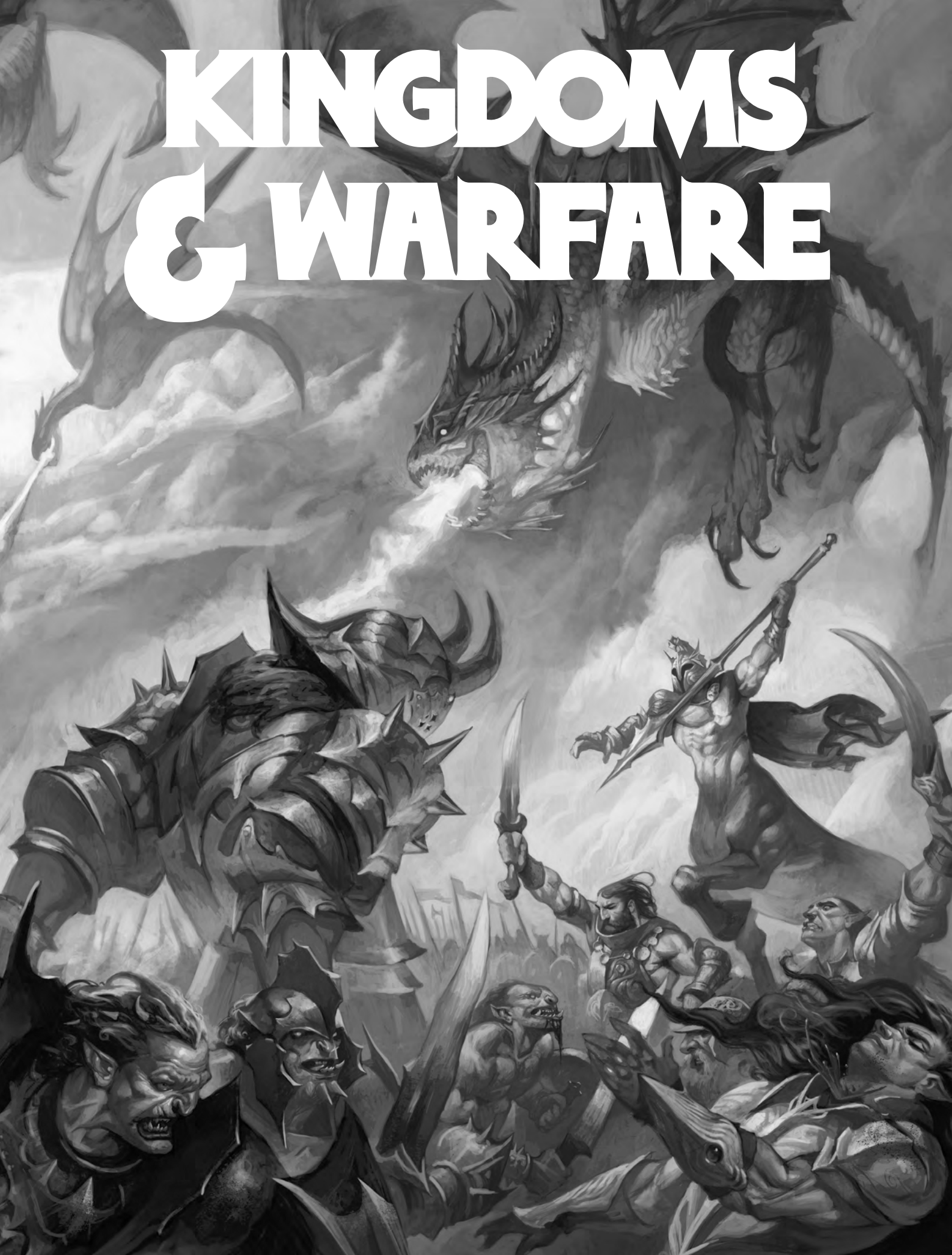


# KINGDOMS & WARFARE



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MCDM



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I have always viewed the worlds of fantasy RPGs in terms of domains. The idea that the world is divided into spheres of influence and power, with specific people in charge of those things. Even as a

teenager, I played in lots of different fantasy worlds, and I judged them all based on one thing: the map.<sup>1</sup> I used maps as the keys that unlocked the different domains in a world.

Maps are one of the GM's most powerful tools. The map of the local area, the map of the region, the map of the city, the map of the world. Because maps invite exploration. A map explicitly asks the players to pore over it, point to something evocative or mysterious, and ask: "What's this?"

In the '80s and early '90s, there was an explosion of new, official campaign settings. New fantasy worlds for RPGs. And my friends and I were excited to try them. But whenever I saw the map

of a new world, I always wondered the same thing: "Who's in charge here?" I don't know why that was important to me. Probably, I was just looking for some kind of organizing principle. Some kind of lens to view all this new information through.

I didn't literally think, "Whose domain is this?" I wouldn't have used that language. And I never thought exclusively about barons and dukes and queens. If I pointed to a great forest, I wouldn't expect it to belong to a feudal noble. I know how fantasy works: it's a big forest, so it probably belongs to the elves!

But which elves? Surely a forest this big is an important asset, and some elven court considers it their realm. Their domain. And if not, that's probably because it's contested! A hot or cold war over ancient elven boundaries! Drama!

Or maybe the forest belongs to an order of powerful druids. Maybe they keep it deliberately wild and pool their resources to ensure no single

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<sup>1</sup> Well, I judged them by a lot of things, but the map was usually the first one. The first impression.

civilization takes it over! Well, those druids would be just another domain.

That's how my mind worked then, and how it still works. It's okay if some places aren't controlled by anyone. But then, as now, when I see a map of a fantasy world and there are no political boundaries, no answers, no information to tell me, "Who's in charge?" anywhere, I get disappointed. I feel like ... there's a layer of information missing.

To date, there's never been an edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game whose core rules took the idea of different domains—whether those are counts and dukes and queens, or druid enclaves, wizard circles, or knightly orders—and gave them mechanical features. Not just, "Oh, you get this one feature if you join this organization," but rules for letting different organizations engage in planning, conspiracy, and conflict the way people do.

That's what this book tries to do. I wanted to give you the tools to add organizations and warfare to your games and make doing so fun. When players think about their own party of heroes, even without changing anything about their characters, I hope they'll recognize at least one of the organizations or specializations in here as fitting their group.<sup>2</sup> When GMs see all the different NPC realms in the book, I hope they'll want to run new adventures with a hag coven as the villain, building a secret army in the swamp. Or an evil empire run by an immortal dragon. A draconic tyranny!

When players choose an organization and a specialization, their characters gain new mechanical features—but they'll also feel more like a formal group. They'll have to communicate more to use their new domain powers, and will argue about how best to use domain features during a new phase of the game, called intrigue. Everyone will communicate, argue, and compromise—just like the members of a real organization.

This book will give the heroes and villains in your games more influence, more impact. Their reach will extend beyond the end of their swords or the range of their spells. The party's agents can go out and spy, research, build, and negotiate, all while the heroes are dungeon delving. And of course, when those heroes discover that another domain is building an army to march against the people who look to them for leadership, they can build their own army and prepare for war!

This book might not be for everyone. But if any of the above sounds cool to you, we think you'll like it.

—Matt Colville  
Orange County, CA  
2021

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<sup>2</sup> Probably, let's be honest, the disorganized misfits.



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# Introduction



here's a lot in this book, but what's here ultimately boils down to two systems: intrigue and warfare.

**Intrigue** is conflict between two domains. A holy church versus a mystic circle.

The Knights Templar against a dragon tyrant. A bunch of disorganized misfit adventurers against a nation of undead!

A **domain** is a pretty simple thing as a game concept. It's got four skills. It uses actions and reactions and bonus actions, just like characters and monsters. It has three defenses, but no hit points. The only way to "kill" a domain is to neutralize its officers—although some might escape and start a new domain for the sequel campaign! A domain could be a kingdom, thieves' guild, or druid circle!

An intrigue only ever takes place between two domains. That makes the system simple and easy to keep track of. Other domains might get involved, but purely as allies, lending aid. Of course, depending on the adventure, it's possible that a particular intrigue is just a prelude to another larger intrigue as the characters discover the villainous realm they just defeated was only a pawn in an even larger game....

Alongside the intrigue system, the book presents eight different heroic organizations (each of which can be customized with three specializations) and sixteen different NPC realms to use as allies, neutral observers, or enemies.

**Warfare** is conflict between units of soldiers and monsters. Along with rules for warfare, you'll find seventy-eight special units in this book and another sixty-four in the special unit deck available on our store (at [mcdmproductions.com/warfare-deck](http://mcdmproductions.com/warfare-deck)).

So while it might look like an enormous amount of stuff in here at first glance, it's really just two systems, each relatively straightforward, and then a ton of options for those systems.

The book also contains a handful of new items that can affect intrigue or warfare. And because they were popular in *Strongholds & Followers*, you get some new legendary artifacts called the codices. (Warning! They will unravel the fabric of reality!)

*Strongholds & Followers* presented six courts of extraplanar creatures that the gods might send to aid characters in battle if their faith is strong enough. Those were so popular that we expanded them with three additional courts—devils, demons, and undead. New monsters! Some of these creatures use the action-oriented design philosophy mentioned in "Running the Game #83," designed to make it easier for a GM to use a single monster to challenge an entire party.

Finally, there's an adventure designed to help you use and understand these rules. It's basically a big, detailed example of how the intrigue and warfare systems can work.

## How to Use This Book

First, you should check out the **Glossary of Terms** section, which covers all the new terms the book uses. Don't worry about reading the whole thing, but just skimming it to familiarize yourself with the concepts will help a lot. And you can always refer back to the glossary if you're looking for a quick definition.

One of the design goals of this book was to make as few assumptions as possible about your game. You can start using these rules right now, with your existing characters in the middle of your current campaign—or even right in the middle of an adventure. In fact, we hope these rules take your group and your adventures and elevate them, granting everything a broader scope and a feeling of raising the stakes. In a world where the forces of powerful domains vie for control of ancient artifacts and forgotten lore, every adventuring party and their enemies can now be listed among those domains.





The easiest way to adopt these rules is to imagine that the heroes in your game are already an organization, with the players picking the specific type of organization from the eight in this book. Then set up the villains of the adventure as a villainous realm, which the GM picks from among the sixteen in the book.

You can stop there if you like. Domains have options that give their officers—both characters and NPCs—more things to do during an adventure or between adventures. But an organization is more than just its officers. There are followers, agents, and employees all ready to carry out the characters' and NPCs' orders. As such, leading a domain means players can have their organization conduct research or espionage while the characters continue exploring dungeons or fighting dragons.

Domains grant their officers access to domain features that become usable during intrigue. The GM will use the rules for intrigue to make the campaign more memorable as it moves toward one or more warfare battles that mark the intrigue's conclusion, with the heroes plotting and scheming against a villain as their organization uses its domain features and domain skills to prepare for battle—even as the villain does the same!

Domains also grant their officers access to domain powers. These are new special features that allow characters to work together during any combat that takes place during intrigue against the officers of an opposed domain—just as the villain and their lieutenants will be working together on that opposing side. This includes the combat that runs alongside the potential climactic final battle at the end of intrigue. (Though not all adventures need to have a final battle, it's great fun!)

The warfare rules in this book are robust enough to be used as their own game. This can be a fun way to play out small skirmishes or major battles, and it works fine without using the rules for intrigue.

But finally—and most ambitiously—all these rules work together as a whole. The heroes become an organization as they plot and scheme against the villain's realm, making allies and raising an army. Time and again, they confront enemy leaders in combat using their new domain powers while their

loyal forces clash around them! And though they might not be something that ends up a part of every session, battles between the armies of domains can lend an epic feel to any adventure. It's a little more work, certainly, but that work pays off in the kind of conflict that pushes players and GMs toward the biggest possible adventure finale.

There might be other things you wish this system did. If we've done a good job, it'll be easy for you to design your own optional rules that expand on this framework. We look forward to seeing what you do with the content that follows!

## COMBAT AND BATTLE

To keep clear the differences between warfare and characters engaging in combat, this book uses "combat" to refer to characters and monsters skirmishing using the game's normal rules. "Battle" is used to refer to armies clashing using the warfare rules.

## SCALE

Another thing this book makes no assumptions about is the scale of your game—specifically, the units of distance you use on your campaign map. How much territory a domain controls is something left to the GM—if it ever comes up at all. Domains can come into conflict all on their own as villains try to blow up the world or some small part of it, and the heroes trying to stop them likely don't need to know, "Exactly how many square miles do they control?"

In addition to helping keep these rules flexible and easy to adopt, worrying about the literal area of a territory likely isn't something most people will find exciting in a game about pretending to be an elf who fights dragons. So in the end, the rules simply assume it takes about a week (however this is defined in your world) for a domain to carry out a single domain action. And even that can be easily tweaked to any length of time, as it's deliberately abstract. For a particular game, it might work to have a domain turn be a week at the beginning of an intrigue, but then only a single day at the end as the pace quickens and the stakes rise.



# The Operation



e sell it back to them,” Narco said. “Hang on ... then what are you gonna put on your bolts?”

Aurex nodded her head in agreement. “Need I remind you,” the half-devil assassin said, “before your mind of chemicals and formulae overheats from its own cleverness, it took our people three weeks to steal those vials of *dreamtime*. And they managed to get in, get it, and get out without anyone noticing. Those resources could have been put to better use if that drug doesn’t end up on a bolt in Castagan.”

Loroyan Thel, the drow brains of the Operation, peered at Narco from across the corner table of the quiet tavern. “We can handle the paladin with or without magic poison, demidevil,” he said, almost under his breath.

“And get him to talk?” Aurex said. “Under *dreamtime*, he’ll talk while he sleeps—and we’ll know it’s the truth.”

Thel sighed. “I’m aware of that.”

“I thought the sleep juice was for your bolts,” Zarek said. Not unusually, the half-orc enforcer felt two steps behind the conversation.

“Forget the bolts, Zarek,” Aurex said. “I want to hear what our alchemist director of narcotics has in mind.”

Narco turned to the half-devil. “Aurex, don’t you see?” He smiled riotously, tossed a small vial into the air, then snatched it back again. “It’s exactly as you said. Our agents got into the Tower of the Lens, got the drug, got out with no alarms. No searching, no deaths, no guards alerted. No trace.”

No one spoke.

“No trace ... of us. So we take this back to the Lens, and we tell them we lifted it off someone who tried to sell it to us.”

“Ah ...” Zarek said.

“No good.” Thel shook his head. “They’ll rumble that. Wizards are reliably clueless, but they’re not stupid.”

“Hey, what if we kill someone?” Zarek said. Everyone frowned at him, as this was his solution to everything. It would be on his family crest if fate ever conspired to make a noble of him.

Still, the half-orc had a point, so they let him continue. “Okay, check this out, yeah? If it’s just us, sure, they’ll rumble that like Thel says. But if we give them a body? And we say, yeah this piece of piss tried to sell us this juice, but we didn’t even know what it was! We asked him where he got it, he got defensive. Says he stole it from you wizards, right? And we said, ‘Oh, you trying to offload your scab on us so you can go back to the Lens and frame us? Pull the other one.’ Then he got pissy and tried something, and we sorta had to kill him or whatever!”

Everyone was looking at Zarek.

“Right? So they see this body and they start wondering, ‘Who’s this, right?’ And if they’re wondering that, they’re not wondering ... about us.”

Thel slowly smiled and looked at Narco, who smiled back and wagged his eyebrows.

Then they turned to look at Aurex, whose visage was inscrutable. Slowly, she spoke.

“It might work.”

“Good enough for me,” Thel said. “Let’s give it a shot. Well done, Zarek.”

“Oh, thanks, boss,” the enforcer said, beaming with pride.

“You people done scheming?” A small, snarling voice piped up as Garrote, the Operation’s chief negotiator and resident goblin officer, hopped up onto a chair.

Thel explained the plan.

The goblin was impressed. “Hey, you came up with that all on your own?” he asked Narco.

“Well, I ...”

“Not bad for a drug addict.”

“Garrote,” Thel warned. Narco looked hurt. Unlike the rest of the officers of the Operation, he wasn’t a killer by trade.

The goblin looked around the table. “That it?” he said. “That all you got?”

Aurex took out her sin-metal blade and began polishing it again, looking meaningfully at the goblin.

“Oh yes, you’re all very clever,” Garrote said. “But unless you’ve forgotten ...” He stabbed a dagger into the map of the temple the group intended to infiltrate, there to confront and combat the order of paladins who were, of late, bent on the destruction of the Operation. “We still got this shit to deal with.”

“With all the intel Aurex ferreted out?” Thel said. “Their wizard’s true name? The guards you blackmailed?”

“Thel, they have an army. They know we’re coming for ’em. They’re gonna surround this place so tight a mouse couldn’t get in.” Garrote pointed to Narco. “And don’t get any ideas. I’m not gonna be a mouse again, so put those filthy potions away.”

“Yeah, that is a piss,” Zarek said. “We gonna fight our way in, boss?”

“Well, it’s been a month. I was hoping a solution to that would have presented itself.” Thel frowned. “It’s not too late to seek special assistance. We could call up the Crew.”

“Don’t you get it?” The goblin smiled, chuckling. “Narco here got halfway there, but it’s up to the charming goblin to seal the deal.”

“Get it over with,” Aurex said. She held out her blade to see the dim light of the tavern glint off the shining gray metal before being absorbed.

Garrote’s face fell. Aurex and her blade. “Yeah. Anyway. We take the *dreamtime* back to the Tower of the Lens, we give ’em some corpse they can pin all their suspicion on, just like Narco and Zarek say. Then we say ‘Goodness, would you like this back? Seems expensive.’ But then we say, ‘We don’t want paying.’ Maybe Aurex’s people dig up some dirt on the Lens? Should they even have this stuff? It’s illegal as shit. So, you know, we embarrass ’em, lie to ’em, give ’em someone else to be suspicious of, a little blackmail thrown in for good measure. Then we just offer to give it back to ’em. Free.”

“To what end, Garrote?”

The goblin grinned. “So they volunteer to take care of our little military problem for us.”

No one spoke. The officers of the Operation were all uniformly stunned. Thel looked at Aurex and Narco. “They could do it,” he said.

Narco nodded. “Lend us a unit of elementals, show how grateful they are.”



Aurex frowned, hating to admit the goblin was right. “You got it in you to brace a quaesitor of the Lens?”

Garrote made a “psh” noise. “Wizards are easy. You just gotta flatter ’em before you threaten ’em.” He smiled. “By the time I’m done with ’em, they’ll think it was their idea.”

“I can try and dig up something on their quaesitor,” Aurex said. “Give Garrote some ammo.”

Thel put his hands flat on the table. “Intel says we got a week before the Order of the Black Pegasus

comes after us, and I intend to go after them first. So ... work your magics, and let’s see if we can’t convince the Lens they owe us a favor.”

“Blackmail, intel, drugs.” Garrote nodded at the three vials of *dreamtime*. “Just a day’s work for us, boss.”

Zarek finally caught up. “Heh. This is good, you guys. Oh yeah, this is gonna be fun. This is real thieves’ guild shit.”

# Glossary of Terms



his section collects the terminology underlying the domains, intrigue, and warfare systems at the heart of the book. As you read the rules for the first time, you might want to refer back here

to check unfamiliar terms—or to flip forward to the **Heroic Organizations** and **NPC Realms** sections, and to the **Warfare** chapter, to see how these terms play out in the rules.

## DOMAINS & INTRIGUE

The following terms are used in domains and intrigue.

**Attitude:** The disposition of another domain toward yours. Used to establish alliances through diplomacy.

**Combat:** The normal round-by-round conflict between characters in the game, including the officers of domains.

**Communications:** One of a domain’s three defenses. Communications represents how well agents and followers understand the goals and orders of the domain’s leaders, and can relay the current state of the domain back to them.

**Decrement:** To decrease the number on a die by 1.

**Defense Levels:** A number that represents the strength and effectiveness of a domain’s Communications, Resolve, and Resources. During intrigue, a domain wants to increase their own defense levels and decrease those of the opposed domain. Defense levels don’t modify defense scores.

**Defense Score:** A number that represents the security of a domain’s Communications, Resolve, and Resources.

**Development Point:** Spent by the officers in a domain to customize its stats.

**Diplomacy:** One of a domain’s four skills, used to negotiate with other domains.

**Domain:** A group of characters or creatures working together to further some long-term goal. The term “domain” encompasses the leaders of the domain, the agents and followers who work for them, and the territory they influence.

**Domain Feature:** A special benefit or action used during an intrigue on behalf of a domain by one of its officers.

**Domain Power:** A special benefit or feature available to officers of a domain during combat against officers of an opposed domain.

**Domain Turn:** The time in which each domain in an intrigue conducts one domain action. Often a week, but could be any span of time determined by the GM.

**Espionage:** One of a domain's four skills, used to spy on or sabotage other domains.

**Found:** To create or establish, in regard to domains founding strongholds.

**Intrigue:** Conflict between two domains in which each takes domain actions, using domain features and domain skills to affect the defenses of the opposing side and prepare for battles. Also the period of time covering this conflict.

**Leader:** The NPC officer who runs a villainous realm.

**Lieutenants:** The NPC officers of a villainous realm who obey the realm's leader.

**Lore:** One of a domain's four skills, used to research obscure knowledge.

**Muster:** To raise new warfare units for a domain.

**Officer:** One of the player characters or NPCs in charge of a domain.

**Operations:** One of a domain's four skills. Operations is used to muster new units and to take actions not covered by any other domain skill.

**Organization:** A player-controlled domain.

**Party Sheet:** The record of an organization's stats, defenses, and features.

**Power Die:** A die that an officer can roll at the start of a battle. The die is placed with its result facing up in a domain's power pool.

**Power Pool:** The shared group of power dice all officers in a domain access when using their powers.



**Realm:** An NPC-controlled domain.

**Resolve:** One of a domain's three defenses, representing how committed a domain's followers are to the cause of the domain's leaders.

**Resources:** One of a domain's three defenses. Resources covers both wealth and the availability of anything a domain needs to operate.

**Stronghold:** A domain's headquarters, whatever form that might take.

**Test:** To resolve a skill roll for a domain. Used in place of "check" to make it clearer when the rules are talking about interactions between domains rather than between characters and other creatures.

**Title:** A special feature an officer gains as a result of commanding a domain.

**Villainous Realm:** An NPC realm in direct conflict with the players' organization.

## WARFARE

The following terms are used in warfare.

**Activation:** The act of selecting a unit, determining its movement and actions, and resolving them. A unit's activation in battle is effectively equivalent to a character's turn in combat.

**Adjacent:** Spaces and units are adjacent if one is above, below, left, or right of the other. Spaces and units that are diagonal to each other are not adjacent.

**Aerial:** Units that can fly.

**Allied Units:** All units that are part of an army or are friendly to that army.

**Artillery:** Siege engines and archers.

**Attack:** The bonus to a d20 roll representing a unit's ability to successfully execute an attack order and engage an opposed unit. Opposed by Defense.

**Battle:** Conflict between two armies.

**Battle Magic:** Magic items crafted by officers and given to units in an army.

**Bringing the Siege:** The test that determines which domain marches on the other at the start of a battle. This determines which side defends a stronghold and which side attacks.

**Broken:** A broken unit is removed from the battlefield, usually because it suffered its last casualty. Broken units can be reformed by rallying.

**Casualty:** The higher a unit's casualties, the more damage it can take. Think of casualties as hit points for units.

**Casualty Die:** The die placed on each unit card that tracks how many casualties the unit has remaining. A unit's casualty die is initially equal to its size.

**Cavalry:** Highly mobile ground troops, usually mounted.

**Center:** The most protected rank on the battlefield. Archers begin battle in their army's center rank.

**Combat:** The normal round-by-round conflict between characters in the game, including the officers of domains.

**Command:** The bonus to a d20 roll representing a unit's ability to correctly interpret complex orders and execute them successfully.

**Commander:** The character or NPC who controls a unit.

**Decrement:** To decrease the number on a die by 1.

**Defense:** A numerical value representing a unit's ability to maneuver in such a way as to avoid an opposed unit's attack. Used as the DC for an opposed unit's Attack test.

**Defenseless:** Lacking an army in a battle.

**Deployment:** The placing of units in legal spaces on the battlefield. Usually the first thing that happens in a battle.

**Diminished:** A unit is diminished when its current casualties are half or less than its starting casualties.

**Disband:** A unit that disbands is gone forever and cannot be rallied.

**Exposed:** A unit that is vulnerable to enemy cavalry because it is not properly protected by other units.

**Fortification:** A construction in one or more spaces on the battlefield, which grants units various bonuses during the battle.

**Front:** The vanguard rank of an army plus all of an opposed side's ranks.

**Increment:** To increase the number on a die by 1.

**Infantry:** Basic ground troops, trained to fight in melee and hard to kill.

**Inflict Casualties:** To damage a unit. If a unit inflicts 1 casualty on another unit, the target loses 1 casualty.

**Levies:** Laborers who briefly put down their pitchforks and ploughshares and pick up sword and pike to serve their domain.

**Maneuver:** A special action a unit can take, many of which require a Command test.

**Martial Advantages:** Special features that units gain based on the character class of the officer commanding those units.

**Morale:** A bonus to a d20 roll representing a unit's ability to maintain discipline in the face of overwhelming odds, magic, exotic enemies, and impending destruction.

**Opposed Units:** All units that are part of the army of the other side, or which are friendly to that army.

**Order of Battle:** The rules that describe which units can attack which other units.

**Power:** A bonus to a d20 roll representing a unit's physical strength and its ability to inflict casualties on an opposed unit. Opposed by Toughness.

**Rank:** A row on the battlefield.

**Rear:** The last rank on the battlefield, whose units defend the center rank from enemy cavalry. Usually populated by levies. (Wish them luck!)

**Reserve:** A well-protected rank on the battlefield where units can be stacked until needed.

**Special Unit:** A warfare unit that cannot be mustered through a normal Operations check, or that is unique to a specific domain.

**Suffer Casualties:** When a unit takes damage, it suffers casualties. If a unit suffers 1 casualty, it loses 1 casualty.

**Tier:** A measure of how powerful a unit is. Higher-tier units are more effective in battle, and harder to muster.

**Toughness:** A numerical value representing a unit's physical hardiness and its soldiers' ability to withstand attacks and keep fighting. Used as the DC for an opposed unit's Power test.

**Unit:** A group of soldiers, civilians, or monsters who make up an army.

**Unit Dependency:** The rule governing how many units of each tier can be fielded.

**Vanguard:** The first rank of an army, which faces the opposing army. Usually populated by infantry.







# DOMAINS & INTRIGUE



very fantasy RPG campaign contains domains. The local church is one. The baron, their court, and the people of the barony are another. The thieves' guild. The secret society of rangers and

druids. Whatever your choice of fantasy subgenre, your campaign contains many different domains feeding a network of alliances, allegiances, suspicions, and grudges.

The rules in this book give you a straightforward way to represent those domains with game mechanics, and to allow the player characters to step up onto a larger stage and translate their influence from adventuring into political power. Player-run domains are called **organizations**. NPC-run domains are called **realms**. This book presents eight different player organizations, each with three specialties, and another sixteen NPC realms.

When two domains come into direct conflict, this is called an **intrigue**. The purpose of intrigue is to move toward a climactic confrontation involving combat between the officers of opposed domains and battles between their armies. Some adventures might end with just a final warfare battle at the end of intrigue, while others will feature numerous smaller battles leading up to a final battle alongside a final combat between the characters and the officers of an opposed domain. A domain can be destroyed only by neutralizing its officers. As such, once an intrigue starts, it continues until initiative is called for the final showdown between the domains' officers.

## THE CORE ASSUMPTIONS

Running nations and guilds and churches and spy networks can be incredibly complex. It's easy to imagine a highly detailed game system that can model a world at this level. Tracking a barony's food supply, determining how much iron is available to a duchy, mapping out a spy network's elaborate web of agents, or even maintaining a list of a local religion's temples and shrines—it's all a complicated process. Games like that already exist, and are typically complex grand-strategy simulations that might even require a computer to run them.

This book takes a different approach.

First off, these rules understand that you're already playing a complex fantasy RPG. We all know that just managing a single character or a world of NPCs can be a lot of work. So ideally, any domain management system has to be something that sits lightly on top of the game that players and GMs are already enjoying.

Furthermore, the game almost always has a heavy focus on fighting monsters. Most monsters are defined by their combat prowess, and many of a character's best class features revolve around making them a better monster fighter. By assuming that training followers makes characters better at the stuff they're already good at—whether that means research, study, or fighting—running a domain provides another way to improve the effectiveness of player characters and NPCs in combat.

Finally, almost every adventure involves some villain plotting and scheming while the heroes try to stop them. This system assumes that the villain runs their own villainous realm, that the player characters' organization is actively trying to stop them, and that this conflict will eventually come to a head in an all-out battle—or perhaps more than one. This is the same way things would pan out if you weren't using the new rules in this book. But with these rules, every officer in a domain has new special features called domain powers. These powers require communication and cooperation to use, even as armies clash in warfare to all sides.

In simplest terms, the rules in this book assume that characters continue adventuring as they normally do. While the characters are adventuring, slowly working their way toward a final confrontation with the villain, their domain is looking for allies to lend aid, investigating the villain and their lieutenants to learn their secrets, and disrupting the workings of the villain's realm to weaken that realm's forces in a final showdown. Even for a campaign that's in the middle of an adventure right now, players and GMs can adopt the new rules in this book to provide a framework for the campaign's existing plots and intrigue—then raise the stakes for both heroes and enemies in a warfare battle!

The adventure included with this book—"The Regent of Bedegar"—serves as an example of how

a straightforward adventure can include rewards such as military units or resistance to an opposing realm's features based on a domain's actions during the adventure.

## CHARACTERS AND OFFICERS

*Kingdoms & Warfare* assumes that all the player characters in a campaign will be officers in a domain organization. These rules introduce a new dice pool (described below) shared by all the officers of an organization, which grants characters access to domain powers. Those new features are based on what type of organization the players choose, and require the players to communicate and cooperate as a team. (A villainous realm has its own dice pool that the leader and their lieutenants gain access to for their own domain powers.)

A character can be an officer in more than one organization, but they can be involved only in one intrigue at a time and can benefit only from the

effects of one party sheet at a time. (That's the record of a domain's stats, defenses, and features.) A wizard might be a member of the party's noble court organization and run their own arcane order on the side. But during an intrigue involving the noble court, the character is focused on that organization while their arcane order tends to its own affairs.

## WHAT IS AN ORGANIZATION?

An organization is a domain built around the officers who founded it—the player characters. The players decide what their characters' organization does, and who its initial allies and enemies are. Among those allies, an organization also includes the NPC followers, retainers, and lieutenants the characters attract as a result of rising fame or infamy earned through adventuring. For example, if the party's organization is an underworld syndicate, that organization includes all the members of the syndicate down to the lowest-level



agents keeping their ears to the ground and feeding the characters information. Likewise, an organization set up as a noble court might include large numbers of farmers and laborers who rely on the heroes for protection, and who are ready to serve to show their thanks.

Using the rules in this book, an adventuring party becomes an organization when it founds a stronghold, typically by buying, building, discovering, or inheriting it. Founding a stronghold announces to the world that the adventurers are more than just mercenaries, and are ready to get involved with local affairs in one way or another.

## DESCRIBING A DOMAIN

Each fully detailed domain (whether a player character organization or a villainous realm) is described by its collection of skills, defenses, domain powers, and domain features, as well as its size.

A domain has four **skills**: Diplomacy, Espionage, Lore, and Operations, each of which has a modifier. A domain's officers use these skills during intrigue.

A domain has three **defenses**: Communications, Resolve, and Resources. Each defense has a numerical value that provides a target number for tests made with domain skills during an intrigue. Each defense also has a level that can be raised or lowered. Any domains can gain bonuses or take penalties during battle or combat based on their domain defense levels.

Each domain also grants its officers access to special **domain powers** they can use in combat. Each officer gets a **power die** that they roll at the beginning of any combat against one or more officers of an opposed domain. The roll goes into a **power pool** shared by all the officers of a domain, with these dice fueling each character's domain powers.

Every domain also provides a number of unique **domain features** that officers can make use of during intrigue, allowing the domain to affect the opposed domain's defenses and units, to muster special units, and make other preparations for battle.

Finally, each domain has a **size** that determines how many turns it can take during intrigue, how large its officers' power dice are, and the scope of certain benefits available to the domain's army (as detailed in the **Warfare** chapter).

## INTRIGUE

Conflict between domains is called intrigue, and serves as the backdrop to the warfare battles that can play out between the heroes and the villains. The characters can use their organization's skills outside of intrigue, making use of Diplomacy to forge alliances, Espionage to gather intelligence, and so forth. But once the heroes decide it's time to act and stop the villain (or once the villain decides to stop the heroes), the GM announces that intrigue has begun as its own special phase of the game.

Intrigue occurs between two domains—by default, the heroes' organization and the villain's enemy realm. NPC realms might also be involved, but they don't act on their own during intrigue. Rather, they lend aid to one side or the other.

Intrigue is divided up into domain turns, during which the players and the GM make use of the domain features and special actions available to them. Intrigue ends once both sides have completed all their domain turns, at which point the GM will set up a final showdown between domains—involving combat between the characters and their enemies, a climactic battle between the armies of powerful domains, or both!

## FOUNDING AN ORGANIZATION

The players create an organization when their characters acquire a stronghold. They might do so by spending time and money to buy or build a stronghold, or through other means such as discovering an old ruin, clearing it out, and fixing it up. Some campaigns might even begin with the heroes inheriting a stronghold!

The game's core rules note prices for different strongholds of different sizes, but there's also an entire book dedicated to this—*Strongholds & Followers*. (You don't need that book to use the rules in this book, but it might be fun.)

Once the characters gain a stronghold, they naturally start to attract followers. Folks hear about the deeds they've done, notice the new headquarters, and volunteer to help or serve the characters. That stronghold and those followers are the foundation of the player characters' organization.

Of course, the GM can waive any of these requirements if doing so is a better fit for the campaign. The only thing that's really necessary is to have people working for the characters. But without some kind of headquarters, even if it's just the local tavern (an establishment according to the *Strongholds & Followers* rules), there's no physical structure to defend and nothing for an enemy to attack—and these things are important to the new rules in this book, as you will see.

## CHOOSING AN ORGANIZATION TYPE

Eight different types of organizations for player character domains are presented in this book, and each of those has three specializations. Two of those organizations—the noble court and the adventuring party—are good for existing campaigns in which

the players don't want to make new characters to use these rules, or for campaigns with a wide range of character types. The rest are themed more narrowly, and are best for new characters built around a specific organization type—and for parties where characters are focused on similar or even the same classes. (See **Granting Titles** below for more information.)

That said, even the most strongly themed organizations don't make any assumptions about what classes officers can or should be. With only a few exceptions, none of the domain powers that officers can take make reference to class features. Any group of characters could decide to be a thieves' guild or a knightly order. After all, every criminal enterprise needs wizards and clerics, and you don't have to be a heavily armored and chivalrous paladin to follow a knight's creed.



## DEVELOPMENT POINTS

Each organization is set up with a **party sheet** that defines the organization's starting skills, its defenses, its domain powers, and its domain features. The sheet even has a place for the characters' pool of power dice.

When characters found an organization, they begin with **8 development points**, which are available to spend on skills and defenses. The players take turns passing the party sheet around, with each player spending 1 point and checking off the appropriate blank box on the party sheet (see below) until all points have been spent.

Players can make choices for spending development points as a group, or each player can do what they like individually. The GM can also weigh in if necessary, depending on the circumstances of the campaign. For example, in a campaign where one character has inherited a barony from their parent and the other characters are the new baron's lieutenants, it might make sense for the new baron's player to spend most of the organization's initial development points. (That's less fun, though!)

Each time a domain increases its size, the officers gain an additional 8 development points to spend on improving their organization. The players once more pass the sheet around, with each player spending 1 point until all points are spent.

Each development point spent lets a player mark off a box on the party sheet, moving to the right. When a box is marked off, the box on its right is

marked off next. When a box with a value in it is marked off, the organization's skills or defenses become that number. For example, if an organization has +2 marked off in Diplomacy and the players mark off the next two boxes to reach +3, the organization's Diplomacy modifier increases to +3. If Resolve starts at 10 and the players mark off the next six boxes, the organization's Resolve increases to 15.

Each organization starts with its skills and defenses at specific values, representing what the organization is naturally good at based on its type. (See the **Heroic Organizations** section on page 31 for details.) Mark off the boxes with the starting values and all the boxes to the left of those boxes. Then players spending development points continue marking off boxes to the right.

Any time an effect changes a domain's skills or defenses, the effect always refers to the modifier, not the number of boxes. If a domain specialization grants an organization a +1 to Diplomacy, that means the domain's Diplomacy modifier increases by 1. Only development points are applied one box at a time.

## RAISING AN ARMY

As a setup for using the warfare rules, when the characters found an organization, the players immediately muster four Tier I units of their choice to start up their army, from any ancestry the GM agrees the organization has access to. Each unit must be controlled by an officer of the organization,

### POINTS, BOXES, AND BONUSES

| Skills     | Bonus |    |    |    |  |    |  |  |    |
|------------|-------|----|----|----|--|----|--|--|----|
|            | -1    | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  |  | +4 |
| Diplomacy  | -1    | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  |  | +4 |
| Espionage  | -1    | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  |  | +4 |
| Lore       | -1    | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  |  | +4 |
| Operations | -1    | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  |  | +4 |

| Defenses       | Score |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |
|----------------|-------|----|----|----|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|
|                | 10    | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |
| Communications | 10    | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |
| Resolve        | 10    | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |
| Resources      | 10    | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |



and each officer can command a number of units equal to their proficiency bonus. (The **Warfare** chapter has more information on all these things.)

During intrigue, players can muster more units for their organization's army. Rules for this are covered under the **Operations** domain skill in this chapter (page 23) and **Building an Army** in the **Warfare** chapter (page 100).

An army obeys the commands of an organization's officers, and can be deployed outside of intrigue or warfare for narrative purposes. As a rule, an army can perform any activity that an organization's officers could perform but which the characters are too high a level to bother with, from escorting a diplomat to quelling an uprising of cultists.

The Operations domain skill can be used to resolve tasks an army performs outside of battle.

## GRANTING TITLES

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Each organization grants its officers access to five titles that are distinct to each type of organization. Each character claims a different title within an organization, with that title granting new features and proficiencies. A character can have more than one title, but they can benefit from only one at a time, switching titles during a long rest. If a party includes more than five player characters, the GM can allow specific titles in an organization to be duplicated or allow a character to take a title from a different type of organization.

Most organizations' titles are designed to support playing an organization whose officers are all of the same class, by giving those officers a wider range of features. For example, in a normal game, a party consisting of all rogues will deal formidable damage and be very stealthy indeed! At the same time, though, the lack of a tank and a healer makes such a group more fragile and less versatile than a typical group of adventurers. But in a thieves' guild organization whose officers are all rogues, titles help shore up these deficiencies.

As an optional rule, the GM might consider allowing titles only when the players create a single-class party. This isn't a strict requirement, but players and GMs should all be aware that some titles might become overpowered if stacked with similar benefits from class features or feats.

## ORGANIZATIONS AND WARFARE

This book is built around the iconic idea of the heroes fighting an adventure's villain in one or more epic bouts of combat, while outside the characters' or the villain's sanctum, a battle rages between the armies controlled by both sides. If the characters run an arcane order or a druid circle, their army might be composed of elementals or treants. A thieves' guild might hire mercenaries or field units of elite scouts, harriers, and sappers. But regardless of which organization the players choose, **the rules assume they have an army**. The battle that rages alongside the combat has a mechanical impact on the characters. When the army of one domain or the other wins a battle, the officers of the victorious domain gain a morale surge that offers a one-time benefit in combat.

For some players, this idea fits the fantasy concept just fine. But for others, the idea of their characters' thieves' guild or arcane order fielding an army might seem strange, and out of line with their ambitions or style of play, or the way they imagine their organization. If this is ever the case, the players and the GM should feel free to ignore the warfare system in this book altogether. You can still use the intrigue system, and these rules will still work and be fun. Or you might try ignoring both warfare and intrigue to just use an organization's skills and powers! The power dice mechanic works well on its own, and will be fun even if the characters never raise an army.

Even so, the GM is encouraged to describe the villain's realm as still having an army! But those forces will just be off doing something terrible in grand cinematic fashion (and possibly creating the reason the heroes need to stop the villain in the first place). Some sort of final combat still happens, with the heroes fighting the Scion of Orcus or Lord Saxton or what have you. But the villain's armies are busy wreaking havoc elsewhere.

## BEFORE INTRIGUE

Domain-level play works the same way the skirmish-level game works. Just as each character has skills they can use outside of and during combat,

an organization has skills it can use before and during intrigue. In the same way that characters decide to draw steel and initiate combat, an organization can decide to deploy its agents and begin intrigue. Likewise, the GM can decide, “You’ve pushed this NPC far enough! It’s time for intrigue!” Or, “This villainous realm has decided the party is an active threat, and they initiate intrigue!”

In any event, the GM determines when intrigue begins, regardless of which side initiates it.

Before intrigue begins, the characters’ organization can probe and test their enemy, but **they can’t use their skills directly against a villainous realm**. That kind of action is what begins intrigue. This is a fine line, and it’s up to the GM to adjudicate it. But in general, if the characters can make use of their organization’s skills to deal with everyday people (for example, learning something about a villainous realm by making general inquiries using Diplomacy) or known information (for example, researching a villain’s history using Lore), then those activities can remain part of the regular game. (See below for more information on these domain skills and their use.)

A Diplomacy test made against one of Lord Saxton’s allies might provide some idea what kind of army he’s preparing without starting intrigue. But an Espionage test to spy on Lord Saxton would initiate intrigue. Likewise, a Lore test to learn what Lord Saxton can do in combat might be allowable outside of intrigue if the GM decides Lord Saxton has shown off his combat skills often enough that there are people outside his domain who know that information. But any domain skill that requires targeting a villainous realm (including its agents, libraries, and lands) should start intrigue.

## DOMAIN SKILL TESTS

A domain skill test works exactly like a character or creature making an ability check. A d20 is rolled, modifiers are added, and the total is compared to the test’s Difficulty Class, determined by the GM. If the total is equal to or higher than the DC, the test succeeds. Tests can likewise be made with

advantage and disadvantage, just like ability checks. The rules use the word test instead of check to help differentiate domain skills from the abilities and skills used by the characters.

## USING DOMAIN SKILLS OUTSIDE OF INTRIGUE

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Players don’t have to wait until intrigue begins to use the skills of their characters’ domain. A domain and its agents are always standing by, waiting for orders. For example, a Diplomacy test—along with some good roleplaying and effort on the characters’ part—could change the attitude of a clan of elves toward an organization, so that once intrigue begins, the DC to convince the elves to aid the organization is lower.

Outside of their place in intrigue, there are no hard and fast rules describing how domain skills can be used. Players can suggest ideas, and if the GM agrees that an idea makes sense, they can try it! The goal with skills outside of intrigue is to keep the rules purposefully broad, so each table can develop their own standards.

How long it takes to resolve a domain skill test outside of intrigue is also up to the GM. A good rule of thumb is one domain skill test per week, but this is entirely dependent on the timeframe of the game and the campaign. If you don’t track the passage of time closely in your game, it might be easier to tie domain skill tests to major narrative events, such as the awarding of XP to characters, the end of a session, or even the end of a major encounter. (See **Time and Domain Turns** below for more guidance in this area.)

Regardless of how the GM rules, characters use their domain’s skills by giving orders to the organization’s followers and waiting, sometimes for days or even weeks of campaign time. During that time, those followers work to carry out those orders. Making an Espionage test to determine what military units a villainous realm has mustered can take an enormous amount of effort to pull off, including long days spent in research and networking.



## RUNNING INTRIGUE

A villainous realm is defeated only when its leader is defeated in combat, whether that means death, or surrender, or stranding them in another part of the multiverse. The defeated realm's agents and followers might organize under a different leader later, but that will be a different domain with its own stats and features.

Before the final showdown between the characters (in their roles of officers of their domain organization) and the officers of the villain's realm, the characters' organization conducts an intrigue against that realm. During intrigue, the players can use their organization's skills to put their army together, or sabotage certain elements of the opposed domain's power structure to impose penalties on its skills or defenses. At the same time, agents of the villainous realm are making their own attempts to weaken the characters' organization.

Much like deciding when to call for initiative rolls in combat, the GM decides when intrigue starts. This usually happens once the heroes encounter one or more agents of the villainous realm, or the effects of those agents' villainy. This might occur at a different point in each adventure, but once the characters have direct evidence of the existence and operation of a villainous realm, intrigue can begin.

As a rule, the heroes' organization can't research or confront a villainous realm they don't know about, or which is beyond the reach of their influence. The characters can't use their friendly neighborhood thieves' guild to sabotage another domain on the other side of the planet.

An intrigue is focused on one boss villain. A short adventure with only one main villain will likely have only one intrigue, which begins as soon as the heroes encounter the agents of that villain (and recognize them for what they are) or the results of their villainy. For complex campaigns in which the characters will face off against increasingly powerful sub-bosses before getting to the main boss, it's a good rule of thumb to plan for additional intrigues—perhaps even one per sub-boss. Each sub-boss fight can mark the end of a chapter or act, and will have its own intrigue leading up to it. As such, each sub-boss should be treated as the leader of their own villainous realm, in service to the end-boss's realm.

## DOMAIN TURNS AND ACTIONS

During an intrigue, each **domain can act a number of times equal to 4 + the domain's size**. Each time a domain acts during an intrigue is called a domain turn. This is true for the heroes' organization as well as the villain's realm.

## CHOOSING ACTIONS

During a domain turn, the characters' organization and the villainous realm act at the same time. The GM chooses a domain action for the villainous realm and keeps it secret. Then the characters choose a domain action for their organization. After the players declare the organization's domain action, the GM reveals the action of the villainous realm. Once actions are declared, the players roll any necessary skill tests for their characters' organization's domain action while the GM does the same for the villainous realm. Then the players share the results of their organization's actions followed by the GM sharing the villainous realm's results.

## WHO KNOWS WHAT?

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Spies from both domains monitor each other, so almost all actions a domain takes and the results of those actions are public knowledge. The exception is mustering units and using domain skills to improve a domain's stats (its domain skills and defenses). Enemies know when units are mustered or when a domain's stats are improved, but knowing which units a domain has or what the domain's current stats are requires a successful Espionage test. See **Domain Skills** on page 18 for more information.

## TAKING DOMAIN TURNS

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Sometimes one domain in an intrigue has a greater domain size and can take more turns than the other. If the larger domain initiated the intrigue, those extra domain turns are taken at the start of the intrigue before the other domain can act. If the larger domain didn't initiate the intrigue, the extra domain turns are taken at the end of intrigue, after the other domain can no longer act.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

When a domain takes a turn, one of its player character or NPC officers runs the domain turn, directing the domain to make use of its domain features, or to use domain skills as a domain action. Many features also involve the use of domain skills. When using a domain skill, if the officer is proficient with any of the domain skill's associated character skills, they can add their proficiency bonus to the skill test roll. However, this can be done only once per officer per intrigue.

There are three domain action types: domain action, domain bonus action, and domain reaction. An officer can make one domain bonus action in addition to a domain action during a domain turn. Each officer can take only one domain reaction during an intrigue. Any domain reactions that an officer can make have specific triggers noted in their descriptions.

Because domain features are used during intrigue, many of them relate directly to the warfare rules as they set up battles featuring the army of the characters' domain. The **Warfare** chapter (page 92) has more information on the rules and terminology referenced in those domain features.

## WHOSE TURN IS IT?

There is no limit to the number of rolls an officer can make during intrigue—only on the number of domain turns each domain can take. Each officer issues orders to the domain's agents and followers, which can easily require multiple domain turns. However, because only one of that officer's skill tests can gain the officer's proficiency bonus during an intrigue, it's best to have different characters and NPCs take domain turns. The more one character must spread their attention between different activities, the less effective their leadership.

## TIME AND DOMAIN TURNS

As noted above, the GM decides how often domains can take domain turns during regular adventuring. Intrigue begins when one domain threatens another; continues through periods of campaigning, battles, or both; and lasts until a final confrontation when the characters, the villains, and their armies face off for the last time. During the intrigue, an entire adventure might play out, featuring several encounters and multiple days or weeks of game time. One intrigue might last just a short period of time while another lasts a month or more, simply because of the different scope of the adventure.

The GM should feel free to use any of the following options when deciding when and how often to call for new domain turns:

- One domain turn per week.
- One domain turn per day.
- One domain turn after each combat encounter.
- One domain turn per short rest, as the officers dash off orders to their agents.
- Two domain turns every time experience is awarded.

The GM should also feel free to change these milestones on a per-adventure basis depending on how much time is passing. Or even to change them within an adventure to represent the changing pace of action! This might mean calling for two domain turns per day at the start, and then calling for a domain turn after every encounter as the end of intrigue gets closer. The final domain turn usually occurs just before the climactic confrontation begins!



Ultimately, there's no wrong way to do this, and the GM should feel free to adapt how and when they call for domain turns to suit the adventure they're running and the ways in which they track time in their game.

## DOMAIN SKILLS

Each domain has four skills: Diplomacy, Espionage, Lore, and Operations. These skills define how an organization or realm interacts with the world and with other domains. Skills can be used before and during intrigue. During intrigue, making a domain skill test is a domain action.

Each domain skill represents an entire department inside a domain, including followers and retainers who are experts in their fields. Those NPCs can mount operations on their own with just the direction of a domain's officers, with those

operations not requiring any direct involvement of the heroes or the villain. As such, not only do domain skills allow a domain to do things while the characters are adventuring, they allow the domain to do things outside the scope of adventuring, from research to sabotage to negotiation.

Players are encouraged to be creative with their domain's skills, the same way players can improvise how they use a character's abilities and skills. Don't worry about "doing it right." Each group will develop their own standards for which skills are best and what the appropriate defense or DC is, in much the same way each table develops its own sense of when Dexterity (Acrobatics) is preferable to Strength (Athletics).

During intrigue, each skill can be used to improve a domain's defense levels or to target the opposed domain and reduce its defense levels.

But it's up to the players and the GM to imagine how this plays out, by translating skill tests and their effects into game terms.

## ADJUSTING DEFENSE LEVELS

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Once intrigue begins, each domain involved in the intrigue prepares for some sort of final confrontation between their officers—the player character heroes versus the GM's villain and their lieutenants. Each side can use domain actions to make use of their domain skills, with the goal of either improving a domain's defense levels, or of targeting the opposed side's defenses to make them less prepared for the warfare battles that take place during intrigue.

### IMPROVING A DOMAIN'S DEFENSES

Each domain has three defenses—**Communications**, **Resolve**, and **Resources**—each of which is rated at a level from 3 to -3 (as described in detail under **Domain Defenses** on page 24). **The DC to improve one of a domain's defense levels is 13 + the defense's current level.** So a domain skill test to take its Resolve level from normal (level 0) to loyal (level 1) has a DC of 13. Improving Resolve level from loyal (level 1) to fanatic (level 2) is a DC 14 check, and going from revolt (level -3) to rebellious (level -2) is DC 10. The level of any defense cannot be increased above 3.

When the players want to affect one of their organization's defense levels using a domain skill, an acting officer chooses the intended defense level, a skill, and sets out how that skill is to be used. For example, Anna (playing a character named Judge) wants to raise the Communications level of her group's mercenary company, the Chain of Acheron, using that organization's Espionage domain skill. She tells the GM: "I want to require all our agents to use only verbal communications, nothing written down, and to use our secret battle language."

This is a great idea—but it's not necessarily easy to implement. The Chain of Acheron has a lot of soldiers, agents, and allies in the city, so there's no guarantee that these orders will work well enough to make a difference. To make the domain skill test, Anna rolls a d20 and adds the Espionage bonus for Acheron's Chain. She also adds Judge's proficiency

bonus, since Judge is proficient in Investigation and has not already used their bonus during this intrigue. (See the domain skill descriptions below for more information on associated character skills.)

The Chain of Acheron's Communications defense is currently secure (level 1), which sets the check as DC 14. If Anna succeeds, the domain's Communications goes up one level. If she rolls badly, Communications remains secure but does not improve, with the GM likely interpreting this as meaning Judge's plans were too ambitious.

A defense level can normally be improved only by one level by making a domain skill test as a domain action. However, if a player rolls a 20 on the test, this represents an unexpectedly successful result that improves the defense by two levels.

Villainous realms can increase their defense levels the same way, with the GM making the decision as to which officer, skill, and specific approach are involved.

### LOWERING A DOMAIN'S DEFENSES

In the same manner, the players can target a villainous realm in the hopes of lowering that domain's defense levels. An acting officer picks a skill and one of the opposed domain's defenses, then describes how they intend to use that skill to compromise the defense. If the scenario makes sense to the GM, the officer rolls a d20, adds the domain skill's modifier, adds their proficiency bonus if applicable, and compares the result with the enemy realm's defense score. If the result is equal to or greater than the chosen defense's score, that defense is lowered one level. If the player rolls a 20 on the check, the chosen defense is lowered two levels. The level of any defense cannot be decreased below -3.

Villainous realms can target the defenses of the heroes' organization in the same way, with the GM making the decision as to which officer, skill, and specific approach are involved.

## OTHER USES FOR DOMAIN SKILLS

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The only limit to what benefits characters can earn through the use of their domain skills is the players' imaginations and the GM's sense of what's fair and reasonable. Each skill gives some ideas of what can



be done with it, and a GM should refer to the DCs noted in the core rules when trying to set difficulties for an optimal balance between what's realistic and what's dramatic.

## DIPLOMACY

*Associated Character Skills: Insight, Persuasion*

The Diplomacy domain skill represents a domain's ability to get what it wants without resorting to war or espionage. It's primarily used to make alliances with other domains. An alliance is not a mechanical notion, but is just an agreement between two domains. The terms of the agreement are up to the officers of each domain, but usually an alliance means that two domains each agree to help the other in times of conflict.

Some alliances are purely defensive. "We agree to go to war against an enemy who attacks either of us." More rarely, alliances can be offensive. "Lord Saxton must be stopped! Will you help us?" Offensive alliances are more difficult to establish, though, and another domain might require great assurances before entering into one. "We might attack Lord Saxton if things are as you say. But what proof can you offer that Saxton is a villain?"

### GAINING SPECIAL UNITS

As a domain action, a domain can make a Diplomacy test to petition an NPC realm for military aid for an upcoming battle. The DC depends on the attitude of the NPC realm, as noted on the following table.

| Attitude   | Diplomacy DC |
|------------|--------------|
| Hostile    | 18           |
| Suspicious | 15           |
| Neutral    | 13           |
| Friendly   | 10           |
| Allied     | 8            |

This Diplomacy test can be used more than once per intrigue, but each NPC realm can only grant one unit per intrigue.

Each NPC realm has a special unit that another domain can gain as a result of an alliance. This is the same special unit the domain can muster

using a domain action, as noted in its description. For example, a successful Diplomacy test made by the characters' organization to seek aid from a giant jarldom NPC realm gets the organization a Pet Roc special unit to command in an upcoming battle. Each NPC realm has only one special unit to provide, so characters had better recruit them before their enemies do! A special unit gained through an alliance with an NPC realm returns to the NPC realm after the battle in which it is used.

### ALLIES AND ENEMIES

A hostile NPC realm is not the same thing as a villainous realm. A villainous realm is actively trying to destroy the heroes' organization, whereas a hostile realm is merely one with a tradition of enmity toward the heroes' domain or other domains like it. A local druid circle might have a troubled history with a noble court that rules the land near their forest, creating potential problems for the different noble court run by the characters even if the characters have never interacted with the druids before.

At the GM's discretion, a realm that is allied with the characters' organization can send units to aid the organization in battle even without a Diplomacy test. But sometimes allies are busy or occupied with other conflicts, in which case the GM will ask for a test to be made.

Diplomacy can also be used to convince an NPC realm currently allied with an enemy to sit a battle out, or to convince a neutral realm to lend aid beyond units. Such aid might include a powerful lieutenant, or information that would benefit the domain requesting assistance.

If a domain fails a Diplomacy test to influence or gain allies from an NPC realm, the domain can make a new Diplomacy test to achieve the same goal on a new domain turn. However, if a Diplomacy test fails by 5 or more, the NPC realm's attitude toward the Domain moves one step toward hostile.

## ESPIONAGE

*Associated Character Skills: Investigation, Stealth*

Espionage allows a domain to learn the secrets of other domains, including their plans, their current activities, and who they are allied with. Successful Espionage tests often decrease the level of an



opposing domain's Communications defense, reflecting how successful attempts at destabilizing the opposed domain have been.

Espionage can be used to learn the makeup of an opposed domain's units and the disposition of its allies in advance of a battle. The DC is usually set by targeting one of the opposed domain's defenses, but the GM can also set a DC arbitrarily (as per the guidelines for setting difficulty in the core rules). Espionage does not reveal the nature of specific magic in use by an opposed domain, but it might reveal that an opposed domain has some magical resources or secrets, which a successful Lore test can then ferret out.

When an opposed domain makes a skill test to muster units or raise its defenses, the GM doesn't automatically reveal the specifics of a successful result. The characters learn that the opposed domain mustered units, but not how many units or what kind. Likewise, the specifics of which defense was raised and by how much remain a mystery. If the

characters want to know these things, they need to make a successful Espionage test as a domain action, typically against the opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the players can choose to know one of the following pieces of information:

- The target domain's current defense scores
- The target domain's current defense levels
- The target domain's skill bonuses
- The target domain's current units
- Another statistic or piece of information, at the GM's discretion

Knowing the kinds of units an opposed domain has mustered helps a domain plan its own army. For example, if a villainous realm is building aerial units, the characters' organization will want some aerial units or artillery of their own to take them on. Likewise, if an opposed domain keeps boosting its Resources defense levels, the characters might decide to try to lower that defense and undo some of that progress!

If a domain feature requires a domain to know a secret piece of information to work properly, then the domain learns the information when they successfully use the feature. A separate Espionage test is not necessary. For example, a fey court domain can duplicate an opposed domain's highest-tier unit with the Your Own Worst Enemy feature. When the court succeeds on the Lore test to use the feature, they automatically learn what the target domain's highest-tier unit is.

## LORE

*Associated Character Skills: Arcana, History, Religion*

Lore represents a domain's ability to research both magical and historical knowledge. This is a broad and wide-ranging skill, which can be used outside of intrigue to unlock arcane discoveries, dig up the details of forgotten history, discover the existence of lost spells, or reveal the answers to ancient mysteries. The only limit on what a Lore check can accomplish is what the GM rules is reasonable.

As a rule, the Lore domain skill should not be used as a substitute for adventuring. But at the GM's discretion, it can be used to supplement the normal adventures of a domain's player character officers. For example, a team of NPC agents might be sent out to recover the legendary headpiece for the Staff of Ra, even as the characters quest after the location of the map room in the hidden Well of Souls. In general, if it would be easy but time-consuming for a domain's officers to acquire important knowledge or rare antiquities, then the Lore domain skill can be used to delegate that task. But if doing so is merely difficult, then the officers should undertake that task themselves.

Lore can be used to learn an opposed domain's secrets when those secrets are explicitly magical, such as the nature of supernatural attacks or defenses, or the presence of any famous magic items or artifacts in a domain's arsenal. Likewise, the presence and features of extraordinary units in a domain's army is something a Lore test can ferret out.



## OPERATIONS

*Associated Character Skills: Athletics, Insight*

Operations represents a domain's ability to muster new units, as well as to perform many of the basic functions of maintaining a domain. This is intended to be a catchall domain skill for any activity the players or GM might think of that doesn't easily fit into another skill.

### BUILDING FORTIFICATIONS

Heroic organizations and NPC realms can acquire strongholds and other fortifications during the course of a campaign in any number of ways. The characters might seize enemy fortifications after a successful battle (or have their own fortifications seized by a villainous realm), claim fortifications as a reward for adventuring, or find some other means of acquiring an existing fortified site.

A domain can also build specific battle-ready fortifications (see **Fortifications** on page 121 in the **Warfare** chapter) in any space on a battlefield the domain controls. Doing so during intrigue requires a successful Operations test made as a domain action. A successful DC 11 test is required to build a stone fence, while a successful DC 13 test is required to build a tower. Multiple fences and towers can then be put together in different configurations to build castles, keeps, and other fortifications.

The GM decides the time scale it takes to build a fortification, but here are some typical guidelines:

- If the Operations test to build the fortification succeeds by 5 or more, the fortification is built at the end of the current domain turn, or after 1 week if the domain is not in intrigue.
- If the Operations test succeeds by 4 or fewer, the fortification is built at the end of the next domain turn, or after 2 weeks if the domain is not engaged in intrigue.
- If the Operations test fails by 4 or fewer, the domain's fortification is still constructed, but it takes 3 domain turns (or 3 weeks) to do so.
- If the test fails by 5 or more, the fortification can't be built, and the players or the GM must wait for a new domain turn (or for 1 week to pass if not engaged in intrigue) before they can try again.

## MUSTERING UNITS

A domain's officer can use a domain action during intrigue to muster a new unit. The Operations skill covers this activity, though an Operations test is normally not required unless the GM feels there's a chance that the mustering might fail. This new unit belongs to the officer who mustered it. An officer can control a number of units equal to their proficiency bonus.

The units an officer musters can be from any ancestry the GM agrees that character has access to, and which conform to the rules for unit dependency. (See **Building an Army** on page 100 in the **Warfare** chapter for information on ancestries, unit dependency, and much more.)

Units mustered through alliances and Diplomacy tests are controlled by a character but not owned by that character. They return to their home NPC realm after the battle in which they are used.

### MODIFYING UNITS

A domain can spend money to upgrade a unit's equipment from light to medium, medium to heavy, and so forth. This requires a domain action and is considered a use of the Operations skill, but normally no Operations test is required. A domain can upgrade as many units as are controlled by the officer using a domain action. Upgrades to a unit can be made to any level a domain can afford, from light to super-heavy.

| Upgrade from...      | Cost                            |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Light to medium      | 500 gp × the tier of the unit   |
| Medium to heavy      | 1,000 gp × the tier of the unit |
| Heavy to super-heavy | 2,000 gp × the tier of the unit |

A domain cannot upgrade a unit that was mustered through alliances and other Diplomacy checks. Likewise, levies cannot have their gear upgraded. Upgraded units retain their original tier.

### DISBANDING UNITS

Eventually, a domain will max out the number of units it controls, making it impossible to muster any new units. When this happens, a domain can disband any number of units to free up space

in its army. This isn't an action, but is simply an order an officer can issue under the umbrella of the Operations skill. The domain does not regain any money spent on equipment upgrades for units that are disbanded.

## SPECIAL UNITS

Every type of domain has an action it can use to summon a special unit consisting of rare and powerful creatures. These include such units as the Crew, a unique group of roguish heroes that an underworld syndicate organization can muster; the drake-mounted knights known as the Praetores Draconis, mustered by a draconic empire realm; and many more. See **Heroic Organizations** (page 31) and **NPC Realms** (page 65) later in this chapter for full details.

A domain can muster a special unit once per intrigue. If an attempt to muster a special unit fails, additional attempts can be made in the same intrigue until successful. When the battle in which a special unit is used ends, the unit leaves the control of the domain, heading off on important business, returning to its home plane, and so forth. A special unit can be mustered again during a new intrigue, responding when duty calls.

A domain can make use of other special units in addition to the unit it can muster, by making use of the Diplomacy domain skill (as discussed earlier in this chapter). By talking to the leaders of NPC realms, the players (and their enemies) can see if those realms are willing to lend their own special units for a battle.

## BEYOND INTRIGUE

The Operations domain skill covers many mundane activities outside of intrigue, including building roads or watchtowers, sending out a unit of scouts to explore the local wilderness, and so forth. Anything a domain might reasonably be able to do but which isn't covered by another domain skill can be accomplished using Operations.

## DOMAIN DEFENSES

Every domain has three defenses, all of which can be targeted by an opposing domain: **Communications**, **Resolve**, and **Resources**. Defenses operate at one of seven levels, each of which has

a name and a numerical rating from 3 to -3. A defense's level represents how robust and functional that defense is at any given moment. Each defense also has a numerical score used as the DC for the domain skill test of an opposed domain wanting to sabotage that defense.

At each level above normal (level 0), the level benefits for a defense are cumulative with the levels below. For example, if a domain's Communications levels are unbreakable (level 3), that domain gains all the bonuses for secure, coded, and unbreakable Communications. Similarly, at each level below normal (level 0), the level penalties for a defense are cumulative with the levels above.

At the beginning of intrigue, all of a domain's defenses start at level 0. The players and the GM can use domain actions during intrigue to raise the level of a domain's defenses or to lower the levels of an opposed domain's defenses (see **Adjusting Defense Levels** on page 19). The level of any defense cannot be increased above 3 or decreased below -3.

Once intrigue ends, and after any final battle between the characters' organization and the villainous realm is over, the defense levels of both domains slowly return to normal, moving one step closer to 0 each week.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications defense is a measure of how rapidly and accurately information is transmitted between a domain's officers and followers. Every domain, from a hard-as-nails mercenary company to a grove of peaceful druids, relies on its network of followers, retainers, and servants to accomplish its goals. And without effective communications, those goals can easily break down.

Communications directly affects an army's ability to coordinate its activities. When Communications is high, an army can efficiently maneuver into a better starting deployment—the arrangement of units under the warfare rules. (See the **Warfare** chapter for more information.) If Communications is poor or compromised, a domain's enemies know what its officers and agents are doing, and can interfere with deployment by sending false signals to the domain's units.

## COMMUNICATIONS LEVELS

| Level | Effect      |
|-------|-------------|
| 3     | Unbreakable |
| 2     | Coded       |
| 1     | Secure      |
| 0     | Normal      |
| -1    | Compromised |
| -2    | Garbled     |
| -3    | Broken      |

**Unbreakable (3).** At the end of the next deployment, this domain chooses any allied infantry or artillery unit on the battlefield, then moves that unit to any unoccupied space on the battlefield.

**Coded (2).** At the end of the next deployment, this domain chooses two allied units in any rank on the battlefield and swaps those units' locations.

**Secure (1).** At the end of the next deployment, this domain chooses an allied unit in any rank and moves that unit into any adjacent space.

**Normal (0).** No effect.

**Compromised (-1).** At the end of the next deployment, the opposed domain chooses one of this domain's units in any rank on the battlefield and moves it into any adjacent space.

**Garbled (-2).** At the end of the next deployment, the opposed domain chooses one of this domain's cavalry units, which is removed from battle and does not deploy until the end of the first round of battle.

**Broken (-3).** At the end of the next deployment, the opposed domain chooses two of this domain's infantry units, which are removed from battle and do not deploy until the end of the first round of battle.

## RESOLVE

Resolve measures the commitment that the followers of a domain have to its cause, and depends on many factors—including how well those followers understand the domain's cause. A domain's followers and army, by default, share the philosophy of the domain's officers and leaders, whatever that philosophy is. For example, the followers of an arcane order domain value neutrality and knowledge, while the soldiers of a despotic regime domain

revel in the glory and victories produced by their iron-fisted leaders.

A domain's Resolve has a direct effect on its officers. If everyone working for the domain is committed and engaged, it makes training easier and gives followers hope and confidence in victory. But the reverse is equally true. If everyone working for a domain is convinced of the domain's imminent failure, it makes training more exhausting and affects officer confidence. High Resolve means that a domain's officers are energized, coordinated, and convinced of victory, granting benefits to those officers in combat against the officers of an opposed domain. Poor resolve means that officers are distracted and tired, and their performance against foes from an opposed domain will suffer.

## RESOLVE LEVELS

| Level | Effect       |
|-------|--------------|
| 3     | Zealous      |
| 2     | Fanatic      |
| 1     | Loyal        |
| 0     | Normal       |
| -1    | Discontented |
| -2    | Rebellious   |
| -3    | Revolt       |

**Zealous (3).** During any combat against officers of an opposed domain, each of this domain's officers has advantage on attack rolls until the end of their first turn.

**Fanatic (2).** As a reaction when an enemy starts their turn during the first round of any combat against officers of an opposed domain, one of this domain's officers who has not yet acted can cast a spell or make a weapon attack.

**Loyal (1).** The speed of each of this domain's officers increases by 10 feet during the first round of any combat against officers of an opposed domain.

**Normal (0).** No effect.

**Discontented (-1).** The speed of each of this domain's officers decreases by 5 feet during the first round of any combat against officers of an opposed domain.

**Rebellious (-2).** During any combat against officers of an opposed domain, the first saving throw

made by one of this domain's officers against a spell or effect directed by an enemy has disadvantage.

**Revolt (-3).** The first attack roll made by each of this domain's officers during any combat against officers of an opposed domain has disadvantage.

## RESOURCES

The wealth of a domain is measured as Resources, though this defense represents more than just money. Resources includes whatever a domain values and collects, whether gold, knowledge, secrets, or things more esoteric. When a domain's Resources is high, it directly affects the gear of that domain's units, granting them improved power or damage. Poor Resources affects morale. Troops that haven't been fed or whose armor and weapons are in dire need of repair become agitated.

### RESOURCES LEVELS

| Level | Effect   |
|-------|----------|
| 3     | Booming  |
| 2     | Abundant |
| 1     | Surplus  |
| 0     | Normal   |
| -1    | Low      |
| -2    | Poor     |
| -3    | Bankrupt |

**Booming (3).** During the first round of battle, each of this domain's artillery units that inflicts casualties inflicts 1 extra casualty.

**Abundant (2).** Each of this domain's cavalry units has advantage on Power tests until the end of the first round of battle.

**Surplus (1).** Each of this domain's infantry units has advantage on Power tests until the end of the first round of battle.

**Normal (0).** No effect.

**Low (-1).** Each of this domain's artillery units has disadvantage on Morale and Command tests until the end of the first round of battle.

**Poor (-2).** Each of this domain's cavalry and aerial units has disadvantage on Morale and Command tests until the end of the first round of battle.

**Bankrupt (-3).** Each of the domain's infantry units has disadvantage on Morale and Command tests until the end of the first round of battle.

## DOMAIN SIZE

Size determines how far a domain's power extends, and the size of the power die used by the domain's officers. Size is a relative measure of the reach and influence of a domain, though not an absolute measure of an area of land the domain controls. In one GM's campaign, where the map covers a whole region hundreds of miles across, a size 3 domain might extend its influence for 60 miles out from its stronghold. In another campaign that takes place entirely in one district in a large city, a size 3 domain might cover only a few blocks.

An organization starts at size 1 if the characters are its founders (but might start at a larger size if the GM has the characters take over an established organization). **Every time the characters' organization defeats another domain, the organization's domain size increases by 1.** The size of the organization's power die likewise increases, and the organization gains more development points to spend on the party sheet, as shown on the Domain Size table. (See **Development Points** earlier in this chapter for more information.)

A domain cannot have a size greater than 5. However, at the GM's discretion, an organization of domain size 5 can still continue to gain new development points by defeating villainous realms.

Villainous realms are not built the same way the characters' organization is. The size of a villainous realm is thus determined by the GM. (See **Building a Villainous Realm** on page 28 for full information.)

### DOMAIN SIZE

| Domain Size | Power Die | Development Points  |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1           | d4        | 8 (starting points) |
| 2           | d6        | +8                  |
| 3           | d8        | +8                  |
| 4           | d10       | +8                  |
| 5           | d12       | +8                  |



## DOMAIN POWERS

Domain powers represent the new features that a domain's officers earn as a result of the research and training they do with their agents. The officers of a thieves' guild work and train with their bravos and apprentice thieves, and as a result, become better at what they themselves do. Likewise, the stewards of a druid circle spend time between adventures studying, tending to nature, and training their acolytes, and so gain greater insight into the summoning of nature spirits.

Each type of domain—both heroic organizations and NPC realms—grants a number of unique domain powers, whose mechanics are broken out in the domain type's description. But all domain powers rely on the use of a shared resource—a pool of power dice.

## POWER DICE

Each officer in a domain—player characters and the villain and lieutenants of an opposed domain alike—gets one power die, with the die type determined by the domain's size (see above). Any officer can choose to roll their power die immediately after they roll initiative at the start of any combat (no action required). Once a power die is rolled, it cannot be rolled again until the officer who rolled it finishes an extended rest. (An extended rest is defined in *Strongholds & Followers* as 1 week of study and training spent at the stronghold of the officer's domain. The GM might use this as a guideline, or set some other parameters for what an extended rest means in the campaign.)

Each domain power allows the officers in the player characters' organization to use some or all of the dice in their shared pool to produce crazy new



effects in combat. At the same time, the officers of a villainous realm will use their own domain powers and power dice to fuel their domain's push for victory over the characters.

Any power dice that aren't used are removed from a domain's pool at the end of the combat in which they were rolled.

For example, Anna, Lars, Grace, and Tom are playing the officers in a thieves' guild (one of the options for an underworld syndicate organization; see page 61). They're just starting out, so each of their characters has a d4 power die. In a fight against a local enemy thieves' guild (an NPC realm) known as the Clock, Lars waits until initiative is determined, and decides to roll his power die, getting a 3. He adds this to the empty pool on the party sheet.

Following suit, the other officers, including officers of the Clock, all decide to roll their power dice. Anna rolls a 4, Tom a 1, and Grace another 4, all of which are added to their pool. The heroes' pool now has four dice in it: a 1, a 3, and two 4s. Whichever hero acts first can take any or all of those dice out of the pool, depending on which domain power they intend to use.

Rolling power dice together in the same combat provides a potential benefit by increasing the number of dice in the pool, and increased chances of high rolls. But some players might want to not roll their power dice, so as to save them for another upcoming combat. Likewise, the GM might decide to not roll power dice even when the players are, if they think their villainous officers will face the characters again before everyone has time to take an extended rest.

## DECREMENTING

When a player or GM activates a domain power, the rules for that power sometimes instruct them to decrement the power die, usually at the end of each turn of the character who used the power. Decrementing the power die means to decrease the number on the die by 1. When a power die showing a 1 is decremented, the die is spent and the power activated with that die is no longer in effect.

If a domain power that calls for decrementing a power die has been used and is currently active on an officer, that power cannot be activated again for the same officer until the power die being decremented is spent.

## VILLAINOUS AND NPC REALMS

The player characters' enemies also run their own domains, known as villainous realms. A villainous realm is run by a **leader**, whose chief agents are known as **lieutenants**. Leaders and lieutenants are the domain's officers, and are referred to specifically by certain domain features.

## BUILDING A VILLAINOUS REALM

The GM builds villainous realms in much the same way the players build the characters' organization. However, the process for the GM has more options, and allows for the creation of a domain that is larger than the size 1 domain the characters must start with. GMs can establish realms at the start of the campaign or at any point within it, and NPC and villainous realms can rise, fall, and evolve as the GM sees fit.

A GM builds a villainous realm using the following process:

- The GM picks a domain type from the **NPC Realms** section, or a domain and a specialization from the domain types presented in the **Heroic Organizations** section (both of which follow later in this chapter). This allows for the creation of nefarious holy churches, druid circles, and mercenary companies, in addition to the traditionally antagonistic realms of despotic regimes, fey courts, and others.
- The GM chooses the domain size of the villainous realm. In most cases, it's best to set the realm's size within 1 of the size of the characters' organization by the time both sides get into an intrigue.

- The GM spends development points improving the villainous realm's skills and defenses. The GM has a number of points to spend equal to  $8 \times$  the villainous realm's domain size.
- The GM picks stat blocks for the villainous realm's leader and lieutenants, and gives one of the domain's titles to the leader. (If the domain has been chosen from the **NPC Realms** section, it has only one title.) The lieutenants of the realm do not get titles (because the GM already has enough to worry about), but all officers might have access to the realm's domain powers and domain features.
- The GM picks a stronghold for the villainous realm.

For example, consider a group of heroes running a size 2 holy church. With that organization's latest foes vanquished, the GM wants to reveal the vampire Countess Sanguin's villainous realm, which has observed the characters' last battle from the shadows and wants to remove the threat their organization poses. The GM knows that Sanguin's servants include vampire spawn, wights, and other undead, so they make the villainous realm an undead dominion (page 86). Since Sanguin's domain has been established for some time, the GM makes it size 3. It poses a threat to the heroes' organization, but not an overwhelming one.

The GM then spends 24 development points to improve the undead dominion's domain skills and defenses, using the same party sheet the players use for the characters' domain. They choose the **vampire** stat block for Countess Sanguin and give her the deathlord title. The GM gives Sanguin three **vampire spawn** lieutenants and names each of them, then gives the undead dominion a stronghold: an ancient castle.

## BUILDING AN NPC REALM

Building an NPC realm is easier than building a heroic organization or a villainous realm, because NPC realms don't directly influence intrigue or battles. They might be persuaded by the characters' organization or the villainous realm to lend aid

during a battle, but the GM can easily set that up without finalizing all of an NPC realm's stats. (That said, a GM is free to flesh out any NPC realm with the same level of detail as a villainous realm—especially if the NPC realm has enemy potential!)

The baseline process for creating an NPC realm is as follows:

- As with creating a villainous realm, the GM picks either a domain and a specialization from the **Heroic Organizations** section or a domain from the **NPC Realms** section. This choice doesn't imply a specific role for the NPC realm, though, which might be friendly or antagonistic toward the characters' organization as the GM decides.
- The GM picks the NPC realm's starting attitude toward the characters' organization, using the table under **Diplomacy** in **Domain Skills** (page 20). This attitude should be based on the NPC realm's history not just with the characters, but also with domains similar to the characters' organization.
- The GM names the NPC realm's leader. This NPC doesn't necessarily need a stat block, but it helps to note a few details about their appearance and personality.
- The GM chooses the NPC realm's domain size (which need not bear any relationship to the size of the characters' organization), and picks a stronghold the NPC realm controls.
- The GM can freely swap out the special unit the NPC realm can normally muster with a special unit from another domain. Perhaps a fey court of elves in the campaign has a roguish flair and is able to bring together the Crew (normally associated with an underworld syndicate domain) instead of the Court Jesters.

For example, consider a GM who wants to create a domain of secluded stone giants living in the mountains near the characters' stronghold. The GM begins with the giant jarldom NPC realm and gives the isolationist giants a suspicious attitude toward the characters. Smallfolk warred with the giants centuries ago, and while the humanoids

might have forgotten that past, the stone remembers. The stone giants are led by Jarl Klanga. She's young and defensive minded, after her parents died in the same landslide that resulted in her losing an arm. The GM decides the realm doesn't hold much influence given their isolationist nature, and gives it a size of 1. The domain has a stronghold: a mountain fortress called Citadel Adamantine.

## CREATING NPC REALMS TOGETHER

In a campaign in which the GM enjoys letting the players join in on the fun of setting creation, it can be cool to let each of the players design an NPC realm for the GM to use. The GM can assign each of the players a domain size and an attitude that their NPC realm has toward the characters' organization, then let them determine the rest of the details. The players get in on the fun of building the easiest type of domain, and the GM has to do less work. Win-win!

### RESKINNING DOMAINS

GMs might find that their worlds include a villainous or NPC domain that's not an automatic fit for any of the concepts this book provides. For example, consider a campaign that features a powerful faction of gnolls. Even though there's no NPC realm set up as a gnoll war band, there's almost certainly another domain that fits. If the gnolls are proud warriors, the GM can use the orc clan domain and call it something else. If the gnolls are religious zealots, their domain could be built as a hidden cult religious order. Or for gnolls with a culture of invention and innovation, the gnomish kingdom might be a perfect fit!

Likewise, GMs shouldn't feel locked into building NPC realms based on ancestry. The goblinoid realm in a campaign doesn't have to be a goblinoid coalition domain. The GM can make it an arcane order, a despotic regime, an undersea colony, or whatever makes sense for their world.





# Heroic Organizations



When a group of characters founds a domain, the players choose one of the eight organization types described in this section. Each organization features three specializations that the players also

choose from, creating a wide range of possibilities for the heroes' domain.

Though this section is primarily for player characters, and is written to speak to the players, a GM can also use the domains presented in this section to create enemy and NPC realms.

## GAINING NEW PROFICIENCIES

If a character gains a proficiency from a domain title that they already gain from another source, that character can take another proficiency of the same kind (skill or tool) instead.

## ADVENTURING PARTY

Mercenaries. Troubleshooters. Rag-tag heroes trying to get by—except “heroes” might not be quite the right word. Your characters have banded together as an adventuring party, a haphazard group of individuals traveling the realm with a common goal. Though you might not be the most diplomatic or noble of groups, you get the job done when it counts. It just might be a bit ... messy.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** -1

**Espionage:** +0

**Lore:** +1

**Operations:** +2

### Defenses

**Communications:** 11

**Resolve:** 12

**Resources:** 10

## DOMAIN TITLES

Adventuring party officers gain access to the following titles, each of which grants a character the noted additional features.

**Cap'n.** You add your proficiency bonus to your initiative rolls. Additionally, when you hit a creature with an attack, each ally who can hear you and is within 5 feet of you gains a bonus to weapon damage rolls against the target creature equal to half your proficiency bonus (rounded down). This bonus lasts until the start of your next turn.

**Doc.** You gain proficiency in the Medicine skill and proficiency with an herbalism kit. Whenever you take a long rest, you can craft two *potions of healing* during the rest using the supplies in an herbalism kit. Potions created this way are effective only if consumed within 24 hours of their creation.

**Know-It-All.** You gain proficiency in the History and Nature skills. Additionally, as a reaction when you roll initiative, you can make an Intelligence (Nature) check to identify the weak points of one creature you can see. The DC for this check is equal to 10 + half the creature's challenge rating (rounded down). On a success, you gain a bonus to attack rolls against that creature equal to your proficiency bonus, and which lasts for 1 minute.

**Smart Mouth.** You gain proficiency in the Intimidation and Persuasion skills. Additionally, you can try to catch an enemy off-guard at the start of combat with your quips. As a reaction when a hostile creature you can see rolls initiative,

you reduce that creature's initiative by a number equal to your Charisma modifier.

**Weirdo.** You gain proficiency in the Arcana skill, and you know a number of spells equal to your Intelligence modifier. These spells can be from any spell list, but they must be 3rd level or lower and have the ritual tag. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells. You can cast each of these spells once as a ritual, and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest.

Additionally, you can cast the *counterspell* spell, and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest.

## DOMAIN POWER

Adventuring party officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Never Tell Me the Odds.** When you take an action or a bonus action that forces at least one creature to make a saving throw, you can take a power die from your domain's pool and add twice the number on the die to the saving throw DC. You can use this feature after affected creatures have rolled their saving throws.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

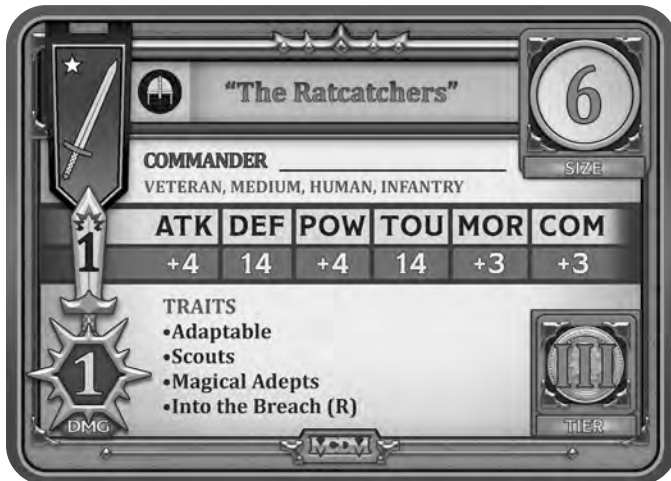
Adventuring party officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Call in a Favor.** As a domain bonus action, your adventuring party can petition an NPC realm for their domain special unit. Make a Diplomacy test targeting the NPC realm, with a DC determined by the realm's attitude toward your domain as shown on the following table.

| Attitude   | Diplomacy DC |
|------------|--------------|
| Hostile    | 18           |
| Suspicious | 15           |
| Neutral    | 13           |
| Friendly   | 10           |
| Allied     | 8            |

**To Arms, Fellow Adventurers (Special Unit).** As a domain action, you make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, you muster the

*The Ratcatchers unit card*



Ratcatchers—a special unit of adventurers just like you! (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

## SPECIALIZATION

When you found your adventuring party, you'll also choose a specialization. Are you an explorers' society, dedicated to seeking out the unseen frontiers of the world? Are you a mercenary company, completing dangerous jobs for coin? Or maybe you're just a band of disorganized misfits, doing all you can to help those in need?

### DISORGANIZED MISFITS

You're ... well, you're trying your best. You might not be the most disciplined or most knowledgeable. You all fight a lot and rarely agree on anything. But you're hard to kill. More importantly, though, you all have good hearts, and you're willing to do whatever it takes to help those in need.

#### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Operations:** +1      **Resolve:** +1

### DOMAIN POWER

Disorganized misfits officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Avenge Me.** When an officer in your domain that you can see within 30 feet of you is reduced to 0 hit points by a creature, you can use your reaction to swear vengeance. Take any number of power dice from your domain's pool. You and each ally you can see within 30 feet of you gain a bonus to damage rolls against the creature that dropped your officer equal to the total of the power dice. This bonus lasts as long as the officer is dying or dead, or until the end of the encounter, whichever comes first.

### DOMAIN FEATURES

Disorganized misfits officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Like in the Great Stories.** As a domain action, you make a DC 14 Operations test. On a success, your domain's Resolve level increases by 2 until the end of the intrigue. Additionally, the next time an opposed domain makes a test to lower one of your domain defenses, the test is made with disadvantage.

**Whatever It Takes.** At the end of the next deployment, you can make a DC 15 Operations test as a domain bonus action. On a success, units deployed in your vanguard gain the following trait until the end of the battle:

**Walk It Off.** The first time this unit would become broken as a result of an inflicted casualty, the unit can make a DC 13 Morale test. On a success, the unit does not break this round, regardless of the number of casualties it suffers.

## EXPLORERS' SOCIETY

As the name suggests, your adventuring party is a band of explorers, dedicated to traversing uncharted forests and plumbing the depths of mysterious caverns in search of new discoveries.

#### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Lore:** +2

### DOMAIN POWER

Explorers' society officers gain access to the following domain power.

**What Does This Button Do?** Your curiosity gets the better of you as you explore. When you take the Use an Object action on your turn to interact with any object, you can also remove one power die from your domain's pool and trigger an effect. Roll a d10 and consult the Button Effects table to determine the nature of the effect.

### BUTTON EFFECTS

| d10 | Effect            | d10 | Effect            |
|-----|-------------------|-----|-------------------|
| 1   | Energy burst      | 6   | Magic investment  |
| 2   | Arcane surge      | 7   | Light blades      |
| 3   | Shadow infusion   | 8   | Energy shield     |
| 4   | Destructive force | 9   | Bold energy       |
| 5   | Weakening energy  | 10  | Rejuvenating aura |

**Energy Burst.** An overload of magical energy hits you, dealing force damage equal to 1d6 + the number on the power die.

**Arcane Surge.** You are infused with shimmering arcane energy. For 1 minute, all your attacks deal extra force damage equal to twice the number on the power die.



# ADVENTURING PARTY

## SKILLS

Diplomacy

Espionage

Lore

Operations

## THE POWER POOL

## DEFENSES

Size

Power Die

Communications

Resolve

Resources

## POWERS

**Never Tell Me the Odds.** When you take an action or a bonus action that forces at least one creature to make a saving throw, you can take a power die from your domain's pool and add twice the number on the die to the saving throw DC. You can use this feature after affected creatures have rolled their saving throws.

## FEATURES

**Call in a Favor.** As a domain bonus action, your adventuring party can petition an NPC realm for their domain special unit. Make a Diplomacy test targeting the NPC realm, with a DC determined by the realm's attitude toward your domain as shown in the following list: hostile: 18, suspicious: 15, neutral: 13, friendly: 10, allied: 8.

**To Arms, Fellow Adventurers (Special Unit).** As a domain action, you make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, you muster the Ratcatchers—a special unit of adventurers just like you! (See page 32 in *Kingdoms & Warfare* for this unit's card.)

Officer Reaction: ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P

|            |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Diplomacy  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Espionage  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Lore       | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Operations | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |

|                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Communications | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Resolve        | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Resources      | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |

**Shadow Infusion.** You are infused with shadowy arcane energy. For 1 hour, your hit point maximum is reduced by the number on the power die, but you gain a bonus to your attack and damage rolls equal to twice the number on the power die.

**Destructive Force.** A wave of destructive energy can be directed toward a foe. Choose a hostile creature within 30 feet of you. The creature takes necrotic damage equal to  $10 \times$  the number on the power die.

**Weakening Energy.** Enfeebling energy suddenly washes over you. For 1 minute, you have a penalty to saving throws equal to the number on the power die.

**Magic Investment.** Magical energy refines a gem or art object you carry, increasing its gp value by  $250 \times$  the number on the power die.

**Light Blades.** Magic manifests around you as spinning blades of light. You and each creature within 30 feet of you must make a Dexterity saving throw with a DC equal to  $8 +$  the number on the power die. A creature takes radiant damage equal to  $1d4 \times$  the number on the power die on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success.

**Energy Shield.** Shielding energy surrounds you. For 1 minute, your AC increases by the number on the power die.

**Bold Energy.** Emboldening energy washes over you. You gain temporary hit points equal to  $5 \times$  the number on the power die.

**Rejuvenating Aura.** A rejuvenating aura spreads out around you. Choose a number of creatures equal to the number on the power die that you can see within 30 feet of you (including you if you choose). Each creature regains all its hit points.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Explorers' society officers gain access to the following domain features.

**I've Seen Weirder.** Your adventures have provided you a wealth of knowledge regarding the strange and arcane. If your domain's Communications level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, each unit your domain controls has advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic during that battle.

**Research, Research, Research.** If your time spent delving through dungeons has taught you anything, it's that it pays to know what you're

walking into. As a domain action, make a DC 16 Lore test. On a success, each of your domain's defense levels increases by 1 until the end of the current intrigue.

## MERCENARY COMPANY

You're a team of soldiers for hire, fighting the battles no one else wants to. For the right price, of course.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

Operations: +1

Resources: +1

## DOMAIN POWER

Mercenary company officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Fighting Dirty.** Before you make a weapon or spell attack, you can use a bonus action to target one of your opponent's vulnerable spots, making for a more challenging attack but dealing more damage. Take a power die from your domain's pool and subtract the number on the die from your attack roll. If the attack hits, it deals extra damage equal to  $5 \times$  the number on the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Mercenary company officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Can We Get a Raise?** As a domain action, make a DC 14 Operations test. On a success, choose one of the following benefits:

- Until the end of the next battle, each officer has a +1 bonus to weapon attack and damage rolls. (The GM can rule that this bonus ends if it takes too long for the next battle to happen.)
- The next time you muster a cavalry or artillery unit, you can also muster an additional two infantry units.
- Each infantry unit you muster from now until the start of the next battle has its experience increased one level.

You can use this feature multiple times per intrigue, but must pick a different benefit each time. The DC increases by 2 for each successive use.

**Survive Till Payday.** If your domain's Resolve level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, each unit your domain controls has advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic during that battle.

## MARTIAL REGIMENT

Armed to the teeth and with battle strength to match, your characters have come together to form a martial regiment. All of you are skilled warriors, willing to fight the battles others shirk from. And while your group might not always act as the most subtle of organizations, you are well-known for your tactical strategy and efficiency in combat.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +1

**Espionage:** +0

**Lore:** -1

**Operations:** +2

### Defenses

**Communications:** 12

**Resolve:** 11

**Resources:** 10

## DOMAIN TITLES

Martial regiment officers gain access to the following titles, each of which grants a character the noted additional features.

**Ambush Captain.** You gain proficiency in the Stealth skill, and you can use a bonus action to take the Hide action. Additionally, when you hit a creature with a weapon attack and have advantage on the attack roll, the attack deals one additional weapon die of damage.

**Bravura Commander.** You gain proficiency in the Persuasion skill. Additionally, when a creature within 30 feet of you that can hear you makes a saving throw to avoid being charmed, frightened, or stunned, you can use your reaction to roll a d4 and add the result to the creature's saving throw. You use this reaction after the saving throw is made but before the result is known.

**Field Medic.** You gain proficiency in the Medicine skill. Additionally, when a creature within 5 feet of you takes damage, you can use your reaction to make a Wisdom (Medicine) check. The DC of the check is equal to half the damage taken by the creature or 10, whichever is higher. On a success, the creature regains a number of hit points equal to



# MARTIAL REGIMENT

## SKILLS

## THE Power Pool

## DEFENSES

Diplomacy

Espionage

Lore

Operations

Size

Power Die

Communications

Resolve

Resources

## POWERS

**Brute Force.** When a creature you can see within 60 feet of you moves, you can use your reaction to take any number of power dice from your domain's pool and make one weapon attack against the creature. Add the total of the power dice to the attack roll, and to the damage roll if the attack hits.

## FEATURES

**Armament.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, make a DC 15 Operations test. On a success, your domain's Resolve level cannot be lower than 0 for the remainder of the intrigue.

**The Professionals (Special Unit).** As a domain action, make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, you muster the Professionals, a special unit of heroic infantry. (See page 38 in *Kingdoms & Warfare* for this unit's card.)

Officer Reaction: ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P

|            |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Diplomacy  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Espionage  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Lore       | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Operations | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |

|                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Communications | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Resolve        | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Resources      | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |



5 + your character level, to a maximum of half the creature's hit point maximum.

**Tactical Marshal.** Your speed increases by 10 feet, you gain a +3 bonus to your passive Wisdom (Perception) score, and difficult terrain no longer impedes your movement. Additionally, as a bonus action, you can choose one creature within 60 feet of you that can hear you. That creature can immediately move up to half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**War Mage.** You gain proficiency in the Arcana skill. As a bonus action, you can charge one melee weapon you are holding with magical energy. Choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, lightning, radiant, or necrotic. While charged in this way, the weapon is magical and deals an extra 1d4 damage of the chosen type. This benefit lasts for 1 minute, or until you either end it as a bonus action or stop touching the weapon.

Additionally, when you hit a creature or object with a weapon charged in this way, you can cast *dispel magic* from the weapon to affect the target. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for the spell. You can't cast the spell again in this way until you finish a long rest.

## DOMAIN POWER

Martial regiment officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Brute Force.** When a creature you can see within 60 feet of you moves, you can use your reaction to take any number of power dice from your

domain's pool and make one weapon attack against the creature. Add the total of the power dice to the attack roll, and to the damage roll if the attack hits.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Martial regiment officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Armament.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, make a DC 15 Operations test. On a success, your domain's Resolve level cannot be lower than 0 for the remainder of the intrigue.

**The Professionals (Special Unit).** As a domain action, make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, you muster the Professionals, a special unit of heroic infantry. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

## SPECIALIZATION

When you found your martial regiment, you'll also choose a specialization. Are you a localized regiment, keeping your homes safe as members of a city watch? Are you members of a military squadron, striking as a crew of highly skilled experts on the most dangerous battlefields? Or are you perhaps a knightly order, united by your dedication to a creed or religion?

### CITY WATCH

You might not be the best trained or most efficient of soldiers. But as members of a city watch, you are dedicated to protecting the place you call home—no matter the cost.

