

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER®



OUTLAWS OF ALKENSTAR

ADVENTURE PATH

CRADLE OF QUARTZ

By Scott D. Young

SPELLSCAR DESERT

20 MILES

Cloudreaver Keep •

↑
TO ALKENSTAR

THE SKILLET

THE GUTROCKS

VERMINHOLE

SCRUBGROVE

CORPSEWALK

Ecanus •

FIREBALL MESA

DINOSAUR UPLANDS

Geb's Rest •

Ancren's Estate •

FOLLY'S ROAD

BAFFLED LOWLANDS

BURNING STONE MESA

Stargazer's Tower •

DESPERATION ARROYO

GEB

NEX

BITTERDEATH LAKE

SCREAMING FIELDS

THE CORPSEWALL

THE TUMBLEDOWN

TORAG'S SCARS

Yled •

STONEWATCHER RIDGES

TARRY DELTA

SIXFISTS



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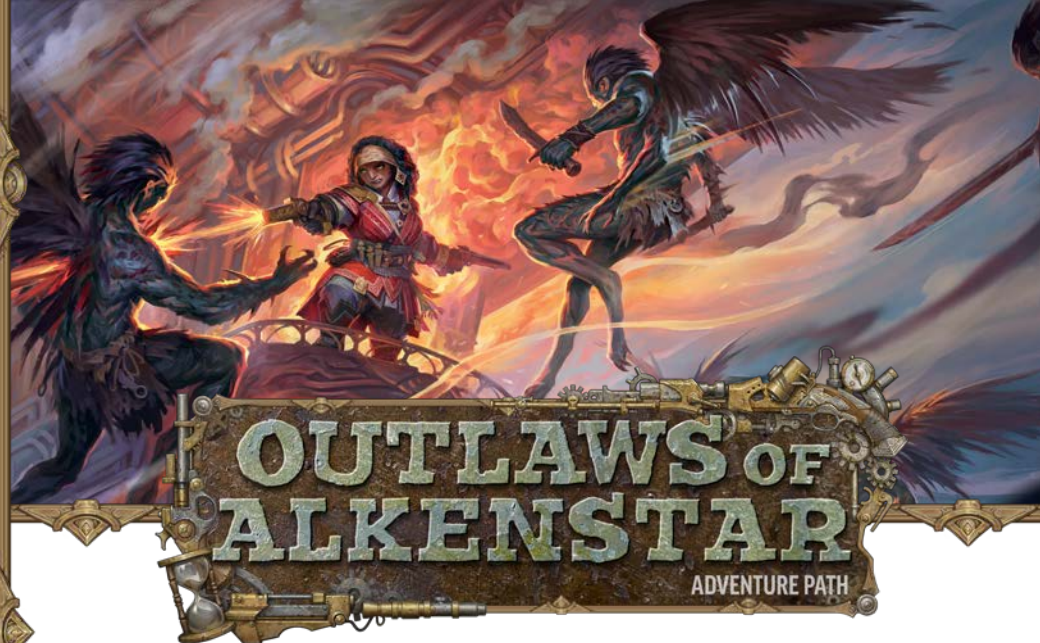
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ADVENTURE PATH 2 OF 3

Cradle of Quartz

Cradle of Quartz

by Scott D. Young

Chapter 1: The High Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2: Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3: The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4: The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

by Ron Lundeen

Adventure Toolbox

by Scott D. Young and Rodney Sloan

Player Rules

Pyronite

Gilded Gear

Mana Wastes Armaments

Vestiges of Brigh

Creatures

Clockwork

Daelum

Giant, Smog

Mana Wastes Mutant

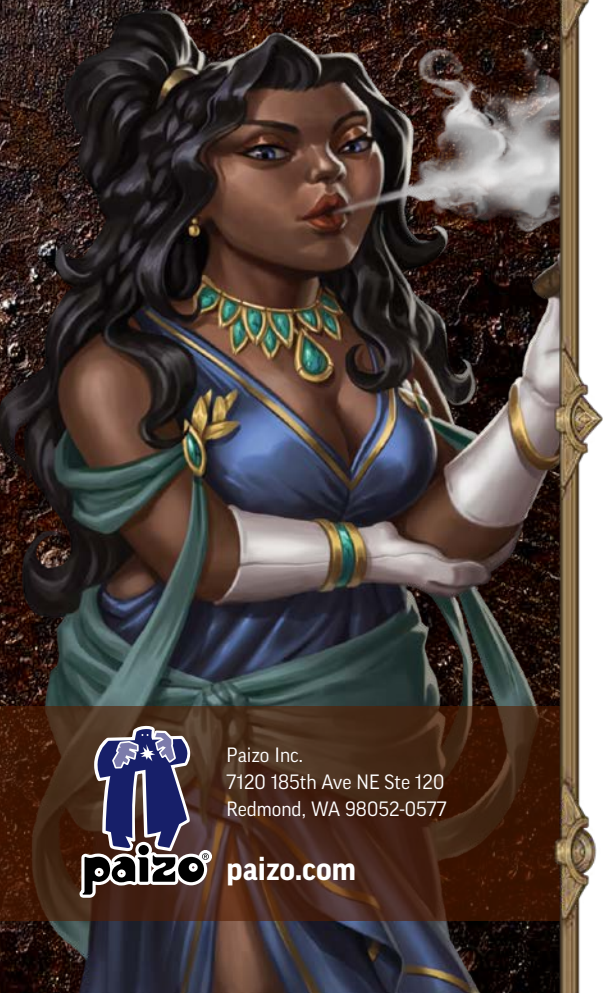
Scarecophagus

Trapjaw Tangle

NPCs

Ambrost Mugland

Sabora Sharkosa



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Cradle of Quartz

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1: The High Priest's Puzzle.....4

After learning a high priest of Brigh reverse-engineered the formula for pyronite, the player characters track down the missing man to determine what kind of formula, exactly, was leaked to their adversaries. There's just one problem: no one has seen Oloman Kosowana in days. To figure out where the cleric is, the party investigates his trap-laden workshop.

Chapter 2: Searching the Spellscar20

Oloman Kosowana fled to the Cradle of Quartz, a remote Brightie shrine in the middle of the Spellscar Desert, east of Alkenstar. To get to the forgotten shrine, the party must convince a washed-up airship captain that the trip is worth it. When a freak mana storm brings the airship crashing into the desert sands, the characters must travel through the cursed desert on foot.

Chapter 3: The Cradle of Quartz.....40

Within the crystalline Brightie shrine called the Cradle of Quartz, the player characters encounter monstrous adversaries and confounding puzzles as they search for Oloman Kosowana.

Chapter 4: The Steaming Kingdom50

The party returns to Alkenstar to face their old adversary, Ambrost Mugland. The wicked mogul is sending a gang of mercenaries called the Gilded Gunners to test their pyronite formula on the vault of a speakeasy called the Steaming Kingdom. By intercepting the Gunners and following them to their hideout, the characters can finally corner their archenemy.

WEIRD MAGIC

Alkenstar was founded in the ruined lands between Nex and Geb in spite—and because—of the region's peculiar ambient effects on magic. Thankfully for the city's inhabitants, protective walls and magical forecasts have largely mitigated the most troublesome aspects of spellcasting within the City of Smog. Naturally, however, the same can't be said for the vast, haunted wastes beyond the city's borders.

In this adventure, the characters step foot outside the relative safety of the city of Alkenstar and into the perilous Spellscar Desert, one of the Mana Wastes' most magically disturbed subregions. Here as never before, they'll encounter dangerous, terrifying, and downright strange places and denizens. For many, the outright weirdness of the Mana Wastes is exactly what makes the place so appealing.

Chapter 2 of "Cradle of Quartz" includes numerous bizarre situations and encounters for the party to overcome, and the Spellscar Desert article on page 66 includes dozens more whimsical characters, locations, and ideas for you to seed into the party's wasteland wanderings as you like. Of course, you should feel free to drop in your own outlandish ideas, too. In fact, if you've been waiting for a chance to incorporate your wildest, wackiest ideas into a Pathfinder Adventure Path, the party's foray into the Spellscar is a prime opportunity.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Cradle of Quartz" is designed for four characters.

- 4** The party should be 4th level when they begin this adventure.
- 5** The party should be 5th level before they begin looking for an airship pilot at the start of Chapter 2.
- 6** The party should reach 6th level by the time they reach the Cradle of Quartz and begin Chapter 3.
- 7** The party should be 7th level after successfully exploring the Cradle of Quartz and before Chapter 4.
- The party should reach 8th level by the adventure's end.

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox



Chapter 1: The High Priest's Puzzle

Oloman Kosowana's life has taken some strange turns. His early years as a tinkerer and inventor led him to join Alkenstar's Temple of Brigh as a young man, and he devoted himself to research and invention at the Bronze Lady's direction. After decades of service to the church, he rose to the rank of primary cog, a position equivalent to high priest or priestess in other organized religions. The expectation was that he would either stay in Alkenstar to serve under the local church's leader, Grand Cog Athenth Llanalir, or migrate to another part of the world to spread the faith and start his own congregation.

Instead, Kosowana defied expectations by remaining in Alkenstar yet dedicating his time and efforts to

researching and compiling some of the church's more rebellious elements. Well-established doctrines couldn't captivate his ever-curious mind, and so he delved deeper and deeper into the church's archives in search of mysteries, secrets, and forgotten lore. In the process, he came across many documents and texts not only unavailable to rank-and-file worshippers, but for all intents and purposes totally proscribed from Brighite orthodoxy.

Brigh's faith opposes the destruction of knowledge, but the church leaders recognize not all information is of equal value or veracity. Many Brighite documents of questionable content are sequestered

beneath Alkenstar's Temple of Brigh in a dusty sub-basement called the Asynchronous Archives. Kosowana immersed himself in the rescinded legends and parables of the early church of Brigh, and he came to believe the current clergy lost their "true path" long ago. Outlandish theories, alternate histories, and falsehoods—both deliberate and accidental—all pushed conventional wisdom from Kosowana's belief system, triggering his crisis of faith. He left the formal structure of his church and began to seek even more esoteric sources of knowledge from independent researchers, putting together disparate sources into a patchwork quilt of conspiracy.

THE CONSPIRACY

The heretical teachings of the Asynchronous Archives continued to resonate with Kosowana's fruitful imaginings long after he retired from the Temple of Brigh. Central to Kosowana's alternative belief system is a formerly sacred location in the Spellscar Desert, a shrine called the Cradle of Quartz. Eccentric Brighite explorers discovered the location a century ago—an unusually pure outcropping of quartz crystals, Brigh's sacred stone—and chose the remote location to establish their small shrine.

According to materials Kosowana unearthed in the Asynchronous Archives, the crystals at the Cradle of Quartz could be used to peer backward and forward in time. One extreme prophet—known in writing only as "the 13th Ordinal"—claimed the Cradle of Quartz could be used not just to observe, but actually travel through time. To many in the church, such a concept was not only unbelievable, but antithetical to many of the precepts held sacred in the Brighite mainstream. Before the 13th Ordinal's radical ideas could gain purchase in the minds of susceptible followers, the Temple of Brigh branded these fringe beliefs the "Concurrent Heresy" and sealed away the relevant works in the deepest levels of the Asynchronous Archives.