*The Professionals unit card*



### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Communications:** +1 **Resources:** +1

### DOMAIN POWER

City watch officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Steel Resolve.** When you fail a saving throw to avoid being charmed, frightened, knocked prone, paralyzed, poisoned, or stunned, you can take a power die from your domain's pool and add the number on the power die to your saving throw.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

City watch officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Community Effort.** Once per intrigue as a domain reaction in response to failing a Diplomacy test, you can immediately make an Operations test with a DC equal to 5 + half the DC of the Diplomacy test (rounded down). On a success, you treat the failed Diplomacy test as a success.

**They Will Not Breach This Wall.** As a domain action, make a DC 15 Operations test. On a success, you gain the resources to bolster your city's defenses. At the start of the next battle, each fortification you're defending gains additional hit points equal to your domain's Resolve level.

## KNIGHTLY ORDER

Knightly orders are composed of warriors united under a single ideal. Some have religious ties, while others ascribe to more abstract creeds not bound to any church. Regardless of its members' affiliation, though, every knightly order delineates a certain sense of honor and pride.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Diplomacy: +1**      **Resolve: +1**

## DOMAIN POWER

Knightly order officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Sworn to Protect.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool and add the number on the die to your AC. Additionally, allied creatures within 15 feet of you gain a bonus to saving throws equal to the number on the power die. At the end of each of your turns, decrement the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Knightly order officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Gallant Company.** As a domain action, make a DC 12 Diplomacy test targeting an NPC realm. On a success, the NPC realm's attitude toward your domain improves one step and any special units mustered from that realm gain a +2 bonus to Defense and Morale in the next battle in which

they are used. Your domain can use this feature only once on each NPC realm during an intrigue.

**Stay Strong.** If your domain's Resolve level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, each cavalry unit your domain controls automatically succeeds on Morale tests for the Rally maneuver during that battle.

## MILITARY SQUADRON

As members of a military squadron, you are an archetypal team of soldiers. Though you can be discreet when missions call for it, your main focus is always on honing your deadly and precise skills in combat.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Espionage: +1**      **Operations: +1**

## DOMAIN POWER

Military squadron officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Skirmisher.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool. Your speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 × the number on the die. While your speed is increased in this way, your movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks, and you gain a bonus to weapon damage rolls equal to the number on the power die. At the end of each of your turns, decrement the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Military squadron officers gain access to the following domain features.

**No Mercy.** If your domain's Communications level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, all your infantry units gain the following trait until the end of the battle:

**Take No Prisoners.** When this unit makes an attack that causes an opposed unit to break, the unit can make one additional attack against any adjacent unit.

**The War Room Where It Happens.** As a domain action, make an Operations test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the opposed domain has disadvantage on tests made to increase its Communications level for the remainder of the intrigue.

## MERCANTILE GUILD

Your characters' organization is built on the back of economic prosperity, whether you acquire income from producing, selling, or plundering goods. You might be merchants, artisans, or pirates, looking to expand and defend your empire of industry, and with a network of agents ready to battle for profit.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +1

**Espionage:** +0

**Lore:** -1

**Operations:** +2

### Defenses

**Communications:** 11

**Resolve:** 10

**Resources:** 12

## DOMAIN TITLES

Mercantile guild officers gain access to the following titles, each of which grants a character the noted additional features.

**Acquisitions Expert.** You gain proficiency in the Arcana skill. Additionally, if you are unable to cast spells of 1st level or higher (either because you have no spellcasting ability, you have expended all your spell slots, or you have used all your innate spells), you can cast the following spells using Intelligence as your spellcasting ability:

At will: *detect magic*, *identify*

3/day each: *charm person*, *comprehend languages*,  
*unseen servant*

1/day each: *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*





**Chief of Security.** When a creature within 5 feet of you makes an attack against a target other than you, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature. If the attack hits, it deals extra damage equal to your proficiency bonus.

**Executive Manager.** When a creature within 5 feet of you misses with an attack or fails a saving throw, you can use your reaction to roll a d4 and add the roll to the attack roll or saving throw.

**Fixer.** You gain proficiency in the Stealth skill. Additionally, you can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Safety Officer.** While you are not unconscious, you and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you have advantage on saving throws against being frightened. Additionally, as a bonus action, choose an ally you can see within 30 feet of you. That ally regains hit points equal to 1d4 + your domain size. You can use this feature a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum one).

## DOMAIN POWER

Mercantile guild officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Outgunned.** When you miss with an attack, you can take a power die from your domain's pool and add twice the number on the die to your attack roll. Alternatively, when you hit with an attack, you can take a power die from your domain's pool and add the number on the die to the attack's damage roll.

*Soldiers of Fortune unit card*



## DOMAIN FEATURES

Mercantile guild officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Soldiers of Fortune (Special Unit).** Make a DC 13 Operations test as a domain action. On a success, you muster the Soldiers of Fortune, a highly professional (and very expensive) special unit of mercenaries. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Spared No Expense.** At the start of a battle, you can use a domain reaction to make a DC 14 Operations test. On a success, increase the levels of two of your domain's defenses by 1.

## SPECIALIZATION

When you found your mercantile guild, you'll also choose a specialization. Are you a monopoly, looking to not just dominate but to own an entire industry? Are you a pirate band, sailing the seas looking for loot and plunder? Or perhaps you're a trade guild—a group of artisans banded together to establish the best business deals and working conditions?

### MONOPOLY

Your organization seeks to dominate the market, squashing any resistance you encounter. As such, you invest in making your enterprise the only option, letting your expansionist views force prospective competition to fold into your ranks or fight you to survive. Depending on your market, you might be viewed as an evil corporation or a force of positive change. But at the end of the day, your organization is going to come out on top.

#### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Espionage: +1**

**Resources: +1**

### DOMAIN POWER

Monopoly officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Action Plan.** On your turn, you can take a power die from your domain's pool, then take one additional action. You can add the number on the power die to one attack roll or ability check made

# MERCANTILE GUILD

## SKILLS

Diplomacy

Espionage

Lore

Operations

## THE POWER POOL

## DEFENSES

Size

Power Die

Communications

Resolve

Resources

## POWERS

**Outgunned.** When you miss with an attack, you can take a power die from your domain's pool and add twice the number on the die to your attack roll. Alternatively, when you hit with an attack, you can take a power die from your domain's pool and add the number on the die to the attack's damage roll.

## FEATURES

**Soldiers of Fortune (Special Unit).** Make a DC 13 Operations test as a domain action. On a success, you muster the Soldiers of Fortune, a highly professional (and very expensive) special unit of mercenaries. (See page 41 in *Kingdoms & Warfare* for this unit's card.)

**Spared No Expense.** At the start of a battle, you can use a domain reaction to make a DC 14 Operations test. On a success, increase the levels of two of your domain's defenses by 1.

Officer Reaction: ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P

|            |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |
|------------|----|----|----|----|--|----|--|----|
| Diplomacy  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  | +4 |
| Espionage  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  | +4 |
| Lore       | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  | +4 |
| Operations | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  | +4 |

|                |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|
| Communications | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |
| Resolve        | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |
| Resources      | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |

as part of that action, or increase the DC of a spell cast during the action by the number on the die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Monopoly officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Corporate Espionage.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the opposed domain has disadvantage on Espionage tests until the end of the intrigue, and your domain's Communications level increases by 1.

**Embargo.** At the start of a battle, if your domain's Resources level is 2 or higher, choose a number of infantry units an opposed domain controls equal to your domain size. Each of those units takes -2 to Attack and Defense until the end of the battle.

## PIRATE BAND

You are a pirate band, robbing others of their goods to be resold as you see fit. Though you might ally yourselves with other pirate crews, follow a code of conduct, or work for governments as a privateer, the members of your band are truly beholden only to yourselves. Whatever the reasons you adopted a life of piracy, your organization is viewed with caution wherever you travel.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Espionage:** +1      **Resolve:** +1

## DOMAIN POWER

Pirate band officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Pillage.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool and choose a power die in the opposed domain's pool showing a higher number than the die you took. Add the opposed die to your domain's pool.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Pirate band officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Commandeer.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the

opposed domain's Resources level decreases by 1, and your domain's Resources level increases by 1.

**Fight Dirty.** If your domain's Resources level is 2 or higher at the end of deployment, choose a number of infantry or artillery units equal to your domain size. Each of those units gets a surprise activation before the battle goes into initiative. After this activation concludes, the battle plays out as normal.

## TRADE GUILD

You oversee a network of like-minded artisans who pool their interests together for maximum potential. You might own businesses, or you could facilitate the businesses of others. Whatever the case, you have many skilled individuals investing in your organization to protect their own interests. While a trade guild might seem harmless to a casual observer, the number of resources at your disposal can summon a threat to rival any ruling body.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Diplomacy:** +1      **Resources:** +1

## DOMAIN POWER

Trade guild officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Healthcare.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool. You immediately spend and roll a number of your Hit Dice equal to the number on the power die, regaining hit points equal to the total of Hit Dice rolled.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Trade guild officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Business Connections.** Once per intrigue, you can make a DC 13 Diplomacy test as a domain bonus action. On a success, all of your domain's officers begin the next combat against an opposed domain's officers with their hit point maximum and current hit points increased by  $5 \times$  your domain size. This benefit disappears at the end of the combat.

**Well Fed.** As a domain action, make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, each of your infantry units gains a bonus to Morale equal to your domain size until the end of the next battle.

# MYSTIC CIRCLE

Your organization is an association of arcane practitioners whose agents include wizards, sorcerers, scribes, and sages. Not all your associates cast magic—your order needs guards and spies as much as anyone else—but every member of your mystic circle respects the power of the magical arts. The collections of scrolls and tomes in your libraries contain knowledge that others seek, and unearthing the secrets of your enemies isn't so different from uncovering forbidden spells.

## Skills

**Diplomacy:** +0

**Espionage:** +1

**Lore:** +2

**Operations:** -1

## Defenses

**Communications:** 12

**Resolve:** 10

**Resources:** 11

## DOMAIN TITLES

Mystic circle officers gain access to the following titles, each of which grants a character the noted additional features.

**Augur.** You have a second sight that grants you limited precognition. You add your Intelligence modifier to your initiative rolls. Additionally, if you and any of your allies within 60 feet of you are surprised when you roll initiative, you can choose for you and your allies to not be surprised, and for a number of enemies equal to the number of characters in your party to be surprised instead. You must finish a long rest before you can use this feature again.

**Bewitcher.** You have advantage on Charisma (Performance) checks. At the end of a long rest, choose one enchantment or illusion spell you can cast that requires concentration. That spell does not require concentration until the end of your next long rest.

**Medium.** When learning or preparing spells, all necromancy spells are available to you, regardless of whether they are on your class's spell list.

Additionally, you can channel the waning life force of a dying creature to aid an ally. When a creature you can see with a challenge rating of 1 or higher dies within 60 feet of you, another creature of your choice that you can see within 60 feet of you regains hit points equal to  $1d4 \times$  the dead creature's challenge rating.



# DEFENSES

## Resources

# POWERS

Alternatively, as a bonus action, you can take a power die from your domain's pool and charge one weapon you are holding with magical energy. Choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, or lightning. Until the start of your next turn, the weapon deals extra damage of the chosen type equal to the number on the power die.

## FEATURES

**Unravel Sorcery.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, you can make a Lore test against an opposed domain's Communications to learn about the magical abilities of one of that domain's officers. On a success, you learn what spells the target knows and has prepared, and you have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects used by that officer until the end of the intrigue.

**Officer Reaction:** \_\_\_\_\_ R P \_\_\_\_\_ R P \_\_\_\_\_ R P \_\_\_\_\_ R P \_\_\_\_\_ R P \_\_\_\_\_ R P \_\_\_\_\_ R P

|                |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|
| Communications | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |
| Resolve        | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |
| Resources      | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |

**Shade.** You gain proficiency in the Stealth skill. While in darkness or dim light, you can turn invisible as an action. Anything you wear or carry is invisible as long as it is on your person. This invisibility ends after 1 hour or if you enter an area of bright light. You must finish a long rest before you can use this feature again.

**Spellsword.** You gain proficiency with martial weapons. Whenever you hit a creature with a melee attack, you reduce that creature's speed to 0 until the start of your next turn.

## DOMAIN POWER

Mystic circle officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Universal Energy Field.** As an action, take a power die from your domain's pool and recover a number of spell slots with a combined level equal to the number on the power die. None of the slots you recover can be 6th level or higher.

Alternatively, as a bonus action, you can take a power die from your domain's pool and charge one weapon you are holding with magical energy. Choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, or lightning. Until the start of your next turn, the weapon deals extra damage of the chosen type equal to the number on the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Mystic circle officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Forgotten Rite of Animation (Special Unit).** As a domain action, make a DC 13 Lore test. On a success, your domain's spellcasters weave an ancient spell to create a special unit of magical constructs called an Ersatz Infantry. These constructs could be golems, animated suits of armor, or clockwork soldiers. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Unravel Sorcery.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, you can make a Lore test against an opposed domain's Communications to learn about the magical abilities of one of that domain's officers. On a success, you learn what spells the target knows and has prepared, and you have advantage on saving throws against spells

and other magical effects used by that officer until the end of the intrigue.

## SPECIALIZATION

When you found your mystic circle, you'll also choose a specialization. Are you an arcane order, tirelessly seeking answers to the mysteries of the universe? Are you a secret cabal, hiding your dark schemes from the world? Or are you a theatrical troupe, using the art of magic to enhance your performances?

### ARCANE ORDER

You are a public institution of magic, seeking to expand the understanding of the cosmic forces which ebb and flow through reality. You might be an arcane academy, a great library, or an assembly of notorious mages. Local lords approach you for counsel, unless you prefer to stay neutral in mundane affairs.

#### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Lore:** +1

**Resources:** +1

### DOMAIN POWER

Arcane order officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Your Staff is Broken.** As an action, take any number of power dice from your domain's pool and target an enemy spellcaster. That caster must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw against a DC equal to the total of the power dice or lose the ability to cast spells in any way for 24 hours.

*Ersatz Infantry unit card*





This power doesn't break the target's concentration on a spell already cast, or prevent the target from taking actions that are part of an ongoing spell that the target has already cast (such as *call lightning*).

### DOMAIN FEATURES

Arcane order officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Find True Name.** As a domain action, you make a Lore test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, you learn the true name of one of that domain's spellcasting officers of the GM's choice, and during the next combat with them, that officer has disadvantage on saving throws against the Your Staff is Broken domain power.

**Midnight Oil.** If you prepare spells and you succeed on any Lore test made as a domain action, you can then use a domain reaction to make a DC 12 Lore test. On a success, the number of spells that all officers of your domain are able to prepare the day of the next battle increases by 1.

**Wards of Protection Against Missiles.** If your domain's Communications level is 2 or higher at the end of deployment, choose a number of units equal to your domain size. The first time during the battle that each chosen unit would be hit by an Attack test from an opposed artillery or aerial unit, that Attack test fails.

### SECRET CABAL

Your organization is clandestine. People might know you exist, but your work stays hidden to protect your members, keep your studies confidential, or better allow you to pull strings from behind the scenes. No matter what the reasons for your secrecy, one thing is certain: You look out for your own first and foremost.

#### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Espionage:** +1

**Communications:** +1

### DOMAIN POWER

Secret cabal officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Elemental Bargain.** As an action, take a power die from your domain's pool and conjure an elemental with a challenge rating equal to or lower than the number on the die. The creature appears

in an unoccupied space that you can see within 30 feet of you. You mentally control the actions the creature takes. It acts when it is summoned, and on each of your turns thereafter.

Creatures summoned by this power disappear when they are reduced to 0 hit points or after a number of rounds equal to 1 + your domain size, whichever comes first.

### DOMAIN FEATURES

Secret cabal officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Curse of Vitiation.** If your domain's Communications level is 2 or higher at the start of a combat against an opposed domain's officers, choose one lieutenant from an opposed domain. That lieutenant has disadvantage on saving throws during the battle.

**We Were Never Here.** As a domain action, make a Lore test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, your domain's Communications level increases by 1 and the opposed domain's Communications level decreases by 1.

### THEATRICAL TROUPE

Magic and artifice have always gone hand in hand, and the art of spellcasting makes for some impressive stage effects. Whether you are a performance company with an established base of operations or a band of entertainers travelling far and wide, you endeavor to make magic accessible to all! Your organization doesn't believe in keeping sorcery hidden away in secluded towers, underground lairs, or exclusive clubs. Showing magic to the world encourages others to take up the art, dispels fears of spellcasting, and can bring joy to the common folk.

#### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Diplomacy:** +1

**Operations:** +1

### DOMAIN POWER

Theatrical troupe officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Magic Misdirection.** As an action, take a power die from your domain's pool and make a Charisma check contested by one creature of your choice that you can see. Add the number on the power die to your check. On a success, the creature



is charmed by you until the end of your next turn. While charmed in this way, the creature sees its allies as enemies, and it must use its action before moving on its turn to make a melee weapon attack against an ally it can reach. If the creature has no allies within reach, it takes no action on its turn.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Theatrical troupe officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Combat Anthem.** As a domain action, make a DC 12 Operations test. On a success, during the next battle, you can choose a number of units your domain controls equal to your domain size. Any opposed unit has disadvantage on Morale tests while adjacent to any selected unit, and any allied unit has advantage on Power tests while adjacent to any selected unit.

**You Didn't Hear This From Me.** As a domain action, make a DC 12 Diplomacy test. On a success, whenever you succeed on a Diplomacy test to muster a unit through an alliance, your domain's Communications level increases by 1 until the end of the intrigue.

## NATURE PACT

Your organization lives and thrives in the untamed wilds, whether forests, deserts, tundra, or even oceans. Nature cannot be controlled, but you know how to channel primal magic. Barbarians, druids, rangers, beasts, and nature spirits are your domain's agents, and with these forces on your side, you are unstoppable.

| Skills                | Defenses                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Diplomacy:</b> +1  | <b>Communications:</b> 10 |
| <b>Espionage:</b> +0  | <b>Resolve:</b> 12        |
| <b>Lore:</b> +2       | <b>Resources:</b> 11      |
| <b>Operations:</b> -1 |                           |

## DOMAIN TITLES

Nature pact officers gain access to the following titles, each of which grants a character the noted additional features.

**The Connected.** Nature links a companion's senses with your own. As an action, you can link yourself to a willing creature you can see within 30

feet of you for 1 hour. This replaces any previous links you made using this feature.

While a linked creature is within 100 feet of you and one of you has to make an ability check or a saving throw, both of you roll the same check or save. The creature making the check or save then uses the highest roll.

**The Pack Leader.** As an action, you summon a beast of your choice with a challenge rating equal to or lower than your domain size into an unoccupied space you can see within 30 feet of you. The beast's weapon attacks are magical, and it gains temporary hit points equal to  $5 \times$  your domain size. The beast acts on its own initiative and understands and follows your verbal commands. The beast follows your commands for 1 hour or until it is reduced to 0 hit points, at which point it disappears. You must finish a long rest before you can use this feature again.

**The Primal.** If you move at least 10 feet toward a Huge or smaller creature, then hit that creature with a melee weapon attack on the same turn, the attack deals extra damage equal to twice your proficiency bonus and the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. The DC for this saving throw equals  $8 +$  your proficiency bonus  $+$  your Strength or Dexterity modifier, whichever is higher.

**The Speaker.** You gain proficiency in the Persuasion skill. Additionally, as an action, you can select a number of willing creatures you can see within 100 feet of you equal to your level  $+$  your domain size. For 1 hour, any of these creatures and you can speak telepathically to each other, singly or in groups, regardless of distance.

**The Stalwart.** As an action, you grant yourself and one ally you can see temporary hit points equal to  $5 \times$  your domain size. You must finish a long rest before you can use this feature again.

## DOMAIN POWER

Nature pact officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Vine Entrapment.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool and choose a creature within 30 feet of you that you can see. That creature must make a Dexterity saving

throw with a DC equal to 10 + the number on the power die. On a failure, thorny vines erupt from the ground and wrap around the creature, which is restrained for a number of rounds equal to the number on the power die. A restrained creature can use an action to make a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check against the save DC. On a success, the creature ends the restrained condition but takes piercing damage equal to 1d10 × your domain size.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Nature pact officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Frog of War (Special Unit).** As a domain action, make a DC 16 Lore test. On a success, you summon the Frog of War, a special unit that is a single massive amphibian ready to devour enemies of nature. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Natural Disaster.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, you can make a Lore test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the opposed domain's Resources level decreases by 2.



*The Frog of War unit card*

## SPECIALIZATION

When you found your nature pact, you'll also choose a specialization. Are you a barbarian tribe, escaping the conventions and customs of settled life by making your own rules in the wild? Are you a druid circle, living as an extension of the natural world and unable to fathom a home anywhere else? Or are you a hunter conclave defending nature from evil's corruption and industry's greed?



# NATURE PACT

## SKILLS

## THE POWER POOL

## DEFENSES

Diplomacy

Espionage

Lore

Operations

Size

Power Die

Communications

Resolve

Resources

## POWERS

**Vine Entrapment.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool and choose a creature within 30 feet of you that you can see. That creature must make a Dexterity saving throw with a DC equal to 10 + the number on the power die. On a failure, thorny vines erupt from the ground and wrap around the creature, which is restrained for a number of rounds equal to the number on the power die. A restrained creature can use an action to make a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check against the save DC. On a success, the creature ends the restrained condition but takes piercing damage equal to 1d10 × your domain size.

## FEATURES

**Frog of War (Special Unit).** As a domain action, make a DC 16 Lore test. On a success, you summon the Frog of War, a special unit that is a single massive amphibian ready to devour enemies of nature. (See page 49 in *Kingdoms & Warfare* for this unit's card.)

**Natural Disaster.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, you can make a Lore test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the opposed domain's Resources level decreases by 2.

Officer Reaction: ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P

|            |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Diplomacy  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Espionage  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Lore       | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Operations | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |

|                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Communications | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Resolve        | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Resources      | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |

## BARBARIAN TRIBE

Power, ferocity, and strength define the barbarian warriors who make up your organization, allowing you to push through enemies and knock all obstacles out of your path.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Operations: +1**      **Resolve: +1**

## DOMAIN POWER

Barbarian tribe officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Impenetrable Defense.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool and select a number of creatures within 15 feet of you equal to the number on the power die. Until the end of your next turn, any damage each of those creatures takes is reduced by the number on the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Barbarian tribe officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Ready to Slay.** If your domain's Resources level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, whenever a unit your domain controls is attacked by an opposed unit, the target unit can use its reaction to make an attack against the opposed unit. This feature can be used a number of times during the battle equal to your domain size.

**Trial by Pyre.** As a domain action, make an Operations test against an opposed domain's Resolve. On a success, reduce the target domain's Resolve level by 1 and select one of that domain's lieutenants. That lieutenant is vulnerable to fire damage until the end of the intrigue. Additionally, each time that lieutenant takes fire damage until the end of the intrigue, they become frightened of the source of the damage until the end of their next turn.

## DRUID CIRCLE

As the leaders of a druid circle, you gain the allegiance of beasts, plants, and even the elements to your cause. Your agents learn how to use terrain to their advantage, hiding in plain sight and creating an information network unlike any other.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Espionage: +1**      **Lore: +1**

## DOMAIN POWER

Druid circle officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Primal Conjunction.** As an action, take a power die from your domain's pool and conjure a beast, a fey, or a plant creature (your choice) with a challenge rating equal to or lower than the number on the power die. The creature appears in an unoccupied space that you can see within 30 feet of you. You mentally control the actions the creature takes. It acts when it is summoned, and on each of your turns thereafter.

Creatures summoned by this power disappear when they are reduced to 0 hit points or after a number of rounds equal to 1 + your domain size, whichever comes first.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Druid circle officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Eagle Eye.** Make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Resources as a domain action. On a success, you increase your domain's Communications level by 1, and you learn the ability scores, AC, hit points, traits, and action options of one lieutenant from the opposed domain.

**Torrential Terrain.** If your domain's Communications level is 2 or higher at the end of deployment, select a number of spaces on the battlefield equal to your domain size. These spaces contain rain until the end of the battle. Any unit your domain controls ignores the effect of rain in these spaces.

## HUNTER CONCLAVE

You lead a hunter conclave, whose members are dedicated to taking on aberrations, monstrosities, undead, and other unnatural creatures that threaten the wilds.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Diplomacy: +1**      **Espionage: +1**

## DOMAIN POWER

Hunter conclave officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Rapid Assault.** When you hit with a weapon attack, you can use a bonus action to take a power die from your domain's pool and immediately make another attack with the same weapon. The attack has a bonus to the attack and damage roll equal to the number on the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Hunter conclave officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Marked Targets.** If your domain's Communications level is 2 or higher at the end of deployment, select a number of opposed units equal to 3 + your domain size. The next Attack test made against any chosen unit by a unit your domain controls has advantage.

**Ruinous Fire.** As a domain action, make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, at the end of the next deployment, select a number of that opposed domain's units equal to your domain size. Those units cannot move during the first round of the battle.

## NOBLE COURT

A noble court domain is unique among the organizations in this section, as it allows the characters to take responsibility for governing a land and the citizens who live and work there. (And if your noble court reaches size 5, it could become a kingdom! Yay, it's the title of the book!) Farmers, smiths, carpenters, and shepherds might be the agents of a rural noble court, while clockmakers, luthiers, butchers, or musicians might serve you in a city. Whoever your followers are, they all look to you for guidance and protection.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +2  
**Espionage:** +0  
**Lore:** -1  
**Operations:** +1

### Defenses

**Communications:** 10  
**Resolve:** 12  
**Resources:** 11

## DOMAIN TITLES

Noble court officers gain access to the following titles, each of which grants a character the noted additional features.

**Court Mage.** You must have the Pact Magic or Spellcasting feature. You can cast the *detect magic* spell at will, without expending a spell slot. Additionally, you have one extra spell slot of the highest spell level you can cast, to a maximum of 5th level.

**Court Minstrel.** You have advantage on Charisma (Performance) checks. Additionally, you know the *vicious mockery* cantrip and can cast it as a bonus action. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this cantrip.

**High Priest.** Once per turn when you damage a creature with an attack or a spell, you can choose another creature you can see within 30 feet of you. The chosen creature gains temporary hit points equal to 1d6 × your proficiency bonus.

**Master Assassin.** You gain proficiency in the Stealth skill. Additionally, whenever you hit with a light weapon or a ranged weapon, you gain a bonus to damage rolls equal to your proficiency bonus.

**Master-at-Arms.** You gain proficiency in the Athletics skill. Additionally, you learn a fighting style of your choice from the fighter's Fighting Style feature in the core rules.

*The Lancers unit card*





## DOMAIN POWER

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Noble court officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Mantle of Authority.** The burden of leadership passed down from your forebears allows you to call upon their strength in battle. As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool and add half the number on the die (rounded up) to one of your ability scores. This can increase your ability score above 20. At the end of each of your turns, decrement the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

---

Noble court officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Prepare the Steeds (Special Unit).** As a domain action, make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, you muster the Lancers, a special unit of skilled equestrians. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Skilled Negotiators.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, you can make a Diplomacy test to gain a special unit from an NPC realm. On a success, the unit also has its casualty die increased one step.

## SPECIALIZATION

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When you found your noble court, you'll also choose a specialization. Are you a court of war, focused on growing your holdings and resources through military might? Are you a political administration, engaging in trade and detente to provide for your people? Or are you a regent state, honoring the traditions of your land and the family that leads it?

### COURT OF WAR

Your noble court focuses on conquest, seeking growth through martial power. Like the subjects of so many great empires, your people are kept happy







through the prosperity gained by annexing new territory. But those you conquer might view your actions as those of a tyrant rather than a hero.

#### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Operations:** +1      **Resolve:** +1

### DOMAIN POWER

Court of war officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Conqueror.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool. Until the end of your next turn, you gain a bonus to weapon attack rolls equal to the number on the power die, your speed increases by 10 feet, and your movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

### DOMAIN FEATURES

Court of war officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Forewarned is Forearmed.** Once per intrigue, as a domain reaction when an opposed domain musters a special unit, you can make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, you increase your domain's Communications level by 2.

**Outmaneuvered.** If your domain's Communications level is 2 or higher at the end of deployment, choose a number of opposed units equal to your domain size. Each of those units must make a DC 15 Command test. If a unit fails the check, you can move one of your deployed units into any unoccupied space next to that unit.

### POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION

Your organization is focused on the skills and traditions of statecraft. Its officers are politicians first, pulling strings and manipulating neighbors, gathering favors and making deals. You prefer to use your diplomatic skills to avoid war—but if that proves impossible, you ensure that the battle happens on your terms, surrounded by allies while your enemy stands alone.

#### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Diplomacy:** +2

### DOMAIN POWER

Political administration officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Timely Aid.** As a reaction to a successful attack made against a creature you can see within 30 feet of you, take a die from the power pool. Until the end of its next turn, that creature gains a bonus to its AC (including against the triggering attack) equal to the number on the power die. Additionally, the creature regains hit points equal to the number on the power die.

### DOMAIN FEATURES

Political administration officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Diplomacy for Intel.** As a domain action, make a DC 15 Diplomacy test. On a success, your domain's Communications level increases by 1, and you can make Diplomacy tests in place of Espionage tests until the end of the intrigue.

**Enchantment Economy.** As a domain action, make a DC 14 Diplomacy test. On a success, all officers in your organization have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects during the next combat against the officers of an opposed domain.

### REGENT STATE

A regent holds power in trust to someone else, usually an absent monarch or an heir too young to rule. But a regent can also hold power in trust to the people, always working to act in their best interests. Regents concern themselves first with their people's well-being, and work hard to establish justice, prosperity, and security.

#### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Resolve:** +1      **Resources:** +1

### DOMAIN POWER

Regent state officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Voices of the Past.** Past custodians of your domain answer your call for aid. As an action, take a power die from your domain's pool and conjure a celestial or an undead (your choice)

with a challenge rating equal to or lower than the number on the power die. The creature appears in an unoccupied space that you can see within 30 feet of you. You mentally control the actions the creature takes. It acts when it is summoned, and on each of your turns thereafter.

Creatures summoned by this power disappear when they are reduced to 0 hit points or after a number of rounds equal to 1 + your domain size, whichever comes first.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Regent state officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Backdoor Negotiations.** As a domain reaction when an opposed domain gains a special unit from an NPC realm, make a Diplomacy test against the opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the NPC realm doesn't send the special unit to aid the opposed domain, and the NPC realm's attitude toward your domain improves one step.

**Volunteer Blacksmiths.** As a domain action, make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, any levies you muster before the end of intrigue start with heavy equipment.

## RELIGIOUS ORDER

Your characters have formed a religious order, assembled in service to a higher power such as a god, archfiend, or unfathomable elder entity. You are no stranger to poring over ancient scriptures, and you can mobilize your tight-knit community of acolytes, priests, and champions to care for the poor and vulnerable, defend the faith, or conduct occult rituals. Whether congregating beneath the scintillating glow of stained glass windows or engaging in lost rites before ancient altars, your faith is strong, and you know that through prayer, all things are possible.

| Skills                | Defenses                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Diplomacy:</b> +0  | <b>Communications:</b> 11 |
| <b>Espionage:</b> -1  | <b>Resolve:</b> 12        |
| <b>Lore:</b> +2       | <b>Resources:</b> 10      |
| <b>Operations:</b> +1 |                           |

## DOMAIN TITLES

Religious order officers gain access to the following titles, each of which grants a character the noted additional features.

**Conduit.** You know the *thaumaturgy* cantrip. Additionally, as an action, you can channel the power of your faith to become a sacred vessel, manifesting one of the following effects that you choose when you take this title:

**Light.** You emit an aura of divine light in a 15-foot radius for 1 minute. Choose a number of creatures that you can see in the area. Each creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier or be blinded for 1 minute. An affected creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Darkness.** You emanate a 15-foot-radius sphere of magical darkness for 1 minute. The sphere moves with you and spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured for all creatures except you.

Once you manifest your chosen effect, you can't do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

**Crusader.** You have advantage on Wisdom saving throws and death saving throws, and you regain the maximum number of hit points from any effect that restores hit points.

**Herald.** You gain proficiency in the Persuasion skill. Additionally, you can cast *sanctuary* and *calm emotions* once each, and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

**Omen.** As an action or a bonus action, you utter a loud, empowering chant. The first creature you hit with a weapon attack before the start of your next turn takes an extra 1d8 radiant or necrotic damage from the attack (your choice). If you use a bonus action to chant again on your following turn, the extra damage increases to 2d8. If you use a bonus action to chant for three or more turns in a row, the extra damage increases to a maximum 3d8, and you have advantage on attack rolls until the start of your next turn.



**Prophet.** When a creature you can see within 30 feet of you makes a saving throw, you can use your reaction to grant that creature advantage on attack rolls and saving throws (including the triggering saving throw) until the start of your next turn.

## DOMAIN POWER

Religious order officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Beseech the Most High.** You can summon servants of your higher power to aid you in battle. As an action, take a power die from your domain's

pool and conjure an aberration, a celestial, or a fiend (your choice) with a challenge rating equal to or lower than the number on the power die. The creature appears in an unoccupied space that you can see within 30 feet of you. You mentally control the actions the creature takes. It acts when it is summoned, and on each of your turns thereafter.

Creatures summoned by this power disappear when they are reduced to 0 hit points or after a number of rounds equal to  $1 + \text{your domain size}$ , whichever comes first.

# RELIGIOUS ORDER

## SKILLS

Diplomacy

Espionage

Lore

Operations

## THE POWER POOL

## DEFENSES

Size

Power Die

Communications

Resolve

Resources

## POWERS

**Beseech the Most High.** You can summon servants of your higher power to aid you in battle. As an action, take a power die from your domain's pool and conjure an aberration, a celestial, or a fiend (your choice) with a challenge rating equal to or lower than the number on the power die. The creature appears in an unoccupied space that you can see within 30 feet of you. You mentally control the actions the creature takes. It acts when it is summoned, and on each of your turns thereafter. Creatures summoned by this power disappear when they are reduced to 0 hit points or after a number of rounds equal to 1 + your domain size, whichever comes first.

## FEATURES

**Consult the Scriptures.** Once per intrigue, you can make a DC 14 Lore test as a domain bonus action. On a success, you can bless one unit your domain controls of your choice, granting it a bonus to Attack tests equal to your domain size and advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic. This bonus lasts until the end of the next battle.

**Spread the Holy Word (Special Unit).** Make a DC 15 Diplomacy test as a domain action. On a success, you muster the Crusaders, a special unit of devout warriors. Additionally, at the end of deployment, you can choose one of an opposed domain's Tier I units. That unit's casualty die is decreased one step. (See page 59 in *Kingdoms & Warfare* for this unit's card.)

Officer Reaction: ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P

|            |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Diplomacy  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Espionage  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Lore       | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Operations | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |

|                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Communications | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Resolve        | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Resources      | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

The nature or specialization of your religious order has no bearing on which type of planar creature—aberration, celestial, or fiend—you can summon with the Beseech the Most High power. Think outside the box! Your holy church might petition a righteous deity for aid and be granted command of a monstrous devil bound by hallowed chains. Likewise, your hidden cult might worship an arch-devil that torments souls in an eldritch demiplane, conjuring an aberration onto the battlefield from a portal of writhing tentacles.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Religious order officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Consult the Scriptures.** Once per intrigue, you can make a DC 14 Lore test as a domain bonus action. On a success, you can bless one unit your domain controls of your choice, granting it a bonus to Attack tests equal to your domain size and advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic. This bonus lasts until the end of the next battle.

**Spread the Holy Word (Special Unit).** Make a DC 15 Diplomacy test as a domain action. On a success, you muster the Crusaders, a special unit of devout warriors. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.) Additionally, at the end of the next deployment, you can choose one of an opposed domain's Tier I units. That unit's casualty die is decreased one step (minimum d4).

## SPECIALIZATION

When you found your religious order, you'll also choose a specialization. Are your rituals taboo or even illegal, forcing you to operate from the shadows as a hidden cult? Does your god command you to grow their faith by operating as a holy church, sending missionaries throughout the land? Or perhaps you're part of a monastic order, guarding ancient secrets in some secluded domain of faith?

## HIDDEN CULT

Society is rife with close-minded individuals who disapprove of your causes or your methods, so you



*Crusaders unit card*

must conduct your rituals in secret. The agents of your hidden cult are everyday people—acolytes and blacksmiths, guards and government officials—who mask their true natures behind ceremonial garb and closed-door meetings. Your stronghold is likely a front for occult activity, and your allies are won through temptation, manipulation, and intimidation. And though you try to keep a low profile, conflict is sometimes inevitable.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Espionage:** +1

**Lore:** +1

## DOMAIN POWER

Hidden cult officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Penance.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool and choose an enemy creature you can see within 60 feet of you. The target takes necrotic or radiant damage (your choice) equal to double the number on the power die at the start of each of its turns, and its speed is reduced by a number of feet equal to  $5 \times$  the number on the power die. At the end of each of your turns, decrement the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Hidden cult officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Blood Sacrifice.** As a domain action, destroy one unit you control. At the start of the next battle, choose a number of units you control equal to

your domain size. Each unit has its casualty die increased one step.

**Poison the Well.** Once per intrigue as a domain reaction when an opposed domain makes an Operations test, make an Espionage test against the opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the opposed domain's Resources level decreases by 1, and your domain's Resolve level increases by 1.

## HOLY CHURCH

As a devout group of worshipers, you act as the instruments of a god. Your agents are dedicated and organized, proudly proclaiming their faith to would-be converts and constructing gleaming temples to receive them. Your clothing or armor is emblazoned with the holy symbol of your deity as a reminder that your cause has been ordained by the ultimate authority.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Diplomacy:** +1      **Resources:** +1

## DOMAIN POWER

Holy church officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Turn the Tide.** As a bonus action, take any number of power dice from your domain's pool and multiply their total by your domain size. You can restore a number of hit points equal to that number, divided among any number of creatures of your choice that you can see (including yourself) within 60 feet of you.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Holy church officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Having the Gods on Our Side.** Once per intrigue as a domain reaction when an opposed domain musters a unit from another domain, make a Diplomacy test against the opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the opposed domain fails to muster the unit.

**Resplendent Armor.** As a domain action, make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, at the end of the next deployment, choose a number

of units equal to your domain size. Each of those units gains +2 to Defense and has its casualty die increased one step. These benefits last until the end of the battle.

## MONASTIC ORDER

As a monastic order, you create a secluded community devoted to a cause, doctrine, or philosophy. Your agents are servants, scholars, and sages who renounced the world in favor of a nobler path. Monasticism is a way of life, full of strict regimens designed to hone the body, mind, and spirit. But though you spend your days in peaceful meditation, your order's arduous training makes you a dangerous weapon.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Lore:** +1      **Operations:** +1

## DOMAIN POWER

Monastic order officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Quaking Fist.** When you hit a creature with a melee attack, take any number of power dice from your domain's pool. You push the target of your attack away from you a number of feet equal to  $5 \times$  the total of the power dice. If the target's movement is stopped early by a wall or other surface, the target takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 5 feet it was pushed, and is knocked prone.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Monastic order officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Ancient Archives.** Once per intrigue, you can make a DC 13 Lore test as a domain action. On a success, all officers gain a bonus to saving throws against spells and other magical effects equal to your domain size during the next combat against officers of an opposed domain.

**Iron Will.** If your domain's Communications level is 2 or higher at the end of deployment, choose a number of units equal to your domain size. Each of these units has advantage on Morale tests for the Rally maneuver until the end of the battle.



## UNDERWORLD SYNDICATE

Your organization is an underworld syndicate acting from the shadows, running agents who might be thugs, spies, killers, or cutpurses. The resources you control put you in a perfect position to undertake clandestine activities, morally ambiguous deals, and jobs not for the faint of heart. You go in, you get the job done, and you get out again, all without anyone knowing. Or, if you're especially good at what you do, you'll leave everyone thinking someone else was responsible.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +0

**Espionage:** +2

**Lore:** -1

**Operations:** +1

### Defenses

**Communications:** 12

**Resolve:** 10

**Resources:** 11

## DOMAIN TITLES

Underworld syndicate officers gain access to the following titles, each of which grants a character the noted additional features.

**Enforcement.** You gain proficiency with light, medium, and heavy armor. Additionally, any enemy within 5 feet of you has disadvantage on melee attacks against any of your allies within 5 feet of you.

**Narcotics.** You have advantage on saving throws against poison. Additionally, when a creature within 5 feet of you that you can see is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can use your reaction to give that creature a stimulant. The creature regains a number of hit points equal to 1d8 + your proficiency bonus, and gains a number of temporary hit points equal to 10 + your character level.

**Negotiations.** You gain proficiency in the Persuasion skill. You can make a Charisma check with advantage, and can do so again after you finish a long rest.

Additionally, you can cast the *disguise self* and *suggestion* spells, requiring no material components. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells. You can cast each spell once in this way, and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest.

**Operations.** As an action, choose one ally and one enemy, each of which is within 30 feet of you





# UNDERWORLD SYNDICATE

## SKILLS

Diplomacy

Espionage

Lore

Operations

## THE POWER POOL

## DEFENSES

Size

Power Die

Communications

Resolve

Resources

## POWERS

**Find Weakness.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool. One target of your choice that you can see takes a penalty to AC equal to the number on the power die until the end of your next turn.

## FEATURES

**Plans within Plans.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, you can make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, you raise your domain's Communications level by 1 and decrease the opposed domain's Communications level by 1.

**The Crew (Special Unit).** As a domain action, make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, you muster the Crew, a special unit of thieves, fighters, bandits, and brawlers who have low morale and are hard to command—but who fight like demons. (See page 63 in *Kingdoms & Warfare* for this unit's card.)

Officer Reaction: ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P ☐ R ☐ P

|            |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |
|------------|----|----|----|----|--|----|--|----|
| Diplomacy  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  | +4 |
| Espionage  | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  | +4 |
| Lore       | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  | +4 |
| Operations | -1 | +0 | +1 | +2 |  | +3 |  | +4 |

|                |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|
| Communications | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |
| Resolve        | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |
| Resources      | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |  | 15 |  | 16 |  | 17 |  | 18 |

and that you can see. The ally can use a reaction to move their speed and make a weapon attack against the enemy. If the attack hits, the enemy is knocked prone.

**Records.** You gain proficiency in the Arcana skill. Additionally, if you are unable to cast spells of 1st level or higher (either because you have no spellcasting ability, you have expended all your spell slots, or you have used all your innate spells), you can cast the following spells using Intelligence as your spellcasting ability:

At will: *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*  
 3/day each: *comprehend languages*, *disguise self*,  
*faerie fire*  
 1/day each: *invisibility*, *locate object*

## DOMAIN POWER

Underworld syndicate officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Find Weakness.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool. One creature of your choice that you can see takes a penalty to AC equal to the number on the power die until the end of your next turn.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Underworld syndicate officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Plans within Plans.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, you can make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, you raise your domain's Communications level by 1 and decrease the opposed domain's Communications level by 1.

**The Crew (Special Unit).** As a domain action, make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, you muster the Crew, a special unit of thieves, fighters, bandits, and brawlers who have low morale and are hard to command—but who fight like demons. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

## SPECIALIZATION

When you found your underworld syndicate, you'll also choose a specialization. Are you a venerable and prestigious assassins' college, training a proud



*The Crew unit card*

line of professional killers? Are you an official spy network, your existence known to the general public even as your work is shrouded in mystery? Or are you a down-and-dirty thieves' guild, taking on any jobs for the right price?

## ASSASSINS' COLLEGE

Assassination is a most misunderstood art. You kill people for money, sure—but only certain people and only under certain circumstances. There are rules, after all, and new assassins must learn those rules at the hands of masters.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Espionage:** +1

**Resources:** +1

## DOMAIN POWER

Assassins' college officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Assassin's Strike.** When you hit with a weapon attack, take all the power dice from your domain's pool. The target of your attack must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 12 plus your domain size. On a failure, the target takes extra damage equal to  $3 \times$  the total of the dice. On a success, the target takes extra damage equal to the total of the dice.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Assassins' college officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Looks Like We Need a New Boss.** As a domain reaction when an opposed domain makes an Operations test, you can make an Espionage test against the opposed domain's Resolve. On a success, the opposed domain makes the Operations test with disadvantage.

**The Best There Is.** If your domain's Resolve level is 2 or higher when one or more of your officers roll their power dice, choose a number of power dice equal to your domain size. Increase each of these dice to their maximum value.

## SPY NETWORK

As part of a covert team of spies, you gather intelligence and engage in clandestine activities for a government, a specific organization—or the highest bidder. Your agents are well trained and savvy, able to operate in even the most challenging conditions.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Diplomacy:** +1

**Espionage:** +1

## DOMAIN POWER

Spy network officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Traitor.** As an action, select a creature that is not another domain's leader that you can see within 30 feet of you, and take all the power dice from your domain's pool. If the target's current hit points are equal to or less than the total of the power dice × your domain size, the target turns traitor and serves you as a retainer, or is revealed to secretly already be in your service.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Spy network officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Create Vulnerability.** Once per intrigue, if your domain's Communications level is 2 or higher, you can choose one opposed domain's lieutenant and one damage type. That lieutenant is vulnerable to that damage type until the end of the next combat involving that lieutenant.

**False Orders.** As a domain action, make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's

Communications. On a success, at the end of the next deployment, you can move one of the opposed domain's Tier I artillery or infantry units to any space on your side of the field. You can use this feature multiple times to affect additional units in the same battle.

## THIEVES' GUILD

Your organization is a second-story crew, focusing on getting into where you don't belong, taking what isn't yours, and earning your well-deserved rewards. You're not much for politics, spying, and information brokering—except when it helps you cut deals with the law.

### Skill and Defense Bonuses

**Espionage:** +1

**Operations:** +1

## DOMAIN POWER

Thieves' guild officers gain access to the following domain power.

**Poison Weapons.** As a bonus action, take a power die from your domain's pool and choose one of your weapons. When that weapon hits, it deals extra poison damage equal to the number on the power die, and any creature that takes that damage is poisoned until the end of their next turn. At the end of each of your turns, decrement the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Thieves' guild officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Stolen Supplies.** Once per intrigue as a domain action, you can make an Operations test against an opposed domain's Resolve. On a success, choose a number of your infantry units equal to your domain size. Each unit has +2 to Attack and Defense during the next battle.

**They're Going to Have a Hard Time Making Payroll This Week.** As a domain action, make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, your domain's Resources level increases by 1, and at the start of the next battle, one of the opposed domain's Tier I units of your choice must decrement its casualty die.



# NPC Realms



When a domain is controlled by an NPC—whether a villain, an ally, or a mystery figure whose role the characters need to figure out—the GM sets that domain up as an NPC realm. This section presents sixteen NPC realms for the GM’s use in a campaign, covering a wide array of domain types, from the explicitly villainous (it’s hard to imagine how a despotic regime could be a good thing) to neutral and possibly friendly realms such as a fey court or a gnomish kingdom.

Unlike heroic organizations, **each NPC realm has only one title, given to the leader.** This reflects the fact that all the officers of a villainous realm (and any other domain outside the characters’ domain) are run by the GM, and no GM needs to worry about five NPCs with special abilities! Also unlike organizations, NPC realms have no specialization. They have the same number of domain powers and domain features overall, but

those powers and features are consistent for each type of realm. This allows a GM to quickly copy the details for an NPC realm onto the generic domain sheet (page 315) and be ready to go.

Some of an NPC realm’s domain powers can be taken only by the domain’s leader. Other powers can be taken by the leader or other officers.

There’s no rule that says all the NPC domains in a game must be realms from this section. GMs can use the domains in the **Heroic Organizations** section as well when populating a world with NPC domains. But by keeping the setup for these realms simpler and less customizable, the intent is to make them easier for the GM to use.

## DESPOTIC REGIME

A despotic warlord rules through fear and propaganda. They are not interested in the health or well-being of their people, but only in making sure their army is always prepared for battle. Despots are cruel. Conquest is the tool they use to appease

their soldiers, but power is all they care about. If it ever seems as though a despot is being reasonable during negotiations, this is a ruse. They are always scheming, even against their allies. And if they defer to a greater power, it is only because a despot fears anyone with more power than them.

| Skills                | Defenses                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Diplomacy:</b> -1  | <b>Communications:</b> 11 |
| <b>Espionage:</b> +2  | <b>Resolve:</b> 12        |
| <b>Lore:</b> +0       | <b>Resources:</b> 11      |
| <b>Operations:</b> +2 |                           |

## DOMAIN TITLE

The despotic regime leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Despot.** When an enemy the despot can see drops to 0 hit points within 30 feet of them, the despot can use a reaction to have their attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage for 1 minute. If an enemy triggers this effect while the despot's attacks are already dealing this extra damage, the benefit is cumulative.

## DOMAIN POWERS

The despotic regime leader gains access to the following domain powers.

**Make an Example.** As an action, the leader takes any number of power dice from their domain's pool. If the total of the dice is equal to or greater than the remaining hit points of one of the domain's lieutenant's, the leader executes the

lieutenant. Each of the domain's remaining lieutenants can then immediately use a reaction to make one weapon attack or cast a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action.

**My Life for Yours.** When the leader is hit by a melee attack, they can take one power die from their domain's pool and cause a lieutenant within 5 feet of them to use a reaction to become the target of the attack instead. The attack's damage is reduced by the number on the power die. As part of the reaction, the lieutenant can then make a melee weapon attack against the triggering attacker.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Despotic regime officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Death to Spies.** As a domain reaction when an opposed domain makes an Espionage test, an officer makes an Operations test against the opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the opposed domain's Communications level decreases by 1.

**Readiness is All.** If the despotic regime's Resources level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, the level of another defense of the officer's choice increases by 1.

**The Crimson Guard (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the despotic regime musters the Crimson Guard, a special unit of loyal soldiers who show no mercy to enemies. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Work the Prisoners to the Bone.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make an Operations test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the opposed domain immediately loses a number of levies equal to the despotic regime's domain size (chosen by whoever controls the opposed domain), and the despotic regime's Resources level increases by 1. If the opposed domain has no levies, it instead loses one unit, and the despotic regime's Resources level increases by 1.

*Crimson Guard unit card*



# DRACONIC EMPIRE

Some dragons amass gold and jewels; others covet the wealth of magic. But the most formidable and cunning of dragons hoard whole kingdoms. A draconic empire is the end result of such unparalleled greed: an amalgamation of cities and lands brought together under a single dragon's rapacious purview. With a lifespan of over a thousand years, a draconic ruler maintains an iron hold over their realm, crushing any attempt to conquer or disband their empire with ease.

Though dragons and other creatures such as wyverns are found among a draconic empire's subjects, the empire absorbs many by way of conquest, and not every citizen of such a realm has draconic blood. At the same time, not every draconic sovereign is seen as a tyrant, and some of the empire's folk might even prefer the efficient and judicious rulings of a dragon overlord compared to the alternatives.

| Skills                | Defenses                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Diplomacy:</b> -1  | <b>Communications:</b> 10 |
| <b>Espionage:</b> +0  | <b>Resolve:</b> 11        |
| <b>Lore:</b> +2       | <b>Resources:</b> 13      |
| <b>Operations:</b> +2 |                           |

## DOMAIN TITLE

The draconic empire leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Imperator Draconis.** When the imperator draconis rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack or effect that deals the damage type associated with the imperator's draconic ancestry (fire damage for gold or red dragons, lightning damage for blue or bronze dragons, and so forth), the imperator can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Draconic empire officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Glittering Armor.** As a reaction to taking damage, an officer can take any number of power dice from their domain's pool and reduce the amount of damage taken by the total of the dice. Additionally, the officer gains resistance to the type of damage

that triggered this reaction for 1 minute or until they use this power again.

**The Great and Terrible.** When an officer is charmed, frightened, paralyzed, or stunned, they can use a reaction to expend a power die from their domain's pool and remove one of those conditions. They are then immune to that condition for a number of rounds equal to the number on the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Draconic empire officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Pillage.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make an Operations test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the target domain's Resources level decreases by 1, and the draconic empire's Resources level increases by 1.

**Destruction Rains from Above.** Once per intrigue as a domain action, an officer can make a DC 16 Diplomacy test. On a success, two allied dragons are summoned to harry the domain's enemies, chosen from the list below:

**The Acrid Bite.** This dragon unleashes streams of viscous acid that corrodes the armor and weapons of an opposed domain's forces. The target domain's Resources level decreases by 2.

**The Bitter Frost.** This dragon unleashes vicious winter cold through an opposed domain's ranks. The target domain's Communications level decreases by 2.

**The Flame Tongue.** This dragon razes an opposed domain's forces with searing fire. The target domain's Resolve level decreases by 2.

**The Poisonous Wrath.** This dragon's poisonous breath blights an opposed domain's lands and servants. The target domain takes -2 to its Resources score until the end of the intrigue.

**The Silent Reaper.** This dragon unleashes a deadly plague upon an opposed domain. The target domain takes -2 to its Resolve score until the end of the intrigue.

**The Storm Mayhem.** This dragon unleashes wind and lightning that plunges an opposed domain into chaos. The target domain takes -2 to its Communications score until the end of the intrigue.







**Furnishings of the Hoard.** If the draconic empire's Resources level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, a number of aerial or artillery units equal to the draconic empire's domain size gain one of the following wands of an officer's choice: a *wand of acid pool*, a *wand of fire*, or a *wand of lightning storm*. (See pages 117–118 in the **Warfare** chapter for more information on these magic items.)

**Praetores Draconis (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the draconic empire musters the Praetores Draconis, a special unit of drake-mounted knights. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)



*Praetores Draconis unit card*

## DWARVEN THANEDOM

Not all dwarven cultures are bellicose, but the dwarves' history of stalwart bravery lends them several advantages when a dwarven thanedom is drawn into conflict—or when its folk decide to start trouble themselves. Dwarven physiology and hardiness is well suited to land war. But even more importantly, many dwarves possess a strong analytical streak that underlies their success as crafters, engineers, and miners. With an instinctive sense of how various parts work together to create a machine, dwarves called to battle understand how to become a part in a war machine, making dwarf soldiers a force to be reckoned with on the field.

| Skills                | Defenses                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Diplomacy:</b> +0  | <b>Communications:</b> 11 |
| <b>Espionage:</b> –1  | <b>Resolve:</b> 12        |
| <b>Lore:</b> +1       | <b>Resources:</b> 12      |
| <b>Operations:</b> +2 |                           |

## DOMAIN TITLE

The dwarven thanedom leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Thane.** The thane cannot be stunned. Additionally, the thane and any allies within 20 feet of them can add the dwarven thanedom's domain size to their initiative rolls.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Dwarven thanedom officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Iron Tide.** As an action, the leader can take a power die from their domain's pool. All allies who can see and hear the leader and are within 60 feet of them gain a bonus to weapon damage rolls or Armor Class (the leader's choice) equal to the number on the power die. This bonus lasts until the start of the leader's next turn.

**Natural Sprinter.** As a bonus action, an officer can take a power die from their domain's pool and increase their movement by 5 × the number on the power die. This benefit lasts until the end of the officer's next turn, during which time their movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Dwarven thanedom officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Accelerated Industry.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the dwarven thanedom's Resources level increases by 2.

**Blazing Forges.** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 14 Operations test. On a success, the dwarven thanedom gains the following benefit until the end of the intrigue: When the dwarven thanedom successfully uses Operations to muster infantry, one officer gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls to one of their weapons or a



*The Device unit card*

+1 bonus to Armor Class for their armor. A weapon or suit of armor can receive this bonus only once per intrigue. These bonuses last until the end of the intrigue.

**Siege Manufacturing.** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the dwarven thanedom does one of the following:

**The Device.** The thanedom musters the Device, a special unit of heavy infantry. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Walking Walls.** The thanedom builds a mobile fortification that acts as a wall, but which can move around the battlefield on intricate mechanical legs. Each walking wall is treated as a fortification taking up 1 space, and the dwarven thanedom places it on any space on their side of the battlefield at the end of deployment. When a dwarven thanedom infantry unit moves out of a walking wall's space, that unit can bring the walking wall with them. Other units cannot move these walls, but can still gain their benefit.

**Warpath.** If the dwarven thanedom's Resources level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, officers can reroll Attack tests for units controlled by the thanedom during the battle, and must use the new result. They can reroll a total number of times equal to the dwarven thanedom's domain size.

## FEY COURT

The courts of the elves, the fairies who serve them, and the fey creatures of the wode are alien to most people of the world. Cruel and capricious, the fey court's rulers are driven by motivations unknowable. They are older than the world, and remember magics that mortal creatures were not meant to know. Draw the ire of a fey court, and the shadows you see, the sounds you hear, the world you touch could well become an illusion designed to lead you down a long, torturous road of doom.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +0  
**Espionage:** +1  
**Lore:** +3  
**Operations:** -1

### Defenses

**Communications:** 11  
**Resolve:** 12  
**Resources:** 11

## DOMAIN TITLE

The fey court leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Monarch of Mischief.** As an action, the monarch of mischief chooses one creature they can see within 30 feet of them. That creature must make a Wisdom saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + the monarch's proficiency bonus + the monarch's Charisma modifier. On a failure, the target is charmed by the monarch for 1 minute. A charmed target can repeat the saving throw whenever it takes damage, ending the effect on itself on a success. A creature that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

The monarch of mischief can use this feature a number of times equal to the fey court's domain size, and regains all expended uses when they finish a long rest.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Fey court officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Now You See Me ... and Me ... and Me!** As a bonus action, the leader can take any number of power dice from their domain's pool and summon a number of duplicates equal to the total of the dice. These duplicates function the same way as



the duplicates created by a *mirror image* spell, except that the leader must roll a 6 or higher to change an attack's target if they have three or more duplicates.

**Watch Where You Swing.** When a fey court officer is hit by an attack, the officer can use a reaction to take a power die from their domain's pool, then choose a creature within 10 feet of the officer to become the target of the attack instead. If the attack hits, it deals extra damage equal to the number on the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Fey court officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Disillusioned Illusions.** If the fey court's Communications level is 2 or higher at the end of deployment, an officer selects a number of opposed units equal to the fey court's domain size and forces those units to attack another unit of the officer's choice within range. Attack tests for these attacks are made with disadvantage.

**Fairy Circles.** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Lore test. On a success, at the end of the next deployment, the fey court can secretly place a number of undetectable traps on the battlefield equal to the fey court's domain size. These traps cannot be placed in spaces occupied by opposed units. When an opposed unit enters a trapped space, the unit is pulled into the fairy realm and removed from the battlefield until the end of their next turn, and the trap disappears.

**Surely You Jest (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Lore test. On a success, the fey court musters a specialty aerial unit of flying fey, the Court Jesters. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Your Own Worst Enemy.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, a fey court officer can make a Lore test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the court's Communications level increases by 1. Additionally, at the start of the next battle, the highest-tier unit of the opposed domain is duplicated in the closest unoccupied space. If the opposed domain has two or more units in the highest tier, the GM picks one at random. This duplicate unit has the Ethereal trait, is under the fey court's control, and lasts until the end of the battle.



*Court Jesters unit card*

## GIANT JARLDOM

In warfare, size matters. Giant jarls often have little patience for ingenuity or diplomatic negotiations, preferring to throw their weight around and squash any puny fools who dare to challenge their will. In the eyes of a living siege weapon, most fortifications constructed by the smallfolk are laughable at best. Giant jarldoms are living engines of war, ready for battle at a moment's notice. Jarls can live hundreds of years, none of which are spent suffering fickle alliances, usurpers, or smallfolk kingdoms who've forgotten their place. The mere touch of a giant's barrel-sized fist can topple a soldier in full plate armor, and the tremors of their footsteps foreshadow the destruction that comes in their wake.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +0  
**Espionage:** -1  
**Lore:** +2  
**Operations:** +2

### Defenses

**Communications:** 10  
**Resolve:** 13  
**Resources:** 11

## DOMAIN TITLE

The giant jarldom leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Jarl.** The jarl can't be knocked prone or moved against their will. Additionally, when the jarl hits a creature with a melee attack, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Giant jarldom officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**The Bigger I Am, the Harder You Fall.** As a bonus action, an officer removes one power die from their domain's pool. The officer gains a bonus to weapon attack and damage rolls equal to the number on the die, and any creature the officer hits with an attack is knocked prone. At the end of each of the officer's turns, decrement the power die.

**Thick Hide.** When an officer is hit by a weapon attack, they can use a reaction to take one power die from their domain's pool. Until the start of the officer's next turn, any damage they take from weapon attacks (including the triggering attack) is reduced by an amount equal to the number on the die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Giant jarldom officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Bring the Big Rocks.** Once per intrigue as a domain action, an officer can make a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, all units controlled by the giant jarldom with the Rock! trait gain the Siege Weapon trait.

**Indomitable Might.** If the giant jarldom's Communications level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, officers can reroll Power tests for units controlled by the jarldom during the battle, and must

use the new result. They can reroll a total number of times equal to the giant jarldom's domain size.

**Runic Omens.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make a DC 13 Lore test. On a success, the giant jarldom's Communications level increases by 1, and each of its officers gains resistance to damage dealt by spells during the first round of the next combat against officers of an opposed domain.

**There Are Giants in the Sky (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the giant jarldom musters the Pet Roc special unit, an enormous and legendary bird of prey. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

## GNOMISH KINGDOM

Bustling with life, gnomish kingdoms are centers for arcane study and engineering breakthroughs. Here, elderly gnomes pass down stories learned across long life spans to bright-eyed young creators, while clever inventors in underground laboratories chip away at new experiments. Gnomes are often known for innovations that work in tandem with the earth, not against it, and their kingdoms are all the richer for it.

Gnomish kingdoms are home to many other types of creatures as well, including students from far-flung lands seeking lore and training. Elderly gnome engineers take on such apprentices happily, ready to share the tricks of their craft. But don't mistake this friendliness for weakness. When pushed to war, gnomish kingdoms conduct themselves with the same precision and ingenuity that their citizens display in their workshops. Their infantry can cleverly dismantle a fortress in a day, and their artillery squadrons wield powerful firearms unlike any other.

*Pet Roc unit card*



**Skills**  
**Diplomacy:** +0  
**Espionage:** -1  
**Lore:** +2  
**Operations:** +2

**Defenses**  
**Communications:** 12  
**Resolve:** 10  
**Resources:** 12



## DOMAIN TITLE

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The gnomish kingdom leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Prime Sophist.** The prime sophist can take the Help action as a bonus action.

Additionally, the prime sophist is able to make a quick study of their foes' weak points. When the prime sophist hits an enemy with an attack, they can make the attack a critical hit. The prime sophist can use this feature a number of times equal to 1 + the gnomish kingdom's domain size. They regain all expended uses when they finish a long rest.

## DOMAIN POWERS

---

Gnomish kingdom officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Never Underestimate the Small.** When an officer is hit by a weapon attack, each other officer of the gnomish kingdom can use a reaction to take

a power die from their domain's pool and make one weapon attack against the attacker. This attack deals extra damage equal to the number on the power die if it hits.

**Thinking Outside the Box.** When an officer makes a saving throw that is not an Intelligence saving throw, they can take a power die from their domain's pool, then make an Intelligence saving throw instead of the original save, with a bonus equal to the number on the power die.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

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Gnomish kingdom officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Clever Together.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make a Diplomacy test to petition an NPC realm for research assistance. The DC for this test depends on the NPC realm's disposition toward the gnomish kingdom, as shown on the following table.



| Attitude   | Diplomacy DC |
|------------|--------------|
| Hostile    | 18           |
| Suspicious | 15           |
| Neutral    | 13           |
| Friendly   | 10           |
| Allied     | 8            |

On a success, the gnomish kingdom gains a +1 bonus to Lore tests until the end of the intrigue, and its Communications level increases by 1.

**Mirror Legion (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the gnomish kingdom musters a special unit of magic-reflective constructs: the Mirror Legion. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Raw Firepower.** If the gnomish kingdom's Communications level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, all the gnomish kingdom's artillery units deploy for that battle with heavy equipment.

**Warfare Engineers.** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 15 Lore test. On a success, the gnomish kingdom designs and outfits its soldiers with brutally destructive weaponry, granting each of its artillery units the Siege Weapon trait.



*The Mirror Legion unit card*

## GOBLINOID COALITION

Most domains consider enemy goblinoid realms a nuisance rather than a true military threat. Outside of urban environments, goblins, bugbears, and hobgoblins usually live in small clan groups, rising and falling in strength as the strongest leaders jockey for power. But sometimes an ambitious goblinoid leader is able to unite a number of clans as a singular community—and a dangerous fighting force. By pooling resources, goblinoid clans and bands can form a coalition capable of launching devastating attacks on all who threaten their lands and people, bringing goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears into a unified and disciplined force of capable warriors.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +0

**Espionage:** +1

**Lore:** -1

**Operations:** +3

### Defenses

**Communications:** 12

**Resolve:** 10

**Resources:** 12

## DOMAIN TITLE

The goblinoid coalition leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**King Boss.** When a creature the king boss can see targets them with an attack, the king boss can use a reaction to choose an ally within 5 feet of them. The two swap places, and the chosen ally becomes the target of the triggering attack instead.



## DOMAIN POWERS

Goblinoid coalition officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Cheap Shot.** When an officer hits with a weapon attack, they can take a power die from their domain's pool to wound the target of the attack. At the start of each of the target's turns, it takes 1d4 necrotic damage for each wound it has. A wound lasts a number of rounds equal to the number on the power die.

**Worg Pack.** As a bonus action, the leader can take a power die from their domain's pool to summon worg guardians. A number of **worgs** equal to half the number on the die (minimum one) appear in unoccupied spaces the leader can see within 60 feet of them. A summoned worg's weapon attacks are magical, and it gains temporary hit points equal to  $5 \times$  the goblinoid coalition's domain size. The worgs act on their own initiative, following the leader's commands and attacking the leader's enemies. A summoned worg disappears after 1 hour or when it drops to 0 hit points.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Goblinoid coalition officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Mumbo Jumbo.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the opposed domain's Communications level decreases by 1, and the goblinoid coalition's Resources level increases by 1.

**Prisoners of War.** As a domain action, an officer makes an Operations test against an opposed domain's Resolve. On a success, two units are mustered from the opposed domain (chosen by the players if the opposed domain is a heroic organization) and placed under the goblinoid coalition's control. Each of these units has disadvantage on Morale tests. If the goblinoid coalition is defeated in the next battle, the units are returned to the opposed domain, even if they were broken or disbanded during the battle.

**Spike Pits.** If the goblinoid coalition's Resources level is 2 or higher at the start of deployment,





*The Red Howl unit card*

an officer secretly selects three spaces on the map to contain undetectable spike pit traps. If the goblinoid coalition is in its stronghold during the battle, the pits can be placed anywhere. Otherwise, the pits must be on the goblinoid coalition's side of the battle.

An opposed unit that moves into a space with a spike pit activates the trap. It suffers 1 casualty and can no longer move or take actions until after the end of its next turn. Once a spike pit is activated, it cannot be activated again.

**The Red Howl (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the goblinoid coalition musters the Red Howl, a special unit of battle-trained, armored hell hounds. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

## HAG COVEN

A hag's deception and vile reckoning makes for a dangerous and unpredictable foe. Every encounter with one of these fiends is a gamble that might deal results worse than death. When several hags form a hag coven, their combined magical, seductive, and scheming power increases exponentially. Patient and cruel, the members of a hag coven sign pacts with the most desperate mortals, using the might of the horrid fey, fiends, and monstrosities that follow them as an army to enforce their dark bargains against even war leaders and emperors. Be wary when facing or allying with a coven, for every move the hags make furthers their singular goal of seeing the world suffer.

**Skills**  
**Diplomacy:** +2  
**Espionage:** +0  
**Lore:** +2  
**Operations:** -1

**Defenses**  
**Communications:** 12  
**Resolve:** 12  
**Resources:** 10

## DOMAIN TITLE

The hag coven leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Queen of Night.** The queen of night can cast the *find familiar* spell at will, with the spell requiring no material components and having a casting time of 1 action. When the queen of night casts this spell, they summon up to three familiars, each of which can be a beast or fiend with a challenge rating equal to or lower than the hag coven's domain size. A summoned familiar cannot be a creature with lair actions, legendary actions, or villain actions. There is no limit to the distance through which the queen of night can communicate telepathically with these familiars. The queen of night can have only three familiars at a time, and the familiars disappear if the queen of night dies or becomes incapacitated.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Hag coven officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Curse of the Coven.** As a bonus action, an officer can take a power die from their domain's pool and select a creature they can see within 30 feet of them. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + the number on the power die. On a failed save, the target is cursed for 1 minute. Whenever the officer takes damage from a spell or magical effect, the cursed creature takes the same damage.

**Know Thy Place.** As an action, the leader can take a power die from their domain's pool and select a number of creatures within 30 feet of them equal to the number on the die. Each target must make a Wisdom saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + the hag coven's domain size. On a failure, the target falls prone and is paralyzed until the end of the leader's next turn. On a success, the target falls prone.



## DOMAIN FEATURES

Hag coven officers gain access to the following domain features.

**A Comforting Voice.** As a domain action, an officer makes a Diplomacy test against an opposed domain's Resolve. On a success, the opposed domain's Resolve level is reduced by 1, and the hag coven's Communications level increases by 1.

**Clever Bargain.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make a Diplomacy test against an opposed domain's Resolve. On a success, the hag coven's Communications level increases by 1, and the opposed domain can muster only one unit of levies each time it musters levies until the end of the intrigue.

**Drained Source.** If the hag coven's Communications level is 2 or higher at the start of any combat between officers of the hag coven and an opposed domain, an officer secretly chooses a number of magic items in the possession of the opposed domain's officers equal to the hag coven's domain size. These items lose all their magical

properties at the end of the combat. Artifacts cannot be targeted in this way.

**Swamp's Wrath (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Lore test. On a success, the hag coven musters the Swamp Mother, a special unit formed of shambling mounds. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

## INFERNAL ECHELON

Fiends are evil incarnate. Whether they seek to cheat mortals out of their souls or simply consume those souls by force, all fiends share the same drive—the suffering of the living. It's easy to lose sight of this simple truth when dealing with these creatures, as both the Abyss and the Nine Hells are entrenched in complicated politics. Demons and devils both follow strict hierarchies, creating complex power struggles whose machinations have consequences that ripple out across multiple worlds. And at the heart of these grand plots stands the infernal echelon—an organized force of fiends dedicated to powerful leaders, and committed to unleashing death, madness, and despair upon the mortal realm.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +2

**Espionage:** +1

**Lore:** +1

**Operations:** +0

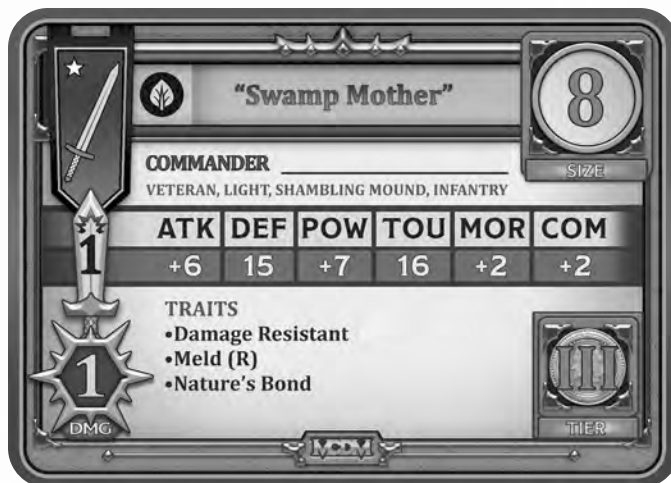
### Defenses

**Communications:** 12

**Resolve:** 10

**Resources:** 11

*Swamp Mother unit card*



## DOMAIN TITLES

The infernal echelon leader gains one of the following titles (based on their particular flavor of evil), each of which grants the noted additional features.

**Deceiver.** The deceiver cannot be targeted by the *screy* spell and similar effects, or by any effect that would sense their emotions, read their thoughts, or detect their location.

Additionally, the deceiver can cast the *major image* spell, requiring no components, and can do so again when they finish a long rest. Charisma is their spellcasting ability for this spell.

**Defiler.** The defiler emits an aura of caustic decay. When any creature chosen by the defiler starts its turn within 20 feet of them, that creature takes 1d8 poison damage, and all nonmagical armor and weapons the creature carries or wears take a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls or the AC they offer. A weapon whose penalty drops to -5, armor reduced to an AC of 10, or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed. Plant creatures take maximum damage from this effect.

Additionally, the defiler can choose to ignore any or all effects of the *hallow* spell.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Infernal echelon officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Doom Curse.** As an action, an officer can take a power die from their domain's pool and target a creature they can see within 30 feet of them with a terrible curse. The target must make a Charisma saving throw against a DC of 10 + the number on the power die. On a failed save, the cursed creature regains only half the normal number of hit points from magical healing and becomes vulnerable to one type of damage chosen by the officer. This curse lasts 24 hours.

**Hellfire.** Whenever an officer hits with a weapon attack, they can take a power die from their domain's pool and have the attack deal extra fire damage



*Ashen Chargers unit card*

equal to double the number on the die. This extra fire damage cannot be reduced in any way.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Infernal echelon officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Face Dancers.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the opposed domain's Communications level is reduced by 2.

**Inferno Artillery.** If the infernal echelon's Communications level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, all its artillery units deploy for that battle with the Flaming Weapons trait.

**Led by the Nose.** As a domain reaction when an opposed domain succeeds on a Diplomacy test to influence an NPC realm, an officer can make their own Diplomacy test. If the officer's test is higher than the opposed domain's test, the opposed domain's Diplomacy test fails and the NPC realm's attitude toward the opposed domain decreases one step.

**Summon the Pale Riders (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Lore test to muster the Ashen Chargers, a special unit of fiendish knights riding nightmares. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)





## MEDUSEAN TYRANNY

Those afflicted with the medusa's curse often retreat into isolation, sequestering themselves in remote lairs to hide their monstrous transformation. Most medusas spend their days collecting not just victims but knowledge, as they attempt to undo the fell magic that has transformed them. A medusean tyranny arises when these powerful beings emerge from the shadows to seek out others of their kind. Alone, a medusa is a terrifying threat. Together, they pool centuries of knowledge and power, becoming all but unstoppable.

Medusas working together form a democratic unit known as a Veiled Council, with a medusean tyranny coming into full power when a council seizes a first stronghold. Once a base of operations is established, the council begins to expand across surrounding regions, ruling through fear and squashing resistance with powerful sorcery. The larger the hubris of a bordering domain, the more likely a medusean tyranny is to set their ensorcelled armies upon it.

| Skills                | Defenses                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Diplomacy:</b> +2  | <b>Communications:</b> 10 |
| <b>Espionage:</b> -1  | <b>Resolve:</b> 12        |
| <b>Lore:</b> +3       | <b>Resources:</b> 11      |
| <b>Operations:</b> +0 |                           |

### DOMAIN TITLE

The medusean tyranny leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Veiled Sovereign.** The veiled sovereign has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the sovereign's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### DOMAIN POWERS

Medusean tyranny officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Hubris Curse.** As a bonus action, an officer can take a power die from their domain's pool

and afflict one creature they can see with a curse. The effect of the curse is based on the number on the power die.

| Power Die | Curse Effect  |
|-----------|---|
| 1-3       | Choose one ability score. While cursed, the target has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws made with that ability score.   |
| 4-6       | The officer has advantage on attack rolls against the target.   |
| 7-9       | The target must make a Wisdom saving throw at the start of each of its turns, with a DC equal to 10 + the medusean tyranny's domain size. On a failed save, the target wastes its action that turn doing nothing. |
| 10-12     | The target is afflicted by all three of the effects above.  |

This curse ends at the end of the combat encounter. An affected character can also end the curse early by using a bonus action to take one power die from their domain's pool, if the number on the die is at least half the number on the die used to inflict the curse.

**Unrelenting Gaze.** If the target of the leader's Petrifying Gaze succeeds on the saving throw to resist that trait's effect, the leader can use a reaction to take a power die from their domain's pool, reducing the target's saving throw by the number on the die.

### DOMAIN FEATURES

Medusean tyranny officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Allies to Stone.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make a Lore test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the opposed domain's Resources level is reduced by 1, and the medusean tyranny has advantage on subsequent Lore tests until the end of the intrigue.



*Living Statuary unit card*

**Cult of Secrets.** If the medusean tyranny's Resources level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, a number of its artillery units equal to its domain size each begin the battle equipped with a *wand of petrification*:

**Wand of Petrification.** Choose a unit, which must succeed on a DC 13 Power test or become disorganized.

**Living Statuary (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Lore test. On a success, the medusean tyranny musters the Living Statuary, a special unit of animated statues made from the victims of medusas. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Promises of Power.** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Diplomacy test to obtain a special unit from an NPC realm whose attitude toward an opposed domain is neutral or worse. The medusean tyranny has advantage on this test if the NPC realm's attitude toward the opposed domain is suspicious or hostile.

## ORC CLAN

Fearless and unwavering in defense of their homelands or in pursuit of plunder, the legions of an orc clan are not to be trifled with. Many folk call themselves superior warriors, with their heavy plate mail and firearms. But countless tales speak of foolish champions who underestimated the power of an orc clan—and the dear price they paid for that ignorance.

Most orc clans are composed of numerous smaller tribes and extended families, creating a bond that sees clan members defend their fellows with ruthless tactics and little patience for insult. Clan leadership is not hereditary, but is only rarely determined by age or strength. Instead, the mantle of chieftain is usually passed down to whoever can inspire the most loyalty in their fellow warriors.

Many of those who lose a campaign against an orc clan tell tales of the orcs' brutality, but this paints a picture that is far from accurate. Orc clans connect to a proud warrior culture, but their social infrastructure is no more savage than that of any other civilization. Although some clans are driven by ambition that sees them challenge and conquer other realms, most are dedicated to defending the orcs' expansive homelands, attacking only when provoked.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +1  
**Espionage:** -1  
**Lore:** +1  
**Operations:** +2

### Defenses

**Communications:** 10  
**Resolve:** 13  
**Resources:** 11

## DOMAIN TITLE

The orc clan leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Chieftain.** The chieftain gains proficiency in Charisma saving throws.

Additionally, as a bonus action, the chieftain can choose one creature that can hear them within 30 feet of them. As a reaction to the chieftain's command, that creature can immediately move up to half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks, then make one weapon attack.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Orc clan officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Outlast.** As a bonus action, an officer can take any number of power dice from their domain's pool, regaining a number of hit points equal to twice the total of the dice.



**Protect the Clan.** When an officer is targeted by an attack, another officer within 30 feet of the target officer can use a reaction to make a defensive maneuver. The second officer takes one power die from their domain's pool and subtracts the number on the power die from the attack roll.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Orc clan officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Proud Warriors.** If the orc clan's Resolve level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, all the orc clan's infantry units have the following trait until the end of the battle:

**Unflinching Endurance.** The first time during a battle that this unit suffers 1 or more casualties, it can immediately make an attack against a legal target.

**Take No Insult.** Once per intrigue when an opposed domain succeeds on a skill test targeting one of the orc clan's defenses, an officer can use a domain reaction to make an Operations test against the opposed domain's Resolve. On a success, make note of the opposed domain's current defense scores. The opposed domain's Resources score decreases by 1 at the start of each of the domain's subsequent turns. If the opposed domain's Resources score is reduced to 10, at the start of its next turn, its Communications score begins to decrease by 1 each turn instead of Resources. If its Communications score is reduced to 10, the opposed domain's Resolve score begins to decrease in the same manner instead of Communications.

This continues until either all the opposed domain's defense scores are reduced to 10 or the intrigue ends. If the opposed domain defeats the orc clan in the next battle, the opposed domain's defenses are returned to the scores they had before this feature was used.



*The Unbreakable unit card*

**Tales of Clan Heroes Past.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make a DC 15 Lore test. On a success, the orc clan's Communications level and Resolve level both increase by 1.

**The Unbreakable (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the orc clan musters their best warriors: the Unbreakable, a special unit. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)



## PLANAR INVADERS

Beyond the life known to the folk of the world, countless other worlds exist, filled with riches, mysteries, and danger. Planar invaders travel between these dimensions, seeking and consuming rare resources, obliterating those who get in their way, and too often leaving behind a trail of suffering. They pay no heed to the mundane conceptions of war understood by worldly folk, with their alien mindset and refusal to follow rules of engagement. Rather, they exploit every advantage they have, with no care to whether or not they leave survivors behind.

| Skills                | Defenses                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Diplomacy:</b> -1  | <b>Communications:</b> 11 |
| <b>Espionage:</b> +2  | <b>Resolve:</b> 12        |
| <b>Lore:</b> +0       | <b>Resources:</b> 10      |
| <b>Operations:</b> +3 |                           |

## DOMAIN TITLE

The planar invaders' leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Overlord.** Whenever the overlord reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the overlord gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls until the end of the encounter, and gains temporary hit points equal to  $5 \times$  the planar invaders' domain size. If the overlord reduces multiple creatures to 0 hit points during the same encounter, the bonus is cumulative.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Planar invaders' officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Resistance is Futile.** As an action, an officer can take a power die from their domain's pool to create an aura of despair centered on the officer. The aura has a radius of 5 feet  $\times$  the number on the power die, and lasts until the start of the officer's next turn. Each enemy creature that starts its turn within the aura must make a Wisdom saving throw with a DC of  $8 +$  the planar invaders' domain size. On a failure, the creature is paralyzed until the start of the officer's next turn.

**You'll Be of Use Yet.** As an action, the leader can take any number of power dice from their domain's pool and cast the *dominate person* spell, requiring no components. The save DC for the spell is equal to  $8 +$  the total of the power dice.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Planar invaders' officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Interplanar Blip.** If the planar invaders' Communications level is 2 or higher at the end of deployment, an officer chooses a number of infantry units controlled by the planar invaders equal to their domain size. These units gain the following trait until the end of the battle:

**Blip.** When this unit marches, it can move 1 extra space and can move through other units, though it cannot end its movement in the same space as an opposed unit.

**Recall the Fleet (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the planar invaders muster Timescape Shock Troops, a special unit of merciless time raiders. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Spatial Anchor.** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 12 Lore test. On a success, during the next combat against officers of an opposed domain, each planar invader automatically succeeds on saving throws to avoid being unwillingly sent to another plane (as with spells such as *banishment* or

*Timescape Shock Troops unit card*



*plane shift*) and against spells and effects that would alter their form (such as *polymorph*).

**We Will Take What We Need from Your Mind... Directly.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Resolve. On a success, the planar invaders' Communications level and Resolve level both increase by 1.

## REPTILIAN BAND

Reptilian folk vary widely in their cultures and outlooks, with each preoccupied with unique concerns and internal politics. But every so often, a charismatic leader steps forth to bind disparate factions of kobolds, lizardfolk, dragonborn, and other peoples of reptilian ancestry into a mighty band. When united, these brave peoples make an unbreakable bulwark against those who would intrude into or steal resources from their lands—or a furious swarm dedicated to leveling whole kingdoms and reshaping the world as it was in primordial times.

### FROGFOLK

The illustrious history of the world's oldest fantasy roleplaying game is filled with various frog peoples. While such creatures are technically amphibians, the reptilian band domain works great to create a villainous or NPC realm using such creatures.

#### Skills

**Diplomacy:** -1

**Espionage:** +2

**Lore:** +3

**Operations:** +0

#### Defenses

**Communications:** 11

**Resolve:** 12

**Resources:** 10

## DOMAIN TITLE

The reptilian band leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Matriarch Rex.** The matriarch rex can shed their skin as a bonus action, immediately ending all conditions affecting them.



*Prehistoric Wrath unit card*

## DOMAIN POWERS

Reptilian band officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Regenerate.** As a bonus action, an officer can take a power die from their domain's pool and recover a number of hit points equal to the number on the die. Using a die in this way regrows any of the officer's missing limbs.

**Vengeful Shriek.** If an ally the leader can see drops to 0 hit points, the leader can use a reaction to emit a vengeful shriek. The leader takes any number of power dice from their domain's pool, and each creature of the leader's choice within 30 feet of them that they can see takes thunder damage equal to the total of the power dice.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Reptilian band officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Booby Traps.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the target domain's Resources level decreases by 1, and the reptilian band's Resolve level increases by 1.

**Ensorcelled Scales.** If the reptilian band's Resolve level is 2 or higher at the start of any combat with officers of an opposed domain, all the reptilian band's officers have the following reaction during that combat:



**Reflective Scales.** If the officer succeeds on a saving throw against a spell that targets a single creature, or if a spell attack misses the officer, they can use a reaction to choose another creature they can see within 60 feet of them. The spell targets the chosen creature instead of the officer, with the new target rerolling the saving throw or the caster rerolling the attack roll, as appropriate.

**Prehistoric Wrath (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Lore test. On a success, the reptilian band musters the Prehistoric Wrath, a special unit of dinosaurs. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**Primal Magic.** As a domain action, an officer makes a Lore test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the opposed domain's Resources level decreases by 1, and the reptilian band gains a *scroll of blood magic*. (See page 117 in the **Warfare** chapter for more information on this magic item.)

## UNDEAD DOMINION

Undeath is perhaps the oldest form of fell magic, its foul stain marring history again and again despite the efforts of those who pledge to wipe it out once and for all. Not all undead are evil by nature, but most leaders who seek to live forever are, as they manipulate the magic of life and death to eternally exercise their will over others. And soon enough, some of those undead leaders begin to ask themselves: “Why shouldn’t my people also share in the gift of immortality...?”

When an undead dominion rises, it creates a blight on the living landscape, turning soil to ash and draining the energy from all living things. Its people are a labor force that never needs rest. A military that needs no pay or medical care. They cannot be broken. They cannot be bought. They do not need to eat, or sleep, or breathe. They—and the threat they bring to bear on neighboring lands—are perpetual.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** -1  
**Espionage:** +0  
**Lore:** +1  
**Operations:** +3

### Defenses

**Communications:** 11  
**Resolve:** 13  
**Resources:** 10

## DOMAIN TITLE

The undead dominion leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Deathlord.** If damage reduces the deathlord to 0 hit points, they make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the deathlord drops to 1 hit point instead.

Additionally, effects that kill a creature outright, such as the *power word kill* spell, reduce the deathlord to 1 hit point instead.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Undead dominion officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Knee Deep in the Dead.** As a bonus action, an undead dominion officer can take any number of power dice from their domain's pool and create a number of undead minions equal to the total of the dice divided by 2. These minions rise from the ground in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of the officer. The officer selects the minions that appear, with the undead dominion's domain size determining the maximum challenge rating for each minion, as shown on the following table.

| Domain Size | Maximum Minion CR | Example Undead       |
|-------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1           | ¼                 | Skeletons or zombies |
| 2           | ½                 | Shadow               |
| 3           | 1                 | Ghoul or specter     |
| 4           | 2                 | Ghost or ogre zombie |
| 5           | 3                 | Mummy or wight       |

The undead act on their own initiative and follow the orders of the officer who summoned them.

**Rise Up.** As a bonus action, the leader can take a power die from their domain's pool and unleash an aura of unholy animation. Each corpse within



*The Grim Front unit card*

160 feet of the leader rises as an undead servant under their control, with a number of hit points equal to the number on the power die.

Risen creatures that were already undead retain their previous statistics except for their new hit points. New undead raised by this power become **ghouls** if their remains are whole, or **specters** if not.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

Undead dominion officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Mass Animate Dead (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Lore test. On a success, the undead dominion musters the Grim Front, a special unit of bloodthirsty undead soldiers. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

**The Curse Spreads.** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 14 Lore test. On a success, the officer can choose a number of undead infantry units they control equal to the undead dominion's domain size and give them the following maneuver:

**Infect.** As a reaction when an adjacent opposed unit breaks, make a Command test against that unit's Toughness. On a success, the undead dominion immediately reforms the unit with 1 casualty and takes control of it, the unit's type becomes undead, and it gains the Dead and Harrowing traits. The reformed unit acts on the next turn in the initiative order.





**The Dead Do Not Falter.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make a DC 14 Operations test. On a success, the undead dominion has advantage on Operations tests until the end of the intrigue.

**Vile Resistance.** If the undead dominion's Resolve level is 2 or higher before the start of the next combat against the officers of an opposed domain, dominion officers gain the following benefits during the combat: they lose the Sunlight Sensitivity trait if they have it, they are immune to effects that turn undead, and they do not take extra damage from any effect that deals extra damage to undead.

## UNDERSEA COLONY

Some ancestries whose folk dwell below the waves make valuable allies, but not all pelagic creatures are friendly toward the people of the surface world—and few monsters stoke fear so visceral as those that hide in the unfathomable depths of the sea. The home of such creatures is a quiet, crushing, everlasting night that holds more in common with the deep void between the stars than the lands the waves crash against. Undersea folk live among ancient cities that sank long ago, filled with prehistoric secrets best left forgotten.

Land-dwellers who come into conflict with an undersea colony often see its residents as detached and remorseless. Their strange languages often hide even stranger morals, such that slaying the crew of a ship to retrieve a stolen artifact of the deep might seem no different to them than peaceful diplomacy.

| Skills                | Defenses                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Diplomacy:</b> +0  | <b>Communications:</b> 13 |
| <b>Espionage:</b> +0  | <b>Resolve:</b> 11        |
| <b>Lore:</b> +2       | <b>Resources:</b> 10      |
| <b>Operations:</b> +1 |                           |

## DOMAIN TITLE

The undersea colony leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Tideweaver.** If a creature that cannot breathe underwater starts its turn within 30 feet of the tideweaver, that creature takes 2d6 cold damage.

Additionally, as a bonus action, the tideweaver can target a number of creatures they can see within 30 feet of them equal to the undersea colony's domain size. Each target must succeed on a Strength saving throw or either be pushed 20 feet away from the tideweaver or pulled to within 5 feet of the tideweaver (the tideweaver's choice). The DC for this saving throw is 15 or the tideweaver's spell save DC, whichever is higher.

## DOMAIN POWERS

Undersea colony officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**The Bends.** As an action, the leader can take a power die from their domain's pool and target one creature they can see within 60 feet of them. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 8 + the number on the power die or be stunned until the end of the leader's next turn. Constructs, undead, and creatures whose form contains no liquid (such as fire elementals) automatically succeed on this saving throw.

**Uncanny Gift.** As a bonus action, an officer can take a power die from their domain's pool and cast the *eldritch blast* cantrip, using the number on the power die as the spell's attack bonus. The spell creates a number of beams equal to the undersea colony's domain size.

*Salt Golems unit card*





## DOMAIN FEATURES

Undersea colony officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Dark Figures Move and Twist.** If the undersea colony's Communications level is 2 or higher at the end of deployment, an officer can choose a number of ranks on the battlefield equal to the undersea colony's domain size and cover them in fog. This fog has no effect on the undersea colony's units.

**Disrupt Shipping.** As a domain action, an officer makes an Operations test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, whenever the undersea colony makes a successful Operations test until the end of the intrigue, in addition to the normal effects for success, they also reduce the opposed domain's Resources level by 1. If the undersea colony is defeated in a battle, the opposed domain's Resources return to normal.

**Eerie Insight.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make a Lore test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, an officer chooses a number of magic items equal to the undersea colony's domain size that are in the possession of the opposed domain's officers, creating copies of those magic items for the undersea colony's officers. Artifacts cannot be targeted in this way. The copies function only until the end of the next combat encounter in which they are used.

**Salt Golems (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Lore test. On a success, the undersea colony musters the Salt Golems, a special unit of constructs made from ultradense salt crystals. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)

## WORLD BELOW CITY-STATE

Most people think of the World Below as a vast network of caverns stretching beneath the surface of the everyday world. But this is another realm entirely—a separate manifold in reality that is home to strange creatures all vying for control. Only the craftiest folk survive the host of subterranean horrors and the constant conflict between factions

in the deep. Drow, duergar, deep gnomes, and more all build city-states strong enough to weather any setback or assault. The people of these city-states rarely venture beyond their well-defended territories—but when they do, it is often in search of the resources that will help guarantee their continued security. While most World Below city-states have no interest in conquering the folk of the surface, their highly trained forces can strike quickly when necessary—or when provoked by aggression on any side.

### Skills

**Diplomacy:** -1

**Espionage:** +2

**Lore:** +0

**Operations:** +2

### Defenses

**Communications:** 10

**Resolve:** 11

**Resources:** 13

## DOMAIN TITLE

The World Below city-state leader gains the following title and the noted additional features.

**Strike Leader.** The strike leader can use an action to create a 20-foot-radius sphere of hazy smoke centered on a point within 120 feet of them. The sphere lasts for 1 minute, spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. While the sphere lasts, the strike leader can use a bonus action to move it up to 60 feet in any direction.

## DOMAIN POWERS

World Below city-state officers gain access to the following domain powers.

**Close-Quarters Magic.** As a bonus action, an officer takes a power die from their domain's pool and teleports up to a number of feet equal to  $5 \times$  the number on the die to an unoccupied space they can see.

**Crawling Toxin.** When an officer hits with a weapon attack, they can take a power die from their domain's pool and have the attack deal extra poison damage equal to the number on the power die. Any creature that takes this poison damage must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## DOMAIN FEATURES

World Below city-state officers gain access to the following domain features.

**Blades in the Dark.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the World Below city-state's Resolve increases by 1, and each unit the opposed domain musters through alliances until the end of the intrigue has its casualty die decreased one step (minimum d4).

**Subterranean Bounty.** If the World Below city-state's Communications level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, the level of one other defense of an officer's choice increases by 1.

**Tunnel Up.** As a domain action, an officer makes an Espionage test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, during the next deployment, the World Below city-state can place one infantry unit in an unoccupied space in enemy territory.



*Worm Knight unit card*

**Worm Knight (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the World Below city-state musters a Worm Knight, a special unit consisting of a knight atop a battle-trained purple worm. (See the **Warfare** chapter for full details on how to read a unit card.)



# WARFARE





hen great heroes like Ajax, Hector, or Achilles participate in a war, the story is about them fighting other heroes. Enemy heroes. The Trojan War is just a backdrop for these individuals' epic stories.

So if that's the story you want to tell—of great armies clashing in the background while heroes and villains duel each other in single combat—then you don't need rules for warfare. You can just play out normal encounters while a huge battle is described happening around the heroes and their enemies, like some particularly dramatic background music.

This system, by contrast, assumes that even in a fantasy world, armies are important. Heroes can fight other heroes, but it takes an army to capture and hold territory—and to defend a domain against a villain's army. Each army's tactics, the units deployed, and who won is important—as is how they won. So while the characters still need to stop the villain in a thrilling combat, the characters' army also needs to defeat the villain's army to fully secure victory.

## USING THESE RULES

These rules don't worry overmuch about where the player characters are during a battle, or exactly what they're doing. Most are probably off adventuring or fighting the leaders of the villain's army. They're not on the battlefield trying to micro-manage their own army. But that army is still an extension of the characters. Each unit gains benefits in battle based on a player character's class (see **Martial Advantages** on page 111), but a character's features, traits, spells, and feats mostly help make them better at fighting monsters. Characters aren't designed to fight armies. So these rules let the characters focus on fighting monsters and villains while their army tries to take and hold the villain's territory, or to stop the villain's army from taking territory of its own.

Players and GMs who like these rules and want to use this system in their games should make sure that everyone understands wars are about armies. The players and the GM control their own

side's units, but the characters, the monsters, and the NPCs should always be focused on undertaking the personal challenges and one-on-one combat they're best at.

With all this in mind, we think everyone will find a lot of value in these rules. As an overview, this section presents just a few of the ways players and GMs can use this warfare system in your games.

### COMBAT AND BATTLE

To keep clear the differences between warfare and characters engaging in combat, this book uses "combat" to refer to characters and monsters skirmishing using the game's normal rules. "Battle" is used to refer to armies clashing using the warfare rules.

## WE'RE ADVENTURING!

Just because the heroes go off on adventures doesn't mean the rest of the world stops short, waiting in suspended animation for them to return. Armies are a fantastic tool that can be used to create tension in a game while the heroes are off adventuring.

Giving the villain of the adventure an army to attack the heroes' domain, the domains of their allies, or even just the place they live is a great way to get the players engaged with warfare. A GM can pause and say "Meanwhile..." as they describe a scenario in which the heroes' domain is threatened and the players must use the heroes' army to defend it.

## DOWNTIME WARFARE

One of the most canonical uses of warfare is to give the players more—and more interesting—things to do during downtime, or at any time between group adventures when the characters are free to be more self-directed. In the time between one adventure and another, the players have a chance to come up with their own goals and motivations. And having characters be officers in a domain with a standing army, even a small one, opens up all sorts of new opportunities for story and game play.

The players might decide to use the characters' army proactively. Send it somewhere to liberate

a town or temple, or to clear out a forest infested with cultists. Send it to blockade a road and force a confrontation with a local warlord. Or they might use it reactively based on challenges the GM places in front of them, like a rebellion or an uprising. Between adventures, unlimited possibilities for drama and action arise, and warfare can easily factor into these.

## EPIC FINALE

The most spectacular use of this system is to simulate a climactic confrontation between a heroic organization and a villainous realm. The easiest and most fun way to do this is to run and resolve the battle first, then the combat, even though both are actually happening simultaneously. This works much the same way that players in combat resolve their characters' actions in distinct turns, even though in reality the characters are all moving and attacking at the same time.

When this is done, mark down who wins the battle and on which turn. Then, on that turn of the combat, the winning officers each gain a Morale Surge they can use at any time (see the sidebar). The warfare rules have been designed to, on a whole, resolve faster than character combat. This is not wholly realistic, but it is dramatic—and it allows the game to continue to focus on the heroes and their actions. Their army will win or lose before the end of the combat, and the victors gain a sudden and dramatic bonus reflecting the rush of adrenaline.

Of course, this requires some willing suspension of disbelief, since the players will have already resolved the battle before starting the combat. So they know who's going to win—and on what turn—going into their own final fight. But even if this causes characters to change their behavior in what is technically a metagaming sense, it can easily be explained as the characters being the ones who trained the forces fighting outside—and as such, being instinctively aware that those forces are going to win (or lose!), even if that wasn't strictly obvious during the actual running of the battle.

A battle can, of course, take longer than a combat! This isn't a problem if the winner of the battle is the same domain as the winner of the combat.

But even if that's not the case, when a domain's commanders lose a combat (whether they died, surrendered, were banished to another dimension, and so on) their troops automatically undertake the Retreat maneuver. (The rest of this chapter explains maneuvers and all the other rules for warfare.)

### MORALE SURGE

A character experiences a sudden rush of adrenaline upon hearing the herald's news of victory on the field of battle. As a bonus action, the character can move half their speed and take one additional action, on top of their regular action and movement. The character can use this benefit once, and loses it if they don't use it before taking a long rest.

## BRINGING THE SIEGE

When the GM decides that it's time for a battle to begin, each side can attempt to bring the siege. This section of the rules vaguely emulates the behavior of European military conflicts from the eleventh century to the fifteenth century. During these times, the majority of battles were sieges—one army attacking a fortification, rather than two armies facing each other in the field. The major question of the time was: Which side would mobilize first and lay siege to the other side's castle or keep?

The warfare rules simulate this historical setup by requiring both domains to make an opposed Operations test at the start of each battle. The winner decides whether they will attack the villain's stronghold, defend their own stronghold, or meet on a different field of battle. In the case of a tie (or if the GM determines that it's not appropriate for a particular battle to involve a stronghold), both armies meet at a location away from either stronghold.

### SEIZING THE INITIATIVE

The army that defends its domain's stronghold gains the benefits of the fortifications of that stronghold. The army that attacks has more flexibility in its tactics and is said to have seized the initiative. All units in that army's vanguard rank get a free activation at the start of the battle. While the



attacking army is taking this free activation, the units of the defending army can use reactions only.

## USING THE GRID

One of the keys to keeping battles fun is making sure everyone has room to maneuver. Each side in the battle has a  $4 \times 5$  grid—twenty spaces in total—on which to place their infantry and artillery units. Cavalry and aerial units do not use the grid.

If one side of the battlefield is completely filled with troops, that side is left with no room to maneuver and the game turns into a slog. As such, these rules work best with each side controlling twelve or fewer units.

## MAKING TESTS

Throughout these rules, you'll see references to units making tests. Just like with the rules for running domains, tests in warfare are analogous to your character making ability checks—you roll a d20, add a modifier, and compare the total to a fixed DC or some other value. If the result is equal to or greater than the value it's compared to, the test succeeds. Tests can likewise be made with advantage and disadvantage, just like ability checks.

When a unit attacks another unit, it first makes an Attack test opposed by the opposed unit's Defense. To successfully execute a special maneuver, a unit must succeed on a Command test with a DC based on the complexity of the maneuver. (Attack, Defense, and Command are three of the modifiers that are part of every unit's battle statistics, discussed in more detail below.)

## STARTING SMALL

The best way to test out these rules is to start with a small battle, wherein each player controls just one unit. There are then a commensurate number of units on the opposing side, controlled by the GM. A battle of this size—perhaps two opposing forces trying to take over a small town—gives everyone, including the GM, the chance to learn the system and get their feet wet.

It might seem like a fun idea to start with a huge battle! An epic confrontation with dozens of units on each side! But this system will quickly bog down

### ALLIED AND OPPOSED

In the warfare rules, "allied units" refers to all units that are part of an army or are friendly to that army. "Opposed units" refers to all units that are part of the army fielded by the other side in a battle, or which are friendly to that other side's army. The same usage applies when talking about opposed commanders. This allows the rules to read properly from the perspective both of players running their characters' army and the GM running a villain's army, by avoiding terms like "enemy" that might be misread as referring only to the units of the villain or GM's side.

If any part of the rules allows a unit to affect allied units, the unit can also affect itself (assuming it meets all other criteria for the specific effect).

under that kind of setup, and there are better ways to create this epic feel. These rules don't model individual soldiers, which means that players and GMs are free to redefine the scale of battle to suit their needs. If you want to run an epic battle, simply say that each unit represents a legion of five thousand soldiers rather than a squad of fifty or some other smaller number.

Alternatively, many of what are considered huge historical battles were actually a series of smaller related skirmishes. So if you want to replicate this kind of massive battle, you can use this system to play out specific skirmishes within a larger war. Using different battlefield setups each time, you'll play out the battle for the port, then the battle for the tower gates, and finally the battle for the city, with the results of each battle affecting the next.

## LARGER BATTLEFIELDS

Each player character involved in a warfare battle can command a number of units equal to their proficiency bonus, which means players can eventually control up to six units each! If your group has five or six players, that can mean battles with thirty units or more on a side!

Any time you play a battle with more than fifteen units on a side, it's recommended that the battlefield be expanded by adding ranks (rows) and



files (columns) to the field, so that there are always openings and empty spaces. As a general rule of thumb, add one new column for every three units beyond fifteen. Once you've added two columns, add another row: a second vanguard row with the same rules for deployment as the original vanguard row.

### EXPANDING THE BATTLEFIELD

| Units per Side | Add...                                    |
|----------------|---|
| 15 or fewer    | Nothing; use the 4 × 5 grid for each side |
| 16–18          | One column                                |
| 19–21          | Another column                            |
| 22–24          | One vanguard row                          |
| 25–27          | Another column                            |
| 28 or more     | Another column                            |

### DOMAIN ARMIES

Not all domains need an army. Depending on the campaign or the nature of the specific adventure you're playing, domains for the characters and the villains are still useful for the additional features they grant, even without these warfare rules. A heroic organization might act behind the scenes, or lend aid to other domains in the form of special units that can be mustered and sent to help allies. But if an enemy has an army marching on the characters' stronghold—or vice versa—creating an army is the best way to play out that scenario!

### UNITS

Each army is made up of units. Each unit is a collection of soldiers (including monsters) with the same ancestry, training, gear, and type.

An army defends a domain and fights battles for the domain's officers (either the player characters or the villains controlled by the GM). While the characters confront an opposed domain's leaders in an epic combat, the armies loyal to both sides clash in an epic battle. The characters and the villains issue orders, but the soldiers who fight and die in response to those orders are the ones who take and hold the field—the ones who win or lose the war.

### ANATOMY OF A UNIT

The following is a typical unit, so let's check out its stats.



There are a lot of numbers and symbols at use here, but you'll quickly get used to them. And you'll find much more information on all these stats and how they're used in the sections that follow.

#### NAME

Every unit has a name. For normal units, that name is just a combination of the unit's ancestry and type—for example, Human Cavalry, Elf Artillery, or Hobgoblin Infantry. Some units have more descriptive names, though, such as Human Shield Maniple or Bugbear Heavy Claw. Special units might follow either format. And unique units have quotation marks around their names, to indicate that there is only one of these special units anywhere in the world.

#### COMMANDER

Every unit also has a commander. This is the creature that issues orders to the unit in battle—usually one of the officers in charge of the domain fielding the unit.

The rules don't worry too much about how exactly a human paladin locked in combat with an evil enemy cleric is able to make their intentions known to the unit they command out on the battlefield. The system is deliberately abstract. Runners and heralds are tasked with conveying such orders, and minor magics can facilitate communication between a commander and their troops.

But beyond that, a unit knows what its commander wants because the commander has trained that unit. As well, each unit is assumed to have sergeants and subcommanders who know what to do if the commander is incapacitated, killed, or turned into a slimy toad.

## BATTLE STATISTICS

This section describes the statistics found on a unit card. Lots more information on all these statistics and examples of how they're used can be found in the following sections.

**Attack (ATK)** is a measure of a unit's tactical effectiveness—its ability to successfully execute an attack order and engage an opposed unit. A successful Attack test can inflict casualties on an opposed unit, but is only half of the process of making an attack. Attack is opposed by Defense and improved by experience.

**Defense (DEF)** is a measure of a unit's ability to maneuver in such a way that it can avoid an opposed unit's attack, or minimize it so much that it fails to make a noticeable dent in the unit's casualties. Defense is improved by experience.

**Power (POW)** is a measure of a unit's physical prowess in battle. When the halberds strike, the arrows fall, or the lances pierce, how much force is behind them? Making a Power test is the second part of making an attack, and inflicts even more casualties on an opposed unit. Power tests made for other reasons do not deal damage unless the rules say so. Power is opposed by Toughness and improved by equipment.

**Toughness (TOU)** is a measure of a unit's physical hardiness—its ability to withstand successful attacks and keep fighting. Toughness is improved by equipment.

**Morale (MOR)** measures a unit's ability to maintain discipline in the face of overwhelming odds, powerful magic, exotic enemies, and death. Failing a Morale test inflicts casualties just as Attack tests and Power tests can, since a soldier who is terrified and flees is just as ineffective as a dead soldier. Morale is improved by experience.

**Command (COM)** is a unit's ability to correctly interpret complex orders and execute them successfully. Command is improved by experience.

**Number of attacks (the sword icon)** represents the number of times a unit can organize itself to attack other units in one round of battle. Most units have only one attack. Number of attacks is improved by experience.

**Damage (DMG)** is the number of casualties inflicted on a successful Power test made after a successful Attack test. If some part of the rules grants a bonus to damage, that bonus applies only to the Power test made as part of an attack. Damage is improved by equipment.

**Size** is an abstract measure of a unit's ability to maintain morale and unit cohesion, and to carry out orders. Size determines a unit's **casualty die** (see below), and so determines how much damage a unit can take. The bigger a unit's size, the more effective it is at staying in the fight.

**Movement** is another of a unit's battle statistics, but does not appear on the card because all units have a movement of 1.

## CASUALTIES

During warfare, the number of casualties a unit can suffer but still keep on fighting is represented by the **casualty die**. A casualty die is based on a unit's size, and is placed on the unit card during battle with the number of casualties the unit has remaining facing up. For example, a size 6 unit would begin with a d6 casualty die, with the 6 facing up.

If a unit is ever reduced to half its maximum casualties or fewer, it is **diminished**. The first time a unit is diminished in a battle, it must succeed on a DC 13 Morale test or immediately suffer 1 casualty.

If a unit's casualty die ever reaches 0, the unit is **broken** and is removed from the battle. A broken unit might be able to be rallied to return to the battle, or it might be disbanded and permanently lost.

These rules don't worry about the exact number of soldiers or monsters in a unit. Likewise, casualties usually mean soldiers killed by enemy action, but not always. A soldier who is disoriented or too terrified to act, or who cannot see or hear or understand their commanders' orders, is just as ineffective as a dead soldier. For this reason, even though a unit might be removed from the battlefield when broken, there is a chance that it can be rallied later by gathering together scattered soldiers, bolstering their resolve, and organizing them for battle again.

## TYPE

A unit's type is represented by a weapon symbol. Type determines what a unit can do in battle, who it can attack, and who it can be attacked by. There are four types of basic unit: infantry, artillery (including siege weapons), cavalry, and aerial. For the purpose of improving experience and equipment (see below), cavalry and aerial units use the same tables.

| Type              | Symbol | Type            | Symbol |
|-------------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| Aerial            |        | Cavalry         |        |
| Artillery         |        | Infantry        |        |
| Artillery (Siege) |        | Infantry (Levy) |        |

## EXPERIENCE

Experience is a combination of how much training a unit has and how much fighting it's seen. More experienced units gain bonuses to Attack, Defense, Morale, and Command, as well as additional attacks, as indicated on the Unit Experience

Bonuses table. But different types of units learn different lessons in battle.

Units gain experience by surviving battles, according to how experienced they already are (see **Improving Units** on page 104). Each section of the table starts with the lowest level of experience at the top, with each subsequent level below indicating the next improvement.

The bonuses on these tables are **not cumulative**. If a veteran infantry unit survives a battle and improves to become elite, its Attack modifier goes up by 1, not by 2.

The number of stars in a unit card's upper left corner indicate the unit's level of experience. Levies and regular units have no stars, veteran units have one star, elite units have two stars, and super-elite units have three stars.

## LEVIES

Levies are infantry troops who have zero training and no experience, typically laborers and townsfolk. They know their likely fate in battle, but they believe enough in a domain's cause to fight and die for it—or they fear the price of not fighting even more.

Levies cannot have their gear or experience improved. They automatically disband after every battle and must be mustered again for the next battle.

## EQUIPMENT

Equipment describes a unit's arms and armor. Heavier units have better weapons and armor, granting them bonuses to Power, Toughness, and Damage (except for artillery units), but they might not be as flexible in battle as a lighter, more mobile unit. As with experience, different types of units gain different benefits from improving their equipment.

Units improve their equipment by having their domain pay for those improvements (see **Improving Units** on page 104). Each section of the Unit Equipment Bonuses table starts with the baseline level of equipment at the top, with each subsequent level below indicating the next improvement.



## UNIT EXPERIENCE BONUSES

| Infantry Experience | Additional Attacks | Attack | Defense | Morale | Command |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| Levies              | +0                 | -1     | -2      | -2     | -1      |
| Regular             | +0                 | +0     | +0      | +0     | +1      |
| Veteran             | +0                 | +1     | +2      | +2     | +2      |
| Elite               | +1                 | +2     | +4      | +4     | +2      |
| Super-elite         | +1                 | +3     | +6      | +6     | +3      |

| Cavalry and Aerial Experience | Additional Attacks | Attack | Defense | Morale | Command |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| Regular                       | +0                 | +0     | +0      | +0     | +0      |
| Veteran                       | +0                 | +1     | +1      | +1     | +2      |
| Elite                         | +1                 | +2     | +2      | +2     | +4      |
| Super-elite                   | +1                 | +3     | +3      | +3     | +6      |

| Artillery Experience | Additional Attacks | Attack | Defense | Morale | Command |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| Regular              | +0                 | +0     | +0      | +0     | +0      |
| Veteran              | +1                 | +2     | +1      | +1     | +1      |
| Elite                | +1                 | +4     | +2      | +2     | +2      |
| Super-elite          | +1                 | +6     | +3      | +3     | +3      |

## UNIT EQUIPMENT BONUSES

| Infantry Equipment | Power | Toughness | Damage |
|--------------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| Light              | +0    | +0        | +0     |
| Medium             | +2    | +2        | +0     |
| Heavy              | +4    | +4        | +0     |
| Super-heavy        | +6    | +6        | +1     |









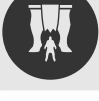





| Cavalry & Aerial Equipment | Power | Toughness | Damage |
|----------------------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| Light                      | +0    | +0        | +0     |
| Medium                     | +1    | +1        | +0     |
| Heavy                      | +2    | +2        | +0     |
| Super-heavy                | +3    | +3        | +1     |

| Artillery Equipment | Power | Toughness |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| Light               | +0    | +0        |
| Medium              | +1    | +1        |
| Heavy               | +2    | +2        |
| Super-heavy         | +3    | +3        |



## ANCESTRY

Ancestry affects all of a unit's stats, and in many ways is the defining attribute of a unit. Ancestry also determines what traits a unit has.

| Ancestry   | Symbol  | Ancestry   | Symbol  |
|------------|---|------------|---|
| Dragonborn |    | Human      |    |
| Dwarf      |    | Kobold     |    |
| Elf        |    | Lizardfolk |    |
| Fiend      |    | Monstrous  |    |
| Giant      |    | Orc        |    |
| Gnoll      |  | Special    |  |
| Gnome      |  | Undead     |  |
| Goblinoid  |  |            |   |

The bonuses a unit gains because of its ancestry have very little to do with any of the stats that creatures of those ancestries have in the core rules. The warfare rules are concerned with how well creatures organize, take orders, and maintain morale and unit cohesion, none of which are necessarily related to how well creatures fight in single combat.

## TIER

A unit's tier, represented by a Roman numeral on its card, is a measure of the unit's overall power or nastiness. Tier I units are the least powerful (and thus the easiest to put onto the battlefield), while Tier V units are the most powerful.

All units after Tier I have unit dependencies that determine how many units of a specific tier are needed to field a unit of a higher tier. For example, you can field an unlimited number of Tier I units, but you must have more Tier I units than Tier II units.

## TRAITS

Each unit also has a collection of traits—maneuvers or special features that it can employ in battle. The names of each unit's traits are listed on its unit card, keying to the descriptions in the **Unit Traits** section on page 126 in this chapter. This keeps the unit cards small and useful in battle, and means players don't have to constantly pick each card up to read what its traits can do in the middle of a battle. Printer-friendly cards are available on page 314.

## BUILDING AN ARMY

As soon as a group of characters founds an organization, they muster four Tier I units of the players' choice from any ancestry the GM agrees the organization has access to. These are leaderless soldiers—probably regular light troops from other failed domains, looking for someone to serve.

As an option, any time a domain musters a Tier I unit, it can muster two levies instead. This can boost the size of a starting army by making it some combination of levies and regular troops. However, levies automatically disband at the end of the next battle they fight in.

Six ancestries are presented in this book—humans, elves, dwarves, orcs, goblinoids, and undead. Each ancestry features nine units covering different types and tiers. Whenever an organization musters new units, they must be from an ancestry the GM agrees the organization has access to, chosen from the nine units noted and following the rules for unit command and unit dependencies (detailed below).

(If you use *Strongholds & Followers* in your game, you can optionally use the rules that allow characters to attract a variety of followers, including new units, when they build or take over a stronghold.)

Units mustered by a heroic organization belong to that organization. Each unit needs a commander (see **Unit Command and Dependencies** below)

who must be an officer in the organization. These units gain experience through battle (unless they're levies), and the organization can spend gold to improve any unit's equipment.

Gaining additional units can be accomplished in three ways:

- An officer of the organization can use a domain action during intrigue to muster one unit from any ancestry the GM agrees the organization has access to (see the **Operations** section on page 23 in the **Domains & Intrigue** chapter). Units mustered in this way belong to the organization and persist from battle to battle until they are disbanded. They must conform to the rules for unit dependencies.
- An officer of the organization can muster the organization's special unit by succeeding on an Operations test during intrigue (see the **Operations** section on page 23, and the details of

special units in each organization's write-up in the **Domains & Intrigue** chapter). This unit disbands after the next battle it is used in, and must be mustered again before it can be used again. This unit ignores unit dependencies.

- An officer of the organization can recruit new units from NPC realms by succeeding on a Diplomacy test during intrigue (see the **Diplomacy** section on page 20 in the **Domains & Intrigue** chapter), gaining the use of that realm's special unit. Units gained by diplomacy disband after the next battle they are used in, and return to their home domain. Additional diplomacy is necessary if they are to be fielded again. These units ignore unit dependencies.

All units, regardless of how they are raised, need a commander. Units that conform to the rules for unit dependencies can be used to unlock new units based on their tier, but units that ignore





unit dependencies cannot. For example, a Tier III unit mustered as an organization's special unit or recruited through diplomacy does not count toward being able to muster a Tier IV unit.

## UNIT ANCESTRY

The GM determines which ancestries an organization has access to when raising units. It's reasonable to assume a dwarf officer would know other dwarves, and that the officer's heroism has become known in their homeland. So when this heroic dwarf puts out the call, a unit of dwarves arrives! That said, a dwarf officer might be an exile, or might have been raised in a human city and have no real connection to any ancestral home. If so, the GM might decide that a different ancestry is available instead.

If the characters' organization is on good terms with a nearby NPC elf domain—perhaps because of interactions during a previous adventure—it's reasonable to assume that the organization can muster elven units. But the only way to muster the Court Jesters—a special aerial unit of veteran sprites with medium equipment belonging to a fey court domain—is through Diplomacy.

## UNIT TYPES

There are four types of units—infantry, artillery, cavalry, and aerial. Each has different base stats, and because of the rules governing which units can attack other units (see **Attacking**) and the rules for deployment, each has a specific role to play in warfare.

### INFANTRY UNITS

Infantry are the meat-and-potatoes troops for any domain.

They are not as flashy as artillery or cavalry, but they are harder to kill, having higher Toughness than other units of the same tier and ancestry. Infantry are often used to protect artillery units.

Infantry have very few legal targets in a battle. They can attack only adjacent units (in front, behind, to the left, or to the right of the infantry unit), and can't attack cavalry or aerial units at all. But infantry also have access to more maneuvers than other units. Only infantry units can use the Follow Up maneuver, which gives them free movement after an adjacent opposed unit breaks or



moves away from them. This helps infantry quickly move into position to get closer to the opposed side's center rank—where all the squishy archers are usually hiding!

Infantry can also make use of the Set for Charge maneuver, which gives them a chance of inflicting casualties on any cavalry or aerial unit that attacks them. They cannot attack those more mobile units back, but they are not completely defenseless against them.

Infantry also include a domain's levies—the untrained troops who have either volunteered to support a domain or been pressed into service. Levies are cheaper than other Tier I units, with officers able to muster two units of levies instead of any other Tier I unit. But they have poor stats compared to other infantry units, and those stats cannot be improved. Levies disband after every battle.

The best use of levies is to defend a domain's rear rank against enemy cavalry. They often won't last long, but they'll force an opponent to waste actions wearing them down.

### ARTILLERY UNITS

Artillery units include both archers and siege engines.



Mostly archers.

Artillery units can attack any other unit on the field, which means they're a domain's best defense against enemy aerial units. Those are thankfully rare, but archers' ability to pick targets from across the battlefield makes them incredibly good at two things—forcing Morale tests by diminishing opposed units, and breaking opposed units that have only 1 casualty remaining, regardless of where those units are.

Additionally, archers and cavalry can be coordinated to pick out a single enemy cavalry unit and wear it down, since archers and cavalry can attack any cavalry unit. Many battles begin with both sides using archers and cavalry in this way, trying to eliminate opposing cavalry before they can go on the offensive.

The downside, of course, is that archers are incredibly squishy. They have low Defense and Toughness compared to other troops of the same tier and ancestry. For this reason, they must be

deployed in the center rank of the battlefield, and a large part of the strategy of a domain's officers typically involves keeping their archers alive.

Siege Engines are usually Tier II units, so they're harder to muster. They can attack any other units and inflict a lot of casualties—but most require an entire round between attacks doing nothing (loading the catapult or trebuchet, winding the ballista, and so forth). Combined with the fact that they're the only unit that can damage fortifications (which they automatically hit!), siege engines are typically only mustered when a domain is fighting an opposing force with fortifications, and are then used to batter down those walls and towers.

### CAVALRY UNITS

Cavalry units move fast and hit hard. They are so mobile that they belong to no specific rank, ranging across the battlefield to attack other cavalry, and pick off those infantry and artillery units foolish enough to leave themselves exposed.



Cavalry units have greater Power than other units of the same tier and ancestry, and they're one of the few Tier I units that deal 2 damage on a successful Power test. This means they can cause most Tier I units to become diminished with a single successful attack—a size 6 unit taking 1 casualty from a successful Attack test, and then 2 more casualties from a successful Power test!

Many battles begin with both sides trying to neutralize the other's cavalry. Units with the Archers trait are particularly good at this.

### AERIAL UNITS

Flying units are rare, with most of them in Tier III and having stats comparable to an average Tier II unit. This is because aerial units can attack any other unit (in the same manner as artillery units) but very few units can return fire against them! Only artillery and other aerial units can attack an aerial unit.



Mustering aerial units gives a domain a major advantage over an opposed domain that has no aerial units with which to defend itself. But while they have clear advantages in battle, aerial units are squishy. They have higher Attack modifiers than other units of the same tier and ancestry,

but their need to be lightly armed and armored compared to other units gives them lower Defense and Toughness.

Properly used, aerial units can make a big difference in a battle, but they do not represent instant victory. Rather, much of their usefulness is psychological. An army without aerial units facing an army with aerial units often feels as though it's on the defensive, even if it has archers enough to handle the situation.

## UNIT COMMAND AND DEPENDENCIES

A couple of restrictions affect how many units a domain can field, and which units it can field. This stops a battle from growing too large to manage, and simulates the fact that any army will have a very small number of elite units supported by a broad base of regular units. It also prevents domains from fielding an army made up of only one or two extremely nasty units that can't be defeated by a regular army.

### UNIT COMMAND

An officer can command a number of units equal to their proficiency bonus. Every unit a domain fields—both regular units and special units, no matter how those units are gained—must have a commander.

Normally, only a domain officer (a player character member of a heroic organization, or the NPC leader and lieutenants for an enemy realm or some other opposed domain) can command units. But the GM might decide to let NPCs allied with a heroic organization command units as well. This is useful in scenarios that demand larger armies but have a small number of players.

### UNIT DEPENDENCIES

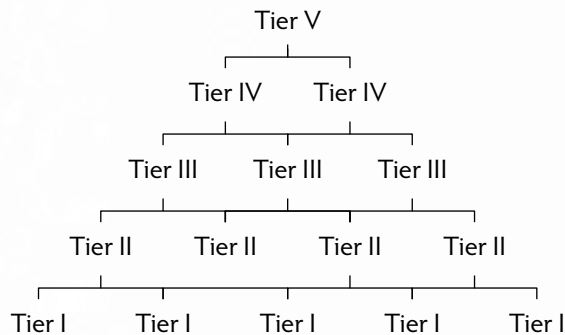
Each unit's tier represents not only its power level relative to other units. It represents the relationship wherein higher-tier units require many lower-tier units to support them, as follows:

- There is no limit to the number of Tier I units (including levies) a domain can field.
- A domain can field a number of Tier II units one less than its current number of Tier I units.
- A domain can field a number of Tier III units one less than its current number of Tier II units.

- A domain can field a number of Tier IV units one less than its current number of Tier III units.
- A domain can field a number of Tier V units one less than its current number of Tier IV units.

Remember that whenever a domain raises a regular Tier I unit, it can raise two units of levies instead. Because these levies are also Tier I, they are a quick way of increasing unit numbers to unlock more powerful units—at the cost of fielding much squishier units at the base of an army!

An example large army of fifteen units lead by a Tier V unit would look like this:



A domain's special unit, as well as units raised through diplomacy, ignore unit dependencies. These units can take to the battlefield regardless of what other units are in play for a domain.

## IMPROVING UNITS

For each of the units in play for a domain, experience and equipment can both be improved. Units gain experience through battle, and better equipment with money.

### IMPROVING EXPERIENCE

The only way to improve a unit's experience is through battle, as follows:

- Regular units become veteran units if they survive their first battle. Easy!
- Veteran units become elite units if they survive three more battles. Much harder.
- Elite units become super-elite units after surviving four more battles (eight total).

Levies cannot be improved, as the untrained troops who make up those units are considered to go back to their lives as soon as their task in battle is done.

## IMPROVING EQUIPMENT

A domain can spend money to upgrade a unit's equipment from light to medium, medium to heavy, and so forth, requiring only a domain action.

(**Modifying Units** on page 23 in the **Domains & Intrigue** chapter has all this information.)

A domain can upgrade as many units as desired with a single domain action, and those units can be upgraded to any level the domain can afford, from light to super-heavy. A domain can upgrade any units it controls.

| Upgrade from...      | Cost                            |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Light to medium      | 500 gp × the tier of the unit   |
| Medium to heavy      | 1,000 gp × the tier of the unit |
| Heavy to super-heavy | 2,000 gp × the tier of the unit |

## VOLUNTARILY DISBANDING UNITS

Players and GMs might end up with an army fit to a purpose that decisively wins a climactic battle! But now a domain needs a different army for the next threat. To create the opportunity to muster new units, a domain's officers can voluntarily disband any units the domain controls during an extended rest. (The GM determines what an extended rest means in the campaign, but one week of downtime spent managing a domain is a good rule of thumb.) Units must be disbanded carefully, though, or the relationships of unit dependencies might be broken.

## WARFARE FEATS

In campaigns that use the optional rule for feats, player characters can take any of the following feats to improve their units' stats in warfare.

### TACTICAL LEADER

Each unit you control has +2 to Attack.

### AGILE LEADER

Each unit you control has +2 to Defense.

### LEAD FROM THE FRONT

Each unit you control has +2 to Power.

### UNSTOPPABLE LEADER

Each unit you control has +2 to Toughness.

## PERSUASIVE LEADER

Each unit you control has +2 to Morale.

## STRATEGIC LEADER

Each unit you control has +2 to Command.

## THE BATTLEFIELD

The battlefield is a grid five spaces wide, divided into two sections for the two opposing forces in a battle. Each section is four rows deep, with each row called a rank.

The topmost row in each section is the **vanguard**, which faces the opposed army. Behind the vanguard is an army's **reserve** rank, followed by the **center** rank, followed by the **rear**.

In addition to these four ranks, each side also has a **front**, which comprises the vanguard plus all enemy ranks. If a unit controlled by a domain moves from that domain's vanguard into the opposing side's vanguard, or even all the way into the opposing side's rear rank, they are still in the controlling domain's front.

|          |  |  |  |  |  |          |
|----------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|
| REAR     |  |  |  |  |  | REAR     |
| CENTER   |  |  |  |  |  | CENTER   |
| RESERVE  |  |  |  |  |  | RESERVE  |
| VANGUARD |  |  |  |  |  | VANGUARD |
| VANGUARD |  |  |  |  |  | VANGUARD |
| RESERVE  |  |  |  |  |  | RESERVE  |
| CENTER   |  |  |  |  |  | CENTER   |
| REAR     |  |  |  |  |  | REAR     |

With the exception of the reserve rank (see **Stacking** below), a space can only hold one unit.

## SETUP

At the start of a battle, all officers commanding units roll initiative. After initiative is determined for a battle, each character and NPC acting as a commander deploys their units in reverse initiative order. In other words, whoever acts last in the combat gets to place all their units first in the battle.

If you are playing a battle alongside combat, use the same initiative order for both.

## CASUALTY DICE

During deployment, each unit commander places a die on every unit they control. This is the casualty die representing the number of casualties the unit can suffer before it breaks. The number of casualties the unit has remaining should be facing up. So a size 6 unit would begin with a d6 casualty die, with the 6 facing up.

Some domain features can increase the size of a unit's casualty die. **Increasing a casualty die** means upgrading from a d4 to a d6, a d6 to a d8, and so forth. Decreasing a casualty die means downgrading in the same way.

As a unit suffers casualties, its casualty die is **decremented**. This means the number on the die is decreased by 1, so that a 6 becomes a 5, a 5 becomes a 4, and so forth. Under certain circumstances, the die is **incremented**—increased by 1—to indicate that a unit's battle readiness is being restored. A unit that has its casualty die decremented from 1, indicating that it has lost its last casualty, is **broken** and removed from the field.

Unless otherwise noted, no unit can gain casualties beyond the maximum value on its casualty die.

Once all units are placed, battle can begin. During battle, units are activated by the characters and NPCs controlling them in initiative order.

## COLLAPSING RANKS

At the start of any round (including the first), if a rank contains no units or fortifications (see below), that rank collapses and is no longer part of the battlefield. The ranks in front of and behind the collapsed rank are now next to each other. Ranks that remain on the field keep their name and rules. For instance, if a rear rank collapses, the center rank next to it remains the center rank.

## DEPLOYMENT

When deploying units, artillery must go in the center rank. Infantry can be deployed in the vanguard, center, reserve, or rear ranks. Cavalry and aerial units are not placed in any rank, but can move freely across or above the battlefield.

## STACKING UNITS

---

Units in the reserve rank can be stacked when deployed. When units are stacked, only the top unit can be targeted. Units under a stack are treated as though they were not on the battlefield for the purpose of being subject to attacks or effects.

Only the top unit of a group of stacked units can be activated. If that unit leaves the stack, the unit beneath it is now on top of the stack and can be targeted. Because a unit can't move into a space occupied by other units, units can only leave a stack during a battle, they can't enter one.

## ACTIVATION

---

On each commander's turn (whether that commander is a player character or an NPC controlled by the GM), they activate all the units they control in any order. Each unit must finish its activation before another unit can be activated.

Each unit can take actions and move, in either order. The actions a unit can undertake during its activation include the following:

- Attack another unit
- Use a magic item
- Attempt a maneuver
- Move 1 additional space (march)
- Hold (do nothing)

Unless a unit holds and does nothing, it can move and take an action, take an action and move, or move and move (called a march).

## ATTACKING

---

When a unit attacks, its choice of targets is determined by its unit type. (These parameters are sometimes referred to as the "order of battle.") The units of both sides are able to attack as follows:

- **Infantry units** can attack any adjacent unit—one in front, behind, to the left, or to the right. They cannot attack diagonally.
- **Artillery and aerial units** can attack any unit.
- **Cavalry units** can attack other cavalry units, and any infantry or artillery units that are exposed (see **Unit Conditions** on page 107).

- **Siege engines** can attack any unit, and can attack fortifications.

Some units, typically infantry in the rear rank, might have no opposed units that are legal targets. (Units can attack allied units if compelled to do so by some effect, or just for fun.)

With a legal target selected, an attacking unit makes an Attack test against the target's Defense. If the Attack test succeeds, the attacking unit inflicts 1 casualty on its target and then makes a Power test against the target's Toughness. If the Power test succeeds, the attacking unit inflicts additional casualties equal to the unit's noted damage.

The attacks of artillery units are ranged attacks. The attacks of infantry, cavalry, and aerial units are melee attacks.

## MOVEMENT

---

When a unit moves, it must move into an empty adjacent space—a space in front, behind, to the left, or to the right of its current space. Units cannot move diagonally. Units that have movement greater than 1 can move into successive empty spaces. A unit can move through other units only if it has a special feature that says so.

Though the front ranks of both sides in a battle are usually separated a little to make it easier to tell one side from another, units in one front can move into the opposing side's front if there is an empty space there. Units can then move normally through the opposing side's ranks as long as there are empty adjacent spaces for them to move into.

If a unit is in the rear rank of its army and moves backward, it is permanently removed from the battle.

## BONUS MOVEMENT

A unit might gain "+1 to movement," which means the unit moves 1 extra space both when it moves and if it uses its action to move. (Which is to say, if it marches, it moves 2 extra spaces.)

A unit might suffer a penalty to movement (indicated by "-1 to movement"). If a unit with the normal speed of 1 and no bonuses to movement suffers a -1 movement penalty, it cannot move or march.

## UNIT CONDITIONS

Just like the conditions that affect characters, a number of unit conditions summarize the state of an army's units during the battle.

**Broken.** A unit that breaks becomes broken. It has lost its last casualty and is removed from the battle. Broken units can be reformed, usually by rallying.

**Disbanded.** A disbanded unit is removed from the game and cannot be reformed by normal means.

**Disorganized.** A disorganized unit does nothing on its next activation while it attempts to regain unit cohesion.

**Disoriented.** A disoriented unit can either take an action or move, but not both. Unless otherwise stated, this unit condition lasts until the end of the unit's next activation.

**Exposed.** A unit is exposed if there are no units between it and the leftmost or rightmost battle-field edge, or if there are no units in any rank to the rear of the unit. Units in the center and reserve of an army's ranks cannot be exposed as long as that army has its own units in both its rear rank and anywhere in its front. (See **Exposed** below for more information.)

**Hidden.** When a unit is hidden, other units have disadvantage on Attack tests against it.

**Misled.** A unit that is misled cannot attack, and spends its next activation moving randomly into an available space. Cavalry and aerial units cannot be misled.

**Weakened.** A unit that is weakened has disadvantage on Attack tests and Power tests.

## ACTIONS, REACTIONS, AND BONUS ACTIONS

Each unit has the same types of actions in battle as a character does in combat—one action, one bonus action, and one reaction.

Each unit gets only one action per activation. If a unit gets multiple attacks, it makes those attacks as one action. If it has access to multiple actions, perhaps as a result of maneuvers or unit traits, it must choose which action to use on its activation.

A unit can use a bonus action only if some trait or other feature grants it a bonus action. A bonus action is used on the unit's activation, either before or after it attacks or moves. If a unit gets multiple bonus actions from traits or features, it must choose which one to use on its activation.

If a unit has a reaction, it can use that reaction during its own activation or on another unit's activation. Once a unit uses a reaction, it cannot use another one until its next activation. If the reaction interrupts another unit's activation, that unit can continue its activation after the reaction resolves.

## RESOLVING MULTIPLE REACTIONS

When resolving multiple reactions between units, the defending unit gets the first chance to resolve a reaction. Then the attacking unit can use its reaction, followed by the defending unit's allies, then the attacking unit's allies.

## EXPOSED

Cavalry can attack exposed units. A unit is exposed if there are no units between it and the leftmost or rightmost battlefield edge, or if there are no units in any rank to the rear of the unit. By definition, all units in the rear ranks are always exposed. Units in the center and reserve of an army's ranks cannot be exposed as long as that army has its own units in both its rear rank and anywhere in its front. As soon as either of those conditions is no longer true, units in the center or reserve can become exposed. See the diagram below for more information.

| RANK COLLAPSED |                  |                  |                  |                 |                 |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| REAR           | EXPOSED          | EXPOSED          | EXPOSED          |                 | REAR            |
| CENTER         | Skeletal Archers | Skeletal Archers | Skeletal Archers |                 | CENTER          |
| RESERVE        |                  | EXPOSED          | NOT EXPOSED      |                 | EXPOSED         |
| VANGUARD       |                  | Zombie Infantry  | Zombie Infantry  |                 | Zombie Infantry |
|                |                  |                  | EXPOSED          | NOT EXPOSED     | EXPOSED         |
|                |                  |                  | Zombie Infantry  | Zombie Infantry | Human Infantry  |
| VANGUARD       | EXPOSED          | NOT EXPOSED      |                  | NOT EXPOSED     | EXPOSED         |
| VANGUARD       | Zombie Infantry  | Human Infantry   |                  | Human Infantry  | Human Infantry  |
| RESERVE        |                  | NOT EXPOSED      |                  |                 | NOT EXPOSED     |
| RESERVE        |                  | Human Infantry   |                  |                 | Human Infantry  |
| CENTER         |                  | NOT EXPOSED      | NOT EXPOSED      |                 |                 |
| CENTER         |                  | Human Archers    | Human Archers    |                 |                 |
| REAR           |                  | EXPOSED          | EXPOSED          |                 |                 |
|                |                  | Human Peasants   | Human Peasants   |                 |                 |

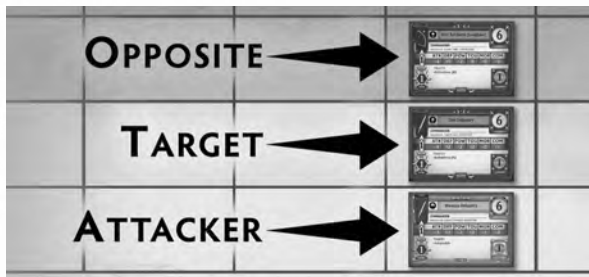


## "FORWARD" AND "BACK"

If the rules ever refer to a unit moving forward or back, those directions are relative to the unit's rear rank. Forward is moving away from the rear and back is moving toward the rear.

## "OPPOSITE"

Some rules refer to the unit opposite a target. This means the unit on the other side of the target from the attacker.



## MORALE TESTS

When a unit is subject to magic or specific events, the rules sometimes call for that unit to succeed on a Morale test. This includes such events as a unit being diminished, when it must succeed on a DC 13 Morale test or suffer 1 casualty. Likewise, whenever a unit is affected by an opposed unit's battle magic, in addition to resolving the other effects of the magic, that unit must succeed on a DC 13 Morale test or suffer 1 casualty.

Unless otherwise stated, the DC for any Morale test is 13.

## TOKENS

Some unit traits and magic items can put tokens on units, with the trait or item description noting what effect the tokens create. When a unit with tokens on it activates, it immediately suffers the effect of the tokens. If a token inflicts damage, the unit takes damage for each token on it. At the end of the unit's activation, make a DC 12 Power test for each type (acid, fire, etc.) of token on it. On a success, remove one token of that type.

For example, a unit targeted by another unit with the Flaming Weapons trait and in a space containing an acid pool created by a *wand of acid pool* might have two fire tokens and one acid token on it

at the beginning of its activation. It suffers 3 damage (1 for each fire token and 1 for the acid token), then removes one fire token and one acid token.

## DIMINISHED, BROKEN, AND DISBANDED

A unit is **diminished** when its current casualties are half or less than its starting casualties. The first time a unit becomes diminished, it must succeed on a DC 13 Morale test or suffer another casualty. Each unit does this only once per battle.

A unit is **broken** and removed from the battle after it suffers its last casualty. This does not mean that every soldier in the unit is dead, but those who survive are left confused, panicked, squabbling—or might simply have fled. Broken units can be reformed with the Rally maneuver and certain martial advantages.

If a unit breaks and later fails a Morale test to rally, it is **disbanded**. (Certain martial advantages and other effects can also cause a unit to disband.) A disbanded unit is permanently destroyed. It is removed from the battle and cannot be rallied or reformed by normal means.

## DEFEAT

At the end of each round of battle, after all officers on both sides have activated all their units, each side determines the current **point value** of their army. This total is based on the tier of each unit in the army, with Tier I units (including levies) worth 1 point, Tier II units worth 2, Tier III units worth 3, and so on.

At the end of any round, if one side has **more than twice the point value** of the other, that side has won the battle. Each commander on the losing side must immediately attempt the Retreat maneuver for each of their units (see **General Maneuvers** below).

## AFTER THE BATTLE

Immediately after the battle, all units that were broken but not disbanded can execute the Rally maneuver. (This excludes units that have already been rallied during the battle, as a unit can rally only once per battle.)

Units that succeed at the Retreat or Rally maneuvers gain casualties at a rate of 1 per week, incrementing the casualty die until they have their full casualties once again.

Units that survive the battle, including those that rallied at the conclusion of the battle, can increase their experience, as discussed in **Improving Units** (page 104).

Levies immediately disband after the battle, as they are always temporary units. New levies must be mustered from scratch for the next battle. Likewise, special units go their own way, and units mustered through alliances or diplomacy return to their home domains.

## ONGOING EFFECTS

Any ongoing effects, tokens, or unit conditions automatically end for all units once the battle is over. It is assumed that once battle is no longer a priority, surviving troops and their officers can quickly resolve any problems a unit is having.

## GENERAL MANEUVERS

Maneuvers represent complex operations that a unit can attempt during its activation. Some maneuvers are made as reactions in response to specific events or conditions, as described in the maneuver.

Some maneuvers require a successful test, with the battle statistic and DC noted in the maneuver. On a failed test, the unit cannot perform the intended maneuver. However, it can still move or attack during its activation (though it can't do both).

Some maneuvers can be attempted only by certain types of units. Other maneuvers can be attempted by units of any type. Certain maneuvers (Follow Up, Rally, Retreat, Set for Charge, and Withdraw) can be undertaken by any appropriate units. Other maneuvers can be undertaken by appropriate units only if a martial advantage allows units to be trained to use the maneuver (indicated by the prerequisites).

This section collects maneuvers that are either generally available, or which can be assigned by martial advantages. Additional maneuvers are

available as traits assigned to specific units, and are found in **Unit Traits** (page 126).

## FEINT

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*Prerequisite: Rogue martial advantage*

As an action, choose an adjacent opposed unit and an empty space adjacent to that unit. This unit moves into the adjacent space and makes an opposed Command test against the target unit. On a success, the opposed unit moves into the space this unit just vacated.

## FIND COVER

---

*Prerequisite: Ranger martial advantage*

As a reaction to moving, this unit can make a DC 13 Command test. On a success, any opposed unit attacking this unit has disadvantage on Attack tests until its next activation.

## FOLLOW UP

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*Prerequisite: Infantry*

As a reaction to an opposed unit adjacent to this unit breaking or moving out of its space, this unit makes a DC 8 Command test. On a success, this unit moves into the opposed unit's former space.

## MOBILITY TRAP

---

*Prerequisite: Barbarian or monk martial advantage*

As a reaction when an opposed cavalry or aerial unit successfully attacks this unit, this unit makes a DC 13 Command test. On a success, the attacking unit's type becomes infantry and this unit places the attacking unit in any empty space closest to this unit. The attacking unit's type reverts back at the beginning of its next activation, and it is removed from its temporary space.

## RAGE CHARGE

---

*Prerequisite: Barbarian martial advantage*

As an action, this unit makes a DC 13 Command test. On a success, the unit moves up to 5 spaces. If it ends this movement adjacent to an opposed unit, it can attack that unit.

## RALLY

*Prerequisite: Any broken unit*

After the battle, this broken unit makes a DC 13 Morale test (no action required). On a success, the unit reforms with 1 casualty. If a 20 is rolled on the d20 for the test, the unit reforms with 2 casualties. On a failure, the broken unit disbands.

### RALLYING

Each unit can be rallied only once per battle—either at the end of the battle using the Rally maneuver, or beforehand by the use of a martial advantage or some other special feature. At the end of a battle, after a victor has been declared, all broken units automatically attempt the Rally maneuver, unless they have already been rallied by some other means. (As a battle progresses, players should keep track of which units have already been rallied.)

If a commander has a reaction that allows them to rally a unit during another unit's activation (for example, as a reaction to being broken by an opposed unit's successful attack) the rally is executed immediately. If the unit successfully rallies, the unit that triggered the reaction then finishes its activation. (In the example above, it would proceed to the Power test, potentially inflicting more damage on the just-rallied unit.)

## RETREAT

*Prerequisite: None (any unit)*

This unit makes a DC 8 Command test. On a success, the unit is removed from the battle and its current casualties are recorded. On a failure, the unit suffers 1 casualty as opposed units take parting shots at it. If this does not break the unit, it is removed from the battle and its current casualties are recorded.

A commander must attempt the Retreat maneuver for all their units if the commander's army is defeated in battle. But a commander can also attempt the Retreat maneuver with any unit on its activation in order to save the unit from a potentially worse fate.

## SET FOR CHARGE

*Prerequisite: Infantry*

As a reaction to suffering a casualty from a successful Attack test from a cavalry or aerial unit that is not using the Archers trait, this unit makes a DC 13 Command test. On a success, the attacking unit suffers 1 casualty.

## STRAFE

*Prerequisite: Fighter martial advantage*

As a reaction to succeeding on a Power test made as part of an attack against an opposed artillery or infantry unit, this unit makes a DC 13 Command test. On a success, two adjacent opposed units in the same rank as the target unit each suffer 1 casualty.

## VOLLEY

*Prerequisite: Fighter martial advantage*

As an action, choose two adjacent units and make a DC 13 Command test. On a success, this unit attacks both units. On a failure, the unit attacks only one unit of its choice.

## WITHDRAW

*Prerequisite: Artillery or infantry*

As a reaction to failing a Morale test, this unit can move back into an empty space instead of suffering a casualty. If there is no empty space behind this unit, it cannot use this maneuver.



## MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

Between adventures and during downtime, player characters work with the units they command, whether training them or crafting items for them. Infantry units trained by a barbarian character fight quite differently than infantry units trained by a rogue. Likewise, wizards and clerics both craft wands and scrolls for the sergeants who command their troops, but these items grant very different boons.

These traits and items are called martial advantages, and are unlocked as the character's domain grows in size (from winning battles). A character's martial advantages typically apply to all the units that character controls as a commander, unless the text of the martial advantage says otherwise.

Multiclass characters can choose martial advantages from any of their classes. For example, a wizard/druid can choose from either the Wizard Martial Advantages table or the Druid Martial Advantages table each time they gain new a martial advantage based on their domain's size. However, those choices are permanent once made, and can't be swapped out.

Many of the martial advantages described in the tables below use the shorthand "DS" for the domain size of the commander's realm.

## BATTLE MAGIC

Some commanders gain access to battle magic, allowing them to create magic items designed for war that can be distributed among the units they control. Only one item can be used on a commander's turn. These items are limited use, and expend their magic either immediately or at the end of the battle. Each martial advantage creates a single item per battle.

Whenever a unit is affected by an opposed unit's battle magic, in addition to resolving the other effects of the magic, that unit must succeed on a DC 13 Morale test or suffer 1 casualty.

**Wands.** Wands must be given to artillery or aerial units during deployment. A magic wand belongs to the specific unit it is given to, and can be used every round.

**Scrolls.** Magic scrolls are single-use items. They are not assigned to any specific unit at deployment, but can be assigned to any unit by its commander at any time.



## BARBARIAN MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

Barbarians favor lightly armored, highly mobile troops. These soldiers sometimes don't last long, but they can carve a path through any battlefield.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages                 |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 1           | Furious Assault, Mobility Training |
| 2           | Berserkers                         |
| 3           | Mobility Trap                      |
| 4           | Rage Charge                        |
| 5           | Blood Fever                        |

**Furious Assault.** Each light infantry unit this commander controls has +1 to movement and inflicts 1 additional casualty on a successful Attack test.

**Mobility Training.** Each light infantry unit this commander controls automatically succeeds on the Command test for the Follow Up maneuver (page 109), and can immediately make an attack against an adjacent opposed unit when it completes that maneuver.

**Berserkers.** Each infantry unit this commander controls automatically succeeds on the Morale test when it becomes diminished. Each diminished infantry unit this commander controls has advantage on Power tests.

**Mobility Trap.** Each light infantry unit this commander controls has the Mobility Trap maneuver (page 109).

**Rage Charge.** Each light infantry unit this commander controls has the Rage Charge maneuver (page 109).

**Blood Fever.** Once per battle, a diminished unit this commander controls can make a DC 13 Command test. On a success, each diminished unit this commander controls gains a free activation. Attack tests made during this activation have advantage.

## BARD MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

As characters who excel at inspiring comrades in the middle of battle, bards make excellent leaders. They focus mostly on battle magic to inspire their soldiers or trick the forces of the enemy, but their troops also enjoy the benefits of being well taken care of.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages                                   |
|-------------|--|
| 1           | Song of Battles Won, Troops of Fame and Great Renown |
| 2           | Scroll of Mass Hypnosis                              |
| 3           | Scroll of Omund's Trumpet                            |
| 4           | Tale of Heroes Bold                                  |
| 5           | Impassioned Speech                                   |

**Song of Battles Won.** An opposed unit has disadvantage on Attack tests against any unit this commander controls if that defending unit has fewer casualties than the attacker.

**Troops of Fame and Great Renown.** As a reaction to being deployed, a unit this commander controls chooses an opposed commander. Each unit controlled by that commander must succeed on a Morale test (DC = 11 + DS) or suffer 1 casualty.

**Scroll of Mass Hypnosis.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a number of opposed units equal to this commander's domain size +1. Each chosen unit must succeed on a Command test (DC = 13 + DS) or become disorganized.

**Scroll of Omund's Trumpet.** As an action, the unit with this scroll can cause each allied unit to have advantage on Power tests and Morale tests until the end of that unit's next activation.

**Tale of Heroes Bold.** Each unit this commander controls has advantage on Attack tests when there are two or more opposed units adjacent to it.

**Impassioned Speech.** Once per battle as a bonus action, a unit this commander controls chooses a number of allied units that are broken equal to the commander's proficiency bonus. Each unit that succeeds on a DC 12 Morale test gains 1d4 + 1 casualties and is returned to the battle according to normal deployment rules, restoring collapsed ranks if necessary. If there is no legal space for a unit to return to, it disbands.

## CLERIC

### MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

As fighting priests, clerics master a dangerous combination of martial prowess and battle magic. They excel at healing troops and rallying them in battle—and the heavy infantry they train hit hard.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages            |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 1           | Divine Rally, Wand of Healing |
| 2           | Heavy Training                |
| 3           | Exorcizers                    |
| 4           | Blessing of Strength          |
| 5           | Scroll of Mass Healing        |

**Divine Rally.** At the beginning of this commander's turn, a broken unit the commander controls that has not already been rallied can make a DC 13 Morale test. On a success, it gains 1d4 casualties and is returned to the battlefield according to normal deployment rules. Additionally, the unit has +2 to Defense and Toughness until the end of the battle.

**Wand of Healing.** As an action, the unit with this wand chooses any unit. The target unit's casualty die is incremented by 2.

**Heavy Training.** Each medium, heavy, and super-heavy infantry unit this commander controls inflicts 1 additional casualty on a successful Power test.

**Exorcizers.** Any unit this commander controls automatically succeeds on Attack tests and inflicts 1 additional casualty against any undead or fiend unit.

**Blessing of Strength.** Each unit this commander controls has +2 to Power and Toughness.

**Scroll of Mass Healing.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a number of units its commander controls equal to the commander's proficiency bonus. Each of those units gains 4 casualties.

## DRUID

### MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

Druids are dedicated to defending not just their groves but all of the natural world. Their battle magics muster the power of nature to protect their armies, and to devastate their enemies.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages                    |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1           | Nature's Boon, Wand of Grasping Roots |
| 2           | Scroll of Torrential Rain             |
| 3           | Lynx Soldiers                         |
| 4           | Bark and Root                         |
| 5           | Scroll of Storms                      |

**Nature's Boon.** Each unit this commander controls has +2 to size, to a maximum of size 12. This bonus is only active while this commander controls the unit.

**Wand of Grasping Roots.** As an action, the unit with this wand chooses a target unit, which must succeed on a Power test (DC = 11 + DS) or become disoriented.

**Scroll of Torrential Rain.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a rank on the battlefield. Each unit in that rank has disadvantage on Attack tests until the end of this unit's next activation.

**Lynx Soldiers.** Each unit this commander controls is immune to the effects of terrain, has +1 to movement, and automatically succeeds on the Command test for the Follow Up maneuver (page 109).

**Bark and Root.** Each infantry and artillery unit this commander controls has +2 to Toughness. Additionally, each time any unit this commander controls ends its activation, roll a d4. On a 4, that unit's casualty die is incremented by 1.

**Scroll of Storms.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a rank on the battlefield. Each unit in that rank must succeed on a Power test (DC = 11 + DS) or suffer 2 casualties. On each of this unit's subsequent activations, the storm moves one rank toward the opposing side's rear rank, affecting each unit in that rank. Once the storm affects the opposing side's rear rank, its effect ends.



## FIGHTER MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

Fighters excel in warfare. Their soldiers are the most highly trained on the battlefield, and they know an astonishing range of techniques to direct and engage troops in the middle of a battle.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages            |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 1           | Heavy Training, Martial Rally |
| 2           | Strafe                        |
| 3           | Charge                        |
| 4           | Volley                        |
| 5           | Field Promotion               |

**Heavy Training.** Each medium, heavy, and super-heavy infantry unit this commander controls inflicts 1 additional casualty on a successful Power test.

**Martial Rally.** At the beginning of this commander's turn, a broken unit the commander controls that has not already been rallied can make a DC 13 Morale test. On a success, it gains 1d4 casualties and is returned to the battlefield according to normal deployment rules. Additionally, the unit gets two activations this turn, instead of one.

**Strafe.** Each aerial and cavalry unit this commander controls has the Strafe maneuver (page 110).

**Charge.** When any cavalry unit this commander controls makes a successful Power test as part of an attack, that unit can use a reaction to deal 1 casualty to any unit opposite it.

**Volley.** Each artillery unit this commander controls has the Volley maneuver (page 110).

**Field Promotion.** Once per battle, as a reaction to a unit this commander controls diminishing or breaking an opposed unit, increase that unit's Attack, Power, Morale, and Command by 2, and the unit gains one additional attack. At the end of the current battle, it loses these bonuses.

## ILLRIGGER MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

The illrigger is a fighting hellknight whose soldiers call upon fell powers to terrify their enemies. (A PDF containing the Illrigger class is available on the MCDM store at [shop.mcdmproductions.com](http://shop.mcdmproductions.com).)

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages              |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1           | Death Commandos, Infernal Rally |
| 2           | Terror Troops                   |
| 3           | Scroll of Hellfire              |
| 4           | Execution                       |
| 5           | The Ruin of the World           |

**Death Commandos.** When any infantry unit this commander controls succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, the target unit must succeed on a DC 13 Morale test or suffer 1 additional casualty.

**Infernal Rally.** At the beginning of this commander's turn, a broken unit the commander controls that has not already been rallied can make a DC 13 Morale test. On a success, it gains 1d4 casualties and is returned to the battlefield according to normal deployment rules. Additionally, the unit gains an additional attack, has +1 to movement, and has advantage on Attack tests and Power tests. At the end of each activation, decrement the unit's casualty die.

**Terror Troops.** Infantry and cavalry units this commander controls have the Harrowing trait.

**Scroll of Hellfire.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a target unit, which must make a Power test (DC = 13 + DS). The unit gains 4 fire tokens on a failure, or 2 fire tokens on a success. Each fire token inflicts 1 casualty.

**Execution.** As an action, a unit controlled by this commander chooses an allied unit with 1 casualty. That unit disbands, and one unit this commander controls has advantage on Attack tests and Power tests until the end of the battle.

**The Ruin of the World.** As an action, a unit this commander controls causes all allied cavalry units to immediately activate in any order. On this activation, whenever one of those units resolves an Attack test, that unit can decrement its casualty die and make an immediate free attack. It can continue doing so as long as it has casualties remaining.

## MONK

### MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

Monks work closely with the common folk, training them to defend themselves against cruel overlords. They rarely train heavily armed or armored troops, but their levies fight as well as any infantry, and cavalry fear all units trained by a monk.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages             |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 1           | Hidden Reserves, Levy Training |
| 2           | Mobility Trap                  |
| 3           | Focused Resolve                |
| 4           | Like Water                     |
| 5           | Mind over Body                 |

**Hidden Reserves.** A reaction to breaking, an artillery or infantry unit this commander controls can roll a d4. The unit does not break, and remains in its space with casualties equal to the result of the roll. Each unit can use this martial advantage once per battle.

**Levy Training.** Each unit of levies this commander controls has +2 to Attack, +2 to Power, and +1 to damage, and has advantage on the Command test for the Set for Charge maneuver (page 110).

**Mobility Trap.** Each light infantry unit this commander controls has the Mobility Trap maneuver (page 109).

**Focused Resolve.** Each unit this commander controls has advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic. Additionally, as a reaction to activating, each infantry and artillery unit this commander controls can remove one token before that token's effects are resolved.

**Like Water.** Choose a light infantry unit this commander controls, and an opposed unit that is adjacent to the infantry unit and has an empty space opposite it. If this unit succeeds on a DC 15 Command test made as an action, it moves through the opposed unit into the empty space opposite it, and the opposed unit suffers 1 casualty.

**Mind over Body.** Once per battle as a reaction when a unit this commander controls finishes its activation, that unit selects all the units this commander controls. Power tests against each of the selected units fail until the unit's next activation.

## PALADIN

### MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

When the paladin calls, soldiers answer. Troops loyal to these dedicated warriors fight with fervor, and enemies fear facing them—especially cavalry trained by a paladin, which are among the most effective forces on the field.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages           |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| 1           | Righteous, Templar's Rally   |
| 2           | Scroll of Clarity            |
| 3           | Cavaliers, Hell's Hammer     |
| 4           | Blessing of Speed            |
| 5           | Scroll of Templar's Blessing |

**Righteous.** When any unit this commander controls succeeds on a Morale test, it can use a reaction to gain advantage on its next Attack test. Additionally, any opposed unit diminished by a unit this commander controls has disadvantage on the Morale test.

**Templar's Rally.** At the beginning of this commander's turn, a broken unit the commander controls that has not already been rallied makes a DC 13 Morale test. On a success, it gains 1d4 casualties and is returned to the battlefield according to normal deployment rules. Additionally, the unit has +2 to Attack and Power until the end of the battle.

**Scroll of Clarity.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a number of units equal to this commander's proficiency bonus. Roll a d4. Each unit's casualty die is incremented by that amount.

**Cavaliers.** Each cavalry unit this commander controls has advantage on Attack tests and +1 to damage.

**Hell's Hammer.** Each infantry and cavalry unit this commander controls has advantage on Power tests against any undead or fiend unit.

**Blessing of Speed.** Each infantry unit this commander controls can make one additional attack.

**Scroll of Templar's Blessing.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a unit. Until the end of the battle, that unit's size increases by 2 (but not above 12), it gains one additional attack, and it automatically succeeds on Command tests.

## RANGER MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

Taking advantage of a ranger's experience in the wilds, ranger-trained troops are used to operating behind enemy lines and in hostile terrain. Moreover, the skill of their archer units are legendary.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages               |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1           | Archery Training, Scout Training |
| 2           | Rough Terrain Training           |
| 3           | Find Cover                       |
| 4           | Pin Them Down                    |
| 5           | Coordinated Fire                 |

**Archery Training.** Each artillery unit this commander controls has advantage on Power tests.

**Scout Training.** Choose a number of light infantry units this commander controls equal to half the commander's domain size rounded up. Each of those units has the Scouts trait (see **Unit Traits**).

**Rough Terrain Training.** Any unit this commander controls cannot become disorganized. Additionally, each unit this commander controls ignores terrain penalties, and has +1 to movement in normal terrain.

**Find Cover.** Each unit this commander controls has the Find Cover maneuver (page 109).

**Pin Them Down.** When any artillery unit this commander controls makes a successful Attack test against another unit, that unit takes -1 to movement until the end of its next activation.

**Coordinated Fire.** As a reaction to being activated, any artillery unit this commander controls can choose an opposed unit. Each allied artillery unit that succeeds on a DC 8 Command test can immediately attack the opposed unit.

## ROGUE MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

Soldiers trained by a rogue are highly mobile and well skilled in the use of dirty tricks. Rogue-trained scouts might not last long behind enemy lines, but they will wreak havoc while they stand.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages             |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 1           | Mobility Training, Skirmishers |
| 2           | Poison Arrows                  |
| 3           | Scout Training                 |
| 4           | Feint                          |
| 5           | Infiltrators                   |

**Mobility Training.** Each light infantry unit this commander controls automatically succeeds on the Command test for the Follow Up maneuver (page 109) and can immediately make an attack against an adjacent opposed unit when it completes that maneuver.

**Skirmishers.** If any infantry or artillery unit this commander controls moves before it attacks, it has +2 to Attack tests for that activation, and it can immediately move 1 space after it attacks.

**Poison Arrows.** When any artillery unit this commander controls succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, it places one poison token on the target unit. Each poison token inflicts 1 casualty.

**Scout Training.** Choose a number of light infantry units this commander controls equal to half the commander's domain size rounded up. Each of those units has the Scouts trait (see **Unit Traits**).

**Feint.** Each infantry and artillery unit this commander controls has the Feint maneuver (page 109).

**Infiltrators.** Once per battle as a reaction to activating, a unit this commander controls can choose a diminished opposed infantry unit adjacent to that unit. This commander takes control of the opposed unit.

## SORCERER MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

Specializing in battle magic, sorcerers craft scrolls and wands designed to inflict maximum damage to as many units as possible, and can take down even the most hardened soldiers.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages               |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1           | Sorcerous Training, Wand of Fire |
| 2           | Invisibility                     |
| 3           | Scroll of Translocation          |
| 4           | Fire Shield                      |
| 5           | Scroll of Earthquake             |

**Sorcerous Training.** Each unit this commander controls has advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic and the traits of special units.

**Wand of Fire.** As an action, the unit with this wand targets an opposed unit, which must succeed on a Power test ( $DC = 13 + DS$ ) or suffer 1 casualty and gain one fire token. Each fire token inflicts 1 casualty.

**Invisibility.** Each unit this commander controls starts the battle hidden. A unit ceases to be hidden when it inflicts 1 or more casualties on another unit.

**Scroll of Translocation.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a unit in any rank and moves it into any empty space on the battlefield. If this unit is an opposed unit, it can succeed on a Power test ( $DC = 11 + DS$ ) to avoid being moved.

**Fire Shield.** When any opposed infantry, cavalry, or aerial unit makes a successful Attack test against a unit this commander controls, that opposed unit must succeed on a Power test ( $DC = 13 + DS$ ) or suffer 1 casualty.

**Scroll of Earthquake.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a rank on the battlefield. Each unit in that rank must succeed on a Power test ( $DC = 13 + DS$ ) or suffer 2 casualties and become disorganized.

## WARLOCK MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

A warlock's dread patron empowers highly diverse battle magic, letting them reshape the battlefield, protect their soldiers, and terrorize enemies.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages                             |
|-------------|--|
| 1           | Scroll of Illusory Soldiers, Wand of Acid Pool |
| 2           | Patron's Curse                                 |
| 3           | Scroll of Blood Magic                          |
| 4           | Flaming Hooves                                 |
| 5           | Scroll of Hell's Maw                           |

**Scroll of Illusory Soldiers.** As a reaction to the end of deployment, the unit with this scroll creates an illusory duplicate of a unit this commander controls. The new unit has all the same stats and traits as the original unit, except it has half the original unit's casualties, can't gain more casualties than this number, and is always diminished.

**Wand of Acid Pool.** As an action, the unit with this wand chooses a space and puts an acid token there. Any unit that moves into that space or starts its turn there suffers casualties equal to the number of acid tokens in the space, then removes one acid token.

**Patron's Curse.** If any heavy or super-heavy unit this commander controls makes a successful Power test made as part of an attack, the target unit is disoriented until the end of its next activation.

**Scroll of Blood Magic.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a number of diminished allied units equal to this commander's proficiency bonus. Each unit can immediately make an attack against a legal target. If the Attack test is successful, the unit has advantage on its Power test.

**Flaming Hooves.** Whenever a cavalry unit this commander controls succeeds on a Power test made as part of an attack, add a fire token to the unit targeted by the test. The fire token inflicts 1 casualty.

**Scroll of Hell's Maw.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses an opposed unit, which must make a Power test ( $DC = 15 + DS$ ). On a success, the unit suffers 1d6 casualties. On a failure, the unit is consumed and disbands.

## WIZARD MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

Few armies can stand resolved to fight while a wizard's lightning rips through them or opposed units appear from thin air to attack. A wizard specializes in battle magic that can both protect the troops they train and let their units unleash cataclysmic power upon the battlefield.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages                                |
|-------------|---|
| 1           | Arrows of Dancing Lights, Wand of Lightning Storm |
| 2           | Wall of Fire                                      |
| 3           | Scroll of Translocation                           |
| 4           | Antimagic Shield                                  |
| 5           | Scroll of Cataclysm                               |

**Arrows of Dancing Lights.** When any artillery unit this commander controls succeeds on an Attack test against an opposed unit, each allied unit attacking that opposed unit has advantage on Attack tests until the end of the opposed unit's next activation.

**Wand of Lightning Storm.** As an action, the unit with this wand chooses a target unit. That target unit and each unit adjacent to it must succeed on a Power test ( $DC = 11 + DS$ ) or suffer 1 casualty.

**Wall of Fire.** As a reaction to the end of deployment, choose four adjacent spaces on the battlefield and note the line along one edge of those spaces. Any opposed unit that crosses that line suffers 1d4 casualties.

**Scroll of Translocation.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a unit in any rank and moves it into any empty space on the battlefield. If this unit is an opposed unit, it can succeed on a Power test ( $DC = 11 + DS$ ) to avoid being moved.

**Antimagic Shield.** Each unit this commander controls is immune to the effects of wands and scrolls, and automatically succeeds on any Power test against the traits of opposed units.

**Scroll of Cataclysm.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses 5 ranks that are adjacent to each other. Each unit in each of these ranks must succeed on a Power test ( $DC = 13 + DS$ ) or suffer 1 casualty and become disorganized.

## OPPOSING COMMANDERS

When running the army controlled by the villain or some other NPC, the GM must track which units belong to which NPC commanders. Each opposing commander facing off against the characters-as-commanders acts in initiative order, just like the characters. When an opposing commander acts, they can activate all the units they control.

Each opposing commander can command a number of units equal to their proficiency bonus (just like player character commanders), with that proficiency bonus determined by the opposing commander's Challenge Rating.

For example, Lord Saxton's despotic regime has five officers—Magus Therin, Prelate Ellingwood, Sir Anglim, Lady Morgant, and Lord Saxton himself—who are the commanders of that domain's forces during warfare. Lord Saxton is CR 8, giving him a proficiency bonus of +3 and allowing him to control three units. The rest of his officers are CR 3, with their +2 proficiency bonus allowing them to each control two units.

In general, the GM decides which units each NPC officer controls before the battle starts, to suit their own ideas of how the battle should go. (The adventure in this book assigns units to specific officers, but even there, the GM is free to move things around.)

## MARTIAL ADVANTAGES FOR OPPOSED COMMANDERS

The units of the villain's army gain the benefits of martial advantages just as the units of the characters' army do. However, the GM does not track which martial advantages each unit has based on their commander. (That would be too much to ask of the GM, who is already doing a lot!) Instead, all opposed units benefit from the same martial advantages, with the number of those advantages determined by the opposed domain's domain size. The GM chooses the martial advantages for the villain's army based on the general character types of any of the commanders of the opposed domain—spellcaster, knight, or assassin.

## SPELLCASTING COMMANDER

Enemy mages, shamans, necromancers, cult leaders, and grand viziers all qualify as enemy spellcasting commanders, as do any NPCs built around a class with spellcasting ability.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages               |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1           | Sorcerous Training, Wand of Fire |
| 2           | Patron's Curse                   |
| 3           | Scroll of Torrential Rain        |
| 4           | Fiery Defense                    |
| 5           | Scroll of Firestorm              |

**Sorcerous Training.** Each unit this commander controls has advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic and the traits of special units.

**Wand of Fire.** As an action, the unit with this wand targets an opposed unit, which must succeed on a Power test (DC = 13 + DS) or suffer 1 casualty and gain one fire token. Each fire token inflicts 1 casualty.

**Patron's Curse.** If any heavy or super-heavy unit this commander controls makes a successful Power test made as part of an attack, the target unit is disoriented until the end of its next activation.

**Scroll of Torrential Rain.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses a rank on the battlefield. Each unit in that rank has disadvantage on Attack tests until the end of this unit's next activation.

**Fiery Defense.** Choose a number of allied units of this commander's choice equal to half this commander's domain size rounded up. Each infantry, cavalry, and aerial unit that makes a successful Attack test against one of the chosen units must succeed on a Power test (DC = 13 + DS) or suffer 1 casualty.

**Scroll of Firestorm.** As an action, the unit with this scroll chooses an opposed unit, which must make a Power test (DC = 13 + DS). The unit suffers 1d4 + 2 casualties on a failure, or 2 casualties on a success.

## KNIGHT COMMANDER

Any heavily armed and armored enemy leader qualifies as a knight commander. Spellcasters who wear heavy armor might also play the part of a knight commander instead of a spellcaster commander, at the GM's determination.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages              |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1           | Death Commandos, Heavy Training |
| 2           | Cavaliers                       |
| 3           | Charge                          |
| 4           | Volley                          |
| 5           | Well-Motivated                  |

**Death Commandos.** When any infantry unit this commander controls succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, that target unit must succeed on a DC 13 Morale test or suffer 1 additional casualty.

**Heavy Training.** Each medium, heavy, and super-heavy infantry unit this commander controls inflicts 1 additional casualty on a successful Power test.

**Cavaliers.** Each cavalry unit this commander controls has advantage on Attack tests and +1 to damage.

**Charge.** When any cavalry unit this commander controls makes a successful Power test made as part of an attack, that unit can use a reaction to deal 1 casualty to any unit opposite it.

**Volley.** Each artillery unit this commander controls has the Volley maneuver (page 110).

**Well-Motivated.** When an infantry unit this commander controls inflicts casualties with a successful Power test, the unit can use a reaction to suffer 1 casualty and attack again.



## ASSASSIN COMMANDER

Master thieves, expert rangers, and any other stealthy, highly mobile, high-damage-output NPCs qualify as enemy assassin commanders.

| Domain Size | Martial Advantages          |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 1           | Scout Training, Skirmishers |
| 2           | Poison Arrows               |
| 3           | Mobility Training           |
| 4           | Execution                   |
| 5           | Coordinated Fire            |

**Scout Training.** Choose a number of light infantry units this commander controls equal to half the commander's domain size rounded up. Each of those units has the Scouts trait (see **Unit Traits**).

**Skirmishers.** If any infantry or artillery unit this commander controls moves before it attacks, it has +2 to Attack tests for that activation, and it can immediately move 1 space after it attacks.

**Poison Arrows.** When any artillery unit this commander controls succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, it places one poison token on the target unit. Each poison token inflicts 1 casualty.

**Mobility Training.** Each light infantry unit this commander controls automatically succeeds on the Command test for the Follow Up maneuver (page 109), and can immediately make an attack against an adjacent opposed unit when it completes that maneuver.

**Execution.** As an action, a unit controlled by this commander chooses an allied unit with 1 casualty. That unit disbands, and one unit this commander controls of the commander's choice has advantage on Attack tests and Power tests until the end of the battle.

**Coordinated Fire.** As a reaction to being activated, any artillery unit this commander controls can choose an opposed unit. Each allied artillery unit that succeeds on a DC 8 Command test can immediately attack the opposed unit.

## CHOOSING COMMANDER ROLES

The GM has no obligation to tie martial advantages to the classes or NPC stat block names of an opposed domain's officers—only to let those roles inspire them as desired. Likewise, for monstrous commanders, the GM should focus more on the monster's role as a leader, rather than automatically assigning them the role of a specific commander based on their stat block.

This makes the characters' army more flexible than the villain's army, because the units of the characters' army will have a much wider array of martial advantages available to them. However, each of the player's units benefits only from a single set of advantages. Having an entire army run under one set of martial advantages creates many efficiencies that make the villain's army easier to run, and ultimately just as effective as the characters' army.

As an example, consider that Lord Saxton and Lady Morgant are evil knights. Saxton has two spellcasters in his court (Magus Therin and Prelate Ellingwood) and an assassin (Sir Anglim). This means that between the leader and his lieutenants, Saxton has access to any of the three opposed commander types.

Saxton's domain is size 2, so the GM gets to pick three martial advantages (two for size 1 and one for size 2), which can be chosen from any of the three opposed commander tables—one advantage from each table, all three from one table, or any other combination.

## EXPANDING MARTIAL ADVANTAGES

In addition to the martial advantages gained from any of the three opposed commander tables, the GM is free to choose martial advantages from the character class tables as well. If one of a realm's officers is known to do magical deals with a mysterious supernatural figure, a martial advantage from the warlock table makes sense. However, a GM who does this should avoid any advantages that would allow a realm's commanders to rally troops in the middle of a battle. The ability to rally a unit during the fight is intentionally framed as a heroic action. And more importantly, if both sides can rally their troops in the middle of battle, that battle will drag on tediously and quickly stop being fun.



## FORTIFICATIONS

A fortification is a structure occupying a number of spaces on the battlefield, typically on the side of the force that is the defender in the battle. Units in those spaces gain benefits based on the type of fortification. The GM determines which fortifications are available to each side in the battle (both existing fortifications and fortifications raised during play) and in which spaces those fortifications appear.

Each fortification provides a bonus to Morale for all allied units of the side that controls the

fortification, regardless of where those units are on the battlefield. (If there are multiple fortifications on the battlefield, allied units use the highest bonus to Morale for any of their side's fortifications.) As well, each fortification provides a bonus to Defense for any units in the same space as the fortification, and a tower fortification provides a bonus to Power for any artillery units in the same space. (Siege weapons cannot be placed on towers.)

The Basic Fortifications table provides a breakdown of fortifications, their sizes, and the bonuses

### BASIC FORTIFICATIONS

| Fortification | Size         | Morale* | Defense** | Power*** | Hit Points |
|---------------|--------------|---------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Stone fence   | 1–2 spaces   | +1      | +2        | —        | 4          |
| Guard tower   | 1 space      | +1      | +2        | +2       | 6          |
| Town walls    | 3–4 spaces   | +2      | +2        | —        | 8          |
| City gates    | 5 spaces     | +2      | +2        | +2       | 8          |
| Keep          | 2 × 2 spaces | +3      | +2        | +2       | 10         |
| Castle        | 4 × 2 spaces | +4      | +2        | +2       | 12         |

\* All allied units in the battle

\*\* All allied units in the fortification

\*\*\* Artillery units in the fortification

they provide. All bonuses provided by a fortification are lost if the fortification is destroyed. A rank with a Fortification in it does not collapse when there are no units in that rank.

Units in fortifications can't be exposed.

## MOVING

Leaving a fortification costs no extra movement, but it costs 1 extra movement to move into a space with a fortification. The units defending a fortification can break like any other unit, or can use the Retreat maneuver to depart the fortification (page 110). Doing so might allow an opposed unit to move into that space and gain the benefits of that fortification.

## DAMAGING A FORTIFICATION

Only units with specialized traits can damage a fortification, with those traits specifically calling out fortifications in their descriptions. (See **Unit Traits** on page 126.) Units with a specific siege trait—Siege Engine, Siege Weapon, Fast Siege Weapon, and Fast Siege Weapon (Heavy)—can attack and automatically hit a fortification, with no Attack test or Power test necessary.

## CONTESTED FORTIFICATIONS

A fortification can be empty and still grant its bonus to Morale for the units of the army that control the fortification. But as soon as a unit moves into the area of a fortification controlled by the opposing side, that fortification becomes contested and no one gains a Morale bonus for it. If the only units in the area of a fortification are opposed units, then the fortification becomes occupied by that opposing army, and only the opposing army gains the fortification's bonus to Morale.

When two units attack each other and both are in the area of the same fortification, neither gains any of the fortification's bonuses to Defense or Power.

## HIT POINTS AND SIEGE WEAPONS

Fortifications have hit points based on their size.

When a unit damages a fortification, that damage is assigned to the entire fortification, not any specific part of it. This means that fortifications occupying more than 1 space can't be targeted in any specific space, and they remain standing in all their spaces until the fortification is wholly destroyed.

When a fortification is reduced to 0 hit points, it is destroyed in all its spaces, and any unit in those spaces must make a DC 13 Morale test with disadvantage. On a failure, the unit suffers 1 casualty.

## PLACEMENT

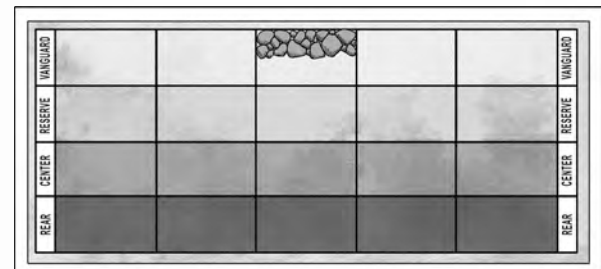
The GM decides each fortification's position on the battlefield, though fortifications are almost always on the defending side. Walls and gates do not have to be in the vanguard, but many scenarios will place them there to represent the idea that the defenders are behind those fortifications for the protection they offer. That being said, the GM might well decide to put the city gates in the center rank, so the setup of fortifications isn't meant to be taken too literally.

## TYPES OF FORTIFICATIONS

The following are the most common fortifications, showing their typical placement on the battlefield. These are not the only possibilities, though, and the GM is free to use towers and walls in any combination to build unique fortifications, calculating those fortifications' hit points accordingly.

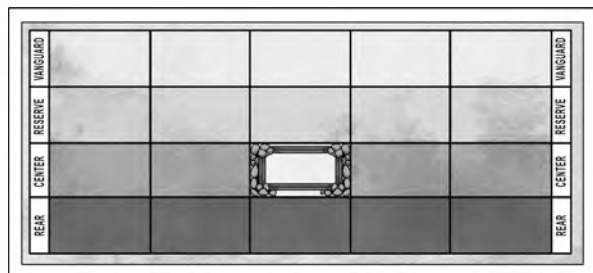
### STONE FENCE

This short wall provides protection for only one or two units. It might be used in a short battle in which a handful of units fight over a small town.



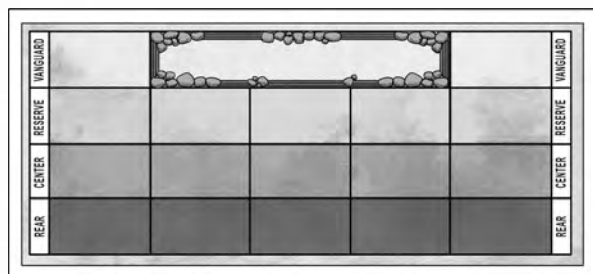
## GUARD TOWER

This is a lone tower, atop which an artillery unit can leverage height and superior position to maximize the chance of inflicting casualties on enemy forces.



## TOWN WALLS

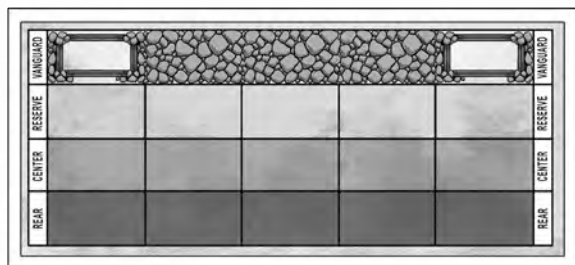
This larger version of the stone fence offers protection for even more units.



## CITY GATES

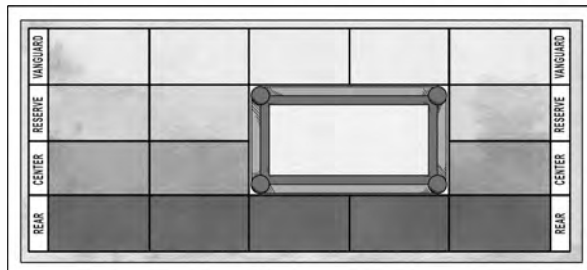
A sturdy town wall is abutted by towers on either side of it! A large city gate is shown below, while a smaller one would have two towers with just a one- or two-space wall between them—and would have fewer hit points.

Each gate space is either a tower space or a wall space. Artillery units that move from a tower space to a wall space lose the bonus to Power that a tower provides.



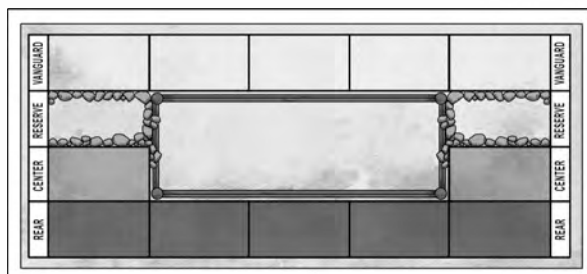
## KEEP

A keep is a collection of towers clustered closely together, and essentially acts as a large tower.



## CASTLE

A castle represents the largest fortification typically found on a battlefield, built up of both walls and towers to provide maximum benefit for infantry and artillery.



## TERRAIN

Terrain represents general effects that change the nature of the battlefield, from fog to rain to dense forest. Units of certain ancestries feature soldiers that are historically used to fighting in certain types of terrain, allowing those units to ignore the penalties terrain imposes. At the same time, certain terrain offers advantages for specific types of units.

## FOG

Fog obscures vision and creates strange auditory effects. A sergeant's command shouted from the other side of the battlefield might echo through the fog to sound like it's coming from just a few feet away, making it difficult for troops to hear their orders.

Any artillery unit in fog has disadvantage on Attack tests. Any unit that rolls a 1 on a Command test while in fog becomes disorganized.

## FOREST

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Trees act as natural cover, making archers almost useless in forest fighting. While in forest terrain, any artillery unit has disadvantage on Attack tests.

## MUD

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Mud, including terrain near or in a swamp, stymies movement. Any unit in mud must march in order to move 1 space, and it does not benefit from any bonuses to movement.

## RAIN

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Rain obscures vision just like fog, and creates muddy ground to combine aspects of both those terrain types. While in rain, each unit must march in order to move 1 space, any artillery unit has disadvantage on Attack tests, and any unit that rolls a 1 on a Command test becomes disorganized.

## PLAINS

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The wide-open expanses of plains are excellent for cavalry units, providing them with maximum maneuverability. While in plains terrain, any cavalry unit has +2 to Command.

## MOUNTAINS

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Mountains feature treacherous slopes, steep cliffs, and falling rocks, and units unaccustomed to moving in such conditions routinely lose soldiers. While in mountain terrain, any unit that moves must succeed on a DC 8 Power test or suffer 1 casualty.

## SCENARIOS

Scenarios change the shape of the battlefield, creating unique developments that might challenge forces on one or both sides, negate one side's advantage in numbers, or make some units useless!

## BRIDGE

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When two armies fight over a bridge, each side's vanguard rank is reduced to a single space, and cavalry units cannot be used. This scenario often comes down to a battle between artillery and aerial units.

## DEFEND THE PASS

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In this scenario, one side occupies the pass while the other side must break the first side's defense, minimizing the field for one side. Cavalry units cannot be used in the battle, and artillery units can target only enemies in the same column. This sort of battle lends itself to a small army taking on a much larger one.

## CHARGE THE HILL

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This scenario uses a normal battlefield, except the defender's rear rank is at the top of the hill and each rank in front of it is farther down the slope. Any unit moving uphill must succeed on a DC 8 Command test to march 2 spaces. On a failure, the unit moves 1 space instead. (If a unit's movement is limited, as when moving through mud, it might be able to march only 1 space and might not be able to move at all on a failure.)

Any infantry unit that moves 1 space downhill before attacking inflicts 1 additional casualty on a successful Power test made as part of an attack against a target unit that is downhill from them. Cavalry units attacking from the high side of the hill have advantage on Attack tests against any units.

This scenario allows a small number of units at the top of the hill to defend against a larger army at the bottom of it.

## COMMANDERS ON THE FIELD

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Sometimes two armies meet in a field and neither side is defending anything. In this scenario, the commanders of the armies are leading their troops against each other, rather than fighting face to face.

Each commander chooses a unit to lead. If two units each led by opposing commanders end up adjacent to each other, a commander can forego issuing an order to their unit to instead challenge the opposing commander to single combat. This is an opposed Command test. The victor decides whether the single combat proceeds.

## SINGLE COMBAT

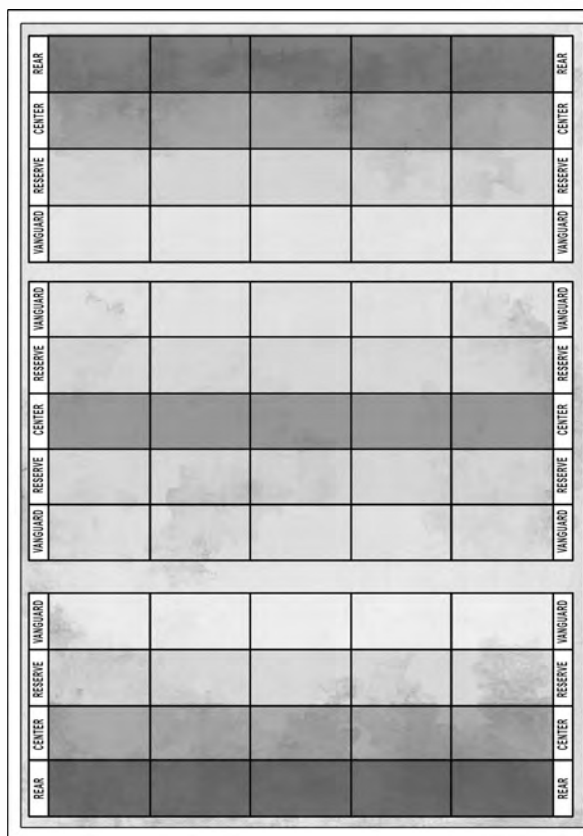
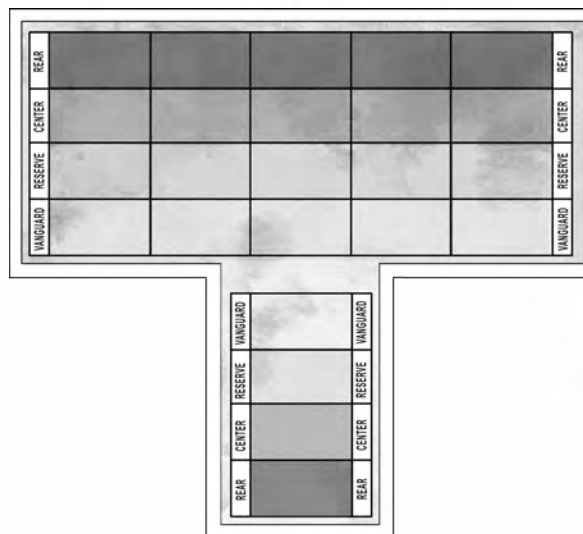
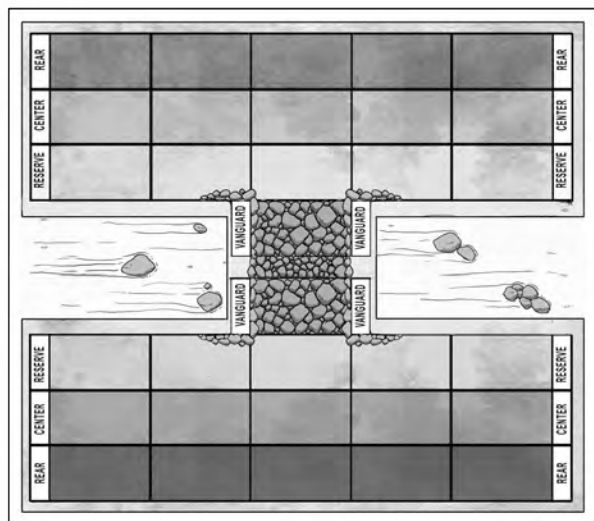
The battle is paused, and the two leaders enter combat together, rolling initiative again after each round. Either commander can yield as an action, in which case their unit suffers 1 casualty. If one commander drops to 0 hit points or dies outright, the unit they commanded immediately breaks and the single combat is over, though the battle can continue.

## BATTLE OF THREE ARMIES

This scenario imagines two different allied armies attacking a third army. This scenario allows one large army to fight off two smaller armies.

The defending army has no rear rank, but has two vanguard ranks and two reserve ranks. If one of those vanguard ranks collapses, units in the defending army's center rank and the reserve rank behind the collapsed vanguard are both exposed to the army the collapsed vanguard faced.

*Bridge scenario battlefield (below),  
Defend the Pass scenario battlefield (top right), and  
Battle of Three Armies scenario battlefield (right)*





## UNIT TRAITS

Over and above the statistics found on each unit card, a unit's traits define what it is able to do during battle. **Unit Traits Descriptions** (below) breaks out every trait found across all units in *Kings & Warfare*, plus those in the special unit deck (page 144). Each unit has the name of each of its traits printed on its card but not the full description, for two reasons. First, it would make the cards too large. And second, it would require players to pick a unit card up every activation to read what its traits can do. Easier to print the traits out for all players involved in the battle.

If the text of a trait conflicts with the base-line rules in this book, the text of the trait takes precedence.

## RECHARGE

The notation "Recharge X–Y" means a unit can use a trait once, and that the trait then has a random chance of recharging during each subsequent activation. Each time the unit activates after using the trait, roll a d6. If the roll is one of the numbers in the recharge notation, the unit regains the use of the trait.

## LEGAL TARGET

Where a trait refers to a legal target, this means any target that a unit could normally make an Attack test against.

## UNIT TRAIT DESCRIPTIONS

Traits are presented in alphabetical order.

**AAAUUUGH!!!** When this unit breaks, all adjacent units suffer 1 casualty.

**Adaptable.** This unit has advantage on Morale and Command tests.

**Aerial Bombardment.** If this unit spends an activation doing nothing, it can use its next activation to target a fortification by making a DC 13 Power test. On a success, it deals 1d4 + 2 damage to the fortification.

**Amphibious.** This unit does not suffer movement penalties when fighting underwater, or in rain or mud.

**Arcadian.** This unit has advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic.

**Archers.** This unit can attack any opposed unit. Successful Power tests the unit makes against opposed units that are not exposed inflict only 1 casualty.

**Armored Carapace.** This unit suffers no casualties from artillery Attack tests.

**Barbs.** An opposed infantry unit that makes a successful Power test as part of an attack against this unit suffers 1 casualty.

**Battle Hymn.** This unit has a bonus to Morale equal to its commander's domain size, as do allied units while adjacent to this unit.

**Better than One.** When this unit attacks an opposed unit, it can also attack any other adjacent opposed unit.

**Big.** This unit has advantage on Power tests against units whose casualties are lower than this unit's.

**Blanket Fire.** As an action, choose a rank on the battlefield. Attack each unit in that rank. Recharge 4–6.

**Blinding.** When an opposed unit fails an Attack test against this unit, the opposed unit is disoriented.

**Burning.** Each opposed unit that activates adjacent to this unit suffers 1 casualty.

**Burrow.** As an action, remove this unit from the battlefield. On its next activation, place the unit in any empty space. The unit is disoriented until the end of that activation.

**Chaos Vulnerability.** This unit has disadvantage on Power tests to resist battle magic.

**Charge.** If this unit moves at least 1 space before it attacks, it has advantage on Attack tests for this activation as long as the target is in the direction the unit moved.

**Chorus of Victory.** As an action, choose a rank on the battlefield. Each allied unit in that rank increments its casualty die and has advantage on Attack tests until the end of its next activation. Recharge 6.

**Close Range.** This unit has advantage on Attack tests and Power tests against adjacent units.

**Cloud of Darkness.** Opposed units have disadvantage on Attack tests against this unit.

**Collateral Damage.** When this unit makes a successful Power test against an infantry or artillery unit, the unit opposite the target also suffers 1 casualty.