When Kosowana discovered these writings, he believed, like many before him, such outlandish claims must have a grain of truth to them. In truth, the 13th Ordinal was no seer or prophet, but a devious shrine skelm called Droloxos the Eroder. Driven by the desire to undermine the Temple of Brigh in Alkenstar for his own amusement, Droloxos created the Concurrent Heresy from whole cloth. Not content to merely warp the minds and hearts of Brighites, Droloxos led his devotees on a secret pilgrimage to the Cradle of Quartz in 4688 AR.

While the 13th Ordinal's texts were based on fantasy, cosmic powers exist that take seriously any attempts to abuse the sanctity of time, imagined or real. To many of these powers, the veracity of such ambitions is irrelevant; any who attempt to subvert the laws of nature deserve to be punished for their crimes, whether or not their efforts held any promise.

When Droloxos and his flock arrived at the Cradle of Quartz and began their futile experiments, they drew the attention of a hound of Tindalos, a foul aberration from the Dimension of Time, who responded to the Brighites' hubris by slaughtering them all. In a single night of terror, the monster cut down the Concurrent Heretics and ended their meddling. Those few pilgrims who traveled to the Cradle of Quartz afterward and returned alive told tales of bloodless wounds and claws of smoke that rent both flesh and space itself.

In the aftermath of the massacre, the Temple of Brigh removed all references to the Cradle of Quartz and transferred related documents to the Asynchronous Archives. The temple issued a new edition of Brigh's holiest

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

Following the party's investigative work in the previous volume, Foebe Dunsmith hires the player characters to track down a high priest of Brigh named Oloman Kosowana, who apparently managed to reverse-engineer the pyronite formula. The objective isn't to stop the spread of the formula but to perform damage control. The party's best lead is Alkenstar's Temple of Brigh, where the characters can meet Kosowana's contemporaries and learn the location of his private workshop. At the workshop, the characters learn they're too late: Kosowana fled Alkenstar, and Ambrost Mugland's goons ransacked his home. Among the workshop ruins lies a spark of Kosowana's genius, however, in the form of a clue to the high priest's hiding spot in the Spellscar Desert: a long-forgotten Brighite shrine called the Cradle of Quartz.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High Priest's Puzzle

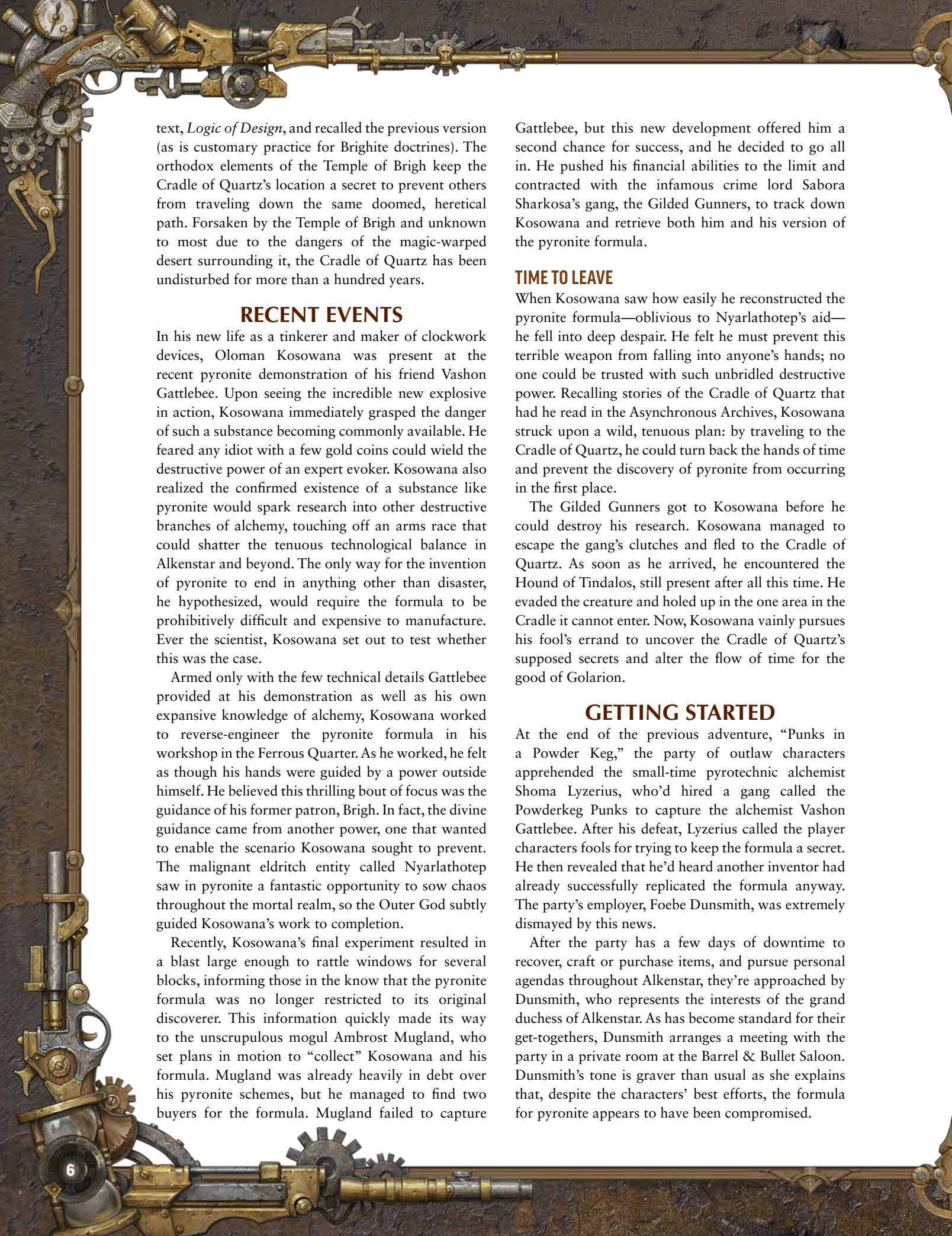
Chapter 2:
Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

Adventure Toolbox



text, *Logic of Design*, and recalled the previous version (as is customary practice for Brighite doctrines). The orthodox elements of the Temple of Brigh keep the Cradle of Quartz's location a secret to prevent others from traveling down the same doomed, heretical path. Forsaken by the Temple of Brigh and unknown to most due to the dangers of the magic-warped desert surrounding it, the Cradle of Quartz has been undisturbed for more than a hundred years.

RECENT EVENTS

In his new life as a tinkerer and maker of clockwork devices, Oloman Kosowana was present at the recent pyronite demonstration of his friend Vashon Gattlebee. Upon seeing the incredible new explosive in action, Kosowana immediately grasped the danger of such a substance becoming commonly available. He feared any idiot with a few gold coins could wield the destructive power of an expert evoker. Kosowana also realized the confirmed existence of a substance like pyronite would spark research into other destructive branches of alchemy, touching off an arms race that could shatter the tenuous technological balance in Alkenstar and beyond. The only way for the invention of pyronite to end in anything other than disaster, he hypothesized, would require the formula to be prohibitively difficult and expensive to manufacture. Ever the scientist, Kosowana set out to test whether this was the case.

Armed only with the few technical details Gattlebee provided at his demonstration as well as his own expansive knowledge of alchemy, Kosowana worked to reverse-engineer the pyronite formula in his workshop in the Ferrous Quarter. As he worked, he felt as though his hands were guided by a power outside himself. He believed this thrilling bout of focus was the guidance of his former patron, Brigh. In fact, the divine guidance came from another power, one that wanted to enable the scenario Kosowana sought to prevent. The malignant eldritch entity called Nyarlathotep saw in pyronite a fantastic opportunity to sow chaos throughout the mortal realm, so the Outer God subtly guided Kosowana's work to completion.

Recently, Kosowana's final experiment resulted in a blast large enough to rattle windows for several blocks, informing those in the know that the pyronite formula was no longer restricted to its original discoverer. This information quickly made its way to the unscrupulous mogul Ambrost Mugland, who set plans in motion to "collect" Kosowana and his formula. Mugland was already heavily in debt over his pyronite schemes, but he managed to find two buyers for the formula. Mugland failed to capture

Gattlebee, but this new development offered him a second chance for success, and he decided to go all in. He pushed his financial abilities to the limit and contracted with the infamous crime lord Sabora Sharkosa's gang, the Gilded Gunners, to track down Kosowana and retrieve both him and his version of the pyronite formula.

TIME TO LEAVE

When Kosowana saw how easily he reconstructed the pyronite formula—oblivious to Nyarlathotep's aid—he fell into deep despair. He felt he must prevent this terrible weapon from falling into anyone's hands; no one could be trusted with such unbridled destructive power. Recalling stories of the Cradle of Quartz that had he read in the Asynchronous Archives, Kosowana struck upon a wild, tenuous plan: by traveling to the Cradle of Quartz, he could turn back the hands of time and prevent the discovery of pyronite from occurring in the first place.

The Gilded Gunners got to Kosowana before he could destroy his research. Kosowana managed to escape the gang's clutches and fled to the Cradle of Quartz. As soon as he arrived, he encountered the Hound of Tindalos, still present after all this time. He evaded the creature and holed up in the one area in the Cradle it cannot enter. Now, Kosowana vainly pursues his fool's errand to uncover the Cradle of Quartz's supposed secrets and alter the flow of time for the good of Golarion.

GETTING STARTED

At the end of the previous adventure, "Punks in a Powder Keg," the party of outlaw characters apprehended the small-time pyrotechnic alchemist Shoma Lyzerius, who'd hired a gang called the Powderkeg Punks to capture the alchemist Vashon Gattlebee. After his defeat, Lyzerius called the player characters fools for trying to keep the formula a secret. He then revealed that he'd heard another inventor had already successfully replicated the formula anyway. The party's employer, Foebe Dunsmith, was extremely dismayed by this news.

After the party has a few days of downtime to recover, craft or purchase items, and pursue personal agendas throughout Alkenstar, they're approached by Dunsmith, who represents the interests of the grand duchess of Alkenstar. As has become standard for their get-togethers, Dunsmith arranges a meeting with the party in a private room at the Barrel & Bullet Saloon. Dunsmith's tone is graver than usual as she explains that, despite the characters' best efforts, the formula for pyronite appears to have been compromised.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud to start this adventure and give the party their next mission.

"Well, I have another problem that needs solving, and I think it's right up your alley," the gunslinging bartender sighs. "It pays well, and it'll get you even closer to settling your score with your old friends Ambrost Mugland and Deputy Anjelique Loveless.

"Last night, we got reports of a flying clockwork monster spotted over Hammer Street in Ferrous Quarter. It flew over the Ustradi due east before leaving the city entirely." Dunsmith indicates the general area on a map of Alkenstar. "One of the sentries at Alkenstar Castle got a good look at it and said it was a clockwork cat with big bronze wings, with somebody riding it like a steed."

"We checked with the Temple of Brigh—you know, goddess of clockworks. They keep a tight rein on which clockworks get made in Alkenstar. Turns out nobody's filed the paperwork for any clockwork cats. According to the Brighites, there's just one obvious suspect." Dunsmith slides a charcoal sketch across the table. The sketch shows a gaunt-faced man with bushy hair, thin lips, a broad nose, and an intense stare.

"Oloman Kosowana, one of the church's former primary cogs—the second-highest rank one can attain within the Brighite priesthood. A real wiz with clockworks, apparently, plus anything else he sets his mind to. Curious to a fault, you might say. He was booted from the church a while ago for breaking protocol and promoting heretical conspiracy theories. Last time anyone saw him in public was at our friend Vashon Gattlebee's pyronite demonstration." Dunsmith raises her eyebrows meaningfully.

"Kosowana kept a low profile 'til recently, doing his own thing at his workshop in Ferrous Quarter. We got a few complaints from neighbors of loud booms coming from the workshop, but nothing serious. Well, the same night sentries saw that flying clockwork cat, one of Kosowana's neighbors says he saw the old man fleeing the premises, some gun-toting goons in pursuit. Sounds like one of the local gangs broke into the place and our man hightailed it out of there. Now, here's where it gets interesting: one of the robbers matches the description of our old friend, Ambrost Mugland."

Dunsmith clasps her hands behind her back and turns around to study the whiskey bottles lining one of the walls. "Maybe it's a coincidence that Mugland, who failed to capture Gattlebee, leads a gang of toughs to grab this

Kosowana guy just a few nights later. But I don't believe in coincidences. I want you to check it out."

She drops a cloth sack on the table that lands with a satisfying clink. "Go search Kosowana's workshop and talk to his neighbor. The priests at the Temple of Brigh will have the address. While you're at the temple, maybe see about looking into whatever heretical poppycock got Kosowana in hot water with the Brighites. Could give us some clues as to where he went. At any rate, the duchess wants you to find him before Mugland does. Ensure his safety and find out what he knows. If he managed to figure out the pyronite formula, bring him in so we can keep him safe."

The characters may have questions for their patron, but Dunsmith has limited information beyond what she just relayed. She suggests

they go to the Temple of Brigh or talk to Kosowana's neighbor for more information.

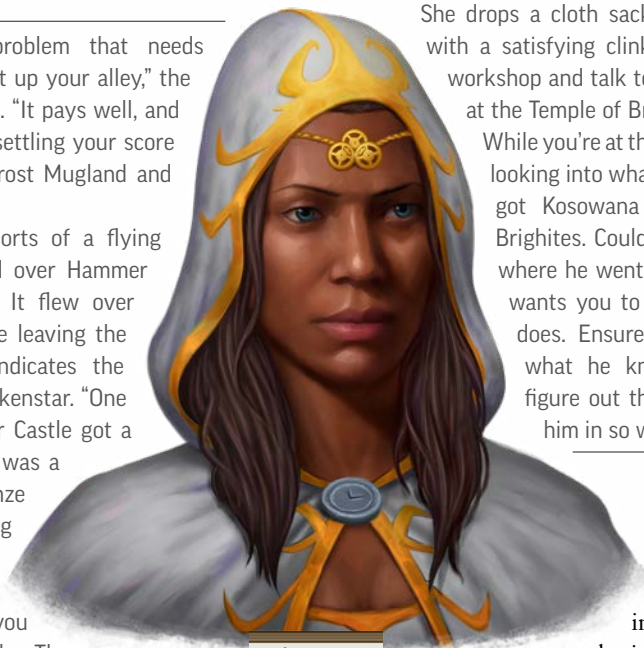
Treasure: The bag Dunsmith drops on the table contains 200 gp. If the characters try to negotiate the fee, she increases their rate to 250 gp. She then sighs and points out that this job is also their best—and only—lead on what their nemesis Mugland is up to.

FINDING KOSOWANA

Dunsmith suggests three potential avenues of inquiry the party might undertake to learn more about Kosowana's persona. Talk to one of Kosowana's former colleagues at the Temple of Brigh, research what supposedly led to Kosowana's ousting from the church, and talk to Kosowana's nosy next-door neighbor. The characters can follow any of these leads in any order, either before or after they investigate the missing priest's workshop (see Kosowana's Workshop on page 11).

TERTIARY COG MINTAKUS

The party's most likely first stop is the Temple of Brigh, where the player characters can get Kosowana's address and maybe learn why he was banned from the church. Dunsmith put in a word at the Temple and arranged for the characters to meet with **Tertiary Cog Mintakus** (LN female human priest of Brigh 5), a formal priestess who often deals with the church's public affairs. Mintakus is accompanied by an acolyte named **Duga** (LN male human acolyte of Brigh 2),



Mintakus



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

BRIGH'S FAITH

Brigh, also known as the Bronze Lady or the Whisper in Bronze, is the goddess of clockwork and invention. Her areas of concern also include time, primarily its measurement through the use of clocks. The subject of time travel, though tangentially related to Brigh's domain, is unorthodox in most Brighite circles.

Brigh's holy text is called *Logic of Design*. By way of parables and guidance called regulations, the text exhorts inventors to experiment rigorously and to preserve knowledge of their work for future generations. Unlike many holy books, *Logic of Design* is regularly updated as new discoveries are made, with old versions recalled and replaced with revised texts. Regulations are rigorously numbered and organized into sections, subsections, paragraphs, and subparagraphs as needed. When updated, text is never renumbered, making it possible for astute readers to trace the evolution of Brighite thought by studying omissions and addenda.

In Alkenstar, clergy members of the Temple of Brigh are organized into a rigid hierarchy. At the bottom of the pecking order are acolytes, who are overseen by priests known as cogs. These cogs range in seniority from tertiary cogs (the lowest-ranking individuals) to grand cogs (the highest rank achievable in the church). Grand cogs wield great authority within the church and sometimes take on colorful monikers, such as High Clockmother Athernth Llanalir.

who carries a large, leatherbound book fastened with bronze gears. This book is a copy of *Logic of Design*, Brigh's primary scripture and manual of regulations.

As a faithful representative of the Temple of Brigh, Mintakus is happy to answer any questions her guests might have. She speaks with a formal, mechanical cadence, responding to most inquiries with but a few words before motioning for her acolyte to recite a particularly poignant paragraph from *Logic of Design* by way of explanation.

Following are some of the characters' most likely questions for Mintakus, along with an example of Mintakus's answer for each.

Do you know where Oloman Kosowana is? Mintakus raises an eyebrow in mild surprise. "We haven't kept up with the goings-on of the former primary cog for quite some time. In accord with Regulation Fourteen-Five-Two, Oloman Kosowana is no longer associated with our temple." She turns to the acolyte,

who opens the complex clockwork latching mechanism on his book, quickly locates the appropriate passage, and hands the book to the party, pointing to a heading that reads "Regulation 14.5.2" so they can read along while the acolyte recites the text from memory.

"Regulation fourteen-five-two. All components shall advance the functional or aesthetic qualities of the device. Any component which does not serve the whole shall be excised." The acolyte closes the book as he finishes the last phrase.

Mintakus nods, eyes closed, savoring the logic of the words. "So it was with Primary Cog Kosowana. He chose not to serve the church, so was declared superfluous to our needs. He continues to serve the Whisper in Bronze in his own way, perhaps, but not in an official capacity. I believe his workshop is in the Ferrous Quarter along the river, three blocks west of Hammer Street."

Further discussion with Mintakus can reveal more information about Kosowana. Some likely questions the characters might ask and Mintakus's answers are provided below.

Why do you say Kosowana "did not serve the whole" of the church? Mintakus frowns and pauses to consider the question. "Regulation Four-Seven-Five guides us," she says. She gestures to the acolyte, who recites the passage from memory:

"It is not for the Gear to determine how it will turn, but for the Maker to set the Design. Each Gear must work with those beside it, or else the Device will fail."

Mintakus nods. "Oloman found himself fascinated with some of the... less accurate records in our archives, from which he formed a peculiar worldview. Instead of helping to grow the knowledge of the faith, he fell victim to lies and half-truths. Grand Cog Llanalir finally had to ask him to retire from public duties to prevent further embarrassment."

What are these records? The acolyte recites another passage in response. "Regulation Three-One-Seven. In order to truly create an original Device, one must first create the entire cosmos. All Makers build upon those who have come before, and it is the duty of every Maker to leave a foundation for future Makers to build upon." Mintakus nods again in agreement, then elaborates.

"Even old texts rife with error are retained by our order, but some stories from the past are meant as allegory, or require heavy revision or annotation in light of new understandings. Oloman took a few such stories literally, and it infected his work, his teaching, even his mind. You must understand, every religion has those who believe they have cracked the code or uncovered truths that generations of researchers before

them have missed. When presented with evidence, these people merely invent a bigger conspiracy to explain away the incongruity that allows them to maintain their beliefs.”

Do you know where he might have gone? “I do not. Oloman and I have not spoken since he left the church years ago. All I can do is direct you to his workshop; perhaps his neighbors may be able to provide you with the information you seek.”

Once they’ve finished their conversation, Mintakus gives the party Oloman Kosowana’s last known address, along with meticulously detailed directions to get there from the Temple of Brigh.

Further Aid: If the characters improve Mintakus’s attitude to friendly, she gives them a copy of the most recent version of *Logic of Design*, the Brighite holy book, and encourages them to incorporate its teachings into their life.

The Sacred Library: If Mintakus’s attitude is improved to helpful, she hesitantly suggests the party might glean some knowledge in the Asynchronous Archives, the library of sacred materials in the temple’s basement. “Kosowana, though a powerful primary cog, was not exempt from the many rules he broke while accessing the archives,” Mintakus says. “Perhaps you might learn something of the man by reading some of the same books he did.”

In accord with the tortuous logic that defines much of the Temple of Brigh’s tenets, the Asynchronous Archives are more accessible to those outside the church than those within it; whereas cogs and acolytes are forbidden from entering the library without submitting multiple request forms specifying exactly what they wish to study, guests are permitted to peruse the church’s library freely once per month for a single visit up to 24 hours. Of course, visitors are still required to sign a strict nondisclosure agreement forbidding them from revealing any information they learn to others. The penalty for breaking this agreement is submission to a *geas* ritual to prevent further disclosure, plus a lifelong ban from all of the Temple of Brigh’s libraries. The characters can take up Mintakus on this offer now or after they investigate Kosowana’s library.

THE ASYNCHRONOUS ARCHIVES

The player characters might learn about the Asynchronous Archives by befriending Mintakus (see

above) or by perusing Kosowana’s copy of *Logic of Design* (see area A4 on page 15). Either way, they’ll need to research the archives to fully understand the clues Kosowana left in his workshop (see The High Priest’s Puzzle on page 18).

Research Subsystem: To determine what information the characters glean while researching the Asynchronous Archives, use the research subsystem and the Asynchronous Archives library stat block on page 10. Each round of research here takes 4 hours, after which, each character can attempt a research check to determine how many Research Points they earned that round. As they reach the Research Point thresholds indicated below, they uncover key information and trigger certain encounters. For full rules on the research subsystem, see page 154 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*.

When the characters reach the library, read or paraphrase the following.

Mintakus unlocks the large, gear-covered door to the Asynchronous Archives. “It’s a good thing you came when you did,” she says offhandedly. “The secondary cogs begin their regularly scheduled inventory of the library in sixteen hours. I trust this to be enough time for you to conduct your research.”

The Brighites’ inventorying process is a lengthy, arduous ordeal that spans several days, during which time no visitors are permitted within the library. Mintakus makes it clear the characters have 16 hours—no more, no less—to conduct their research and exit the library.