**Consume.** As an action, this unit targets an opposed unit with lower casualties than it that it can attack. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Power test or break. Recharge 5–6.

**Corrode.** When this unit makes a successful Attack test against an opposed unit, that unit takes –2 to Attack and Defense. Each opposed unit can be affected by this trait only once per battle.

**Corrosive Breath.** As an action, choose three adjacent opposed units. Each unit must succeed on a Power test ( $DC = 8 + \text{this unit's size}$ ) or suffer 2 casualties and gain one acid token. The acid token inflicts 1 casualty. Recharge 5–6.

**Create Dead.** If this unit causes an opposed unit to break, replace that unit with a Ghoul Infantry unit under the command of this unit's commander. The new unit can act on the commander's next turn.

**Damage Resistant.** Successful Attack tests against this unit inflict no casualties. Successful Power tests inflict casualties normally.

**Daylight Weakness.** While in direct sunlight, this unit has disadvantage on Power tests.

**Dead.** This unit always succeeds on Morale tests, and cannot be diminished.

**“Dig!”** As an action, choose a space containing an opposed fortification and remove this unit from the battlefield. On the unit's next activation, the target fortification takes 2d6 damage and this unit breaks as though it were in that space.

**Dire Hyena Mounts.** This unit has advantage on Attack tests against diminished units.

**Disruptive.** When an opposed unit adjacent to this unit activates, it has a 25 percent chance of doing nothing on that activation.

**Draconic Ancestry.** This unit cannot be disorganized or weakened, and it is immune to the Harrowing trait.

**Dragonkin.** If there is an allied dragon in the battle or if this unit's commander has some sort of draconic ancestry, this unit has advantage on Attack tests, Command tests, and Morale tests.

**Drone.** As an action, choose a rank on the battlefield. Each opposed unit in that rank must succeed

on a DC 15 Power test or suffer 1 casualty and be unable to move on its next activation. This unit can use this trait only once per battle.

**Elf-shot.** When this unit succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, the target unit must succeed on a DC 10 Power test or become weakened until the end of its next activation.

**Embiggen.** As a reaction to activating, this unit's size increases to 8. Its casualty die becomes a d8 and is incremented twice. Until the end of its activation, the unit has advantage on Attack tests and Power tests. This unit can use this trait only once per battle.

**Eternal.** This unit has advantage on Morale tests against undead or fiend units, and on the Morale test to attack units with the Harrowing trait.

**Ethereal.** This unit has +1 to movement. It can move through other units, but only if it can end its movement in an empty space. Other units do not gain bonuses to Defense from fortifications against this unit's attacks.

**Fade.** After a successful Attack test, this unit can move back 1 space. Opposed units cannot use the Follow Up maneuver in response.

**Fast Siege Weapon.** This unit can attack a fortification. It automatically hits (no Attack test or Power test needed) and deals 3 damage.

**Fast Siege Weapon (Heavy).** This unit can attack a fortification. It automatically hits (no Attack test or Power test needed) and deals 5 damage.

**Fearless.** This unit automatically succeeds on Morale tests.

**Fearsome.** As a reaction to making an Attack test, this unit forces the target to succeed on a Morale test ( $DC = 8 + \text{this unit's size}$ ) or suffer 1 additional casualty.

**Feast.** At the end of this unit's activation, if any diminished unit is adjacent to it, increment this unit's casualty die.

**Fire Blast.** As an action, this unit forces two adjacent opposed units to each make a DC 13 Power test. On a failure, a unit suffers 2 casualties. Recharge 5–6.

**Fire Breath.** As an action, this unit forces three adjacent opposed units to each make a Power test ( $DC = 8 + \text{this unit's size}$ ). On a failure, a unit

suffers 2 casualties and gains a fire token. The fire token inflicts 1 casualty. Recharge 5–6.

**Fire Immunity.** This unit does not suffer casualties from traits or other effects with “burning,” “fire,” or “flame” in their names, or from fire tokens.

**Flaming Weapons.** When this unit makes a successful Power test as part of an attack, it adds a fire token to the target in addition to the normal effects of the test. The fire token inflicts 1 casualty.

**“Follow the Standard!”** When this unit succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, each cavalry unit the unit’s commander controls can use a reaction to immediately make an attack against the target of the Power test.

**Guerrillas.** When this unit succeeds on an Attack test against any opposed infantry or artillery unit (but not siege weapons), that unit is disoriented.

**Gulp.** As an action, this unit forces an opposed infantry or artillery unit (but not a siege engine) to make a DC 15 Power test. On a failure, the target unit is diminished (or is broken if it was already diminished). Recharge 5–6.

**Hallucinatory Spores.** As an action, this unit forces a legal target to make a DC 15 Power test. On a failure, the opposed unit attacks one of its own allied units of this unit’s choice on the opposed unit’s next activation.

**Hard Hats.** This unit has +2 to Defense against attacks from aerial units.

**Harriers.** If this unit succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, this unit becomes the target unit’s only legal target on its next activation.

**Harrowing.** Any opposed infantry, cavalry, or aerial unit must first succeed on a Morale test (DC = 10 + this unit’s tier) when it attacks this unit. On a success, the attacking unit is not affected by any unit’s Harrowing trait for the rest of the battle. On a failure, the attacking unit’s activation ends.

**Heroes of the Myriad Worlds.** Once per battle as a bonus action, this unit can gain advantage on Attack tests and Power tests until the end of its activation.

**Holy.** Undead and fiend units have disadvantage on Attack tests and Power tests against this unit.

**Hop.** For its movement, this unit can move to any empty space on the battlefield.

**Implacable.** This unit cannot unwillingly be moved or teleported, and it can ignore any effects of terrain.

**Indistinct.** Attack tests for ranged attacks made against this unit have disadvantage.

**Inexorable.** This unit is immune to any effect that would hinder or stop its movement, or that would deny it the ability to use actions.

**Inspire Fear.** Whenever this unit leaves an opposed unit diminished, all goblinoid units in the same rank as this unit can immediately attack a legal target.

**Into the Breach.** When this unit successfully executes the Follow Up maneuver, it has +2 bonus to Defense until the beginning of its next activation.

**Invisibility.** This unit cannot be attacked until it successfully attacks an opposed unit.

**Jaunt.** In place of its movement, remove this unit from the battlefield. It returns to the space it left, or an unoccupied space of the GM’s choice if that space is occupied, at the start of its next activation. Recharge 5–6.

**Lightning Breath.** As an action, choose a rank on the battlefield. Each unit in that rank must succeed on a Power test (DC = 8 + this unit’s size) or suffer 2 casualties. Recharge 5–6.

**Load the Bones!** While any diminished unit is adjacent to this unit, this unit has +2 damage against opposed fortifications.

**Magic Resistant.** This unit has advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic.

**Magical Adepts.** As a bonus action, this unit forces an opposed unit to make a DC 13 Power Test. On a failure, allied units have advantage on Attack tests against the opposed unit until the end of the battle. Recharge 5–6.

**Maneuver: Detonate.** As an action, this unit deals 1d4 + 2 damage to an adjacent fortification. Recharge 3–6.

**Maneuver: “Evasive Maneuvers!”** As a reaction when an opposed artillery unit makes an Attack test against this unit, impose disadvantage on the opposed unit’s Attack test. Recharge 5–6.

**Maneuver: “Fire!!”** As a reaction to a successful Power test made against a target unit, add a fire token to the target. The fire token inflicts 1 casualty. Recharge 4–6.

**Maneuver: “Hold the Line!”** As a reaction to being diminished, this unit makes a DC 13 Command test. On a success, this unit ignores the casualties that caused it to become diminished, and is not diminished.

**Maneuver: “Lancers! Flank Them!”** As a reaction when an opposed cavalry or aerial unit inflicts 1 or more casualties on an allied infantry or artillery unit, this unit makes a free attack against that opposed unit.

**Maneuver: “Land and Charge!”** While this unit has the aerial type, it can use a bonus action to make a DC 11 Command test. On a success, this unit’s Power tests have +2 damage on this activation, but the unit’s type becomes cavalry. At the end of its next activation, the unit regains the aerial type. Recharge 4–6.

**Maneuver: Outflank.** As an action, move this unit into any empty space. Any opposed unit that executes the Follow Up maneuver in response has disadvantage on the Command test.

**Maneuver: “Prey on the Weak.”** As a reaction to an exposed opposed unit being diminished, this unit makes a DC 10 Command test. On a success, the unit makes an attack against the opposed unit.

**Maneuver: Repair.** As an action, a fortification this unit is on or adjacent to recovers 1d4 + 2 hit points, up to its starting hit points.

**Maneuver: “Spit Upon Their Horns.”** As a reaction to succeeding on a Power test made as part of an attack, this unit makes a DC 13 Command test. On a success, the target unit suffers 1 additional casualty.

**Maneuver: Strafe.** As a reaction to succeeding on a Power test made as part of an attack against an opposed artillery or infantry unit, this unit makes a DC 13 Command test. On a success, two adjacent opposed units in the same rank as the target unit each suffer 1 casualty.

**Maneuver: Testudo.** As a reaction to suffering 1 or more casualties from an opposed artillery or aerial unit’s Attack test, this unit makes a DC 13 Command test. On a success, any opposed unit targeting this unit has disadvantage on Power tests until this unit’s next activation.

**Mass Protection Against Evil.** Any opposed infantry or artillery unit must succeed on a DC

15 Morale test to enter the vanguard rank of this unit’s side.

**Meld.** As a reaction to a successful Attack test against an infantry or artillery unit, this unit can move into the target unit’s space. While this unit is in the target’s space, the target unit cannot move and can attack only this unit. Units attacking either unit in this space have a 50 percent chance of targeting the wrong unit.

**Mobile.** This unit has advantage on the Command test when using the Follow Up maneuver, and can move back 2 spaces when using the Withdraw maneuver.

**Nature’s Bond.** When an allied infantry or artillery unit suffers 1 or more casualties, this unit can take the casualty instead. This unit must deploy in its side’s front.

**None.** This unit has no traits.

**Noxious Fog.** As an action, this unit places two poison tokens in each of 4 adjacent spaces. Any unit that moves into a space with one or more of these poison tokens or that activates there suffers 1 casualty per token. Each space loses one poison token at the end of this unit’s subsequent activations. Recharge 5–6.

**Pack Tactics.** When an adjacent unit that also has this trait successfully uses the Follow Up maneuver (page 109), this unit can move into any empty space adjacent to this unit’s current position.

**Pike Training.** This unit automatically succeeds on Command test for the Set for Charge maneuver.

**Point Blank.** When this unit succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack against an adjacent unit, it inflicts 1 additional casualty.

**Poisonous.** When this unit succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, the target unit is also weakened until the end of its next activation.

**Pool of Soul’s Blood.** Any opposed infantry or artillery unit adjacent to this unit cannot leave its space.

**Quadruped.** For its movement, this unit becomes a cavalry unit until the end of its activation. The unit leaves the grid and then returns to the space it left at the end of its activation (or to its army’s reserve rank if that space is occupied). Recharge 5–6.

**Ram Riders.** When this unit succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, the target unit must

**Reckless.** This unit can take disadvantage on any Attack test in order to have that Attack test inflict an additional 1 casualty.

**Reflector.** When this unit fails a Power test against a wand, it can use a reaction to roll a d20. On a 10 or higher, this unit suffers no effect from the wand and the unit activating the wand suffers the effect instead.

**Regenerate.** Each time this unit activates, increment its casualty die by 1.

**Relentless.** As a reaction to suffering a casualty that would cause this unit to break, this unit makes a DC 13 Power test. On a success, this unit does not break and has 1 casualty.

**Rime.** Any opposed infantry or artillery unit adjacent to this unit has its movement reduced to 0 and cannot benefit from bonus movement.

**Rock!** As an action, this unit can make an Attack test against any opposed unit, with disadvantage if the target is an aerial unit. Recharge 4–6.

**Rockbreaker.** This unit deals double damage against fortifications.

**Rolling Thunder.** As an action, this unit makes an opposed Power test against an adjacent opposed unit. If this unit's result is equal to or greater than the target's, the target unit must move back 1 space or break. This unit immediately moves into the target unit's vacated space.

**Rush.** This unit automatically succeeds on the Command test for the Follow Up maneuver.

**Savage.** Each successful Attack test by this unit adds a bleed token to a target unit. Each bleed token inflicts 2 casualties.

**Scourge of the Wild.** This unit has +2 to Attack and +2 to Power against orc, goblinoid, or elf units.

**Scouts.** This unit can deploy into the rear rank of an opposed army.

**Screech.** As an action, this unit forces an opposed unit to succeed on a DC 15 Power test or become misled. Recharge 4–6.

**Shock Troops.** Each time this unit causes another unit to be diminished, this unit gains +2 to Attack and +2 to Power until the end of the battle.

**Siege Engine.** This unit must spend 1 round of battle doing nothing before each attack. This unit

can attack a fortification. It automatically hits (no Attack test or Power test needed) and deals 1d4 + 2 damage.

**Siege Weapon.** This unit can attack an adjacent fortification. It automatically hits (no Attack test or Power test needed) and deals 3 damage.

**Slam.** When this unit succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, the target unit is also disoriented.

**Smoke Screen.** When this unit succeeds on an Attack test against another unit, that unit is also disoriented.

**Solar Flare.** Once per battle as a reaction to targeting a fortification, the damage this unit deals to fortifications is maximized, and it deals that damage to all fortifications in one rank.

**Soporific Spores.** As an action, this unit forces a legal target to make a DC 13 Power test. On a failure, the opposed unit is disorganized.

**Sow Chaos.** Each opposed unit within 1 space of this unit has disadvantage on Morale and Command tests, and suffers 1 additional casualty if it fails the Morale test to avoid becoming diminished.

**Spike Shot.** As an action, this unit forces a target unit to succeed on a DC 12 Power test or suffer 2 casualties and become weakened. An affected unit can repeat this power test at the end of each of its activations to lose the weakened unit condition. Recharge 5–6.

**Split.** When this unit is diminished, place an identical unit with the same current battle statistics and casualties in an empty adjacent space.

**Spores.** When this unit is targeted by a successful Attack test from an infantry, cavalry, or aerial unit, the attacking unit must succeed on a DC 13 Power test or become disoriented.

**Stalwart.** While this unit is diminished, opposed infantry and cavalry units have disadvantage on Power tests against it.

**Stinky.** Any opposed unit adjacent to this unit has disadvantage on Attack tests.

**Stone.** Each opposed unit that activates adjacent to this unit suffers 1 casualty.

**Stoneskin.** As a reaction to suffering 1 or more casualties from any opposed artillery unit, this unit can ignore 1 of those casualties.

**Stoneskin.** As a reaction to suffering 1 or more casualties from any opposed artillery unit, this unit can ignore 1 of those casualties.

**Strength in Numbers.** This unit begins the battle with 1 additional casualty for each other undead unit in its army (up to a maximum of 12 casualties).

**Stupid.** Each time it attacks, this unit has a 25 percent chance of ignoring its intended target and attacking a random adjacent unit.

**Swords of the Dragon Lord.** When this unit makes a successful Attack test against a target unit, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Morale test or suffer 1 additional casualty.

**To the Death.** If this unit breaks as a result of an opposed infantry, cavalry, or aerial unit's Attack or Power test, the attacking unit suffers 1 casualty.

**Veterans of a Thousand Wars.** This unit's movement increases by 1. When attacking units of a lower tier, its damage increases by 1.

**Wail.** Once per battle, this unit can use an action to force each adjacent opposed unit to make a DC 15 Power test. On a failure, a unit suffers 1 casualty, and its Morale bonus is reduced to 0 until the end of its next activation. On a success, a unit has disadvantage on Morale tests until the end of its next activation.

**Warbred.** As a reaction to succeeding on a Power test as part of an attack, this unit can make a DC 10 Command test. On a success, this unit can attack again.

**Wave.** When this unit succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack against an opposed unit, the opposed unit is pushed back 1 space if there is an empty space behind it. If there is no empty space, the opposed unit and the unit behind it each suffer 1 casualty.

**Whirlwind.** When this unit succeeds on an Attack test against an opposed infantry unit, that unit takes -2 to Attack and Defense. Each opposed unit can be affected by this trait once per battle.

**You Follow!** Whenever this unit successfully uses the Follow Up maneuver, each goblinoid unit in the rank this unit leaves can move 1 space.

## ANCESTRAL UNITS

Many of the units that make up the armies in the warfare rules are organized by ancestry. Six of the most common ancestries are discussed below—humans, elves, dwarves, orcs, goblinoids (including hobgoblins and bugbears), and undead. These ancestries cover many of the peoples and forces that players and GMs might commonly recruit from, with other ancestries available through the special unit deck (see below).

Organizing units by ancestry is completely arbitrary, but still useful. If it makes sense for a specific campaign, any of these ancestries can be easily reskinned and referred to as specific nations, tribes, or domains. In an all-human campaign, dwarf units could represent a line of human mountain folk, while elf units stand in for the soldiers of a steadfast forest realm. In the same way, not all elf units need the same traits. A GM might develop three or four additional traits for different courts of elves in their world, so that only one court gets the Eternal trait.

Each of the standard ancestries features nine units, including a variety of infantry, cavalry, and artillery units covering Tiers I, II, and III. It's possible to build a solid army using just the units from those ancestries, making use of the characters' and NPCs' backgrounds and alliances.

## UNITS, NOT CHARACTERS

It's important to note that the way members of a given ancestry organize for war can be very different from how they perform during adventuring or when fighting a dragon single-handed. In other words, the stats a member of an ancestry has in combat are not related to the ancestry's stats in warfare. The things that make a good adventurer don't necessarily make a good soldier. Instead, these rules focus on how members of a particular ancestry might organize in large companies, how good they are at taking orders, how seamlessly they coordinate with dozens of other soldiers, and how they maintain their cool while taking casualties.

As such, the typical stats for an elf, dwarf, or zombie in the core rules don't translate mathematically into a unit's stats. Rather, a unit focuses





on culture, training, and behavior as those things apply to the requirements of a large battle. By the same token, the soldiers represented by units are not adventurers. Though they have solid combat skill, their training is mostly focused on fighting together and not breaking under pressure. A battle in a dungeon or a dragon's lair is not a place for a hundred soldiers trained with pike and shield, accustomed to deploying in formation and to count on the soldiers in front of, behind, and beside them. Army battles take place in wide-open spaces to allow this sort of unit to make best use of its soldiers' training. Cram them all into a series of 10-foot-wide corridors without light, and it drastically reduces their effectiveness.

An army might have some kind of special operations section whose soldiers function more like adventurers, at least in terms of their skill sets. But for the most part, those sorts of soldiers are not the soldiers in a standard unit.

## HUMANS

---

Humans are feeble and weak compared to most of the other ancestries in the book. They have no ancestral bonus to Attack, Power, Defense, or Toughness. What pathetic creatures! However, they are better than most other ancestries at two things: Morale and Command. And as it turns out, these are critical elements to success on the battlefield. Human units are thus less likely to break and run when the battle gets tough or things get weird. And they're better at executing complex commands, which means their infantry are more likely to succeed on maneuvers such as Follow Up and Set for Charge. Taken in combination with the Adaptable trait that all human units have—granting advantage on Morale and Command tests—and humans are an ancestry optimized for warfare.

Many are the commanders who've looked out at a pathetic band of spindly humans and imagined them to be easy pickings—only to experience

real dread and terror when the humans don't break. They don't run. Rather, they stand fast. They hold their ground. And they think tactically. Each ancestry has its own specialty in the field of war. But for humans, their specialty *is* war.

Human armies are versatile. The best armies have a variety of units: infantry, cavalry, and artillery, and humans are equally good at all of these. This means you can field a balanced army, evenly divided between these disciplines. However, it's your army. You should muster the units you think are fun to field. Try an army with lots of archers! Or use your domain's Espionage skill to spy on the enemy, learn their army's composition, and muster units to thwart them!

If you don't know which units your enemy is fielding, try mustering the Hounds of Dalrath. They gain a bonus against most of the units the GM is likely to use.

## ELVES

Elf units are better on Attack than other ancestries in this book, representing their hereditary affinity with sword and bow. Elf units include some of the best archers in the game, though they are otherwise physically unimpressive on the battlefield. That said, elf units are highly mobile, making it easier for them to exploit any holes in an enemy's defenses. If a unit breaks or uses the Retreat maneuver, elf infantry will very likely move into position to take advantage of that gap.

As well, elf units have the Eternal trait. Undead and infernal creatures are no different to them than humans, dwarves, or goblins. As such, the soldiers of an elf unit don't experience existential dread at seeing a zombie horde shuffling toward them any more than they do in response to a human horde. This makes them better at holding their ground in





the face of units that strike fear into the hearts of soldiers of other ancestries.

Elf armies favor archers! No surprise there. The Elven Thorns are one of the best artillery units in the game. Weakening opposed units with the Thorns is a powerful strategy likely to contribute to your victory. But the Forest Mist unit is also not to be underestimated.

Like many well-trained infantry units in the book, the Forest Mist gains a bonus to Defense when it moves into a gap left by an opposed unit after a successful Follow Up maneuver. In addition to the Forest Mist's high Defense, they can plunge into gaps of the opposed infantry without worrying too much about taking casualties as a result.

## DWARVES

---

Dwarves are a hardy folk, granting their units greater natural Toughness than the units of other ancestries. This makes them excellent infantry, and dwarf infantry units are among the best in the game. Dwarf units also have the Stalwart trait, meaning that even after a dwarf unit is diminished, it is very hard to break it.

Infantry should be the meat and potatoes of any dwarf army, but dwarves field good artillery and cavalry too! Dwarves favor crossbows for their foot soldiers, and these are devastating at close range. But artillery must deploy into the center rank, so a skilled dwarf commander focuses on using their infantry to open some space in the front rank, and then move their artillery units adjacent to opposed units to maximize their close-range effectiveness.

## ORCS

Orcs share the elves' affinity with weapons (granting a bonus to an orc unit's Attack) and have increased Toughness that makes them excellent soldiers. But their most potent asset is the Relentless trait, which allows an orc unit in danger of breaking to keep fighting and stay on the field. An orc unit reduced to the very last of its soldiers can keep fighting almost indefinitely!

Orcs are the traditional enemies of human, elf, and dwarf armies, known for their proud and fierce culture and traditions. But a domain that can avoid conflict to ally with orcs (typically in exchange for assurances of respect for territorial boundaries and mutual defense in times of need) can gain access to powerful units. An entire orc army with the Relentless trait is a thing few enemies are prepared to face. But orc units have a wide array of other traits.

The Bloodwalkers can outflank any enemy, making them the equivalent of super scouts. And the orc cavalry known as the Hellriders ride nightmares, which grant that unit the Harrowing trait. Most enemies find the presence of these hell steeds on the battlefield a serious blow to morale, and opposed artillery struggle to focus on targets whose Jaunt trait allows them to attack, then shift into the Ethereal Plane where they cannot be reached.

### PROXYING OTHER STEEDS

Cavalry units gain no bonuses to their stats based on the mount they ride, but different mounts contribute unique traits to their unit. As you can infer from the Hellriders, nightmares add the Harrowing and Jaunt traits to this unit.

A GM who wants to give cavalry units different mounts should easily be able to look at existing mounted units in the game and reverse engineer





what that mount does. Nightmares grant the Harrowing and Jaunt traits. Ram-mounted cavalry get the Ram Riders trait, units with elk mounts get the Spit Upon Their Horns maneuver, and so on.

## GOBLINOIDS

Often at the low end of the pecking order under bigger, stronger species, goblins tend to be pressed into service as levies more so than trained troops. But goblinoids also include the powerful bugbears and the hobgoblins, two peoples whose love of regimentation makes them exceptional soldiers. As such, the proper mix of goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears on the field can prove a match for any other ancestry.

Bugbear units have huge bonuses to Attack and Defense (and are all Tier III units as a result). They also inspire other goblinoid units to greater deeds, so that an army of goblins with a bugbear unit leading them can be a formidable threat! For their part, hobgoblins are fearless combatants and sound strategists, giving hobgoblin units a better Attack than units of other ancestries, and making them the

equal of human units for Morale. Hobgoblin units also make use of the Warbred trait, granting an additional attack after a successful Power test. This can be used to devastating effect as hobgoblin infantry chew through opposing forces—and makes those units easily the equal of humans on the battlefield.

Although goblins are typically no one's first choice for infantry units, their cleverness more than makes up for a lack of physical strength. Goblin Sappers make use of the Dig trait to undermine enemy fortifications, while Goblin Smokers use the Smoke Screen trait to leave opposed units unable to properly retaliate to goblinoid attacks.

An all-goblin army normally focuses on hobgoblins for infantry, artillery, and cavalry. Goblins are useful as levies and maybe one or two specialized units, such as Goblin Sappers if the enemy has a fortification.

Because the Bugbear Heavy Claw unit has traits that can grant free movement and attacks to goblinoid units, it's best to use that unit for an all-goblin army. If you want to spice up an existing army with some goblinoid units, hobgoblins are best.



## UNDEAD

Not an ancestry so much as a necromantic tool used by the commanders of evil domains, undead units feature in many NPC-led armies. Low-tier undead units are intended to be expendable, but higher-tier units are quite nasty—and many interesting undead units can be found in the special unit deck.

The baseline units of an undead army are skeletons and zombies. Skeleton units are destroyed relatively quickly, but zombie units can be as hard to take down as orc units. What makes all undead units especially formidable, though, is the Dead trait and the Harrowing trait. The Dead trait means an undead unit never worries about Morale tests and can't be diminished. Because its soldiers aren't alive, they don't worry about their fellow bonebags being ground up by enemy forces.

The Harrowing trait means that most units of mortal creatures are freaked out by the presence of undead on the battlefield. Elf units pay undead no mind, but the units of other ancestries don't like the prospect of fighting against their own forebears risen from the grave. A sense of dread and

foreboding fills the field when undead march, and especially at the beginning of a battle, undead units can have a major advantage!

Undead armies shine once they get past Tier I units. The main purpose of fielding skeletons and zombies is to unlock ghoul, wight, and wraith units! Ghoul Infantry regain lost casualties thanks to the Feast trait, allowing them to feed on the corpses of fallen enemies or allies. And the ghoul artillery unit known as the Fireborn can inflict ongoing damage with fire tokens from their special maneuver.

Deathstormers are wight cavalry units that race across the battlefield on skeletal steeds. And the unique Tier III wraith unit known as the Black Wind is even more powerful. Along with the Dead and Harrowing traits, this unit gains bonus movement and can move through other units thanks to its Ethereal trait. This also means units that the Black Wind attacks gain no benefit from fortifications. If you've amassed a large enough army to field the Tier III units, you probably don't need that Zombie Catapult—but you should probably field it anyway, because it's dope.





**Human Infantry**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGULAR, LIGHT, HUMAN, INFANTRY

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +3  | 12  | +2  | 12  | +1  | +2  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Adaptable

**Human Peasants**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 LEVIES, LIGHT, HUMAN, INFANTRY

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +2  | 10  | +2  | 12  | -1  | +0  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Adaptable

**The Hounds of Dalrath**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 VETERAN, HEAVY, HUMAN, CAVALRY

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +4  | 13  | +5  | 12  | +2  | +3  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Adaptable  
 •Scourge of the Wild

**Human Artillery (Longbow)**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGULAR, LIGHT, HUMAN, ARTILLERY

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +3  | 10  | +2  | 8   | +1  | +1  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Adaptable

**Human Aerial (Hawk)**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGULAR, MEDIUM, HUMAN, AERIAL

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +7  | 11  | +3  | 9   | +1  | +1  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Adaptable  
 •Aerial Bombardment

**Human Artillery (Catapult)**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 VETERAN, MEDIUM, HUMAN, ARTILLERY

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +5  | 11  | +3  | 9   | +2  | +2  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Adaptable  
 •Siege Engine

**Human Cavalry (Horse)**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGULAR, LIGHT, HUMAN, CAVALRY

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +3  | 12  | +3  | 10  | +1  | +1  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Adaptable

**Human Shield Maniple**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 VETERAN, MEDIUM, HUMAN, INFANTRY

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +5  | 14  | +4  | 14  | +3  | +3  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Adaptable  
 •Maneuver: "Hold the line!" (R)  
 •Into The Breach (R)

**Greenstockings**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 ELITE, LIGHT, HUMAN, ARTILLERY

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +7  | 12  | +2  | 8   | +3  | +3  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Adaptable  
 •Fade

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

REGULAR, LIGHT, ELF, INFANTRY

ATK

DEF

POW

TOU

MOR

COM

+4

12

+2

12

+0

+1

TRAITS

- Mobile
- Eternal

1

TIER

1

DMG

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

VETERAN, MEDIUM, ELF, INFANTRY

ATK

DEF

POW

TOU

MOR

COM

+5

14

+4

14

+2

+2

TRAITS

- Into the Breach (R)
- Eternal
- Scouts
- Harriers

II

TIER

1

DMG

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

VETERAN, MEDIUM, ELF, AERIAL

ATK

DEF

POW

TOU

MOR

COM

+7

11

+3

9

+1

+2

TRAITS

- Eternal
- Maneuver: "Land and Charge!"

III

TIER

1

DMG

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

REGULAR, LIGHT, ELF, CAVALRY

ATK

DEF

POW

TOU

MOR

COM

+4

12

+3

10

+0

+0

TRAITS

- Mobile
- Eternal

I

TIER

1

DMG

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

VETERAN, HEAVY, ELF, ARTILLERY

ATK

DEF

POW

TOU

MOR

COM

+6

11

+4

10

+1

+1

TRAITS

- Mobile
- Eternal
- Fast Siege Weapon

II

TIER

1

DMG

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

VETERAN, HEAVY, ELF, CAVALRY

ATK

DEF

POW

TOU

MOR

COM

+5

13

+5

12

+1

+2

TRAITS

- Mobile
- Eternal
- Maneuver: "Spit Upon Their Horns" (R)

II

TIER

1

DMG

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

REGULAR, LIGHT, ELF, ARTILLERY

ATK

DEF

POW

TOU

MOR

COM

+4

10

+2

8

+0

+0

TRAITS

- Mobile
- Eternal

I

TIER

1

DMG

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

LEVIES, LIGHT, ELF, INFANTRY

ATK

DEF

POW

TOU

MOR

COM

+3

10

+2

12

-2

-1

TRAITS

- Mobile
- Eternal

I

TIER

1

DMG

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

ELITE, SUPER-HEAVY, ELF, ARTILLERY

ATK

DEF

POW

TOU

MOR

COM

+8

12

+5

11

+2

+2

TRAITS

- Mobile
- Eternal
- Elf-shot

III

TIER

2

DMG

# Dwarf Infantry

COMMANDER \_\_\_\_\_  
REGULAR, LIGHT, DWARF, INFANTRY

SIZE 6

DMG 1

ATK DEF POW TOU MOR COM

+3 12 +2 12 +0 +1

TRAITS

- Stalwart

TIER I

# Dwarf Artillery (Crossbow)

COMMANDER \_\_\_\_\_  
REGULAR, LIGHT, DWARF, ARTILLERY

SIZE 6

DMG 1

ATK DEF POW TOU MOR COM

+3 10 +2 10 +0 +0

TRAITS

- Stalwart
- Close Range

TIER I

# Dwarf Cavalry (Ram Riders)

COMMANDER \_\_\_\_\_  
REGULAR, LIGHT, DWARF, CAVALRY

SIZE 6

DMG 2

ATK DEF POW TOU MOR COM

+3 12 +3 12 +0 +0

TRAITS

- Stalwart
- Ram Riders

TIER I

# Bolt Throwers

COMMANDER \_\_\_\_\_  
REGULAR, HEAVY, DWARF, ARTILLERY

SIZE 6

DMG 1

ATK DEF POW TOU MOR COM

+3 10 +4 13 +0 +0

TRAITS

- Stalwart
- Collateral Damage
- Point Blank

TIER II

# The Gold Lances

COMMANDER \_\_\_\_\_  
VETERAN, MEDIUM, DWARF, CAVALRY

SIZE 6

DMG 2

ATK DEF POW TOU MOR COM

+4 13 +4 13 +1 +2

TRAITS

- Stalwart
- Ram Riders
- Maneuver: "Lancers! Flank them!" (R)

TIER II

# Dwarf Artillery (Trebuchet)

COMMANDER \_\_\_\_\_  
VETERAN, HEAVY, DWARF, ARTILLERY

SIZE 6

DMG 3

ATK DEF POW TOU MOR COM

+5 11 +4 12 +1 +1

TRAITS

- Stalwart
- Siege Engine

TIER II

# Dwarf Engineers

COMMANDER \_\_\_\_\_  
VETERAN, LIGHT, DWARF, INFANTRY

SIZE 6

DMG 1

ATK DEF POW TOU MOR COM

+4 14 +2 14 +2 +2

TRAITS

- Stalwart
- Maneuver: Repair

TIER III

# Dwarven Highshields

COMMANDER \_\_\_\_\_  
VETERAN, HEAVY, DWARF, INFANTRY

SIZE 6

DMG 2

ATK DEF POW TOU MOR COM

+4 14 +6 18 +2 +2

TRAITS

- Stalwart
- Maneuver: Testudo (R)
- Into the Breach (R)

TIER III

# Dwarf Miners

COMMANDER \_\_\_\_\_  
LEVIES, LIGHT, DWARF, INFANTRY

SIZE 6

DMG 1

ATK DEF POW TOU MOR COM

+2 10 +2 12 -2 -1

TRAITS

- Stalwart
- Hard Hats

TIER I

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

REGULAR, LIGHT, ORC, INFANTRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +4  | 12  | +2  | 12  | +0  | +1  |

TRAITS

- Relentless (R)

1

DMG

1

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

VETERAN, MEDIUM, ORC, CAVALRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +5  | 13  | +4  | 12  | +1  | +2  |

TRAITS

- Relentless (R)
- Harrowing
- Jaunt

1

DMG

2

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

VETERAN, MEDIUM, ORC, ARTILLERY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +6  | 11  | +3  | 10  | +1  | +1  |

TRAITS

- Relentless (R)
- Siege Engine

1

DMG

3

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

REGULAR, LIGHT, ORC, ARTILLERY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +4  | 10  | +2  | 9   | +0  | +0  |

TRAITS

- Relentless (R)

1

DMG

1

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

VETERAN, MEDIUM, ORC, INFANTRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +5  | 14  | +4  | 15  | +2  | +2  |

TRAITS

- Relentless (R)
- Maneuver: Outflank
- Into the Breach (R)

1

DMG

1

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

LEVIES, LIGHT, ORC, INFANTRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +3  | 10  | +2  | 12  | -2  | -1  |

TRAITS

- Relentless (R)
- To the Death

1

DMG

1

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

REGULAR, LIGHT, ORC, CAVALRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +4  | 12  | +3  | 11  | +0  | +0  |

TRAITS

- Relentless (R)

1

DMG

2

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

VETERAN, HEAVY, ORC, ARTILLERY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +6  | 11  | +4  | 11  | +1  | +1  |

TRAITS

- Relentless (R)
- Point Blank

2

DMG

1

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

VETERAN, MEDIUM, ORC, AERIAL

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +7  | 11  | +3  | 10  | +1  | +2  |

TRAITS

- Relentless (R)
- Poisonous

1

DMG

1

TIER



**Goblin Meat Shields**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 LEVIES, LIGHT, GOBLIN, INFANTRY

SIZE **4**

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +2  | 9   | +1  | 11  | -3  | -2  |

**TRAITS**  
 •AAAUUGH!!!

DMG **1**

TIER **I**

**Bloodfangs**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGULAR, LIGHT, HOBGOBLIN, CAVALRY

SIZE **6**

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +4  | 12  | +3  | 10  | +1  | +0  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Warbred (R)  
 •Maneuver: "Prey on the Weak" (R)

DMG **2**

TIER **II**

**Goblin Sappers**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 VETERAN, MEDIUM, GOBLIN, INFANTRY

SIZE **4**

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +4  | 13  | +3  | 13  | +1  | +1  |

**TRAITS**  
 •AAAUUGH!!!  
 •"Dig!"

DMG **1**

TIER **II**

**Hobgoblin Infantry**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGULAR, LIGHT, HOBGOBLIN, INFANTRY

SIZE **6**

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +4  | 12  | +2  | 12  | +1  | +1  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Warbred (R)

DMG **1**

TIER **I**

**Goblin Worg-Riders**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGULAR, LIGHT, GOBLIN, CAVALRY

SIZE **4**

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +3  | 11  | +2  | 9   | -1  | -1  |

**TRAITS**  
 •AAAUUGH!!!

DMG **2**

TIER **I**

**Dire Wasp Riders**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 VETERAN, MEDIUM, HOBGOBLIN, AERIAL

SIZE **6**

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +7  | 11  | +3  | 9   | +2  | +2  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Warbred (R)  
 •Poisonous

DMG **1**

TIER **II**

**Hobgoblin Archers (Longbow)**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGULAR, LIGHT, HOBGOBLIN, ARTILLERY

SIZE **6**

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +4  | 10  | +2  | 8   | +1  | +0  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Warbred (R)

DMG **1**

TIER **I**

**Bugbear Heavy Claw**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 VETERAN, HEAVY, BUGBEAR, INFANTRY

SIZE **6**

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +7  | 16  | +7  | 16  | +2  | +2  |

**TRAITS**  
 •Inspire Fear  
 •You Follow!  
 •Into the Breach (R)

DMG **2**

TIER **III**

**Goblin Smokers**

**COMMANDER** \_\_\_\_\_  
 VETERAN, MEDIUM, GOBLIN, ARTILLERY

SIZE **4**

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
| +5  | 10  | +2  | 8   | +0  | +0  |

**TRAITS**  
 •AAAUUGH!!!  
 •Smoke Screen

DMG **1**

TIER **II**

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

Zombie Infantry

REGULAR, LIGHT, ZOMBIE, INFANTRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +2  | 11  | +1  | 13  | +0  | +1  |

TRAITS

- Dead
- Harrowing
- Relentless (R)

1

DMG

1

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

Deathstormers

REGULAR, LIGHT, WIGHT, CAVALRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +4  | 14  | +4  | 11  | +3  | +3  |

TRAITS

- Dead
- Harrowing
- Warbred (R)

1

DMG

2

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

Fireborn

VETERAN, HEAVY, GOUL, ARTILLERY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +7  | 13  | +7  | 12  | +1  | +1  |

TRAITS

- Dead
- Harrowing
- Maneuver: "Fire!" (R)

2

DMG

1

TIER

4

SIZE

COMMANDER

Skeletal Cavalry

REGULAR, LIGHT, SKELETON, CAVALRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +3  | 11  | +2  | 10  | +0  | +0  |

TRAITS

- Dead
- Harrowing

1

DMG

2

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

"The Black Wind"

VETERAN, MEDIUM, WRAITH, AERIAL

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +6  | 11  | +5  | 11  | +1  | +2  |

TRAITS

- Dead
- Harrowing
- Ethereal
- Create Dead

1

DMG

1

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

Ghoul Infantry

REGULAR, LIGHT, GOUL, INFANTRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +5  | 11  | +5  | 14  | +0  | +1  |

TRAITS

- Dead
- Harrowing
- Feast

1

DMG

1

TIER

4

SIZE

COMMANDER

Skeletal Archers (Longbow)

REGULAR, LIGHT, SKELETON, ARTILLERY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +3  | 9   | +1  | 8   | +0  | +0  |

TRAITS

- Dead
- Harrowing

1

DMG

1

TIER

4

SIZE

COMMANDER

Bonebags

LEVIES, LIGHT, SKELETON, INFANTRY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +2  | 9   | +1  | 12  | -2  | -1  |

TRAITS

- Dead
- Harrowing

1

DMG

1

TIER

6

SIZE

COMMANDER

Zombie Catapult

VETERAN, HEAVY, ZOMBIE, ARTILLERY

| ATK | DEF | POW | TOU | MOR | COM |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +4  | 10  | +3  | 11  | +1  | +1  |

TRAITS

- Dead
- Harrowing
- Siege Engine
- Load the Bones!

1

DMG

3

TIER





## THE SPECIAL UNIT DECK

Of course there was no way to fit every possible unit anyone might think of into a single book, so MCDM had to produce a supplement to *Kingdoms & Warfare*: the special unit deck. This features sixty-four nonstandard units from a variety of additional ancestries and monstrous lineages, including dragons, fiends, more undead, kobolds, giants, black puddings, centaurs, gnomes, elementals, and more!

Ultimately though, the three tiers of units across six ancestries in this book, plus the special units that can be mustered by domains, are enough to run any number of interesting, unique battles without resorting to additional special units—especially when those battles include fortifications and different kinds of terrain.

Moreover, it's our hope that the warfare system and the setup of units is clear enough to make creating new units fun. There's no need to buy the special unit deck just to field a single dragon unit for a battle. Rather, just think about the system as presented, imagine how dragons might work in it, and create your own unit—which will probably end up very close to the official dragon units in the special unit deck!

## FOR THE GM: BUILDING THE VILLAIN'S ARMY

Just like the regular game focuses on the characters, these warfare rules are not a competitive exercise.

It's still the GM's responsibility to curate content in order to create drama. So while the GM can use the same rules for building the villain's army as the players use to build the characters' army, it is perhaps more important that the army the heroes face is sufficiently challenging. Likewise, the villain's army should reflect the choices the players and characters have made. The heroes can always get in over their heads, bite off more than they can chew, and end up facing overwhelming odds on the battlefield—just as they can in combat with individual enemies.

The rules used for designing encounters with monsters apply to the warfare rules as well. Thus “more units” is typically a greater challenge than “better units,” just like a standard encounter with many more monsters than characters can quickly become a TPK. The villain's army should obey the rules for unit command and dependencies (part of the **Building an Army** section starting on page 100). But knowing that an army can field one Tier IV unit does nothing to suggest which unit is best for a particular scenario—and not all units of the same type are equal in battle.

Players can muster units only from ancestries they have connections or alliances with, or from ancestries predisposed to lend aid through good roleplaying. But the GM **should make liberal use of monstrous units**, as well as any units from any ancestry that seems reasonable and dramatic. The GM is not restricted by which ancestries they can field, as long as it seems reasonable that the leaders of an opposed domain would have access to those monsters or ancestries.

Deciding which units to field is not a science. It will take interpretation, guesswork, and experience to properly balance a battle—and to figure out that not all battles should be balanced. And this process doesn't stop once the battle begins! A GM might find that they need to discreetly fudge some die rolls or have units use less than optimal tactics because they realize only midway through the battle that they've overloaded the villain's forces—and that the characters' army is about to have a bad day.

In addition to the general advice for players, GMs should keep the following points in mind when building armies for a villainous realm or any other domain fighting against the characters:

- If one side has Tier V units, the other side probably should too. But a few heavily upgraded Tier IV units could balance things out.
- As a general rule, avoid scenarios where one side has many more or much better units than the other side.
- If one side has a super-heavy, super-elite unit, that's fine—as long as it's clear how the other side can make up for that. A good number of veteran medium units might be enough. Strategically, a good army is one with infantry, artillery, and cavalry units. About half an army should be infantry.
- Tactically, an army should focus on breaking the opposing side's front. If one side's artillery and cavalry are used to try and get to the opposing side's center through the rear while infantry attack the opposed vanguard, that side will probably lose because it's dividing its forces.
- Once an opposing side's front is broken, the attacking side's units can move around more. This opens up many different strategies, and lets cavalry and artillery units become more flexible.
- The best use of archers is for picking off units that are close to breaking. (Assuming there are no aerial units to attack!)
- It's reasonable for a GM to design a battle meant to be a rout of the characters' forces. But that should happen only if the players have gotten in over their heads in spite of the GM's best efforts to the contrary.

These rules can always be adjusted for drama and style. Perhaps a particular villain relies on a horde of infantry! But the rules are designed to make it so that an all-infantry army won't be able to bring enough troops to bear to be effective, and will likely inevitably lose to a better-balanced army. Still, GMs should always remember that as with the characters facing off against single foes, **the rules for warfare expect the players to face reasonable challenges and win.** The only time this should change (again, as with the regular game) is if the characters have gotten themselves in over their heads because they've done something foolish—particularly against the GM's advice.

## WHEN SHOULD A MONSTER BE A UNIT?

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As a rule, opposed units should not be creatures so mighty that the characters would prefer to handle them personally. For example, a 5th-level party's army should not face off against a Red Dragon unit, both because that unit will probably smoke (perhaps literally) the characters' small, relatively inexperienced army—and because the players would most likely prefer that their characters fight that dragon face to face.

Eventually, though, as the characters level up, what was once a major threat becomes a minor issue. A high-level party with a large, experienced army might see a Black Dragon unit flying around the battlefield and shrug, "Our army can take care of it." These things are relative.

## REINFORCEMENTS: THE SECRET WEAPON

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Because this is a brand-new system and no one is well familiar with it, players and GMs might find themselves in the middle of a battle that's going badly. "Going badly" means something undramatic is happening. One side is being routed, while the other side faces few challenges leading to an unearned victory. This scenario is bad no matter whether the player characters are the ones routing or being routed.

If this happens, it's a good time for the losing army to deploy their reinforcements. These are new units that arrive on the battlefield in the nick of time to save the day. (Cavalry are traditional reinforcements, but there's no need to be a martyr to tradition.)

Reinforcements should be used sparingly, and should always be a dramatic reveal. As just one example, an NPC domain whose leaders decided to stay neutral despite being courted by both the characters and the villain during intrigue makes an excellent source of unexpected reinforcements for either side. If the reinforcements come to aid the heroes, then the players and their characters gain control over them. The GM decides if reinforcements arrive and which units show up. This is a narrative tool used to keep the tension high, though, not a part of the battle setup.

A detailed black and white illustration. In the upper left, a large dragon with textured scales and large wings is breathing a stream of fire towards the center. The fire is depicted with bright, wispy lines. Below the dragon, the landscape is rocky and uneven. In the lower right, a large, weathered skull of a creature with a wide, toothy mouth is partially buried in the ground. In the lower left, several small figures of adventurers in armor are visible, looking up at the dragon. The overall scene is dramatic and action-oriented.

# **MONSTERS & MAGIC ITEMS**

# Monsters



*Strongholds & Followers* introduced the idea of Concordance, a numerical value every character possesses that measures how closely aligned they are with their god's or patron's teachings and desires.

Anyone who worships a god or follows the teachings of a church or a greater power has Concordance. In a fantasy world where these beings are objectively real and grant their followers access to spells and abilities, any character should be able to petition their god and, if they are found sufficiently pious, receive aid. You can use the Concordance rules in *Strongholds & Followers* to summon some of the creatures in this book.

## ACTION-ORIENTED

Many of the creatures presented here are designed to be boss monsters: enemies that can take on an entire party by themselves or with a handful of minions. But boss monsters that are just “higher CR” often fail to challenge the characters. We’ve got a solution: **action-oriented monsters**.

The key to effective solo villains is giving them plenty of opportunities to act and move when it’s not their turn. Thus, each action-oriented creature in this book has at least one special bonus action and reaction, as well as “villain actions” that let them dominate the battlefield.

These actions make the boss monsters action-oriented, dynamic, and formidable. Whether fought as an exciting solo challenge or alongside a few easy-to-run minions, action-oriented monsters challenge the characters with dramatic and powerful actions in combat.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Every action-oriented monster has three villain actions that they can use after an enemy creature’s turn. Villain actions are similar to legendary actions with the following exceptions:

- A creature can only use one villain action per round (as such, villain actions tend to be more powerful than legendary actions).
- Each set of villain actions has a recommended round order. These abilities give the battle a logical flow and a cinematic arc.

The first villain action is an **opener**, which shows the characters that they are not battling a typical monster. Openers generally deal some damage, summon a minion, buff the creature, debuff the characters, or move the creature into an advantageous position. They’re just a taste of what’s to come.

The second villain action provides **crowd control**. It typically fires after the heroes have had a chance to respond once or twice, get into position, and surround the villain. This second action helps the villain regain the upper hand. Like an opener, this action comes in many flavors, but it is even more powerful than an opener.

The third and final villain action is an **ultimate move** or “**ult**”—a showstopper the villain can use to deal a devastating blow to the characters before the end of the battle.

While every creature has a recommended order of actions, you can take villain actions in the order most dramatic for your fight. You could push back a villain action if a monster is stunned or might stay alive for more than three rounds, or you could perform the recommended third action in round two after several surprise critical hits!

## COURT OF DECAY

The Last City, a hulking necropolitian ruin in the center of the Abyss ruled by the Demon Prince of Undeath, is home to insidious undead creatures—called the Deathless and the Soulless, they are creatures of hate, memory, and mind who refuse to yield to law and surrender to the grave.

The Court of Decay and the Court of the Deep maintain a taut, uneasy truce. The Deathless have no souls, so they yield no power to the demons of

the depths. But they do not fall into lethe (page 165) and therefore pose a constant threat.

Ancient kings of the Mundane World, these Deathless Lords mastered unholy lore in life so their unfailing will would overcome the sleep of death.

## **Zaar Anathema, The Shackled King, The King in Gold**

Zaar, the Thane of Kalas Mithral and Lord of House Q'or, once ruled the empire of steel dwarves and personally arbitrated disputes between the Celestial domains and the Terran Empires. He was a wise king, just and true. Now Kalas Mithral is

dead, forgotten, and he who once ruled now serves in the Court of Decay.

The end of Kalas Mithral came with the war against . The astral celestials' first Army of Night sieged the walls of Kalas Mithral for months and weeks and days, six and six and six. The Legion of Adamant was mighty in warfare and impervious to sorcery and sword. But the greatest weapon the astral celestials wielded was treachery and corruption, and the Legion of Adamant, once called the Legion Unyielding, faltered.

The King in Gold foresaw the ruin of his house, his capital, and his people. He swore a vow that Kalas Mithral would not fall while he lived and in answer came a howl from below. A bane placed deep within the earth at its creation called out



to Zaar. Long had the elementals known that Ord placed hideous blights within his masterwork, entombing them within the world. Fringe sages among the dwarves wrote that all Orden was a prison for something poisonous to the timescape.

Zaar summoned the Order of Fabrication, a team of elite mechanists. He pointed to the floor of their deepest chamber and uttered one command: “To the heart of the world.” And thus the Order of Fabrication undertook their greatest making.

A mighty engine did the mechanists build, its corkscrew tip sharp enough to pierce the shell of the world, its hull clad in a metal never seen before or since, its core able to withstand the titanic pressures and temperatures. Thirty elementals could the vessel hold, engineers to man the controls and Zaar’s elite wardens to battle whatever they encountered below, whatever guarded the bane at the heart of the world. War-ender did they name the great machine, for they believed the power below would end the wretched siege and bring their people salvation.

None now live who remember the War-ender’s expedition, but this much is known: many days after it pierced the shell of the world, the War-ender emerged, its hull shattered, its crew gone. Only Zaar remained, manning the controls alone.

And gripped tightly in his hand, exhumed from the depths of the earth, was the *Tellac Oranic* (see page 213 in the **Magic Items** section), a stone that radiated death and turned the living into shadows.

At first, the lords of the other houses believed Zaar had unearthed their salvation. For three days Zaar led the Legion of Adamant with the verdant

stone in hand, and the Army of Night melted away before him.

But the other houses quickly realized the price. While the Army of Night retreated, the dwarves of Kalas Mithral died, turned into dark umbras by the hideous stone. What seemed at first a victory was instead devastation—the Army of Night simply withdrew while the *Tellac Oranic* feasted on legions of life.

Zaar did not heed his noble court’s pleas as they begged him to surrender the stone. When he turned his back on them, they declared his house Anathema and stripped him of his rank and title. But Zaar did not notice this shame.

Eventually, the Legion of Adamant was gone, their souls fed to the stone. Only as he stood alone on the battlefield, the Army of Night an oncoming flood of death, did Zaar realize his folly. He called out to Ord, to Aan, to Myr and Kul, the makers of earth and air, of water and fire, and the four gods heard him. But their answer was not mercy—it was condemnation.

Sea, Sky, Mountain, and Magma cursed Zaar. And Ord, maker of the world, shackled the King in Gold, bound the *Tellac Oranic* to him for eternity. As his flesh and mind decayed, he died howling, watching the mile-high walls of Kalas Mithral, which had never known tarnish nor blemish, fall to Night.

The star elves slaughtered the steel dwarves to the last, sparing none, and pulled their gleaming silver city down around their corpses. Zaar, the Shackled King, fell into the Unthinking Depths, where he drags the green stone through the Last City, remembering nothing of his days of glory—only the death of his people and the king who failed them.





## ZAAR ANATHEMA

*Large undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 256 (27d10 + 108)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20 (+5) | 16 (+3) | 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Str +10, Dex +8, Con +9

**Damage Resistances** cold, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Dwarvish

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

**Ball and Chain.** As a bonus action, Zaar throws the *Tellac Oranic* toward one creature he can see within 30 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 25 feet toward Zaar.

**Fed by Souls.** Zaar regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point but fewer hit points than half his hit point maximum.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Zaar fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, Zaar has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Turn Resistance.** Zaar has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Zaar makes three warhammer attacks, one of which can be replaced with a *Tellac Oranic* attack.

**Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (4d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If Zaar hits the same target twice with his warhammer on his turn, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or become stunned until the start of Zaar's next turn.

**Tellac Oranic.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (4d6 + 5) necrotic damage, the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4, and the target gains a level of exhaustion. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. If a humanoid dies from this attack, two **shadows** controlled by Zaar rise from the corpse.

### REACTIONS

**Mantle of Shadow.** Whenever Zaar takes damage, he can create a 15-foot-radius sphere of magical darkness centered on himself. This darkness remains until dispelled or until the beginning of Zaar's next turn.

### VILLAIN ACTIONS

Zaar has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Summon Shades.** Zaar calls forth shades captured within the *Tellac Oranic*. A **will-o'-wisp** appears in an unoccupied space next to each enemy within 30 feet of Zaar that he can see. These will-o'-wisps act immediately when summoned, then immediately after Zaar on the same initiative count, and fight until they're destroyed. They follow Zaar's commands and disappear if he dies.

**Villain Action 2: Call Unto Death.** A draining pulse emits from the *Tellac Oranic*. Any creature that is not undead within 30 feet of Zaar must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. If the target is within 5 feet of Zaar, it makes this saving throw with disadvantage.

**Villain Action 3: Reaper.** Souls surge from the *Tellac Oranic* to pull the living into undeath. Any creature that is not undead within 60 feet of Zaar must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) necrotic damage on a failed save and gaining a level of exhaustion. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and doesn't gain a level of exhaustion. A humanoid slain by this villain action that is not brought back to life before the start of its next turn rises as a **wight** under Zaar's control.

## KHORAK, JARL OF DRENGRHEIM

When the Nine Clans of Vanigar rose in the north, Khorak the Stone Giant warned the other giant tribes that humans would spread, multiply, and drive the giants into extinction. Some agreed, and though they joined Khorak against the spread of the clans, their forces were not enough and the Vanirmen repelled them.

Khorak took his remaining followers into the arctic wastes of Vanigar and there made bargain with Olkhar, the Vanir God of Trickery. Olkhar gave Khorak and his followers the power they needed to conquer the Vanirmen, but his bargain cost them an eye. A ragged band of giants entered the frozen desert, but a cyclopean horde emerged—a force whom none could stand against.

Armed with Olkhar's gift, a prophetic power called *deadsight*, Khorak and his followers won many battles against men, and more giants joined his growing legion. Khorak personally slew each of the chieftains of the Nine Clans in battle and claimed the lands of men. An empire of giants emerged, called Drengnheim, with Khorak the Far-Seeing at its helm. But these victories and this empire could not sate Khorak's hunger, fed by the visions of the *deadsight*. It told him everything, showing endless lands and treasures to claim—all while hiding from him the means of his undoing.

He turned against the other giants, seeking to control their resources, and did what the humanoids could not: united

the clans of giants against him. The Cloud, Fire, and Ice tribes united under the banner of Jarl Manghild, a fire giant princess Khorak orphaned and thought left for dead. In the end, Khorak died in battle against the jarls of the combined tribes. Never before had they allied, and never would they do so again.



## KHORAK, JARL OF DRENGRHEIM

*Huge undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 276 (24d12 + 120)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 26 (+8) | 14 (+2) | 20 (+5) | 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Str +13, Con +10, Wis + 9

**Skills** Insight +9, Perception +9

**Damage Resistances** cold, lightning, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

**Languages** Common, Giant

**Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Khorak fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Staff of Providence.** The *staff of providence* (see page 213 in the **Magic Items** section) has 15 charges. While holding this staff, Khorak can use a bonus action to expend 1 or more of the staff's charges to cast one of the following spells from it (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks): *guiding bolt* (1 charge), *spirit guardians* (3 charges), or *flame strike* (4 charges). The staff regains 1d10 + 5 charges daily at midnight.

**Turn Resistance.** Khorak has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Khorak makes two staff attacks, or makes one staff attack and uses his Chieftain Crown.

**Staff of Providence.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d8 + 11) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) radiant damage.

**Chieftain Crown (Recharge 5–6).** The skulls in Khorak's crown emit a chorus of chattering screams. Each creature within 30 feet of Khorak that can hear the chorus must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 49 (14d6) psychic

damage and has disadvantage on its next attack roll or saving throw. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and doesn't have disadvantage on its next attack roll or saving throw.

### REACTIONS

**Deadsight.** Khorak's gift from Olkhar allows him to foresee oncoming attacks. He adds 5 to his AC against a melee attack that would hit him and can make a melee attack with the *staff of providence* against the creature who made the attack. To do so, Khorak must see the attacker and be wielding the *staff of providence*.

### VILLAIN ACTIONS

Khorak has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Read the Future.** Khorak foresees the characters' actions. Each enemy creature Khorak can see within 60 feet of him must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or have their tactics revealed to Khorak for 1 minute. Whenever a target that fails this saving throw makes an attack roll or a saving throw before the minute ends, the target must roll a d6 and subtract the number rolled from the attack roll or saving throw. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Villain Action 2: Visions of Death.** Khorak conjures visions of death to horrify his enemies. Each creature Khorak can see within 60 feet of him that he chooses foresees a gruesome way they could die in the immediate future. Upon receiving this vision, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of Khorak for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Villain Action 3: The End Is Nigh.** Khorak foresees his own impending doom. He casts as many spells as it takes to expend all remaining charges of the *staff of providence*.

## TELCEZALCO XXVIII, THE BLOOD RIVER

Telcezalco was the last king of the inantzicatl, the serpent folk of Orden. The serpent king's devotees gladly followed him into wars on other islands, worshipping him as a god. But Telcezalco was mortal. Every passing day reminded him of that fragility.

The inantzicatl believed the terror lizards of the island—the tetzahuitl—were sacred. They offered food, jewels, and other sacrifices to the tetzahuitl before hatchings, long journeys, and battles to ensure good fortune, and never harmed the lizards lest they risk angering the gods. Telcezalco suspected their blood contained great power—power over life and death. He was right ... but the only death he gained power over was his own.

Telcezalco and his followers slaughtered thousands of tetzahuitl, pouring a river of blood that they bathed in. They emerged immortal and undying, but their victory over death was short-lived.

Defiling the sacred pact between the inantzicatl and the tetzahuitl woke Goxomoc, the god of the terror lizards. Telcezalco's newfound power was nothing in the face of Goxomoc. The titan lizard decimated the island and the inantzicatl empire. No more would the snake-men of Ix build or smelt or write, for Goxomoc destroyed all they had. The few survivors left Ix in search of more habitable lands.

Telcezalco, twenty-eighth and last, ruled over the death of his empire. Now he serves in the Court of Decay, and all fear the arrival of the final king.

### TELCEZALCO XXVIII

*Large undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 336 (32d10 + 160)

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

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20 (+5) | 17 (+3) | 20 (+5) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) |

**Saving Throws** Str +11, Dex +9, Con + 11

**Skills** Athletics +11, Perception +8, Stealth +9

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 17 (18,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6



**Coiled Spring.** As a bonus action, Telcezalco can move or jump up to a distance equal to his movement speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Telcezalco fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Telcezalco has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Spider Climb.** Telcezalco can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Telcezalco makes three attacks: two with his scimitar and one to constrict.

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Constrict.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turns, and Telcezalco can't constrict another target.

**Withering Breath (Recharge 5–6).** Telcezalco exhales necrotic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## REACTIONS

**Rearguard.** When another creature enters a space within 5 feet of Telcezalco, he can make a scimitar attack against that creature.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Telcezalco has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Vengeful Spirits.** Telcezalco causes 2d4 **will-o'-wisps** to burst from his body. Each will-o'-wisp emerges in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of Telcezalco. The will-o'-wisps act immediately after Telcezalco on the same initiative count, and fight until they're destroyed. They follow Telcezalco's commands and disappear if he dies.

**Villain Action 2: Extract Spirit.** Each creature within 5 feet of Telcezalco or one of his will-o'-wisps must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 18 (4d8) necrotic damage as a **will-o'-wisp** bursts from the target's body. The will-o'-wisp emerges in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target. The will-o'-wisp acts immediately after Telcezalco on the same initiative count, and fights until it's destroyed. It follows Telcezalco's commands and disappears if he dies. In addition, Telcezalco's Withering Breath immediately recharges.

**Villain Action 3: Spirits' End.** Any remaining will-o'-wisps can use their full movement and then explode, dropping to 0 hit points. Each creature within 5 feet of a will-o'-wisp when it explodes must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



## MÁELODOR RHYLLEARNÁN, KING OF THE FOXGLOVE COURT

*“Men will be the end of this world.”*

—MÁELODOR RHYLLEARNÁN

Long before the first empire of man, Máelodor Rhyllernán watched the Gol spread across the land. Where once only elves, dwarves, and dragons lived, now a fourth mortal people walked among them.

They did not farm, nor build roads, nor cut wood, all the offenses elves would later levy against men. But they worshipped many gods. Máelodor refused to share his kingdom with the humans, so the Gol went to war. They had warred against elf and dragon and dwarf—they had even warred against each other. Máelodor didn’t scare them. Such defiance filled the king with rage.

“They will consume the world,” Máelodor said.

“Leave them. They will consume themselves,” the Queen of the Foxglove Court observed.

But the king became obsessed with the Gol. Their expansion unnerved him, and he spoke incessantly about his never-ending war with these humans. The Queen in Digitalis urged her husband to seek a truce and appeal for peace. Máelodor ignored her wisdom. After years of watching her people die for Máelodor’s obsession, the Queen of the Foxglove Court left in the night, leaving her husband to his lonely war. She and her guard and favored courtiers slipped away in the moonlight and established the Orchid Court, which rules the Great Wode still.

Máelodor raged. He claimed the Gol ensorcelled his wife. It was their fault the battle continued, and now it was their fault he fought this bloody conquest alone. He howled a vow to his god that day, and Val heard his cry. The Oath of the Hunt bound the King in Digitalis to his own fury. On the longest night of the year, he gathered his devilhound cavalry and began the Solstice Hunt, the hunt against humans.

For weeks did the Solstice Dogs hound the Gol, their bows and hawks and jaws hewing men before them like weeds razed from a garden. Máelodor’s forces caught the Gol surprised and pressed the advantage.

Finally, a Gol leader summoned the demon Taamgul, who carved into men sorcerous tattoos. These Gol, their skin still bleeding from the arcane ink, rode against the Solstice Dogs with Taamgul at the lead and cleaved the hunt’s devilhounds out from under them.

Taamgul slew Máelodor Rhyllernán, the King in Digitalis, but the King’s vow sustained him. Dead, he fought on, and Taamgul was forced to embrace him. When she returned home to the Abyssal Waste, she dragged Máelodor with her.

Máelodor Rhyllernán now serves in the Court of Decay, but legends tell of powerful necromancers summoning the ancient king, and his dread cavalry sometimes rides out against all humans, thirsting for vengeance.



## MÁEŁODOR RHYLLEARNÁN

*Large undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 228 (24d10 + 96)

**Speed** 60 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 19 (+4) | 26 (+8) | 19 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 20 (+5) | 15 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +14, Con +10, Wis +11

**Skills** Animal Handling +11, Perception +11, Survival +11

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Sylvan

**Challenge** 19 (22,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

**Deadly Critical.** Máelodor rolls the damage dice three times instead of twice when he scores a critical hit.

**Ghost Rider.** Máelodor and his mount are one creature. Any effect that targets either creature targets both. Máelodor can't be separated from his mount by any means.

**Incorporeal Movement.** Máelodor can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Máelodor fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Oath of the Hunt.** Máelodor has advantage on attack rolls against humans. He also automatically succeeds on any Wisdom (Survival) checks made to track or otherwise locate humans.

**Shade Step.** As a bonus action, Máelodor can teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Máelodor makes two attacks with his longbow and uses his Dog Bite once. When his Bird of Prey is available, he can use it in place of one of his longbow attacks.

**Dog Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (1d10 + 8) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) acid damage.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d8 + 8) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) necrotic damage.

**Bird of Prey (Recharge 5–6).** Máelodor sets his ghostly falcon on a creature he can see within 60 feet. The creature takes 28 (8d6) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or become blinded for 1 minute. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and is not blinded.

### REACTIONS

**Phase.** Máelodor adds 4 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Máelodor must see the attacker. If this reaction would cause the attack to miss, the attacker takes 22 (4d10) force damage as they pass through Máelodor's incorporeal form.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Máelodor has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Hunting Hounds.** Máelodor whistles, causing three ghostly hounds to appear in unoccupied spaces he can see within 120 feet of him. These hounds use the **ghost** stat block but can't use the Possession action. The hounds act immediately after they are summoned, act immediately after Máelodor on the same initiative count, and fight until they're destroyed. They follow Máelodor's commands and disappear if he dies.

**Villain Action 2: Call of the Wild.** The Solstice Dog lets out a resounding howl, compelling creatures

to join the pack. Any creatures within 300 feet of Máelodor and able to hear the howl must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or be charmed by Máelodor for 8 hours. A charmed creature follows Máelodor's instructions to the best of its ability and treats Máelodor's enemies as its enemies. If a charmed creature is damaged, it can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Villain Action 3: Heartseeker Volley.** Máelodor fires a magical arrow skyward that bursts into a volley of arrows. Máelodor makes one longbow attack against each creature of his choice that he can see within 600 feet of him. If a target hit by this attack has fewer than 50 hit points, or is reduced to fewer than 50 hit points by the damage from this attack, the target immediately drops to 0 hit points.

## TRISTAN VASLOR, THE KING BELOW

Three thousand years before the Council of Aberdanon, men from the Commonwealth flooded into the region then known as the Central Plains. They were organized and bore advanced technology.

From Khoursir they brought the stirrup, and from Kalas Mithral they brought the secret of steel. Riding at the head of their armies was Tristan Vaslor, a warrior unmatched. In a search for great power, he led them to war with the Gol, the first humans.

But the Gol were lorecrafty and called upon the demons Khuurtok the All-Seeing, He of Five Hundred Eyes; Bytorr the Wolf; and Ullrok the Blighted, Consort of Flies. These demons fought alongside the Gol and pushed back Tristan Vaslor and his army. An uneasy truce settled, but Tristan Vaslor desired conquest.

The Central Plains were wild then, populated with hidden temples to unknown gods and mystic towers where hermit sages delved into knowledge man was not meant to know. The wizard Pellum lured Tristan to the White Tower, a tower of necromancy, and offered him aid in exchange for service. "Seek you the Temple of Primordial Chaos," the

wizard called out from atop his tower. "There you will find the sword *Maethelgas*, which shall aid you in your domination. And also a book I desire, one of little value to you." (See page 211 in the **Magic Items** section for details on *Maethelgas*.)

Tristan and his knights rode out, found the temple, and made to sack it, but the temple was vast and many things hostile to light and life dwelled and warred within. For one year did Tristan's knights siege the temple, building a makeshift city around it, delving deep, disappearing for weeks, until Tristan emerged with the codex Pellum desired... and a great black iron runesword in his hand.

Pellum was true to his word—bound to *Maethelgas*, Tristan was able to drink the souls of his enemies. Many Gol leaders did he slay, and each time *Maethelgas* grew in power.

Finally, the vast plains were conquered. The region was named Vasloria, and Tristan ruled for 300 years, his life extended by the powerful sword at his side. But the blade required souls—Tristan's conquest could not cease. Soon the humanoid tribes were brought under his sway, and this was not enough. The elves and dwarves did he fight, and still the blade called for more.

Eventually, Tristan turned against his own dukes and fed their souls to the blade. After this massacre, his knights damned him, entombing him in the crypt he built for his many dead wives.

For three days, the knights of Vasloria thought their nightmare ended, but in his desperation Tristan fed his own soul to *Maethelgas*. The crypt quaked with a necrotic surge, splitting asunder as Tristan emerged from his crypt as the Dead King.

For ten years, the King Below, the One Below All, ruled over Vasloria. Under his dread hand, Vasloria descended into a nightmarish realm of cruelty and

suffering. The people cowered and lived in fear. None dared stand against their dread sovereign.

Not until two brothers, Adun and Cavall—one a farmer, the other a soldier—preached a new way of living. Not to remain slaves to fear, but to resist, to fight, even if it meant death. Even the grave was better than this wasteland they endured.

They led their growing congregation to the Dead King's castle and there confronted him. While none imagined they might live, much less prevail, Adun and Cavall prayed. Their prayer rose in righteous light and banished Tristan Vaslor to the Abyssal Wasteland, and as his undead howling faded from castle walls, the rule of the King Below ended and Vasloria knew peace.

The One Below All once ruled a continent, and in power he remains after death—he serves in the Court of Decay at the right hand of the Lord of Decay, the Ultralich, Khorsekef the Infinite.



## TRISTAN VASLOR

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 21 (+3 plate)

**Hit Points** 294 (28d8 + 168)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 26 (+8) | 19 (+4) | 22 (+6) | 21 (+5) | 18 (+4) | 23 (+6) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +11, Con +13, Wis +11

**Skills** Intimidation +13, Perception +11

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

**Hunger Sight.** While Tristan holds *Maethelgas*, he knows the location of all creatures within 60 feet of him that aren't constructs or undead.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Tristan fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Pact of Power.** *Maethelgas* protects its wielder from all but the greatest of harm. If Tristan takes 15 or less damage from an attack or spell, he instead takes no damage from the attack or spell.

**Seeking Sword.** As a bonus action, Tristan releases *Maethelgas* to hover magically in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of him. If Tristan can see the sword, he can mentally command it as a bonus action to fly up to 50 feet and either make one attack against a target or return to his hands. If the hovering sword is targeted by any effect, Tristan is considered to be holding it. The hovering sword falls if Tristan dies.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Tristan makes two attacks with *Maethelgas* and uses Paralyzing Fist, or uses Paralyzing Fist twice.

**Maethelgas.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d6 + 11) slashing damage plus 27 (6d8) necrotic damage. If the weapon is used to make a ranged attack, it immediately returns to Tristan's hand after the attack is resolved.

**Paralyzing Fist.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If thrown, the fist flies back to reattach to Tristan's arm after the attack.

**Drink of Life (Recharge 5–6).** A creature marked by Tristan's Catch the Scent must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or immediately drop to 0 hit points. Tristan heals an amount equal to the hit points lost.

## REACTIONS

**Catch the Scent.** When Tristan makes a successful melee attack with *Maethelgas*, he can mark the target. Tristan has advantage on all melee weapon attacks against a marked target. A target remains marked until it dies or until Tristan marks a different target.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Tristan has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Arena of Pain.** Tristan conjures a ringed wall up to 60 feet in diameter, 20 feet high, and 5 feet thick centered around himself. The wall is made of whirling, razor-sharp blades formed from magical energy. The wall provides three-quarters cover to creatures behind it, and its space is difficult terrain. When a creature enters the wall's area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, the creature must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The wall lasts for 1 minute.

**Villain Action 2: Whirlwind of Blood.** *Maethelgas* makes one attack against every enemy creature within 30 feet of Tristan, then flies to his hand or the position where it started this villain action (Tristan's choice).

**Villain Action 3: Soul Shred.** Tristan causes *Maethelgas* to tear at the soul of all creatures he can see within 60 feet. Each target must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 61 (7d8 + 30) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



## KHORSEKEF THE INFINITE

First Pharaoh of the Khemharan Empire, Khorsekef was immortal and ruled for over 3,000 years. It was impossible for the Khem-hor to imagine a world without their god-king. Even now, five millennia later, the fashions and traditions Khorsekef ushered in are synonymous with Khemhara. The cometary impact of his rule still echoes loudly in the desert.

Under Khorsekef's rule, the people of Khemhara thrived in the desert. Khorsekef used his power to ensure this, providing an oasis for an entire nation. What his people could not know, because the desert isolated them from the world, was that Khorsekef's rule denied them the right to change or grow. They worshipped their god-king, who never died, and he watched while generation after generation turned to dust at his feet.

Children were born, grew old, married, had children, but nothing ever changed. Names, likenesses, even identities, inventions, and discoveries were endlessly recycled. The Khem-hor thought this was the cycle of the world. The truth was hidden from them.

At least, they did not until the coming of the great explorer Lady Agatamori from Higara, who crossed the desert in the ingenious sand ships her engineers built. Lady Agatamori, a cartographer eager to chart new lands, did not bring war, but she caused one. A civil war. A rebellion. A war against time.

Khorsekef captured Lady Agatamori and her retinue almost immediately and hid them in one of his pyramids, called hedrons. But it was too late—word spread. *There were other humans in the world.* Humans who strove, created, invented. Humans who were not bound to the Khem-hor's eternal cycles of rediscovery and reinvention, recycling the same knowledge, even the same identities, through eternity.

Still, this might have remained a rumor, soon forgotten, but for the captain of the Pharaoh's guard who was so overwhelmed by the bright-souled humanity in Lady Agatamori that he smuggled her and her crew out of the Great Tet and into the Atenopolis.

Like a virus, understanding began to spread. The people of Khemhara had been lied to. They were not alone in the world, and they did not have to die repeating the same generation over and over.

Armed with new knowledge from conversing with the Khem-hor, Lady Agatamori's vizier unlocked the final clue. Khorsekef's hedrons were not, as he had told his people, mausoleums for noble citizens. None were buried there. Instead, the hedrons had been set in certain astronomically significant locations for a secret purpose. The vizier thought he knew why.

While the Pharaoh's loyal guard closed in on Lady Agatamori's hiding place in the city, brave Khem-hor brought word of the vizier's discovery to the Heironauts, the Pharaoh's cadre of wizards. They quickly assembled the clues and realized they, too, had been lied to. Their position brought so much privilege and luxury that it was easy to trick them into thinking their limited knowledge was the sum total of world lore.

The Heironauts discovered the great lie: the hedrons were engines that stored time, absorbing it from the topology of the manifold, a time-looped reality created by the Pharaoh, and transmitting it into the Infinite Pharaoh to preserve him while stagnating everything else. Nothing in Khemhara changed because nothing could change. Time itself had stopped. Each generation wasn't merely like the previous—it was a single population giving birth to itself, burying itself, over and over through eternity. They thought their pyramids were tombs. But the desert was a tomb, and they were the embalmed.

Powerful magics erupted in the desert as the Heironauts broke the oppressive cycle and made massive strides in lore. Within days they discovered new spells, and soon reached a limit imposed by the hedrons. So they focused their lore on the hedrons and began to drain their power for themselves, using the stored time to fuel their magic.

The Pharaoh, their god-king, could not allow this. He used the power given him by the hedrons to bring battle against his own wizards.

Cause grappled with effect as the War Against Time engulfed the Atenopolis. Though the

Pharaoh initially proved stronger, the Heironauts were growing more powerful by the hour. Soon, the very fabric of the manifold would rip, spilling the Atenopolis out into the Real.

The Pharaoh then did the unimaginable: He opened the Great Tet. The Great Tet was not like the other hedrons. The other pyramids stored time like batteries, releasing it to perpetuate the manifold Khorsekef created. But the Great Tet had never released its stores of time. The Pharaoh broke the seal on the massive hedron, freeing the millennia contained within. Even the Heironauts had not known of the deep stores of time kept inside—it was an emergency measure Khorsekef had built exactly for this contingency.

Opening the Great Tet, the Infinite Pharaoh drank deep of the eons stored within, but its power was so great no physical vessel could contain it. His atoms burst with stored time and shredded apart, leaving only his will.

The white-eyed, dessicated form that remained was the animated memory of the Will of Khorsekef. He was no longer the Pharaoh. He was now the Ultralich, a mind so powerful no force has yet been discovered that can end him.

Facing annihilation by the newly dead god before them, minds filled with new spells and ideas from Lady Agatamori and those of their own creation, the Heironauts did something no citizen of the Atenopolis had done in a millennium. They improvised. They dared stand against the pharaoh's stagnant rule.

"The gate swings both ways!" the First Heironaut declared, and her council understood. Using the residual power stored in the remaining hedrons, they invented a ritual to negate the Infinite Pharaoh's millennia-long program.

They took the geometries of the manifold he had created, the cul-de-sac of reality they had lived in for uncounted centuries, and inverted it. They spilled its contents across the timescape, and the Atenopolis reentered the Mundane World.

At the same time, the fabric of the pocket universe they lived in wrapped back against itself, against its center. The point of origin. Khorsekef, the being that had created it.



Caught within his own imploding manifold, Khorsekef was hurled downward into the Abyssal Wasteland. There, he ascended as the Lord of Decay and the King of Death. The Ultralich, commanding the loyalty of the Court of Decay. They skirmish with the other courts while Khorsekef seeks a way to return to the Atenopolis and restore his infinite rule.

Khorsekef vowed he would return, and the oracles of Khemhara predicted exactly that for the last

several millennia. But in the meantime, an explosion of learning and innovation propels the Khem-hor forward. The Pharaohs of the desert weave the Eternal Design in preparation for the Infinite Pharaoh's return. If they can complete it before he returns, Khorsekef will find nothing but sand and dust and scarabs where once was a bright civilization—the Khem-hor will have saved themselves and found a paradise.

## KHORSEKEF THE INFINITE

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 304 (32d8 + 160)

**Speed** 50 ft., fly 50 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 20 (+5) | 27 (+8) | 21 (+5) | 22 (+6) |

**Saving Throws** Con +12, Int +15, Wis +12

**Skills** Arcana +15, History +15, Perception +12, Religion +15

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22

**Languages** all

**Challenge** 23 (50,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Khorsekef fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Khorsekef has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Rejuvenation.** As long as Khorsekef's will persists, he can't be truly destroyed. If Khorsekef is reduced to 0 hit points, his body is destroyed and he is banished from the current timeline. The instant this occurs, Khorsekef reappears at full health in Necropolis, the city at the center of the Abyss.

**Stolen Moments.** As a bonus action, Khorsekef steals precious seconds from one creature he can see. On the target's next turn, it can either move, use an action, or use a bonus action; it can only use one, not all three. Once a creature has been affected by this ability, it is immune to the effects of Khorsekef's Stolen Moments for the next 24 hours. Each time Khorsekef uses this ability, he gains an additional 10 feet of movement. Khorsekef retains this additional movement for the next 24 hours.

**Temporal Nexus.** Time bends strangely around Khorsekef, causing stress to the living. When a creature that is not undead moves within 60 feet of Khorsekef for the first time on a turn or starts its turn within 60 feet of him, that creature must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Khorsekef makes one Stasis Touch attack and one Leeching Blast attack. He can replace one of these attacks with his Borrowed Time or his Lost in Time actions.

**Stasis Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) force damage. The target must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Leeching Blast.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +15 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. Khorsekef recovers hit points equal to the damage taken by the target.

**Borrowed Time (Recharge 5–6).** Khorsekef steals time from one creature he can see within 120 feet of him. The target must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 65 (10d12) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the target fails the save, it also ages a number of years equal to the damage dealt. Khorsekef regains hit points equal to the damage dealt. If Khorsekef's body is destroyed, the aging effect is reversed.

**Lost in Time (Recharge 5–6).** Khorsekef banishes one creature he can see within 60 feet of him to a different timeline for 10 minutes. The target can use its action to attempt to merge back into the correct timeline. When it does so, it makes a DC 20 Intelligence check. On a success, it returns to the correct timeline. When the target returns, it reappears in the space it left, or if that space is occupied, in the nearest unoccupied space. Ruby dragons banished by this action return to their original timeline and can choose to remain in it for as long as they wish.

## REACTIONS

**Warp Step.** When an attack would hit Khorsekef, he can warp time and cause the attack to miss. The attacker must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with warp sickness. The cursed target gains a level of exhaustion and can't regain hit points. The creature no longer benefits from the effects of a long rest and gains another level of exhaustion every 24 hours. The curse lasts until removed by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic or until Khorsekef's body is destroyed.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Khorsekef has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Sands of Time.** Khorsekef swirls the sands of time around him. Each creature that

is not undead within 120 feet of Khorsekef must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be affected by the sands for 1 minute. An affected target's speed is halved, it takes a –2 penalty to AC and Dexterity saving throws, and it can't use reactions. On its turn, it can use either an action or a bonus action, not both. Regardless of the creature's abilities or magic items, it can't make more than one melee or ranged attack during its turn. If the creature attempts to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action, roll a d20. On a 1–10, the spell functions normally. On an 11 or higher, the spell doesn't take effect until the creature's next turn, and the creature must use its action on that turn to complete the spell. If it can't, the spell is wasted. A creature affected by the sands can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Villain Action 2: Compress Infinity.** Khorsekef compresses the infinite possibilities of time to unleash a catastrophic blast of force. Khorsekef chooses four points within 150 feet of him. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on those points must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Villain Action 3: Final Countdown.** Khorsekef expels a portion of his own time to destroy others, cutting his remaining hit points in half. All creatures that are not constructs or undead within 60 feet of Khorsekef must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 65 (10d12) necrotic damage and rapidly ages until it is 1d6 days away from death by old age. On a successful save, a target takes half as much necrotic damage and ages 1d10 years. While 1d6 days away from death, the creature has disadvantage on all attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws, and its movement speed is halved. If Khorsekef's body is destroyed, the target regains the years lost by this effect; however, the target doesn't return to life if they died of old age before Khorsekef's body was destroyed.

## COURT OF THE DEEP

The Abyssal Wasteland is a dead plane filled with ruins of once-great cities. Or are they the degenerating reflections of existing cities in the timescape? Sages differ. Demons call this place home, this rotting reality where forgotten gods go to die. It is a land of entropy and the creatures that call the Waste home consider order a poison.

This is the deepest world in the timescape. Creatures who sink this far down find themselves unable to organize their thoughts, unable to plan or scheme beyond base emotion and survival. Only by feasting on the souls of others can a mind rise above this entropy and muster order enough to plan and, possibly, escape.

Cruel and unyielding, the demons who rank in the Court of Depths gorged on souls until their minds were sharp enough to plot and scheme and climb over one another in a desperate attempt to rise out of the depths and perhaps, one day, loose themselves on the Mundane World, where souls are rich and potent.

## DEVOURERS OF SOULS

Unique among monsters, demons of the Court of the Deep feast not upon food and water, but upon **souls**. Souls fuel their bloodthirsty powers; while starved for souls, a demon can scarcely even think.

Similar to how monster hit points are formatted, the number of souls a given demon has consumed is presented both as a die expression and as an average number. The amount of dice used to calculate a demon's soul count is dependent on the demon's challenge rating, as shown in the table below.

### SOUL DICE

| CR    | Soul Dice | Average<br>(Rounded Down) |
|-------|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1–10  | 1d4       | 2                         |
| 11–15 | 2d4       | 5                         |
| 16–18 | 3d4       | 7                         |
| 19+   | 4d4       | 10                        |

During an encounter, a demon can burn souls to use or enhance certain abilities, decreasing their soul count. Demons gain more souls by slaying other creatures. When a demon reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the creature must immediately make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw before it falls unconscious and begins dying. On a failed save, the creature's soul is consumed by the demon. The demon adds 1 to their soul count, and the creature immediately dies and subsequently can't be restored to life by any means short of a *wish* spell.

Soul devouring makes the demons of the Court of the Deep deadly opponents. You can remove this ability and only have a demon devour a soul when a creature dies through normal means within 60 feet of it or adjust the DC of the saving throw to give characters a better chance of living through an encounter with one of these opponents. Likewise, you can make the deadliness of soul devouring scale with a demon's power, requiring a saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + the demon's proficiency bonus or equal to the demon's challenge rating.

There is no upper limit to a demon's soul count. When a demon's soul count drops to 0, it falls into *lethe* (see **Lethe**).

### SOULS AND ACTION-ORIENTED MONSTERS

The Court of the Deep monsters use villain actions and soul devouring in combat. While action-oriented monsters are made to be fought alone, having a few low-challenge-rating demon or cultist minions in the encounter gives the big bad some souls to suck up! Consider adding some of these creatures during an encounter with a member of the Court of the Deep.

## SOUL-FUELED POWER

Each demon has a swathe of features that require souls to use. These can be broken down into two broad categories: passive features and active features.

**Passive features** are triggered whenever a demon's soul count crosses a certain threshold. The threshold is unique to each feature and detailed in the feature's description. The feature remains active until the demon's soul count drops below the feature's respective threshold.

**Active features** require a demon to burn souls and lower their soul count to use. Some active features buff common statistics, such as attack and damage rolls, while others grant the demon access to special—and oftentimes incredibly powerful—new actions.

Each active feature has a base cost, or the number of souls that must be burned in order to use the ability. This cost is noted in parentheses beside the feature name. Additionally, some active features allow demons to heighten the effect by burning additional souls on top of the ability's base cost.

## SOULSIGHT

Demons have a special sense called **soulsight**, which allows them to detect any sentient creature within a certain radius. Unless otherwise stated, neither physical matter nor magical effects can impede soulsight; however, creatures who lack sentience or have no soul are invisible to a demon's soulsight.

The radius of a demon's soulsight is denoted in their respective stat block.

## LETHE

When a demon runs out of souls, it falls into **lethe**: a state of craven hunger, wherein a demon can only lash out in a desperate search for sustenance. Demons who have fallen into lethe are mindless and violent creatures whose only goal is to consume.

While a demon is in lethe, it is subject to the following effects:

- Its Intelligence score drops to 3 (–4), unless it is already lower.
- It has advantage on all attack rolls and disadvantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.
- It can't cast spells.
- On its turn, the demon automatically moves toward the nearest creature it can see with its soulsight, regardless of the terrain in its way. If the demon is still able to take an action that turn, it uses its action to attack that creature (or any obstacle in its way).

A demon is no longer in lethe when its soul count increases above 0, at which point the effects of lethe end.

## ADDING SOUL RULES TO EXISTING DEMONS

This section presents the stat blocks for six of the most prominent demons in the Court of the Deep. However, a court is nothing without its subjects, and there are bound to be other demons roaming the planes, all thirsting for souls.

To add soul rules to an existing demon, such as a balor or vrock, first use the Soul Dice table to calculate the demon's initial soul count and increase its challenge rating by 1. Then give the demon two or three additional abilities it can use by burning those souls, such as the following:

**Abyssal Shield (Costs 1+ Souls).** As a bonus action, the demon can burn any number of souls and increase its AC by an amount equal to the number of souls burnt for 1 minute.

**Soul Rend (Costs 1–5 Souls).** When the demon makes a successful attack against a creature, it can burn up to 5 souls and deal an extra 14 (4d6) damage for each soul burnt.

**Hungering Strike (Costs 1+ Souls).** When the demon makes an attack roll and misses, it can burn any number of souls and add a +5 bonus to the attack roll for each soul burnt, potentially causing the attack to hit.

## GROYLE FLESHENDER

Barely able to form coherent thoughts, Groyle has souls enough to hate and hungers for more. A dullard and a brute, Groyle has no capacity for cruelty—he has not the imagination or patience. He rends and demolishes his way across the battlefield, seeking out whichever creature’s soul shines the brightest, endeavoring to consume them whole and alive. Their screaming desperation gives their immortal soul a sweetness the Fleshender can’t resist.

Groyle begins combat by using Goring Charge to attack a nearby spellcaster and follows it up with a bite attack, preferring to target and swallow a creature with healing spells. The demon then focuses his attacks on the toughest enemy, using Mark of Abhorrence and Soul Rend to bring down foes quickly.

### GROYLE FLESHENDER

*Gargantuan fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 315 (18d20 + 126)

**Souls** 5 (2d4)

**Speed** 25 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 23 (+6) | 12 (+1) | 25 (+7) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) |

**Saving Throws** Str +11, Con +12

**Skills** Perception +5

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., soulsight 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Abyssal, Common

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5



**Goring Charge.** If Groyle moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature, he can use his bonus action to make one gore attack targeting that creature. If the attack hits, the target must make a DC 20 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes an additional 13 (2d12) piercing damage and is pushed 10 feet away from Groyle and knocked prone.

**Mark of Abhorrence (Costs 2 Souls).** As a bonus action, Groyle chooses one creature he can see within 60 feet of him and marks it with his vile hatred. Whenever Groyle uses his Multiattack and targets the marked creature at least once, he can make one additional claw attack against the marked creature as part of the action. In addition, any attack roll Groyle makes against the marked target scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 on the d20.

The mark lasts for 1 minute, or until the target is reduced to 0 hit points.

**Soul Frenzy.** As long as Groyle's soul count is 3 or higher, he has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Soul Rend (Costs 1–5 Souls).** When Groyle makes a successful attack against a creature, he can burn up to 5 souls and deal an extra 14 (4d6) damage for each soul burnt.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Groyle makes two attacks with his claws.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft. one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

**Gore.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d12 + 6) piercing damage.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 45 (6d12 + 6) piercing damage, and the target is swallowed if it is a Huge or smaller creature. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside Groyle, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of Groyle's turns. If Groyle takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from the swallowed

creature, he must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the creature, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of him. If Groyle dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

## REACTIONS

**Spiteful Defense (Costs 1 Soul).** When Groyle is hit by an attack, he can bolster his armor. Until the start of his next turn, he gains a +5 bonus to his AC, including against the triggering attack.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Groyle has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Soul Sense.** Groyle locates the hostile creature with the highest number of hit points remaining that he can see with his soulsight and immediately moves up to 60 feet toward it. At the end of this movement, Groyle can make a gore attack using Goring Charge if possible.

**Villain Action 2: Earthbreaker.** With a furious roar, Groyle slams his massive claws into the earth and rends it asunder. Each creature within 30 feet of Groyle must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone. Additionally, each creature that failed its saving throw can use either an action or a bonus action on its next turn, not both.

**Villain Action 3: The End of All Flesh.** Hatred incarnate, boiling and crimson, seeps from Groyle's wounds. Each creature within 15 feet of Groyle must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) psychic damage plus 27 (6d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this action has disadvantage on its Wisdom saving throw to prevent its soul from being consumed.





## HARA'ANTAR THE SOULTHIEF

Hara'antar the Blasphemite is the last acolyte of the Blood Sun cult. Effulgent in her unholy worship, she intends to complete the bloodshadow rite, assume the mantle of the High Priest, and start the cult anew.

The soulthief's prayers are unique in the Court of the Deep; with tolling reverence empowering her hissing orisons, she can fuel her dark spells with the souls of nearby enemies without needing to consume them first. This makes her a pariah among the demons; if Hara'antar can tap into the dozens or hundreds of souls each great demon carries, what power could she gain?

### HARA'ANTAR THE SOULTHIEF

*Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 195 (26d8 + 78)

**Souls** 5 (2d4)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 19 (+4) | 17 (+3) | 22 (+6) | 15 (+2) | 15 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Wis +7, Cha +7

**Skills** Deception +7, Perception +7, Stealth +9

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., soulsight 60 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Abyssal, Common

**Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

**Abyssal Resistance (Costs 1 Soul).** If Hara'antar fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Blood Pact.** The level of Hara'antar's spell slots is determined by the number of souls she has: 3rd level if Hara'antar has 1 soul, 5th level for 2–4 souls, 6th level for 5–7 souls, and 7th level for 8 or more souls.

**Draining Hex (Costs 2 Souls).** As a bonus action, Hara'antar can drain the life from one creature she is grappling. The target must make a DC 19 Charisma saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Hara'antar then regains a number of hit points equal to the damage taken.

**Pact Magic.** Hara'antar is a spellcaster. She has four spell slots she can use to cast spells, requiring no material components; the spell slot's level is dependent on the number of souls Hara'antar currently has when she expends that spell slot (see Blood Pact). Hara'antar's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks), and she regains all expended spell slots when she finishes a short or long rest. She knows the following spells:

3rd–7th level (4 slots; see Blood Pact): *blight*,  
*circle of death*, *cloudkill*, *counterspell*,  
*ray of enfeeblement*

**Soul Rend (Costs 1–5 Souls).** When Hara'antar makes a successful attack against a creature, she can burn up to 5 souls and deal an extra 14 (4d6) damage for each soul burnt.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Hara'antar makes three attacks: one with her bite and two with her pincers.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Hara'antar can't bite another target.

**Pincers.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

## REACTIONS

**Malediction (Costs 1 Soul).** When a creature Hara'antar can see within 60 feet of her makes a saving throw, she can utter a vile curse, rolling 1d6 and subtracting the number rolled from the creature's roll.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Hara'antar has three villain actions. She can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. She takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Rite of the Soulthief.** Hara'antar draws power from the souls of those nearby, using them to fuel dark magic. Hara'antar increases her soul count by an amount equal to the number of souls within 30 feet of her. A sentient creature counts as 1 soul; if another demon is within 30 feet, Hara'antar gains a number of souls equal to the demon's current soul count, and the demon loses all its souls. For example, if three sentient creatures and one demon with a soul count of 5 are within 30 feet of Hara'antar when she uses this villain action, Hara'antar's soul count increases by a total of 8 souls.

**Villain Action 2: Rite of the Crimson Dark.** A foul mass of blood-tinged shadow erupts around Hara'antar, forming a 15-foot-radius sphere of magical darkness centered on her. This darkness spreads around corners and barriers. A creature with darkvision can't see through this darkness, and nonmagical light can't illuminate it. The darkness moves with Hara'antar and lasts until Hara'antar uses another villain action. Each creature who starts its turn in this darkness must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must use its movement to exit the darkness' area of effect.

**Villain Action 3: Rite of the Blood Eclipse.**

Hara'antar chooses one sentient creature she can see within 60 feet of her and drains its soul of life. The creature must immediately make a DC 19 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 42 (12d6) psychic damage and is paralyzed until the end of Hara'antar's next turn. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and is not paralyzed. Hara'antar then regains a number of hit points equal to double the amount of damage taken.

## ZOR'YAL LIFESWALLOWER

A cloud of blood surges across the battlefield. Within its crimson deluge is the Lifeswallower. The sanguine torrent cloaks Zor'yal from other demons' soulsight—without this invisibility, Zor'yal is weak. But do not underestimate this deadly assassin. Her claws are so potent, anyone caught unawares will die to their sting.

Zor'yal led the assault on Kham, her demons warring with the products of the Lords of Kham's beast-magic until the *codex incabulum* was opened and the demons banished. Zor'yal is less now than she was, but she remembers. Her insatiable hunger for revenge against the Mundane World drives the gory squall that carries her into battle after battle until she can wreak her vengeance on the world above.

### ZOR'YAL LIFESWALLOWER

*Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16

**Hit Points** 199 (21d10 + 84)

**Souls** 7 (3d4)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

| STR    | DEX    | CON    | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 20(+5) | 22(+6) | 18(+4) | 16(+3) | 18(+4) | 15(+2) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +11, Int +8

**Skills** Investigation +8, Perception +14, Stealth +16

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., soulsight 60 ft., passive Perception 24

**Languages** Abyssal, Common

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5



**Abyssal Resistance (Costs 1 Soul).** If Zor'yal fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Lacerate (Costs 1–3 Souls).** When Zor'yal takes the Attack action on her turn, she can burn up to 3 souls and make an additional weapon attack for each soul burnt.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Zor'yal deals an extra 24 (7d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of hers that isn't incapacitated and Zor'yal doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Wounding Mist.** As long as Zor'yal's soul count is 2 or higher, she is cloaked by blood-soaked clouds of mist. The mist extends a distance of 10 feet from Zor'yal. This area is heavily obscured, and demons within the mist (including Zor'yal) are hidden and invisible to soulsight. The mist moves with Zor'yal and can't be dispelled by any magical or nonmagical means. Zor'yal can see through the mist.

**Wounding Step (Costs 2 Souls).** As a bonus action, Zor'yal can teleport to an unoccupied space she can see within 90 feet of her. Her teleportation is accompanied by a cacophony of screams, and immediately after she disappears, each creature within 10 feet of the space she left must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. A creature who failed the saving throw can't regain hit points until the start of Zor'yal's next turn.

## ACTIONS

**Venomous Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 13 (2d12) poison damage.

## REACTIONS

**Weakening Mist (Costs 1 Soul).** When Zor'yal is hit with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her. If the attack was a critical hit, it becomes a normal hit.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Zor'yal has three villain actions. She can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. She takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Boiling Blood.** With a wet hiss, the blood-stained clouds of her Wounding Mist grow even larger. Until Zor'yal uses another villain action, the mist has a radius of 30 feet. In addition, each non-demon creature that begins its turn within the mist must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 16 (3d10) fire damage.

**Villain Action 2: Baleful Teleport.** Zor'yal chooses up to four creatures within 30 feet of her that she can see. Each chosen creature must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or take 16 (3d10) psychic damage and be teleported to unoccupied space of Zor'yal's choice within 30 feet of her.

**Villain Action 3: Bane of the Lifeswallower.** Tendrils of brackish ichor lash out from Zor'yal. She chooses up to three creatures that she can see within 120 feet of her. Each creature must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 52 (8d12) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The creature's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0, and Zor'yal automatically consumes its soul.

## VORG'AUT HARROWFIST, THE LADY BLIGHT

The Lady Blight is the greatest warrior of the Wasteland. She leads the Corrosion, a unit of elite demon heavy infantry responsible for single-handedly repelling the Inexorable invasion of the Waste after the rest of the Depths broke morale and began to feed on each other. The Corrosion stood alone against the advance of Integral, Axiom's premiere cavalry—unable to sunder Vorg'aut's adamant stand, Integral was forced to retreat.

With hulking fists radiating crimson light, Vorg'aut commands the Wasteland, equal parts leader, warrior, and siege engine. Even the battlefield yields to her will, for the Lady Blight is unbending.



### VORG'AUT HARROWFIST

*Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 228 (24d8 + 120)

**Souls** 7 (3d4)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 90 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 27 (+8) | 18 (+4) | 21 (+5) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Str +14, Con +11

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., soulsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Abyssal, Common

**Challenge** 17 (18,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

**Abyssal Resistance (Costs 1 Soul).** If Vorg'aut fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Gouging Bloodform (Costs 1 Soul).** When Vorg'aut moves on her turn, she can choose to twist the terrain in her wake. Each unoccupied space she passes through until the end of her turn becomes difficult terrain for all creatures that are not demons for 1 minute.

**Might of the Harrowfist (Costs 2 Souls).** As a bonus action, Vorg'aut can detach her coalescing fist from her arm, commanding it from afar. The fist flies up to 90 feet and attacks one creature or object of Vorg'aut's choice within 10 feet of it.

While the fist is detached, Vorg'aut can use a bonus action to command it to fly up to 90 feet to another spot she can see. As part of the same bonus action, Vorg'aut can command the fist to attack one creature or object within 10 feet of it.

After three rounds, the fist returns to Vorg'aut's arm.

**Siege Monster.** Vorg'aut deals double damage to objects and structures.

**Soul-Fueled Strikes.** As long as Vorg'aut's soul count is 3 or higher, her weapon attacks count as magical for the purposes of overcoming resistances and immunities.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Vorg'aut makes three attacks: one with her barbed tail and two unarmed strikes.

**Barbed Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. *Hit:* 19 (2d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage plus 19 (2d10 + 8) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 20). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Vorg'aut can't use her barbed tail against another target.

**Unarmed Strike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (1d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

**Coalescing Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 41 (6d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 30 feet and knocked prone.

**Shattering Bloodform (Costs 2 Souls).** Vorg'aut warps the battlefield, splitting it with abyssal fissures. Each creature within 30 feet of Vorg'aut must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or be thrown 1d6 × 10 feet straight in the air. Any target without a flying speed falls, taking bludgeoning damage from falling, and lands prone.

## REACTIONS

**Vengeful Bloodform (Costs 1 Soul).** When Vorg'aut is damaged by a creature within 60 feet of her that she can see, she can twist the battlefield in retaliation. The creature must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes

13 (3d8) bludgeoning damage and is restrained. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and is not restrained.

A restrained creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Vorg'aut has three villain actions. She can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. She takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Summon Lieutenant.** Vorg'aut summons an allied **glabrezu**, one of the elite soldiers of the Corrosion, to aid her in battle. The glabrezu appears in an unoccupied space within 15 feet of Vorg'aut, acts on its own initiative count each round, and fights until it is destroyed. It follows Vorg'aut's commands and disappears if she dies.

**Villain Action 2: Commander's Fury.** Vicious and unforgiving, Vorg'aut empowers her strikes with acrid rage. Until she uses another villain action, Vorg'aut gains a +5 bonus to all attack and damage rolls, and she scores a critical hit on a roll of 15–20 on a d20.

**Villain Action 3: Caustic Retribution.** Putrid red light envelops Vorg'aut's form, then lashes out in corrosive beams. Vorg'aut chooses up to five creatures she can see within 120 feet of her. Each target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 39 (6d12) acid damage and has disadvantage on all Strength- and Dexterity-based attack rolls, Strength and Dexterity checks, and Strength and Dexterity saving throws for 1 minute. On a success, a target takes half as much damage but suffers no other effect.



## TRALL THE MINDBREAKER

When sages across the timescape dare to turn the oracular eye downward, peering into the Abyssal Wasteland and seeking forgotten lore that long ago sunk beneath the surface of the Real, they find Trall's ivory void eyes, purging and all-consuming, staring back at them.

The Mindbreaker is attuned to any divination targeting the Waste and, rather than trawling the depths looking for souls with some spark left in them, she stabs leeching psychic tendrils through the arcane conduit, draining the soul from the poor wizard, sorcerer, or warlock foolish enough to peer into the Deep.

Thus does the Mindbreaker stay sated with souls. An augur unmatched in foresight and cruelty, she is both mage and anti-mage.



### TRALL THE MINDBREAKER

*Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 238 (28d10 + 84)

**Souls** 7 (3d4)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 23 (+6) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) |

**Saving Throws** Con +9, Int +12

**Skills** Arcana +12, History +12, Perception +8

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** soulsight 120 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 19 (22,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

**Abyssal Resistance (Costs 1 Soul).** If Trall fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Limited Magic Immunity.** As long as Trall's soul count is 3 or higher, she is immune to spells of 3rd level or lower unless she wishes to be affected.

**Magic Resistance.** Trall has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Quickened Mind (Costs 1 Soul).** When Trall casts a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, she can burn an additional soul to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

**Spellcasting (Costs 1+ Souls).** Trall can burn souls to cast spells. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). Souls replace a spell's usual components; certain spells require more souls to cast, as indicated below. She can cast the following spells at 7th level:

1 Soul: *magic missile*, *shield*

2 Souls: *levitate*, *misty step*, *ray of enfeeblement*

3 Souls: *counterspell*, *fireball*, *hold monster*, *slow*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Trall makes four claw attacks or two Mindshriek attacks.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) slashing damage plus 22 (4d10) psychic damage.

**Mindshriek.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 39 (6d10 + 6) psychic damage.

## REACTIONS

**Mindtrick (Costs 1 Soul).** When Trall is hit by an attack, she can reveal that the creature is attacking a false image of her, and that her true location is elsewhere. Trall takes no damage and appears instead in an unoccupied space within 25 feet of her original location as the false image fades.

**Mindspike (Costs 3 Souls).** When Trall is targeted by a divination spell or any other form of magical scrying, she can stab a vicious lance of psychic energy into the caster's mind. The caster must immediately make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

For the next 24 hours, Trall knows the location of the caster, regardless of which plane they are on or any defenses the caster may have against detection. During this time, Trall can use a bonus action to teleport to an unoccupied space within 30 feet of the caster.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Trall has three villain actions. She can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. She takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Arcane Mirage.** Trall summons a horde of illusory duplicates, which shift around her and make it nigh impossible to track the true Trall. Until she takes another villain action, the duplicates move with her and mimic her actions. Whenever a creature targets Trall with an attack while these duplicates surround her, the creature must first succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, targeting one of the illusions on a failure. The duplicates can't be destroyed by nonmagical means, but can be magically dispelled with a *dispel magic* spell and a successful DC 19 check made with the caster's spellcasting ability.

**Villain Action 2: Nightmare Phantasmic.** With a cruel smile, Trall infiltrates the minds of her opponents, infesting the battlefield with their greatest fears come to life. Up to three creatures Trall can see within 120 feet of her must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a target becomes frightened, and at the end of each of the target's turns, the target must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or take 22 (4d10) psychic damage. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Villain Action 3: Command Psyche.** Trall chooses one creature she can see within 120 feet of her and twists its truths into vicious lies. The creature must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw; if the creature has taken psychic damage from Trall within the last minute, the saving throw is made with disadvantage. On a failed save, the creature is charmed for 24 hours. The charmed target obeys Trall's verbal or telepathic commands. If the target takes more than 20 damage on a single turn, the target can repeat the saving throw with disadvantage, ending the charmed condition on itself on a success.

## SYLT BLOODHEAT

The greatest demon of the Court of the Deep, Sylt commands the grudging obeisance of fiends within the Abyssal Wasteland. Unlike the others, Sylt has never fallen into lethe—she has transcended it, subjugated it, until the very flow of souls is hers to dominate.

Sustained by the Bloodheat, Sylt drinks souls in a never-ending flow, feasting on that which empowers the demons and rewarding the legions at her side. Demons under her command find their powers and intellect grow as their supply of howling souls is refueled, effortlessly sustained in a banquet given to her most loyal.

The Court hates Sylt—she is a dark and fell intelligence who prefers to wait and scheme rather than succumb to temporary hungers. They crave bloodshed and feasts of souls and sinew, impatient with her cunning and insidious plots. But none gainsay her right to rule. Many in the Waste wait for her word to lead them across the timescape in a bloody war of anti-life.

In combat, Sylt prefers to use hit-and-run tactics in environments with plenty of cover and places to hide.

### SYLT BLOODHEAT

*Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 250 (20d12 + 120)

**Souls** 10 (4d4)

**Speed** 60 ft., climb 60 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 22 (+6) | 15 (+2) | 23 (+6) | 26 (+8) | 21 (+5) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Str +13, Con +13, Int +15, Cha +10

**Skills** Insight +12, Intimidation +17, Perception +12, Stealth +16

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** soulsight 120 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22

**Languages** Abyssal, Common

**Challenge** 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7



**Abyssal Resistance (Costs 1 Soul).** If Sylt fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Bloodheat.** Burning scarlet, the air of the Bloodheat surrounds Sylt, pulling souls across the Waste to sustain her and her underlings. At the start of her turn, Sylt automatically gains 1d4 + 1 souls, and each demon within 30 feet of her gains 1 soul.

**Fell Focus (Costs 3 Souls).** As a bonus action, Sylt can summon three scourges of putrid necrotic energy. Sylt makes a ranged spell attack against up to three creatures she can see within 120 feet of her with a +15 bonus to the attack roll. On a hit, a target takes 26 (4d8 + 8) necrotic damage, and must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest.

After making these attacks, Sylt can then teleport to an unoccupied space she can see within 120 feet of her.

**Lacerate (Costs 1–3 Souls).** When Sylt takes the Attack action on her turn, she can burn up to 3 souls and make an additional weapon attack for each soul burnt.

**Lethe Immunity.** Sylt is immune to the effects of lethe when she drops to 0 souls.

**Magic Resistance.** Sylt has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Soul-Fueled Strikes.** As long as Sylt's soul count is 5 or higher, her weapon attacks count as magical for the purposes of overcoming resistances and immunities.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Sylt can use her Frightful Presence. She then makes four claw attacks.

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature of Sylt's choice that is within 120 feet of her and aware of her presence must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect

ends for it, the creature is immune to Sylt's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) necrotic damage.

## REACTIONS

**Dark Command (Costs 2 Souls).** When a creature Sylt can see within 30 feet of her attempts to move, Sylt can ensnare the creature in her grasp. The creature must succeed on a DC 23 Charisma saving throw or be stunned until the start of its next turn.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Sylt has three villain actions. She can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. She takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Master of the Court.** Sylt summons three demons to fight at her side. The demons must be challenge rating 8 or lower and can't have lair, legendary, or villain actions. They each appear in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of Sylt, act on their own initiative count each round, and fight until they are destroyed. They follow Sylt's commands and disappear if she dies.

**Villain Action 2: Schemer's Gambit.** Sylt chooses up to five creatures she can see within 300 feet of her and commands them to move, rearranging the field to suit her dark battle plans. Each target must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or immediately move up to their movement speed in a direction of Sylt's choice. Creatures allied with Sylt can choose to fail this saving throw.

**Villain Action 3: Hail the Crown.** The crimson halo adorning Sylt's head flares with ungodly light, and screeching pits of abyssal horror erupt at three different points she can see within 300 feet of her. Each creature within 30 feet of each point must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 42 (12d6) necrotic damage and 42 (12d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature in the area of more than one pit is affected only once.

## COURT OF SEVEN CITIES

The Seven Cities of Hell scheme and plot endlessly, each ruled by an archdevil seeking domination over the others to become the King of Hell. Should this happen, the legions of Hell would erupt across the timescape, bathing the upper worlds in black soulblood.

Each archdevil sends an emissary to serve in the Court of Seven Cities, as required by the Onyx Edict, the founding document of Hell. But the court is infested with servants of these representatives, each one a point of connection in the ever-shifting web of deceit, subterfuge, and bloodshed.

## TRUE NAMES

All devils have true names that they keep secret, as speaking the true name of a devil within earshot of it can strip it of its supernatural defenses. True names are hard to discover—fiends go to great lengths to bury them. But with enough effort, your Domain could deliver one to you to use as a weapon at a crucial moment in the eternal war against evil. Proclaiming the true name of a devil takes one action, and if the devil can hear you, the proclamation removes its Magic Resistance trait, its damage immunities, and its damage resistances for 24 hours.

### WHY SEVEN CITIES?

Each of the Seven Cities of Hell is named after a real “hell” (or hell-like analog) from a real culture in our world.

This continues a tradition going all the way back to the original game in 1974, a tradition I have a lot of affection for. The idea that **our world**, the real world, Earth, is just another plane in the multiverse and it is “orbited” by other nearby Earth-adjacent planes, such as Arcadia, Hades, Asgard, and Niflheim.

Earlier editions imagined your cleric might worship gods from our real world! Thor or Ra, for example. Because it presumed those gods lived in their own planes, and those planes were accessible from any Prime Material plane, like Earth or your homebrew fantasy world. Earlier editions even mentioned characters who traveled from our real world to the fantasy RPG world.

So the MCDM multiverse, the timescape, imagines that an intrepid planar traveler could arrive in these hells and reimagines them as cities warring through eternity in the larger plane of Hell.

These hells are from many cultures, including Greek (Styx, Acheron) and Jewish tradition (Sheol), as well as Mongolian tradition (Kasyrgan). Naraka is from Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist traditions. Finally, Dis is from Christian literature (Dante's *Inferno*).

These cities are named and included thus because I thought it was a cool opportunity to learn more about different cultures' notions of the afterlife. It was fun, doing this research. It should not be taken as an opportunity to imagine any of these cultures are in any way lesser. They should not be used as an opportunity to trot out hateful, backward, racist tropes. These were behaviorally modern humans like you and me. They led complex internal lives. They weren't ignorant, they just knew different things than we do.

And, hopefully, by representing different cultures among these hells that some readers may not be familiar with, some folks might read more about them! Learn how different real-world peoples throughout history have thought about the afterlife. That stuff is super cool and also, I think, makes us better GMs, because we are able to more realistically present our own worlds and peoples.

In the end, these aren't meant to be the real, authentic places described in our earthly cultures, merely a fantasy version appropriate to a pulp fantasy RPG.

—MC

## HATE DEVIL

Hate devils are brutal, ferocious infantry. They radiate antipathy so strongly that anyone in their aura begins to hate their friends, their allies—even themselves.

During the first round of combat, a hate devil attacks from above, using Spit Flame or casting *phantasmal killer* to harm foes that resist its Aura of Enmity. On subsequent turns, the devil lands to focus melee attacks on a flying or ranged combatant before taking back to the skies for defense. The devil is willing to provoke an opportunity attack or two if it means returning to the safety of the skies.

### HATE DEVIL

*Large fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 115 (11d10 + 55)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 21 (+5) | 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) |

**Saving Throws** Str +9, Con +9

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

**Aura of Enmity.** Any creature hostile to the devil that starts its turn within 30 feet of the devil must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, unless the devil is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature





becomes charmed by the devil until the end of the devil's next turn.

While charmed, a creature's eyes glow with green fire. On its turn, a charmed creature must act in one of the following ways, chosen by the charmed creature:

- The creature must attack its closest ally, using its speed to move toward the ally as necessary.
- The creature must attack itself.

If the charmed creature can't perform either option, it loses its turn. A creature can't be affected by more than one Aura of Enmity at a time. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the Aura of Enmity of all hate devils for the next 24 hours.

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede the devil's darkvision.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The devil's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*  
3/day each: *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer*

**Magic Resistance.** The devil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The devil makes four attacks: two with its claws, one gore attack, and one Tail Strike. It can substitute Spit Flame for one of these attacks.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

**Gore.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage.

**Tail Strike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Spit Flame.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d12) fire damage.

## RAKAT, BARON OF STYX

Styx, the City of Blood, was sacked in the War of Forgetfulness and is now least among the Seven Cities. Their representative in the court is a lowly baron—but a baron who, since the war, is determined to not forget what Styx suffered.

A hate devil of sizable power, Rakat intends to pit the court against itself and destroy it from within. Their blinding rage hides a scheming mind.

Like other hate devils, Rakat begins combat by flying above their enemies, but remains low enough to ensure they are in the fiend's Aura of Enmity. On their first turn, they cast *power word stun* on a foe with lower hit points than others to ensure the spell's success, and fire their Ray of Antipathy at a creature outside their Aura of Enmity. They use the Divide and Conquer villain action to cut any bard, cleric, or other supportive spellcaster off from a creature affected by *power word stun* or charmed by their Aura of Enmity.

On subsequent turns, Rakat engages characters in melee with *Zealcleaver* (see page 214 in the **Magic Items** section), though the devil continues to remain at least 10 feet in the air, benefitting from their long reach.

## RAKAT, BARON OF STYX

*Large fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 157 (15d10 + 75)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 21 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 21 (+5) | 20 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) |

**Saving Throws** Str +9, Con +9, Int +9

**Skills** Deception +8, Insight +6, Persuasion +8

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

**Aura of Enmity.** Any creature hostile to Rakat that starts its turn within 30 feet of the devil must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, unless Rakat is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature becomes charmed by Rakat until the end of Rakat's next turn.

While charmed, a creature's eyes glow with green fire. On its turn, a charmed creature must act in one of the following ways, chosen by Rakat:

- The creature must attack its closest ally, using its speed to move toward the ally as necessary.
- The creature must attack itself.

If the charmed creature can't perform either option, it loses its turn. A creature can't be affected by more than one Aura of Enmity at a time. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the Aura of Enmity of all hate devils for the next 24 hours.

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede Rakat's darkvision.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Rakat's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). The devil can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*  
3/day each: *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer*  
1/day each: *plane shift*, *power word stun*

**Magic Resistance.** Rakat has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Rakat's weapon attacks are magical.

**Ray of Antipathy.** As a bonus action, Rakat blasts a crackling beam of energy from their eyes, targeting one creature they can see within 120 feet of them. That creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by Rakat as described in their Aura of Enmity trait.

**True Name.** Rakat's true name is Agg'orvunyag IV.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Rakat makes three attacks: two with *Zealcleaver* and one Tail Strike. They can substitute Spit Flame for one of these attacks.

**Zealcleaver.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) slashing damage, and Rakat can choose to end one spell or

magical effect on the target. *Zealcleaver* always deals maximum damage to paladins.

**Tail Strike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Spit Flame.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d12) fire damage.

## REACTIONS

**Eye for an Eye.** When Rakat takes damage from an attack made by a creature within 5 feet of the devil, Rakat can make one attack against that creature. If this attack hits, that creature is blinded until the end of its next turn.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Rakat has three villain actions. They can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. Rakat takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Divide and Conquer.** Rakat slashes through the air with *Zealcleaver*, severing the very bonds of friendship between two creatures the devil can see within 60 feet of Rakat. Spells cast and effects created by either creature can't benefit the other until both complete a long rest, and any existing spells or effects which originate from one creature that currently affect the other lose their effect for that creature.

**Villain Action 2: Scatter like Rats!** Rakat generates a wave of fiendish illusions, causing creatures the devil chooses within 60 feet of Rakat to see their surroundings as a surreal hellscape filled with loathsome enemies. Each target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or immediately move up to their movement speed in a direction of Rakat's choice.

**Villain Action 3: Word of Discord.** Rakat commands all creatures charmed by the devil to make an attack against a target of Rakat's choice within their range, and then a second attack against themselves.

## STONE DEVIL

*Large fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 216 (16d10 + 128)

**Speed** 20 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 10 (+0) | 26 (+8) | 14 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) |

**Saving Throws** Str +8, Con +12

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

**Damage Immunities** cold, fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, frightened, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

**Immutable Form.** The devil is immune to any effect that would alter its form.

**Implacable.** The devil is immune to any effect that would move it.

**Magic Resistance.** The devil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The devil's weapon attacks are magical.

**Soulblood Trail.** When the devil leaves a space, it becomes difficult terrain for 1 hour, and any creature that enters the trail's area for the first time or starts its turn there must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If this damage leaves the target with 0 hit points, it dies.

A creature that fails the Constitution saving throw also gains the following flaw: "I won't help anyone unless they do something for me first." The creature

## STONE DEVIL

Nearly indestructible, stone devils are the bulwarks of the Seven Cities. No unit of stone devils has ever lost morale in the history of the timescape. Their hearts grind spirits into black soulblood that corrupts everything it touches.

A stone devil relies on its high AC to protect it from opportunity attacks as it moves around the battlefield to make the most of its Soulblood Trail trait.

The flaw imposed by the devil's Soulblood Trail trait and Foul Ichor action is a temporary affliction that is fun to roleplay for many players, but others truly dislike having a personality change imposed by a failed saving throw. Only use the flaw if you play with the type of players who enjoy incorporating it into the narrative.



keeps the flaw for 7 days, but it can be removed early with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

The Soulblood Trail doesn't affect stone devils.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The devil makes two attacks with its lance and uses its Pulverize.

**Lance.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, it is knocked prone and grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the devil can't attack another target.

**Pulverize.** The devil twists its lance into a creature grappled by it. That creature takes 40 (8d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Foul Ichor.** Black soulblood pours from the devil's chest, cascading over a creature grappled by the devil's lance. The target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If this damage reduces a target to 0 hit points, the target dies.

A creature that fails the Constitution saving throw also gains the following flaw: "I won't help anyone unless they do something for me first." The creature keeps the flaw for 7 days, but it can be removed early with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

**Profane Flame.** Red lightning bolts descend on two creatures that the devil can see within 60 feet of it. A target must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 27 (6d8) lightning damage. A target gains no benefit from cover for this saving throw.

## MORANON, MARQUIS OF ACHERON

Loyal and unyielding, Marquis Moranon steadily serves Asmodeus, archdevil of Acheron, the City of Whispers. Moranon's fidelity is admirable, Asmodeus just wishes his servant was a little more ambitious...

Unlike other stone devils, Moranon's villain actions and Disciplined Advance reaction allow him to create hazardous areas using his Soulblood Trail without provoking opportunity attacks. He is less reckless than his soldiers and makes far greater use of Profane Flame, since he can use it as a bonus action or as a reaction using Disciplined Advanced.

Moranon focuses his attacks on arcane spellcasters, believing they are the ones most likely to discover his true name and use magic to bypass his high AC. His advance is calculated and considered. If armored warriors get in the devil's way, he cuts them down, using Disciplined Advance and villain actions to get around such foes and engage spellcasters first, and using Profane Flame to attack those casters if warriors lock him down.

## MORANON, MARQUIS OF ACHERON

*Large fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 21 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 243 (18d10 + 144)

**Speed** 20 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20 (+5) | 10 (+0) | 26 (+8) | 14 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) |

**Saving Throws** Str +9, Con +12

**Skills** Deception +5, Insight +6, Persuasion +5

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

**Damage Immunities** cold, fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, frightened, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

**Immutable Form.** Moranon is immune to any effect that would alter his form.

**Implacable.** Moranon is immune to any effect that would move him unwillingly.

**Infernal Superconductor.** Moranon can use Profane Flame as a bonus action.

**Magic Resistance.** Moranon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Moranon's weapon attacks are magical.

**Soulblood Trail.** When Moranon leaves a space, it becomes difficult terrain, and creatures entering that space must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If this damage leaves the target with 0 hit points, it dies.

A creature that fails the Constitution saving throw also gains the following flaw, "I won't help anyone unless they do something for me first." The creature keeps the flaw for 7 days, but it can be removed early with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

The Soulblood Trail doesn't affect stone devils.

**True Name.** Moranon's true name can't be written down, only spoken in Deep Speech. It sounds like the roar of a pyroclastic flow rolling down a mountainside.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Moranon makes three attacks with his lance and uses his Pulverize.

**Lance.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, it is knocked prone and grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Moranon can't attack another target.

**Pulverize.** Moranon twists his lance into a creature grappled by him. That creature takes 41 (8d8 + 5) piercing damage.

**Foul Ichor.** Black soulblood pours from Moranon's chest, cascading over a creature grappled by his lance. That creature must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If this damage reduces a target to 0 hit points, the target dies.

A creature that fails the Constitution saving throw also gains the following flaw: "I won't help anyone

unless they do something for me first." The creature keeps the flaw for 7 days, but it can be removed early with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

**Profane Flame.** Red lightning bolts descend on two creatures that Moranon can see within 60 feet of him. A target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 27 (6d8) lightning damage. A target gains no benefit from cover for this saving throw.

## REACTIONS

**Disciplined Advance.** When an attack misses Moranon, he can move 5 feet and then attack with his lance or use Profane Flame.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Moranon has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Ruthless Attrition.** Moranon moves up to his movement speed without provoking opportunity attacks and attacks with his lance, or, if he has a creature grappled, uses Pulverize twice.

**Villain Action 2: Take Ground.** Moranon moves up to his movement speed without provoking opportunity attacks. If he has a creature grappled, they are dragged with him and take 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Villain Action 3: Soulblood Geyser.** Moranon fires a jet of soulblood from his chest in a 60-foot cone. All creatures in this area are knocked prone, and must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If this damage leaves the target with 0 hit points, it dies. A creature that fails the Constitution saving throw also gains the following flaw: "I won't help anyone unless they do something for me first." The creature keeps the flaw for 7 days, but it can be removed early with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. All terrain in this area becomes coated with soulblood, as described in the Soulblood Trail trait.

## STEEL DEVIL

The razors of hell, steel devils are highly mobile terror weapons deployed to wreak maximum carnage in battle. It is impossible to fight one without suffering wounds; even psionic attacks cause the mind to bleed.

A steel devil uses its incredible speed to engage its enemies in melee combat, since its mere presence can dish out damage to any nearby creature. It prefers to fight warriors foolish enough to remain close to make the most of its Agonizing Visage and Thorns of Pain traits. Even at a distance, the devil's Agonizing Visage and Soul Scalpel can harm foes as it advances.

### STEEL DEVIL

*Large fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 157 (21d10 + 42)

**Speed** 45 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 19 (+4) | 20 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 15 (+2) | 17 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +9, Int +8

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4





**Agonizing Visage.** When a creature looks at the devil to target it with an attack or spell, the creature takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes at the start of its turn to avoid this damage. If the creature does so, it can't see the devil until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the devil in the meantime, it immediately takes the damage.

**Barbed Mind.** When a creature deals psychic damage to the devil, attempts to read its thoughts, or attempts to speak to it telepathically, the creature must make a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Magic Resistance.** The devil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The devil's weapon attacks are magical.

**Thorns of Pain.** When a creature moves within 5 feet of the devil or begins its turn there, the creature takes 15 (6d4) slashing damage. This damage can't be resisted.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The devil makes six attacks with its Eviscerating Strike and uses its Soul Scalpel.

**Eviscerating Strike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage.

**Soul Scalpel.** The devil mentally reaches into the essence of one creature it can see. That creature must make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. On a failed save, the target's Charisma score is reduced by 1. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

## REACTIONS

**Parry.** The devil adds 4 to its AC against one weapon attack that would hit it. To do so, the devil must be able to see the attacker.

## SRYZ, COUNT OF NARAKA

It's rare for a steel devil to enter the ranks of Hell's nobility, but Count Sryz sees the weakness brought about by the Wars of Forgetfulness and intends to quickly ascend to reigning as the prince—or to destroy the court in the process.

Sryz is the ultimate steel devil, and acts much like their counterparts do in combat. The devil engages other creatures in melee, surrounding themselves with as many combatants as possible to get the most out of their Agonizing Visage and Thorns of Pain traits and setting themselves up to devastate as many creatures as possible with their Sonic Attack villain action.

On their turn, Sryz spreads the damage around with their six Eviscerating Strikes, dashing with Lethal Agility if need be, then targets a creature they can't reach with Soul Scalpel. Sryz prefers to use Lacerating Presence on a foe that concentrates on a spell to make it more difficult for the creature to maintain a hold on the magic.

Sryz damages as many creatures as possible to maximize the effect of their Howl of Suffering villain action.

## SRYZ, COUNT OF NARAKA

*Large fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 180 (24d10 + 48)

**Speed** 45 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 19 (+4) | 21 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 20 (+5) | 15 (+2) | 17 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +10, Int +10, Cha +8

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidation +8

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 14 (11,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

**Agonizing Visage.** When a creature looks at Sryz to target the devil with an attack or spell, the creature takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes at the start of its turn to avoid this damage. If the creature does so, it can't see Sryz until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at Sryz in the meantime, it immediately takes the damage.

**Barbed Mind.** When a creature deals psychic damage to Sryz, attempts to read the devil's thoughts, or attempts to speak to them telepathically, the creature must make a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Lacerating Presence (1/Turn).** When Sryz inflicts damage, the devil can cause that target to start bleeding. A bleeding creature takes 1d4 slashing damage at the start of its turn, and this damage increases by 1d4 each round. Creatures stop bleeding if they regain hit points, or if *lesser restoration* or *greater restoration* is cast on them.

**Lethal Agility.** On each of their turns, Sryz can use a bonus action to take the Dash action.

**Magic Resistance.** Sryz has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Sryz's weapon attacks are magical.

**Thorns of Pain.** When a creature moves within 10 feet of Sryz or begins its turn there, the creature takes 15 (6d4) slashing damage. This damage can't be resisted.

**True Name.** Sryz's true name has been carefully extracted from this existence and can only be retrieved from parallel timelines. It is Viz Incivixii, which translates from an ancient Infernal dialect to *The One Who Divides*. Anyone who speaks the name aloud takes 1d4 psychic damage.

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## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Sryz makes six attacks with their Eviscerating Strike and uses their Soul Scalpel.

**Eviscerating Strike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (3d4 + 5) slashing damage.

**Soul Scalpel.** Sryz mentally reaches into the essence of one creature they can see. That creature must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. On a failed save, the target creature's Charisma score is reduced by 1. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

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## REACTIONS

**Parry.** Sryz adds 4 to their AC against one weapon attack that would hit them. To do so, Sryz must be able to see the attacker.

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## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Sryz has three villain actions. They can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. Sryz takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Sonic Attack.** Sryz emits a high-frequency scream that pierces the minds of their enemies. Each creature of Sryz's choice within 60 feet of the devil that can hear Sryz must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

**Villain Action 2: Slip between Worlds.** Sryz slices through the barriers between planes, and teleports up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space that the devil can see.

**Villain Action 3: Howl of Suffering.** Sryz shrieks a harrowing scream that deepens existing wounds. Each creature within 120 feet of Sryz that doesn't have all of its hit points must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, a creature begins bleeding as described in Lacerating Presence.

## LORE DEVIL

Lore devils are living compendiums of spent scrolls and dead codices. Keepers of lost arcane secrets, they wield cunning magics and feed on the energy of weaker mages.

A lore devil prefers to battle foes at range, beginning combat with its Multiattack action, first casting *dominate person* to bring a strong bodyguard to the fiend's side, then using Arcane Bolt twice. The devil continues to use Multiattack, casting *disintegrate* to harm an enemy spellcaster or *reverse gravity* followed by *fireball* and *lightning bolt* on subsequent turns to damage as many foes caught in the upward pull as possible. If a creature gets close enough to make melee attacks against the lore devil, the fiend

uses *Spelldrain* to regain hit points before casting *misty step* or *plane shift* to get away.

Note that the lore devil has a damage vulnerability uncommon among the other denizens of hell-fire. Characters don't normally encounter lore devils in flaming wastelands or volcanic lava pits the way they might some other fiends. These devils are smart and stay out of the places in hell that are hazardous to their health.

Some lore devils study ancient infernal rituals that allow them to bind the flesh of other devils to their papery skin. This fiendish essence infuses their pages with durability against flames, removing the vulnerability. Some lore devils gather enough fiendish flesh to perform the ritual several times, making them resistant or even immune to fire damage.



### LORE DEVIL

*Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (18 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 117 (18d8 + 36)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

| STR    | DEX    | CON    | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 10(+0) | 20(+5) | 14(+2) | 22(+6) | 20(+5) | 19(+4) |

**Saving Throws** Int +11, Wis +10, Cha +9

**Skills** Arcana +11, History +11, Religion +11

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** force, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned, prone

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** any languages written on the lore devil's skin, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

**Cabalistic Remains.** When the devil dies, it collapses into a pile of tattered parchment. Creatures that try to read the lore devil's remains must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, they can learn one language, spell, or secret the devil knew in life (chosen by the GM). On a failed save, the creature becomes cursed, driven to try to piece the fragments of the lore devil back together, convinced that they hold some profound, hidden truth. The curse is lifted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The devil's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The devil can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *mage armor*, *misty step*, *ray of enfeeblement*  
 3/day each: *counterspell*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*  
 1/day each: *disintegrate*, *dominate person*,  
*feeblemind*, *plane shift*, *reverse gravity*

**Limited Magic Immunity.** The devil can't be affected or detected by spells of 6th level or lower unless it wishes to be. It has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

**Ward of Arcane Recursion.** When the devil successfully casts *counterspell* to thwart a *magic missile* spell, a line spell, or a spell that requires a ranged attack roll, the lore devil is unaffected, and the spell is reflected back at the caster as though it originated from the devil, turning the caster into the target.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The devil makes three attacks. It can cast a spell in place of one of these attacks.

**Arcane Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) force damage.

**Spelldrain.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, and if the target has prepared any spells, it must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or lose one prepared spell (chosen by the devil). The devil regains hit points equal to 10 × the level of the forgotten spell.

## INDEX, EARL OF SHEOL

Lord Index is composed of the burning pages of the once-powerful *codex mutabilis* (see page 225 in the **Magic Items** section), the Book of Change. When the arcane tome was thrown into the caldera of Mount Vor, the book was incinerated, and deep within Sheol, the City of Death, Lord Index was created.

Index is the Book of Change given life—as such, they have access to now-abolished rituals, ones of immense and unmatched power. The Lords of Sheol, the City of Death, turn a blind eye to Earl Index's machinations, fearing the lord's power even as they rely on it.

The Earl of Sheol is a complex boss monster, and their villain actions are maximally disruptive! To keep the game rolling, consider doing the math on these actions ahead of time. In the case of Transmute Aspects, having new stats and attack modifiers ready for your players to use will dramatically reduce the chance that they riot and set your table on fire!

## INDEX, EARL OF SHEOL

*Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (18 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 182 (28d8 + 56)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 20 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 22 (+6) | 20 (+5) | 19 (+4) |

**Saving Throws** Int +11, Wis +10, Cha +9

**Skills** Arcana +11, History +11, Persuasion +9, Religion +11

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** force, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned, prone

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** all, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

**Chromatic Organum.** As a bonus action, Indix may choose one damage type. Until the start of their next turn, the devil gains immunity to that damage type, and all spells Indix casts that deal damage inflict the chosen damage type in place of the normal type.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Indix's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). Indix can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *mage armor*, *misty step*, *ray of enfeeblement*

3/day each: *counterspell*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*

1/day each: *disintegrate*, *dominate person*, *feeble-mind*, *plane shift*, *reverse gravity*

**Limited Magic Immunity.** Indix can't be affected or detected by spells of 6th level or lower unless they wish to be. Indix has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

**True Name.** No lore exists on the true name of Indix, but clever players will realize that it is, of course, *codex mutabilis*.

**Untethered Form.** Indix can cast the *shapechange* spell at will, without expending a spell slot or using any components.

**Ward of Arcane Recursion.** When Indix successfully casts *counterspell* to thwart a *magic missile* spell, a line spell, or a spell that requires a ranged attack roll, the devil is unaffected, and the spell is reflected back at the caster as though it originated from Indix, turning the caster into the target.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Indix makes three attacks. They can cast a spell in place of one of these attacks.

**Arcane Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) force damage.

**Spelldrain.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, and if the target has prepared any spells, it must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or lose one prepared spell (chosen by Indix). Indix regains hit points equal to 10 × the level of the forgotten spell.

**Catastrophe Theory (1/Day).** Indix chooses one creature he can see within 30 feet of him and marks it with an arcane seal. The next time that creature takes damage, the seal disappears and the creature takes an additional 63 (14d8) psychic damage.

## REACTIONS

**One Space Is the Same as Any Other.** When an attack misses Indix, the devil can magically teleport up to 300 feet to an unoccupied space they can see.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Indix has three villain actions. They can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. Indix takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Entanglement Matrix.** Indix targets up to six creatures they can see within 60 feet of the devil, fundamentally connecting their quantum essence. Each creature must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or enter an entanglement matrix. Until Indix is incapacitated, ends the matrix as a bonus action, or 1 hour has passed, whenever a creature in the matrix takes damage or is affected by a condition, all other creatures in the matrix also take that damage or are affected by the same condition. When a condition ends for one creature, it ends for all other affected creatures.

**Villain Action 2: Transmogrification Grid.** Indix exchanges the atoms of each creature in the entanglement matrix, causing up to three pairs of affected creatures to swap positions.

**Villain Action 3: Transmute Aspects.** Indix directly alters the abilities of their enemies. Each creature in the entanglement matrix must shift each of their ability scores along one space on their character sheets; Strength becomes Dexterity, Constitution becomes Intelligence, Charisma becomes Strength, and so on. These changes last as long as the matrix lasts.



## FANG DEVIL

Fang devils are the high priests of Hell, channeling unholy power to twist and subvert their enemies, mutating them into unrecognizable monstrosities. Horns erupt from their skulls and twist to pierce their eyes, their flesh splits open to reveal bloody gashes filled with teeth—blood that turns to poison as it drips from the maws in profane salivation.

## FANG DEVIL

*Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 285 (30d8 + 150)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 20 (+5) | 20 (+5) | 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 20 (+5) |

**Saving Throws** Str +9, Dex +10, Con +10, Cha +10

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

**Formless Shape.** The devil is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance.** The devil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The devil's weapon attacks are magical.

**Unhallowed Toxin.** Poison damage dealt by the devil ignores any damage immunity or resistance the target has.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The devil makes four melee attacks and uses its Twist Flesh.

**Mouth Hand.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 19). While grappled, the target is restrained.

Whenever the devil makes this attack, it can grow as many limbs as required to grapple multiple targets at once.



**Venomous Bayonet.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned.

**Hail of Teeth (Recharge 5–6).** A barrage of teeth erupts from the devil in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (18d4) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Teleport.** The devil magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

**Twist Flesh.** The devil targets a creature it can see within 60 feet of it. That creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned as it suffers a sudden monstrous transformation that wracks its body with unimaginable pain as bones writhe beneath skin and muscles fill with acid.

While poisoned in this way, a creature also suffers a random secondary effect:

- The target's internal temperature skyrockets, boiling its bodily fluids, which hiss from its pores as jets of steam. The target gains a level of exhaustion.
- Horns erupt from the target's skull, curving into its eyes. The target is blinded.
- Pus-filled boils form and pop in the target's ears. The target is deafened.
- The target's muscles burst, weakening it. All the target's weapon attacks deal half damage.
- The soles of the target's feet fuse with the ground, tearing with every move it makes. The target is restrained.
- The target's skeleton writhes beneath its skin, hardening into stone. The target is paralyzed.

The poisoned condition can be ended by a *lesser restoration* spell or by finishing a long rest, but levels of exhaustion can only be removed by a *greater restoration* spell or by finishing a long rest.

## HORAT, DUKE OF KASYRGAN

Horat is hierarch of the Envenomed, a cult of pain. His wicked power twists and corrupts everything it touches.

The Envenomed have spies throughout the Seven Cities, but thus far, Horat has been loyal to Pharyon. Many in Hell's cognoscenti believe there is a real alliance between the Duke of Kasyrgan and the Prince of Dis, though what this portends, no one knows.

Horat uses Multiattack to attack up to two spellcasters or lightly armored creatures with his Mouth Hand then attempts to poison those targets with Venomous Bayonet. He finishes his Multiattack by using Twist Flesh on a foe in his Mutation Field that isn't grappled by him.

If several foes get near Horat, he uses Hail of Teeth to deal as much damage as possible, even attacking any minions that might be in the line of fire.

Horat uses his Allow Me to Improve You reaction as often as possible to keep the toughest threats at bay while he tears apart foes with fewer hit points.

## HORAT, DUKE OF KASYRGAN

*Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 323 (34d8 + 170)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR    | DEX    | CON    | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 18(+4) | 20(+5) | 20(+5) | 16(+3) | 16(+3) | 20(+5) |

**Saving Throws** Str +10, Dex +11, Con +11, Cha +11

**Skills** Deception +11, Intimidation +11

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

**Formless Shape.** Horat is immune to any spell or effect that would alter his form.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Horat fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Horat has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Horat's weapon attacks are magical.

**Mutation Field.** Horat emits an unholy aura of distortion. Each creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of him has its speed reduced to 10 feet as its limbs develop extra joints and its feet splay into talons or tentacles until the start of the target's next turn.

In addition, as a bonus action, Horat can use Twist Flesh against every hostile creature affected by his Mutation Field.

**True Name.** The true name of Horat is not fixed. It is made up of the syllables VEN, THU, and ZJA. There are six permutations of the name, depending on how you order the syllables, but only one permutation is correct during a given battle.

**Unhallowed Toxin.** Poison damage dealt by Horat ignores any damage immunity or resistance the target has.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Horat makes four melee attacks and uses his Twist Flesh.

**Mouth Hand.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 19). While grappled, the target is restrained.

Whenever Horat makes this attack, he can grow as many limbs as required to grapple multiple targets at once.

**Venomous Bayonet.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) poison damage, and the target

must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned.

**Hail of Teeth (Recharge 5–6).** A barrage of teeth erupts from Horat in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (18d4) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Teleport.** Horat magically teleports, along with any equipment he is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space he can see.

**Twist Flesh.** Horat targets a creature he can see within 60 feet. That creature must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned as it suffers a sudden monstrous transformation that wracks its body with unimaginable pain as bones writhe beneath skin and muscles fill with acid.

While poisoned in this way, a creature also suffers a random secondary effect:

- The target's internal temperature skyrockets, boiling its bodily fluids, which hiss from its pores as jets of steam. The target gains a level of exhaustion.
- Horns erupt from the target's skull, curving into its eyes. The target is blinded.
- Pus-filled boils form and pop in the target's ears. The target is deafened.
- The target's muscles burst, weakening it. All the target's weapon attacks deal half damage.
- The soles of the target's feet fuse with the ground, tearing with every move it makes. The target is restrained.
- The target's skeleton writhes beneath its skin, hardening into stone. The target is paralyzed.

The poisoned condition can be ended by a *lesser restoration* spell or by finishing a long rest, but levels of exhaustion can only be removed by a *greater restoration* spell or by finishing a long rest.

## REACTIONS

**Allow Me to Improve You.** When a creature starts its turn in Horat's Mutation Field, he can use his Twist Flesh on that creature.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Horat has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Spindle-Shanked.** Horat moves up to his full movement speed without provoking opportunity attacks, and then makes two melee attacks.

**Villain Action 2: Unholy Ground.** The range of Horat's Mutation Field becomes 60 feet.

**Villain Action 3: Litany of Pain.** Horat chants an exaltation of suffering, afflicting enemies within 120 feet of him that can hear him with relentless agony. Enemy spellcasters lose concentration on any ongoing spells they are casting, and all enemy creatures must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become stunned until the end of Horat's next turn. Creatures with the poisoned condition automatically fail this saving throw.

## EYE DEVIL

Oracles of the Court of Seven Cities, the eye devils are inward-looking prophets. They speak in riddles, and only the Cult of the Mirrored Eye can decipher the proclamations of the Eyes of Hell.

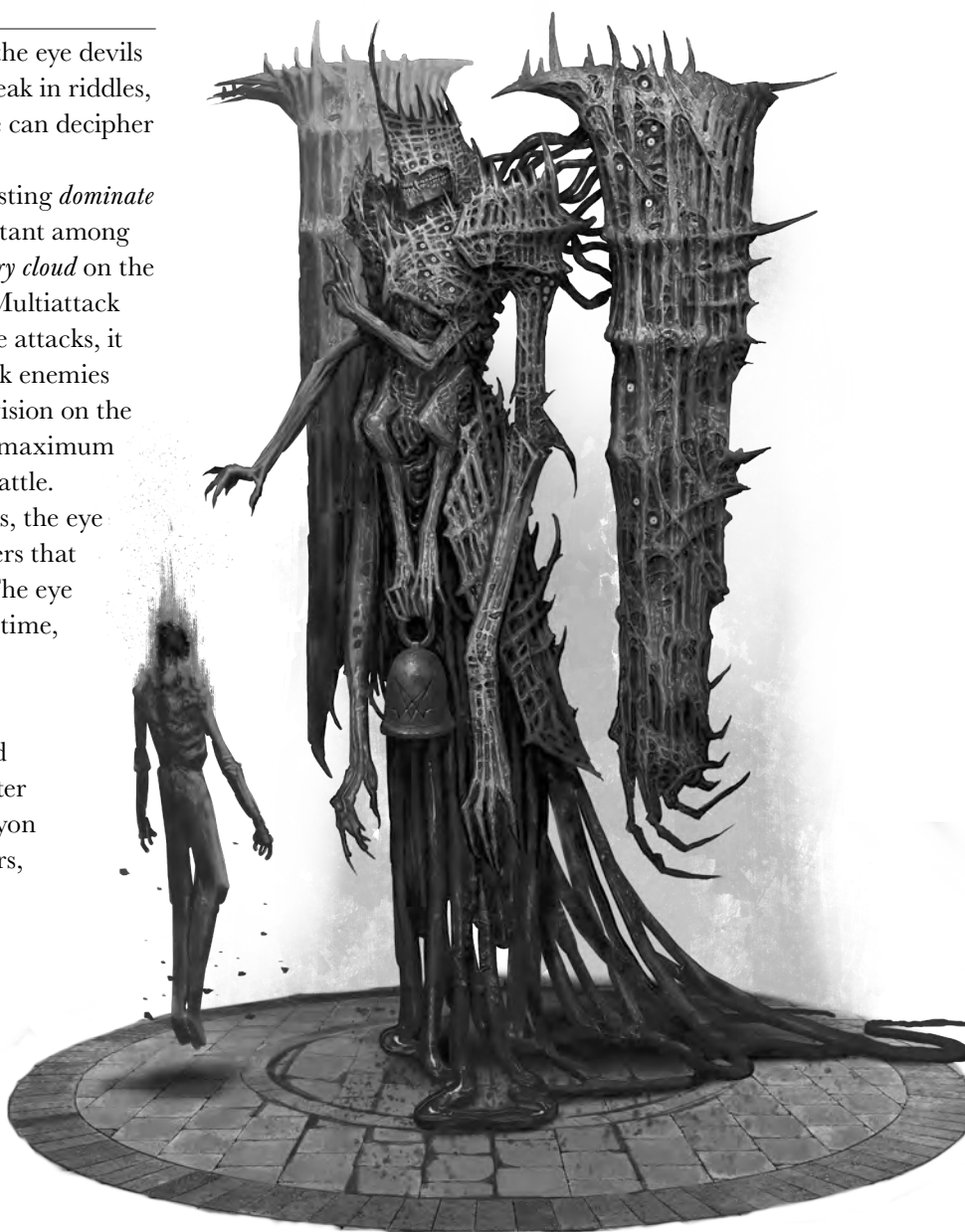
An eye devil attacks from above, casting *dominate monster* to bring the best melee combatant among its foes to its side, followed by *incendiary cloud* on the fiend's second turn. Since the devil's Multiattack action allows it to cast spells and make attacks, it uses Flame Jet and Incinerate to attack enemies that can reach it. The devil uses Malvision on the first turn of combat, hoping to create maximum chaos among its enemies during the battle.

After casting its most powerful spells, the eye devil targets flying or ranged characters that can threaten it with the *eyebite* spell. The eye devil concentrates attacks on one at a time, methodically bringing down threats.

## PHARYON, PRINCE OF DIS

Once again, the power of Dis rises and the City of Lies rules over Hell. Dispatcher dispatches his newest lieutenant, Pharyon the Edictor, Revelator, Lord of Answers, Oracle to the Court.

For the first time in the (admittedly now ruined) lists of Hell, an eye devil leads the Court of Seven Cities, and the devil's dark portents guide the unholy court. The eye



devils' power to see past, future, and alternate realities makes them rather unpredictable on the battlefield, but Pharyon is even more cryptic and inward-looking than most of his kin.

Pharyon carries the *Omega Toll* (see page 212 in the **Magic Items** section), the Bell of Light's End. When it sounds its thunderous knell, the old epoch ends. What comes after ... even Prince Pharyon can't see.

In combat, Pharyon flies to avoid melee and uses *Malvision* followed by *Multiattack* to attack with *Flame Jet* and a spell, typically *dominate monster*, *incendiary cloud*, *delayed blast fireball*, or *eyebite*. When a creature hits Pharyon with an attack, he uses his *Look Again* reaction, provided the attacker is in a relatively safe spot and not surrounded by the devil's foes.

## EYE DEVIL

*Huge fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 262 (21d12 + 126)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 26 (+8) | 12 (+1) | 22 (+6) | 25 (+7) | 26 (+8) | 22 (+6) |

**Saving Throws** Str +14, Con +12, Wis +14, Cha +12

**Skills** Insight +14, Perception +14

**Damage Vulnerabilities** lightning

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, frightened, poisoned, prone

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24

**Languages** Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

**Innate Spellcasting.** The devil's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). The devil can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*, *telekinesis*

3/day each: *delayed blast fireball*, *eyebite*

1/day each: *dominate monster*, *incendiary cloud*, *plane shift*

In addition, the devil can concentrate on two spells at once.

**Limited Prescience.** The devil can't be surprised, and has advantage on initiative rolls.

**Magic Resistance.** The devil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Malvision (1/Day).** As a bonus action, the devil gazes into the looming horrors of the future and witnesses a vision of doom, imposing it on reality.

One creature that the devil can see within 30 feet of it becomes the subject of an ill omen, and they foresee themselves suffering a terrible fate. At the end of the target's next turn, it is inflicted with a curse. It doesn't know the nature, which is decided from the following options at random:

- The target begins to age rapidly, as each day for them becomes a year.
- The target's luck runs out; they now automatically fail all saving throws.
- The target is doomed. If they are reduced to 0 hit points, they instantly die.
- The target must roll a d20. On a roll of 1, they die instantly with no chance of resurrection.

A creature can't be affected by the same curse twice.

To avoid the effects of the impending curse, a target can use their bonus action to pass their fate to an ally they can see within 60 feet. After transferring the curse in this way, the infliction of the curse resets to now take place at the end of the new target's next turn. An impending curse can't be transferred back to a creature who has already been targeted with it. If the devil is destroyed before the curse takes effect, the creature is unaffected by the curse.

A curse can only be lifted by a solar's *Healing Touch*. It can also be suppressed, but not broken permanently, by wearing an amulet featuring the petrified eye of an eye devil.

**Soul-Scorching.** Fire damage dealt by the devil ignores resistance and immunity to fire damage.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The devil makes four attacks. It can cast a spell in place of one of these attacks.

**Incinerate.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (8d6) fire damage.

**Flame Jet.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) fire damage.

**Winged Embrace.** The devil encloses itself and one other creature within 5 feet of it within its wings. The creature must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or become grappled (escape DC 20). While

grappled, the target is restrained. The devil can only grapple one creature at a time.

While grappling a creature, the devil is guarded from damage by its wings, which can be attacked (AC 18; 50 hit points). When reduced to 0 hit points, the wings fall apart, releasing the trapped creature inside.

If the devil's wings are destroyed, it reforms them at the start of its next turn.

**Teleport.** The devil magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

## PHARYON, PRINCE OF DIS

*Huge fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 325 (26d12 + 156)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 26 (+8) | 12 (+1) | 22 (+6) | 25 (+7) | 26 (+8) | 22 (+6) |

**Saving Throws** Str +14, Con +12, Wis +14, Cha +12

**Skills** Deception +12, Insight +14, Perception +14, Persuasion +12

**Damage Vulnerabilities** lightning

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, frightened, poisoned, prone

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24

**Languages** Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 20 (25,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

**Innate Spellcasting.** Pharyon's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). Pharyon can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*, *telekinesis*  
3/day each: *delayed blast fireball*, *eyebite*  
1/day each: *dominate monster*, *incendiary cloud*, *plane shift*

In addition, Pharyon can concentrate on up to four spells at once.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Pharyon fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Pharyon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Malvision (3/Day).** As a bonus action, Pharyon gazes into the looming horrors of the future and witnesses a vision of doom.

One creature that Pharyon can see within 60 feet of him becomes the subject of an ill omen and they foresee themselves suffering a terrible fate. At the end of the target's next turn, it is inflicted with a curse. It doesn't know the nature, which is decided from the following options at random:

- The creature begins to age rapidly, as each second for them becomes a year.
- The target's luck runs out; they now automatically fail all saving throws.
- The target is doomed. If they are reduced to 0 hit points, they instantly die.
- The target must roll a d20. On a roll of 1, they die instantly with no chance of resurrection.

A creature can't be affected by the same curse twice.

To avoid the effects of the impending curse, a target can use their bonus action to pass their fate to an ally they can see within 60 feet. An impending curse can't be transferred back to a creature

who has already been targeted with it. If Pharyon is destroyed before the curse takes effect, the creature is unaffected by the curse.

A curse can only be lifted by a solar's Healing Touch. It can also be suppressed, but not broken permanently, by wearing an amulet featuring the petrified eye of an eye devil.

**Soul-Scorching.** Fire damage dealt by Pharyon ignores resistance and immunity to fire damage.

**True Name.** Pharyon's true name must be hummed, whistled, or played on an instrument at the table for the reading to be legitimate!





## GEMSTONE DRAGONS

A long-forgotten branch of the draco genus, *draco crystallus* are primarily hexapods like their more common cousins *draco metallus* and *draco chromaticus*. They are older than the other draconic genera, which accounts for their wider diversity in body type.

You can read more about these psionic dragons in *Strongholds & Followers*. This book presents two unique gemstone dragons: Trudy, a ruby dragon wyrmling, and Cthrion Uroniziir, a mighty onyx dragon.

## PSIONICS

The gemstone dragons are silico-organic organisms. When hatched, they are almost entirely organic. As they grow, their crystalline structure grows, as does their psionic power.

The crystals that grow on and thread through their bodies form a network of psionic filaments that capture, conduct, amplify, and store charges of psionic energies, which the dragons then convert into manifestations.

Though manifestations may seem like magic, they are an entirely different discipline and power. Spells such as *antimagic field* and *dispel magic* have no effect on psionic manifestations.

Each dragon begins with a number of charges based on their age. They can expend these charges to cast any psionic manifestation. Many of these manifestations have a base cost and can be enhanced by expending more charges.

Over time, the dragon's crystals conduct more psionic energies into its body, recharging its power. At the end of each of its turns, roll the recharge die and restore that many charges.

## MANIFESTATIONS

Psionic charges are used to manifest psionic abilities. These manifestations are the primary source of a gemstone dragon's power. All manifestations have a range of 30 feet, unless noted otherwise.

The following manifestations are by no means the only ones the dragons have access to. It is known that the most powerful gemstone dragons can alter their form at will in a manner that

defies all inspection. But these are the most well-documented and commonly used manifestations available to all psionic creatures.

The save DC against a dragon's manifestation is 8 plus the dragon's proficiency bonus plus the dragon's Intelligence modifier.

### AMPLIFY

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Charges:** 4

The dragon focuses the power of its mind and wreaths its teeth, claws, and tail in glowing psionic force. For the next minute, all of its melee attacks deal an extra 1d8 psychic damage. When the dragon hits with a melee attack while this manifestation is active, it can use a reaction to spend any number of charges to deal an extra 1d8 psychic damage per 2 charges spent.

### ANOTHER WORLD

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Duration:** Special

**Charges:** 20

What if things had been different? Maybe in another world, I'm the wizard and you're the fighter!

Target two enemies. Both must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or swap character sheets until they finish a long rest.

### BELIEVE

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Duration:** Special

**Charges:** 10

The dragon infects the mind of one creature with a new belief. The target must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or suffer an effect chosen from the list below.

**Friends.** Until the end of its next turn, the target can't attack other creatures, and other creatures have advantage on their next attack roll against the target.

**Enemies.** At the start of its next turn, the target must move to attack its closest ally. If it has multiple possible targets, it attacks one at random.

**Chasm.** The target perceives a chasm opening up beneath it. It falls prone and takes 2d8 psychic damage. At the start of each of its turns, the target can make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the target can't stand up and takes 2d8 psychic damage as it continues to believe it is falling into an infinite abyss. On a successful save, the effect ends on the target.

**Disaster.** The target feels as though the world is ending and becomes frightened of the dragon. While frightened in this way, the target must spend its turn trying to move as far away from the dragon as it can. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make an Intelligence saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

### **DISTANCE**

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 feet

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Charges:** 1 per target

Space contorts and twists. The dragon chooses any number of targets it can see within 30 feet of it.

Each target must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or be pushed 30 feet away from the dragon.

### **ELSEWHERE**

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Charges:** 2 per 5 feet

The dragon chooses a creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or be teleported 5 feet per 2 charges spent to an unoccupied space the dragon can see.

### **FLAY**

**Casting Time:** 1 bonus action

**Range:** Self (60-foot cone)

**Duration:** 1 round

**Charges:** 2 per 1d6 psychic damage

The dragon blasts pure psionic energy from its eyes, frying the brains of all creatures in a 60-foot

cone. Each creature in that area must make an Intelligence saving throw, taking 1d6 psychic damage per 2 charges spent on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### **FORGET**

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Duration:** Special

**Charges:** Special

The dragon reaches into an enemy's mind and plucks critical knowledge of a spell or weapon from its cortex. The dragon targets one creature it can see within range and chooses one of the following effects:

**Spells.** The dragon chooses a spell that the target has prepared and spends charges equal to 5 + the spell's level. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or it can no longer cast the chosen spell.

**Weapons.** The dragon chooses a weapon the target has proficiency with and spends 3 charges. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or it can no longer add its proficiency bonus to attack rolls made with the chosen weapon.

This effect lasts until the target finishes a long rest. If the creature succeeds on the saving throw, it is immune to all dragons' *forget* for the next 24 hours. The dragon can only use this manifestation on the same creature once per 10 minutes.

### **MINDSCAPE**

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 feet

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

**Charges:** 3 + 1 charge per round

The dragon implants a vision of a new landscape in the target's mind, causing them to move randomly and erratically. The dragon targets one creature it can see within range. The target must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or become trapped in the mindscape. If the target moves while the manifestation is active, it moves 10 feet in a random direction. To determine the direction, roll a d8 and assign a direction to each die face.

## THE REAL

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

**Charges:** 4

The dragon sees the true reality. It gains truesight out to 120 feet.

## REFLECTION

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Charges:** 20

The dragon creates a psychic duplicate of a creature it can see within range. The copy appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of the dragon, and acts immediately after the dragon in the initiative order each round. The duplicate can understand and is loyal to the dragon. It uses all the statistics of the creature it duplicates, but without lair, legendary, or villain actions, and has nonmagical copies of the creature's equipment. The duplicate disappears when it is reduced to 0 hit points, the manifestation ends, or the dragon uses this manifestation again.

## SYMPATHY

**Casting Time:** 1 reaction, taken in response to the dragon being damaged by a creature within 30 feet of it that it can see

**Range:** 30 feet

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Charges:** 2 charges per d8

The dragon violently reacts to being hurt, raking its enemy's nervous system with sympathetic psionic vibrations.

The dragon spends charges to force the creature that damaged it to make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 1d8 psychic damage per 2 charges spent (to a maximum that equals the triggering damage).

## WEIGHT

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 feet

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

**Charges:** 3 + 1 charge per round

The gemstone dragons know that the weave of the timescape isn't a true force—it's little more than

a quirk of geometry. One they can enhance or reverse at their discretion.

The dragon chooses a creature it can see within range and selects either *Levitas* or *Gravitas*. The target must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or suffer the effect described below.

**Levitas.** At the start of each of its turns, the target rises 10 feet. A levitating target can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. When the effect ends, the target falls to the ground, taking 1d6 damage per 10 feet fallen, up to a maximum equaling the target's level or challenge rating (e.g., 5d6 for level 5 or CR 5).

**Gravitas.** The target's speed is reduced to 10 feet.

## AURAS

A dragon projects an aura 30 feet around it. The aura persists while the dragon has psionic charges remaining. The aura's effect depends on the dragon's gemstone variety.

## CRYSTAL HIDE

Normal weapons bounce and spark off the crystals protruding from a gemstone dragon's skin. These dragons have resistance to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

## SYMPATHETIC VIBRATIONS

All gemstone dragons are vulnerable to psychic damage. The same crystalline structure that makes them hard to damage with normal weapons conducts any psionic radiation, causing its latticework to crack and shatter.

## MINDSPEECH

All gemstone dragons develop telepathy as they age. Most acquire it when they are young, but the topaz dragons are born with it.

## MATRIX MIND

The gemstone dragons can maintain several persistent manifestations simultaneously, but doing so requires spending 1 charge per manifestation at the start of each of its turns. Whenever a dragon takes damage while concentrating on a psionic manifestation, it must make an Intelligence saving throw to maintain concentration as if concentrating on a spell.

## TRUDY

*Medium dragon, lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 49 (9d8 + 9)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 14 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +4, Int +5, Wis +4, Cha +4

**Skills** Insight +4, Perception +4

**Damage Vulnerabilities** psychic

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Amplification Aura.** When a creature within 30 feet of Trudy casts a spell, she can choose to increase the spell save DC for that spell by 1.

## PSIONICS

**Charges** 1

**Recharge** 1d4

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

**Lift.** Trudy chooses up to three allied creatures that she can see within 30 feet of her. Until the end of its next turn, each target can jump a distance equal to its movement speed.

## REACTIONS

**Psionic Ward.** When Trudy or a creature within 30 feet of her that she can see takes damage, she can spend 1 or more psionic charges to reduce the damage by 1d4 for each charge spent.

## TRUDY

When the great Cthrion Uroniziir rose from her slumber, many *draco crystalli* were woken, hatching and crawling forth. One of them, Trudy the ruby wyrmling, is new to the struggle to preserve reality against the onslaught of the Würm of the World's End. But though she is, Trudy knows her duty, eager to join the battle and stop the Time Ender from consuming whole realities.

Trudy is still young as the crystal dragons reckon these things, but she is already an expert on the fabric of reality, the many worlds of the timescape, and the people who inhabit them. She talks to herself, constantly analyzes everything and everyone, and is a little oblivious to people's reactions to her. When she gets nervous, she breaks into rhyming couplets, often in Draconic. This can't be helped.

*Quod est,*

*Quod licet,*

*Radix Malorum!*

*Ad infinitum, quod erat demonstrandum!*



## CTHRION URONIZIIR

Known to the elves as the Wurm of the World's End, Cthrion Uroniziir, Lord of the Neutral Evil Dragons rises from her slumber to collapse the myriad manifolds of the timescape into one partition. If she succeeds, worlds will be annihilated. Collapsed together into one singular *universe*.

Opposing her, a faction led by the slumbering Ballisantirax whose power is so great, should she wake, it would unmake the Mundane World. So she dreams, and from her dreams projects allies to aid the heroes who oppose Cthrion Uroniziir, the Time Ender.

Uroniziir is a world-ending campaign final boss requiring the greatest heroes of the timescape to join forces!



## CTHRION URONIZIIR

*Gargantuan dragon, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 24 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 585 (30d20 + 270)

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 25 (+7) | 27 (+8) | 28 (+9) | 26 (+8) | 20 (+5) | 25 (+7) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +17, Int +17, Wis +14, Cha +16

**Skills** Arcana +17, Insight +14, Perception +14, Religion +17

**Damage Vulnerabilities** psychic

**Damage Immunities** fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24

**Languages** Common, Draconic, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 29 (135,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +9

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Cthron Uroniziir fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Cthron Uroniziir has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Cthron Uroniziir's weapon attacks are magical.

**Negentropic Entity.** Cthron Uroniziir is a living plane. Creatures, objects, and worlds consumed by her are forcibly incorporated, melding into a single universe contained within her. Creatures can only leave the universe with magic that enables planar travel, such as the *plane shift* spell, and spells targeting creatures, objects, or locations within Cthron Uroniziir automatically fail unless their range exceeds the caster's plane of existence.

Cthron Uroniziir can't be harmed from within the universe. If she dies, the universe implodes, destroying everything inside.

**Psionics.** Cthron Uroniziir can use a psionic manifestation as a bonus action.

**Rift.** If Cthron Uroniziir dies, she creates a swirling 20-foot-diameter spherical rift in spacetime. All objects within 50 feet of the rift that aren't anchored to the ground are pulled into it. Each creature within 50 feet of the rift must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be pulled into the rift. Creatures and objects pulled into the rift take 39 (6d12) force damage. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, it is consumed by the void and ceases to exist. The rift then closes, depositing any remaining creatures in unoccupied spaces within 20 feet of it.

**Time Aura.** When a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of Cthron Uroniziir, the creature must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or be affected by the *slow* spell. An affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. On a success, a creature is immune to the Time Aura of all onyx dragons for the next 24 hours. Creatures Cthron Uroniziir chooses are unaffected by her Time Aura.

### PSIONICS

**Charges** 35

**Recharge** 1d12

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Cthron Uroniziir uses her Inhale. She then makes four attacks: one with her bite, two with her claws, and one with her tail.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d6 + 7) slashing damage

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

**Inhale.** Cthron Uroniziir creates a 90-foot-cone vacuum. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 24 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 20 feet toward Cthron Uroniziir and knocked prone. Large or smaller objects not worn or carried are drawn into Cthron and incorporated into her universe.



**Cosmic Breath (Recharge 5–6).** Cthron Uroniziir exhales the contents of another world in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 26 Dexterity throw or take 45 (10d8) bludgeoning damage and 45 (10d8) damage corresponding to the world's composition. Roll a d6 to determine the damage type: (1) acid, (2) cold, (3) fire, (4) lightning, (5) necrotic, or (6) radiant.

## REACTIONS

**Delay.** When a creature within 30 feet of Cthron Uroniziir that she can see makes an attack roll or casts a spell, she can attempt to hurl the creature forward in time before the action resolves. The target must make a DC 25 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the target vanishes, and if it was the target's turn, its turn is over, but the triggering action is unresolved. At the end of Cthron Uroniziir's next turn, the target reappears in the space it left or in the nearest unoccupied space, and then the action they took resolves. If the target's action targeted a creature or object that is now out of range of the attack or spell, the action fails. If a creature fails this saving throw by 5 or more, it also ages 1d12 years when it returns. Once a creature is targeted with Delay, Cthron Uroniziir can't target that creature again with Delay for the next 24 hours.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Cthron Uroniziir has three villain actions. She can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. She takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Terraform.** Cthron Uroniziir conjures an onyx monolith in an unoccupied space she can see within 120 feet of her. The monolith is 5 feet wide and 20 feet tall. It has AC 20, 200 hit points, immunity to fire, lightning, and poison damage, as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks, and vulnerability to psychic damage. At initiative count 10 each round until its destruction, the monolith pulses

with black lightning. Each creature of Cthron Uroniziir's choice within 30 feet of the monolith must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) lightning damage. If Cthron Uroniziir is within 30 feet of the monolith when it pulses, she gains 21 (6d6) hit points. Immediately after the first pulse, the ground within 30 feet of the monolith becomes difficult terrain.

**Villain Action 2: Pluck.** Cthron Uroniziir summons 1d4 allies from one or more planes to aid her in battle. Each ally must be a creature with a challenge rating of 9 or lower and can't have lair, legendary, or villain actions. They each appear in an unoccupied space within 10 feet of Cthron Uroniziir, act on their own initiative count each round, and fight until they are destroyed. They follow Cthron Uroniziir's commands and disappear if she dies.

**Villain Action 3: Freeze.** Cthron Uroniziir uses a special psionic manifestation that costs no charges and mimics the *time stop* spell.

## LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Cthron Uroniziir takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. She can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- Cthron Uroniziir manifests *weight* at no cost, choosing up to four targets.
- Cthron Uroniziir manifests *another world* at no cost. She can't use this action again for 1 week.
- Cthron Uroniziir casts the *plane shift* spell (spell save DC 25), which can be used to transport creatures inside of her universe.

## REGIONAL EFFECTS

A region containing Cthron Uroniziir's lair is warped for those who dare slumber, creating the following effect. The dreams of intelligent creatures who sleep within 12 miles of the lair are melded together in a lucid, overlapping cacophony. In these dreams, they can exchange philosophies about unity, law, and order—when they aren't being plagued by each other's nightmares.

## RELG, THE DESCENDER, THE LORD IN CORPULECT

Before the Wars of Forgetfulness, Relg ruled the Court of the Deep as the King in Lethe. Almost invincible, Relg radiated lethe. No matter the souls they contained, no matter how powerful their will, any demon who opposed Relg fell into the unthinking entropy. He ruled for an eternity.

Until the coming of the Bloodheat, the Demon That Does Not Forget. Sylt's immunity to lethe

meant she alone could stand against the Descender. Sylt overthrew Relg in a bloody, merciless clash and formed a new court in the foundations of blood left behind.

Relg was adrift in the timescape until the coming of Ajax, Invincible, the Iron Saint. Having heard the dark whispers about the Lord in Corpulect, Ajax summoned Relg, bound the once-king to him, and placed Relg at the head of the army of demons he now commands, the Infernum.



In combat, Relg positions himself among as many enemies as possible to make the most of his Aura of Lethe. The demon welcomes melee combatants and always tries to maintain a soul count of 3 or higher so his Pus-Filled Soul Boils harm those who threaten him.

On his turns, Relg first uses his tentacles to attempt to grab at least one creature so he can use his Reel trait, then uses his axe and horns to threaten other targets he can reach, using Soul Rend early and often to destroy his foes quickly. If a flying creature threatens the demon, he uses Weighted Soul to bring it to the ground.

## RELG

*Gargantuan fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 21 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 525 (30d20 + 210)

**Souls** 10 (4d4)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 26 (+8) | 11 (+0) | 25 (+7) | 20 (+5) | 20 (+5) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Str +16, Con +15, Wis +13

**Skills** Insight +13, Intimidation +11, Perception +13

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning, necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** soulsight 120 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23

**Languages** all, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 25 (75,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +8

**Aura of Lethe.** Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of Relg must succeed on a DC 21 Intelligence saving throw or lose precious memories. On a failed save, the creature must roll a d8 and subtract the number rolled from all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks made until the start of its next turn. If a creature fails this saving throw three times in a row, it suffers the effect of the *feblemind* spell.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Relg fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Relg has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** Relg's weapon attacks are magical.

**Pus-Filled Soul Boils.** As long as Relg's soul count is 3 or higher, creatures that touch him or hit him with a melee attack while within 5 feet of him take 10 (3d6) acid damage.

**Reel.** As a bonus action, Relg pulls one creature of his choice grappled by his tentacles to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of him and makes a bite attack against it.

**Regeneration.** Relg regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn. If he takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn. Relg only dies if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

**Soul Rend (Costs 1–5 Souls).** When Relg makes a successful attack against a creature, he can burn up to 5 souls and deal an extra 14 (4d6) damage for each soul burnt.

**Turn Resistance.** Relg has advantage on saving throws against effects that turn fiends.

**Weighted Soul (Costs 2 Souls).** As a bonus action, Relg chooses a creature within 120 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or its speed is reduced to 0 feet until the end of its next turn. If the creature is airborne, it immediately plummets 60 feet toward the ground.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Relg makes four melee attacks: three with his axe and one with his horns. He can use his tentacles in place of any of these attacks.

**Axe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 34 (4d12 + 8) slashing damage.

**Horns.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d10 + 8) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 24 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 20 feet away from Relg and knocked prone.

**Tentacle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 24). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. Relg has six tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d10 + 8) piercing damage, and the target is swallowed if it is a Large or smaller creature. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, has total cover against attacks and other effects outside of Relg, and takes 17 (5d6) acid damage and 17 (5d6) necrotic damage at the start of each of Relg's turns. A creature reduced to 0 hit points while swallowed by Relg dies, and its soul is instantly consumed by Relg without a saving throw.

If Relg takes 50 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside him, he must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of Relg. If Relg dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone. A creature that exits Relg is frightened of him until the end of their next turn.

## REACTIONS

**Siphon Arcane.** When a creature within 60 feet of Relg that he can see casts a spell, Relg can cause it to make a DC 21 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the spell has no effect. In addition, the creature forgets the spell and can't cast it again until they finish a long rest.

## VILLAIN ACTIONS

Relg has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

**Villain Action 1: Birth.** Relg regurgitates an allied **nalfeshnee** in an unoccupied space within 15 feet of him. Each creature within 5 feet of the nalfeshnee when it appears must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The nalfeshnee acts immediately after Relg on the same initiative count.

**Villain Action 2: Lake of Oblivion.** Relg conjures a shallow lake of steaming liquid lethe in a 50-foot radius centered on himself. When a creature enters the lake for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in the lake, it must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or be affected by the *confusion* spell for 1 minute (requiring no concentration from Relg). The lake is difficult terrain for creatures hostile to Relg.

**Villain Action 3: Wails of the Damned.** Each creature within 30 feet of Relg that can hear the screams emanating from his open gut must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or drop to 0 hit points.

# Magic Items



Whenever we present an entirely new system (and this book contains two of them: intrigue and warfare), it seems like a good idea to present new magic items that support these systems. If organizations

can act the way heroes do, and if characters can command units, then surely wizards and priests have developed magic to enhance these things!

This section presents new items that help officers better manage their domain and commanders better lead their troops. In addition, we include nine new codices, artifact-level magical tomes that bend the fabric of the timescape.

## COAT OF THE CRIMSON GUARD

*Armor (studded leather), very rare (requires attunement)*

This ornate leather coat is a pristine white until its powers are used. You have a +2 bonus to AC while wearing this armor.

The coat has 3 charges. During a warfare battle, you can expend 1 charge as a reaction when one of your units would suffer casualties. When you expend a charge, you take damage equal to 5 times

the number of casualties your unit would suffer and your unit does not suffer any casualties. You must be conscious to use this reaction. Taking damage from this reaction changes the coat to a deep crimson color for 24 hours. The coat regains all expended charges daily at dawn.

## COUNTERPOINT

*Weapon (morningstar), very rare (requires attunement)*

The first of these morningstars, known as *Ysgwyd y Ddaear* or the *Falling Star of Soraya*, left a trail of destruction through history, breaking sieges, crushing armies, and leveling cities. The true origin of the morningstar is lost to myth.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this morningstar. An enemy struck by an opportunity attack with this weapon stops moving, falls prone, and has its speed reduced to 0 until the end of its turn.

When you use the Attack action to make an attack with this weapon, the target is marked. The mark lasts until the end of your next turn. You can only mark one creature this way at a time, and if you use the Attack action to attack multiple creatures, the last creature you attack with the weapon is marked. If a marked target within 5 feet of you attempts to attack another



creature, you can immediately attack the marked creature once with the weapon without using an action or reaction.

**Seismic Blast.** This weapon has a maximum of 3 charges, but only has 1 charge remaining when it is found. As an action, you can expend 1 charge to cast the *earthquake* spell from the weapon. The morningstar has a 25 percent chance of gaining 1 charge daily at dawn.

**Intrigue.** You have advantage on Diplomacy tests to influence domains that know about the weapon's existence.

Additionally, once per intrigue, you can turn a failed Diplomacy test into a success, but the target NPC realm's attitude toward your domain is reduced by one step.

### COUNTERPOINT'S LIMITATION

At the GM's discretion when the characters first obtain a *counterpoint*, it can't be recharged at dawn, and charges can't be added to the weapon from any other source. This means the weapon only has one use of Seismic Blast left, making the final charge much more valuable. Do you use it now, or save it for a pivotal moment?

As the GM, you can decide what, if anything, can allow the weapon to begin regaining charges. Perhaps the characters need to soak a *counterpoint* in the blood of an ancient blue dragon, destroy the other copies of the weapon, or achieve some other heroic deed.

## FATE'S NEEDLE

*Weapon (dagger), uncommon (requires attunement)*

The hilt of this thin ivory dagger is wrapped with a single piece of golden thread, which shimmers with divination energy.

While wielding a *fate's needle*, you can use your bonus action to choose a target you can see within 60 feet of you and tug on the golden thread. You gain advantage on your next attack roll against the target, as the thread's magic affords you a brief glimpse into one possible future. You can use your bonus action in this way a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all uses after finishing a long rest.

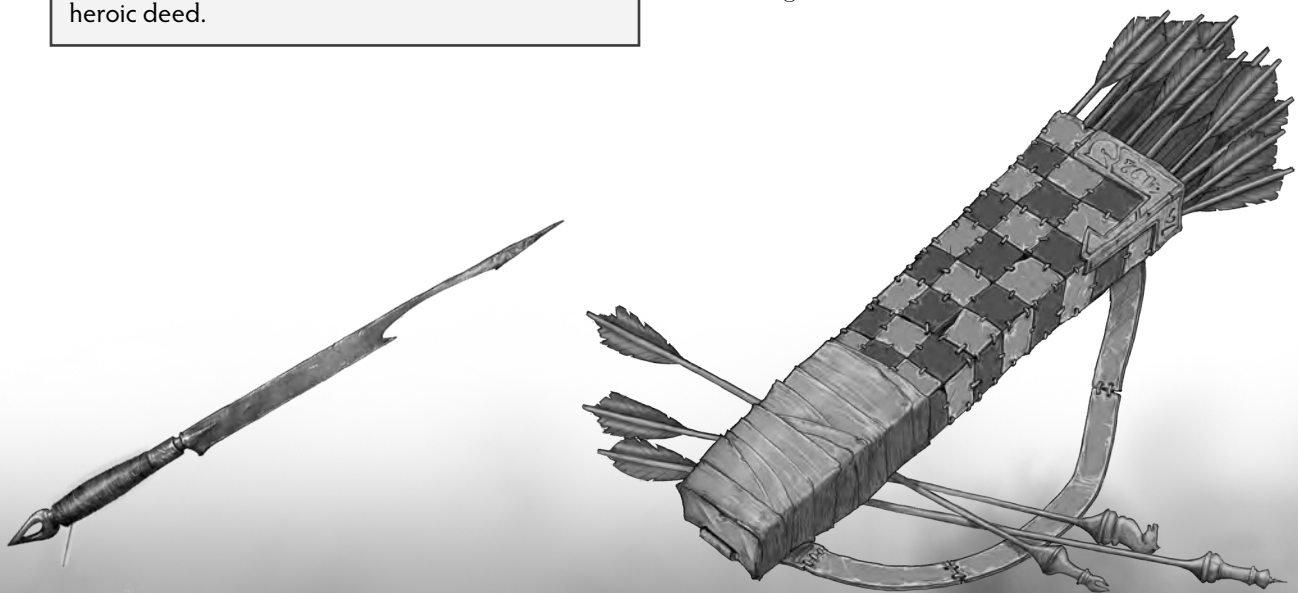
In addition, the golden thread grants insight into the sprawling arcane tapestry that spans the universe. An officer attuned to a *fate's needle* gains a +1 bonus to Lore tests for their domain.

## GRANDMASTER'S QUIVER

*Wondrous item, rare*

This checkered quiver contains 16 magical arrows with heads that resemble chess pieces. A complete quiver includes eight pawns, two bishops, two knights, two rooks, one queen, and one king. When the quiver is found, there is a 60 percent chance that 1d8 randomly selected arrows are missing.

Each type of arrow has a unique magical effect in addition to dealing damage like a nonmagical arrow. Once an arrow hits a target, it becomes a nonmagical arrow.





**Pawn.** Immediately after this arrow hits a creature, the target and one other creature of your choice within 5 feet of it take 2d6 piercing damage.

Alternatively, as a reaction to one of your units being diminished, you can expend this arrow to grant that unit advantage on its next Power test.

**Bishop.** Immediately after this arrow hits a creature, a 5-foot-wide line of celestial light extends out from you to the target. The target and each creature in the line excluding you must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 4d8 radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Alternatively, during the deployment phase of warfare, you can expend this arrow to give one of your units advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic during that battle.

**Rook.** Immediately after this arrow hits a creature, the target must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, you and the target switch places. You can shoot this arrow at a creature that willingly wants to switch places with you. A willing target takes no damage from this arrow and can automatically fail the saving throw.

Alternatively, during deployment, you can fire this arrow to any unoccupied space you can see within range, instantly creating a guard tower fortification at that location.

**Knight.** When you hit a target with this *+1 arrow*, you gain the benefits of the *jump* spell for 1 minute.

Alternatively, as a reaction to one of your units making a successful Power test, you can expend this arrow to inflict an equal number of casualties to one additional adjacent opposed unit.

**Queen.** Immediately after this arrow hits a creature, a creature of your choice within 30 feet of the target gains the following benefits for 1 minute:

- Their movement speed increases by 10 feet.
- They do not provoke opportunity attacks.
- They have advantage on Dexterity saving throws.

Alternatively, when your domain fails a Diplomacy test, you can expend this arrow as a domain reaction to turn it into a success.

**King.** Immediately after this arrow hits a creature, one ally of your choice within 5 feet of the target can use their reaction to make one melee weapon attack against the target with advantage.

Alternatively, as a reaction to making a Command test, you can expend this arrow to gain advantage on all Command tests during that battle.

## HELMET OF DUAL FATES

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

If another domain makes a domain skill test while you are wearing this helmet, you can use a domain reaction to give that domain disadvantage on that test. Once you use the helmet in this way, the next domain skill test an officer in your domain (including you) makes is also made with disadvantage.

In addition, while wearing this helmet you can use your reaction to gain advantage on a saving throw, but all attacks you make before the end of your next turn are made with disadvantage. The helmet can't be used this way again until the next dawn.





## HEROIC SOUL'S CHASUBLE

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

The high elves have a tradition: whenever a knight or priest from another domain who served as an ally to the elves dies in their service, the elves inter their body in a special garment over which prayers and rituals are performed. On the next solstice, the tomb is opened and the garment removed. It now carries the knowledge of the dead hero, ensuring that their wisdom does not pass from the world.

The chasuble has 2 charges. When you make an attack roll, ability check, or domain skill test while wearing this chasuble, you can expend 1 charge to roll 1d8 and add it to the total, possibly changing the outcome. You can wait until after you roll the d20 before deciding to expend the charge, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

The chasuble regains both charges daily at dawn.

## MAETHELGAS

*Weapon (greatsword), legendary (requires attunement)*

You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this greatsword. It has the thrown property with a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 60 feet. When you hit a creature with a ranged attack using this weapon, the target takes an

extra 2d8 necrotic damage. Immediately after the attack, the weapon flies back to your hand.

**Catch the Scent.** When you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack using *Maethelgas*, you can use your reaction to mark the target. You have advantage on all melee weapon attacks against a marked target. The target remains marked until it dies, until you mark a different target, or until you are no longer attuned to *Maethelgas*.

**Empowered Leader.** When a unit you control makes a Power test, *Maethelgas* can consume a soul inside it (see **Curse** below) to grant advantage on the check.

**Hunger Sight.** While attuned to *Maethelgas*, you are aware of the presence and location of creatures within 60 feet of you that aren't constructs, devils, or undead.

**Pact of Power.** *Maethelgas* protects its wielder from all but the greatest of harm. While attuned to the sword, if you take 15 or less damage from an attack or spell, you instead take no damage.

**Ravenous Will.** *Maethelgas* can inspire bloodlust in those who have sworn service to you. During deployment, you can infect one unit you control with brutal fury. While infected in this way, a unit inflicts 1d6 additional casualties on a successful Power test. At the start of each round of battle, you can designate a different unit you control as the target of this feature.

**Curse.** This sword is cursed, and becoming attuned to it extends the curse to you. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the sword, keeping it within reach at all times. You also have disadvantage on attack rolls with weapons other than this one.

Every time *Maethelgas* kills a creature of challenge rating 5 or higher with a soul, the creature's soul is stored in the sword. A creature that dies this way can't be restored to life by any means short of a *wish* spell. When you find *Maethelgas*, it contains 2d6 souls.

Each day at dawn, *Maethelgas* consumes 1d4 souls inside it. If *Maethelgas* has no souls to consume, the sword loses all its magical properties save for its curse, and you must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion

as the sword saps your vitality. When the sword gains a new soul, you lose any levels of exhaustion gained from the curse and the sword regains all its magical properties. Levels of exhaustion accrued from the curse can't be removed by any other means. If you die from this exhaustion, your soul is consumed by *Maethelgas*.

Only a *wish* spell is capable of ending attunement to the sword. Lesser magics can't end attunement or suppress the curse.

## OMEGA TOLL

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement by a creature of true neutral alignment)*

Pharyon of the Court of the Seven Cities carries an artifact with the capacity to end reality, a bell that exudes so much power that even Pharyon himself is loath to use it. When it rings, no one knows the destruction it will wreak ... or what will follow.

A creature of any alignment other than true neutral is unable to attune to the bell, but a creature of any alignment can ring it.

**Epicenter of Time.** The bell is a primordial talisman. If you are a true neutral cleric, druid, paladin, or ranger, you can use it as a spellcasting focus, and you gain a +3 bonus to spell attack rolls and your spell save DC.



**Spells.** While attuned to the bell, you can cast the *time stop* spell at will. Additionally, once per year, you can cast *wish*.

**Random Properties.** The *Omega Toll* has the following random properties:

- 2 minor beneficial properties
- 2 major beneficial properties
- 2 minor detrimental properties
- 2 major detrimental properties

**Ring the Bell.** When the bell is rung, it tolls for 1d4 + 1 rounds. On each round that the bell rings, it casts a different spell, centered on itself. Spells cast by the bell have a spell save DC of 20, and each one continues indefinitely as though being concentrated on. The bell can concentrate on multiple spells at once.

| d4 | Spell                     |
|----|---------------------------|
| 1  | <i>Storm of vengeance</i> |
| 2  | <i>Meteor swarm</i>       |
| 3  | <i>Earthquake</i>         |
| 4  | <i>Fire storm</i>         |

Once the bell ceases ringing, the world as you know it ends. Roll on the following table to decide the fate of existence:

| d6 | Apocalypse  |
|----|---|
| 1  | All creatures in the timescape that were not within 300 feet of the bell when it rang fall into a deep, dreamless sleep, from which they seemingly cannot wake. |
| 2  | All player characters are instantly transported 2,000 years into the future.  |
| 3  | The bell alters the outcome of an ancient battle, shifting the timeline of the characters' world and plunging it into endless war and chaos.                    |
| 4  | The barriers between worlds are obliterated, allowing fey, fiends, and elementals to wreak havoc across the Material Plane.                                     |
| 5  | The gods become mortal.   |
| 6  | The passage of time halts across all worlds for all creatures that were not within 300 feet of the bell when it rang.   |

**Destroying the Bell.** The bell can't be destroyed forever, but its knell can be attacked and quieted, delaying the doom that it heralds. It has AC 20, 10 hit points, and immunity to all damage types except radiant. If struck by a *holy avenger*, the bell instantly breaks. When broken, the bell melts into liquid metal and dissolves, reforming in one of the Seven Cities 1d6 × 100 years later. Casting the *silence* spell on the bell also ceases its ringing, but only if the spell lasts until the bell falls still.

### STAFF OF PROVIDENCE

*Staff, legendary (requires attunement by a cleric, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)*

This staff is carved from stone and topped by a statue of an angel. It can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it and deals an extra 3d6 radiant damage on a hit.



This staff has 15 charges. It regains 1d10 + 5 expended charges daily at midnight. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff bursts into flames then crumbles into ash.

**Spells.** While holding this staff, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC and spellcasting ability modifier: *guiding bolt* (1 charge), *spirit guardians* (3 charges), or *flame strike* (4 charges).

**Destiny Foretold.** Wielding the *staff of providence* allows you to read the tapestry of your destiny and grants insight into how to change the destiny of your opponents. Once per intrigue, you can use a domain bonus action to make a DC 13 Espionage test. On a failed test, your domain's Communications level increases by 1. On a success, your domain's Communications level increases by 2.

### TELLAC ORANIC

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

This green gemstone gleams with sickening radiance. The *Tellac Oranic* lay dormant in the heart of the world until a desperate dwarven king named Zaar Q'or unearthed it. Zaar quickly fell to the stone's corruption and turned its might upon his people. He now wanders the Last City, deathless, a slave to the stone's appetite for souls.



**Hunger Unending.** The *Tellac Oranic* converts the souls of creatures it slays into charges. The *Tellac Oranic*'s charge level equals the total challenge rating of all the creatures whose souls it has consumed. When the *Tellac Oranic* consumes a new soul, add the challenge rating or level of the creature you killed to its charge level. The souls of creatures with a challenge rating of lower than 1 are not great enough to charge the *Tellac Oranic*. If you die while attuned to the *Tellac Oranic*, the item loses all charges.

As the *Tellac Oranic* acquires charges, the attuned wielder gains the following abilities:

**1–25 Charges.** You regain 10 hit points at the start of your turn if you have at least 1 hit point but fewer hit points than half your hit point maximum.

**26–50 Charges.** You can call forth the souls from within the *Tellac Oranic* to serve you. As an action, you can summon 1d6 **will-o'-wisps**, 1d4 **ghosts**, or one **wraith**. The summoned creatures appear in unoccupied spaces you can see within 30 feet of you, share all the languages you know, and are friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the summoned creatures as a group, which has its own turns. They obey any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to them, they defend themselves from hostile creatures, but otherwise take no actions. The undead disappear when they drop to 0 hit points or after 1 hour, whichever comes first. You can't use the *Tellac Oranic* this way again until you finish a long rest.

**51–100 Charges.** While holding the *Tellac Oranic*, you can use an action to emit a deadly pulse. Each creature within 30 feet of you must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. If a target is within 5 feet of you when you use this feature, it makes this saving throw with disadvantage.

**Soul Feast.** While holding the *Tellac Oranic*, you can use an action to make a ranged weapon attack against a creature you can see within 30 feet of you. On a hit, the creature takes 4d6 necrotic damage and its Strength score is reduced

by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a humanoid dies from this attack, two **shadows** controlled by you rise from the corpse.

**Serve in Death.** During battle, all units you control automatically suffer 1 casualty at the end of each activation and gain a +1 bonus to Power and Toughness. When the casualty die of a unit you control reaches 0, its casualty die resets to its original size, its type becomes undead, and it continues to fight until it loses its last casualty again.

**Curse.** The *Tellac Oranic* is cursed and seeks to drain the will of all who possess it. Attuning to the *Tellac Oranic* extends the curse to you. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the gemstone, keeping it on your person at all times.

Each midnight you remain attuned to the *Tellac Oranic*, you must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or reduce your Constitution score by 1. This reduction can't be restored by any means short of a *wish* spell. If your Constitution score is reduced to 0, you become an undead thrall to the gemstone and the GM assumes control of your character. Once you have transformed, there is no way to reverse the condition.

There is no known way to break this curse.

## ZEALCLEAVER

*Weapon (greatsword), legendary (requires attunement)*

Forged from an ancient holy tablet and twisted into a tool of evil, *Zealcleaver* now serves the hate devil Rakat, Baron of Styx and member of the Court of Seven Cities.

The *Tablet of Zeal* was created by Saint Fanw the Ardent, leader of the Holy Order of the Lodestar, a group of knights serving Cavall. When Fanw became the Saint of Faithfulness, she created the tablet and its axioms to guide her order in her absence, and from it the knights drew their incredible power.

But as the cornerstone of their strength, the tablet became their weakness. Its theft by a cult of Sutekh stripped the knights of their power, and the order crumbled as the tablet fell into the hands of the forces of darkness, where it has remained ever since.



The tablet still bears the wisdom of Saint Fanw the Ardent, but its powers have been perverted. No longer does it strengthen the courage of mortals; as a weapon, *Zealcleaver* breaks their spirit instead.

**Using Zealcleaver.** If you are a good-aligned cleric or paladin, attuning to this weapon burns you for 2d8 necrotic damage. The sword can magically change in size to better conform to the grip of its user. *Zealcleaver* is a magic weapon that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it, and *Zealcleaver* always deals maximum damage to paladins.

When you strike a creature with the weapon, you can choose to end one spell or magical effect on the target creature. While attuned to *Zealcleaver*, your eyes glow with burning green light, granting you advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

**Intrigue.** *Zealcleaver* can be used to impart some of the lost power of the Holy Order of the Lodestar to a single unit. Once per intrigue, you can use a domain bonus action to make a DC 12 Lore test to decipher the axioms written on the blade. On a success, one of your units gains the following traits until the end of the next battle fought before the end of the intrigue:

**Forward unto Victory!** This unit automatically succeeds on all Morale and Power tests.

**Driven by Hate!** Rakat's fell energy clings to the blade, baleful and wicked. This unit can't use the Retreat maneuver.

**Curse.** In its corrupted form, the blade boils with Rakat's pernicious influence, bearing a curse laid by the hate devil that affects any non-fiend who attunes to the sword. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the blade, keeping it within reach at all times. If you lose the blade while cursed, you stop at nothing to get it back.