If the characters suggest the cogs postpone their inventory work, Mintakus is aghast at the very thought. “The Temple of Brigh has conducted the sacred inventorying process on the same day, at the same time, every month, for the past hundred years,” she says. “No exception can be made.”

Since each round of research takes 4 hours, the party has 4 rounds to conduct their research here.

ASYNCHRONOUS ARCHIVES

LIBRARY 4

DIVINE

Logic of Design Revision History A series of outdated versions of Brigh’s holy text, including redacted articles and unorthodox treatises; **Maximum RP 10**



2. The Apprenticeship of Bronze

2.2. HOLY PLACES

2.2.7 At the eastern end of Tentacle Canyon in the Spellscar Desert, 180 miles from Cloudreaver Keep on a bearing of N95°E, is a spherical geode of amethyst exactly 10 feet in diameter. Its shape is so perfect that it is doubtless deific in nature; even Time itself seems to bend around this flawless gem, this Cradle of Quartz. Like light reflecting off just a single facet of a cut gem in a box of blackest silk, Brigh reveals an aspect of Her Perfect Design in the depths of even the most tortuous wastelands.

HANDOUT #1: REGULATION 2.2.7

Research Checks DC 19 Academia Lore, Brigh Lore, or Library Lore, DC 21 Religion, DC 24 Perception

Sands of Time An enormous hourglass filled with pure quartz sand that reflects mysterious visions through its glass; **Maximum RP** 10

Research Checks DC 19 Brigh Lore or Fortune-Telling Lore, DC 21 Occultism, DC 24 Perception; **Special** A character who uses Perception for a Research check must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or be overwhelmed by visions of the past and future. The creature becomes confused for 1 round.

5 Research Points The player characters discover various parables and regulations in Brigh's holy text, *Logic of Design*, are excised from the text's current version. If the characters already found the clues at Kosowana's Workshop (see The High Priest's Puzzle on page 18), they discover the significance of Regulation 2.2.7; give your players a copy of **Handout #1: Regulation 2.2.7** (above).

10 Research Points The player characters learn a variety of myths, legends, and conspiracy theories have developed to explain Brigh's mysterious deific origins. Many of the wildest conspiracy theories concern Brigh's interest in, and possible dominion over, time (as opposed to only clocks and clockwork creations).

While flipping through a tome, the characters disturb a pair of wayward akizendris (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 204) magically immersed in the text. The wicked proteans were transported to the Material Plane during a mana storm and have entertained themselves by rewriting and erasing the Brighites' sacred texts. Annoyed at being interrupted, the akizendris attack the party.

15 Research Points The player characters uncover a series of articles penned by a researcher using the pseudonym "the 13th Ordinal," sometimes abbreviated as "13." The articles suggest the goddess Brigh as understood by her followers is actually a clockwork creation disguising her true divinity, which is beyond the comprehension of mere mortals. The 13th Ordinal

had a specific interest in the Cradle of Quartz, a former Brighite holy site in the Spellscar, which they believed was key to uncovering the truth of Brigh and the ultimate understanding of time. In subsequent texts, the Brighite clergy denounce the 13th Ordinal and labeled their beliefs as "the Concurrent Heresy."

As the characters conduct their research, a pair of interlopers enter the library—Karayo, an evil aphorite sharpshooter (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 204), and Siksusu, a sadistic vishkanya infiltrator (*Bestiary* 3 288). Like the party, they are looking for Kosowana and believe they can find clues in the Asynchronous Archives. They aren't affiliated with the Gilded Gunners or anyone else; their qualms with Kosowana are strictly personal and have to do with money. They attack the party, which they view as an obstacle to their goal.

20 Research Points The player characters glimpse a vision of Harcourt the Fisher, the wandering Brighite priest who discovered the Cradle of Quartz. This vision describes the Cradle of Quartz's supposed ability to alter the flow of time and includes a map to the location.

When the vision ends, one of the characters discovers a *metronomic hammer* (page 79) inexplicably in their hands. Mintakus says Harcourt the Fisher once wielded a weapon like this, so it is a peculiar find. Since the Temple of Brigh does not keep weapons in the Asynchronous Archives, she permits the party to keep it.

XP Award: For learning the location of Kosowana's workshop from Mintakus, award each player character 30 XP. If the party also gains access to the Asynchronous Archives, award each character an additional 30 XP.

NOSY NEIGHBOR

Dunsmith suggested the player characters question the missing priest's neighbor, a junkyard owner named **Wenryck Riggs** (NE male human junk dealer 3) who

owns a ramshackle shop in the building directly north of Kosowana's workshop. After Riggs witnessed to Kosowana's hasty departure, he gabbed about it to anyone who would listen, and news of the occasion spread from there.

If the characters interview Riggs, he is evasive and suspicious at first, beginning the conversation with an attitude of unfriendly. He openly complains about Kosowana's recent "deafening foolery," explaining that he's been filing noise complaints with the shieldmarshals for weeks to no avail. "Nothing gets done under that Deputy Loveless, I tell ya," Riggs spits. (Unknown to Riggs, his noise complaints are what first tipped off Loveless, and by extension Mugland, to Kosowana's research into pyronite.)

If the characters improve his attitude to at least indifferent, Riggs confirms he saw his neighbor chased away by some ne'er-do-wells, but he "doesn't remember" any more details unless made at least friendly. For the purpose of Diplomacy and Intimidation checks, Riggs has a Will DC of 17; combining such a check to influence Riggs with a bribe of 2 gp or more increases the check's degree of success by one (from failure to success, for example).

Once made friendly, Riggs says he saw several bandits dressed in gold and black pass by his office window and stop at his neighbor's door. They kicked in the door, and he heard some shouts, several shots, and sounds of a scuffle. Riggs peered out his window, but he couldn't see inside Kosowana's workshop. A few moments later, he heard more shots inside the building, then Kosowana burst from the loading area on a "flying cat made of brass and gold." The bandits ran after the fleeing inventor and fired their guns at him, but Kosowana flew far out of sight.

If the characters improve his attitude to helpful, Riggs relays one more useful detail about Kosowana's workshop: apparently, the workshop is so packed with materials that Kosowana couldn't even open the front door fully to get inside. Instead, the inventor cracks open the door just a bit each time he comes or goes, squeezing through the tight gap and hastily closing the door behind him. (This observation is only partly accurate; Kosowana enters and leaves the building in this fashion, but he owes his careful movements to the delicate mechanisms of the dart trap in area A1, not a cluttered workspace.)

XP Award: If Riggs's attitude is improved to at least friendly, award each player character 30 XP.

KOSOWANA'S WORKSHOP

Kosowana's private workshop is part of a nondescript warehouse complex in Alkenstar's Ferrous Quarter.

It's surrounded by dozens of similar buildings. The place is much larger than the inventor needed for his research; he hopes to eventually turn the place into a manufacturing and distribution hub for a private line of clockwork assistants and soulbound constructs.

The following locations, starting with area A1 below, correspond to the map of Kosowana's workshop on page 12.

Workshop Features: Unless otherwise noted, the outer walls of the workshop are made of stone, with high, narrow slits for windows designed to let in sunlight but block out any prying eyes. The offices (areas A1, A2, and A3) have wooden inner walls, 10-foot ceilings, and simple wooden doors without locks. The main workshop area (areas A4, A5, and A6) is slightly below ground level, with wooden stairs leading down 3 feet to a flagstone floor; here, the rafters are 10 feet above the floor with the true ceiling 5 feet above the rafters. The loading dock (area A7) is a wooden overhang built onto the stone building with thick wooden posts and beams supporting the roof.

WORKSHOP EXTERIOR

Before they enter Kosowana's workshop, the characters might discover a few things by waiting outside the building or talking to Kosowana's neighbor.

Scouting the Building: By covertly watching the workshop before entering, the player characters can spot a young street urchin entering and exiting the building several times throughout the day. This urchin, a boy named Joniah, leaves the workshop each morning through the building's broken roof vent, returning in midafternoon with a bag of scavenged food. If the weather is fair, Joniah sometimes dozes discreetly on a corner of the building's roof. See area A8 for more details about Joniah.

XP Award: If the party witnesses Joniah entering or leaving Kosowana's workshop, award each player character 30 XP.

A1. MAIN OFFICE

LOW 4

The front door to Kosowana's workshop is locked with an average lock that requires four successful DC 15 Thievery checks to pick (Kosowana has the lock's only key). The door is reinforced with bronze plates (DC 22 to Force Open; Hardness 10, HP 40, BT 20).

A character who Seeks around the door and succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check spots a metal dart on the ground near the doorway; with a critical success, the character also notices faint traces of fresh blood on the doorstep and wooden splinters from where the door's jamb was broken. Spotting one or both of these signs grants a character a +2 circumstance bonus to

**Cradle
of
Quartz**

**Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle**

**Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar**

**Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz**

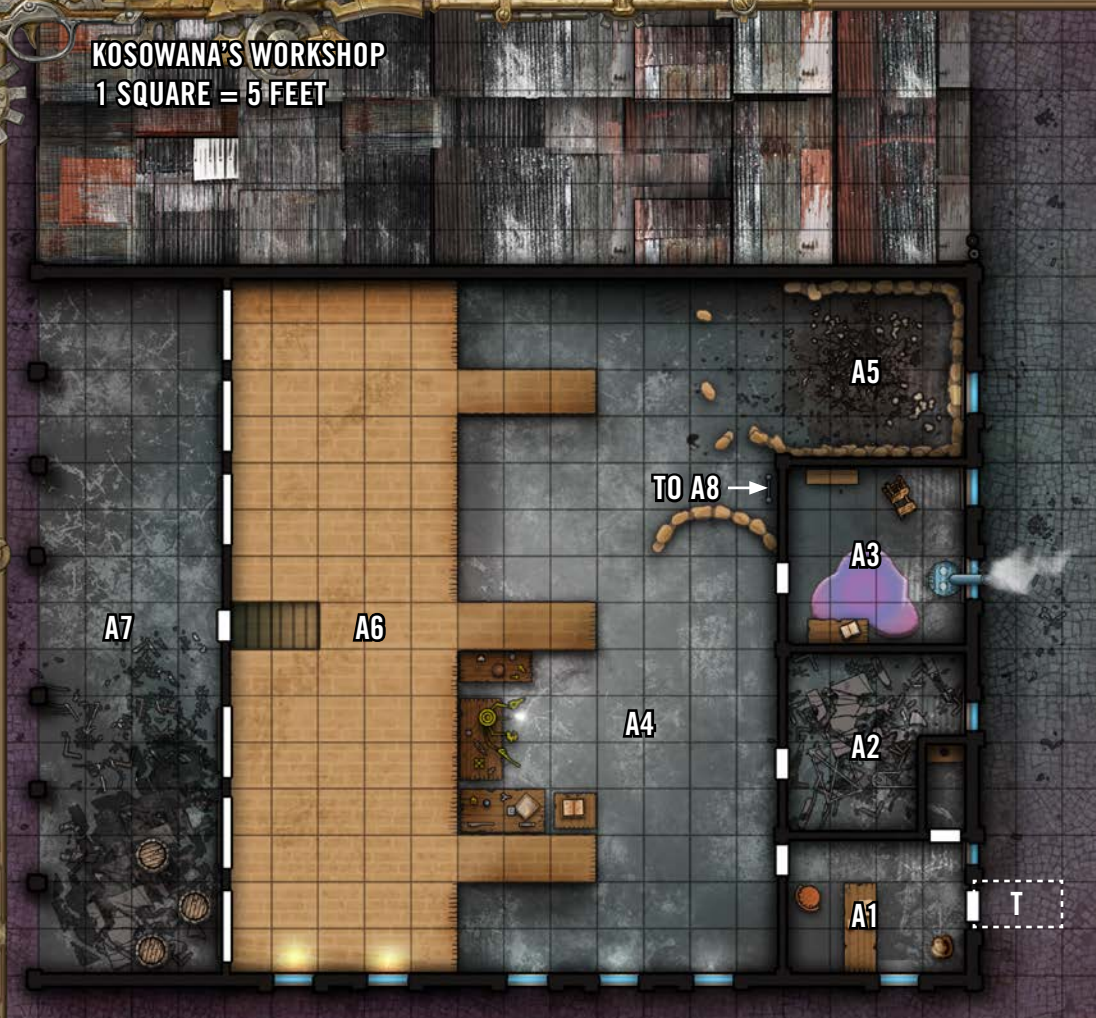
**Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom**

**Spellscar
Desert**

**Adventure
Toolbox**

KOSOWANA'S WORKSHOP

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



STORAGE LOFT



their Perception check against the following hazard's Stealth DC.