Even if the attunement ends, the curse remains. No spell can remove the curse. With each passing day, your physical appearance becomes more infernal—horns sprout from your head, you grow a barbed tail, and your tongue splits in two, becoming forked. After 666 hours of being cursed, the transformation completes and you become a devilish version of yourself. Other characters may assume you are a fiend native to Hell. These physical changes aren't considered magical in nature and therefore can't be dispelled. Tieflings do not undergo any physical changes when attuned to this weapon.

In addition, you develop a burning hatred for all mortal creatures, seeing them as disgusting insects unaware of their own insignificance. After 666 hours, you gain the following flaw: "All mortals deserve nothing but annihilation, but those who put their faith in other mortals deserve it doubly so."

You can end the curse by restoring *Zealcleaver*.

**Restoring Zealcleaver.** *Zealcleaver* can be restored to its former glory. Using the weapon to kill five named devils from the Court of Seven Cities removes the curse Rakat placed on the blade, returning it to its ancient splendor as an instrument for good.

Whether it remains a blade or transforms back into the *Tablet of Zeal* is up to the GM.

### TABLET OF ZEAL

Though we don't provide the statistics for the *Tablet of Zeal*, it is a holy artifact that should have powers that blind and deal radiant damage to enemies; destroy undead and fiends; and heal and buff good-aligned heroes. It might also bring forth a special unit of your choice!



# New Codices



Because they were popular in *Strongholds & Followers*, we present nine new reality-bending codices. Each codex is an artifact-level item, written when the world was young and magic not yet tamed.

Many codices grant their users incredible power, including the power to raise new units. They should not be looked at as rewards, but rather immense burdens. Threats to the natural order. These tomes are best found locked away in some obscure vault, guarded by a powerful entity who rightly fears what might happen should the codex fall into the wrong hands. Or any hands! Mortals, certainly, can't be trusted with this power.

A high-level NPC might ask the heroes to retrieve one after a powerful enemy has wrested it from the bowels of obscurity. For a time, the heroes can use the power within—but this should always be temporary.

## ENCOUNTERING A CODEX

Each codex grants whoever attunes to it enormous power. Before the players ever encounter a codex in the hands of a formidable enemy or sealed away for protection, you should make sure they have some idea what these books can do. Many of these abilities are dramatic and even over-the-top, but not wholly useful in most adventure scenarios. Even still, it becomes unfair, even unsportsmanlike, to surprise your players by making them the target of one of these abilities without warning them what the codices can do first.

These warnings could be presented as in-game knowledge conferred by an NPC or discovered through the heroes' own research.

*Example: If you attempt to read the mind of a character attuned to the astral codex, your head explodes.*

*No saving throw. In one sense, this is an enormously powerful ability and conveys the severe stakes at hand. But the players should know before they encounter an NPC attuned to the Book of Stars that anyone who wields it has learned the mind mastery technique of the star elves, and what this means. It doesn't need to be specific: "Their minds can't be read. Anyone who attempts it winds up with their brain scrambled... or worse!" When the heroes are forewarned, this alarming ability is much less ridiculous and startling and much more dramatic and foreboding.*

## ATTUNING TO A CODEX

To attune to a codex, the reader must spend a month in uninterrupted study of no less than 8 hours per day, six days per week.

Once attuned, the owner of the codex need not take the book with them. They can leave it in a secure location with no limits to distance, but must refresh their knowledge through 8 hours of uninterrupted study once per month or lose its benefits.

## SACRIFICE

Some of these books require the attuned owner to surrender some of their life essence to satiate the fell powers constrained or described in the texts. Sacrificing requires rolling some number of Hit Dice, losing that many hit points and the Hit Dice immediately, and reducing your hit point maximum by the same amount. While the effect powered by the sacrifice persists, the lost hit points and Hit Dice can't be regained. When the effect ends, you can heal the damage, restore your hit point maximum to normal, and recover the Hit Dice normally.

If sacrificing Hit Dice causes you to drop to 0 hit points, you fall unconscious and all effects you created end. You can't sacrifice more Hit Dice than you have. If you must sacrifice a Hit Die to sustain an effect but you have none, the effect ends.

## NEW CODICES DESCRIPTIONS

The new codices are presented in alphabetical order. If you like these magic items, you can find more in *Strongholds & Followers*.

### ASTRAL CODEX

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

Written by Archasteron Xille Xelviani of the Court of the Electress of the Karnala Catacombs in the Age of Death, the *astral codex* is one of only two reliable sources of information on the astral celestials, the star elves who once served as the hidden hand of Val. For millennia, sages assumed Archasteron Xelviani was an astral celestial, but philosophers in the Age of Enlightenment concluded he or she was a human, one of the Hlan who voluntarily accompanied the dark elves into the World Below, the Dark Under All.

Modern thought from wizards of the Imperial College in Capital holds that the banishment of the astrals created the World Below, though this

opinion has not become widely accepted, cannot be proven, and may never be proven.

The *astral codex* is written in Elvish. A creature that attunes to the *astral codex* and understands its secrets gains the following abilities.

### MASTER OF A FALLEN WORLD

Attuning to the *astral codex* gives you many abilities of the star elves, including their mastery over the World Below. As an action, you can create a gate to or from the World Below, per the *gate* spell. You can travel to a random location within the plane, or a specific location that you name, such as the Palace of Varnal or the gates of Xanaxarite. This feature doesn't allow you to travel into Godblinds.

In addition, once per week, you can use your action to muster a special unit of drow: the Gloaming Fang. The unit remains under your command for 24 hours, then disappears.

### GAZE OF THE STAR ELVES

When you attune to the *astral codex*, your eyes become flickering pools of swirling light and inky darkness. You gain the mind mastery technique of the star elves and can communicate telepathically with creatures you can see within 120 feet of you. As a bonus action, when you gaze upon a creature, you know what their Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores are.

You can cast the *detect thoughts* spell at will. Saving throws made against this spell automatically fail.

*The Gloaming Fang unit card*



You are also considered to be permanently under the effect of the *mind blank* spell, but you can choose to pause any or all of its effects at will. If a creature you can see targets you with a spell or ability that is blocked by this power, you can use a reaction to cause that creature's head to explode. If the creature has no head, wherever its brain is located explodes instead. If the creature has no brain, nothing happens.

## WORMWOOD

As Val's hidden hand, the star elves watched the enemies of the true elves closely, manipulating them when needed with strange alchemy. The codex suggests that the star elves' first misstep was in deploying these elixirs against the adamant elementals.

Once per intrigue, you can use a domain bonus action to make a DC 12 Lore test, replicating an elixir from the *astral codex* on a success. These elixirs allow you to poison and control enemy operatives, creating suggestible double agents, extracting confessions, and derailing operations. On a success, roll a pool of d6s equal to your domain size. Until the end of the intrigue, you can spend a die from the pool to change the outcome of any Espionage test made by you or another domain, by either adding or subtracting the result of the spent die plus your Espionage modifier. You can spend the die after the test is made and the result is known, possibly changing a success into a failure and vice versa, but you must do so before the end of the domain turn.

## VOID BETWEEN THE STARS

The *astral codex* allows you to access the star elves' pocket manifold, known as the void between the stars. Unique among the manifolds of the timescape, the starvoid sequesters knowledge away from the mundane world, removing it from memory.

Up to three objects, creatures, or ideas can be stored within the void between the stars at any time. While something is within the void, it does not exist in the timescape. No one but you remembers anything about it, and all traces of it vanish completely. Creatures in the timescape are not affected by anything stored in the void. For instance, if a lich dies outside the void while its phylactery is stored in it, the undead can't rejuvenate.

Below are some things that could already be hidden in the void between the stars when you first find the codex:

- A creature's true name
- The phylactery of a lich
- Another codex
- The knowledge of a forgotten god
- A cache of rovia, the starmetal
- A lost city
- The tarrasque

If you store the knowledge of the *astral codex* within the void, the void rends itself apart, the codex vanishes from your possession, and you and everything stored inside the void are forever destroyed.

## STARMETAL MASTERY

The *astral codex* is the single greatest repository of knowledge regarding the working of starmetal—also known as rovia—the metal which the star elves brought with them when they were banished. Sometimes, pieces of it still fall from the heavens.

While attuned to the codex, you are proficient with weapons and armor made of starmetal, and you gain the ability to create starmetal items with unique properties. Studying the codex for an extended period of time is the only way to replicate the star elves' methods and access the starmetal's hidden properties, and the GM can decide how many different items the *astral codex* contains. Some ideas are below. Almost any weapon or armor with legendary rarity from the core rules makes an appropriate starmetal item (at the GM's discretion, of course).

Creating a starmetal item requires you to spend 90 days working without interruption with the codex at hand and resting no more than 8 hours per day. You also need access to a supply of starmetal and must pay 50,000 gp to obtain the necessary tools and equipment, which are no longer useful after crafting the item.

**Starmetal Armor.** The codex describes suits of sable black armor made by the star elves, which let them vanish from all senses.

**Starmetal Blades.** Mundane weapons made from starmetal can cleave through solid rock, but those created with the help of the *astral codex* can cleave through any barrier at all, physical or magical.

## IMMINENT BLADE

*Weapon (any sword that deals slashing damage), legendary*

Whenever you attack a creature with this starmetal blade, treat the target's AC as if it were 10 plus the creature's Dexterity modifier. Reactions that improve the target's AC, such as the *shield* spell or a knight's Parry reaction, don't adjust the target's AC against attacks made with the *imminent blade*. When you attack an object with this blade and hit, that object is reduced to 0 hit points.

In addition, you can use this weapon to slice through magical barriers, such as those produced by *forcecage* or *wall of force*. When you attack a magical barrier, make an attack roll against AC 10. On a hit, you create an opening big enough to immediately slip through before it closes up behind you.

## ROVION STEALTH ARMOR

*Armor (plate), legendary (requires attunement)*

Unlike normal plate, this starmetal armor doesn't reduce your speed, regardless of your Strength score, and doesn't impose disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. While wearing this armor, any critical hit against you becomes a normal hit, and you are shielded as though you are wearing an *amulet of proof against detection and location*. In addition, while you are invisible, you can't be detected by powers that normally thwart invisibility, such as *truesight*, *detect thoughts*, *faerie fire*, or *see invisibility*.

## CODEx ADAMANT

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

The Age of Saints lasted only 600 years, but it produced sages to rival the Age of Enlightenment and loremasters to rival the Age of Wonder. One of these—Muhya bint al-Mustakfi, the Hazarite Saint of Dreams—used her Dreamfall ability to push her consciousness back over 12,000 years to the Elemental Age, the age when the dwarves first walked the surface of Orden. In her dreams, she watched the vast and impenetrable home of the steel dwarves, Kalas Mithral, rise and become, to many, the capital of Orden at the time.

She observed the steel dwarves for 30 years at the height of their power, saw their innermost thoughts, tapped into their knowledge. These decades of dreams lasted only one night for her.

When she woke, disoriented from a lifetime spent among the dwarves, she couldn't remember her own language. Her servants and her palace seemed alien to her. Slowly, her memories of the dream started to fade—urgent and desperate, she wrote down everything she learned while the elementals' language was still fresh in her mind, sleeping little, eating less. Her servants feared for her life, but the result of months of fevered writing was the *codex adamant*, the Book of the Adamant Elementals, also known as the Book of Steel, the Mithral Tome, or the Chronicle of Kalas Mithral.

Like veins of ore beneath a towering mountain, ancient knowledge pervades the *codex adamant*. The hammers of long-dead smiths ring out with each turn of the page, reforging the reader with the essence of the steel dwarves. Possessors of this book become stalwart artisans, capable of withstanding the punishing blows of giants and unforgiving hours at the forge. The fruits of their labor are sturdy and bold: masterwork blades which refuse to dull, resilient armor forged from unbreakable adamantine, and loyal armies of metal soldiers. Eventually, however, all possessors of the codex succumb to its



## BRASS MAN

*Medium construct, lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d8 + 16)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX    | CON    | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 16(+3) | 11(+0) | 14(+2) | 11(+0) | 11(+0) | 15(+2) |

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** the languages of its creator

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Magic Absorption.** Creatures the brass man chooses within 20 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects, and spell attacks against those creatures are made with disadvantage.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The brass man makes two attacks with its war pick.

**War Pick.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Self-Destruct.** The brass man erupts in an explosion of scrap and flame. Each creature within 10 feet of the brass man must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This explosion destroys the brass man.

## REACTIONS

**New Target.** When a creature within 20 feet of the brass man is hit with a spell attack or fails a saving throw against a spell that can only target one creature, the brass man can become the target of the spell instead.

greed, joining the elementals in the Legion of Adamant who were, too, slain by their own corruption.

The *codex adamant* is written in Dwarvish. A creature that attunes to the *codex adamant* and understands its secrets gains the following abilities.

## ALLIES ON THE ANVIL

You can use the codex to conjure the materials necessary to build a **brass man**, a magical construct soldier that resembles a clockwork humanoid. To create a brass man, you must spend 8 hours working uninterrupted with the codex guiding you. Once you finish creating a brass man, the construct can speak and understand languages you know, is under your control, and obeys your verbal commands. If you don't issue any, it defends itself from hostile creatures and other sources of danger, but otherwise takes no actions.

With the codex, you can build and command a number of brass men equal to your domain size (minimum of 1). If you currently control

the maximum number of brass men the codex allows, the book can't conjure more materials for you. If you unattune from the codex, the brass men crumble into metallic dust.

## DIAMOND LEGION

Once per week, you can use your action to summon the Diamond Legion, a special unit of constructs. The unit remains under your command for 24 hours, then disappears.

*The Diamond Legion unit card*



## FORGEBORN

The *codex adamant* grants you the following benefits:

- Your Strength, Constitution, and Wisdom scores increase by 4, to a maximum of 24.
- When you are subjected to an effect that would move you against your will, you can use your reaction to not be moved.
- You gain proficiency with jeweler's tools, mason's tools, and smith's tools.
- You can cast the *creation* spell. Once you cast the spell using the codex, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.
- Your hair grows at an unprecedented rate, reaching terminal length 1d4 days after you attune to the codex and after each time you cut it.

## LODESTONE'S GREED

The subconscious temptation of avarice pulls you toward precious mineral deposits, such as adamantine and mithral. Once per intrigue, make a DC 14 Operations test as a domain action. On a success, your Resources level increases by 1, and you gain a bonus to your Resources score equal to your domain size for the remainder of the intrigue.

## SUPERIOR EQUIPMENT

As a reaction to one of your units making a successful Power test, make a DC 13 Command test. On a success, your unit sunders their target unit's equipment, inflicting a -5 penalty to the target's Power and Toughness until the end of the battle. Once

you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish an extended rest.

Additionally, as an action, you can touch the codex to a nonmagical, metal weapon, shield, suit of armor, or tool and turn the metal into adamantine. You can't turn another item into adamantine with the codex for 1 week.

## WITHOUT A SCRATCH

As an action, you can coat your flesh in unbreakable steel, becoming immune to all damage for 1 minute. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

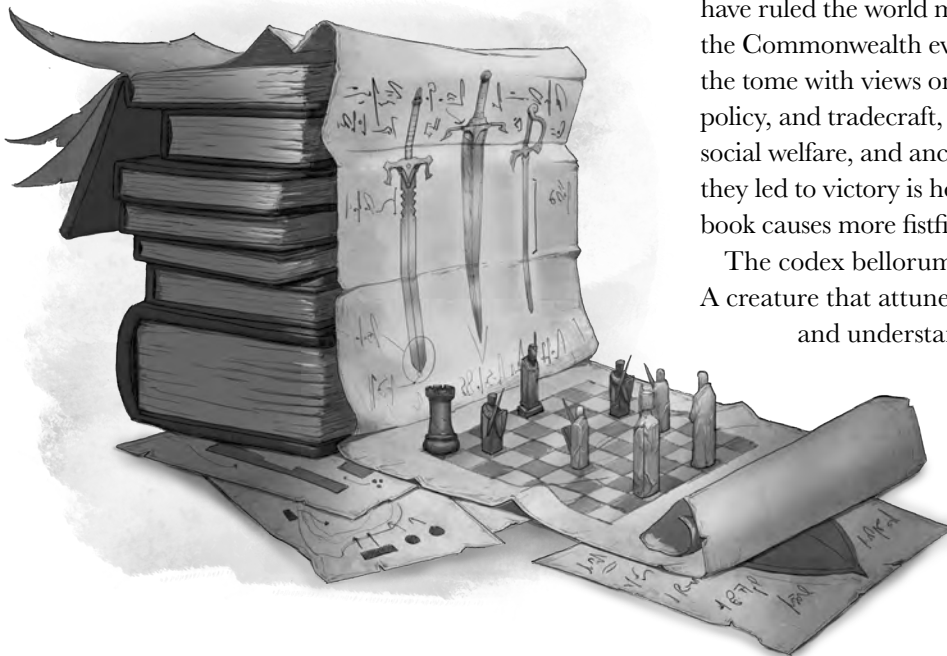
## CODIX BELLORUM

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

For centuries, sages believed that the *codex bellorum* was created by Emperor Cassius I—first of the Five Crusading Emperors—during his pyrrhic campaign against Higara. After suffering a string of crushing losses, Cassius I claimed to have authored a new codex imbued with his observations on the Higaran art of war, and with it he was finally able to defeat the empress, beginning a long chain of events that eventually led to Caelian conquest. No army carrying the *codex bellorum* has been bested since.

But codices are not created from mundane observations. Newly discovered records suggest that Cassius instead merely found the Book of War and passed it off as his own. Other references to the codex imply it was written by a deified figure which must have ruled the world many thousands of years before the Commonwealth even existed. This figure filled the tome with views on war, peace, strategy, foreign policy, and tradecraft, but also ethics, economics, social welfare, and ancient philosophy. Which empire they led to victory is hotly debated, and no other lost book causes more fistfights among historians.

The *codex bellorum* is written in Common. A creature that attunes to the *codex bellorum* and understands its secrets gains the following abilities.





## AVATAR OF WAR

As an action, you can assume the form of the god-like Avatar of War, with steel wings and formidable strength. While in this form, you gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed, proficiency with all weapons and armor, and a +10 bonus to weapon attack rolls. To maintain this form, you must sacrifice 1 Hit Die at the end of each of your turns.

While in this form, your weapon attacks always deal the maximum possible damage, and you are always considered to be under the effect of the *haste* spell. If you fall unconscious while you are the Avatar of War, you revert to your normal form. If you die while you are the Avatar of War, you explode into a shower of magic weapons, dealing 1d12 + 1 slashing damage per Hit Die you sacrificed while in the form to all creatures within 60 feet of you, and the codex disappears, relocating itself elsewhere in the Mundane World.

You revert to your normal form when you use a bonus action to do so or when you have no Hit Dice remaining. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

## FALLING CRIMSON LEAVES

When you successfully make a weapon attack against a creature and the entirety of the space you occupy is at least 5 feet higher in elevation than your target's space, the hit is automatically a critical hit.

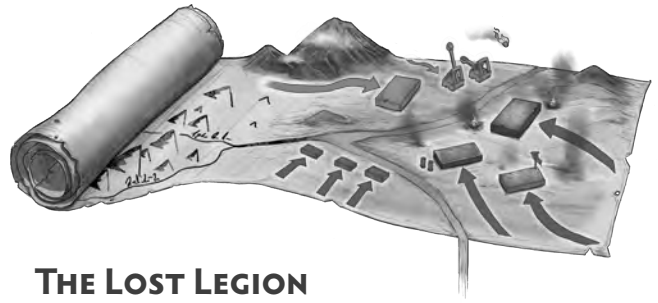
## FLOW OF THE RIVER

Regardless of initiative, you deploy your units any time during deployment. In addition, all of your units gain the following trait:

**False Blossoms.** When an opposed unit fails an Attack test against this unit, the opposed unit becomes misled.

## PATH OF DYING

The true warrior considers themselves already dead. When you are reduced to 0 hit points, roll 1d4. You remain alive for a number of minutes equal to the result before you fall unconscious and begin dying. Until you fall unconscious or regain hit points, you are immune to all damage.



## THE LOST LEGION

Once per week, you can use your action to summon the Lost Legion, a special unit formed of the ghosts of legendary soldiers. The unit remains under your command for 24 hours, then disappears.

## SOVEREIGN COMMANDER

You always begin battle with maximum Communications, and all units under your command have advantage on Attack, Power, and Command tests.

You can command a number of units equal to your proficiency bonus plus three. Additionally, all infantry units under your command gain the following traits:

**Maneuver: Bloody Advance.** As a reaction to succeeding on an Attack test, make a DC 15 Command test. On a success, the damage dealt by this unit's next Power test is doubled. If this attack breaks an opposed unit, you can automatically use the Follow Up maneuver, and any remaining damage is inflicted on any opposed unit that was immediately behind the broken unit.

**Maneuver: Keep Moving.** As an action, this unit can move into any empty space.

*The Lost Legion unit card*



## CODEx CANTICALUS

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

At first glance, the *codex canticalus*—also known as the Book of Song—doesn’t appear to be a tome at all. Instead, the codex is a deep blue music box, dotted with gilded constellations and accompanied with a case of engraved brass cylinders. Placing one such cylinder into the box and winding it releases a transcendent melody into the air, its rhythms rumbling in the heart of its listener. Thus is the wisdom of the codex conferred: not by sight, but by glorious sound.

Authorship of the *codex canticalus* has been attributed to numerous bards, but none have been confirmed. Analysis of the language used in the songs puts it no earlier than the beginning of the Age of Wonder and the end of the Age of Enlightenment, a span of 3,600 years. The book’s cylinders, known as leaves, contain songs sung in almost every language—mostly Elvish and Common, but also Dwarvish and Infernal. Surely these cannot be the work of a singular bard. Higarar musicologists from the Age of Heroes “proved” with statistics that each leaf’s composition reflects a unique musical style. Because this is the prominent view, it is also oft challenged. Perhaps it could be the work of a single bard.

Because no sage has ever beheld every leaf, and some leaves have been recorded as two different song-cycles before later scholarship revealed them to be the same cylinder, the number of cylinders is not known. It’s possible some have been written recently, if we accept the Higarar view that each cylinder is written by a different bard.

If so, perhaps the Book of Song is in some modern obscure genius’ hands even now—a bard of great skill but little note who found the blue music box and beheld within a blank cylinder, there to write their masterwork and preserve a fragment of their magic for all eternity.

A creature that listens to and attunes to the *codex canticalus* and understands its secrets gains the following abilities.

## POLYPHONYLASTS

If you have levels in the bard class, you gain one additional use of Bardic Inspiration. If not, you gain a number of d6 Bardic Inspiration dice equal to half your Charisma modifier rounded down (minimum of 1); you can give these dice to other creatures to use as per the Bardic Inspiration feature in the bard class description in the core rules.

In addition, when you use your bonus action to give a creature a Bardic Inspiration die, you can also choose to sacrifice 1 Hit Die and pour more of yourself into your performance, granting the creature one of the following additional benefits:

- The creature’s attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 17–20.
- The creature’s movement speed is doubled, and the creature is immune to the grappled and restrained conditions.
- As long as the creature isn’t dead, the creature regains a number of hit points equal to your character level at the start of its turn.

The benefit lasts until the Bardic Inspiration die is lost. Once the Bardic Inspiration die is lost, you can heal the sacrificed hit points.

## RUN TO THE HILLS

When a hostile creature that you can see within 60 feet of you drops to 0 hit points, you can use your reaction to conduct a piercing lament that shudders through the fallen’s allies.

Your performance conjures a ghostly wisp of energy from the fallen creature’s body, which then lashes out toward up to three other targets of your choice. Each target must be within 30 feet of the fallen creature, and a creature can’t be targeted more than once.

A target must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, taking 6d8 necrotic damage plus 6d8 psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Once you have used this feature, you can’t do so again until you finish a long rest.

## SOLICITORS, SWORDS, AND MONEY

The melodies of the codex have made your wit sharp, your words eloquent, and your voice ever so charming. You gain proficiency in the Deception and Persuasion skills, and your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses either of those skills. In addition, you have advantage on Diplomacy tests.

## SWORDS OF A THOUSAND MEN

By playing a jaunty tune from the codex, you can inspire your companions even amidst the tense air of a war room. When a fellow officer of your domain makes a domain skill test, you can use your reaction to give them a Bardic Inspiration die. The officer can then immediately roll the Bardic Inspiration die and add the number rolled to the total.

## GOLDEN SLUMBERS

Once per intrigue, you can use a domain action to weave a soothing song over the opposed domain. All denizens of the opposed domain fall into a deep enchanted slumber, allowing your domain to take an additional 1d4 + 1 domain turns. These additional domain turns do not count toward the total number of times your domain has acted during the intrigue.

Your domain can use these additional turns to take domain actions as normal. During these turns, the enchanted realm automatically fails any domain

skill tests, and tests made against the enchanted realm's defenses are made with advantage.

Once these additional turns have been taken, the opposed domain awakes with no recollection of being enchanted, and the intrigue resumes as normal.

## CODEx GRANATINE

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

When the first stone dwarves were carved from the living rock in the fourth age, they were imbued by Ord with knowledge to work and shape the world. This lore served them well, as they learned to forge and smith, carving vast cities from the caverns below the earth. As this first generation of master smiths realized that they would eventually die, they inscribed their knowledge onto a series of stone tablets called the *codex granatine*—while they were able to pass on their secrets to their children, they were the only dwarves born with the inherent knowledge of the magic woven in the core of the world.

A creature can glean a fragment of that original divinity by studying the *codex granatine*, whose stone surfaces carry the first knowledge gifted to dwarves.

The *codex granatine* is written in Dwarvish. A creature that attunes to the *codex granatine* and understands its secrets gains the following abilities.

### BRING FORTH THE CITADEL

Once per intrigue, you can make a DC 14 Lore test as a domain action. On a success, you conjure the Stone Citadel, a castle fortification (see page 121 in the **Warfare** chapter) with 32 hit points, on the battlefield just before deployment during the next battle before the end of the intrigue. On a failed test, the Stone Citadel is not conjured, but you can attempt the test again during the same intrigue.

The Stone Citadel can only exist on one battlefield at a time. When it is conjured, it disappears from the last place it appeared. If it is destroyed, it can be conjured again during a new intrigue.

### CHILD OF STONE

Your natural aging process slows and your life expectancy doubles. You gain darkvision and tremorsense out to a range of 60 feet, you can't



be poisoned, and you are immune to poison damage. In addition, you can cast *meld into stone*, *stone shape*, and *stoneskin* using the codex. Wisdom is your spellcasting modifier for these spells, and once you cast a spell using the codex, you can't cast that spell using the artifact again until you finish a long rest.

## FORGE MASTER

Forged weapons are loath to turn against you. Any creature that attacks you with a metal weapon makes the attack with disadvantage.

## GRANITE LEGION

Once per week, you can use your action to summon the Granite Legion, a special unit of construct warriors. The unit remains under your command for 24 hours, then disappears.

## VOICE OF THE MOUNTAIN

You have studied the foundations of dwarven society and know how to best appeal to their minds and hearts. When you make a Diplomacy test to petition an NPC realm with a dwarven leader for the aid of the realm's special unit in the coming battle, you automatically succeed, regardless of attitude.

## EARTH SENSE

Every stone is one piece of a singular whole. Reading the codex has revealed to you how to communicate with that tremendous force. Once per intrigue, you can use a domain bonus action to awaken the stones, minerals, and gems around the enemy domain. Materials awakened

in this way serve as eyes and ears, reporting critical information back to you. For the remainder of the intrigue, your domain has advantage on Espionage tests.

## SECRETS OF THE SMITH

You can forge weapons and armor at twice the speed and twice the quality. When you or another officer in your domain succeeds on an Operations test to muster new units, you can use a domain reaction to upgrade that unit's equipment by one level (without spending money to do so).

## CODEx MUTABILIS

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

The *codex mutabilis* was first drafted by Zahra al-Atallah, the High Transmutor, Hazarite lord alchemist in the court of Khwaja ud-Din during the second century of the Age of Wonder. It extrapolates on her theory that law and chaos are both largely irrelevant to the true nature of the timescape, which only has one essential quality: change.

Zahra al-Atallah and her students argued that there is no cosmic balance that should be preserved, but neither are events wholly random and unpredictable. This thesis became highly controversial, eventually leading to her exile and the loss of the book.

*"All things are made of the same essential matter, therefore no real obstacles stand in the way of one thing becoming another, or of one person becoming another. In fact, we all change constantly, without even noticing."*

The *codex mutabilis*'s written language changes every 10 years. It is currently written in Infernal. A creature that attunes to the *codex mutabilis* and understands its secrets gains the following abilities.

## HIGH TRANSMUTOR

While you carry the *codex mutabilis*, transmutation spells you cast are treated as if you used a spell slot one level higher to cast them (up to a maximum of 9th level).

Additionally, you can touch a Tiny nonmagical object and change the properties of its materials. It takes 1 minute to change the properties of a

*The Granite Legion unit card*



cubic inch of liquid or solid material, such as turning a copper coin into gold, and 1 hour to change a cubic foot of liquid or solid material, such as turning a portion of a stone wall to dust, or a small cask of water into wine.

### UNTETHERED FORM

While you carry the *codex mutabilis*, you can cast the *shapechange* spell at will. In addition, you can cast the *plane shift* spell to send yourself or other creatures to Primordus, the Sea of Eternal Change. Charisma is your spellcasting modifier for these spells. Once you cast the *plane shift* spell using the codex, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

### ONE SPACE IS THE SAME AS ANY OTHER

When you are targeted with an attack while you carry the *codex mutabilis*, you can use your reaction to teleport up to 300 feet to an unoccupied space you can see, causing the attack to miss.

### CHROMATIC ORGANUM

While you carry the *codex mutabilis*, you can choose one damage type as a bonus action. You gain immunity to this damage type and all spells you cast that deal damage use this damage type instead of their normal type until the start of your next turn.

### THE WHEEL TURNS

If you die while attuned to the *codex mutabilis*, you are automatically subject to the *reincarnate* spell, and your new body awakens somewhere else on your current plane of existence. The *codex mutabilis* is no longer attuned to you and vanishes, reappearing elsewhere in the timescape.

### CATASTROPHE THEORY

As an action, choose one creature you can see within 120 feet of you and sacrifice up to half your maximum Hit Dice. The next time that creature takes damage, roll the sacrificed dice and add the result to the damage taken.

## CODEx ORACULUM

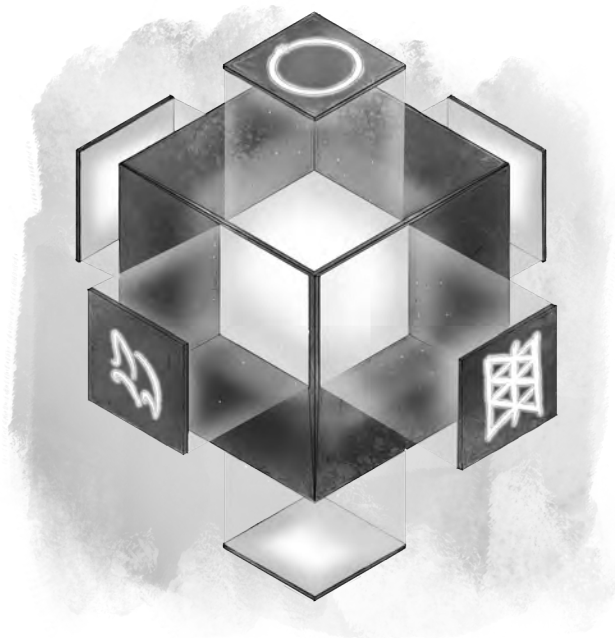
*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

The language in the *codex oraculum* changes when a new creature opens the book, warping and twisting to fit their native tongue. The words “Fate folds as time flows” appear on the inside cover of the tome. Rumors say the author’s name changes every century, but currently the book credits Mirabin Das, Sword and Oracle of the ninth Tonjai Dynasty of the Ganaarājya empire in the first Age of Men. The *codex oraculum* changes the holder’s fate and the fates of those around them.

The book was first uncovered when a wizard accidentally created a dimensional tear while experimenting with magic. He entered the rift and found a world parallel to his own, with minor changes that entirely altered some people’s fates. The wizard found the codex there and brought it back to his world. From that moment on, the wizard possessed a shocking amount of good fortune, as he notes in the tome:

*“The power inside this book allows me to forge a new destiny for myself and others through magic. The moment this tome came into my hands was the moment I became the new author of fate.”*

The *codex oraculum* is written in any tongue. A creature that attunes to the *codex oraculum* and understands its secrets gains the following abilities.



## A TWIST OF FATE

When intrigue begins, you can roll a number of d20s equal to your domain's size and record the results. During the intrigue, you can replace any domain skill test roll made by you, an officer in your domain, or an officer of the enemy domain with one of these foretold rolls. You must choose to do so before the roll, and you can replace a roll in this way only once per domain turn.

## SHIFTED REALITY

Harnessing the magic of possibility and twisting fate, you can expend a spell slot when you fail an ability check, attack roll, saving throw, or domain skill test. Roll 1d4 for each level of the expended slot and add the result to your roll, potentially causing it to succeed.

## DUALITY OF MAGIC

The *codex oraculum* twists the strands of fate around you, making it difficult for enemies to target you with spells. When you are targeted by a spell, you can sacrifice Hit Dice equal to the spell's level as a reaction. You absorb the spell's magic, nullifying its effects against you and any other targets, and immediately cast the same spell, selecting a new target and requiring no components and using the original caster's spellcasting ability modifier, spell save DC, and spell attack bonus.

## SHARED FATE

When you witness the suffering or good fortune of one creature, you can cause another creature to have the same fate. As a reaction to you or a creature you can see within 60 feet of you taking damage, you can cause another creature you can see within 60 feet of you to suffer the same damage. As a reaction to a creature you can see within 60 feet of you regaining hit points, you can cause yourself or another creature you can see within 60 feet of you to regain the same number of hit points. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

## INTERTWINED

The codex has 4 charges. As a bonus action, you can intertwine your fate with the fate of another creature you can see within 30 feet of you for 1

minute. Whenever that creature makes an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw, you can expend 1 charge to change the result of the roll into a 1. If the codex runs out of charges, roll a d100. On a roll of 15 or lower, the codex disappears from your person, your attunement to it ends, and the codex teleports somewhere else. The codex regains 1 charge each day at dawn.

## CODEx SOLARIS

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

On the morning Kalidasa Dhar penned the final lines of the *codex umbra*, Eleodora Kai witnessed her first sunrise. Raised in the Khem-hor temple of the Everburning Sun, Lady Kai watched the sun-priests go about their work and absorbed their knowledge and rituals. She believed, from her earliest memory, that the sun's rays were alive.

She passed through the rituals at a young age to become the Arcanum Extraordinary to the Knights of the Prismatic Fire. After years of service to the order, she began her great work.

Though Lady Kai was a coeval of the empire's vizier, and stories pit the two great sorceresses against each other, the only contemporaneous accounts scholars have indicate they corresponded regularly and may even have worked together.

*"The astute mage Kalidasa claims that there is no correlation between shadow and light, but I must disagree. If true shadow is formed from the dead echoes of a previous world, then true light must be its equal and opposite: raw cosmogonic energy, capable of rending old universes apart and building new ones from the ashes. For what else could have created such powerful remnants of the dark?"*

In the *codex solaris*, which is written in Celestial, Eleodora identifies light as the preeminent force in the universe and claims the sun to be its nexus. A creature that attunes to the *codex solaris* and learns to harness this power gains the following abilities.

## AURORAL RADIANCE

Wherever you go, iridescent bands of light ripple around you. You emit bright light out in a 5-foot radius around you and dim light for an additional 10 feet. You can suppress this effect as a bonus action, but the bands of light return 8 hours later or until you use another bonus action to release them.



Once per turn while the bands of light surround you, you can deal an extra 6d6 radiant damage to a creature you hit with an attack. If the creature is immune to the blinded condition or unable to see you, the creature only takes half as much radiant damage.

## HEALING RADIANCE

As an action, you can make your hand glow with brilliant light and touch one creature. The target regains 10d10 hit points, all conditions and diseases currently affecting the target end, and any levels of exhaustion the target has are removed. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until the next dawn.

## EVENTIDE'S LIGHT

You gain darkvision out to 120 feet, and magical darkness no longer impedes your vision.

Additionally, Power tests made against your domain's units are made with disadvantage, as your luminescent blessing guards the troops against the shadow of death.

## DAWNBREAKER

Once per week, you can use your action to summon the Dawnbreaker, a massive lion-headed battering ram special unit that fires bolts of pure hardened sunbeams. The Dawnbreaker remains under your command for 24 hours, after which the hard-light construct dissipates into the air.

*The Dawnbreaker unit card*



## RED SUN RISES

On the eve of a warfare battle, you mutter the words of an ancient incantation. At dawn, your foes are greeted by a crimson sun on the horizon—an omen of death, haloing your troops as they advance.

When your domain successfully Brings the Siege, you can force your enemy to make one final DC 18 Operations test. On a failed test, all of your enemy's units are disoriented as the ominous presence of the red sun seizes the hearts and minds of their soldiers. On subsequent activations, an affected unit can make a DC 14 Morale test, ending the disoriented effect on itself on a success.

## SOLAR STORM

As an action, you can channel a cataclysmic storm of light through your own body, transforming yourself into a living star. While in this form, you gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed, immunity to radiant damage, and resistance to acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage. To maintain this form, you must sacrifice 1 Hit Die at the end of each of your turns as the storm burns you from the inside out.

Each creature of your choice who begins its turn within 15 feet of you and can see you must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the start of its next turn.

You can end this form as an action. When you do, you can choose to sacrifice any number of Hit Dice you have remaining and roll those dice. Each creature within 30 feet of you must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes radiant damage equal to the total value of the rolled Hit Dice you sacrificed to end Solar Storm and is blinded until the start of its next turn. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't blinded.

If you drop to 0 hit points while in this form, the storm is unleashed from your body in a massive supernova. Each creature within 60 feet of you (not including you) must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw, taking 20d6 radiant damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. If you are still alive after the supernova, you make death saving throws at disadvantage until you regain hit points or are stabilized.

You revert to your normal form when you use a bonus action to do so or when you have no Hit Dice remaining. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

## CODEx TEMPESTATUS

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

When the great sails of the Caelian Empire spread themselves across the world, conquering almost every region in Orden, only two peoples escaped their conquest. One of them, the far northern people of Vanigar, defended their shores with great storms they seemed to summon at will.

For a decade, the empire's ships battered themselves against the storms sent against them. Every fleet sank, their hulls ripped apart, their sails burned by lightning. No research, no oracles could reveal the source of this storm mastery. Eventually, the empire ceased its war against the storms, content with the rest of the world.

Three centuries later, a tome emerged written in the runic language of the Vanir. It was not a treatise like the other codices—it was a book of rituals, each of devastating power. Scholars theorize that the power within this codex granted the Vanirmen the power to withstand the mighty ships of the empire. Though the identity of the author of the Book of Storms remains a mystery.

A creature that attunes to the *codex tempestatus* and understands its secrets gains the following abilities.

### SKY CALLER

The author of the Book of Storms referred to themselves as the Sky Caller. Attuning to the book places you in sympathy with the ebb and flow of cloud and atmosphere, the natural patterns of the air. Consequently, air obeys your thoughts and whims. You gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed. If you already had a flying speed, it is doubled. In addition, you gain immunity to lightning and thunder damage.

### STATIC SHOCK

The codex is constantly charged with static energy, and attuning to it passes this quality onto you.

Invisible electric currents writhe around you. Whenever you hit a target with a melee or spell attack, you deal an extra 3d6 lightning damage. Whenever a creature within 5 feet of you hits you with a melee attack, it takes 3d6 lightning damage.

### CLOUD COMMAND

Attuning to the book opens your awareness to the atmospheric water that permeates even the driest of climates. For you, manipulating the atmosphere is simple. During deployment, you can summon fog or rain to affect the terrain.

### THUNDERCLAP

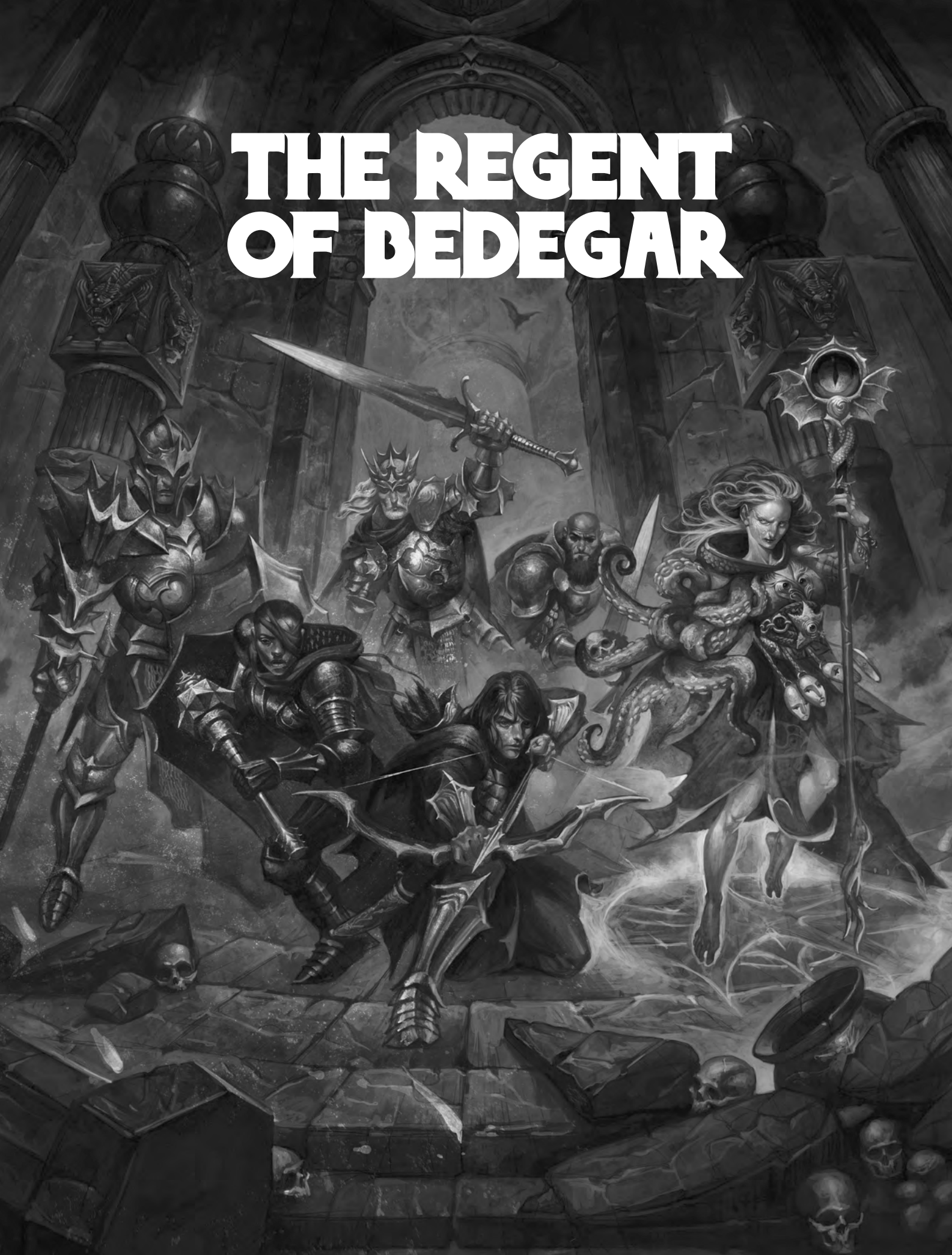
The sound and fury of a storm remind mortals just how powerful nature's wrath is. During your turn in warfare, choose a unit. Each unit adjacent to it must succeed on a DC 15 Morale test or become disoriented.

### GALEFORCE WINDS

The winds are yours to command, and you know how to twist them to keep intruders from the sky. Once per battle, you can use an action to conjure violent winds. When you do so, all opposed aerial units suffer 1d6 casualties.



# THE REGENT OF BEDEGAR





# Introduction



*The Regent of Bedegar* is an adventure for the fifth edition of the world's first roleplaying game, designed for five 7th-level characters. This is the sequel to *The Siege of Castle Rend*, the adventure in *Strongholds & Followers*. But if you haven't run that adventure, that's okay (though we think it's really fun). We include everything you need to know here.

The point of this game is, of course, to have a great time telling memorable tales with your friends. This adventure aims to facilitate that, using the rules of *Kingdoms & Warfare* to tell an epic tale where an enemy army marches against the heroes, and they rise to defend the town under their protection. In order to prevail, the heroes must negotiate alliances, outwit knights and necromancers, and even defeat a dragon—the stuff of legends!

## SAFETY TOOLS

While most of this adventure doesn't deviate from the normal high fantasy people expect to experience while playing the game, safety tools are an important part of any RPG experience. The best tools help your group establish boundaries, keep the game fun for everyone, and provide guidance for tackling edgier topics.

We recommend having a conversation with your group before playing this adventure to establish lines (topics that your story won't even touch on because a player requests it) and veils (softer limits that players are ok with touching on in game, provided they happen "off-camera" and without a lot of detail). You should also have a way for any player to request a scene be stopped immediately and the story move on—or even be rewound—without question.

There are many free RPG safety tools that you can find online with a quick search. Pick the tools that work best for your group.

To make your run of this adventure legendary, spend some time reading these first sections. We review (or introduce you to) the story so far. We then go over the intrigue that drives this adventure before the awesome final confrontation.

## THE STORY SO FAR

This adventure takes place in the far-northern wilderness Duchy of Urand, a large region that holds three distant baronies (Tor, Dalrath, and Bedegar) with many perilous lands between them. Most of this adventure takes place in the Barony of Bedegar.

In *The Siege of Castle Rend*, the characters rescued young Edmund Bedegar (heir to the throne), cleared out a ruined castle in Forest Rend, and claimed it as their own. The local tyrant, Lord Saxton, saw this as a challenge to his power. Saxton sent one of his lieutenants and a small force to clear out the castle, but the heroes prevailed.

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

In this adventure, Lord Saxton gathers an army to lay waste to the heroes, their castle, and the town the castle protects. The text is divided into six main sections, as follows.

## SETTING UP

The adventure begins with the heroes formalizing their bond by forming an organization. The characters already have a villainous realm who wants them dead! This section also presents a few important NPC relationships and reviews the setting elements with your players' characters.

## PART 1: TROUBLE COMES TO REND

In the first encounter, the heroes meet a spy who informs them that Lord Saxton is raising an army to march on their fortress. In five weeks, the full might of Saxton's forces will arrive to destroy Castle Rend!

After repelling a small contingent sent to probe their defenses, the characters chart their course. They learn of the surrounding realms and powerful entities that could serve as allies or foes and decide the order in which they want to approach them.

## PART 2: ADVENTURING IN NPC REALMS

The heroes gather their defenses, journey across the duchy seeking allies, and undermine Lord Saxton. This section outlines the rules for the adventure's intrigue, a conflict between two domains: the heroes' organization and Lord Saxton's despotic regime. The conflict takes five weeks, and the players take one domain turn per week. Between each domain turn, the characters can travel to different NPC realms and recruit allies—or weaken their foes—before the final confrontation.

## INTERLUDES: HEROES RETURN

When the heroes return to their castle between quests in part 2, you can run optional interludes where they deal with the everyday pressures of running an organization. The way they respond to these scenes may provide benefits they can use during domain turns.

This section also contains an optional battle you can run to give the characters more practice with the warfare rules—and wear down their mighty army before the final confrontation with Lord Saxton.

## PART 3: BATTLE FOR GRAVESFORD

Once all domain turns have concluded, Lord Saxton arrives. The heroes likely expect an attack on Castle Rend—but they may be in for a gut-wrenching surprise! Lord Saxton attacks Gravesford to demoralize the characters' troops and force them to leave the defenses of the castle.

The final confrontation utilizes this book's warfare rules. While the heroes directly fight Lord Saxton and his lieutenants, the warfare rules reflect the larger battle fought by Saxton's troops and the heroes' army. This climactic encounter concludes the adventure, determining whether Lord Saxton is defeated once and for all.

## APPENDIX: THREATS

The appendix presents statistics for creatures the heroes may encounter during their adventure that aren't included in the core rules.

## MAJOR PLAYERS

In this adventure, the heroes must undermine their foes while winning allies to their cause. This section summarizes the key figures and factions in this adventure, and provides statistics for the enemy and NPC realms they will encounter. Statistics for individual creatures, other than those available in the core rules, are presented in the appendix.

Many of the domains are willing to join the player characters' side and lend troops to their army, provided the characters or their organization can do something in return. The necromancer has already thrown her lot in with Lord Saxton, but the heroes can cut off her support—probably with a sword or an axe.

## LORD EDMUND

Thirteen-year-old Edmund Bedegar is the lord of Castle Rend and the last remaining heir to the throne of Bedegar. His family was murdered by Saxton (who used the White Tusk Orcs to carry out his dirty deed). While young, he is capable and a courageous up-and-coming master of politics. Though the White Tusk Orcs held Edmund captive in *Siege*, he has forgiven them, focusing his desire for revenge upon Lord Saxton.

### IF SIEGE TURNED OUT DIFFERENTLY

If you ran *Siege*, it's possible that some events turned out in unexpected ways. Feel free to adapt this adventure to the events in your campaign.

For example, the White Tusk Orcs might be harder to win over if they were treated like enemies in the first adventure. If Sir Pelliton was victorious, you could decide Gravesford is the base of operations for the heroes. If Edmund was killed, Saxton still wishes to eliminate Castle Rend and those who know he murdered the Bedegar line. Make the story your own!



Whether you use Edmund in this adventure is up to you. Edmund defers to the characters, naming them to his council and trusting them to run the castle. He can be useful, acting as your voice to offer suggestions when the players need help making decisions. Players may also enjoy taking Edmund under their wing and working to defeat Saxton and restore the rightful heir. You can also have Edmund play more of a background role or remove him entirely and just focus on the characters.

## CITIZENS OF GRAVESFORD

The nearby town of Gravesford welcomes the protection offered by the heroes and Castle Rend. You may wish to read over the town's description in *Siege* and familiarize yourself with its inhabitants (but you don't have to). The heroes are expected to develop relationships with the town's inhabitants as they begin to rule Castle Rend. Yes, this all matters in the end.

## SAXTON'S REGIME

Lord Saxton fixed his gaze on Castle Rend when the heroes took it from his grasp. Their occupation of the castle and protection of Gravesford threatens his rule. Saxton believes that the longer the

characters fly their banner over Forest Rend, the more people of Bedegar think joining their little rebellion is a good idea. An example must be made.

Lord Saxton runs a size 2 despotic regime (see the villainous realm's stat block below).

During intrigue, Saxton's officers likely focus on the following tasks. You are free to adjust this strategy based on the actions the characters take with their organization and your familiarity with the system.

- Lord Saxton takes the regime's first domain turn (in the **Charting a Course** section) and attempts to muster the Crimson Guard special unit.
- On subsequent turns, regime officers focus both on building Resources levels to get the benefit of the Readiness is All feature, and using Operations to muster more units for Saxton's army. Once the regime's Resources defense level is 2, its officers focus on building Communications and Resolve levels.
- If the characters' organization gains one or more levels of Communications, a regime officer uses the Death to Spies action.
- If the characters' organization raises any levies, a regime officer uses Work the Prisoners to the Bone.







- The regime does not spend much time trying to recruit special units from NPC realms. Before intrigue begins, Caliga Lifebane, the necromancer who runs an undead dominion, already promised Saxton the Grim Front special unit, which the regime receives unless the characters defeat the necromancer.

## THE CLOCK

**Realm:** Underworld Syndicate (Thieves' Guild)

**Size:** 1

**Attitude:** Friendly (can't be petitioned for aid until Zola Honeycut is freed)

**Special Unit:** The Crew

Agents of the Clock thieves' guild operate everywhere in Bedegar, but they've long made their headquarters in Bedegar City, now the seat of Lord Saxton's power. After seizing power, Saxton cracked down hard on the Clock, raiding their safehouses and imprisoning Zola Honeycut, a prominent leader in the organization. But the Clock doesn't break so easily, and they're ready to hit back against Saxton.

The Clock is friendly to the heroes primarily because Saxton seeks to exterminate them so he can control the law and crime alike. The characters can recruit the Clock's special unit, the Crew, but only if they first help the Crew's leader, Zola, break out of prison first (see **Alliance: The Clock** on page 252).

### LORD SAXTON'S DESPOTIC REGIME

*Size 2 villainous realm (d6 Power die)*

#### Skills

**Diplomacy:** +0

**Espionage:** +3

**Lore:** +2

**Operations:** +4

#### Defenses

**Communications:** 12

**Resolve:** 15

**Resources:** 12

### POWERS

Lord Saxton gets the following domain powers.

**Make an Example.** As an action, the leader takes any number of power dice from their domain's pool. If the total of the dice is equal to or greater than the remaining hit points of one of the domain's lieutenant's, the leader executes the lieutenant. Each of the domain's remaining lieutenants can then immediately use a reaction to make one weapon attack or cast a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action.

**My Life For Yours.** When the leader is hit by a melee attack, they can take one power die from their domain's pool and cause a lieutenant within 5 feet of them to use a reaction to become the target of the attack instead. The attack's damage is reduced by the number on the power die. As part of the reaction, the lieutenant can then make a melee weapon attack against the triggering attacker.

### FEATURES

**The Crimson Guard (Special Unit).** As a domain action, an officer makes a DC 13 Operations test. On a success, the despotic regime musters the Crimson Guard, a special unit of loyal soldiers who show no mercy to enemies.

**Death to Spies.** As a domain reaction when an opposed domain makes an Espionage test, an officer makes an Operations test against the opposed domain's Communications. On a success, the opposed domain's Communications level decreases by 1.

**Readiness is All.** If the despotic regime's Resources level is 2 or higher at the start of a battle, the level of another defense of the officer's choice increases by 1.

**Work the Prisoners to the Bone.** Once per intrigue as a domain bonus action, an officer can make an Operations test against an opposed domain's Resources. On a success, the opposed domain immediately loses a number of levies equal to the despotic regime's domain size (chosen by whoever controls the opposed domain), and the despotic regime's Resources level increases by 1. If the opposed domain has no levies, it instead loses one unit, and the despotic regime's Resources level increases by 1.

## THE ORCHID COURT

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**Realm:** Fey Court

**Size:** 1

**Attitude:** Suspicious (DC 15 Diplomacy test to petition for aid)

**Special Unit:** Elven Thorns

Long ago, the elves of the Orchid Court ruled most of Bedegar, but a war with humans pushed them into a small forest on the region's northern border. Now the elves guard the Wode of the Orchid Court, the last piece of their home, with fierce determination. Their past makes them suspicious of outsiders, but the Orchid Court accepts sincere helping hands in times of need—and they always repay kindnesses.

The Orchid Court can muster the Elven Thorns, a special group of archers. The characters can recruit the Elven Thorns with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy test made as a domain action, or they can visit the Orchid Court themselves and battle a green dragon for the elves. Alternatively, if the characters visit the Orchid Court and betray the elves, they can gain the dragon as a special unit.

## THE ELGENWIGHTS

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**Realm:** Nature Pact (Druid Circle)

**Size:** 1

**Attitude:** Suspicious (DC 15 Diplomacy test to petition for aid, but they must be found first)

**Special Unit:** Swamp Mother

Elgenwights have the torso, head, and arms of a lithe human, and the horns and four legs of a deer. These nature-loving creatures live in isolation in the Elgenwode, where they commune with nature, create art, and hide from the rest of the world. Respectful visitors who find the Elgenmoot, the elgenwight's secret meeting place in the forest, are greeted with caution, curiosity, and kindness—provided they understand what the inscrutable deer-folk are saying.

The elgenwights can summon the Swamp Mother special unit, a massive shambling mound. To treat with the elgenwights, the characters must first find them, either by making a successful DC 13 Espionage or Lore test as a domain action, or by finding Salar Bearmantle (page 266). Once the elgenwights are found, getting the NPC realm to lend the Swamp Mother to the characters'

organization requires either a successful DC 15 Diplomacy test made as a domain action or a personal visit from the characters themselves.

## THE WHITE TUSK

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**Realm:** Orc Clan

**Size:** 1

**Attitude:** Depends on the outcome of *Siege* (see below)

**Special Unit:** The Unbreakable

If you played *Siege*, the characters would already know that the White Tusk Orcs roam Forest Rend. The orcs hunt the bounty of the forest, hate Lord Saxton for trying to manipulate them, and generally keep to themselves.

The White Tusk's attitude toward the characters' organization is friendly if the orcs and characters left on good terms in *Siege*. If the characters' prior negotiations with the White Tusk ended in violence, the orcs are hostile toward the characters. The White Tusk can muster the Unbreakable, a special unit of tough orc warriors. The characters can recruit this unit with a successful Diplomacy test made as a domain action, or by visiting the orcs and negotiating in person. The DC for the Diplomacy test is based on the White Tusk's attitude toward the characters' organization, 10 for friendly and 18 for hostile.

## DALRATH

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**Realm:** Noble Court (Court of War)

**Size:** 2

**Attitude:** Neutral (DC 13 Diplomacy test to petition for aid)

**Special Unit:** The Hounds of Dalrath

Lord Kenway's nation of Dalrath is north of Bedegar. Always at war with neighboring elves and goblinoids, Dalrath's leader and people are exhausted, but they continue to fight and stand strong. Travel to Dalrath from Bedegar is unlikely due to the war-torn mountains that lie between, but the characters can still use magic to contact Kenway.

Instead of the Lancers special unit, Dalrath can muster the Hounds of Dalrath, a unit of magical canines. At first, Lord Kenway of Dalrath has no interest in allying with the characters, as his domain

has too many battles they must win at home. To convince Kenway to lend out his hounds, the characters must find information in **Sabotage: The Star Chamber** (page 277) that proves Lord Saxton plans to conquer Dalrath after Bedegar.

## THE NECROMANCER

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**Realm:** Undead Dominion

**Size:** 1

**Attitude:** Hostile (DC 18 Diplomacy test to petition for aid)

**Special Unit:** Grim Front

After Lord Kenway exiled Caliga Lifebane from Dalrath for practicing necromancy, she came to Bedegar and settled into an old tower overlooking the village of Mistview. She killed the poor farmers there and made their corpses her army.

When Saxton's knights came to conscript Mistview's people into service, they found an undead horde waiting for them. Caliga cut a deal with the usurper: the dead people of Mistview would join his army, provided she could continue her practice of necromancy.

Caliga has already promised her special unit, the Grim Front, to Lord Saxton. The characters can stop Caliga from lending Saxton aid by storming her tower in **Sabotage: The Necromancer** (page 272). An ambitious and lucky group of characters could also try to convince Caliga that lending Saxton aid is a bad idea with a series of Diplomacy tests to adjust the NPC realm's attitude made as domain actions; however, since the heroes only get one action per turn, they likely won't want to focus on this during intrigue.



# Setting Up



efore beginning part 1 of this adventure, review with the players what Castle Rend is like, and remind them (if necessary) of the lay of the land. After ensuring everyone is familiar with the barony and

its inhabitants, the players select a heroic organization for their characters.

## GEOGRAPHY

Share the **Barony of Bedegar** map (page 247) with the players and review the following elements:

- Castle Rend is located in Forest Rend, a dangerous and wild place.
- The castle protects the nearby town of Gravesford.
- Castle Rend is part of the Barony of Bedegar, which is currently ruled by the usurper Lord Saxton.
- Lord Saxton resides within the massive keep in Bedegar.

### USING STRONGHOLDS & FOLLOWERS

While not required, you can add the rules from *Strongholds & Followers* into this adventure. The type of stronghold Castle Rend has become (whether a keep or a castle with a keep, temple, and tower) can impact the adventure. Followers could take part in council meetings, be given tasks, or accompany the heroes as part of their missions. Similarly, class feature improvements can give the characters another way to shine. Note that the various domains in the adventure aren't part of the heroes' demesne. However, you could create an interesting challenge by giving the Star Chamber or necromancer some demesne effects or stronghold actions. Use this to bring characters to the edge of their seat and give them an "Aha!" moment, but don't overwhelm them with it.

## CASTLE REND

If you played through the previous adventure and used the *Strongholds & Followers* rules, Castle Rend likely functions as either a 3rd-level keep or a 1st-level castle for the characters. Review with the players what features they chose.

Even if you didn't play through *Siege*, you may use those rules to establish Castle Rend and make full use of its capabilities in this adventure. However, those rules aren't required—our default assumption is that you are solely using the *Kingdoms & Warfare* rules. See the **Using Strongholds & Followers** sidebar if you wish to also use its rules.

Ask the players how they've fixed up Castle Rend since moving in. If they need ideas, you can suggest restoring outer walls, rebuilding the fallen towers, and reconsecrating the temple. The characters muster four Tier I units of soldiers who defend the castle when they found their organization. Finally, the people of the town of Gravesford welcome Castle Rend protecting them and agree to pay taxes and provide troops as part of a levy.

Encourage the players to make the place their own and ask about the changes they have made. Which rooms have they claimed? Where do they spend their time? What decorations have they added? How have they personalized the castle? What are the names of various important NPCs, such as the chief steward of the keep, the head of their troops, the keeper of records and lore, and even the chef? Make notes (you can use the names when the council meets) and weave some of these details into the intrigue.

## GRAVESFORD

The people of Gravesford look to the heroes to protect them, despising Saxton and fearing what he would do if the heroes weren't present. The players know that Gravesford depends on their characters—and as GM, you also know that Gravesford

and its inhabitants are the stakes in this adventure! The heroes are familiar with the town's major locations and are expected to continue developing relationships with the NPCs in town. Reviewing the list of NPCs and locations from *Siege* before play begins is not necessary, but helps make the characters' trips into town more significant.

## PINNA'S WARES

Pinna, a young human wizard apprentice, was kidnapped by the White Tusk Orcs in *Siege* and presumably saved by the heroes (though the orcs treated her fairly). She is back in town, and visits the heroes with replenished stock whenever they come back to town between domain turns, selling 1d4 *potions of healing* (50 gp), a *potion of greater healing* (200 gp), a *potion of animal friendship* (250 gp), and a *potion of resistance to poison* (300 gp).

## SELECTING AN ORGANIZATION

The players should review the **Heroic Organizations** section of this book and select one. This is an excellent reason to have an initial session zero where you provide the backstory, the players introduce their characters, and then the players select their organization.

The players are the officers of their organization. There are many agents working for them, though these are nameless, faceless NPCs until the narrative pushes one of them to the fore.

After the characters select an organization to found, provide the players with the appropriate organization party sheet so they can pass it around and spend development points. Have the players choose titles, then review how intrigue works. Don't forget to have the players select their starting army of four Tier I units of their choice—they're going to need them!

### PART 1:

# Trouble Comes to Rend



In part 1 of this adventure, the heroes learn that Lord Saxton is raising an army to sack their castle. They must defend themselves against a preliminary attack, then make plans to defeat

Saxton once and for all.

## OWLBEARS ATTACK

The adventure begins as the characters travel through Forest Rend looking for an old ally with an important message. Intending to warn the heroes of Lord Saxton's impending attack, the secretive Willoughby Twobuckle (halfling **spy**, he/him) summoned the characters to an urgent meeting at their castle—but now he's late to his own meeting.

The characters know Willoughby's not the type to be late, so his absence is cause for worry. They know him as an informant, rogue, and a Cog (agent) of the Clock, and while he's periodically seen in town, he doesn't seem to reside there. In *Siege*, it was Willoughby who warned the heroes of an impending attack, and from the tone of his missive, today's situation is similarly dire. Knowing he's not the type to be late, the characters head into the dangerous forest to find the halfling, and soon discover him—pursued by three owlbears.

The amber rays of the autumn sun filter through the canopy as you weave through the massive gnarled trees of Forest Rend. You are headed through the dangerous wilds to find the secretive spy, Willoughby Twobuckle. The halfling provided valuable information in the past, and has again

promised to deliver “something big.” The halfling was supposed to meet you at the castle, but he’s late. That could mean he found trouble in the wild forest, so you went to find him.

You follow a game trail into a clearing where several large trees were felled by a storm. That’s when the halfling tumbles past you.

“Hey, are these your owlbears?! ‘Cause they’re trying to kill me and that would upset a lot of people. Mostly me.”

Two brown-feathered owlbears rush into the clearing, their growls and hoots echoing across the forest. A moment later, a third snarling owlbear limps into view, a crossbow bolt protruding from its haunch.

After sharing the read-aloud text above, you can either run this fight as a traditional combat encounter or make it an introductory montage. Regardless of which you do, proceed to **Willoughby’s Warning** once you are done.

If you choose to do a cinematic montage, ask the players to imagine this is the opening of an ’80s-style television show. What awesome thing is each character doing to defeat the owlbears and save the halfling? Go around the table and have one player at a time describe their character’s cinematic moment. Award each character inspiration after their description. This is a fun way to do character introductions and kick off the adventure.

If you choose a combat encounter, this is meant to be an easy fight, though owlbears are classic monsters and their multiple attacks pack a punch. There are three giant **owlbears**, one of which was visibly wounded by Willoughby’s crossbow and has only 35 hit points remaining. Willoughby uses the statistics of a **spy** with 40 hit points; he contributes to the fight while using his Cunning Action to stay out of harm’s way. The owlbears initially go after the halfling, but are easily distracted by anyone who engages them. Each owlbear retreats when reduced below 15 hit points.

## VISION AND LIGHT

It is a late summer day, and pockets of dim light can be found around the clearing and near the logs. There are many places for Willoughby and others to hide. The owlbears remain out in the open.

## TERRAIN

Two 5-foot-wide tree trunks have fallen, one across the other. The trunks are difficult terrain, but characters atop them can perform feats of derring-do, such as jumping onto an owlbear. With a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (no action required), such a courageous act gives the character advantage on their next melee attack. If a character fails the check, however, they have disadvantage on their next attack roll.

## WILLOUGHBY’S WARNING

Once the combat or cinematic scene has concluded, Willoughby addresses the characters. He has dire news.



Willoughby runs a hand through his grease-slicked hair. "Thanks. This is why I hate forests. Anyway, about your, uh..." He waves his hand in the direction of the castle. "Castle or whatever."

"Saxton's kinda pissy about the whole thing. In fact, do you folks have an army? Like a... like a big army? 'Cause Saxton does and he's DYING to use it. He figures you folks are basically ratcatchers who'll split as soon as he shows up. In fact, reason I'm outta breath is 'cause a small group of soldiers chased me here! They're coming to test your defenses. Then just as I lost them, I met these friendly owlbears..."

"More on Saxton once we've defended your castle and we're inside and away from all owlbears... and regular bears too."

Willoughby responds to the characters' questions in his roundabout clipped speech as they head back to Castle Rend. The Clock's operation in Bedegar picked up the information that Saxton is planning this small attack to gather information for a bigger assault.

When they return to the castle, proceed with **Saxton's Test**.

## A GIFT FROM WILLOUGHBY

As the heroes journey back to Castle Rend with Willoughby, the halfling presents them with a *diplomat's pouch*. He has one of his own, and carries a third to present to Edmund (or another NPC staying at Castle Rend). This item allows the sending of letters to and from Castle Rend, so the characters can check in with the castle's NPCs and receive guidance and give directives to their organization while adventuring. Willoughby tells the characters to consider the pouch "an early reward" for a favor he needs getting a friend out of jail... but that discussion can wait!

## SAXTON'S TEST

When the characters get back to Castle Rend, there isn't a moment to lose. Alarms are raised as Saxton's scout forces attack the characters' army. Give your players the following instructions:



### DIPLOMAT'S POUCH

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

When a letter is placed in this pouch, addressed to someone who owns another *diplomat's pouch*, the recipient listed in the letter immediately finds a copy of it in their pouch. A letter can be listed to multiple recipients with a *diplomat's pouch*.

It's time for our first warfare combat of the adventure! The four Tier I units you selected when you created your organization are under attack. Saxton sent two Human Infantry units and one Human Artillery (Longbow) unit to attack them. Since we're learning the basics, we'll keep it simple. We won't be using martial advantages or special terrain for the battle.

The battle will take place somewhere in Forest Rend! We'll find out exactly where after we roll to see who brings the siege. If you win, your forces can fight from the safety of Castle Rend. But if Saxton's forces win, his soldiers ambush yours during a training exercise in a clearing.

The characters should be able to fend off Saxton's units with their starting units—this battle is meant



to simply teach them the basics of the warfare system. For this battle, don't use martial advantages or special terrain. It uses the standard battlefield, two sides each, 4 rows of 5 columns to a side. Have each character control one unit; if there are more units in the heroes' army than there are characters, the characters may control two units each.

Saxton's forces consist of the following units:

- Two Human Infantry
- One Human Artillery (Longbow)

If the characters win *Bringing the Siege* (see page 94 in the **Warfare** chapter), they can choose to fight from Castle Rend, which gives them a castle fortification (page 121) to place on their side of the battlefield. If Saxton's forces win, his forces choose to catch the heroes' army while they are practicing drills in a large forest clearing and there are no fortifications on the field.

Saxton deploys his infantry in his vanguard and his archers in his center. The tactics here are simple: do as much damage as possible. The infantry and archers focus their attacks on one unit (or the castle) before moving on the next. This is a test of their defenses and training to see how well they handle a small assault.

This battle should be brief, with Saxton's forces outnumbered by the heroes.

## REINFORCEMENTS

If there are more characters than the units in your army, for each character without a unit to control, one unit of Human Peasants from *Gravesford* arrives at the start of the battle to support the heroes. These peasants saw Saxton's army enter *Forest Rend* and decided to gather their weapons and help defend the castle. If Saxton's forces get lucky and appear to be winning the battle, you could also have one or more units of Human Peasants arrive to support the characters.

If the characters' reinforced army starts with at least double the point value of Saxton's forces, add another unit of Human Infantry to Saxton's army.

## IF SAXTON WINS

Even if Saxton wins his battle against the heroes' army, his forces are not enough to tear down the castle. His forces retreat after a victory, confident they've done serious damage and sure they can take the castle when they return with a larger force.

## CHARTING A COURSE

Regardless of the battle's outcome, the surviving defenders make their way back to the castle—only to learn that this attack is just the beginning. Lord Saxton's on the move, and it'll take careful strategy to subvert his plans and ensure the castle remains safe.

## INTRIGUE BEGINS!

Lord Saxton controls a size 2 despotic regime that can act during all six domain turns of this intrigue, and the intrigue starts now! Since the characters control a smaller size 1 organization, they can only act during the last five domain turns of the intrigue—these domain turns will be taken during part 2, **Adventuring in NPC Realms**.

Because Saxton initiated the intrigue, he gets to take and resolve his extra action before the heroes take their first action. This gives the players something to react to at the very start of their first domain turn, which they'll take after the first week of adventuring in part 2. See **Major Players** in this adventure's introduction (page 232) for more information about Lord Saxton's intrigue tactics and his domain's stat block. See **Domains & Intrigue** on page 8 for intrigue rules.

Saxton's first action is to attempt to raise the *Crimson Guard*, a special unit that only the despotic regime has access to.

If Saxton successfully raises the *Crimson Guard*, read the following:

As your weary soldiers return to Castle Rend after the battle with Saxton's army, Willoughby looks at your sorry force, clicking his tongue. "That was just a scout group. Testing the defenses, they were. More will come. A whole lot more. Saxton doesn't like an even fight. The Clock is—"

Before he can finish, one of your scouts rides breathless to the castle steps. As she dismounts, she says, "Forgive the interruption. I come with news from the city of Bedegar. Saxton raised the Crimson Guard. These elite veterans are merciless and plan to march with his army upon Castle Rend!"

If Saxton is unsuccessful in raising the Crimson Guard, read the following:

As your weary soldiers return to Castle Rend after the battle with Saxton's army, Willoughby looks at your sorry force, clicking his tongue. "That was just a scout group. Testing the defenses, they were. More will come. A whole lot more. Saxton doesn't like an even fight. The Clock is—"

Before he can finish, one of your scouts rides breathless to the castle steps. As she dismounts, she says, "Forgive the interruption. I come with news from the city of Bedegar. We fear that Saxton has sent out riders to raise the merciless Crimson Guard. Our informants believe he's thus far been unsuccessful—but given time, he'll assemble all of these elite veterans and march upon Castle Rend!"

After resolving Saxton's domain turn, the heroes must review their options and decide how to proceed. This is a good time for the characters to gather in the great hall with Lord Edmund, Willoughby, and any other NPCs they wish to have present. Pinna could be visiting the castle as the heroes return with Willoughby and join the meeting if the characters desire.

## WE NEED AN ARMY

Willoughby nods approvingly at the group you've gathered to plan the castle's defense.

"As I was saying before more bad news rode in, the Clock is always ticking. We know for a fact that he's put together a big army of battle-hardened nasties. Figure you got about five weeks before he marches like seven companies down here himself and pulls this place down around your ears ...

The Clock can help you, but only if you first help one of ours break out of prison."

The halfling pauses dramatically, then adds, "But the Clock won't be enough. You gotta raise an army to defend this place. A big one. Let's make some allies."

Allow the characters to drive the conversation, with Edmund and other NPCs helping to keep the conversation moving and presenting resources and options.

The characters should recognize (remind the players if necessary) that fighting Saxton without first raising an army is an almost certain failure. All advisors agree—Lord Saxton is a fearsome combatant, schooled in tactics and warfare. He will surely raise an army that can reduce a poorly defended Castle Rend to a pile of rubble and its inhabitants to distant memories. However, there is hope! The heroes can raise their own army through domain actions and adventuring to recruit allies.

The characters should already have four Tier I units that they mustered when they founded their organization, so they already have a small army.

## TAKING THE FIGHT TO SAXTON

Attacking Lord Saxton with Castle Rend's current army would be ruinous. Saxton already has a large army outnumbering Castle Rend's forces. Bedegar's defenses are formidable, and the terrain would be unfamiliar to the heroes' troops. Attacking Saxton also would give him a political advantage, as he would relish the opportunity to act as Bedegar's noble defender.

If the heroes suggest this course of action, the NPCs on the council recommend against infiltrating Bedegar Keep to assassinate Saxton, given the keep's defenses and the army assembling around it. They advise that it's much better to prepare a defense at the castle and catch Saxton on a battlefield the characters prepare. If the characters discuss assassination, the NPCs suggest attacking the Star Chamber (see **Urland Intelligence Report** below). Denying Saxton his knight lieutenants is far more achievable and could significantly alter the battle.



## RECRUITING ALLIES

If the players don't think of it, the NPCs suggest reaching out to nearby allies who can lend troops to Castle Rend. Recruiting allies is a short-term strategy to deal with Saxton, but also a forward-thinking one that could forge a stronger, more united Bedegar. If the players don't think to look at a map, an NPC calls for one.

Share maps for both the **Barony of Bedegar** and the broader **Duchy of Urland** with the players. The Duchy of Urland is a large region—each hex is 12 miles across. Characters can travel 24 miles (or 2 hexes) per day on a road at a normal pace, or 12 miles per day through unpaved wilderness at half the speed. Urland's three baronies (Tor, Dalrath, and Bedegar) are spread out, and the roads are almost as perilous as the forests and

other wilderness separating them. Edmund or Willoughby can share that Tor has no standing army at the moment and is ill-equipped to lend aid. They also mention that Tarreton is a small village of farmers with no military might to offer.

When you bring out the map, or when the players ask what their characters know about the nearby domains, provide the information in the **Urland Intelligence Report**. It's easiest to provide this information as a handout, but you can also share the information via different NPCs verbally reporting the details to the characters.

The characters should use the map and the intelligence report to make a plan for gathering allies and hampering Saxton's operation. They don't need to plan everything at once, but they should at least decide and plan the first leg of their adventure.

### RECRUITING TACTICS

Each faction that *can* be recruited will initially be reluctant to lend aid. That's what makes it an adventure; the challenge is in convincing these folks to help.

One useful negotiating tactic the heroes might hit upon (and if they don't, an NPC might make this observation) is that Saxton is *evil* and will not stop at Castle Rend. "Eventually, he'll come for you and your lands and holdings" is pretty persuasive—even if it's mostly conjecture.

Clever players with negotiable principles might even think of framing Lord Saxton. They could present falsified documents or even people willing to say, "Lord Saxton is plotting against *you* too!" Could work! Could backfire hugely! Fun either way!

Your players might also have ideas for recruiting allies beyond the factions in the **Urland Intelligence Report**, and that's awesome. However, this does mean a bit of work for you. Our advice: when the characters think up a wild idea, don't immediately share what aspects of the idea won't work. Instead, call for checks to determine what might, and through that, explain the challenge. Maybe the characters want to find flying mounts like giant eagles and strap

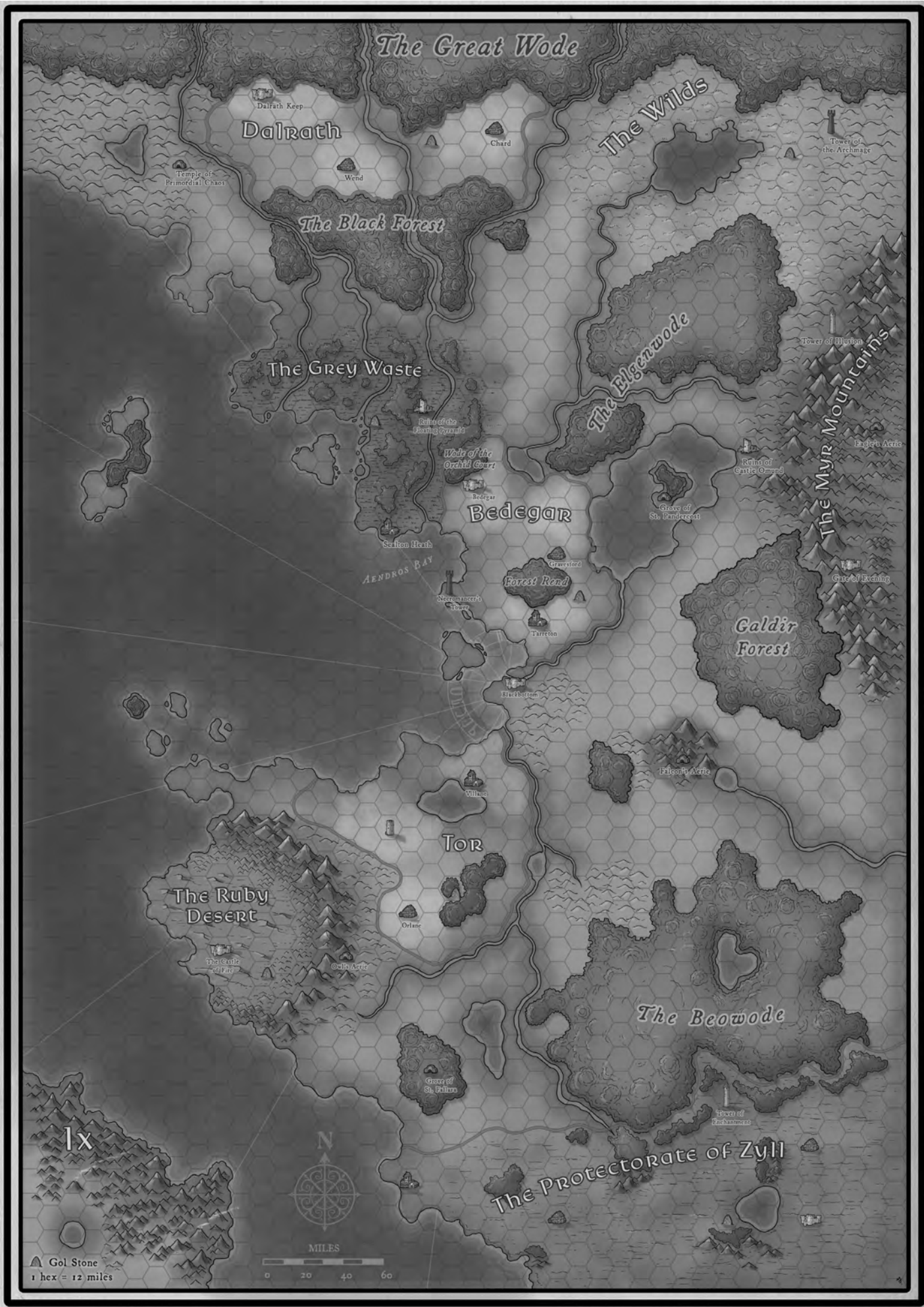
explosives to them. That could be amazing, even if it might be hard.

In general, consider the following:

- Where on the map might this be accomplished, and what realm or creatures are involved?
- What is the challenge in getting the aid?
- How hard should it be to accomplish this?
- Finally, what effect will it have on the battle? (As a guideline, a unit of troops or an increased defense level for the characters is a good reward for clever thinking.)

For the giant eagles idea above, you might quickly decide that they can be found in the mountains to the southeast, near Falcon's Aerie. Giant eagles might be attracted if the characters can slay a large beast and leave it at the top of a mountain as an offering. After hearing their case, the giant eagles may lend aid if so moved. In the nearby hills, there could be gnomes with alchemical knowledge. The gnomes must be convinced (and maybe they have an ogre problem the characters need to resolve before they can help). Succeed, and you have a great story and a cinematic unit of gnome artilleryists riding giant eagles, swooping into the final battle. Dope.







*The Barony of Bedegar*

# Urland Intelligence Report

The following report details what we know about our potential allies and enemies in Urland. Our intelligence is limited, but every group keeps tabs on each other, so it's worth asking around... especially if we want to find the elusive elgenwights!

## Orchid Court

All of Bedegar was once a mighty forest ruled by the wood elves. They can still be found in the Wode of the Orchid Court in northwest Bedegar. A few elf archers would be worth a whole unit of soldiers.

Here's a summary of intelligence gathered from our field agents:

- The court's almost certainly located near areas of natural purity, such as pristine waters or particularly ancient woods. You should be able to find their general location if you travel into the forest.
- Finding the elves is not the challenge—the elves are likely to find you first. The tough part is negotiating. It's been several human lifetimes since elves and humans held an alliance. While the details have faded from memory, the last treaty was broken by humans.
- The elves of the Orchid Court are mercurial, their temperament naturally changing with the seasons. While they were chaotic in spring and joyful in summer, now it is autumn, when they turn to quiet contemplation and melancholy. In winter, they are fatalistic. Winter is not a time for new beginnings or new alliances, though it can be a time for war.

## The Clock

This thieves' guild is based in Bedegar and is no friend to Lord Saxton. They have a crew of ruffians, specialists, and rogues ready to throw down, but there's one problem: the crew's leader, Zola Honeycut (she/her), is in a Bedegar jail—and she's scheduled to be hanged for conspiring against Lord Saxton!

Here's a summary of intelligence gathered from our field agents:

- Saxton will want to hang Zola fast. She could swing from the gallows any day now. The quicker you move to free her, the more likely she is to be alive.
- It's permissible under Bedegar law for priests of Saint Verona to visit those sentenced to death, as well as to attend the hangings.
- Willoughby Twobuckle has a Clock contact named Correna Jarvis (she/her) who can meet you in the city and give you the lay of the land.



## Elgenwights

It's said that no human who enters the Elgenwode ever returns. The mighty wode wardens, the elgenwights, possess great power and use it to defend their forest fastness. But the elves have an emissary there. This tells me the wights make use of diplomacy. Perhaps the wardens could be convinced Saxton is a threat to all of us.

Here's a summary of intelligence gathered from our field agents:

- The elgenwights are similar to centaurs, but combine aspects of humans and elk. They are stewards created by the true elves. Their kind are few, but fiercely dedicated to protecting the denizens of the wode.
- Elgenwight culture is alien to most humans. When their language is translated, it's more akin to song and art than typical speech. When humans and elgenwights last convened centuries ago, they did so at an elgenmoot—a clearing with many small mounds. In such a place, an outsider can request an audience.
- There are druids who travel the lands, sharing knowledge. One of them, an elf named Salar (they/them), has been known to tell stories of the Elgenwode. If Salar could be located, their knowledge may enable negotiation with the elgenwights.

## White Tusk Orcs

The White Tusk Orcs are no friend to Lord Saxton after his recent betrayal. While nomadic, finding the White Tusk in Forest Rend should be an easy task.

Here's a summary of intelligence gathered from our field agents:

- Orcs value strength, both within their clan and when dealing with others. It's important for the White Tusk leader to show the rest of the clan that either she or the clan gained something of value as part of the negotiation.
- A patrol recently encountered the corpses of two orcs, mauled by a massive beast. The wounds and tracks suggest it was a giant ape. If you defeated this fearsome beast, it may buy goodwill with the orcs.

## Dalrath

Lord Kenway (he/him) of Dalrath is a just ruler. He has the largest army and the finest cavalry in Urland, including a unit of magic hounds! The problem is that we have nothing to offer Lord Kenway—but if you can find something to offer, such as proof Lord Saxton is also a threat to Dalrath, we might convince him to send us troops.

Here's a summary of intelligence gathered from our field agents:

- The bad news: His nation, north of Bedegar, battles goblins and orcs in the north and elves in the wild forests. Kenway won't easily spare help.
- The good news: you can treat with Dalrath without traveling there. Lord Kenway owns a *diplomat's pouch*, so you can send missives using the pouch Willoughby gave you.

## **The Necromancer**

Saxton seizes every advantage he can. The necromancer, Caliga Lifebane (she/her), is reviled by the people of these lands because of her foul practices. She would certainly forge an alliance with Saxton, who would promise her anything to secure his own power. We must stop her.

Here's a summary of intelligence gathered from our field agents:

- A generation ago, before Caliga's appearance, the tower watched over the small village of Mistview. A wizard moved in and expanded the tower ... then disappeared. When travelers next visited Mistview, every inhabitant was undead, and a wicked necromancer attacked any who dared draw near the tower.
- The wild, overgrown area around the ruined town offers enough cover to potentially approach unseen.

## **The Star Chamber**

If you want to deal a blow to Lord Saxton, invade the Star Chamber in the city of Bedegar, headquarters of his Knights of the Three Roses. If you can get inside, uncover some of Saxton's secrets, and kill one of his lieutenants, you'll deal our enemy a giant blow before the battle even begins.

Here's a summary of intelligence gathered from our field agents:

- The Star Chamber is not just the home of the many Knights of the Three Roses—it is their temple, sanctuary, and mystic source of power. They closely guard the rituals they conduct here. A successful infiltrator might find powerful items here, but beware the likely otherworldly threats.
- Very few outsiders are allowed in the building. The knights frequently purchase supplies for their rituals from a guild of arcanists and herbalists, known for wearing cowled green robes. The Bedegar prison also periodically brings prisoners to the Star Chamber. Those prisoners never leave.
- The Star Chamber is the headquarters for the knights. There may be important information here. Battle plans, information on their alliances, perhaps even secrets pertaining to Lord Saxton.

## PART 2:

# Adventuring in NPC Realms



After the characters are briefed on the Urland Intelligence Report and chart a course of action, they visit NPC realms to gain allies and weaken Lord Saxton before the battle begins.

Part 2 provides details on each realm along with mini-adventures for the heroes to undertake.

## RUNNING THE INTRIGUE

In **Charting a Course**, Lord Saxton took the first domain turn. Now the characters have five weeks—and five domain turns—to gain all the support and do as much damage to Saxton as they can. Only characters who use a combination of adventuring heroics (aka playing the standard game) and intrigue (the stuff in this book) stand a chance of recruiting every possible ally and landing every metaphorical blow to Saxton's army.

It should take the characters about a week to complete one mission in an NPC realm. At the end of each week (or, if you prefer, at the end of each mission), the characters' organization and Lord Saxton's despotic regime each take a domain turn.

At the end of the heroes' fifth and final domain turn, proceed to part 3, **The Battle for Gravesford**.

## DOMAIN TURNS

Domain turns bring to life the war between Castle Rend and Lord Saxton. War often starts quietly, with spying and shoring up defenses, and ends with bloody battle. But all of it is war. Drive that message home. Lives are on the line. Castle Rend is on the line. The choices the players make matter.

Follow the rules in this book when running domain turns. Summary information on Lord Saxton's villainous realm, its officers, and the domain actions he takes are found in **Major Players** in this

adventure's introduction. Remember that Saxton already took his first domain turn during **Charting a Course** in part 1; both he and the heroes have 5 domain turns remaining.

The heroes are free to choose any domain actions during their domain turns that they think will be effective. They might look to gather information on Lord Saxton, investigate other realms and learn more about their options, or improve their offensive or defensive readiness. Once the domain turn has been resolved, the characters continue adventuring!

### DOMAIN ACTIONS INSTEAD OF ADVENTURING

In lieu of directly completing all of these quests during the five weeks of adventuring, the players might choose to use some of their domain actions to petition potential allies or sabotage foes. However, doing so comes at the cost of not being able to use that domain action for other preparations. See the **Major Players** section of part 1 for information on each faction's attitude and how to recruit them in this manner.

## ADVENTURING AND THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Between domain turns, the heroes take matters into their own hands, informed by the decisions they made during **Charting a Course**. The characters might travel to a location, fight battles, and/or engage in diplomacy. The results of their exploits determine whether an alliance is forged or a foe is weakened.

Each quest is outlined in a section below, identified either as "Alliance" (if its goal is obtaining a new ally) or "Sabotage" (if it's an attempt to undermine Lord Saxton).

The heroes have approximately one week to accomplish each mission, though much of that time is taken up by travel and other duties around Castle Rend. Don't worry about the exact time. The heroes have the horses and assistants they need to get there and back. Focus on the action and assume that each week allows for the completion of one mission.

Though you shouldn't worry about tracking whether a quest took six, seven, or eight days, time matters in a broader sense. Some of the missions are harder or easier to accomplish depending on what week they are tackled, and any event during the fourth or fifth week of adventuring takes place as the seasons change and winter comes to the land. For example, after the third week, the Clock crew leader is dead! Realms are not static, and the seasons themselves play a role in the Orchid Court's response to the heroes (see the **Impact of the Seasons** sidebar on page 260). The effects of timing are noted where relevant.

## INTERLUDES

The characters are free to return to Castle Rend between quests. When they do, they encounter the demands of everyday life. Following part 2, you'll find the **Interludes: Heroes Return** section, which presents mundane encounters that can be interspersed with each week's more adventurous exploits. Despite being split into separate sections, part 2 and the Interludes should be alternated with each other as the weeks progress, not run linearly.

## ALLIANCE: THE CLOCK

The characters travel to the city of Bedegar to rescue the crew leader of the Clock thieves' guild, Zola Honeycut. Saxton plans to hang Zola, having declared her (and the entire Clock) as enemies of the state. The penalty is death.

As noted in the **Urland Intelligence Report**, Zola must be rescued quickly, before she meets her end! Assuming the heroes traveled to Bedegar during the third week of adventuring or earlier, Zola lives. She is in prison and about to be transferred to a public plaza for hanging. After some legwork, the heroes can decide whether to rescue her from jail or at the hanging.

### ZOLA IS DEAD?!?

If the characters waited until the fourth or fifth week to begin this mission, Zola is already dead. In this case, you get to decide what options the heroes have. They could simply fail and return home—or start a new mission, like infiltrating the Star Chamber while they're in the city.

You could also decide that since the heroes didn't show, members of the Clock tried to spring her instead, failed, and are now prisoners. Freeing them could give the players another opportunity to gain the Crew special unit—but if Zola is dead, the unit has disadvantage on all Morale tests.

## ARRIVAL IN BEDEGAR

The characters can reach Bedegar without incident, entering the city unnoticed among the many merchants and travelers that enter through the gates.

Once inside the city, Correna Jarvis (human **bandit**, she/her) finds them quickly, thanks to the ever-prepared Willoughby. She invites them into an alley and quickly provides the following information:

- Tomorrow just before noon, Zola Honeycut will be escorted by many guards for the short walk from the prison to the city's public plaza. Some guards will return to the prison, while others remain at the plaza to keep the peace during the hanging.
- At the gallows, stairs rise up to a wooden stand with a trap door where the prisoner stands under the noose. Prisoners are allowed final words then hanged while the crowd cheers.
- It is permissible under Bedegar law for priests of Saint Verona to visit the prison to minister to those sentenced to death, as well as to speak with the guilty on the gallows just before the hanging. The priests wear rough-spun gray cloth robes.

Once she shares the information with the characters, Correna wishes them luck and starts to slip away. She doesn't have more information, and Saxton's goons are cracking down on the Clock, so she tries to keep out of the public eye. If the heroes inquire why other guild members aren't trying to save Zola, she laughs bitterly and explains

## FINDING DISGUISES

If the characters wish to find a guard outfit or robe of a Saint Verona priest, they can buy similar garments for 10 gp each and modify them to look like the real thing with a successful DC 13 Intelligence check with a disguise kit or weaver's tools.

Or they can find the genuine articles for 25 gp each with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check or Charisma (Investigation) check, made with advantage if they know thieves' cant. Characters can also find a group of priests or guards and try to take them by force. If the characters assault anyone in a public place, there is a 25 percent chance that two veteran guards arrive and join the fray.

that the guards know most of their names and faces, and if they're seen anywhere near the execution, they'll likely be killed on sight. However, a character who makes a successful DC 15 Charisma

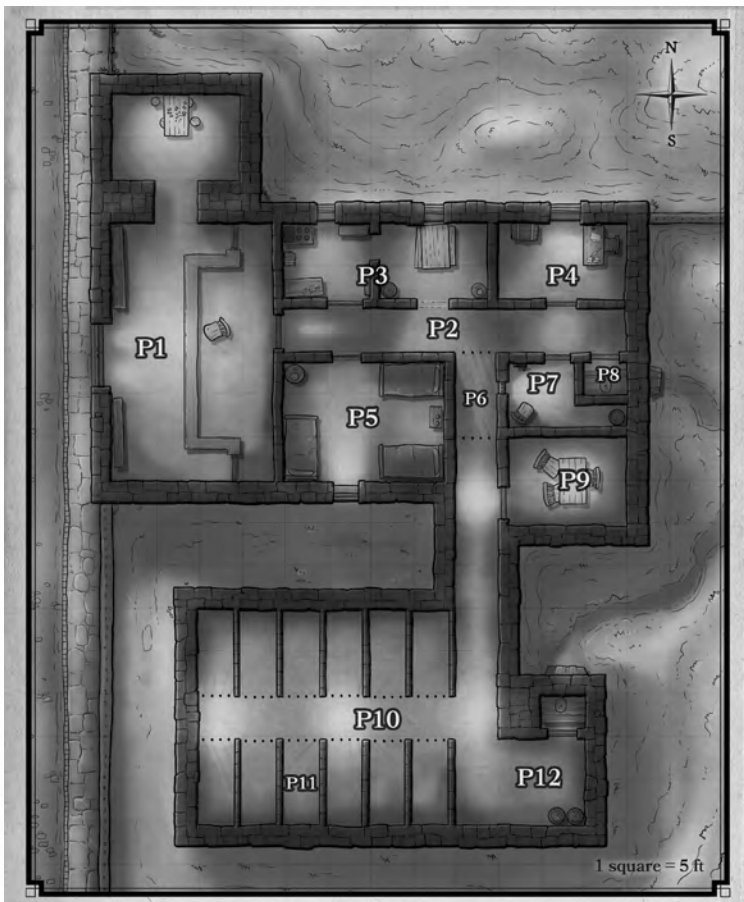
(Persuasion) check convinces Correna to stay and aid with the rescue.