Hazard: The main door is rigged to fire a series of metal darts when fully opened. Kosowana routinely avoided the trap by opening the door only enough to squeeze through the narrow gap. When the Gilded Gunners arrived, they kicked in the door and triggered the trap, hence the blood at the threshold. The Gunners hurriedly fixed the door, resetting the trap on their way out to deter anyone on their trail.

IRON DART LAUNCHER

HAZARD 4

UNCOMMON MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 25 (expert)

Description A half-dozen iron darts fire from spring-loaded launchers concealed in the desk opposite the front door.

Disable DC 22 Thievery (trained) to disable the trigger, or DC 18 Acrobatics to squeeze through the partially opened door (this doesn't disable the trap but prevents it from triggering)

AC 22; Fort +14, Ref +8

Hardness 10; **HP** 50 (BT 25); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Dart Trigger The front door is fully opened, Forced Open, or broken; **Effect** A hail of iron darts launches along a 20-foot line from the desk through the doorway, dealing 4d8+10 piercing damage to each creature in the area of effect (DC 24 basic Reflex save).

Reset The trap resets as soon as the door is closed. It has enough darts to trigger three times, after which, it must be reloaded with 20 darts before it can reset again.

This room may once have served as an outer office and reception area for a business, but now it seems to be equal parts storage room and junk pile. What was once a reception desk is covered with wooden boxes of tools and spare parts. The walls have various nails and hooks attached in a seemingly haphazard way, with everything from large hammers to small pliers to a bag of now-rotted apples hanging from the walls. Wickerwork mannequin parts—arms, legs, torsos—poke from behind the desk, and a mostly assembled mannequin stands in the corner beside the eastern door. A hand-lettered sign that reads “workshop” hangs crookedly from a single nail in a second door to the west, with a second mannequin sitting in a

chair next to it. A sign reading “water closet” is nailed to a door behind the counter to the north.

This room was originally a reception area for the building’s previous occupants, but Kosowana hardly uses it for anything but storing odds and ends. The desk is covered with spare parts, tools, and cobwebs. The room’s windows face the street and are conventional shop windows instead of the high slits elsewhere in the building, but the openings are almost totally cluttered by hanging junk and stacks of boxes.

Creature: The seated mannequin by the workshop door is actually one of Kosowana’s clockwork creations, a construct called a clockwork door warden. The Gunners blasted the door warden several times and knocked it out of operation when they arrived. After searching the entire building and locating the pyronite formula, the Gunners’ clockwork specialist hastily repaired the door warden and rigged it with a repeating crossbow (*Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 64). The engineer then placed the door warden in standby mode and ordered it to attack any intruders, especially anyone matching Kosowana’s description.

The clockwork door warden attacks any creature that enters the room from any direction. The clockwork’s programming was compromised by the Gilded Gunners’ violence; even though its repeating crossbow’s magazine is emptied after five shots, the door warden continues to mindlessly fire the weapon with its third action each round, even if that means wasting the action. It fights until destroyed.

COMPROMISED DOOR WARDEN CREATURE 4

Clockwork door warden (page 80)

Initiative +12

Items repeating crossbow (1 magazine; *Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 64)

Uncertain Operation At the beginning of its turn, the compromised door warden rolls 1d4 to determine how many actions it has for that turn (to a maximum of 3 actions per turn). The door warden’s Speed each turn is 10 feet times the result of that same die roll, to a maximum of 25 feet per turn (that is, a roll of 3 or 4 indicates a Speed of 25 feet).

Speed 10 feet or greater (see Uncertain Operation)

Ranged ♦ repeating crossbow +12 (range increment 120 feet, repeating, reload 0), **Damage** 1d8 piercing

Clues: Searching the office yields clues that confirm Riggs’s account. It’s clear from the damage that the front door was forced open and then hastily repaired. The floor is spattered with blood from the Gilded Gunners’ confrontation with the dart trap and door

warden, and there are three crossbow bolts embedded in the wall and counter (fired from a Gunner’s repeating crossbow, which was then rigged for the door warden to use). Several bullet holes pock the western wall and front of the counter. A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception or Warfare Lore check can tell the bullets were shot from both one-handed and two-handed firearms.

Treasure: Tucked into the box of mannequin parts is a *wand of widening* (1st-level spell) with which Kosowana planned to experiment for a future clockwork mage product. Behind the counter, buried under layers of paper and boxes of bolts and springs, is a long-forgotten velvet bag containing 78 sp and a small, unpolished garnet worth 15 gp. The repeating crossbow and magazine can be salvaged from the clockwork dummy with a successful DC 15 Crafting check (on a critical failure, the repeating crossbow becomes broken).

A2. STORAGE ROOM

This room’s walls are lined to the ceiling with shelves overflowing with metal ingots, spare parts, clockwork components, and assorted junk. Teetering stacks of metal pipes, rods, and gears balance precariously against the shelves. The window in the eastern wall is boarded up from inside and unreachable due to piles of random parts.

This room contains raw components for crafting and repairing clockwork constructs, as well as several types of metal parts, fasteners, and scavenged junk Kosowana accumulated throughout his career. The Gilded Gunners’ hasty search of the space destroyed any semblance of organization that once existed.

Creature: Leaning against the junk piles in the northeast corner of the room is Kosowana’s greatest achievement: a wood-and-brass clockwork construct imbued with a fragment of a mortal soul, giving it a semblance of intelligence and personality. Kosowana never managed to give this prototype anything more than basic sentience, and employed it to clean up the shop while he worked on his next version.

Kosowana never named the construct, but it thinks of itself as “Swee Pup,” since that’s what Kosowana yelled at it most often. When the Gilded Gunners approached the front door, Swee Pup went to greet them but received a close-range blast from a dwarven scattergun for its troubles, leaving its lower half in splintered tatters.

Swee Pup’s initial attitude toward the characters is unfriendly; it learned the hard way that strange visitors aren’t always nice. If attacked, Swee Pup

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest’s Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

defends itself as best it can while politely requesting the attacker stop damaging it. Swee Pup's winding key is with Kosowana; Swee Pup will wind down in a few hours if no way to wind it is found. A character who spends 1 hour in Kosowana's workshop and succeeds at a DC 21 Crafting check can create a new key to wind Swee Pup.

Swee Pup's existence is a difficult one. Though made of brass and steel, the construct remains sentient even when its clockwork body winds down, leaving it in a frightening liminal state between consciousness and sleep, more like paralysis than unconsciousness. Kosowana never considered the moral implications of binding a sentient soul to a clockwork creation when he envisioned a new line of sentient clockworks able to learn from their mistakes and devise solutions to unforeseen problems. Still, Swee Pup doesn't begrudge its creator, whom it regards as a father and best friend.



Swee Pup

SWEE PUP

CREATURE 2

UNIQUE LN TINY CONSTRUCT SOULBOUND

Custom soulbound doll (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 304)

Initiative Perception +8

Broken Legs Swee Pup's lower half doesn't function as a result of damage sustained, reducing its Speed to 0 feet. Repairing such a complex and rare prototype is beyond the ability of anyone but Kosowana without months of research.

Speed 0 feet

Treasure: A large bag partially covered with junk hangs on the wall near the door. It contains Kosowana's suit of +1 *padded armor*, which he rarely wore except when conducting his experiments with pyronite. Kosowana intended to retrieve the armor before heading to the Cradle of Quartz, but left it in his haste to flee the Gilded Gunners.

What Swee Pup Saw: If the characters improve Swee Pup's attitude to friendly or helpful, the construct will describe the robbery he witnessed. It speaks in a lilting, robotic voice; though it has emotions, Swee Pup's ability to convey such feelings is limited by its mechanical physiology.

"Master Oloman was working in the workshop when there was a bang outside. I heard humans yelling, then the sound of thunder. The master was surprised, and

he started working faster. Then the master ran to the piles and hid. The door opened, and three humans and a small human came in. I went to greet them, and one of them made thunder, and my legs went away. The guests started looking on all the tables. Then the big door opened, and the master rode his metal cat out the door and into the air. The guests were surprised, and they ran after the master and the metal cat. There was more thunder. After a fractional revolution of my escapement wheel, the humans and small human returned. They kept looking on all the tables and made a big mess. They found me again and threw me into this room. I have been on standby hoping the master will return to wind me. I would like my legs back so I can fulfill my duty and Swee Pup the shop before Master

Oloman's return."

Swee Pup lacks the vocabulary, experience, and context to answer any questions beyond simple requests for clarification. At your discretion, Swee Pup might agree to accompany the characters on their adventure, though only if they promise to find Master Oloman so the inventor can fix Swee Pup's lower half.

XP Award: For befriending Swee Pup and hearing its story of the break-in, award each player character 30 XP.

A3. ALCHEMICAL STORAGE

LOW 4

The door to this room is tightly sealed, with a thick metal latch to keep it shut. The latch can be lifted from either side of the door, but it requires two hands to lift.

This ruined storage room smells harshly of chemicals and ash. The floor is covered with broken alchemical glassware of every description, the former contents pooling in the center of the room in a multihued puddle. Metal shelves, torn books, and scattered notepaper lie everywhere.

Kosowana hermetically sealed this room specifically to store sensitive equipment and alchemical reagents that degraded when exposed to air, dust, or light. The Gilded Gunners broke the door's seal and trashed everything inside the room while looking for the pyronite formula, then sealed away one of Kosowana's peskier clockwork helpers.

Creature: To keep verminous rats from infesting his workshop, Kosowana crafted a swarm of miniature clockwork rat-trappers called a trapjaw tangle. When the Gilded Gunners broke in, they found the

swarm a nuisance, so they sealed the little clockworks inside this room after they were done looting it. The spilled reagents seeped into the swarm's hardware and overrode the clockworks' original programming. Now, rather than hunting down solely rats, the trapjaw tangle nips and snaps at anything that moves, including the player characters.

TRAPJAW TANGLE

CREATURE 5

Page 87

Initiative Stealth +13

Treasure: Despite the damage to the room, the party can salvage enough unbroken gear to assemble an expanded alchemist's lab. A bottle of *universal solvent* and a moderate bottled lightning lie amid the broken glass and debris on the floor.