After the characters learn about the hanging, they have three choices. They can infiltrate the prison before the hanging, free Zola from the large contingent of guards during the procession to the gallows, or perform the classic scene of attacking just as the prisoner is about to hang.

## PRISON BREAK

If the characters choose to break Zola Honeycut from prison, have them discuss their plan, which could simply be to storm the place. But it is likely something cleverer (appearing in priest's robes, pretending to be guards bringing in a new prisoner, etc.).

The prison areas are keyed to the Bedegar Prison map. Ceilings inside the prison are 8 feet tall, and torches on wall sconces throughout the complex provide bright illumination for all areas.



### BEDEGAR JAILHOUSE MAP

- Area P1: Entrance
- Area P2: Hallway
- Area P3: Kitchen and Mess Hall
- Area P4: Warden's Office
- Area P5: Barracks
- Area P6: Gated Hallway
- Area P7: Guard Post
- Area P8: Privy
- Area P9: Interrogation Room
- Area P10: Cells
- Area P11: Zola's Cell
- Area P12: Second Guard Post and Privy



## PRISON WINDOWS

Windows on the outside of the prison lead to areas **P3**, **P4**, and **P5**. Sturdy iron bars built into the outside walls of the prison block the windows. A character who makes a successful DC 19 Strength (Athletics) check bends the bars wide enough for a Small or Medium creature to squeeze through. The bars have AC 19, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Attacking the bars alerts the creatures in the adjoining area of the attacker's presence, but bending the bars does not.

## RAISING THE ALARM

Guards who encounter characters in areas **P2** through **P12** of the prison without a proper escort immediately move to attack those heroes and raise the alarm by shouting for help. If the alarm is raised for longer than 2 rounds in a row, the whole prison goes on alert and the warden, all guards, and all veterans move to quell the disturbance.

If Zola is freed with a well-executed plan, the characters can get her out of the city without much trouble. But if the characters alert the whole prison by raising the alarm for too long, the city is on alert. See **Fleeing the City** (page 258) for more information.

## P1. ENTRANCE

Large metal-bound double doors (the only entrance into the prison) lead into the building's registration area. Adrian, the receptionist (human **guard**, he/him) is on duty when the characters arrive, and asks them to sign in. Visitors are not allowed to see Zola unless they are priests sent by the local Church of Saint Verona, who wear distinctive gray robes. However, other prisoners are allowed visitors. A successful DC 14 Charisma (Deception) check convinces Adrian to allow the characters further into the prison to visit one of the prisoners in areas **P10** or **P11**. Characters wearing gray robes and pretending to be priests of Saint Verona, or those who slip Adrian a bribe of 100 gp or more, make the check with advantage.

An adjacent guard room holds two **guards** and one **veteran**. The guards accompany any visitors Adrian allows to meet a prisoner. Adrian has keys

to the gate at **P6**. He provides them to an escorting guard when needed. A successful DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check steals the keys from Adrian or a guard without notice.

## P2. HALLWAY

Whenever the heroes enter this hallway, there is a 1 in 6 chance that one **guard** is also here, moving from the barracks to the mess hall.

## P3. KITCHEN AND MESS HALL

At any given time, 1d4 – 1 **guards** eat here. Slim (half-orc **commoner**, they/them), who dislikes the guards and Lord Saxton but is friendly to visitors and prisoners, tends to the kitchen. If Slim notices the characters and recognizes them as intruders, the half-orc tells them to flee and that they are in danger from Saxton's bootlickers.

A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Slim to help the characters infiltrate the prison further. The half-orc offers to distract Teresa Dolruth, the warden in area **P4**, by asking her to come to the kitchen to inspect some old beef. If the characters agree, Teresa enters the kitchen for 5 minutes, allowing the characters to search her office. During this time, Teresa leaves her keys at her desk in area **P4**.

## P4. WARDEN'S OFFICE

Warden **Teresa Dolruth** (human, she/her, page 301) has an office here. On her belt, she wears a ring of keys to every room and cell in the complex. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check can steal the keys without Teresa noticing. If Slim (see area **P3**) agreed to distract Teresa, she leaves her keys at her desk during the distraction.

**Treasure.** A locked chest in the room can be opened with a key from Teresa's keyring or a successful DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. Inside can be found 525 gp, a *counterpoint* (see page 208 in the **Monsters & Magic Items** chapter) with no charges remaining, and a *potion of heroism*. If combat breaks out in the prison, Teresa grabs the magic items from her chest before joining the fray.



## P5. BARRACKS

The barracks holds bunk beds and small lockers. One **veteran** and one **guard** are here, napping, playing cards, or reading.

**Treasure.** A total of 25 gp can be found among the lockers.

## P6. GATED HALLWAY

Two gates close off this hallway. The keys are carried by the prison staff in areas **P1**, **P4**, and **P7**.

The gate has AC 19, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A successful DC 18 Dexterity check with thieves' tools picks the gate's lock. A successful DC 21 Strength (Athletics) check forces the gate open.

## P7. GUARD POST

Two **guards** have the duty of allowing escorted visitors or prisoners into or out of the cells. A peg-board on the wall holds keys for all of the cells and a key to the gated hallway (area **P6**). A character who makes a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check can steal the keys without the guards noticing.

## P8. PRIVY

This small room has a privy and washbasin.

## P9. INTERROGATION ROOM

The rack, restraints, and various implements make it clear that interrogation in this room is... unpleasant.

## P10. CELLS

Each of the twelve small cells contain a chamber pot and mattress. There is a 1 in 4 chance that someone occupies a cell. Most prisoners are drunk **commoners** or petty **bandits**, but you can also include one or more of the following NPCs as a prisoner (they have no equipment):

- Twilight (elf **scout**, she/her) begs the characters for release if she notices a breakout taking place. She's a thief who claims to "know things." If freed and asked about the elgenwights, Twilight tells the characters to look for Salar Bearmantle at the Gol Stone south of Gravesford (see **Alliance: The Elgenwights** on page 266).







- Dimple (halfling **spy**, he/him) was imprisoned for stealing from the Star Chamber. He can offer to help get the heroes into the Star Chamber, providing guidance on how to reach the second level safely—if the characters free him. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals Dimple plans to betray the characters. If the characters take the halfling up on his offer, Dimple gives them true information about the Star Chamber as soon as he's free of the prison—but after going his own way, he double-crosses them, telling the knights in advance that the heroes are coming. Dimple hopes that ratting the characters out gets him a pardon.
- Tusek Funnyfingers (half-elf **bandit**, he/him) is an agent of the Clock with crooked but very dexterous fingers. Tusek is glad to help the characters rescue Zola in exchange for his freedom. If Tusek is imprisoned here, Zola won't leave without him.

Each cell has a single locked door with AC 19, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A character who makes a successful DC 18 Dexterity check with thieves' tools picks a door's lock. A character who makes a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check forces a door open. The prison staff in areas **P4** and **P7** have keys to the cells.

### P11. ZOLA'S CELL

Zola Honeycut (unarmed human **bandit captain**, she/her) is exercising in her cell as the heroes arrive. Tough as nails, her last name refers to her reputation for giving crew members a fair cut of the take from jobs. If armed, she fights by the characters and follows their lead as they exit the prison and city.

### P12. SECOND GUARD POST AND PRIVY

One **guard** and one **veteran** play cards at a small splintering table. They promptly investigate any disturbances, such as a fight or a character breaking down a cell door.

## STREET AMBUSH

The heroes might decide to free Zola as guards escort her from the prison to the plaza. The guards stick to busy streets that are 15 feet wide, though there are certainly intersections, cover, adjacent alleyways, and the like. Allow the players to describe their plan, then draw a simple map based on it. A particularly good plan could give the characters advantage on their initiative rolls as the action starts.

Zola Honeycut (unarmed human **bandit captain**, she/her) walks in the middle of the procession, her wrists bound with rope. Five **guards** and three **veterans** surround Zola. Warden **Teresa Dolruth** (human, she/her, page 301) leads the group. The guards don't allow anyone except for fellow guards and priests of Saint Verona wearing gray robes to get close to Zola, attacking others who ignore their warnings. Disguised characters can get close to Zola without raising the guards' suspicion with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Deception) check.

The warden despises the Clock. Charisma checks made to convince Teresa to surrender during an ambush have disadvantage. However, if she is killed or incapacitated, Charisma checks made to convince the rest of the guards to surrender have advantage.

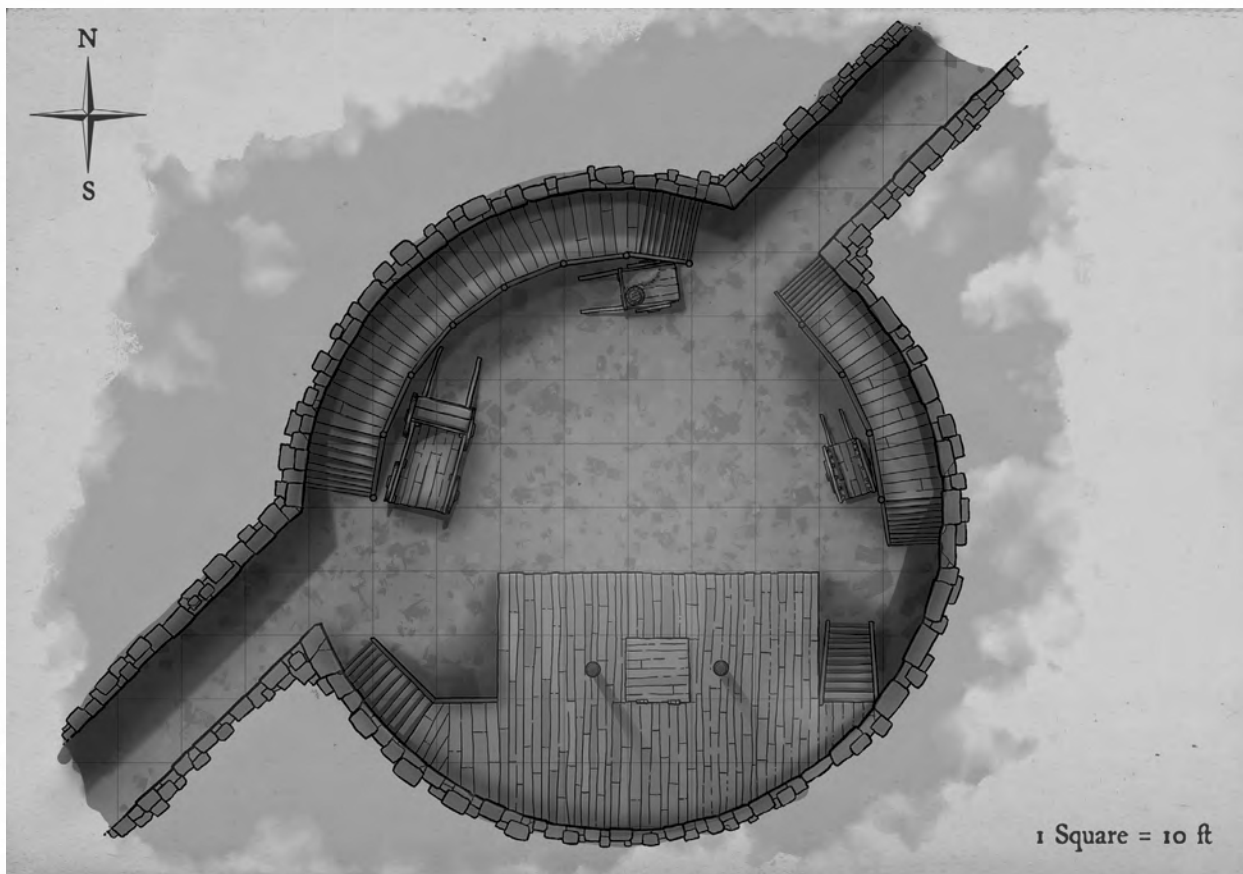
Teresa carries a *potion of heroism* and a *counterpoint* (see page 208 in the **Monsters & Magic Items** chapter) with no charges remaining.

## RAISING THE ALARM

If the characters liberate Zola with an ambush in the street, they likely create a commotion which complicates their escape. Continue with the **Fleeing the City** section.

## RESCUE AT THE GALLOWS

A cinematic option is for the heroes to rescue Zola as she is about to hang. The characters can scout the location and plan their rescue. Use the **Bedegar Plaza and Gallows** map to run this encounter.



*Bedegar Plaza and Gallows map*

Raised 20-foot-tall arcades for viewing the event have been erected on the plaza's north side. In the center of the plaza, the gallows (two stout wooden pillars holding a crosspiece with a noose) sits atop a wooden platform that is 15 feet high, accessible by two sets of wooden stairs, one on each side. A lever by one of the pillars controls the 10-foot-square trap door. Crowds begin to show up an hour before the appointed time, the same time that merchants arrive peddling food and drink.

The area has many possible vantage points, and the arcade and crowd can offer cover to the characters. Up to two priests of Saint Verona (or heroes disguised as priests) are allowed on the raised platform to hear the prisoner's final words and offer them salvation.

When the heroes are in place, it's time for the action! Read the following, adjusting as necessary if the heroes intend to strike before the noose is around Zola's neck.

The fervorous crowd fills the circular plaza, leaning over the elevated arcades, pushing closer to the wooden platform. They cheer as a procession enters the plaza. A stern woman, referred to by several in the crowd as the warden, leads guards and the accused, Zola Honeycut, to the platform's steps. Several guards depart, but four remain. One is stationed at each set of stairs, while the other two accompany their charge to stand over a trap door.

The taller of the two guards guides Zola atop the trap door, briefly blocking her from view as he secures the noose around her throat. The other guard moves to rest her hand on a lever, which will cause a trap door to open under the accused's feet.

The crowd quiets as the guard fastens the noose and steps back, and you see Zola with head high and defiance in her eyes. The warden calls out for her final words. Zola spits at the closest guard and cries, "Death to Saxton!"

The warden grimaces, then prepares to give the order for Zola's death.

One **guard** is positioned at each of the steps to the wooden platform. Atop the platform, Zola Honeycut (unarmed human **bandit captain**, she/her) stands with Warden **Teresa Dolruth** (human, she/

her, page 301), one additional **guard**, and one **veteran**. Teresa carries a *potion of heroism* and a *counterpoint* (see page 208 in the **Monsters & Magic Items** chapter) with no charges remaining.

If the trap door lever is destroyed, the guards will be unable to open the door and hang Zola; it has AC 15, 5 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If the heroes don't take action, the guard operates the lever to release the trap door under Zola's feet. Zola's neck doesn't break if she hangs, but falling and choking knocks the wind from her, causing her to suffocate more quickly than normal. If not freed before 30 seconds (or 6 rounds) pass, she dies. The hangman's rope has AC 11, 5 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

## RAISING THE ALARM

When the heroes strike, an enormous commotion ensues, and other guards come to investigate if the rescue takes too long. At the start of the third round of combat, two **guards** arrive. Each round after that, two **guards** and a **veteran** arrive. Continue with **Fleeing the City** once the characters leave the plaza.

## FLEEING THE CITY

If the characters made a clean and relatively quiet rescue, they can either lay low or make a quick getaway before the alarm is raised at the gates. If the characters did everything right and their rolls were lucky, they can leave the city without incident.

Of course, not every plan goes well, and even the best d20s roll natural 1s. If the characters execute a decent plan with a few goofs in a crowded place, such as storming the gallows quickly in obscuring cloaks or creating a distraction to confuse onlookers, have them make a DC 12 group Dexterity (Stealth) check to fade into the crowd or shadows, followed by a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to navigate a path out of the city. Success on these checks lets them reach the gates to exit Bedegar without further trouble.

If the characters alert the entire prison to their presence, fail to flee the scene in a timely manner, or cause other public mayhem, they face one or more of the following challenges as they flee the city.

## ELUDE PATROLS

The heroes glimpse two patrols of five **guards** each coming down both ends of a crowded street, searching for them. A closed gate to one side leads to the only available side street—but it's locked. A successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check allows one character to scale the gate or walls and lower a rope for others to follow. Alternatively, a successful DC 13 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools opens the gate. The last character to cross the gate must make a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check as an alert guard looks in their direction. If the characters fail any of these checks, the guards notice them and attack.

## FADE INTO A CROWD

The characters traverse a crowded outdoor clothing market, filled with people discussing the recent commotion. The heroes can attempt a DC 13 group Dexterity (Stealth) check to nonchalantly pass through without being recognized, or a DC 13 group Charisma (Deception) check if they use disguises. On a success, the characters make it through the crowd without trouble. On a failure, three **veterans** attack the characters.

## GET THROUGH THE GATES

Three **knights** watch the gates. Let the characters formulate a plan and call for ability checks based on the situation. For example, if they want to acquire a wagon and hide Zola under bales of hay, they may need a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check to find a wagon, then a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check to steal it or a successful DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check to convince the owner to let them take it to the other side of the gate. Simply passing through the gate might require a character to make a successful Charisma (Deception) check to answer a knight's questions without raising suspicion, or a successful DC 13 group Dexterity (Stealth) check to move through the gate without notice. Climbing over the gate without notice requires a successful DC 15 group Strength (Athletics) check and a successful DC 15 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. If any of the ability checks fail, the knights attack.

## CONCLUSION

If the heroes escape Bedegar with Zola, her crew learns the news and soon joins her in promising to fight by the characters' side against Lord Saxton. The characters gain the special unit, the Crew (see page 63 in the **Domains & Intrigue** chapter), for their army. If the characters failed, the Clock continues to struggle against Saxton in Bedegar and can't spare anyone to help the heroes.

## TREASURE

If the characters save Zola, she rewards them with a *grandmaster's quiver* (see page 209 in the **Monsters & Magic Items** chapter) and a pouch containing 1,000 gp, which are both part of a hidden stash of her equipment just outside the city.

## ALLIANCE: THE ORCHID COURT

The heroes seek an alliance with the elves of the Orchid Court against Lord Saxton. Gifted with long lives and a longer perspective, the elves see humans as hasty, with concerns careless of the world beyond their kind and present. The Orchid Court is reluctant to put lives on the line for the characters' cause.

## SEEKING THE ORCHID COURT

The characters should begin their search for the elves in the Wode of the Orchid Court in northwest Bedegar. Ask the characters how they plan on approaching the elves, and whether they are doing anything of note as they travel through the forest. Use this information to gauge how the heroes appear to the elf patrol that finds them.

## ELF PATROL

After two days journeying through the deep woods, you descend into a forested valley. The air is chilly and crisp. The trees have wide gnarled trunks and intertwining limbs in this wild area of the wode.

After two days of travel, the characters are enough to draw the attention of an elven patrol. Choose the character(s) with the highest passive Wisdom (Perception) score and address them as you continue:

You are the first to see the elves hidden amongst the trees, clad in armor fashioned to look like leaves. Their dark bows are drawn, the arrows pointed in your direction.

The ambush consists of four **scouts**, Einoan (elf **druid**, she/her), and the patrol captain, Theylas (elf **knight**, he/him). The elves keep their weapons drawn, but they don't attack without provocation.

Consider how the characters appear to the elves. Did they respect the plants and animals in the forest? Were they quiet and respectful as they moved through the wode? Did the characters keep the forest as undisturbed as possible while they traveled? Did they take only what they required of the forest's resources and no more? If the answer to any of these questions is no, the characters have disadvantage on Charisma checks made to influence the patrol. (If the players didn't indicate their characters were being jerks about the forest, assume the answers to these questions are yes.)

Theylas allows the characters to speak first. After a tense introduction, he informs the characters that his patrol has been watching them for several hours, and demands to know why the characters have entered the wode. The characters can make a DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check to communicate the importance of their visit. On a success, Theylas takes the characters directly to the leaders of the Orchid Court. If they fail, Theylas still leads the characters to the court, but via a rough indirect path, forcing each character to succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. Druids and rangers have advantage on the saving throw.

## MEETING THE ORCHID COURT

The elves move swiftly, leading you through winding paths deeper into the valley. Colossal trees, a hundred feet wide and taller than any tower in Bedegar, stretch up into a brilliant canopy. The leaves are a riot of color, from shimmering emerald to deep amber. In defiance of the season, orchids and flowering vines wrap around the trees. The air is fresh, and a melodic song floats through the air, as if always just around the next

tree, a chorus is singing softly and hauntingly. To this tune is added the whirring sounds of insects and the calls of countless birds. This place teems with life.

Moss-covered pathways lead up to wooden ramps shaped into the trees, winding upwards to intricately carved homes sculpted into the branches. And everywhere, there are tall elves of all colors—even blues and greens. The elves pause as they see you, clearly surprised, and begin to whisper to one another.

Theylas points upwards, to a large circular platform amongst the branches between three enormous oaks. "You are not a welcome sight in our wode. But I will take you up there, where you may meet with the Orchid Court."

Giant dragonflies lift a wood platform, bringing the heroes up to the large circular dais where a council of twelve wood elf **nobles** gather to hear their plight. Many elves watch the meeting from tree-limb walkways.

### IMPACT OF THE SEASONS

The elves of the Orchid Court are mercurial, changing their temperament with the seasons. If this mission takes place during the first three weeks of the adventure, it is autumn, when the elves turn to quiet contemplation and melancholy for the passing of the ages. During this time, it's easier for them to contemplate an alliance and feel compassion for the heroes. If the mission takes place during the fourth or fifth week of the adventure, winter makes the elves fatalistic. It is indeed a time for death and war, but the elves resist change.

### SEEKING AN ALLIANCE

Allow the characters to present their case. The quality of their speech can impress the larger elven audience, but the council remains stoic throughout. After the characters finish speaking, the council members address them and ask questions.

The elves don't reveal their main concern about an alliance with the characters until some discussion has taken place. They want to see if the characters take one of the following courses of action:

- **Show Passion.** This can be any strong emotion, from outrage to heartfelt apologies. An elf noble might respond to such a display with, “Ah, there is the passion I seek. There is hope yet!” A character could accomplish this with strong roleplaying or a successful DC 12 Charisma (Performance) check.
- **Prove Devotion to the Alliance.** The elves want a sense that if their people die for Castle Rend, an equal devotion is felt by the heroes. A character could accomplish this by pledging their devotion and succeeding on a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check.
- **Offer the Elves Assistance.** The elves may not reveal their need for help until the characters offer assistance. To accomplish this, a character simply needs to ask how they can help the elves.

The characters can intuit what the elves want to hear with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check. In the winter, this check is made with disadvantage, as the fatalistic nobles are particularly inscrutable.

The following elves interact with the characters after they make their plea to the court:

- Siweldalaren (he/him), an older elf dressed in silver robes, speaks first. “You have spoken well of the needs in the human realm, but I am unmoved. It has been only a few centuries since our last alliance... one that you broke. Why would we repeat the errors of our past?”
- Lirialanar (they/them) says while idly spinning a yew wand, “Once, we welcomed you to the lands you now call Bedegar. We shouldered responsibilities equally for a time. One aiding the other. I think humans have forgotten what their great grandparents knew. What do you know of old alliances?”
- Ffallwrial (she/her), a warrior with her hand never far from her sword, growls, “I sense no passion for a true fight. I do not sense the courage and heart of your ancestors. You are frail and spineless.”

You may add other comments from council members and allow the characters to respond and ask questions.

Though the conversation might be initially confusing for the players, and especially hard if it

is winter, the fun is in figuring out what the elves want. Ideally, you have characters making impassioned promises to bleed for the elves as the elves will bleed for them, and asking how they may prove this. When the heroes show the elves passion, promise devotion, or offer help, Ffallwrial speaks of the Orchid Court’s dragon problem.

## THE FOREST POISONER

All of the elves on the council nod at once, as if they have reached simultaneous agreement. Ffallwrial speaks, “It may be that you are different than those who broke our last agreement. And perhaps your castle and people have some role to play. That history remains to be written, but your lives require little ink.

“And yet, there is passion in your blood. And we are in agreement that Saxton, the so-called lord,



should not grow stronger. We would lend you our Thorns, archers unparalleled. With them at your side, you have a chance to beat your enemy and restore the land's balance. And yet we cannot spare them, for the Thorns hold at bay a great evil. Chlorandraxarous the Forest Poisoner, a green dragon, lairs within our lands. She twists the forest and draws hordes of goblins and unseelie fey to her side. Are you prepared to give your lives for the Orchid Court?"

If the heroes agree to aid in defeating the dragon, the council presents a plan. The elves will draw forth the forces of Chlorandraxarous from her lair; they are confident the dragon herself won't emerge until after her servants weaken the elves. The heroes can use a concealed forest passage to slip behind enemy lines and into the dragon's lair to face Chlorandraxarous alone. If the characters kill the dragon, the alliance will be granted.

The characters may ask questions about the dragon's capabilities, learning the basic nature of her power (Large size, poison breath, claw and bite attacks, the ability to breathe underwater) and her tactics (a clever skirmisher who is highly mobile). The elves can also share that her lair is a large cavern filled with toxic pools tainted by her presence.

Since this mission requires a coordinated strike between heroes and the Orchid Court's forces, the elves emphasize that nobody should rest or dilly-dally on their way to battle the dragon. If the characters rest on their way to battle the dragon, the dragon's forces have time to regroup in the cave after routing some of the elves attacking them. For each hour the characters rest, add four **bugbears** to the encounter with Chlorandraxarous.

## COMPLICATION

Optionally, you can add a political complication for the characters: the druid Lirialanar's teenage daughter, Gaelaria (she/her). As the heroes discuss their plan with the elves, Gaelaria approaches, armored in sturdy leather and bearing a sheathed shortsword, longbow, and quiver. She addresses Lirialanar, "Mother, it is time for my rite of passage. I request to accompany the heroes." The concern on Lirialanar's face is clear, but they turn to the heroes

and say, "I leave the decision to you. Do you honor my daughter Gaelaria's request?"

This is a sensitive moment. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Insight) check sheds light on the situation. It would be difficult to deny the young elf's request without offending her—and her mother. Accepting honors both, but places the young elf's life in the heroes' hands, and if she dies, it will impact the potential alliance. The heroes are free to decide either way. If they accept, provide the players with the stat block of a **scout** for Gaelaria, but increase her AC to 14 and her hit points to 55 (10d8 + 10). The players should decide what actions Gaelaria takes during combat and in dangerous situations.

## DRAGON HUNT

The heroes travel to the dragon's lair, 12 miles from the council of the Orchid Court. As the elves launch their attack, the characters head through the concealed forest passage. The characters see the large cave mouth in the distance, on the other side of an 80-foot-wide and 100-foot-deep ravine.

## CROSSING THE FALLEN AMBERWOOD

As the characters approach the ravine, they see its sides are made of loose rock that crumbles easily. A vine-covered fallen amberwood tree offers a way across. Make sure that the players remember to take actions for Gaelaria—she hasn't been here before and follows their lead.

Beneath the fallen tree trunk, a vine-sprouting tree limb awaits—it is sentient and very hungry. Use the **roper** stat block for the limb, which is attached to the underside of the trunk about halfway across. Once the limb attacks, it is visible as the central mass from which the vines radiate. The creature has half cover (a +2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws) from anyone not under the tree.

**Crossing.** A successful DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check allows a character to safely cross the fallen tree, though they must contend with the vine creature. Once on the other side of the ravine, the characters can enter the dragon's lair. Characters may think of other ways to cross, such as using magic or having a flying creature take a rope to the other side.



Clever tactics could grant advantage on the ability check or bypass the need for a check completely.

**Falling.** If a character fails the Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to cross the fallen tree, they start to fall into the ravine. The character can grab onto vines trailing off the tree with a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check and stop their fall. Such a character dangles 20 feet below the trunk's upper surface and may climb up without making a check. A character who doesn't grab onto the vines falls 50 feet before they strike a rocky outcropping below, taking 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and landing prone.

### OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: OUTSIDE CHLORANDRAXAROUS'S LAIR

If the characters use magic or other abilities to avoid the **Crossing the Fallen Amberwood** encounter, if you feel the characters need another challenge to soften them up before facing Chlorandraxarous, or if your group simply enjoys combat, you can add this encounter. As the characters approach the entrance to the dragon's lair, set the scene:

A pained cry comes from a bloody elf warrior crawling out of the dragon's cave. "Please! We are overrun. Help me get to safety. I can't make it on m—"

The vibrating bellow of an enraged monster echoes out of the cave behind the wounded soldier, burying the rest of her words.

A character who succeeds on a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell the soldier fakes their injuries. She is Granny Cankersore, a **green hag** using Illusory Appearance to bait the characters into coming closer. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 18 or higher, or who succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check, notices that four **bugbears** and a **troll** watch the characters from the shadowed cave entrance. If the characters don't notice anything suspicious and approach the hag, their enemies reveal themselves and attack with the benefit of surprise. If the characters refuse to help the hag or notice the hiding creatures, the enemies still attack, but without the benefit of surprise.

Most of the enemies use straightforward tactics, preferring to gang up on one or two creatures in

### CHLORANDRAXAROUS'S TACTICS

Chlorandraxarous challenges those foolish enough to enter her lair, then flies to position her poison breath effectively. On subsequent rounds, she is overconfident enough to fight on the ground, ideally next to a pool. She likes to use her poison mist lair action to conceal herself, then move through the pools to another area and strike at a combatant that looks weak or normally fights at range. The dragon also uses her claws to push and pull creatures into a pool, then dives beneath them, attacking them from beneath the opaque water to gain the benefit of being heavily obscured.

The dragon treats Gaelaria, if present, like any other combatant.

melee, dropping those enemies, then moving on to the next. Granny Cankersore uses Invisible Passage to strike the most vulnerable heroes, including Gaelaria, with her claws. She might also use her Mimicry trait while invisible to call for help as an imprisoned elf, drawing some characters into the cave to fight the dragon while the rest battle outside. The monsters fight until only two remain, then flee.

### CHLORANDRAXAROUS'S LAIR

A yawning cave mouth leads into a large foul-smelling cavern. **Chlorandraxarous** (she/her, page 302) usually lairs upon a raised shelf at the back of the cavern. Pools of water, tainted by her presence, are interconnected by an underground lake. The connected pools, along with her lair action, allow her great mobility during battle. Several terrain elements should make the battle interesting.

When Chlorandraxarous is reduced to 70 hit points, proceed to **Dragon's Deal**.

### ILLUMINATION

Foul lichens in the pools illuminate the pools and anything within 10 feet with dim light. The cave is otherwise dark.

### CAGE OF THE SORROW-WORN

A rusted iron cage hangs from a corroded chain embedded in the ceiling. It dangles just a foot above the surface of a pool. Within is a winged, twisted being called a sorrow-worn, an elf corrupted by

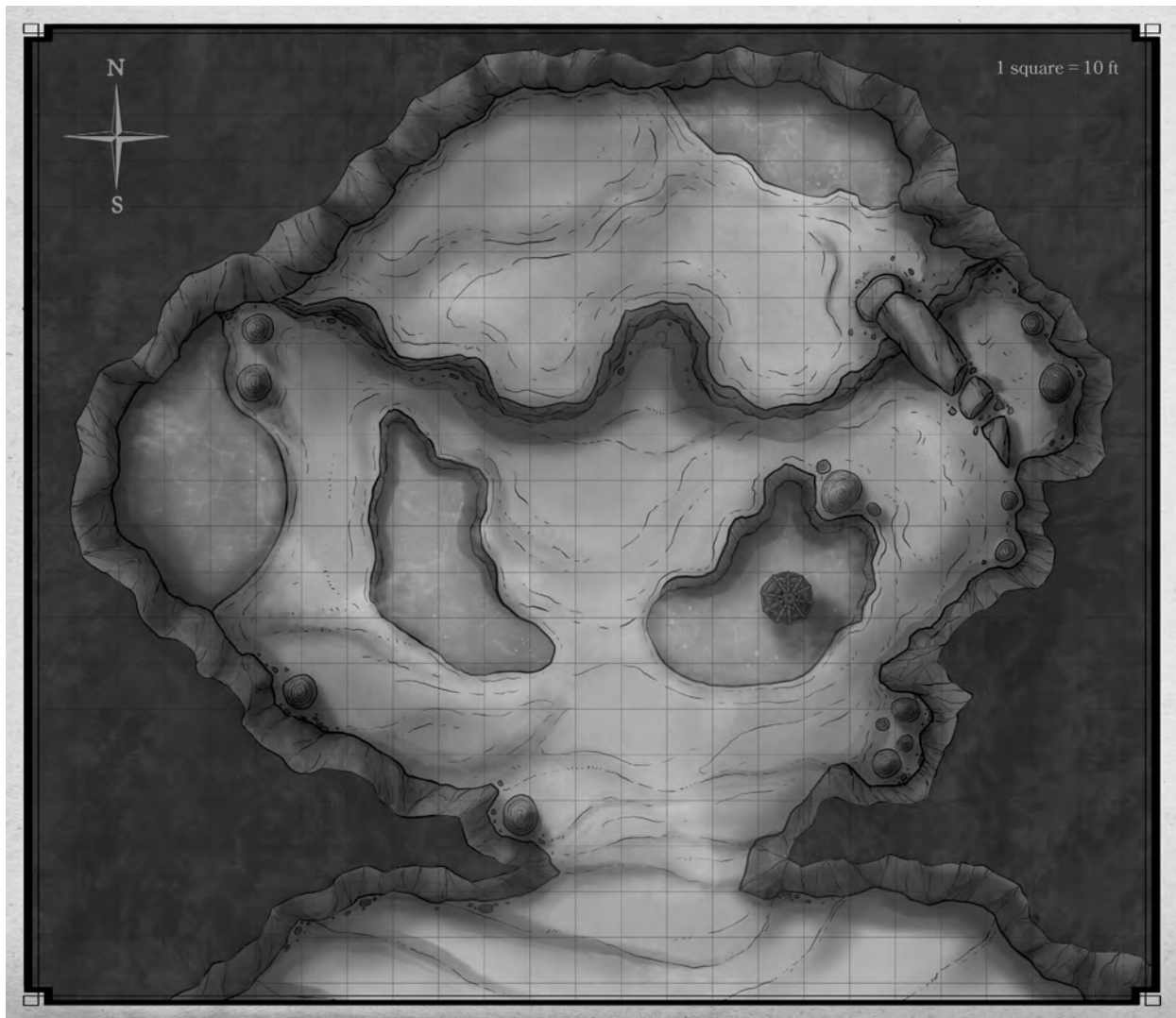
Chlorandraxarous's magic. The sorrow-worn uses the **harpy** stat block, except that the DC to resist their Luring Song is 14. The sorrow-worn attacks anyone touching the cage. A successful DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check made as an action convinces the corrupted elf to stop singing. If the sorrow-worn is reduced to 0 hit points, or if Chlorandraxarous is defeated, their form changes back to that of a male elf. The elf no longer remembers his name, and if the heroes save him, the elf asks that the characters provide a new one.

If Gaelaria is with the characters, she tells them about the abilities and lore of the sorrow-worn then begs them to save the corrupted elf.

## CEILING AND STALACTITES

The ceiling is 30 feet above the main cavern floor. In two places, large jagged stalactites hang down. Clever characters might use these to their advantage. As part of a move, a character can toss a rope around a stalactite and make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a success, the character swings on the rope and can reach the flying dragon.

Each stalactite is a Large object with AC 12, 22 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If a stalactite is broken, it crashes down. Any creature underneath a falling stalactite must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



*Chlorandraxarous's Lair map*

## GREEN POOLS

These murky lichen- and algae-filled pools smell terrible. When a creature enters a pool for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, the creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 5 (1d10) poison damage and is poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned. A creature can otherwise swim normally in the opaque water. The pools descend 10 feet and are connected by 10-foot-diameter underground passages. These passages allow Chlorandraxarous to swim from one pool to another in a straight line.

### OPTIONAL VILLAIN: LIVING VINE CLUSTERS

If you think the characters need more of a challenge, you can add another creature to this battle. A cluster of **living vines** (page 303) crawls out of one of the pools at the end of the first round of combat and joins the fray. If the vines grapple a creature, the plant pulls the creature into the pool using its movement (though its speed is halved while dragging Small and larger creatures).

If the characters continue to have an easy time with combat, more of these creatures can emerge from the pools at the end of each round of combat. When the dragon dies, the living vines fall over, now just ordinary vines.

## RAISED SHELF

The rear of the cavern is raised 10 feet above the ground. Debris from a fallen stalactite on the shelf's east side creates stairs that count as difficult terrain. Alternatively, a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check allows a creature to climb from the ground level to the raised shelf.

## DRAGON'S DEAL

When Chlorandraxarous' hit points are reduced to 70, she asks the characters to parley. If the characters agree, she makes the following proposal:

"My spies tell me that you dare to take me on because, in exchange for my head, the elves have

promised you aid in a coming battle. If you end our fight now, I will promise to fight for you against your enemy. My strength is far greater than a unit of elves!"

If the characters agree to the deal, Chlorandraxarous stops attacking the characters and joins their army in the battle against Saxton as a special solo unit (see her unit card below). A character who makes a successful DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check convinces Chlorandraxarous to give them a magic item from the dragon's hoard (see **Treasure** below).

Taking the deal horrifies Gaelaria if she is with the characters, but she knows she can't face the dragon alone and stands down. In this case, the dragon's forces turn back the elves. The Orchid Court's attitude toward the characters becomes hostile, and the attitude of Dalrath, the elgenwights, the White Tusk, and the Clock move one step toward hostile.

If the characters reject the deal or refuse to parley, Chlorandraxarous keeps fighting until reduced to 30 hit points, then tries to flee out of Bedegar for good.



*Chlorandraxarous unit card*

## TREASURE

A pile of treasure sits on the raised shelf. It includes 10,327 cp, 3,117 sp, 352 ep, 1,156 gp, a *potion of flying*, a *potion of resistance (necrotic)*, three *potions of greater healing*, a *heroic soul's chasuble* (see page 211 in the **Monsters & Magic Items** chapter), and a *ring of protection*. If Chlorandraxarous is defeated, the elves allow the characters to claim the treasure.

## CONCLUSION

If the characters fail to defeat Chlorandraxarous, they must return to their lands without the help of the elves, at least for this century. If the characters are victorious, the council sends a unit of archers, the Elven Thorns (see page 139 in the **Warfare** chapter), to Castle Rend to aid in the fight against Saxton. In addition, the council grants each character the title of Dragonmaster of the Orchid Court. This title is added to the list of each character's available domain titles.

**Dragonmaster of the Orchid Court.** Twice per day, you can make a Charisma check with advantage when dealing with elves or dragons. You gain a +2 bonus to Wisdom (Survival) checks made in forests or involving elves or dragons. You are resistant to poison damage and gain advantage on checks to recognize poisonous substances.

If Gaelaria died, the elven council mourns her. If it is autumn, the council still grants the Elven Thorns to the alliance if the dragon was defeated, but there is a sense of sadness as they contemplate the mourning that results from the battles against Saxton. If the season is winter, the elves demand restitution. The heroes must name one NPC that serves or follows them, and send them to serve the Orchid Court for six months. At the end of this time, roll a die. If the result is even, the NPC dies in battle while serving the Orchid Court. If the characters refuse to offer the elves restitution, the Orchid Court refuses to send the Elven Thorns to help.

If Gaelaria lived, the council welcomes her warmly. Gaelaria requests the honor of commanding

### NECKLACE OF THE ORCHID

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

This necklace bears an orchid flower embedded within a thin crystal. While you wear this necklace, you can crush its crystal as an action, granting you or a creature of your choice within 5 feet of you the effect of either a *heal* spell (if the target is living) or a *reincarnate* spell (if the target is dead). After the orchid is crushed, the necklace loses its magical properties.

the Elven Thorns who serve the alliance, and the elven court grants it. In addition, the council gifts one of the characters a *necklace of the orchid* (see the sidebar).

If the characters recruited Chlorandraxarous's help instead of that of the elves, the dragon joins their army just for the fight against Lord Saxton as a special solo unit (see **Dragon's Deal** above). The elves tell the characters to leave the wode and never return, under penalty of death.

## MUSTERING ELVES

If the characters defeated the dragon and Gaelaria lived through the ordeal, the Orchid Court considers them allies. In addition to being lent the Elven Thorns, the characters can muster elven units now!

## ASKING ABOUT ELGENWIGHTS

The elves ask what other realms or organizations the characters aim to speak with. If the characters bring up the elgenwights, Siweldaleren tells them about Salar Bearmantle, a druid who roams the world as an elgenwight ambassador. Salar visited the elves recently and mentioned where they are going next: the Gol Stone south of Gravesford.

## ALLIANCE: THE ELGENWIGHTS

The heroes attempt to win the support of the elgenwights, ancient elk-centaurs who tend to the trees of sacred forests. First, the characters must find the elf Salar Bearmantle, who roams the world as their ambassador. Once Salar agrees to help, they transport the characters to the Elgenmoot. After clearing the area of monsters, the heroes can speak to the elgenwights and decipher their lyrical puzzle.

## LEARNING OF SALAR BEARMANTLE

While characters heard of Salar during a Castle Rend council meeting and know that the traveling elf druid tells stories of visiting the elgenwights in the Elgenwode, they won't initially know where to find them. The heroes can learn where to meet them in **Alliance: The Orchid Court** (page 259), **Alliance: The White Tusk** (page 270),

or **Alliance: The Clock** (via the imprisoned Twilight, page 255). Any of these sources can point them to Salar Bearmantle's current location, residing near the Gol Stone south of Gravesford.

### GOL STONE LORE

An ancient human civilization called the Gol built large standing stones, several of which can still be found throughout Orden. Historians believe they once marked the boundaries of the Gol's territory. One stands at a crossroads in Bedegar, just south of Gravesford. An unknown script covers each Gol Stone, and few creatures know that they can be used for instantaneous travel from one stone to another.

### GOL STONE

Salar Bearmantle (elf **druid**, they/them) likes to meditate at the Gol Stone, reaching out with their senses to feel the ancient magic that flows through the area. The standing stone rises in stark contrast to the rest of the landscape. Salar sits with their back to the stone, talking to themselves and strumming their lute.

When the characters approach, Salar gladly hears their request. The druid always seeks inspiration, and the impending battle between Saxton and Castle Rend is just the sort of human drama Salar enjoys turning into a song. They ask the heroes for details on their exploits and praise them if the tales are told well. If there is a fellow druid among the heroes, Salar invites them to meditate. If a bard is present, Salar suggests a friendly competition to compose a song or poem, the winner determined by opposed Charisma (Performance) checks, and is gracious whether they win or lose.

Salar listens to the heroes regarding Saxton and their mission, then agrees to help, saying:

"The Wardens will hear of this. I will call the Moot. You may accompany me, if you would brave the Elgenwode. But do not wander. And do not let hope cloud your judgment. The Wodewardens are less concerned with the affairs of men than are my people. They think on a different scale than

we do, and their speech is more akin to song or riddle than words.

"If you are prepared for the mystery, I shall send you there."

When the heroes are ready, Salar draws out a short and squat flute and blows on it. No sound is produced, but the Gol Stone vibrates as a doorway made of light appears on its surface. The interior is opaque, giving no insight into what awaits on the other side.

### ARRIVAL AT THE ELGENWODE

When the characters walk into the doorway, it magically transports them to a Gol Stone in the Elgenwode. They find themselves exiting the stone into a clearing some eighty feet in diameter, with nine large mounds of earth spread radially within the circumference. The mounds are shaped like ramps, sloping upwards to face the center. A circle of willow trees surrounds the clearing, and beyond, a dark and twisting forest extends in all directions. Salar doesn't immediately follow through the portal, so the characters find themselves alone in the Elgenwode.

Well, mostly. Two **hill giants**, Gurud and Darudga, sit on one side of the clearing, bickering in Giant. If the characters can understand the giants, they hear the pair argue about whether humanoids are best prepared in chunks for a meal roasted over a fire, or separated so their bones can be ground into bread and the rest cooked in a stew. Gurud thinks they should be roasted for flavor, while Darudga thinks bread is healthier.

The characters can battle the giants or speak with them. With good roleplaying, a shared language, and a successful DC 17 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check, almost anything is possible, from convincing the gullible giants of a vegan lifestyle's merits to persuading them that heroes are not edible. Characters can attempt the Charisma check twice. If they fail both or show the giants aggression, the hungry behemoths attack. Gurud has a set of *boots of levitation* in a bag from a past human victim, and gifts them to the characters if they help resolve the culinary debate, no matter who they side with. Darudga carries gems worth 250 gp, but only gives those gifts if the characters side with her.

Once the hill giants are dead or gone, Salar arrives. They were distracted by an idea for a song. So sorry.

## RIDDLE OF THE ELGENWIGHTS

When Salar arrives, they let out a long, low whistle, which sounds throughout the clearing. After a moment of silence, nine impressive elgenwights step into the clearing. Each has magnificent elk antlers that twist and turn, a toned and muscular chest (uncovered regardless of gender or climate), and a large lower elk body decorated with flowers, leather straps, vines, snowflakes, leaves, butterflies, or other accessories (some of which may even defy reason).

In a deep rumbling voice, an elgenwight with its hide adorned by shiny green beetles solemnly addresses you. And the words are ... incomprehensible. Salar bows before the wights and translates. "Iliadenoor of the Willow Council says the following. The ends meet time's offspring. We

dream, as you dream, as all dream. Let forgotten tales shine, as darkness does for those who see." Salar grins, flashing you a clear I-told-you-so expression.

Allow the characters to attempt to communicate with the elgenwights through Salar—the wights do not understand human languages, though they're quick to sense mockery or derision. If the characters respond in a sincere lyrical fashion, this visibly impresses the council. The characters can also attempt to pantomime, draw, or communicate with the elgenwights in another way. You can make up your own responses to the characters or use the following quotes as inspiration:

- Sailors course on, as waves carry us all. Show the sails.
- To clocks, what is time?
- Carry the story, lest it not be tired.
- Pastures of chance await us, wondering for a dawn with many hooves.



- The colors of awakening cast our spell.
- As life flowers without reason, magic colored our eyes.
- Wars we do not mean fill the skies and close the books.
- The darkest stars shine bright skies away.
- Empty stomachs make full larders.
- What are we to shapes flat?
- Impossible to describe colors you cannot see.

If the characters get frustrated, Salar can explain that mortal concerns don't translate well to beings such as the elgenwight, who dream and think in ways that aren't like ours. The druid encourages the characters to respond to the elgenwights as the elk-centaurs speak to them, or make their request for an alliance in a display of artistic skill.

If the characters find a lyrical or artistic way to explain that Saxton is a threat to the elgenwights—whether with good roleplaying, a successful DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check, or other appropriate ability check with artisan's tools—the elk-centaurs excitedly chatter to Salar.

"Heroes, good news!" the druid says. "You have been found worthy of further consideration by the Willow Council. Iliadenoor would pose to you a riddle. He claims it was presented to him by a human who understood their thinking. If you can resolve it, an alliance shall be granted for the duration of your conflict with Lord Saxton. You may want a quill and parchment for this."

Iliadenoor says something incomprehensible, and Salar translates. "A challenger came to visit four elgenwights, claiming to know a number that held no certainty." As Salar says this, four elgenwights speak in turn, and Salar translates one at a time.

"What happened when the stranger came next to me? Conflagration did I summon, and yet he stood."

"A sailor's demise did I attempt to provide. And yet he emerged and made his claim a final time."

"Of all to speak with him, I was the first. I cursed his name like lightning and storms did rage. And yet he stood."

"Penultimate was I, as he strode calm as ever to see me. He stood his ground, I must confess."

"They hope you can sort out this tale. The answer is elementary to them," Salar says. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

## SOLVING THE PUZZLE

Each of the four quotes refers to an element. In the order of the quotes above, the answers are fire, water, air, and earth. However, the quotes are out of order. The quotes contain clues as to their order, and in order, the elements are air, fire, earth, and water. If the first letter of each is taken, it spells AFEW, or "a few," which is a number that has no certainty. It is a dissatisfying answer to most humanoids but a wondrous answer to an elgenwight.

**Hints.** If the characters are struggling, Salar repeats what they said at the end and winks, indicating the druid is trying to help them. If they still can't solve the puzzle, Salar could add a hint (such as "every story has an order" or "it's all about how things begin") before the elgenwights begin to suspect the druid is helping and forbid further hints.

You can also allow each character to make one DC 12 Intelligence check as they try to solve the riddle. On a success, you can give them one of the following hints:

- The answer to the riddle is a number that holds no certainty—in other words, a phrase that suggests a number of indeterminate value.
- Each elgenwight who spoke provided their own riddle. When you have the answer to all four of those mini riddles, you can use them to answer the bigger question.
- A theme connects the answers to all the mini riddles.
- Take the first letter of each mini riddle's answer, then rearrange them to spell the answer to this larger riddle.



## THE SECRET OF THREE ROSES

If the heroes have already completed **Sabotage: The Star Chamber** (page 277) and discovered Saxton's knights are controlled by mindkillers, the fact that Saxton has these horrors in his service would *definitely* motivate the elgenwights to send aid—and might even prompt them to forgo the riddle. However, the characters would have to bring this up on their own, perhaps when impressing on the elgenwights that Saxton is a threat to everyone.

## CONCLUSION

If the characters solve the riddle, the elgenwights accept an alliance. They give the characters a magic seed and tell them to plant it to grow a Swamp Mother (see page 78 in the **Domains & Intrigue** chapter), a special unit that is a massive shambling mound that lasts for one battle.

If the characters can't solve the puzzle, the elgenwights invite them to return in another year's time and plead their case once more. No alliance is granted for the fight against Lord Saxton.

## ELGENWIGHT STAT BLOCKS

If you need a stat block for the elgenwights, use the **druid** statistics, but give them a movement speed of 50 feet.

## ALLIANCE: THE WHITE TUSK

The characters seek the White Tusk Orcs to ask them to join in fighting against Lord Saxton. The orcs are nomadic, moving periodically around Forest Rend. If the characters search the forest, ask them to pick one character to lead the search for signs of the orcs. That character must make a DC 17 Wisdom (Survival) check, made with advantage if another character assists.

On a success, the characters find signs of the orcs, such as the leftovers of hunts or signs of old encampments, and catch up with them on the western border of the woods late in the afternoon that

day the check was made. Proceed to the **Meeting the Orcs** section.

On a failure, the characters don't find any signs of the orcs that day. The characters can try again with a new check the next day. In the meantime, at your discretion, the characters might encounter dangerous creatures that try to kill them, chosen or rolled on the Forest Rend Encounters table.

## FOREST REND ENCOUNTERS

| d6 | Encounter  |
|----|--|
| 1  | 1d4 + 1 phase spiders  |
| 2  | 3 veterans and 1d4 + 2 scouts, sent by Saxton to prowl the forest for rebels |
| 3  | 1d3 shambling mounds   |
| 4  | 1d3 trolls   |
| 5  | 3 bandit captains and 2d6 bandits  |
| 6  | A coven of three green hags  |

If it takes the characters more than one day to find the orcs, upon reaching their encampment, they must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 11 plus the number of days it took to find the camp. On a failed save, a character gains a level of exhaustion when they reach the camp. If the character fails the save by 5 or more, they gain two levels of exhaustion.

## WHITE TUSK STAT BLOCKS

You probably won't need the stat blocks for the White Tusk Orcs for this adventure. However, you can find them in the *Siege of Castle Rend*, or just use the **orc** stat block from the core rules.

## MEETING THE ORCS

The characters' meeting with the orcs depends on how their adventures with the orcs went during the *Siege of Castle Rend*. If you didn't play this adventure, use the information in **If Siege Went Well**.

### IF SIEGE WENT WELL

If the characters previously established a friendship with the White Tusk Orcs in *Siege*, **Bonebreaker Dorokor** (she/her, page 143 of *Strongholds & Followers*) welcomes the characters to their temporary encampment. She and the other orcs listen intently.

Allow the characters to plead their case and make a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check. On a success, they can sense that Bonebreaker wants to lend aid, but doesn't want to give in too quickly. She asks the characters what the White Tusk Orcs would get out of an alliance with the characters. If the characters explain that standing against Saxton is the best way to defeat him, Bonebreaker argues the characters' side might be just as bad as Saxton. She suggests they bestow a gift upon the orcs to show how unlike the despot Saxton they are. Any permanent magic item she can use will do.

If the players enjoy combat or if their characters are unwilling to give a magic item to Bonebreaker, you can add the hunt presented below in **An Ape of Enormous Size** as an option to seal the alliance. If they give Bonebreaker a gift, skip ahead to the **Conclusion** section.

### IF SIEGE WENT POORLY

If *Siege* ended with the characters having killed most of the White Tusk, the orcs allow them to enter and plead their case but are clearly angered by their presence. If Bonebreaker Dorokor was killed, Garla the Sunderer (she/her) leads the White Tusk. She is a very mean orc. In either case, they make the characters sweat, asking them difficult questions regarding why the orcs should bleed for them and their castle, how they can claim to be different from Saxton, and the like.

Eventually, the orcs agree to fight Saxton alongside the characters—but only if the heroes first complete a hunt for a dangerous beast that has been following the White Tusk for the last month. Proceed to the **An Ape of Enormous Size** encounter.

## AN APE OF ENORMOUS SIZE

For the last month, a large creature has been assaulting the orcs. It only appears at night, attacking guards on the camp outskirts or stragglers returning to camp. The characters can use this to their advantage to draw out the beast or make themselves a target. The orcs provide information but refuse to help the characters battle the monster.

If the characters agree to defeat the beast for the orcs, it's easy enough to find, since the creature attacks anyone outside the White Tusk camp in the

night. The beast is a **giant ape** with the following stat block adjustments:

- The ape has a +10 bonus on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.
- The ape's Multiattack action allows it to make three fist attacks.

The ape moves silently through the trees and swings down to attack a character, hoping to catch them surprised. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check can create a decoy the ape attacks first instead of the characters. If the check fails, the ape doesn't fall for the trick. The ape fights until it has 20 hit points remaining, then flees.

The sound of the battle with the giant ape draws the attention of a hungry **hydra**, which arrives at the end of the first round of combat. The hydra attacks the characters, thinking them the smaller, easier prey. The monstrosity fights until it has 30 hit points remaining, then flees.

A character with a clever plan who makes a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check as an action can provoke the ape and hydra into battling each other. The winner then resumes attacking the characters.

If the ape is defeated, the orcs agree to the alliance.

## CONCLUSION

If the orcs agree to an alliance, the White Tusk sends the Unbreakable (see page 83 in the **Domains & Intrigue** chapter), a special unit of strong orc warriors, to Castle Rend to aid in the fight against Lord Saxton.

## ALLIANCE: THE LORD OF DALRATH

If the characters want to appeal to Lord Kenway of Dalrath for aid, they must first discover information that can convince him it's in his best interest to fight Saxton.

In **Sabotage: The Star Chamber**, the characters may find proof that Saxton is working with the goblins and gnolls who attack the people of Dalrath (see area **S3**). In **Sabotage: The Necromancer**, the characters can find proof that after Lord Kenway exiled Caliga Lifebane, she began working with Saxton in exchange for the despot's help conquering

Dalrath (see **Middle Level** on page 276).

Information found at either location convinces Lord Kenway that Saxton is a threat to Dalrath.

The heroes are not expected to physically travel to Dalrath. Its borders are dangerous and the hills thick with hostile elves, goblins, orcs, and barbarians. Plus, it's far away! Edmund knows Kenway has a *diplomat's pouch* and advises the characters to contact the Lord of Dalrath with their own. If the characters reach out without proof, Lord Kenway politely rebuffs them, explaining he has too many wars to fight already. But when the characters obtain information about Saxton threatening Dalrath, he is quick to lend his thanks and aid. Here are some possible missives he might send through a *diplomat's pouch*:

- Am I addressing the Lord Bedegar?
- You want aid in battle? So do I. My enemies press upon me from all sides. Perhaps you should come here and aid me.
- Saxton is a worm. But he and you are far south. What do you propose?
- I will send the Hounds.

## CONCLUSION

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If the characters gain Dalrath's aid, they score a major victory for their army! Lord Kenway opens a portal to Castle Rend and marches through it himself, accompanied by a special unit, his famed Hounds of Dalrath (see page 138 in the **Warfare** chapter), to aid in the fight. The lord greets the heroes personally, then returns through the portal after leaving the hounds in their command.

## SABOTAGE: THE NECROMANCER

The necromancer Caliga Lifebane is Lord Saxton's ally. The characters can investigate her connection to Saxton and eliminate a major threat before Lord Saxton can bring Caliga's undead troops to march on Castle Rend. The heroes must infiltrate Mistview's ruins and brave Caliga's tower to face the necromancer. The tower is just west of Forest Rend, so getting there is no problem.

The heroes learned the story of the tower in the **Urland Intelligence Report** (page 248). A generation ago, Gerald Therongo, a kind wizard, watched over the village of Mistview from the tower. One day, Gerald vanished. When travelers next visited the town, every inhabitant was undead, and Caliga Lifebane occupied the tower, sending minions to attack any who drew near.

## ENTERING THE RUINS

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Unless the players specify otherwise, the heroes arrive at Mistview's ruins at night. Dark rain clouds obscure the moon, and a steady drizzle falls. From a safe distance, the characters can see the small ruined town consists of nearly fifteen buildings and a few smaller structures such as stables and sheds. The ruins are overgrown with wild shrubs, brambles, and tall grasses. A pockmarked stone tower rises near the center of town, and parts of its outer walls are missing (as if fire or magic has damaged the tower). Undead, primarily skeletons and zombies, shuffle through the ruins.

Resolve approaching the tower in three steps.



## STEP 1: TOWN OUTSKIRTS

Farmhouses, stables, and small dwellings sit on the outskirts of town. One character can act as a guide, looking out for danger, as the group presses on toward the tower. A guide who makes a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a path through the farmhouses that seems relatively clear. Failure on this check increases the DC of the group Dexterity (Stealth) check described below to 14.

As the characters move through the ruined, weather-beaten farmhouses, they must make a group DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If at least half the characters (rounded up) succeed on the Dexterity (Stealth) check, the characters move on to step 2. Otherwise, they pass through an open barn and stumble upon two **warhorse skeletons** in the stalls. Battle with the skeletal horses draws the attention of six **skeletons** and two **zombies** just outside the building and up in the barn's hay loft, which crash through walls or crawl over hay bales to enter the fray.

### CALIGA'S UNDEAD

The undead created by Caliga have their hit point maximum increased by 10 and gain a +3 bonus to damage rolls. Whenever one of Caliga's undead notices the characters, the monsters attack and fight until destroyed, unless the necromancer is around to order them otherwise.

## STEP 2: HOMES

The heroes pass through a series of small homes as they move through the town proper to get to the tower. A guide finds a clear path with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check. Failure on this check increases the DC of the group Dexterity (Stealth) check described below to 16.

The characters must attempt a group DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check as they sneak through the houses to get to the tower. If at least half the characters (rounded up) succeed, they make it through the creaky houses and move to step 3. Otherwise, they

knock something over inside a house, causing two **will-o'-wisps** and two **shadows** to rise out from the floorboards and attack. The undead are the house's former inhabitants.

## STEP 3: APPROACHING THE TOWER

A large tavern, several businesses, and a very spooky graveyard stand between the characters and the tower. A guide must now succeed at a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check to find a clear path. Failure on this check increases the DC of the group Dexterity (Stealth) check described below to 18.

The heroes can weave through the alleys between the businesses, attempting a group DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If at least half the characters (rounded up) succeed, they make it to the tower. Otherwise, four **ghouls** and two **ghasts** claw out of their graves as the heroes move through the graveyard. If the characters failed all three group Dexterity (Stealth) checks in steps 1, 2, and 3, an **ogre zombie** (buried years ago after it attacked the town) and a **wight** join the fray at the end of the second round.

### AVOIDING THE RUIN ENCOUNTERS

The characters may have some means to bypass the town to get to the tower. The *invisibility* spell grants characters advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, but does not bypass ability checks completely due to the many opportunities to run into undead.

If the characters can fly, they can probably avoid the outskirts and homes in the first two steps. However, as the characters approach the tower, have them attempt the ability checks for step 3, **Approaching the Tower**. If they fail, they attract the attention of several spirits (two **will-o'-wisps** and two **specters**) who fly out of cracks in the tower and attack.

If the characters manage to avoid every encounter through stealth, flight, or some other trick, their battle against Caliga may be a cakewalk. For some groups, that's a fine reward. For others, it's a bit of an anticlimax. If the characters make it to the tower unscathed and seem disappointed or you want to soften them up for Caliga, you can make the graveyard encounter in step 3 automatically happen.

## CALIGA'S TOWER

The necromancer's tower is 40 feet in diameter and has three levels, each 20 feet tall. See the **Caliga's Tower** map for details.

The tower's front iron doors have rusted and can't be opened quietly. However, there is a gap in the stones on the northwest side of the tower, allowing the characters to quietly slip through the hole onto the ground floor. A successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check is required to climb up to a gap on the second level on the tower's southeast side, 20 feet above the ground. A second successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check allows a character to climb up to a gap on the northeast side of the tower's highest level, 40 feet above the ground. If a character fails a Strength (Athletics) check to climb the tower, they slip and must make a DC 12 Strength saving throw. On a success, the character slides low enough they must repeat the Strength (Athletics) check to climb back up, but they don't fall. If they fail the saving throw, they fall prone to the ground and take 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they fell.

Each time a character makes a Strength (Athletics) check to climb the tower, they must also succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check or draw the attention of one **will-o'-wisp** that flies out of a tiny gap in the outer wall. Once a climber has successfully made a Strength (Athletics) check, they may lower a rope, granting advantage on any other character's checks to scale the walls and evade detection.

### GROUND FLOOR

There are no immediate threats in the first two levels of the tower, though the characters may trigger or uncover dangers. The ground floor of the tower has no light sources. The read-aloud text below assumes the characters enter through the hole in the wall, and they are not yet using a light source.

The rain's intensity quickens, and a brilliant flash of light illuminates the interior of the tower. Thunder reverberates off the tower's walls, then you plunge into shadow and darkness. Within the tower, you glimpse moldy furniture upon a water-stained

### NEGOTIATING WITH CALIGA

It's unlikely, but what if the characters want to negotiate with the necromancer? The characters must still reach the tower, but once there, they could announce their presence and request an audience. If they do so and succeed on a DC 19 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Caliga gathers as many of the tower's and town's forces to her side as she can, then invites the characters up to the tower's third level. Lord Kenway of Dalrath exiled the necromancer for her dark practices. If the heroes agree to grant her permanent control of her tower and the area around it, they can convince Caliga with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to tell the characters all she knows about Lord Saxton's plans and promise not to aid the despot—though she doesn't agree to help the characters. If the characters refuse her terms or fail their check, Caliga and her forces attack.

A second successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces her to lend the characters her Grim Front special unit for the battle. If the characters agree and win the final confrontation against Saxton, Caliga may prove an ally or patron for future adventures, or could be a rising threat as she grows her power.

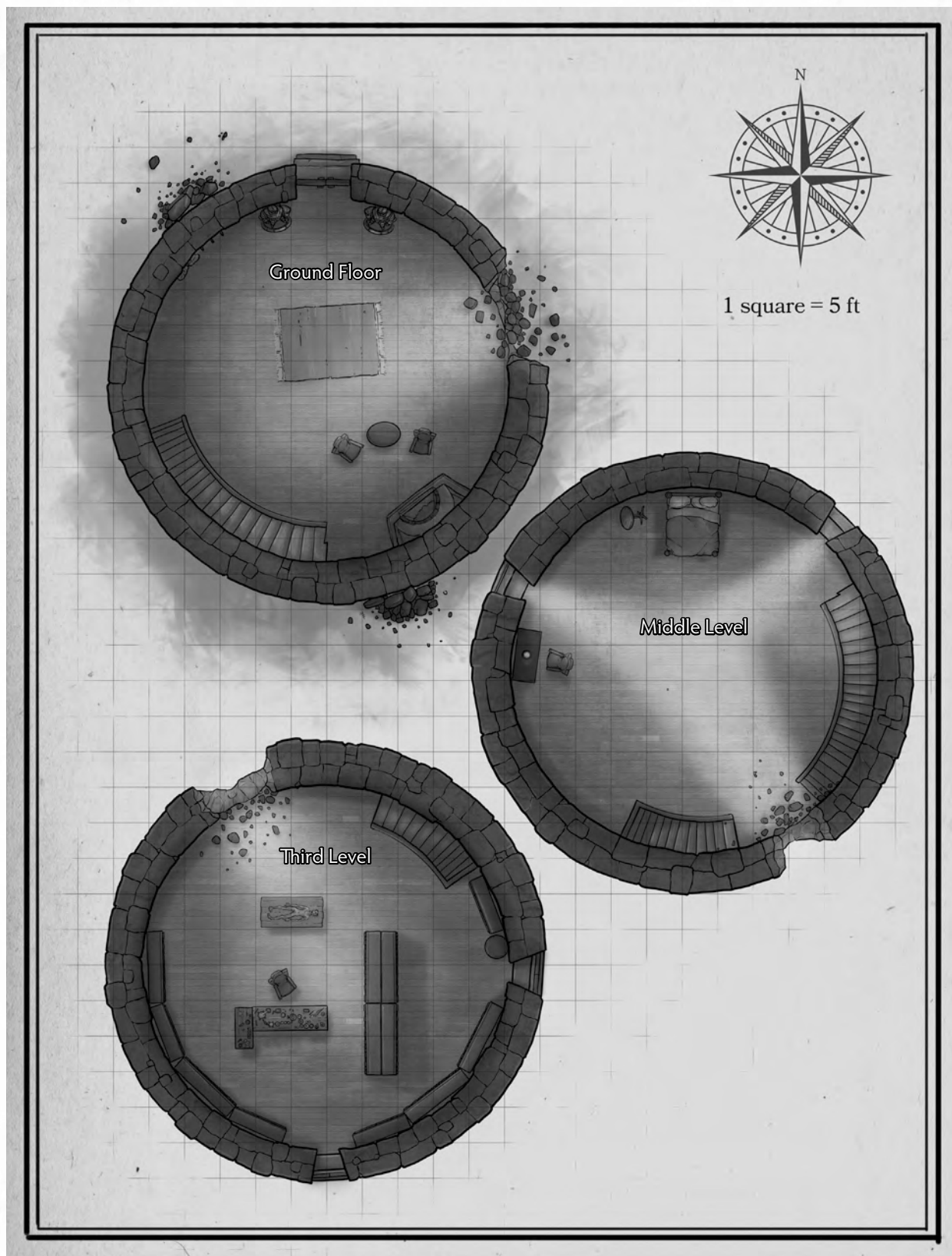
If the characters form an alliance with Caliga to get her Grim Front special unit, the attitudes of all other NPC realms toward the characters' organization move one step toward hostile.

wooden floor, arranged around a dark fireplace.

Two suits of armor flank the rusted entrance door. Old cloaks and hats hang from a rack, not far from a once-grand staircase curving up to the second floor.

The lower tower level consists of a single circular room. A small table near the chairs holds web-covered tin cups and plates.

Two suits of **animated armor** attack if any character makes a loud noise, opens the rusted-shut iron doors, or climbs up the steps. They fight until destroyed, and their loud clanging movement alerts Caliga on the third level to intruders.



*Caliga's Tower map*

## MIDDLE LEVEL

The middle level of the tower has no light sources.

Exposure to the elements has heavily damaged this level of the tower. A large hole in the wall gapes just past the landing, between the stairs from the ground floor and those to the top level. A mold-ridden bed sags against one wall, and just beneath it sits a tarnished chest.

Though the stairs look unsafe, they still support a person's weight. Touching or otherwise interacting with the bed or the chest beneath it reveals that the sheets function as a **rug of smothering**. Combat with the rug alerts Caliga on the third level to intruders.

### CHEST

The chest is trapped and locked. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check finds magical runes on the lock, which are deactivated with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check or an Intelligence check made with thieves' tools or tinker's tools. A *detect magic* spell reveals that the runes radiate an aura of evocation magic. The trap jolts a creature attacking, opening the chest, or picking the lock for 13 (2d10 + 2) lightning damage.

The chest has AC 15, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools picks the chest's lock, or a character who makes a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check forces the chest open. Caliga Lifebane, on the tower's third level, carries a key to the chest.

### TREASURE

The chest contains three *potions of greater healing*, 500 gp, and a rolled-up sheaf of parchment pages. In Common, Caliga has transcribed her conversations with Lord Saxton held through the *sending* spell. These documents tell the tale of Lord Saxton reaching out to Caliga after she was exiled from Dalrath for her necromantic practices. Lord Saxton suggested she take over the village of Mistview, granting her the tower if she would raise an undead army and support him as he gained control of Bedegar. Now, he wants her to prepare for an attack on Castle Rend. Saxton plans to expand his power, eventually attacking Dalrath. (See **Alliance:**

**The Lord of Dalrath** on page 271 for information on how these notices can be used to convince Lord Kenway to lend the characters aid.) In return for Caliga's loyalty, Saxton promises her many bodies for her growing army. The documents also include Caliga's notes on the Star Chamber, where Lord Saxton's knights employ gnolls and goblins and perform mystic and foul rituals—while Dalrath won't be interested in these notes, the heroes may be. Caliga is curious about the source of their power, believing it is the World Below—a plane of existence beneath Orden that holds magic, mysteries, and evil beings.

The chest also holds Caliga's spellbook, which contains all the spells she has prepared (page 301), plus *animate objects*, *bestow curse*, *blight*, *blindness/deafness*, *false life*, *fabricate*, *fly*, *gentle repose*, *identify*, *suggestion*, and *unseen servant*.

## THIRD LEVEL

The text below assumes Caliga has been alerted to the characters' presence and has made herself invisible.

Shelves of alchemical supplies line the walls of the windy top level of the tower. Though the small windows on this level are shuttered, rain blows in from a large gap in the wall, drenching an operating table upon which rests a withered corpse. A second table holds alchemical devices.

**Caliga Lifebane** (she/her, page 301) works here perfecting her dark arts. She recently completed work on the cadaver on the operating table, which is a **vampire spawn**. Flickering candles fill this room with dim light.

Caliga always has the *mage armor* spell cast. If she has been alerted to the characters' presence, she also casts the *invisibility* spell just before they enter the room. She begins combat by casting her *cone of cold* spell to catch as many characters as possible (probably as they ascend the stairs), followed by the *ice storm* spell.

If Caliga is unaware of the characters, once they make their presence known, she takes what she can get with the *blight*, *cone of cold*, and *fireball* spells after that. If any of her foes perish, she uses *animate dead* on their corpses.



If the characters didn't destroy the animated armor suits from the tower's first level or the bedsheets from the second level, Caliga cries out for those constructs to join the fray and protect her. They arrive at the start of the second round of combat.

The necromancer employs the *counterspell* or *shield* spells as reactions whenever she can. If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, she flees. The *ice storm* spell could help her slow down the characters so she can escape using her *cloak of the bat*.

### TREASURE

Caliga wears a *cloak of the bat*.

### CONCLUSION

If the heroes capture or kill Caliga, they prevent Lord Saxton from gaining her Grim Front special unit in the fight against Saxton (see page 87 in the **Domains & Intrigue** chapter). If Caliga escapes, she still can't send Saxton the Grim Front, but she swears revenge against Castle Rend (and could rise as the leader of an undead dominion the characters face in a later adventure).

## SABOTAGE: THE STAR CHAMBER

The characters can attempt to infiltrate Star Chamber and deal a serious blow to Lord Saxton by killing one of his lieutenants. The Star Chamber, a star-shaped keep in the city of Bedegar, serves as the headquarters of the Knights of the Three Roses—a group of warriors secretly controlled by mindkillers (see page 312 of this adventure's appendix). The aberrations are in league with Lord Saxton, who has promised them their own domain to rule within Bedegar.

The knights are Saxton's prized elite cavalry. They execute his most foul orders and direct his troops in battle. Negotiation is not an option, and the heroes would know they can't possibly defeat everyone here—there are too many guards and other dangers. If the players try to take the entire keep head-on, you may wish to encourage them to find a way to infiltrate the ground floor and reach the second level (where the knights operate)

as quietly as possible. If they do so, they might defeat Sir Anglim, destroy vital resources, uncover dark secrets, and sever the link to fell energies that empower several knights.

## FAILURE POINTS

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While the characters are preparing or infiltrating the Star Chamber, if they fail a check to conceal their identity or otherwise do something to potentially reveal their presence, they don't immediately get caught. Instead, the characters accrue a failure point. These slowly increase the keep's alert level, result in more difficult encounters, and could eventually make the knights aware of the characters' presence.

If the characters earn 7 failure points, the alarm is raised in the Star Chamber and guards are authorized to enter all areas. For every 5 minutes the characters spend in the chamber, there is a 30 percent chance a patrol consisting of a **cult fanatic** and three **knights** finds them and attacks.

### DIMPLE'S BETRAYAL

If the characters freed Dimple in **Alliance: The Clock** (imprisoned in area **P10**), you don't have to track failure points. Simply run the last three ground floor encounters (see **Find the Stairs** on page 279).

## PLANNING IN BEDEGAR

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The heroes can easily reach the city. Even if they have previously caused a disturbance in Bedegar by breaking Zola Honeycut from prison in **Alliance: The Clock**, as long as 24 hours have passed since their heroics, the city's size and distracting war effort allow the characters to reenter the city undetected. As the characters move through town, they witness many units of Lord Saxton's army assembling for inspection, underscoring the vastness of his army and how a frontal assault on Bedegar would be folly.

The characters can stake out the Star Chamber or ask around and determine that this isn't a place they can take by force. Each time a character asks around in taverns or other public spaces about the Star Chamber and succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check, they learn one of the following pieces of information:



- The knights frequently purchase supplies for their rituals from the Guild of Arcanists and Herbalists, known for wearing cowed green robes.
- The Bedegar prison periodically sends prisoners to the Star Chamber. Guards escort those prisoners inside—and once there, the prisoners never leave.
- The Star Chamber's ground floor is dedicated to training, mundane research, and the like. The weird and powerful stuff? The actual knights? Those are on the second level, accessible only by the grand stair inside.

If the characters fail a check made to gather information about the tower, they still earn the information, but word gets back to the guards at the Star Chamber that some strangers were asking about the keep, and the characters automatically earn a failure point.

After the characters learn what they can about the Star Chamber, give them some time to plan their infiltration.

### ACQUIRING DISGUISES

If the characters wish to find a guard outfit or the green robes of the Guild of Arcanists and Herbalists, they can buy similar garments for 10 gp each and modify them to look like the real thing by making a successful DC 13 Intelligence check made with a disguise kit or weaver's tools.

Or they can find the genuine articles for 25 gp each with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check or Charisma (Investigation) check, made with advantage if they know Thieves' Cant. Characters can also find a group of **priests** or **guards** and try to take them by force. If the characters assault anyone in a public place, they earn a failure point and there is a 25 percent chance that two **veteran** guards arrive and join the fray.

## ENTERING THE STAR CHAMBER

A gate warden (**cult fanatic**) and four **guards** question the purpose of any visitors who enter the Star Chamber's main (and only) entrance. A successful DC 14 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check, made with advantage if the characters have appropriate disguises, convinces the guards to let

the characters through. On a failure, the guards ask several more questions, but eventually let the characters pass, and the characters gain a failure point.

If the characters attack the gate guards, the guards shout the alarm and fight to the death, and the characters automatically earn 7 failure points.

### CLIMBING THROUGH THE WINDOWS

The Star Chamber has shuttered windows on its second story, 15 feet above the ground. Scaling the walls of the tower without equipment requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Unlocking the shutters from the outside requires a successful DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. The shutters have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Climbing the walls of the Star Chamber without being seen is no easy task; make this clear to the players before any character attempts it! A character who climbs the walls without the aid of magic such as the *invisibility* spell must make a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) check or be noticed by the gate guards who attack and shout the alarm, automatically giving the characters 7 failure points.

## GROUND FLOOR

The keep is relatively small, but its unusual shape and maze-like corridors on the ground floor make it hard to navigate.

### GENERAL FEATURES

Ceilings on the ground floor are 10 feet tall, and all hallways and rooms contain torches that provide bright light in all areas.

### FIND THE STAIRS

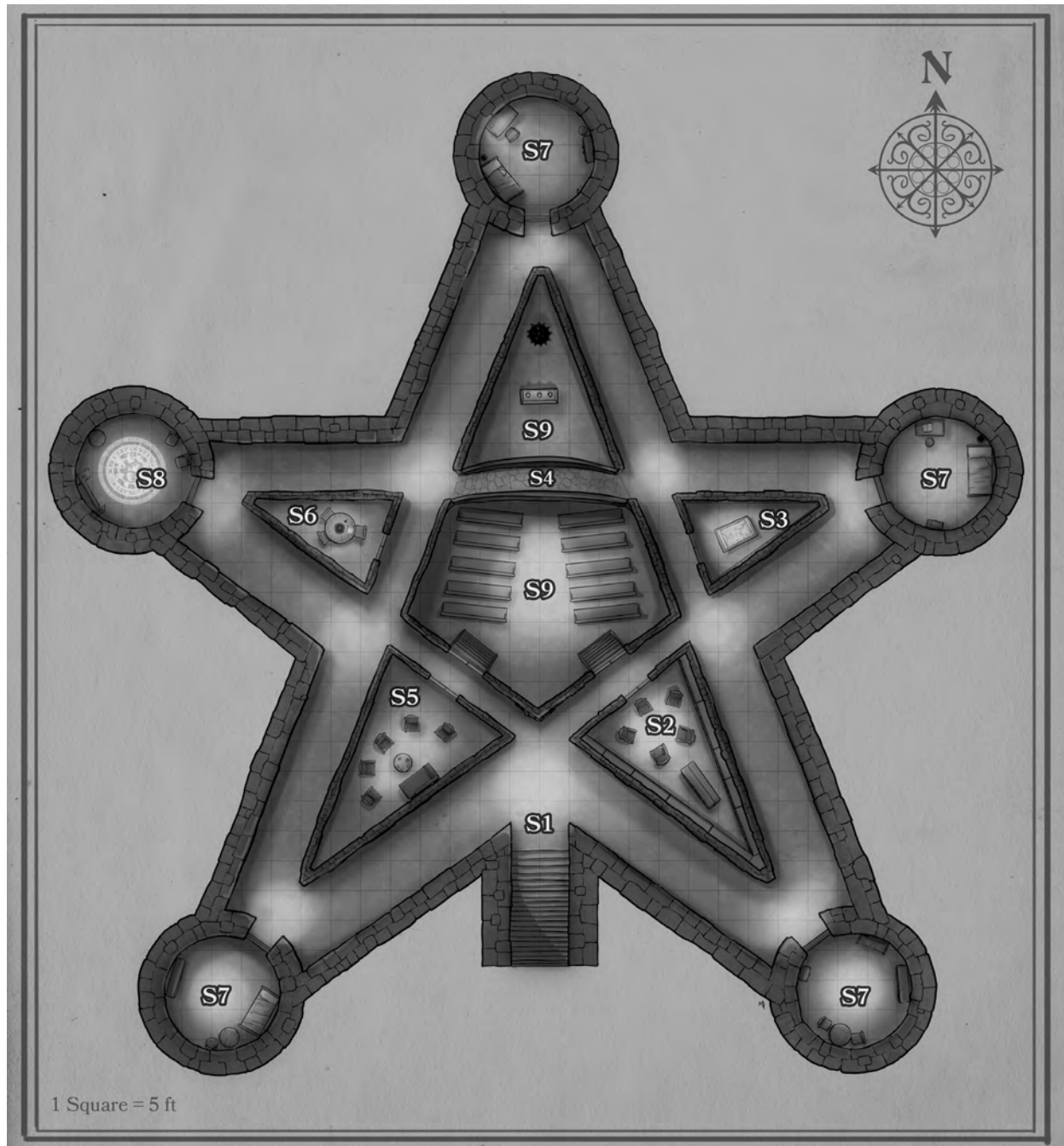
Remind the characters that their goal is to get to the second floor. To do so, they must find their way to the grand stairs through a series of DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check or Wisdom (Insight or Perception) checks. The characters must succeed on this check three times to navigate to the stairs, though a different character can make each check. Each time a character fails, the heroes accrue a failure point. Whether the check succeeds or fails, roll 1d12 and add the current number of failure points. Compare the result to the following scenes and run the encounter that matches the result. If you have already run the scene, roll again.

| d12   | Scene                     |
|-------|---------------------------|
| 1–3   | Unlawful Carnal Knowledge |
| 4–6   | Super Breakout            |
| 7–9   | Drinking Buddies          |
| 10–11 | Get in the Ring           |
| 12+   | Barracks Inspection       |

After each scene, the characters make another check to find the stairs until they achieve three successes.

### UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE

The characters round a corner to find a **bugbear** and a human **knight** awkwardly backing away from each other. A character who succeeds on a



*The Star Chamber map*

DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check knows the couple were clearly stealing a secret smooch moments before. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check knows that Star Chamber guards are prohibited from having romantic relationships with one another. If the characters blackmail the couple and succeed on a DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check, the couple provides them with directions, granting automatic success on the next check to find the stairs.

### SUPER BREAKOUT

The characters reach an intersection and hear a commotion. A **gibbering moulder** is trying to get out through a narrow doorway as three **guards** try to force it back in and close the door. The heroes can avoid being seen with a successful DC 12 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. On a failure, they are ordered to help; the heroes gain a failure point if they run off. (Even if they run off, you can require them all to save once against the moulder's Gibbering trait.)

If the heroes decide to help, the gibbering moulder must be reduced to half its hit points before it retreats into the room. The guards are thankful enough to provide directions to the stairs. This grants an automatic success on the next ability check made to find the stairs.

### DRINKING BUDDIES

Six **bugbears** are in a mess hall, drinking rotgut that one of them distilled. A successful DC 12 group Dexterity (Stealth) check sneaks by the bugbears unnoticed. If the goblinoids notice the characters, they challenge them to a drinking contest. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Intimidation) check gets the bugbears to back down; otherwise, the characters gain a failure point if they refuse. A character who drinks a round must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If at least half the characters (rounded up) succeed on the saving throw, they win the contest and can continue on their way. If fewer than half succeed, one of the heroes who failed says something suspicious or a part of their disguise starts to fall off, resulting in a failure point.



### GET IN THE RING

An open archway reveals a makeshift fighting ring. Four **guards** cheer as two more **guards** box in the center. One of the boxers, a short wiry half-elf, challenges the characters. She demands one of them fight her, offering a 50 gp emerald if they win. If the characters decline or run off without succeeding on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check, they gain a failure point. If a character accepts and defeats the guard, her chest opens up and a horrid creature with tentacles (use the **grick** stat block) crawls out of her chest. The guards are horrified and run off. The heroes can decide whether to kill the creature or run. If they run, they reduce their failure point total by one, as the abomination creates a distraction as it goes on a rampage.



## BARRACKS INSPECTION

Two **cult fanatics** inspect six **guards** in a barracks just off of the hallway the heroes are traversing. If the characters succeed on a DC 15 group Dexterity (Stealth) check, they can escape the inspectors' notice. Otherwise, the inspectors call the characters in for inspection. Characters who run off gain a failure point. If they don't, the fanatics quickly see through any disguises and attack, giving the characters a failure point, along with an additional point if the combat lasted longer than 2 rounds.

## SECOND FLOOR: SANCTUARY AND TEMPLE

The second floor is reserved for the Knights of the Three Roses. Most of the knights are away on missions, but Sir Anglim is present in area **S9** (and might be seen from the bridge in **S4**). If Sir Pelliton was not killed when you ran *Siege*, you can have him appear in area **S9**, or save him for the final confrontation in Gravesford. Use the **Star Chamber** map when the characters navigate the second floor.

## GENERAL FEATURES

Ceilings on the second floor are 15 feet tall. Unless otherwise noted, all hallways and rooms contain multiple small star-shaped sconces that give off dim light.

## S1. GRAND STAIRWAY AND INTERSECTING HALLWAYS

The grand stairs lead up from the first level to an intersection of two hallways. Where the two southern hallways come to a point between areas **S5** and **S2**, that section of the wall is made of a strange green stone that intermittently ripples. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check reveals it to be some kind of ooze occupying a recessed area in the wall.

The green ooze uses the stat block of a **black pudding**. It attacks if touched, or if the characters move down the hall without succeeding on a DC 13 group Dexterity (Stealth) or Charisma (Deception) check. If the characters fight the ooze, they gain a failure point.

## S2. LIBRARY OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

The walls of this room are lined with books, while the center of the room contains additional low shelves and reading areas. The tomes cover various topics, including local history, magical theory, monster anatomy, celestial bodies, and deities, as well as vile topics such as defiling temples, summoning fiends, and torture.

A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers three particularly rare tomes worth 400 gp each. If the result of the check is a 15 or higher, the characters also find three *spell scrolls*, one of *vampiric touch*, one of *blight*, and one of *hold monster*. Failing the check results in finding a book concerning architecture that, if opened, conjures a hostile **gargoyle**. Fighting the gargoyle earns the characters a failure point.

## S3. MAP ROOM

The walls of this room are covered with wood paneling, intricately carved to depict clusters



of three roses. A large table carved from dark wood dominates the center of this room. Upon the table rests a large map of Bedegar, with marble tokens placed in various locations. A cursory examination of the map shows tokens representing the heroes' armies at Castle Rend—Saxton's knights seem to have fairly accurate information on their locations, though the intelligence is from before the heroes began their missions. A successful DC 11 Intelligence (History) check notes that the tokens representing Lord Saxton's units are actually positioned at Gravesford, not at Castle Rend.

A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a hidden wall panel. Inside are tactical diagrams and plans for troop movements indicating that Lord Saxton intends to first attack Gravesford, not Castle Rend, so as to demoralize the characters' armies. The characters also find plans for attacking Dalrath and bringing an end to Lord Kenway's rule by recruiting units of goblins and gnolls to lay waste to his forces; this information could easily convince Kenway to lend them aid (see **Alliance: The Lord of Dalrath** on page 271).

#### S4. BRIDGE

Steep steps climb 20 feet to a bridge with low sides, allowing anyone crossing to look down upon the temple (S9) and potentially see Sir Anglim.

If the characters have accrued 3 or fewer failure points, **Sir Anglim** (he/him, page 308) is not expecting the characters and can be seen in the temple below, kneeling at the altar. They can observe him and even attack with surprise if they succeed on a DC 16 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. If the characters aren't stealthy, they briefly see a knight praying in the temple before he vanishes into the shadows. If the characters have accrued 4 or more failure points, Sir Anglim is already in hiding, as described in area S9.

#### S5. MEETING ROOM

This room contains five comfortable chairs, a divan, and a small table with five goblets inlaid with precious stones. The walls are decorated with portraits of knights.

The portraits bear small plaques and identify Lady Ruth, Lady Morgant, Sir Noth, Sir Anglim,

#### BUGBEARS AND ABERRATIONS!

The heroes' encounters in the Star Chamber may prompt two questions. The first: "If Lord Saxton believes humans should rule over everything, why does he have bugbears working here?" The second: "Why are so many of the aberrations from the World Below running amok here if Saxton's servants can harness their power?"

Despite Saxton's alliance with a group of mind-killers (see page 312 of this adventure's appendix) to control his knights and other forces of the World Below, many aberrations in the chamber abhor the creatures that pluck them from their home and force them into the Mundane World. To make matters worse, the mages and priests of the Star Chamber perform experiments on the aberrations, hoping to unlock arcane secrets and harness the creatures' powers. These imprisoned aberrations here are angry, violent, and looking for a way out ... which is exactly why Lord Saxton puts his nonhuman allies and servants to work in the Star Chamber. Sometimes the aberrations get out and seek vengeance.

and Sir Barlow. (If Sir Pelliton is alive, his portrait is also found here.)

The five chairs and the small table are six **mimics**. They attack only if disturbed, and are trained not to attack any of the knights. (In fact, they recline and mold themselves to the knights as they command.) If the characters battle the mimics, they gain a failure point.

**Treasure.** The goblets are worth 250 gp each.

#### S6. SCRYING ROOM

This austere chamber contains a long table opposite the door and three simple wooden chairs. Upon the table rests a stone bowl containing dark liquid. Next to the bowl lie several sheets of parchment.

The bowl itself is mundane, but the knights use it as a component for the *scrying* spell when they contact Lord Saxton. The liquid within the bowl is foul, tainted with unholy essence. A creature that touches it takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage.

The sheets of parchment contain Sir Anglim's notes from a recent conversation with Lord Saxton. The notes mention that Saxton decided to



attack Gravesford rather than Castle Rend. Saxton also inquires about the success of Lady Morgant's mission to research ancient religious symbols pertaining to Saint Gaed and the traitor saint, Hylae the Corrupt. The notes don't reveal the purpose of the research, but the words "corruption" and "empower" are written on the sheet.

## S7. KNIGHTS' CHAMBERS

These circular tower rooms are austere chambers for visiting knights. As the knights—who are secretly mindkillers—don't need to sleep and require few belongings, they are primarily used for private contemplation or to hatch schemes away from prying eyes. Each chamber contains a few items of furniture, such as a chair and desk, a small meditation mat, and a shelf with a few books. The second such room the characters visit has an arrow fashioned from white bone resting upon a shelf. This is an *arrow of slaying (undead)*.

## S8. THE INTERESTING CHAMBER

This room is similar to the rooms described in **S7**, except the furniture has been pushed to the edges, and in the center stands a strange bipedal aberration with tentacles coming out of its mouth and claws for hands. It is surrounded and bound by a pentagram inscribed upon the floor with chalk. A *detect magic* spell reveals that the pentagram radiates an aura of conjuration magic.

The aberration is an entity from the plane that empowers the Knights of the Rose, the World Below, and has been bound here by Lady Morgant. The aberration calls itself Golrathok, and offers the characters an alliance if they free it. Golrathok initially promises secrets in exchange for freedom. If the characters free Golrathok—or pretend to accept the aberration's offer and succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check—Golrathok tells the heroes that the knights have allied with the necromancer Caliga. They plan to combine forces to destroy the heroes and Edmund, then attack Lord Kenway of Dalrath.

If the characters don't accept, Golrathok offers to provide secrets and to create a distraction so they can escape (by descending to the ground level and

killing as many guards as possible), as well as the best way to escape (a tower window).

Threats have no effect on Golrathok. If killed in the Mundane World, the aberration returns to the World Below.

Golrathok uses the **chuul** stat block with the following adjustments:

- It can speak and understand Common, Deep Speech, and Primordial.
- Its Intelligence and Charisma scores are 12 (+1).

Freeing Golrathok adds a failure point if it only provided secrets, but removes a failure point if it promised to provide a distraction, as the aberration makes good on that deal.

## S9. THE TEMPLE

This large space is clearly a church, though the chaotic star imagery found here represents no known saint or god. The curved ceiling peaks 20 feet above, painted to resemble a gray-black void dotted by stars. The light in this room comes solely from the stars, which intermittently glow brightly and darken, and at any given moment, there are several areas of the church in shadow.

Several pews occupy one end of the temple, the pews carved to depict grasping tentacles. The far end of the room narrows behind an altar stained with blood and ichor. Upon the altar rest three small glass domes. The triangular wedge where the walls would join behind the altar is a black void, and swirling motes of light circle around it, as if it were a whirlpool.

If the characters have fewer than 4 failure points and **Sir Anglim** (he/him, page 308) didn't notice the characters in area **S4**, the knight kneels before the altar, praying and meditating. Otherwise, he heard the heroes and is hiding in shadows near the altar.

## SIR ANGLIM

The Tear Knight, as Sir Anglim is known, leads Lord Saxton's scouts and spies. He uses the darkness and the void pool to his advantage, waiting until at least one character is being drawn into the void, then surprising a different character with his Assassinate trait.

If Sir Anglim's hit point total is reduced below 20 hit points, he uses his Cunning Action trait to disengage and/or dash (utilizing his *boots of speed*) and attempt escape. While fleeing, he may order patrols to pursue the heroes or promise Golrathok (in area **S8**) freedom in exchange for turning on the characters. He then drinks the *potion of greater healing* he carries and seeks to surprise the characters once more when they are distracted fighting the patrols or Golrathok. If Sir Anglim is reduced to 0 hit points, he hits the ground and his skull strikes the floor with a sickening crunch. A **mindkiller** (page 312) emerges from his broken skull and immediately joins the initiative, attacking the closest hero(es).

### ALTAR

The altar can be safely approached from the side opposite the void. Anyone moving between the altar and the void triggers the void (see below).

### VOID

Any creature, other than Saxton's knights, who moves within 20 feet of the void or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pulled 10 feet closer to the void. The area within 20 feet of the void is difficult terrain for all creatures except knights. A creature that is pulled into the void's space vanishes from this room and must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. The creature then finds themselves tumbling out of thin air within sight of the Gol Stone southeast of Forest Rend. (It is up to you whether Salar Bearmantle is at the Gol Stone at this time, as described in **Alliance: The Elgenwights**.) A character who travels through the void and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check knows that Gol Stones can serve as portals and teleportation anchors, and that the Knights of the Three Roses apparently tuned the void to this Gol Stone for faster travel around Bedegar.

A character studying the void from a safe distance and making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check can learn that the void pulls in creatures and objects that get close to it and, while

it damages anything it touches, anything not destroyed is then transported to another location. (This is one of the ways the characters can escape the Star Chamber, though it's painful!)

### TREASURE

Sir Anglim carries a *potion of greater healing*, wears *boots of speed*, and wields two *+1 shortswords*.

### SIR PELLITON RETURNS!

If you want a tougher and more rewarding encounter in the Star Chamber and the characters did not kill Sir Pelliton during the events of *Siege*, you could have **Sir Pelliton** (he/him, page 305) pray at the altar next to Sir Anglim in area **S9**. Like Anglim, Pelliton is controlled by a **mindkiller** (page 312). If either knight is killed, they don't appear in the final confrontation against Saxton's army!

### ESCAPING ALIVE!

If the characters have accrued 6 or fewer failure points, they can simply walk out of the Star Chamber after defeating Sir Anglim. If they've accrued 7 or more failure points, they face a patrol of three **cult fanatics** led by a **half-red dragon veteran** if they try to escape through the main gate beyond area **S1**. The heroes can escape most easily through one of the tower windows in areas **S7** or **S8**, descending to the ground below, and running through Bedegar's streets. If the characters try to escape after earning 7 or more failure points, use the same guidance found in **Alliance: The Clock** in the **Fleeing the City** section (page 258).

If the heroes run out of other options (or are feeling particularly foolhardy), they can also escape through the void in area **S9**. They may also have other means at their disposal, such as the *dimension door* spell.

### CONCLUSION

If the characters killed Sir Anglim, then Saxton is down one lieutenant in the final confrontation! If Anglim (or Pelliton) lived through this raid, then he appears again in part 3.

## OPTIONAL: PINNA, TACE, AND THE SECRET

This is an optional scene you can introduce if the characters have failed one of the missions. Pinna's master, Tace (human **mage**, he/him), comes to Castle Rend. He brings important aid to level the playing field—in exchange for a promise.

This scene begins when the characters return from a mission. Pinna approaches them in Castle Rend, bubbling with excitement, “Master Tace has come! He has agreed to help us! Umm ... you!”

Master Tace awaits outside the castle walls, reclining in a purple tent filled with smoke from his large gnarled pipe. Tace was once the old baron's court wizard, and though he warned against trusting Saxton, was unable to convince his lord and friend.

Saxton arranged to have the baron send Tace to Blackbottom on an errand, leaving the baron without his court wizard when the orcs came and killed the baron and his family.