A4. WORKSHOP

MODERATE 4

The main area of Kosowana's workroom is dark except for whatever light penetrates the high slit windows on the south wall. These windows are 5 feet wide and 1 foot high, and open at 10 feet above street level.

The floor of this broad stone workspace is three feet lower than the rest of the rooms in the building. Bronze gears, metal rods, screws, springs, and mechanical miscellany lie scattered over every horizontal surface. Six half-complete humanoid clockwork devices are propped against worktables and on makeshift stands. Several dozen clocks of every description cover the walls, workbenches, and floor, with a particularly large grandfather clock standing against the south wall.

Three short sets of stone stairs to the east lead to the doors of a wooden office block. A metal ladder propped against the northeastern wall leads to a congested storage loft above the area. Opposite the offices, a six-foot-high wooden platform spans the western wall, with three ramps connecting the platform to the workshop floor. Atop the platform, half a dozen wide wooden loading doors line the west wall. To the north, piles of sandbags obscure a crumbling and pock-marked corner of the stone room, the floor and walls practically falling apart.

This is Kosowana's main workshop, a testament to both the former Brighite's inventiveness as well as his lack of organizational prowess. The wooden platform (area A6) is a loading dock that leads to the street.

Creatures: Four creatures are present on the ground floor of the expansive workshop space, though only one is alive, and none are immediately visible to the

party. Kosowana's cat, Masu, hides among the rafters. The animal is upset at her master's absence but wary of strangers. She uses Stealth to remain hidden while observing the party. A character who can speak with animals can learn the story of the break-in from Masu, which is identical to Sweet Pup's story (page 14). A character who succeeds at a DC 16 Nature check or uses a class feature like wild empathy can befriend Masu. In which case, the cat follows that character diligently until the party leaves the building (possibly becoming a nuisance in any combat encounters). The cat's name is engraved on a silver hourglass-shaped pendant attached to its collar.

A second creature makes itself known once the characters investigate the jumble of half-completed clockwork machinery leaning against the wooden platform to the west—another one of Kosowana's clockwork creations, an advanced clockwork door warden reprogrammed by the Gilded Gunners to attack anyone who approaches the workbench.

Finally, the Gilded Gunners hid a pair of clockwork spies in this area to keep tabs on Kosowana's workshop and report back if the inventor (or anyone else) returns. Both are on standby and activate when they detect a creature, though they attempt to remain hidden (Stealth +3). One clockwork spy hides in one of the junk piles between the loading dock ramps, while the other lurks beneath some of the sandbags of the makeshift bunker near area A5. Both are recording details about anyone who returns to the workshop, and they both attempt to flee if discovered. The spies are programmed to fly randomly about the city for 1 hour before returning to the workshop, where the Gunners plan to recover them.



Masu

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

ELITE CLOCKWORK DOOR WARDEN CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, page 80

Initiative Perception +14

CLOCKWORK SPIES (2) CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 48

Initiative Perception +8

MASU CREATURE -1

UNIQUE N TINY ANIMAL

Female tabby cat

Perception +8; low-light vision

Skills Acrobatics +6, Stealth +6

Str -4, **Dex** +2, **Con** -2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1

AC 14; **Fort** +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

HP 6

Speed 20 feet

Melee ✦ bite +6 (finesse, nonlethal), **Damage** 1 piercing

Melee ✦ claw +6 (agile, finesse, nonlethal), **Damage** 1 slashing

Get Underfoot ✦ Masu Strides up to half her Speed, moving through one or more space occupied by allied creatures, rubbing against and around legs and feet. Each creature whose space Masu moves through is clumsy 1 for 1 round.

Clues: The party can find a number of clues here. See The High Priest's Puzzle on page 18 for more details on each of these unusual pieces of evidence. Player characters who examine the clocks notice that while most of the clocks are working, several near the loading dock are all stopped at: 2:02:07.

If one or more characters befriended Masu, the cat alternately rubs its body against the character's leg and the workbench between two of the loading ramps. (The workbench still smells like Kosowana, since it was the last thing he used before fleeing on his clockwork sphinx.) After a while, Masu might climb the ladder to the loft to visit Joniah (area A8).

On the workbench is a device made of bronze gears and small adamantine hammers, with a large hexagonal crystal in the center. This strange device is a special quartz-based clock Kosowana was tinkering with just before he fled the workshop.

Next to the device is Kosowana's personal copy of Brigh's holy text, *Logic of Design*. The tome's brass-colored ribbon bookmark is placed between the pages for Regulations 2.2.6 and 2.2.8; Regulation 2.2.7 seems to be omitted. By comparing this copy of *Logic of Design* with the copy of the text Mintakus gave the characters at the Temple of Brigh, a character can quickly see that Regulation 2.2.7 is omitted from that copy as well.

Treasure: Kosowana's workshop contains a trove of useful tools and supplies for crafters. In the span of 1 hour, the party can gather enough individual tools to assemble a set of sterling artisan's tools for crafting clockwork constructs, as well as clockwork components worth 80 gp to the right buyer. A vial of timeless salts (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 255), a magnifying glass, and a *clear quartz octagon aeon stone* (page 79) are also among the things on the main worktable.

XP Award: For befriending Kosowana's cat, award each player character 30 XP. If the party prevents both clockwork spies from reporting to the Gilded Gunners, award each character 80 XP.

A5. TEST BUNKER

This area seems to be the site of an explosion. The walls are lined with sandbags, most of which are torn open as if by a thousand cuts, the frayed edges of the linen scorched. The center of the floor is burned black like a star burst, soot and debris radiating from an ashen center. A makeshift bunker of sandbags lies just around the corner from the blast site. The faint stench of brimstone and black powder lingers in the air.

This is where Kosowana tested dozens of various prototypes in the process of reverse-engineering Gattlebee's pyronite formula. The most recent test, conducted the day before he fled, nearly deafened him and shook a thick layer of dust from the rafters. There is little evidence of the pyronite explosion, as the Gilded Gunners thoroughly ransacked the place. A player character who succeeds at a DC 15 Crafting check can determine a powerful bomb was intentionally detonated here less than a day ago.

Gunner Tracks: With a successful DC 15 Survival check, a player character can locate the footprints of three Medium-sized humanoids and one Small-sized humanoid. The tracks circle the blast zone several times and lead throughout the rest of the workshop, as if whoever left them was searching the area for something.

XP Award: If they locate the tracks, award each player character 30 XP.

A6. LOADING PLATFORM

Several sloping ramps lead to a six-foot-high wooden loading platform that spans half the workspace. Six ten-foot-wide bay doors line the west wall, and the platform is covered in hundreds of old scuff marks from wooden and metal wagon wheels.

Two small clocks lie near the northernmost door; both are wound but have been stopped at 2:02:07.

Clockwork Sphinx Tracks: A player character who succeeds at a DC 15 Survival check can see deep, parallel gouges in the planks left by sharp metal tools—or perhaps thick claws—on the platform among the many scuff marks left by wagons over the years. With a critical success, the character determines from the splintered wood that the gouges were left recently by a large creature with sharp metal claws. (These marks were left by Kosowana’s flying clockwork sphinx, which Swee Pup and Masu may have described as a “flying metal cat” to the party.)

XP Award: If they locate the tracks, award each player character 30 XP.

A7. LOADING AREA

This exterior area is open to the street to the west. A sloping wooden roof, held up by thick wooden beams, protects the loading area from inclement weather. The bay doors are about three feet higher than street level, perfect for rolling heavy materials directly from a wagon bed straight into the building.

Joniah, a young vagrant squatting in Kosowana’s attic space, enters the workshop’s loft via this loading area. He climbs the wooden pillars to the sloping wooden roof, then scrambles to the flat warehouse roof, where he can surreptitiously remove and replace a broken ventilation grill to area A8.

A8. STORAGE LOFT

From the bottom of the ladder leading to this crammed storage space, carefully placed crates covered with dark blankets create the illusion that the loft is only 10 feet square. Upon squeezing past the boxes, however, an observer sees the space is much larger, spanning over the entire wooden office block below.

The loft in the five-foot-tall gap above the building’s wooden offices is crammed around the edges with tools, dusty boxes of alchemical reagents, and clockwork parts. A ladder connects the western edge of the loft to the workshop floor below. On the eastern exterior wall, a metal exhaust vent is conspicuously clear of materials.

This space is occupied, completely without Kosowana’s knowledge. Months ago, a plucky youth named **Joniah** (CN male human street urchin 1) snuck in one night through the broken vent grill to escape some gang recruiters. He discovered a new home full of amazing devices and interesting gewgaws. Over

the past few months, Joniah rearranged the piles of junk to make himself scarce in the rare instances when Kosowana climbs the ladder to stow or retrieve a piece of rarely used equipment. Joniah leaves the loft each morning to beg for food on the streets, and he usually returns midafternoon. He had a stomach ache from some bad rat meat the day of the break-in and was in the loft when the Gilded Gunners burst into the building and started shooting. From his perch, Joniah watched Kosowana escape on his clockwork sphinx, the Gilded Gunners shooting into the sky in their feeble pursuit. Worried the Gilded Gunners would find him if he lingered, the boy crawled through the broken vent and onto the roof after watching Kosowana escape.

Joniah knows he’s got a nice hideout, and he’s loath to give it up. If detected, his first thought is to flee; he Squeezes through the broken vent and onto the building’s roof.

Befriending Joniah: Joniah begins any social encounter as unfriendly. If a player character befriended Kosowana’s cat, whom Joniah is also fond of, that character gains a +1 circumstance bonus on attempts to Make an Impression on Joniah.

Having dwelled here for the better part of the year, Joniah is familiar with his unwitting cotenant’s typical habits. Though he’s never met the “fella” face to face, Joniah can relate Kosowana’s avid interests in clockworks and unusual devices. “See, I wouldn’t call him a ‘genius,’” says Joniah. “More like, the fella’s just really curious. But the kind of curious that’s apt to get ya in trouble, see? And when he’s *really* fixated on something, he figures it out, no matter what.”

Joniah ably describes the gang that pursued Kosowana: three humans armed with “shiny guns made of gold” and a “cigar-smoking halfling in fancy business clothes.” He raises his eyebrows meaningfully. “Gilded Gunners, see,” he stage-whispers with some reverence. “That fella’s in a right mess if *they’re* after him. Not sure who their boss was, though.”

Joniah can also describe the “flying cat” Kosowana rode in much greater detail than Swee Pup or Masu; in the boy’s telling, the thing was a Large clockwork construct with the body of a panther, the wings of an eagle, and a vaguely humanoid face. The construct was stored for a long time near the bay doors in the northwest corner of the loading platform. Joniah never saw it move and always thought it was just a statue.

Finally, Joniah says Kosowana exhibited some peculiar behavior during the break-in. “He took the time to wind those clocks, see.” The boy points out several clocks around the workshop, each of which is stopped precisely at 2 hours, 2 minutes, and 7 seconds. After some thought, Joniah adds, “He also fiddled

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest’s Puzzle


Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox



with the thingy over there. Crystal thingy. What? No, I wasn't thinking of taking it. Half the stuff the fella builds around here is apt to kill ya."

XP Award: For learning about Kosowana's strange behavior during the break-in, award each player character 80 XP.