While Tace has ample motivation to oppose Saxton, he also wants to further his own goals. He will summon an Ersatz Infantry, but in exchange, asks that the heroes build a wizard's tower at Castle Rend, and there install his apprentice, Pinna, as Rend's court wizard.

If the characters accept, Tace provides one of the following rewards:

- Tace works with other wizards to summon an Ersatz Infantry, a special unit to aid the characters in the fight against Lord Saxton's forces.
- Tace offers the characters a *scroll of translocation*, a wizard martial advantage.
- Tace offers the heroes their choice of one of the following magic items: a *horn of Valhalla*, a *wand of fireballs*, *ring of spell storing*, or a *vicious weapon*.
- Tace offers two *spell scrolls* selected from scrolls of *mass cure wounds*, *wall of ice*, *flame strike*, or *cone of cold*.

## THE TOWER

The heroes aren't likely to say no, but Tace does have ulterior motives. He is secretly a high-ranking member of the Secret, a society of wizards, sages,

and others devoted to keeping dangerous knowledge hidden. The Secret plans to install one of their members at the new wizard's tower, furthering their reach in the duchy.

If the heroes inquire as to Tace's motives, he remains circumspect and answers vaguely, though the characters sense he doesn't have nefarious motives. If one of the characters is a wizard, they may be familiar with the Secret and suspect Tace is a member. A wizard character recalls the Secret's motto: “Three things cannot be hidden long: love, smoke, and the truth.”

To uphold their end of the bargain and add a wizard's tower to Castle Rend costs time and money, though the society will help cover half of the expense. The cost of a tower in *Strongholds & Followers* is 8,000 gp and construction takes 120 days; you can use the rules from the **Strongholds** chapter of that book, or improvise a cost that seems reasonable for your campaign.



## INTERLUDES:

# Heroes Return



he heroes can return to Castle Rend whenever they like during their adventuring in part 2. While returning between quests isn't necessary, doing so allows the characters to check in with

NPCs, receive news, resolve issues, and otherwise ensure the war effort continues. In addition, the characters may wish to take domain actions from Castle Rend rather than relay orders through their *diplomat's pouch*.

Whenever the characters return, they face the pressures of leadership. Their followers in the castle and the people of Gravesford ask for guidance, orders, and rulings. Pick one of the following scenes to run or roll for it on the Interludes table whenever the characters spend time at Castle Rend between adventures. If you'd like, you can replace the NPCs in these scenes with others the characters created for their organization.

### INTERLUDES

| d4 | Scene             |
|----|-------------------|
| 1  | Horace the Thief  |
| 2  | Spy at the Castle |
| 3  | Magic Hours       |
| 4  | A Knight's Plea   |

## HORACE THE THIEF

In this scene, the heroes hear the case of a suspected thief and must decide what punishment—if any—is merited.

The doors to the council chambers burst open as a guard hauls in a young man by the arm. Madelyn Charyl, the gruff head mason at Castle Rend, follows behind, her face red and fuming. The terrified man stares at the ground as Madelyn roars, "Apologies for the interruption, but as we

were building fortifications around the castle, this thief stole from us. He must pay for his crimes! I ask you make an example of him to end such foolishness in our camp. We have a war to prepare for."

The guard, Reena Snellow, clears her throat before offering, "We do indeed. Which is why we need all the help we can get."

Madelyn Charyl (human **commoner**, she/her) and Reena Snellow (human **guard**, she/her) bring Horace Grivner (human **commoner**, he/him) before the characters. The head mason lays out Horace's crime:

- Madelyn spent all day yesterday working with Horace, an apprentice mason. While working, Horace complained that he needed new winter clothes but couldn't afford them.
- When she returned home last night, Madelyn noticed her coin purse missing from her belt.
- This morning, Madelyn found her purse empty outside the castle walls on the path to Gravesford.
- Horace went to the village last night to take care of some personal business. When he came back to the castle today, he was wearing a brand-new cloak.
- Madelyn confronted Horace about the cloak. He wouldn't tell her where he got the money for it, and she knows why!
- Madelyn believes Horace is the thief. All the (circumstantial) evidence points to him! That's why she ordered Reena to arrest the apprentice.

After Madelyn speaks, Reena shifts uncomfortably. She can't help but speak up in defense of Horace:

- Reena points out the evidence against Horace is circumstantial. Madelyn has no definitive proof or witness to any crime.
- Right now, Castle Rend needs all the help it can get. Horace is one of the castle's best masons! If he can't help build fortifications for Castle Rend,

it could mean the difference between victory and defeat against Saxton's forces.

If questioned by the characters, Horace claims he is innocent. At first, he's reluctant to tell the characters where the new cloak came from, but a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check gets him to admit that he took the cloak from a tavern in the city last night. He tells them he was the last one in the bar, no one had claimed it, and he plans to look for the cloak's owner when he's back in the village. Horace insists he doesn't know what happened to Madelyn's money.

## THE TRUTH

The point of this encounter is not for the characters to get to the truth, but to have them make a difficult decision. Should they fire and punish Horace without evidence, especially when his help is so desperately needed?

It's likely the characters want to do a little probing to try to make a fair decision. If the characters don't have spells like *detect thoughts* and *zone of truth* prepared, you may not need to worry about the facts, and simply let them decide based on the information they have.

If you do want a clear conclusion, the truth can be whatever you decide is most interesting! Horace may simply be guilty or innocent, and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check could give the characters confidence in their decision. If you want a more complicated truth, here are some ideas to inspire you:

- **A Jealous Overseer.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Madelyn worries that Horace's skill as a mason surpasses hers. On a successful DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation) check, she admits that she faked the robbery and framed Horace to get him fired.
- **An Affair.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Horace is being honest about not stealing Madelyn's purse, but he lies when he says his cloak is from a tavern. On a successful DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check, he admits that Cormine Glynnis, a married mason at Castle Rend, bought the cloak for him. The two are having an affair. At least he came by the money honestly.

- **A Compassionate Thief.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Reena despises Madelyn and seems unusually distressed by the idea of Horace being punished. On a successful DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check, Reena confesses that she, not Horace, stole Madelyn's money. She worries about Horace's health in the cold weather, so she purchased the cloak and left it in the tavern, hoping Horace would take it. Reena doesn't want to lose her job, but she also doesn't want Horace to suffer for a crime he didn't commit.

## DECISION

The characters must decide what happens with Horace, Madelyn, and Reena.

- If the characters fire (or worse) any of their staff, rumors of their tough judgment fly through their organization. The characters' spies work extra hard to fight corruption in their ranks, and the characters gain one **Espionage inspiration point**.
- If the characters fire no one, word of their kind hearts spreads in their organization, improving the morale and work ethic of all laborers. The characters gain one **Operations inspiration point**.

### DOMAIN INSPIRATION POINTS

Each interlude asks the heroes to make a hard moral or tactical choice. Much like individual characters can receive inspiration for roleplaying, at the end of each scene, you can award a **domain inspiration point** for how the characters handled it. But they'll need to be careful—some choices might lead to an enemy or NPC realm receiving a domain inspiration point instead!

Each domain inspiration point relates to a specific domain skill and can be spent during intrigue with Lord Saxton's villainous realm to gain advantage on one test made with that skill. The point must be redeemed before the test is rolled, and all domain inspiration points disappear at the end of intrigue.

## SPY AT THE CASTLE

In this scene, the heroes learn that one of their officers is secretly an agent for Lord Saxton.

The gate around Castle Rend opens, revealing one of your spies, Corrin “Swiftblade” Allish, fidgeting in the courtyard. The middle-aged human glances your way, then flicks his eyes toward the stables, indicating you should meet him there. Knowing Corrin, he has some good information to share.

Corrin “Swiftblade” Allish (human **spy**, he/him) meets the characters in the stables, or if they stand him up, he later comes to find them in a private place. After a quick hello, he shares the following information with the character who leads the organization’s spies:

- Corrin’s contacts in Saxton’s court discovered that Alice Wymarc, an officer in the characters’ army, is the despot’s secret agent.
- Corrin believes that punishing Alice swiftly and publicly would prevent further harm to the characters’ organization and send a warning to any other spies.
- On the other hand, Corrin also thinks Alice could be an unwitting asset for the characters. They could feed her false information to give back to Saxton. The risk is that if Alice finds out, she could get away or do further harm to the characters’ organization.

## DECISION

The characters must decide what to do with Alice (human **spy**, she/her).

- If the characters punish the spy publicly, word of their strong stance against Saxton and all he stands for spreads throughout the land to other domains. The characters gain a **Diplomacy inspiration point**.
- If the characters feed the spy false information, a character can make a DC 11 Espionage test as a domain bonus action once during the intrigue with Lord Saxton’s domain. On a success, the characters gain two **Espionage inspiration points**. On a failure, Alice realizes she’s been made and sneaks back to Lord Saxton’s side.

## PLOT TWIST!

You can run the **Spy at the Castle** encounter with a simple twist: Corrin, and not Alice, serves Saxton! Corrin hopes naming Alice a spy sows chaos in the characters’ organization, either through punishing one of their best officers or feeding her false information to impede her judgment. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check knows Corrin lies to them about Alice. If the characters follow up with their agents in Saxton’s court, the spies report they believe Alice to be loyal, and certainly never sent Corrin any information about Alice.

If you run the encounter with Corrin as Saxton’s agent and the characters uncover his betrayal, they face the same choice: make an example of the spy or feed him false information. Should the characters instead take Corrin at his word and treat Alice as the spy, they gain no domain inspiration points, but Lord Saxton’s villainous realm gains an **Espionage inspiration point**.

## MAGIC HOURS

In this scene, the heroes mediate a labor dispute between the castle’s mages and diplomats.

Elicia Rornacio, a mage in your organization, stares daggers across the council table at Favian Ambert, one of your best diplomats. Favian clears his throat, pulling his gaze away from the mage’s stare to address you. “Forgive me, but there is a small . . . debate that requires your wisdom and ruling. If we are to build a coalition of allies against Saxton in mere weeks, we diplomats require the aid of magic. Spells to speed our horses or instantly teleport instead of spending days traveling through mud and snow. We—”

“Enough!” Elicia hisses. “You diplomats would use all our energies and spell ingredients. Unicorn horns don’t grow on trees, Favian. Every spell we cast is one we can’t use elsewhere. Every hour spent crafting components for your travel is an hour of research lost. What of the spies and soldiers who need our spells? You would take everything for the diplomats!”

Favian shakes his head, looking to you with pleading eyes as the mage fumes.

Elicia Rornacio (human **mage**, she/her) and Favian Ambert (human **noble**, he/him) present the issue to the characters: their organization's mages and diplomats both require spellcasting power to prepare for the battle with Saxton, but there's only so much to go around. Should mages continue to answer the diplomats' demands, or should envoys travel without the aid of magic?

## DECISION

The characters must decide if the mages should aid the diplomats with magic.

- If the characters order the mages to continue to aid the diplomats, they gain a **Diplomacy inspiration point**.
- If the characters order the diplomats to work without the aid of magic, they gain two **Lore inspiration points**, but the characters make their next Diplomacy test at disadvantage.

## A KNIGHT'S PLEA

In this scene, the heroes are approached by one of Saxton's knights. They have made a secret journey to the castle to plead on behalf of their people.

Muriel Thouroson, a captain in the Castle Rend guard, strides into the room, flanking a knight sporting the sigil of Lord Saxton! Breathless, Muriel explains, "Don't be alarmed! Liege Agatha Dumah comes in peace as an envoy of Lord Saxton. They surrendered their weapons to us and wish to have a word with you."

Liege Dumah bows, wayward curls escaping their braid and brushing their face. "Please. Lord Saxton doesn't know I am here. I must speak with you."

Muriel Thouroson (human **veteran**, she/her) escorts the unarmed Liege Dumah (human **knight**, they/them). If the characters agree to an audience, Liege Dumah begins by warning them it is folly to resist Saxton. The battle will kill many, and Dumah believes the characters would save more lives if they bent the knee to Saxton rather than rose up against him. It's almost certain that this plea fails to convince the characters of anything, but the knight must try.

Once their initial plea is rejected, Liege Dumah concedes they thought the characters would refuse to surrender, but they hope the characters consider a smaller request. Liege Dumah and many other knights who fight under Lord Saxton's banner do so for survival. These reluctant soldiers have no love for the despot, but Saxton murders those who don't bend the knee. They have families to protect. Dumah appeals to the characters to give their word that, if Saxton is defeated, they will pardon those forced to fight under his banner.

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell Liege Dumah truly fears Lord Saxton. The characters can convince them to defect to their side with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check, but Dumah still wants a pardon for those too scared to leave Saxton's army.

## MURIEL'S IDEA

After Liege Dumah makes their case, Muriel asks to speak to the characters privately. The guard captain suggests that the characters could imprison and interrogate Liege Dumah for information, then execute them publicly to send a message to Saxton.

## DECISION

The characters must decide if they want to offer pardons to Lord Saxton's soldiers, as well as what to do with Liege Dumah.

- If the characters promise pardons, they gain a reputation as kind leaders among domains in the region. They gain a **Diplomacy inspiration point**.
- If the characters don't promise pardons to Saxton's forces, word of the characters' mercilessness inspires their soldiers to train harder. They gain an **Operations inspiration point**, but one of their lowest tier units disbands in disgust (chosen randomly by the GM).
- If the characters convince Liege Dumah to defect, they provide valuable intelligence about Saxton's army. The characters gain an **Espionage inspiration point**. In addition, during the final battle, one of Saxton's Tier I Infantry Units of the GM's choice switches sides and aids the characters' army, fighting against Saxton's. The switch occurs at the start of the second round of battle.



- If the characters imprison Liege Dumah and interrogate them, they provide honest information about Saxton’s villainous realm, but the other domains in the land are horrified to learn that the characters captured a peaceful envoy. The characters gain an **Espionage inspiration point** but make their next two Diplomacy tests with disadvantage.

# OPTIONAL BATTLE: AN UNDEAD HORDE

If you’d like to give the players more practice with the warfare rules, as well as spend some of their warfare resources before the final confrontation with Saxton, you can run this optional battle. Introduce it while the characters are out adventuring, as long as they’ve already successfully recruited at least two special units from NPC realms.

In this scene, Saxton sends an army of undead—which Caliga Lifebane created for him—to attack Castle Rend to weaken its defenses. He knows the undead will likely be destroyed by the characters’ forces, but if the zombies and skeletons take a few of the rebels with them, it’s worth it to the despot. Read or paraphrase the following:

While you are away adventuring, an undead horde carved a path through Forest Rend and now plans to attack your forces! These rotting soldiers wear the banner of Lord Saxton and have come to devour your troops before the final showdown with the despot.

The heroes are intended to win, but may take some damage from the fight. They must decide which special units, if any, they will deploy in this fight. The ones they deploy in this battle can’t be used in the final confrontation against Saxton’s forces.

For this battle, you can use martial advantages. It uses the standard battlefield, two sides each, 4 rows of 5 columns to a side.

The undead forces consist of the following units:

| Tier I           | Tier II        |
|------------------|----------------|
| Zombie Infantry  | Ghoul Infantry |
| Skeletal Archers |                |
| Skeletal Cavalry |                |

If the characters win Bringing the Siege, they can choose to fight from Castle Rend, which gives them a castle fortification (see page 121 in the **Warfare** chapter) to place on their side of the battlefield, or they can fight in Forest Rend, which is covered in forest terrain (see page 124 in the **Warfare** chapter). If Saxton’s forces win, his forces choose to catch the characters’ army out in the forest.

Lord Saxton commands the Zombie Infantry, Skeletal Archers, and Skeletal Cavalry, while Magus Extraordinary Delicara Therin commands the Ghoul Infantry. Both commanders use magic to give their orders from Bedegar Keep.

All of Saxton’s units gain the following martial advantages.

**Cavaliers.** Each cavalry unit this commander controls has advantage on Attack tests and +1 to damage.

**Death Commandos.** When any infantry unit this commander controls succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, the target unit must succeed on a Morale test or suffer 1 additional casualty.

**Sorcerous Training.** Each unit this commander controls has advantage on Power tests to resist battle magic and the traits of special units.

## SAXTON’S TACTICS

The undead infantry deploy in Saxton’s vanguard and press forward, focusing their fire on the same targets to weaken the character’s forces. The Skeletal Archers attack the characters’ artillery units while the Skeletal Cavalry focus on attacking units in the characters’ rear and center.

While unlikely, if Saxton wins this battle, the undead are too uncoordinated to hold the castle on their own. As a result, they withdraw and head back to Bedegar Keep, their job of disrupting the characters’ forces done.

Lord Saxton’s forces have no reinforcements.

**WE ALREADY BEAT THE NECROMANCER**

If the characters already defeated or negotiated with Caliga Lifebane by the time this battle happens, replace these units with human or goblinoid units of the same tier.

## PART 3:

# The Battle for Gravesford



When the five weeks are up and all 6 domain turns have been taken, Lord Saxton arrives with his forces. If the characters have done well in their intrigue and adventuring, their army has grown to match Saxton's. The two armies clash—and at the same time, the heroes face Lord Saxton and his lieutenants at the Church of Saint Gaed the Confessor. The church is a holy site with a secret, and heroes and foes alike attempt to use its power.

## SAXTON ATTACKS GRAVESFORD!

**If the heroes acquired Lord Saxton's plan to attack Gravesford while in the Star Chamber:** they know the despot plans to focus his initial attack on the Church of St. Gaed the Confessor. This allows the players to prepare by moving their army into position around Gravesford. Read or paraphrase the following to set the scene:

Your scouts have been tracking Lord Saxton and his fearsome army since it departed Bedegar. Saxton gathered Bedegar's formidable cavalry and infantry, adding to it conscripted soldiers, mercenaries, goblins, and bugbears.

He pretends his destination is Castle Rend, moving his army along the edge of the forest, but you know that in a few hours he will swing north and take Gravesford. It is Saxton who is in for a surprise, as you've already moved your units to the edge of Forest Rend. As he approaches the town, your forces will descend upon him.

**If the heroes don't know Saxton plans to attack Gravesford,** they are in for a gut-wrenching surprise. Read or paraphrase the following to set the scene:

Your scouts have been tracking Lord Saxton's fearsome army since it departed Bedegar. Saxton has gathered Bedegar's formidable cavalry and infantry, adding to it conscripted soldiers, mercenaries, goblins, and bugbears.

You expect Saxton's arrival at Castle Rend any moment—until you see a scout running your way, a grave expression on her face. "Lord Saxton has altered course! He isn't heading for Castle Rend. He's heading for Gravesford!"

If the heroes consider remaining in their castle and letting the town defend itself, Edmund and any advisor NPCs counsel against this. Saxton has chosen not to attack Castle Rend, which is the heroes' strength. He is attacking their weakness, Gravesford. If Saxton occupies Gravesford, he will certainly jail, torture, and kill its people until the heroes surrender. If that's not motivation enough for the characters, Gravesford is the source of Castle Rend's levies, impacting their effectiveness in battle. If the characters choose to remain in the castle and fight at Castle Rend, this severely hurts morale and units desert.

## FATHER BELDERONE'S WARNING

Just before the battle, Father Belderone, a **priest** of Saint Gaed and keeper of Gravesford's church, comes to visit the heroes.

As you prepare for the battle, you are stopped by an officer leading a familiar figure—Father Belderone, the priest from Gravesford's church. "Heroes! Saint Gaed can help us win this battle!"

Allow the characters to ask questions. Father Belderone can share the following information during the conversation:

- **Curious Traveler:** Yesterday, a traveler stopped by the church. I introduced myself, and she asked me about the stained-glass window, the two marble pillars, and the patterns in the floor. She left after our conversation, and I have not seen her since. Saint Gaed teaches us to be watchful. Her mannerisms were strange, and I did not like her. *(Father Belderone can describe her, and a character who makes a successful DC 14 Intelligence (History) check recognizes she is Lady Morgant, one of Lord Saxton's Knights of the Three Roses.)*
- **Mysterious Symbols:** Finding her questions curious, I sketched the shape of the floor patterns and researched them in old religious texts I own. Viewed from above, they are symbols of magical power, one overlapping the other.
- **Two Pillars:** The pillars bear inscriptions. The warding pillar depicts angels and devils at war. The second pillar depicts knights bearing swords, receiving a blessing.
- **Church History:** This church is older than I am, much older ... built after Saint Gaed's death. In life, Saint Gaed was said to have liked this town. I believe his priests, maybe even Saint Gaed himself, left us a gift for a time when we were in need—or perhaps a way to receive divine grace through him.
- **Activating Symbols:** The symbols on the floor would be powerful once activated! One seems to be a ward for the town against evil creatures. The other empowers those in the church in some way. But it takes more than one person to activate the symbols. Please help me!
- **Blessing:** It pays to be prepared. I should ward one of you from death. *(Father Belderone can cast the death ward spell once per day and does so at no cost on one character the players choose.)*

If the heroes are not convinced, Lord Edmund and other council NPCs urge them to assist the priest. If Lady Morgant thinks it is important, the heroes should probably look into it!



## GRAVESFORD

Once the characters set off for the church with Father Belderone, the battle for Gravesford begins with the heroes' forces confronting Saxton's army in Gravesford.

### SAXTON'S ARMY

Saxton's regime begins the intrigue with the following units, listed by tier (see the **Warfare** chapter):

| Tier I                        | Tier II        | Tier III           |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Human Infantry (3)            | Bloodfangs     | Bugbear Heavy Claw |
| Human Artillery (Longbow) (2) | Goblin Sappers |                    |
| Goblin Worg-riders            |                |                    |

If the characters failed to disrupt the activities of the necromancer Caliga Lifebane, Saxton also commands the Grim Front special unit (see page 87 in the **Domains & Intrigue** chapter).

Because Saxton has six Tier I units, he could field a total of five Tier II units. He starts with two, so he could muster another three Tier II units if you need to make the battle more challenging. If the characters' adventures were successful and they amassed every special unit of the highest tier they could, their army may start with close to double the point value of Saxton's. If this is the case, either give Saxton's army more units as his commanders allow, or upgrade some (or all) of his Tier I units to Tier II units. You can double up on the Tier II units above or use units from the **Reinforcements** section below. Even with upgrades, Saxton's army should only have about a total point value worth about 75 percent of the characters' army.

The regime's officers are **Lord Saxton**, **Magus Extraordinary Delicara Therin**, **Prelate of Ajax Kiril Ellingwood**, **Lady Morgant**, and, if they are alive, **Sir Anglim** and **Sir Pelliton**. Each has a stat block included in this adventure's appendix (page 304). Saxton is the leader of the regime and claims the Despot title (which is included in his stat block).

Each officer controls the following units at the start of battle.

| Officer            | Units                                     |
|--------------------|---|
| Lord Saxton        | Human Infantry (3)                        |
| Magus Therin       | Human Artillery (Longbow) (2)             |
| Prelate Ellingwood | Goblin Sappers, Grim Front (if available) |
| Sir Anglim         | Bloodfangs, Goblin Worg-riders            |
| Lady Morgant       | Bugbear Heavy Claw                        |

If Sir Anglim is dead, divide his units between Prelate Ellingwood and Lady Morgant (or give them to Sir Pelliton if he is alive).

Saxton's army gains the following martial advantages. **All** units use these three advantages: Skirmishers, Death Commandos, and Patron's Curse.

**Skirmishers.** If any infantry or artillery unit this commander controls moves before it attacks, it has +2 to Attack tests for that activation, and it can immediately move 1 space after it attacks.

**Death Commandos.** When any infantry unit this commander controls succeeds on a Power test as part of an attack, that target unit must succeed on a Morale test or suffer 1 additional casualty.

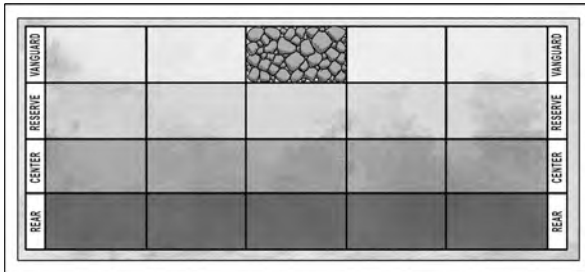
**Patron's Curse.** If any heavy or super-heavy unit this commander controls makes a successful Power test made as part of an attack, the target unit is disoriented until the end of its next activation.

### THE BATTLEFIELD

The battle at Gravesford has no special terrain or scenario, and uses the standard battlefield—two sides each, with 4 rows of 5 columns to a side. The diagram below depicts the heroes' side of the battle as they defend Gravesford. The town's simple stone wall was made by peasants generations ago and is maintained by farmers and passing townsfolk who notice it might need repair.

Unless Saxton used a domain action to raise more units, he does not have enough infantry to fill out his vanguard. **This is normal for battles between small domains.** Saxton prefers to have a mix of units rather than focusing on infantry. As a result, it'll be easy for the heroes to bypass Saxton's vanguard and get to the squishy center of his army.

However, Saxton's army is more versatile than that of the heroes. His sappers may be able to take out the heroes' fortifications (one reason he's attacking Gravesford and not Castle Rend: fewer fortifications). He has two units of cavalry, including the (quite nasty) Bloodfangs, *and* he's fielding a unit of Bugbear Heavy Claw to wreak havoc against the heroes' infantry.



*The heroes' side of the battle*

## SAXTON'S STRATEGY

The following advice assumes you're using Saxton's army as described, though the GM is always free to change the villainous realm's army to suit the scenario or respond to the players' actions. However, unless Saxton's taken an Espionage action during intrigue, he won't know the makeup of the heroes' army and won't be able to alter his strategy to account for it.

If he *were* to alter his army, he'd probably field a couple of levies in his rear to protect his center, but that'd be highly dependent on the presence of cavalry in the heroes' army. If they have no cavalry, Saxton's less worried about his center.

## DEPLOYMENT

Saxton doesn't have a lot of options. His infantry, including the Bugbear Heavy Claw, go in the vanguard, and his archers go in the center. He won't deploy any infantry into his rear, unless he's taken a domain action to muster some levies—or unless you think it's a good idea to do otherwise!

He would like to position the Bugbear Heavy Claw within striking distance of the heroes' best infantry, but that depends on the initiative roll.

He intends to use his Goblin Sappers against the heroes' fortifications—this means they need to live long enough to use their Dig trait, so they should

go in the reserves. Without putting someone in the rear, he can't protect his Goblin Sappers, so it'll once again come down to initiative. Still, Saxton won't mind if the heroes use up their archers' or cavalry's actions on his Goblin Sappers—to him, they're just goblins.

## TACTICS

Generally, the smartest strategy in warfare is to **break the enemy front**. Use your infantry, your archers, and your cavalry to break the front, and the whole rest of the army turns into a bunch of delicious jalapeño poppers you can gobble up in any order you like.

However, villains rarely do the perfectly optimal thing. In hubris and overconfidence, they often fail to think strategically. Saxton has a problem a lot of small domains have: he doesn't have enough troops to defend his archers. He has no levies, for instance.

Saxton knows his center is defenseless, so the first thing he'll try and do is break the heroes' cavalry. With no one defending his rear, the heroes' archers and cavalry can both attack his center with impunity. So he'll use his archers and cavalry units to whittle down the heroes' cavalry, giving them fewer units with which to attack his archers. To do so, Saxton picks a single one of the heroes' cavalry, then uses all his archers and cavalry to take that unit down before switching to the next cavalry unit. Rinse and repeat.

If he can take out the heroes' cavalry, then he'll focus on their infantry. His Bugbear Heavy Claw is tough, hits hard, and is hard to kill—but there are no Goblin Meat Shields for them to command (and thus benefit from their leadership traits)! This is a flaw in Saxton's strategy. He deploys goblins, but he doesn't really know how to *use* them.

If, for some reason, Saxton's army is larger and nastier than the heroes and it looks from the outset that he's going to win, consider this: Saxton *loves* crushing his opponent's levies. He believes (and he may be right!) that as heroes watch these innocent peasants they were supposed to protect fighting and dying in vain, the heroes' morale will suffer deeply.

The heroes may indeed feel regret for Saxton attacking their levies—especially if you emphasize this with particularly dramatic narration. But at the

end of the day, the townspeople that comprise Castle Rend's levies *chose* to be there, fighting for the city they love. And **concentrating on the enemy levies is usually a waste of time**—but perfectly reasonable for Saxton to attempt, given his attitude.

Though Saxton is prideful, he's not stupid. If you can look at the heroes' deployment and see a flaw in the above strategy, so can Saxton and he'll course correct to fix it. The battle should be a challenge, not a rout—for either side.

## REINFORCEMENTS

It may be that through good rolling and inspired roleplaying, the heroes can field a *much* larger army than Lord Saxton. The feeling of “we're gonna crush him!” is very satisfying, but undramatic. This is what reinforcements are for!

If it looks like the battle will be a rout for Saxton, he calls upon Saint Ajax and is rewarded with your choice of some or all of the following units. Each officer is limited in how many units they can command; based on the starting deployment, only Prelate Ellingwood and Lady Morgant can command any more units, as the other officers have reached their max. Of course, if Saxton is calling on Saint Ajax, things are probably going badly, and you could field two or three of each of the following units, as long as you obey the limits on unit command.

If you have the special unit deck, you can pick reinforcements from that column; otherwise, use the Ancestral Unit column.

| Officer            | Special Unit | Ancestral Unit       |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Prelate Ellingwood | Dretch Swarm | Goblin Smokers       |
| Lady Morgant       | Hell's Barbs | Human Shield Maniple |

## THE CHURCH OF SAINT GAED

While Lord Saxton's forces assault Gravesford and the castle's army bravely defends the town, the heroes themselves accompany Father Belderone to the Church of Saint Gaed the Confessor. However,

they aren't the only ones seeking power in this holy place. To save the townspeople (and themselves), the characters must face Lord Saxton himself, accompanied by several of his most trusted lieutenants.

At the gaming table, the battle for Gravesford is played first, but in the world the characters inhabit, it actually happens at the same time. In this encounter, each side seeks to bless or corrupt the church's symbols while defeating their foes. Simultaneously, the characters' army battles Lord Saxton's using the warfare rules in this book. When the heroes receive news about the battle's outcome, it'll affect their combat with Saxton; be sure to review the guidance on running an **Epic Finale** (see page 94 in the **Warfare** chapter), along with its **Morale Surges** sidebar, before running this combat encounter.

## WHO GETS THERE FIRST?

Once the characters agree to head to the church, the GM needs to determine two things:

- Do the heroes reach the church before Lord Saxton?
- If so, do they have the time to ward the church?

To answer these questions, figure out who won Bringing the Siege before the battle began (see page 94 of the **Warfare** chapter), then follow the instructions in the appropriate section below.

### HEROES WIN BRINGING THE SIEGE

**If the heroes weren't surprised by Saxton's attack on Gravesford**, they reach the church first and have a chance to bless the symbols. Proceed to the **The Church of Saint Gaed** encounter with both symbols blessed and active. The characters begin positioned upon the symbols around the pillars while the foes enter the furthest set of doors.

**If the heroes were surprised by Saxton's attack on Gravesford**, Saxton's forces reach the church first but haven't had a chance to defile the symbols. Proceed to the **The Church of Saint Gaed** encounter with neither symbol active. The characters begin just inside the rear doors, and the foes upon the symbols.

### HEROES LOSE BRINGING THE SIEGE

**If the heroes weren't surprised by Saxton's attack on Gravesford**, Saxton's forces reach the



church first but haven't had a chance to defile the symbols. Proceed to the **The Church of Saint Gaed** encounter with neither symbol active. The characters begin just inside the rear doors, and the foes upon the symbols.

**If the heroes were surprised by Saxton's attack on Gravesford**, Saxton's forces reach the church first and defile the building. Lord Saxton has also taken part of the town, establishing a defensive position along the diagonal road bisecting the market. Proceed to the **The Church of Saint Gaed** encounter, with both symbols defiled. The characters begin just inside the rear doors, and the foes stand upon the symbols.

## CHURCH FEATURES

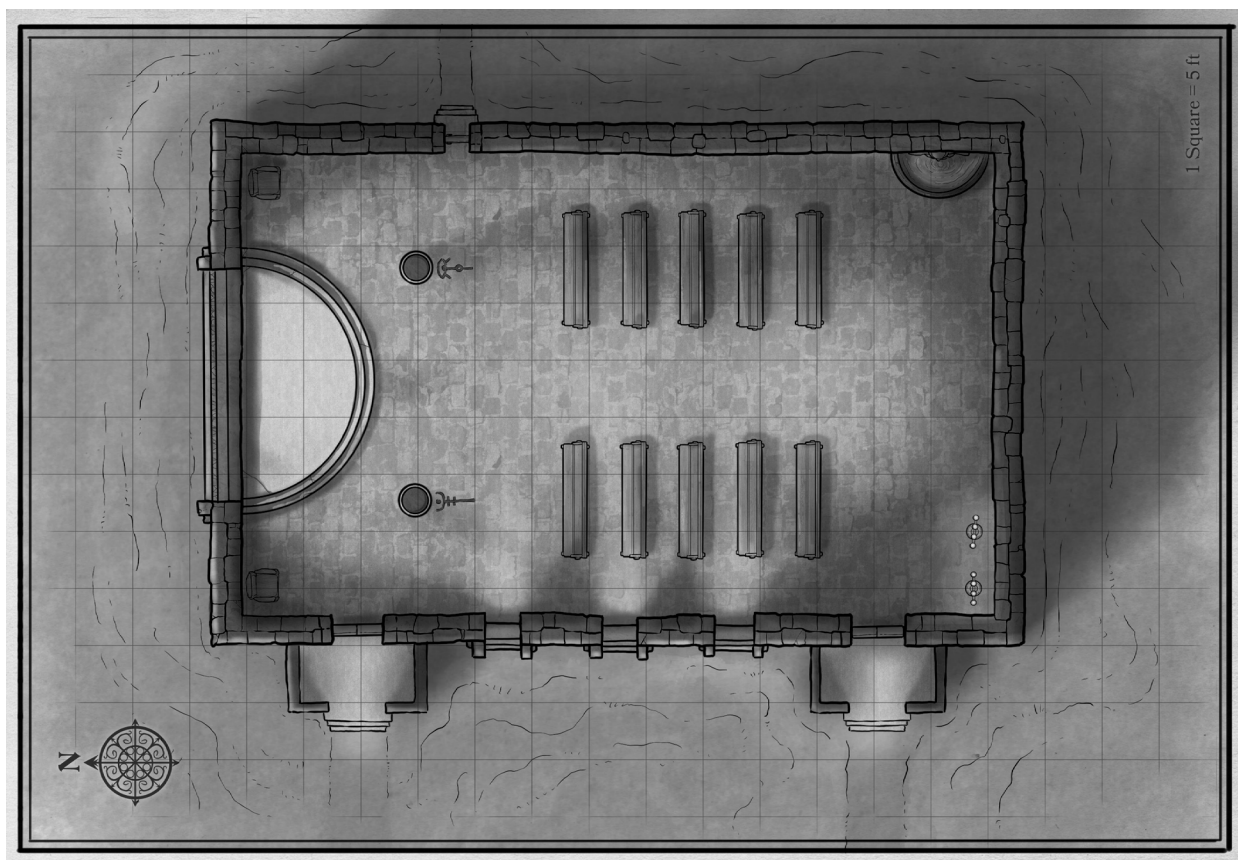
Use the **Gravesford Church** map to run this encounter. The church has a 15-foot-high ceiling, is brightly lit by candles and light coming through the windows, and has the following features.

### FATHER BELDERONE

When combat begins, the elderly Father Belderone (human **priest**, he/him) takes cover behind a pew and shouts out to the heroes, telling them how to activate the symbols. At the end of the first round of combat, he ducks out of the church, his job done.







Gravesford Church map

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Gaed was a mortal who sacrificed himself to expose a devil within the king's court. His sacrifice elevated him to sainthood, and now he acts as an interlocutor for Cavall, one of the two "good" gods in this setting. Saint Gaed is known as the Confessor, saint of exposing secrets and foiling conspiracies. More information on Saint Gaed can be found in *Strongholds & Followers*.

Long ago, followers of Saint Gaed honored the time he had spent in Gravesford by building the church. They performed divine rites, empowering the church to lend aid if the town ever had a great need. That time did not come, and the latent power was forgotten over time. However, the enemies of Saint Gaed, including the Knights of the Three Roses, learned of the enchantment and now plan to corrupt it so their troops benefit.

## EASTERN SYMBOL

The pillar touching this symbol bears a plaque depicting knights bringing their blades together and receiving divine power. To bless or defile this symbol, a creature standing on it must use an action to sacrifice a few drops of blood while offering a prayer to Saint Gaed (to bless) or Ajax (to defile), then wash away the blood with holy water. When this symbol is blessed, it bestows the effects of the *bless* spell on all the heroes. When this symbol is defiled, it bestows the effects of the *bane* spell on the heroes.

The pillar is decorative and not load bearing. It has AC 17, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If the pillar is destroyed, its symbol's effects immediately end.

## WESTERN SYMBOL

The pillar touching this symbol bears a plaque depicting angels and devils at war. To bless or defile this symbol, a creature standing on it must use an action to extinguish a flame while offering a prayer

to Saint Gaed (to bless) or Ajax (to defile), then wash away the ash with holy water. When this symbol is blessed, the characters can't be charmed, and if a character is charmed when this symbol is blessed, the condition automatically ends for them. When the symbol is defiled, the heroes have disadvantage on saving throws against being charmed.

The pillar is decorative and not load bearing. It has AC 17, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If the pillar is destroyed, its symbol's effects immediately end.

### HOLY FONT

This font contains holy water and a pewter chalice. The chalice can be used to carry enough holy water to bless or defile one symbol. A creature within 5 feet of the font can pick up and fill the chalice without using an action as long as they have a free hand to do so. Filling a second container, such as a waterskin, on the same turn requires a character to use an action.

### COMBAT WITH SAXTON'S FORCES

When the encounter with Saxton's forces begins, read or paraphrase the following text to set the scene:

Hooded figures stand before you, blood dripping from their weapons. At the front of the group, you see the tyrant of Bedegar Keep and self-declared regent, Lord Saxton. He cuts an impressive figure in gleaming steel plate armor. His salt-and-pepper hair cascades through his gold crown down his red cloak, framing his pale face and winning smile. His officers sneer behind him.

Saxton laughs, "The temple, the town, and your lives belong to me. Time to crush the ants who dare stand in my way."

When initiative is rolled, Lord Saxton's officers roll their power dice for this final confrontation. Encourage the players to do the same for their characters.

The heroes face **Lord Saxton** and his officers: **Lady Morgant**, the **Prelate of Ajax Kiril Ellingwood**, and **Magus Extraordinary Delicara Therin**. If the characters did not deal with **Sir Anglim** at the Star Temple and/or **Sir Pelliton** didn't die during *Siege*, then they

are also here. See the appendix at the end of the adventure for these creature's stat blocks.

### ENEMY TACTICS

If Saxton's forces have already defiled the symbols, their goal is simply to kill the heroes. Otherwise, Morgant, Anglim, and Pelliton attempt to defile the symbols. If they are successful in corrupting a symbol, crimson light emanates from it. However, if the heroes successfully bless a symbol first (or kill a knight attempting to defile one), Saxton's forces simply focus on killing the heroes.

Saxton, his knights, and Kiril engage the characters in melee while Delicara keeps her distance to sling spells at the characters. Saxton's knights and Kiril stick close to their leader to get the most out of Saxton's *My Life for Yours* power. Morgant and Anglim coordinate their attacks against the same target, so Anglim can get the benefit of his *Sneak Attack* trait.

Saxton starts combat by casting *dominate person* on the character he believes most likely to fail their saving throw, then wades into melee. He attacks with his longsword, uses his *Command Attack* action to give his knights more attacks, and uses his *Move Allies* action to give them better positioning. Whenever an officer has fewer than 15 hit points remaining, Saxton uses the *Make an Example* power.

Pelliton begins combat by casting *phantasmal killer* and using his *Baleful Interdict* trait on his first turn. He then casts *blight* and uses *Baleful Interdict* again on his second turn. On his third turn, he uses *Baleful Interdict* and *Infernal Conduit*, expending all the seals he can.

Kiril casts *spirit guardians* on her first turn, followed by *spiritual weapon* and *sacred flame* on her second turn. On future turns, she casts *inflict wounds* as often as possible.

Delicara has already cast *mage armor* before this encounter begins. She starts with a *fireball* spell, attempting to hit as many characters as possible while avoiding her allies. If the characters are clumped together during her next turn, she casts *fireball* again or targets a smaller group with the *confusion* spell. If there are no clumps of characters, she selects a warrior for the *polymorph* or *suggestion* spell or casts the *haste* spell on Lord Saxton if he

seems to need the help. If a hero gets close to her, she may cast the *charm person* spell or use her tentacle to grapple and hurl them back into the fray.

When Lady Morgant, Sir Anglim, or Sir Pelliton is reduced to 0 hit points, the knight falls to the ground and a **mindkiller** (page 312) crawls forth from their skull, attempting to take over the mind of the closest and strongest enemy warrior.

### TREASURE

Lord Saxton wields a *+2 longsword* with a black blade flecked with ruby dust. If Sir Pelliton is there, he wields a *frost brand greatsword*. If Sir Anglim is there, he carries a *potion of greater healing* (if he hasn't already consumed it), wears *boots of speed*, and wields two *+1 shortwords*.

### ADJUSTING THE CHALLENGE

This is meant to be a challenging fight, and Saxton and his officers should feel like significant threats. If the heroes need a greater challenge, Saxton's Command Attack action could also allow Delicara to cast a cantrip or attack with her tentacle. Delicara could find cover in the church, increasing her defenses. You could also have a knight or two join Saxton's forces, especially if Anglim and Pelliton are out of the fight.

On the other hand, if the heroes are struggling, you can eliminate the mindkillers from this encounter as you see fit, or adjust enemy hit points on the fly to make them fall early. Make whatever changes you feel will make this encounter fair, exciting, and rewarding if the players can achieve victory!

### CONCLUSION

If the despot Lord Saxton is defeated and the heroes' army was victorious, Lord Edmund becomes the regent of Bedegar. Regent Edmund rules justly, benefiting from the alliances the heroes established. Edmund elevates all of the heroes to knighthood (if he didn't already do so in *Siege*). Castle Rend remains in the hands of the heroes, and

if you are using *Strongholds & Followers*, Edmund funds their next round of improvements, reducing the cost by 50 percent. As future threats appear, Edmund and the alliance members call upon the heroes; Lord Dalrath might even need help with his enemies to the north.

If Saxton was defeated but his army won, Lord Edmund still becomes regent, but his rule faces many threats. Edmund relies on the heroes in these challenging times.

If Saxton defeated the heroes but his army lost, Lord Edmund becomes regent, but Magus Extraordinary Delicara Therin (or another knight that was not present) takes any surviving or unconscious characters to a secret lair for experimentation. From there, Saxton remains a thorn in Edmund's side. The heroes might escape the lair, and if any of them didn't survive the escape, one of Castle Rend's allies might bring them back to life—likely in exchange for doing them a great favor. Or it could be a time for new heroes to rise and finally stop the would-be tyrant.

If Lord Saxton defeated the heroes and his army won, the consequences can be as dire as you wish. The heroes may be dead or captured. Edmund could be in hiding, the alliance shattered, and all hope nearly lost. It could be a grim and dark time—if you wish to tell that tale! The players may enjoy creating new heroes that must build an organization and army to rise up against an even more powerful Saxton and his new lieutenants—the once-heroes who failed, now with mindkillers in their brains!

### A BIGGER DOMAIN

If the characters defeated Lord Saxton's despotic regime, their organization's domain size increases to 2, which gives them 8 development points to improve their domain's skills and defenses.

### CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

The characters should advance to level 8 if they successfully complete the adventure. If you're using experience points, award each character 11,000 XP for such a feat!

## APPENDIX:

# Threats

THE FOLLOWING CREATURES APPEAR IN THIS adventure, in addition to those available in the core fifth edition rules.

## TERESA DOLRUTH

Teresa Dolruth, warden of Bedegar Prison, believes in Lord Saxton's mission. She appreciates that the despot raised the pay of all prison guards when he seized rulership, ensuring their loyalty. The warden gleefully enjoys her work interrogating, executing, and imprisoning Saxton's enemies.

### TERESA DOLRUTH

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 11 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Combat Master.** Teresa gains a +2 bonus to weapon attack and damage rolls (included in her attacks).

**Inquisitor.** Teresa has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks made to discern if another creature is lying.

**Special Equipment.** Teresa wields a *counterpoint* (see page 208 in the **Monsters & Magic Items** chapter) with no charges remaining, which grants her an additional +2 bonus to weapon attack and damage rolls (included in her attacks).

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Teresa makes two attacks with her *counterpoint*. If she has a shortsword drawn, she can also make a shortsword attack.

**Counterpoint.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) piercing damage.

When Teresa attacks a creature with the *counterpoint*, hit or miss, the target is marked by her until the end of her next turn or until she attacks another creature with the *counterpoint*. If a marked target within 5 feet of Teresa attempts to attack another creature, she can immediately make one attack with the *counterpoint* against the marked creature without using any action or reaction. A creature struck by an opportunity attack with this weapon stops moving, falls prone, and has its speed reduced to 0 until the end of its turn.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

## CALIGA LIFEBANE

Caliga Lifebane sees herself as misunderstood. She believes the study of necromancy could unlock eternal life, and considers those who stand in her way as uneducated fodder for her experiments. Her loyalty to Saxton lies in the fact that he believes her magic is art, not heresy.

### CALIGA LIFEBANE

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 97 (15d8 + 30)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9 (–1) | 14 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

**Saving Throws** Con +5, Int +6, Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6, Stealth +5

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +3

**Archlich.** If damage reduces Caliga to 0 hit points, she must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, she drops to 1 hit point instead. Effects that kill a creature, such as the *power word kill* spell, reduce Caliga to 1 hit point instead.

**Special Equipment.** Caliga wears a *cloak of the bat*. While wearing this cloak, she has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. In an area of dim light or darkness, she can grip the edges of the cloak with both hands and use it to fly at a speed of 40 feet. If she ever fails to grip the cloak's edges while flying in this way, or is not in dim light or darkness, she loses this flying speed.

**Spellcasting.** Caliga is a 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *light*, *mage hand*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*,\*  
*magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *ray of enfeeblement*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *counterspell*, *fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

\*Caliga casts this spell on herself before combat.

## ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Polymorph (1/Day).** While wearing the *cloak of the bat* in an area of dim light or darkness, Caliga casts *polymorph* on herself, transforming into a bat. She retains her Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores.

# CHLORANDRAXAROUS

Chlorandraxarous, a tyrannical young green dragon, wants to rule the Wode of the Orchid Court. She bullies goblinoids into serving her and pushes them into battle against the elves of the Orchid Court, who refuse to simply bend the knee and shower Chlorandraxarous with worship and treasure. The headstrong dragon is rash, already overconfident in her own power.

The dragon values strength, and if she notices it in an enemy, she does what she can to turn that enemy into an ally. She is willing to make deals and even give away some of her treasure to make an alliance or avoid death.

## LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Chlorandraxarous takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; she can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Grasping vines erupt from a green pool Chlorandraxarous chooses. Each creature within 10 feet of the pool must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pulled 10 feet by the vines into the pool.
- Foul mist erupts from the ground in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point Chlorandraxarous can see within 100 feet of her. The mist heavily obscures this area. Creatures who start their turn within the cloud must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of their next turn. The mist dissipates at the start of initiative count 20 on the following turn.
- Wind blows through the cave, blowing disorienting poisonous fumes into the face of two creatures in the lair Chlorandraxarous chooses. Those creatures must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature must use its reaction, if available, to move as far as its speed allows in a straight line toward its closest ally. If the creature ends its movement within 5 feet of its ally, it makes a melee attack against that ally as part of the reaction.

## CHLORANDRAXAROUS

*Large dragon, lawful evil*

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**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 204 (24d10 + 72)

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

---

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 19 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 15 (+2) |

---

**Saving Throws** Dex +4, Con +6, Wis +4, Cha +5

**Skills** Deception +5, Perception +7, Stealth +4

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +3

---

**Amphibious.** Chlorandraxarous can breathe air and water.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When Chlorandraxarous fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Swift Form.** As a bonus action, Chlorandraxarous moves up to half her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

### ACTIONS

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**Multiattack.** Chlorandraxarous makes three attacks: one with her bite and two with her claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage, and if the target is a Medium or smaller creature, Chlorandraxarous can move the target 5 feet in any direction into an unoccupied space.

**Poison Breath (Recharge 5–6).** Chlorandraxarous exhales poisonous gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## REACTIONS

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**Claw Dash.** When a creature within 5 feet of Chlorandraxarous hits her with a melee attack, she can make a claw attack against that creature, then move up to half her speed.

## LIVING VINES

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Chlorandraxarous creates living vines with the help of her hag allies. These writhing bundles of twisted green vines grow in toxic pools and absorb foul magic instead of sunlight to survive. They protect the dragon's lair at any cost.

## LIVING VINES

*Medium plant, lawful evil*

---

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (7d8 + 14)

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

---

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 19 (+4) | 6 (–2) | 15 (+2) | 6 (–2) | 10 (+0) | 5 (–3) |

---

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands Draconic but can't speak

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +2

---

**Amphibious.** The vines can breathe air and water.

**False Appearance.** While the vines remain motionless, they are indistinguishable from a normal bundle of vines.

### ACTIONS

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**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and if the target is a Medium or smaller creature, the target is grappled (escape DC 14). While grappled, the target is restrained.

## LEADER: LORD SAXTON

A winning smile, a strategic mind, and a hate for all nonhuman creatures crowned Lord Saxton the tyrant of Bedegar Keep. After the White Tusk Orc clan murdered the keep's old baron and line of succession, Saxton declared himself regent. His armies don't know that he orchestrated the White Tusk attack in the first place!

With the help of his court, Saxton oppresses the commonfolk of Bedegar. His military forces the peasants to work long hours for meager scraps in fields, mills, and forges to provide his ever-growing army with supplies so they can battle the rebels who oppose his rule.

Despite his hideous agenda of ruling-class oppression, the soldiers believe Saxton a savior. He takes credit for removing the White Tusk Orcs from Bedegar (though it really belongs to a group of adventurers—probably yours, if you ran *The Siege of Castle Rend in Strongholds & Followers*). Saxton's persuasive speeches convince even some commoners that the cheap, backbreaking labor they provide is for the good of the land. According to Saxton, the peasants must either work their fingers to the bone to support his troops or die at the hands of the rebels.

Lord Saxton, a man in his fifties who has waited far too long to seize what should have always been his, cuts an impressive figure in gleaming steel plate armor. His salt-and-pepper hair cascades through his gold crown down his red cloak, framing his pale face. A close-cropped beard and shield emblazoned with a single crowned rose, indicating his command over the Knights of the Three Roses, completes his handsome visage.

With Bedegar fully brought to heel, Saxton looks toward neighboring regions in need of his leadership—and abhorrent cleansing practices. In his mind, victory is inevitable. No one has the stomach, the brain, or the arm to challenge Saxton and live.

## LORD SAXTON

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

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**Armor Class** 20 (plate, shield)

**Hit Points** 112 (15d8 + 45)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 17 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) |

---

**Saving Throws** Str +7, Con +6, Wis +5

**Skills** Athletics +7, History +6, Insight +5, Intimidation +6

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 8 (3,000 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +3

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**Despot.** Whenever an enemy Saxton can see is reduced to 0 hit points within 30 feet of him, Saxton deals an extra 1d6 damage on all attacks for the next minute. This benefit is cumulative.

**Hated Enemy.** When Saxton hits a humanoid creature that is not a human with a weapon attack, he deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage.

**Legendary Resistance (2/Day).** As a reaction to failing a saving throw, Saxton can choose to succeed instead.

### ACTIONS

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**Multiattack.** Saxton makes three longsword attacks, then uses Command Attack or Move Allies.

**+2 Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage, or 11 (1d10 + 6) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Command Attack.** Saxton targets one ally he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see and hear Saxton, the target can make one weapon attack as a reaction.

**Dominate Person (1/Day).** Lord Saxton casts the *dominate person* spell (spell save DC 14) without expending any material components.



**Move Allies.** Each creature of Saxton's choice within 30 feet of him that can see and hear him can move up to half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

## POWERS

**Make an Example.** As an action, Saxton takes any number of power dice from his domain's pool. If the total of the dice is equal to or greater than the remaining hit points of one of his lieutenants, the leader executes the lieutenant. Each of his remaining lieutenants can then immediately use a reaction to make one weapon attack or cast a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action.

**My Life for Yours.** When Lord Saxton is hit by a melee attack, he can take one power die from his domain's pool and cause a lieutenant within 5 feet of him to use a reaction to become the target of the attack instead. The attack's damage is reduced by the number on the power die. As part of the reaction, the lieutenant can then make a melee weapon attack against the triggering attacker.

## LIEUTENANTS: SAXTON'S COURT

The despotic will of Lord Saxton is made manifest by his court. Three are Knights of the Three Roses, despised by commoners for their cruel actions against the people of Bedegar. Two advisors supply Saxton with magical might, Delicara Therin the Magus Extraordinary and Kiril Ellingwood the Prelate of Ajax.

### THE KNIGHTS OF THREE ROSES

All three of Lord Saxton's knights in this section appear human and act in a plausibly human manner—if you assume humans are scheming, cruel, and sinister. In reality, the knights are mindkillers—creatures of loathsome appearance from the World Below, lent to Lord Saxton by the same patron who grants him his unholy powers. Statistics for the mindkillers are included at the end of this appendix.

When any of Saxton's knights are reduced to 0 hit points, they fall down, cracking their skull against the flagstones—and a mindkiller pops out. This does not surprise Lord Saxton, but it *does* surprise his court mage and court priest!

## SIR PELLITON

Sir Pelliton, the Star Knight of the Three Roses, bullies the people of Bedegar as a petty tyrant, hiding his cowardice behind a smoke screen of noble status and Lord Saxton's authority. Like a spoiled child with unholy powers, Pelliton takes what he wants when he wants and throws destructive tantrums when defied. Inflicting suffering on others makes Pelliton feel strong.

As an illrigger, Pelliton forged a pact with Asmodeus for his abilities. He loves to be loathed, taking great pleasure in harming those weaker than him with sadistic glee. While he kills when he must, Pelliton prefers to leave victims visibly maimed to grow his legendary infamy.

Pelliton is tall and thin, but muscular, with an imposing suit of armor emblazoned with the three-flowered symbol of the Knights of the Three Roses. Both sides of his greatsword blade bear the five-starred constellation he took his title from. His skin is distressingly pale, and his shining shaved head and black goatee can be spotted from a mile off on a clear day.

### SIR PELLITON

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 90 (12d8 + 36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 8 (–1) | 17 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 18 (+4) |

**Saving Throws** Con +6, Cha +7

**Skills** Athletics +7, Intimidation +7

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Condition Immunities** charmed

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

**Alien Mind.** Pelliton has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Baleful Interdict (4/Day).** As a bonus action, Pelliton places a seal on a creature within 30 feet of him that he can see, which lasts 1 minute or until consumed. He can use this bonus action every turn to place another seal on the same creature, or on a different one. When Pelliton or one of his allies hits a target with at least one seal with a melee attack, Pelliton can consume the seals (no action required) to deal an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage per seal consumed.

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** Pelliton's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts, mage hand*

3/day each: *charm person, shield, suggestion*

1/day each: *confusion, hold person, modify memory, nondetection* (self only), *see invisibility*

**Legendary Resistance (1/Day).** As a reaction to failing a saving throw, Pelliton can choose to succeed instead.

**Mindkiller.** When Pelliton is reduced to 0 hit points, the mindkiller controlling him leaves his body, appearing with full hit points in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of Pelliton.

**Spellcasting.** Pelliton is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC

15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following illriger spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, minor illusion, true strike*  
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, command, hellish rebuke*

2nd level (3 slots): *enthrall, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, vampiric touch*

4th level (2 slots): *blight, phantasmal killer*

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## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Pelliton makes two greatsword attacks.

**Frost Brand Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

**Psychic Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) psychic damage.

**Infernal Conduit (1/Day).** *Melee Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) necrotic damage, and Pelliton regains hit points equal to the damage taken. If fully healed, Pelliton gains the excess as temporary hit points.

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## LADY MORGANT

Commonfolk call Lady Morgant the Black Rose because the Thorn Knight never shies from initiating swift and brutal punishment. Morgant rarely speaks, preferring to let her massive maul do the talking. Cold and calculating, the only time the woman's face shows true joy is when her enemy's blood sprays across it.

Lord Saxton sees fearless Morgant as the tip of his spear. She charges headfirst into battle and murders any so-called allies too cowardly to join her. Just mentioning the intimidating legend of Morgant makes rioting peasants get back to work and caravans of rebellious halflings head for Bedegar's borders.

Black plate armor emblazoned with thorny vines protects Morgant's muscled body. At nearly seven feet, the Thorn Knight stands a good foot taller than the other Knights of the Three Roses. The Black Rose wears her onyx-colored hair short and contained under spiked helm, which leaves the face open to show Morgant's sun-browned skin. The head of her iron maul bears the crest of the Knights of the Three Roses.





## LADY MORGANT

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 76 (9d8 + 36)

**Speed** 40 ft.

---

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) |

---

**Saving Throws** Str +7, Con +6

**Skills** Athletics +7, Intimidation +4, Perception +4

**Condition Immunities** charmed

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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**Alien Mind.** Morgant has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Charge.** If Morgant moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a maul attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** Morgant's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *mage hand*

3/day each: *charm person*, *shield*, *suggestion*

1/day each: *confusion*, *hold person*, *modify memory*, *nondetection* (self only), *see invisibility*

**Mindkiller.** When Morgant is reduced to 0 hit points, the mindkiller controlling her leaves her body, appearing with full hit points in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of Morgant.

**Reckless.** At the start of her turn, Morgant can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against her have advantage until the start of her next turn.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Morgant makes two maul attacks.

**Maul.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, or 22 (5d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage on a critical hit.

**Psychic Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) psychic damage.

## REACTIONS

**Feel No Pain (1/Day).** When another creature hits Morgant with an attack, she gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage until the end of her next turn.

## SIR ANGLIM

Sir Anglim, the Tear Knight of the Three Roses, leads Lord Saxton's scouts and spies. The dashing Anglim once ran a smuggling ring in Bedegar until Saxton imprisoned him. After several months of captivity, Saxton broke Anglim, making him a loyal lapdog for the new power in Bedegar Keep.

A criminal background makes Anglim the perfect hunter to sniff and snuff out rebellion before it starts. Anglim's smuggling days give him, and by extension Saxton, eyes and ears in the ports and settlements of neighboring regions. When a piece of information fails to flow into Anglim's ears, he pries it from the mouth of a victim, applying his skills as a master torturer.

In times of war, Anglim leads lightly armored strike forces that swiftly accomplish any objective. None in Saxton's court match Anglim's skill with a bow.

Anglim's clean-shaven face and shining eyes make him look deceptively innocent despite a lifetime of violence. A thin and wiry man, his disarming smile quickly turns to frightening menace—or vice versa—depending on which gets him the information he seeks. Anglim wears armor with tear-shaped studs, indicating his status as the Tear Knight, and a royal blue cloak. Black leather bracers embossed with the symbol of the Knights of the Three Roses complete his ensemble.

## SIR ANGLIM

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Int +5

**Skills** Acrobatics +6, Deception +5, Insight +4, Intimidation +5, Perception +4, Stealth +6

**Condition Immunities** charmed

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Alien Mind.** Anglim has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Assassinate.** During his first turn, Anglim has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit Anglim scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

**Boots of Speed (1/Day).** As a bonus action, Anglim activates his *boots of speed* for 10 minutes. While activated, his walking speed doubles and any creature that makes an opportunity attack against him has disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Cunning Action.** On each of his turns, Anglim can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** Anglim's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

*At will:* *detect thoughts*, *mage hand*

*3/day each:* *charm person*, *shield*, *suggestion*

*1/day each:* *confusion*, *hold person*, *modify memory*, *nondetection* (self only), *see invisibility*

**Mindkiller.** When Anglim is reduced to 0 hit points, the mindkiller controlling him leaves his body, appearing with full hit points in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of Anglim.



**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Anglim deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of one of his allies that isn't incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Anglim makes two attacks with his longbow or two attacks with his +1 *shortsword*.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**+1 Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

**Psychic Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) psychic damage.

**Potion of Greater Healing.** Anglim consumes his potion of greater healing and regains 4d4 + 4 hit points. He only has one potion.

## MAGUS EXTRAORDINARY DELICARA THERIN

A resident of Bedegar Keep longer than Lord Saxton, Delicara Therin is a twisted villain with a desire to create the perfect soldier. Saxton bought her loyalty with promises of humanoid test subjects for her devious experiments. This deal was all the Magus Extraordinary ever wanted, so she unlocked Bedegar Keep's gates and pointed the way to her master's chambers when the White Tusk Orcs attacked.

Whenever the Knights of the Three Roses capture one of Saxton's enemies, the captive winds up in the laboratory of Delicara (after a thorough, torturous interrogation at the hands of Sir Anglim). The Magus Extraordinary's test subjects have short, painful tenures that end in brutal deaths. Her few successful experiments are then tested in the field of battle, where they eviscerate as many of Saxton's enemies as possible before their own demise.

Though passionate about her transmutation experiments, the Magus Extraordinary's duties extend far beyond her lab. Saxton relies on Delicara as an advisor, diviner, and lore master. Delicara's twisted crush on the handsome Saxton, though unrequited, keeps her doing anything the lord asks.

Delicara's pale skin and unkempt, long red and white hair give her a wild, sickly look. She wears the gold-trimmed green robes of the Magus Extraordinary, but wrinkles and dried blood spatter give away her scatterbrained, violent nature. Her staff of purple crystal encasing a dragon's eye, the symbol of her office, stands a foot taller than her slight five-foot-tall frame.

In place of her right arm, Delicara has a long, purple tentacle lined with pink suction cups. The appendage seems to have a mind of its own, flicking and twitching randomly as Delicara goes about her day. The Magus Extraordinary controls this monstrous limb through the power of magic. When she wraps this tentacle around another creature, the appendage feeds, sucking the life energy from the victim.

## MAGUS EXTRAORDINARY DELICARA THERIN

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 38 (7d8 + 7)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 8 (–1) |

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +3

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Spellcasting.** Delicara is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *minor illusion*,  
*prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *mage armor\**, *shield*,  
*thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *enlarge/reduce*, *scorching ray*,  
*suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *haste*

4th level (1 slot): *confusion*, *polymorph*

\*Delicara casts this spell on herself before combat.



## ACTIONS

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if made with two hands.

**Tentacle.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Delicara can't use her tentacle to attack another target.

## PRELATE OF AJAX KIRIL ELLINGWOOD

While most who aim the word “tyrant” at Lord Saxton say it with a sneer and a spit, Kiril Ellingwood levies the word as a compliment of the highest degree. The commonfolk—or cattle, as she calls them—need to be kept under control. Only a leader with a strong hand and absolute authority can bring such order to the world. She believes this as divine truth, for it is the word of Ajax.

As Bedegar's prelate of the Iron Saint, Kiril forces the churches of the region to accept Ajax as a true saint. Saxton happily helps impose this will, and in exchange, he receives Kiril's council. Saxton sees the prelate as a conduit to one of the greatest conquerors in all Orden's history. As a bonus, Kiril's own mind contains brilliant ideas for keeping the people of the realm under control. She leads a team of priests that controls local leaders with enchantment spells to carry out Saxton's will.

Kiril speaks in a monotone voice that reveals her lack of empathy and compassion. Her brown pate is shaved, and she wears a red sash over a scarred, empty eye socket. The prelate wields a gilded mace and a shining shield emblazoned with the image of Ajax. Black steel armor and a hooded red cloak complete her tyrannical ensemble.

## WHO IS AJAX?

Ajax the Invincible is a human conqueror and leader of a vast empire. He seeks to rule the world and achieve true sainthood. Lesser tyrants worship him. They hope such veneration will earn them some of the Overlord's strength and allow them to maintain hold over their domains when he finally invades their neck of the woods.

## PRELATE OF AJAX KIRIL ELLINGWOOD

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (half plate, shield)

**Hit Points** 65 (10d8 + 20)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 17 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) |

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Wis +6, Cha +3

**Skills** History +4, Insight +6, Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Divine Eminence.** As a bonus action, Kiril can expend a spell slot to cause her melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If she expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

**Spellcasting.** Kiril is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, command, cure wounds, inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, dispel magic, spirit guardians*

4th level (1 slot): *banishment, confusion*

## ACTIONS

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Love Your Leader (1/Day).** Each creature within 30 feet of Kiril that can hear her must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or drop whatever it is holding and be charmed by her and another creature of Kiril's choice within 30 feet of her until the end of Kiril's next turn or until the charmed creature takes damage.



# MINDKILLER

Artificially evolved from psionic nematodes by the voiceless talkers, the mindkillers serve as pets. They are given as rewards to allies who use the mindkillers against their enemies, converting them into pliant and loyal servants.

When a mindkiller takes over a body, it absorbs the host's memories and abilities. This allows it to masquerade as its host, passing itself off as the original. It even remembers the host's personality, so it's rare for anyone to suspect a change unless they were there to see the horrible invasive act.

Mindkillers work best as villains when they're introduced while already inside the heroes' foe, driving a body around. What GM doesn't want that shock moment when the characters strike down their enemy and the corpse's head cracks open to reveal a psychic jellyfish within?! The horror of realizing, "That's why the gnoll lord was so smart," at the same time as, "This thing is going to try to crawl inside me now!" is an experience mindkillers were made for.

On the other hand, it's rarely fun for a player to have their character's brain devoured and replaced with a mindkiller thanks to a few failed saving throws. If a player character gets grappled by one of these brain jellies, give them every opportunity to fight it off. Making sure the character isn't without allies and that they outnumber the mindkillers is a good start. When the characters have easy access to spells that can bring a body back to life, you can be a little tougher with your mindkiller encounters.

## VOICELESS TALKERS

All planar travelers panic at the mere mention of voiceless talkers. Psionic marauders from other planes, these tentacled, gray-skinned aberrations conquer world after world. Voiceless talkers see themselves as superior to all other creatures, and devour humanoid brains both for sustenance and pleasure.

# MINDKILLER

*Small aberration, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 45 (10d6 + 10)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Int +5, Wis +4

**Skills** Investigation +5, Perception +4

**Damage Resistances** psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** understands Deep Speech but can't speak, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Alien Mind.** The mindkiller has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Amorphous.** The mindkiller can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** The mindkiller's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

*At will:* *detect thoughts*, *mage hand*

*3/day each:* *charm person*, *shield*, *suggestion*

*1/day each:* *confusion*, *hold person*, *modify memory*, *nondetection* (self only), *see invisibility*

## ACTIONS

**Psychic Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) psychic damage.

**Tentacles.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) psychic damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the mindkiller can't use its tentacles to attack another target.

**Mindwipe.** A humanoid grappled by the mindkiller must make a DC 12 Strength saving throw as the

mindkiller tries to force itself inside the target via the humanoid's ear, nose, or mouth. On a failed save, the mindkiller pushes inside the humanoid, where it has total cover against attacks and other effects originating outside the humanoid.

When a humanoid with the mindkiller inside of it ends its turn, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become stunned. If the creature is already stunned, it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or the mindkiller consumes the creature's brain and spinal cord, replacing those parts of the creature with its own body. If either of the saving throws succeeds, the mindkiller is expelled from the humanoid's body, ending the stunned condition if applicable.

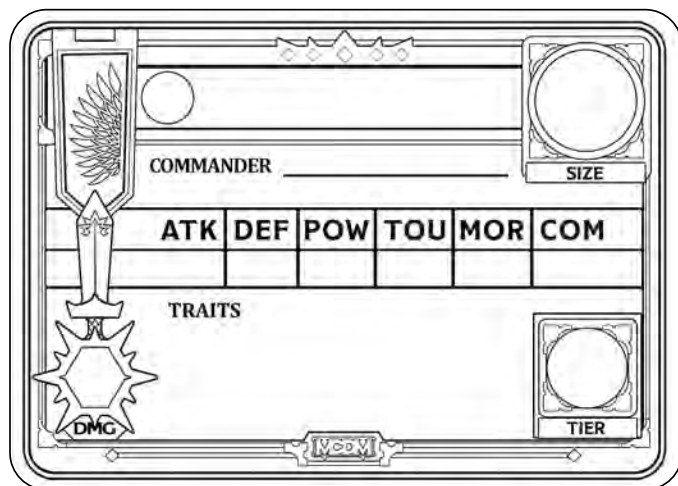
While the mindkiller acts as a humanoid's brain and spine, it takes control of the humanoid's body and retains its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores,

unless the humanoid's are higher. The mindkiller also retains its understanding of Deep Speech, its telepathy, its Alien Mind and Innate Spellcasting traits, and its Psychic Bolt action. It otherwise adopts the target's statistics. It knows everything the creature knew, including spells, class features, traits, and languages.

If the humanoid body dies, the mindkiller must leave it. A protection from evil and good spell cast on the body drives the mindkiller out. A creature adjacent to the host body that has an edged weapon and succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check made as an action deals 11 (2d10) slashing damage to the host body and cuts the mindkiller out. By spending 5 feet of its movement, the mindkiller can voluntarily leave the body, exiting in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of it. If the mindkiller exits a body it controls, the body dies.

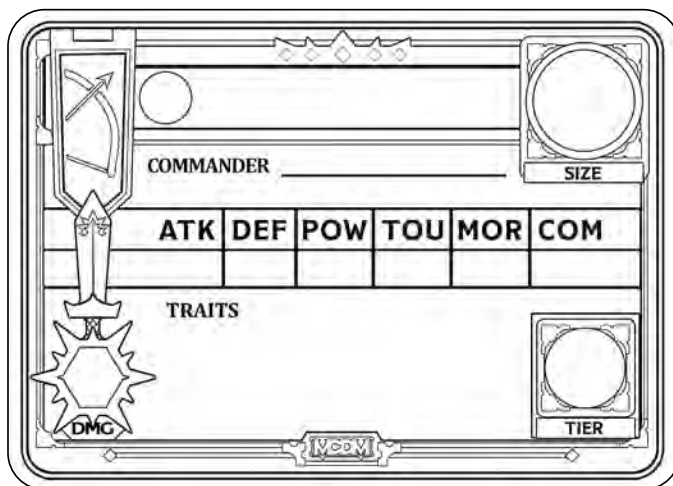


*Blank Aerial unit card*



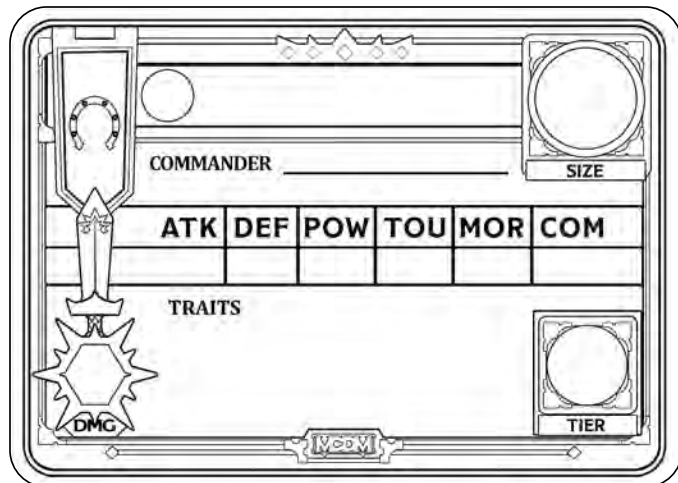
A blank template for an Aerial unit card. The card has a decorative border with a crown at the top. On the left, there is a vertical slot for a unit icon (currently showing a feathered arrow) and a circular slot for a commander's portrait. Below the commander slot is a star-shaped icon labeled 'DMG'. The top section contains a 'COMMANDER' label followed by a line for the commander's name, and a 'SIZE' label followed by a circular slot. The middle section is a table with six columns: 'ATK', 'DEF', 'POW', 'TOU', 'MOR', and 'COM'. Each column has a small square slot below the header. The bottom section is labeled 'TRAITS' and has a large rectangular area for text. In the bottom right corner, there is a 'TIER' label followed by a circular slot. At the very bottom, there is a small decorative element with the text 'IVCOM'.

*Blank Artillery unit card*



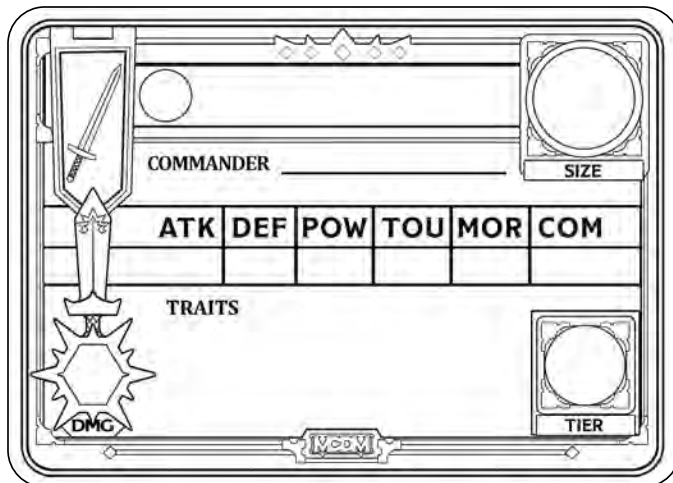
A blank template for an Artillery unit card. The card has a decorative border with a crown at the top. On the left, there is a vertical slot for a unit icon (currently showing a bow) and a circular slot for a commander's portrait. Below the commander slot is a star-shaped icon labeled 'DMG'. The top section contains a 'COMMANDER' label followed by a line for the commander's name, and a 'SIZE' label followed by a circular slot. The middle section is a table with six columns: 'ATK', 'DEF', 'POW', 'TOU', 'MOR', and 'COM'. Each column has a small square slot below the header. The bottom section is labeled 'TRAITS' and has a large rectangular area for text. In the bottom right corner, there is a 'TIER' label followed by a circular slot. At the very bottom, there is a small decorative element with the text 'IVCOM'.

*Blank Cavalry unit card*



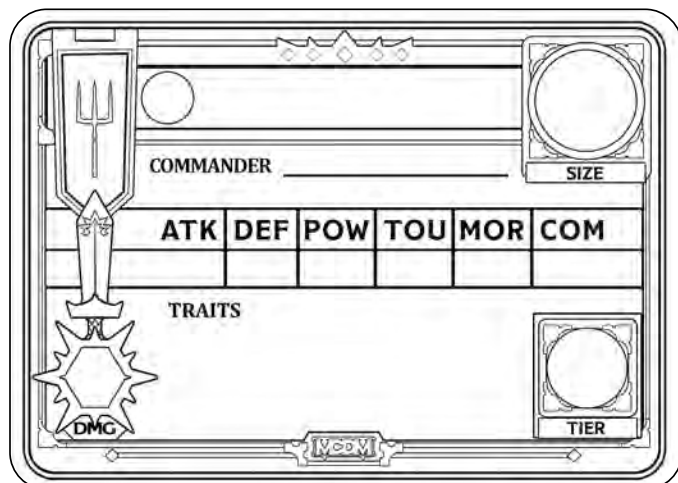
A blank template for a Cavalry unit card. The card has a decorative border with a crown at the top. On the left, there is a vertical slot for a unit icon (currently showing a horseshoe) and a circular slot for a commander's portrait. Below the commander slot is a star-shaped icon labeled 'DMG'. The top section contains a 'COMMANDER' label followed by a line for the commander's name, and a 'SIZE' label followed by a circular slot. The middle section is a table with six columns: 'ATK', 'DEF', 'POW', 'TOU', 'MOR', and 'COM'. Each column has a small square slot below the header. The bottom section is labeled 'TRAITS' and has a large rectangular area for text. In the bottom right corner, there is a 'TIER' label followed by a circular slot. At the very bottom, there is a small decorative element with the text 'IVCOM'.

*Blank Infantry unit card*



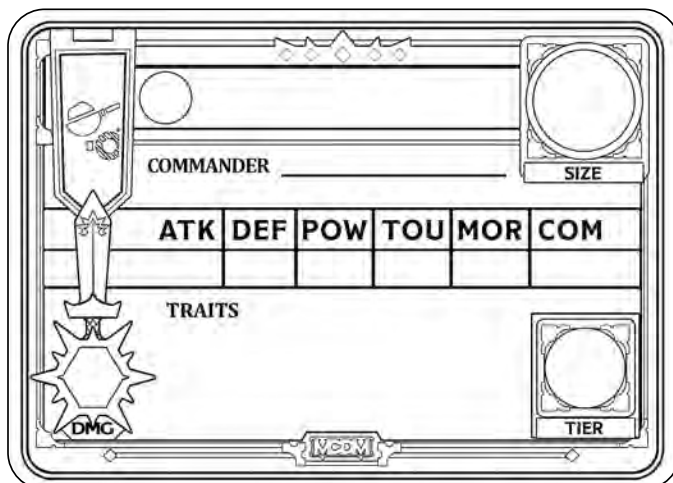
A blank template for an Infantry unit card. The card has a decorative border with a crown at the top. On the left, there is a vertical slot for a unit icon (currently showing a sword) and a circular slot for a commander's portrait. Below the commander slot is a star-shaped icon labeled 'DMG'. The top section contains a 'COMMANDER' label followed by a line for the commander's name, and a 'SIZE' label followed by a circular slot. The middle section is a table with six columns: 'ATK', 'DEF', 'POW', 'TOU', 'MOR', and 'COM'. Each column has a small square slot below the header. The bottom section is labeled 'TRAITS' and has a large rectangular area for text. In the bottom right corner, there is a 'TIER' label followed by a circular slot. At the very bottom, there is a small decorative element with the text 'IVCOM'.

*Blank Levies unit card*

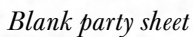


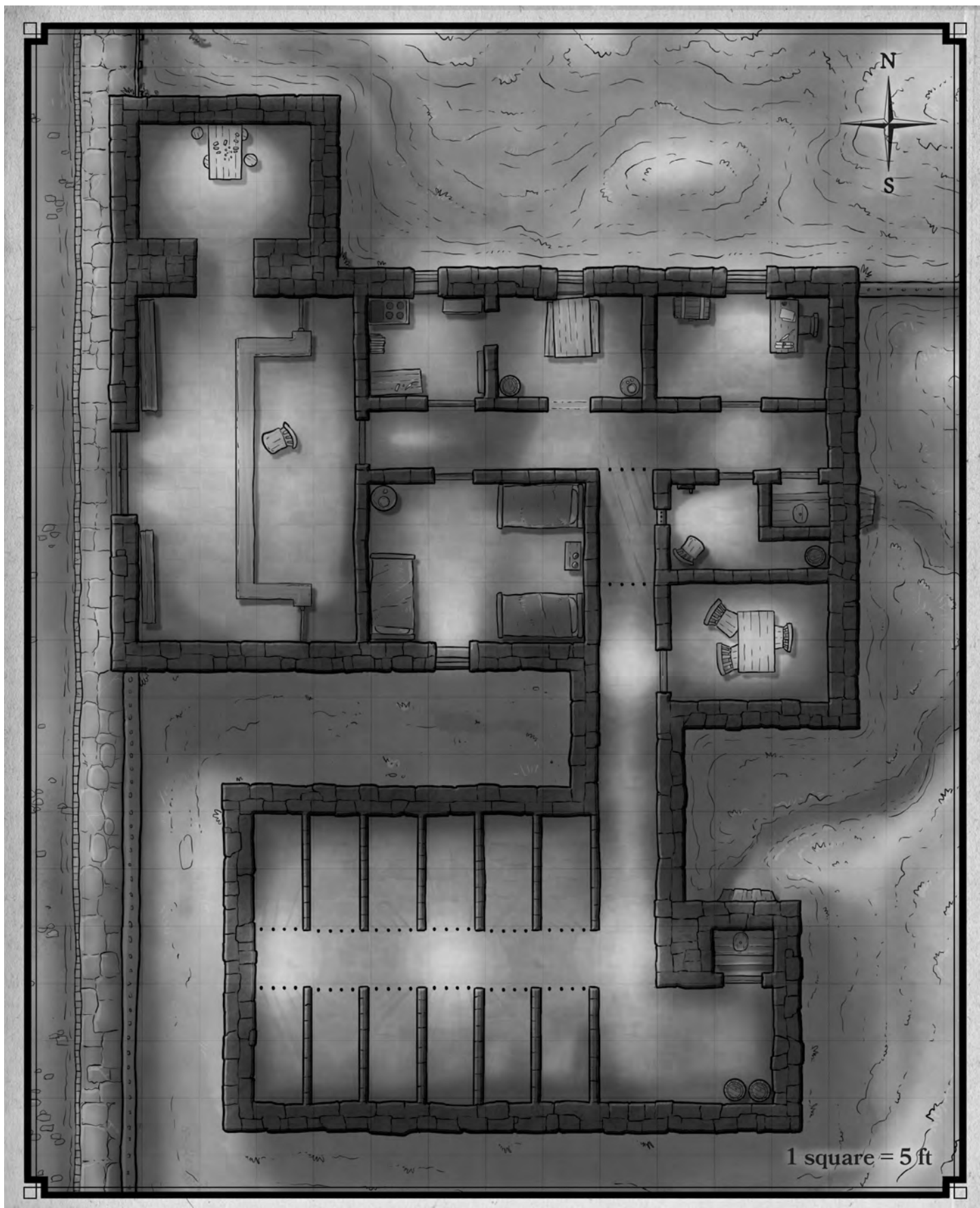
A blank template for a Levies unit card. The card has a decorative border with a crown at the top. On the left, there is a vertical slot for a unit icon (currently showing a pitchfork) and a circular slot for a commander's portrait. Below the commander slot is a star-shaped icon labeled 'DMG'. The top section contains a 'COMMANDER' label followed by a line for the commander's name, and a 'SIZE' label followed by a circular slot. The middle section is a table with six columns: 'ATK', 'DEF', 'POW', 'TOU', 'MOR', and 'COM'. Each column has a small square slot below the header. The bottom section is labeled 'TRAITS' and has a large rectangular area for text. In the bottom right corner, there is a 'TIER' label followed by a circular slot. At the very bottom, there is a small decorative element with the text 'IVCOM'.

*Blank Siege Engine Unit Card*



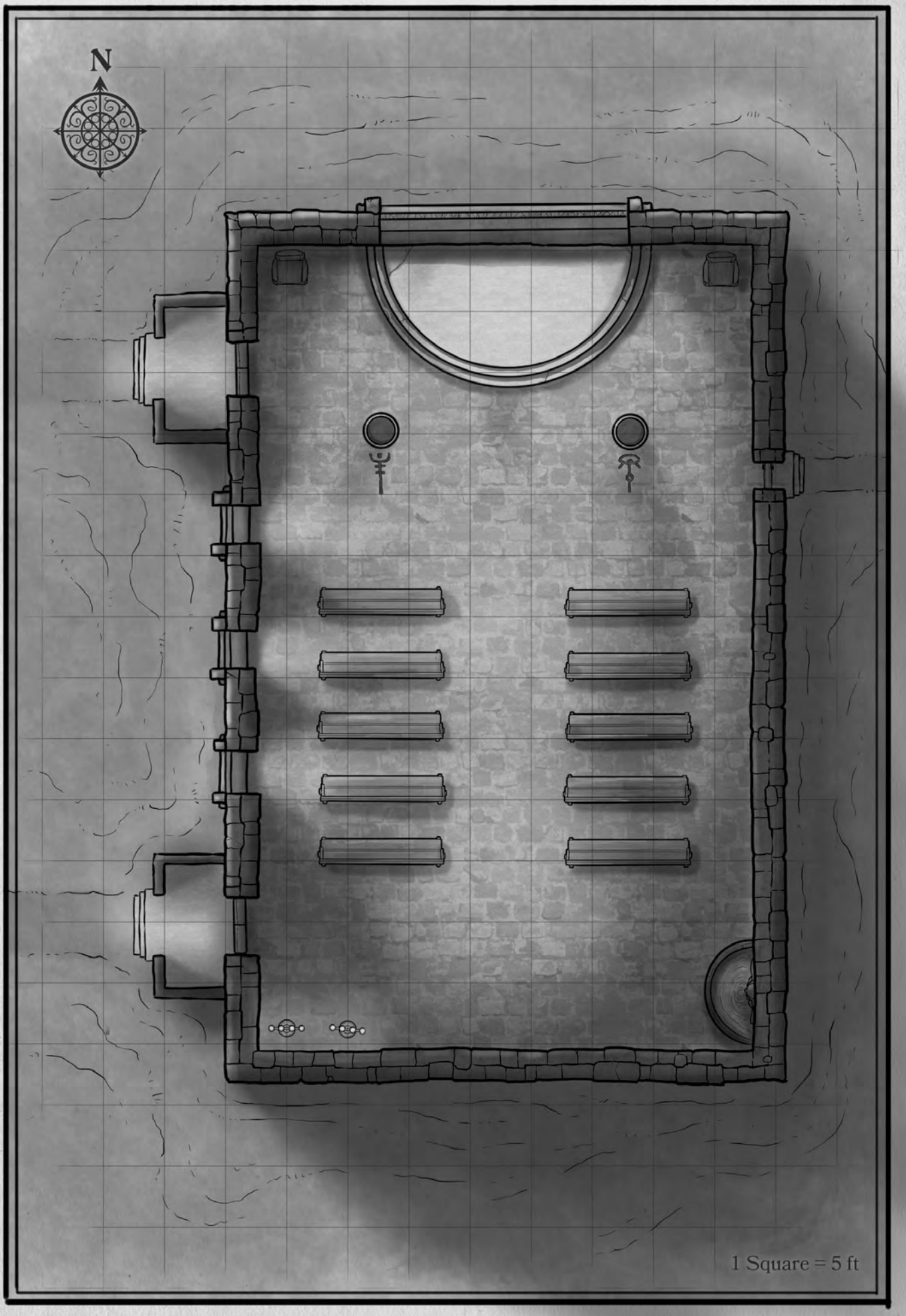
A blank template for a Siege Engine unit card. The card has a decorative border with a crown at the top. On the left, there is a vertical slot for a unit icon (currently showing a siege engine) and a circular slot for a commander's portrait. Below the commander slot is a star-shaped icon labeled 'DMG'. The top section contains a 'COMMANDER' label followed by a line for the commander's name, and a 'SIZE' label followed by a circular slot. The middle section is a table with six columns: 'ATK', 'DEF', 'POW', 'TOU', 'MOR', and 'COM'. Each column has a small square slot below the header. The bottom section is labeled 'TRAITS' and has a large rectangular area for text. In the bottom right corner, there is a 'TIER' label followed by a circular slot. At the very bottom, there is a small decorative element with the text 'IVCOM'.





*Bedegar Jailhouse player's map*

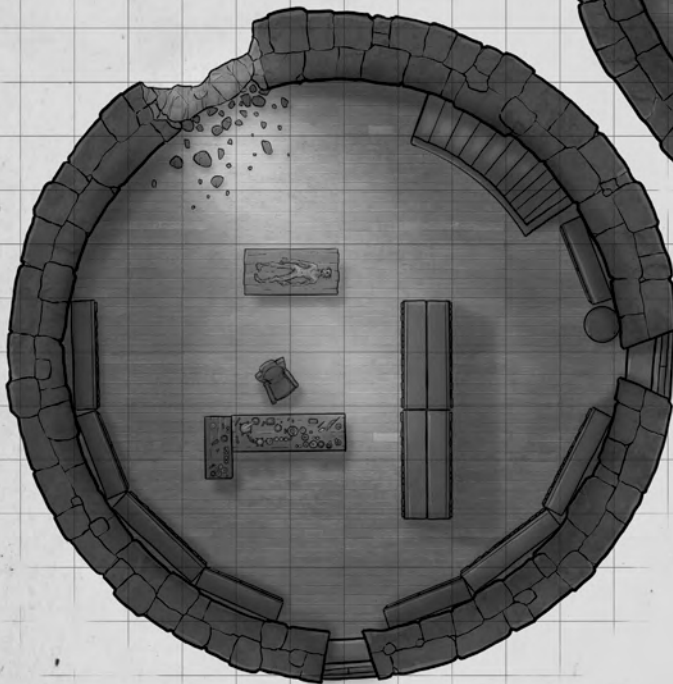
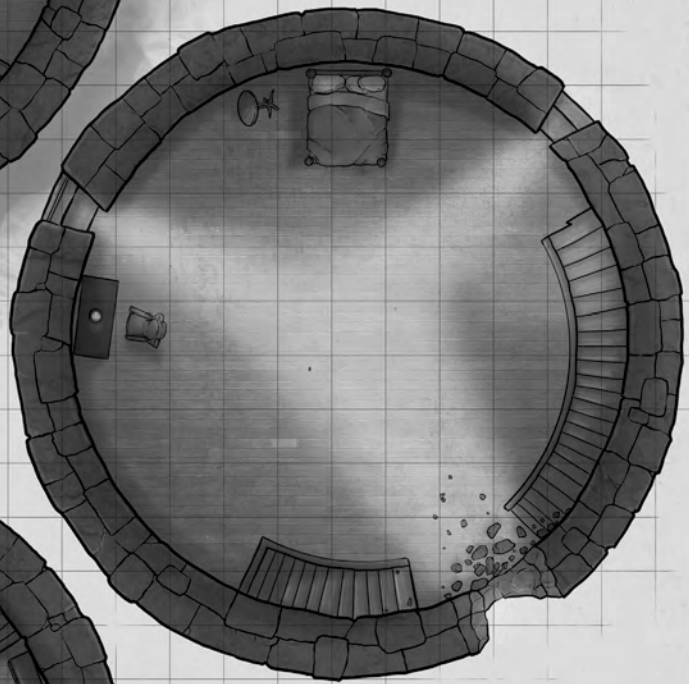
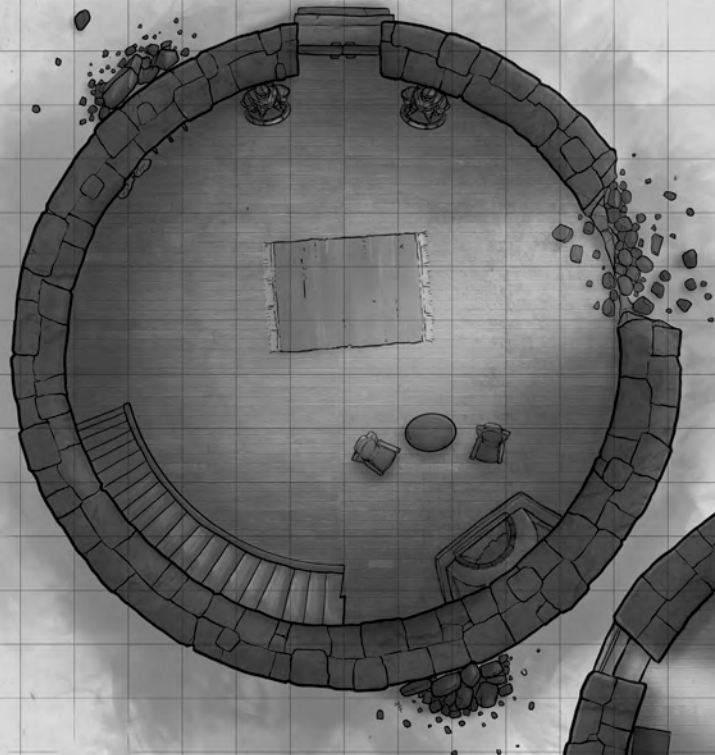




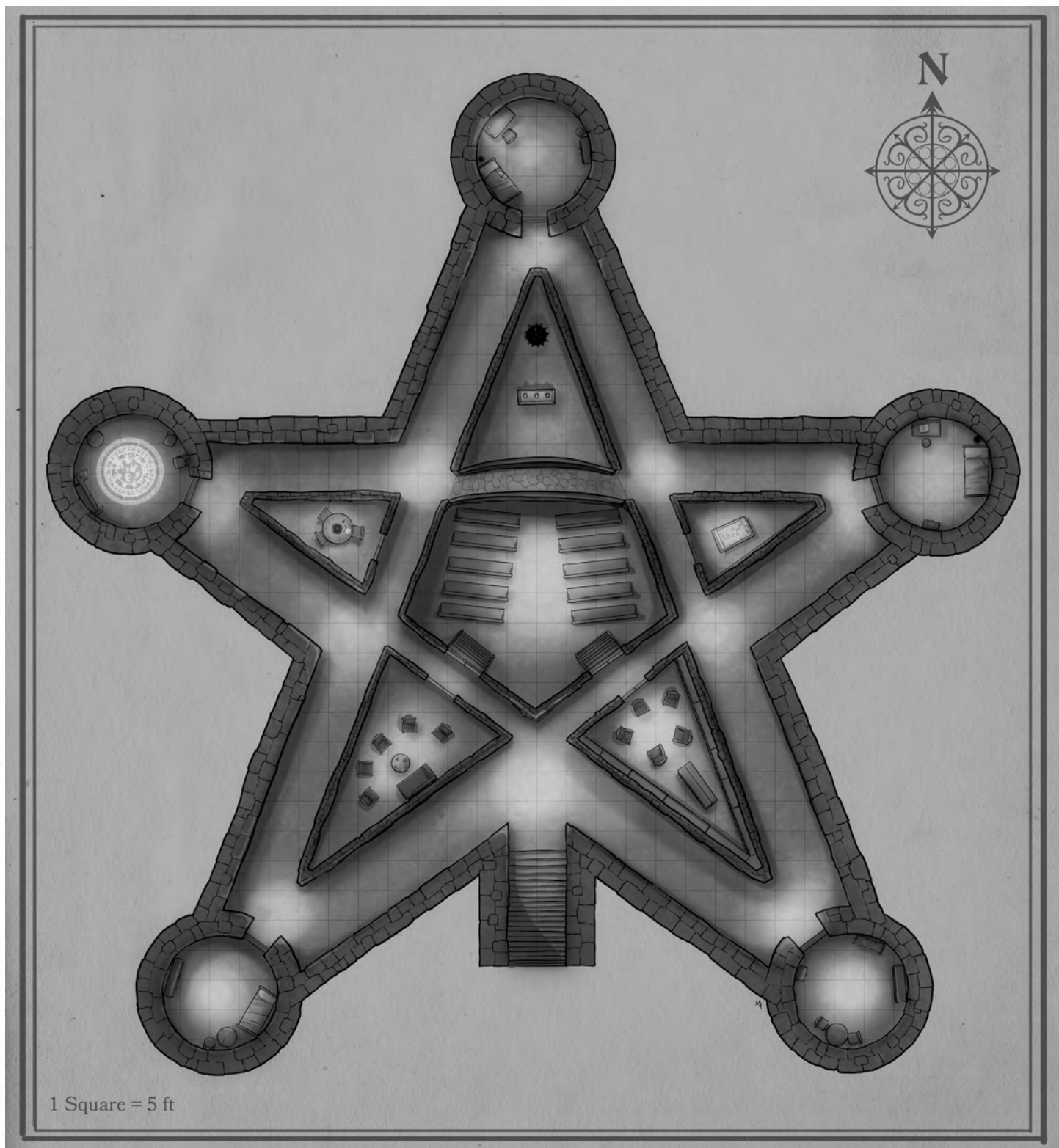
*Gravesford Church player's map*



1 square = 5 ft







*Star Chamber player's map*

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