THE HIGH PRIEST'S PUZZLE

After dealing with the guardians, and befriending or driving off the building's remaining occupants, the party can sift through the warehouse for clues to Kosowana's whereabouts.

When the Gilded Gunners burst into the building, Kosowana was in his workshop, as usual. Paranoid his recent tests might attract undo attention, he enacted his contingency plan at the first sign of trouble. He knew he had to flee to the one place no one but his allies knew about: the Cradle of Quartz.

As the Gunners dealt with his clockwork door warden and Swee Pup, Kosowana set a few of the clocks within arm's reach to a specific time: 2 hours, 2 minutes, and 7 seconds. He then recalibrated a peculiar device on which he'd been working—a kind of clock whose mechanisms were driven by the frequencies of a large quartz stone rather than gears and springs—so that it emitted a particular chime pattern: two chimes, a pause, two chimes, a pause, and seven chimes before a much longer pause. As he activated his clockwork sphinx and made his getaway, Kosowana glimpsed the robbers' golden firearms and recognized their leader as the infamous mogul Ambrost Mugland.

Though an outcast from Alkenstar's Temple of Brigh, Kosowana believed his former allies in the church might look for him if he were to suddenly go missing. He left these clues for his old colleagues, believing that only Brighties would understand their significance and hoping the clock numbers would befuddle his assailants. Kosowana knew he might be pursued and didn't dare leave a plainer message; he also knew any follower of Brigh would be drawn to the strange device that incorporated a large quartz crystal (Brigh's sacred stone). He hoped a cleric of Brigh who heard the device's chime pattern would make the connection between the numbers two, two, and seven and the numbering system in *Logic of Design*, Brigh's holy text.

THE CLUES

Player characters who examine the central workbench in area A4 notice one item that stands out from the rest: a small darkwood box supporting an intricate clockwork device of fine bronze springs and gears, set with a forearm-sized hexagonal quartz crystal at

its center. A series of tiny hammers and chimes are mounted along the top of the device, and a metal cylinder with a series of bumps on its surface rests under a dozen narrow strips of metal. Centered above the crystal is a bronze clock face with tiny crystals indicating the ordinals. Peculiarly, the clock face has 13 ordinals instead of the usual 12—a meaningful clue for those familiar with the writings of the Concurrent Heresy, which the characters might know of after researching the Asynchronous Archives (page 9). Jonah (area A8, page 17) can clue the party into this device, as can Masu the cat (area A4, page 15).

The time shown on the quartz clock progresses at the same rate as real time. However, if the device is touched, the metal cylinder begins to rotate, and the hammers strike the chimes in a specific pattern separated by brief pauses that repeats exactly each time after a longer pause—two chimes, two chimes, and seven chimes. This chiming occurs several times per minute, lasting for 1 hour after a creature touches the device.

A character who succeeds at a DC 22 Crafting or Invention Lore check determines the device is a type of clock, although one that seems to derive its motion and regulation from the large crystal at its center instead of a conventional movement of springs and gears. There is no apparent way to wind the clock, although it is running, but the time given makes no sense since the clock's face shows 13 hours instead of 12. A character who succeeds at a DC 15 Brigh Lore, Mining Lore, or Crafting check to Recall Knowledge identifies the crystal as a particularly pure form of quartz.

This sequence of numbers might seem random, but to a cleric of Brigh, patterns and numbers alike are rarely meaningless. The many regulations and edicts in Brigh's holy text are arranged in the same pattern of three numbers: the section number, followed by the subsection and paragraph number. If the player characters already spoke to Mintakus at the Temple of Brigh, they may recall this pattern as familiar.

Kosowana is trying to draw the attention of his Brightie allies to Section 2, Subsection 2, Paragraph 7 of *Logic of Design*. Unfortunately, modern versions of the text do not have this paragraph—it was redacted when the text was recalled and republished years ago. There is a Regulation 2.2.6 and a Regulation 2.2.8 in the most recent version, but 2.2.7 is not present in any modern text (including any obtained from the Temple of Brigh or owned by characters who might be clerics of Brigh). A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Brigh Lore or DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge knows older versions of the text may contain the redacted passage. (Mintakus at the Temple of Brigh

can also provide this information.) The best way for the party to find an outdated version of *Logic of Design* is to research the documents in the Temple of Brigh's Asynchronous Archives (page 9).

Once the characters access an old copy of *Logic of Design*, they can locate the passage Kosowana is pointing them toward. If you haven't already done so, give your players a copy of **Handout #1: Regulation 2.2.7** (page 10). The implication of this passage is clear: Kosowana must have fled to the Cradle of Quartz.

XP Awards: For solving Kosowana's puzzles and determining he fled to the Cradle of Quartz, award each player character 80 XP.

SPIES EVERYWHERE

If the clockwork spies in area **A4** record the party at Kosowana's workshop and deliver their report to Gilded Gunner agents, Mugland quickly identifies the individuals involved (leaning on Kosowana's neighbor Wenryck Riggs, Mintakus's acolyte Duga at the Temple of Brigh, and any other pliable witnesses as necessary). The day after the clockwork spies report, Mugland sends a team of Gilded Gunners to exterminate the characters. Mugland doesn't know his enemies reside in the Barrel & Bullet Saloon, so the attack occurs somewhere else while the party is in public, such as outside the Temple of Brigh or on the streets of the Ferrous Quarter.

EVENT 1: GOONS' GIFT

SEVERE 4

If the clockwork spies escaped from area **A4**, run this encounter the evening or morning after the party leaves Kosowana's workshop.

Creatures: Three low-ranking Gilded Gunners step from alleyways and surround the characters. They rely on their pistols to send their message; if forced into melee, they Feint to put their foes off-balance and capitalize on their sneak attack ability. The goons fight until reduced to 20 Hit Points or until only one remains conscious, at which point they flee, shouting vindictive insults at the characters as they go. "Quit snooping into the priest's affairs," one hollers, "if you know what's good for you!"

GILDED GUNNER GOONS (3)

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Various criminals

Perception +8

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +11, Acrobatics +12, Deception +10, Stealth +12

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0

Items black powder horn (*Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 169),

chain shirt, dagger, flintlock pistol (20 rounds; *Guns & Gears* 153)

AC 20; **Fortitude** +11, **Reflex** +14, **Will** +8

HP 60

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +14 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing

Melee ♦ fist +13 (agile, nonlethal), **Damage** 1d4+3 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ flintlock pistol +14 (concussive, fatal d8, range 40 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing

Sneak Attack A Gilded Gunner goon's Strikes deal 1d6 additional precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



Gilded Gunner Goon



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

Adventure Toolbox



Chapter 2: Searching the Spellscar

In 4612 AR, a wandering priest of Brigh named Harcourt the Fisher traveled the few safe trade routes near the Gebbite edge of the Spellscar Desert. Fleeing a band of gnolls, Harcourt ran deeper into the desert, hoping to lose his pursuers in the maze of canyons. He found a cave system, where he stumbled upon an amazing site: a series of caverns full of gigantic quartz crystals, each of a size and purity the likes of which he'd never seen.

Harcourt spent several weeks exploring the caves. When he emerged, almost no time had passed in the outside world: the gnolls were still there, and they captured him. During months of harrowing captivity,

Harcourt penned a series of articles detailing his discoveries in the mysterious caves. When he finally escaped, he published his book through the Temple of Brigh. Though full of confusing details, contradictions, and muddled facts, Harcourt's text was a compelling enough read that the primary cogs of Brigh incorporated aspects of it into their canon.

Over the next decade, the clergy of Brigh visited the remote caverns Harcourt described. No one could duplicate the temporal effects Harcourt insists he experienced, but cogs were thrilled to find that the caves were indeed packed with flawlessly pure quartz crystals. The Temple of Brigh in Alkenstar christened

the site “the Cradle of Quartz.” Despite the danger of travel through the Spellscar, a few devoted Brighites still undertook the perilous journey to the site to commune with their deity in the central cave, which was surrounded by immense crystals. Over time, these pilgrims transformed the raw site into a small shrine to their patron goddess.

In 4688 AR, the Cradle of Quartz was quickly and quietly excised from Brighite tradition. All references to the place were removed from the oral traditions and public written records of the church. Only the oldest cogs know the reason for the sudden expulsion: sometime before 4688 AR, something came to the Cradle of Quartz and violently murdered every worshipper and pilgrim present. The pilgrim who discovered the massacre brought word to the Temple of Brigh, but the clerics took the message to heart only after the pilgrim’s mutilated body was found in the streets of Alkenstar the next morning. Follow-up investigations and divinations revealed that something within the enormous crystals of the Cradle of Quartz emerged from another dimension and tore every living being to pieces. Although the beast left its victims in tatters, it seemingly did so without shedding a single drop of blood. The church refers to this creature only as “the claws from beyond” in the few documents that record the events.

When Primary Cog Oloman Kosowana delved into the Temple of Brigh’s Asynchronous Archives, he discovered, among other things, the existence and location of the Cradle of Quartz. The 13th Ordinal, a heretical skelm masquerading as prophet, wrote that the Cradle of Quartz could be used not only to dilate time but to reverse it completely. True believers, according to “13,” could undo errors of the past. After he managed to reverse engineer pyronite in a matter of weeks, Kosowana knew this weapon couldn’t be allowed to exist. He fled, carried by his clockwork sphinx, to the Cradle of Quartz in the hopes of turning back time and stopping Vashon Gattlebee from inventing pyronite in the first place. To find the exiled cleric and ensure his safety (and, more importantly, the safety of his knowledge), the party must follow Kosowana’s example, traveling by air across the dangerous Mana Wastes into the deepest reaches of the Spellscar.

FLIGHT PLAN

This chapter begins soon after the player characters discover that Oloman Kosowana fled to the Cradle of Quartz in the Spellscar Desert. If the characters report their findings to Dunsmith, she suggests they head to Pilot’s Square to find a pilot willing to transport them into the heart of the Spellscar. Tertiary Cog Mintakus can also make this suggestion, noting the Cradle of Quartz is a long way away from Alkenstar.

If the characters express concern that the Gilded Gunners might have stolen Kosowana’s formula, Dunsmith assures them other agents of the duchess are already on the case. “Shiny as gold, they’re still a slippery bunch,” she says of the gang. “While you’re retrieving Kosowana, I’ll figure out where our gilded friends are. The man with the purse strings, Mugland, won’t be far.” In the meantime, Kosowana’s safety is paramount; as long as he’s missing, the formula for pyronite is unsafe.

The player characters can rest for a day if they like before heading to Pilot’s Square, but Dunsmith urges them to make haste. “If the Gilded Gunners do have Kosowana’s formula, it’s only a matter of time before they decode his notes and manage to brew up a batch of pyronite for themselves. It could be months, it could be weeks—either way, though, the clock’s ticking.”

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The party heads to Pilot’s Square to hire an airship captain to fly them into the heart of the Spellscar Desert. The player characters need to reach the Cradle of Quartz, a remote Brighite shrine where Oloman Kosowana is lying low. Once they find their pilot—a has-been navigator named Phera Wyndslow—the characters must defend the airship from Mana Wastes marauders and misfits. A freak mana storm brings their journey to a crashing halt, and they trek the remaining distance to the Cradle of Quartz on foot. In the process, they encounter some of the wild and weird denizens of the Spellscar.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest’s Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

BLIMPS, BALLOONS, AND DIRIGIBLES

In Alkenstar, the term “airship” can refer to a number of various kinds of flying machines. The simplest design is a balloon: a lighter-than-air vehicle that floats freely on the prevailing winds. A balloon usually has a single envelope to hold lighter-than-air gas, with an open basket or gondola hanging below.

A dirigible is any lighter-than-air vehicle that’s both powered and steerable. A blimp is a type of dirigible that’s like a powered, steerable balloon: a single bag of lighter-than-air gas with a gondola below, powered by engines and with steering vanes to allow control of direction and altitude. A rigid airship is a dirigible that has a light framework to maintain the shape of the envelope, filled with multiple cells of lighter-than-air gas. This is the type of flying vehicle most commonly operated in Alkenstar and is what most people mean when they use the term “airship.”

Most Alkenstar airships fill their envelopes with floranine, a naturally occurring, lighter-than-air gas harvested from a series of geyser-like vents north of the city. Floranine is nontoxic and nonflammable, and remains gaseous at a wide range of temperatures, making it perfect for use in airships.

FINDING A PILOT

Traveling to the Cradle of Quartz by land is a quick way to meet a grisly end. Calamitous mana storms are only the most well known of the wasteland’s many hazards; the Spellscar is also infested with violent marauders, mutated monsters, magic-warped war machines, and worse. Besides, a land journey from Alkenstar to the Cradle of Quartz would take 3 weeks at minimum, and Dunsmith urges the characters to make haste. Many forms of magical transportation—teleportation, namely—are similarly untenable thanks to the risk of magic-warping mana storms. The only viable option is a mechanical means of traveling by air. Enter Alkenstar’s famous airship industry.

Finding an airship for hire isn’t difficult—balloons, dirigibles, and other vessels dot Pilot’s Square by the dozen, moored in midair above a ramshackle conglomeration of seedy taverns, pilots’ clubs, and trade warehouses. Aircraft depart from Alkenstar daily, most bound for the Gunworks or Cloudreaver Keep. The true difficulty, as the party soon discovers, is in finding a pilot willing to travel to the depths of the notorious Spellscar Desert.

Any airship pilot to whom the characters talk appears happy to take on passengers or to hire out

as a charter—until the party mentions the destination. No pilot in Alkenstar with a lick of sense is willing to fly so deep into the Spellscar at any price. Fortunately, there’s one pilot just reckless enough to take on such a foolhardy venture.

Phera Wyndslow (CN female dwarf tiefling ship captain 6; *Gamemastery Guide* 243) is in the common room of the Final Prospect, the pub that serves as her most recent headquarters. Semiretired, she can’t quite come to selling her beloved antique airship, the *Second Kiss*, which remains moored above the pub. Apathetic and full of melancholy, Wyndslow passes time at the Final Prospect, waiting to see what life brings her next.

In her prime, Wyndslow was one of the best airship pilots in Alkenstar. Handsome, daring, and charismatic, she commanded top dollar for her fast runs to Cloudreaver Keep or the Gunworks, and she even took a few monster-hunting charters into the Spellscar Desert. Characters who succeed at a DC 19 Diplomacy check to Gather Information learn Wyndslow’s last trip into the Spellscar was disastrous, with several passengers and crew lost in a strange accident Wyndslow refuses to discuss. Wyndslow was a changed woman upon her return, and she took to spending more time in the pub than in the air. Other pilots say she lost her nerve, and she conceals her cowardice behind braggadocio that drives away most would-be customers.

Wyndslow is initially resistant to taking the player characters into the Spellscar. “It’s not worth the time nor the money,” she growls. However, some part of her yearns for her younger days when she was an in-demand pilot, ferrying the rich and famous across Alkenstar. If the characters can improve her attitude to friendly—perhaps by besting her at a game of darts or by appealing to her vanity by regaling her with stories of her glory days—she acquiesces to the party’s request, a faint twinkle in her eye. There’s just one catch, she says: she won’t fly without a full ship. If the characters can find riders to fill the rest of the seats on the *Second Kiss*, Wyndslow says she’ll fly the party to the Cradle of Quartz.

RECRUITING PASSENGERS

To convince Wyndslow to transport them across the Spellscar, the party must gather at least four other paying customers to join them for at least part of the trip. At 50 gp a seat, doing so is no small ask. Wyndslow doesn’t just want the money; she also wants to relive the experience of being an in-demand pilot, so the seats must be filled by actual people.

Following are descriptions of potential passengers around Pilot Square whom the party might enlist

to accompany them on the *Second Kiss*, along with the location of a suitable stat block to use for each if required. In general, a passenger can be convinced to board the *Second Kiss* if a character succeeds at a DC 20 Diplomacy or Deception check and offers to pay their fare (on a critical success, a passenger is so persuaded that they pay their own fare). Of course, modify this list however you like if your players invite passengers not accounted for in this text.

Brem and Finn Gallan (LN male half-elf merchants –1; *Gamemastery Guide* 244), a married couple prone to impulsive travel decisions and constant arguing. Characters must convince both of them separately to join the expedition. If made friendly, they agree to pay their own fees. They leave the ship when it docks at Cloudreaver Keep.

“Mister Fly” (mi-go disguised as NE male human merchant 6; *Bestiary* 3 168)—a malevolent alien entity masquerading as a quiet Katapeshi carpet seller—is glad to pay his own fee for a trip to see the Spellscar. Along the way, he hopes to test his strange technology on fellow passengers. Specifically, Mister Fly’s luggage includes a pollutant-spewing device called a smogger (page 78) whose effects he has yet to witness on living, breathing subjects (since he doesn’t need to breathe, Mister Fly is immune to the smogger’s effects).

Tan Qira (LG female samsaran acrobat 2; *Gamemastery Guide* 236) is eager to explore beautiful places. She spends the voyage drawing landscapes in a thick sketchbook and writing poems.

Usuvu (NG female gnome tomb raider 5; *Gamemastery Guide* 217) is a devout follower of Bharnarol, empyreal lord of creativity, invention, and persistence. Usuvu was alerted to the party’s interest in pyronite and the Cradle of Quartz by informants within the Temple of Brigh, and she wishes to find Kosowana so she can aid him in keeping pyronite from the masses. Usuvu readily agrees to accompany the party and pays her own fee, but she acts suspiciously and refuses to reveal her agenda to the player characters unless they improve her attitude to helpful.

Whitopper “Whit” Heron (CG male human commoner with a longsword instead of a sickle; *Gamemastery Guide* 214), a young man looking for adventure, is eager to join the expedition but spent all of his ready coin on a secondhand sword. The party will need to pay for Whit’s ticket if they want him to join them on the *Second Kiss*.

“Hirum Bridges” and **“Estheri Wystone”** (LE male and female human Gilded Gunner assassins 5; page 57) become available as potential passengers if the player characters aren’t discreet in their search for passengers.

Actually named Ryce and Sal Roffan, these siblings pose as merchants seeking passage to Cloudreaver Keep. In fact, they’re Gilded Gunners sent by Mugland to follow the party and locate Kosowana. Unknown to even the Roffans, Mugland hired them mostly as a distraction while his real agent, the halfling porter “Lucky” Lanks, takes care of business (see *Second Kiss Crew* on page 24). The Gilded Gunners keep their gilded firearms hidden in their luggage.

Solessa Toreda (LN female half-orc archer sentry 2 with an arquebus [*Guns & Gears* 152] instead of a longbow; *Gamemastery Guide* 233) is a former shieldmarshal turned big-game hunter. Though Solessa has many principles, courage isn’t among them; she’s keen to see what Spellscar beasts she can take down from the safety of an airship.



Phera Wyndslow

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

SECOND KISS CREW

Captain Wyndslow has a skeleton crew of four to operate the *Second Kiss* on its various charters. Each of her crewmates has flown with Wyndslow for years, although recent lack of work (and pay) has taken a toll on the crew's morale and loyalty.

Dezzin Drakes (N male half-elf bosun 3 with a flintlock musket [*Guns & Gears* 153]; *Gamemastery Guide* 242) has served as Wyndslow's second-in-command on the *Second Kiss*'s increasingly infrequent voyages. He handles most of the logistics required to keep a dirigible airborne. With few jobs since Wyndslow's accident, he's considering hiring on with a different captain if the opportunity presents itself, although he would hate to leave Wyndslow. Loyal but not foolhardy, he'll avoid combat except to save Wyndslow's life or his own.

Nulbee and **Gebbin** (CN female and male goblin pirates 2; *Gamemastery Guide* 242) make up the technical team that keeps the *Second Kiss* airworthy. The half-siblings bicker constantly over the best approach to keeping the airship's clockwork engines running smoothly. Each believes himself to be the only competent one of the pair and tolerates the other as one would a child. When the chips are down, however, the two are fiercely loyal to each other and to Wyndslow, who took them in years ago after catching them trying to steal food from her cargo hold.

The final member and newest addition to Wyndslow's crew is "Lucky" Lanks, a porter who sees to the comfort of passengers, handles cargo manifests, and supervises loading and unloading. A grifter who has been biding his time with Wyndslow while planning his next big scam, "Lucky" is all too vulnerable to anyone with coin. When the Gilded Gunners paid him to make sure the player characters don't reach their destination, he jumped at the chance to finally take the ship and become his own master. Throughout their journey, Lanks makes several attempts to hijack the *Second Kiss* or otherwise sabotage the party's adventure.



Usuvu

"LUCKY" LANKS

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE LE SMALL HALFLING HUMANOID

Male halfling porter

Perception +11

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +13, Deception +13, Diplomacy +13, Intimidation +13, Stealth +13, Thievery +13

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +4

Items chest feather token, coat pistol (20 rounds; *Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 152), dagger (4), hunting spider venom (3), +1 striking shortsword, thieves' tools

AC 20; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

HP 70

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ shortsword +16 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S),

Damage 2d6+4 piercing

Melee ♦ dagger +15 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing

Ranged ♦ coat pistol +15 (concealable, concussive, fatal d8, range increment 30 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing

Ranged ♦ dagger +15 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing

Scoundrel's Feint When Lanks successfully Feints, his target is flat-footed against his attacks until the end of his next turn. On a critical success, the target is flat-footed against all attacks until the end of Lanks's next turn.

Sneak Attack Lanks deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

SECOND KISS LOCATIONS

Ungainly, slow, and highly susceptible to winds and inclement weather, the *Second Kiss* has one distinct advantage: it can travel 24 hours per day as long as a pilot is available to Drive.

Airships like the *Second Kiss* can make the trip from Alkenstar to the Gunworks or to Cloudreaver Keep in a day's travel in relative comfort. Airships require specialized facilities to load and unload cargo, limiting their regular use to travel between well-equipped ports. If needed, the *Second Kiss* can "land" by descending

nearly to ground level and using several anchors and cables to tie the dirigible down, though doing so requires a large open, flat area. Assuming an uneventful journey and a steady speed, it should take the *Second Kiss* 3 days to reach the Cradle of Quartz.

The following pages briefly detail various accessible areas of the *Second Kiss*. These areas correspond to the



"Lucky" Lanks

map on page 26. Unless otherwise noted, all areas of the main cabin have 8-foot-high ceilings; interior walls are made of light wood (Hardness 5, HP 20, BT 10), and the exterior skin of the cabin is made of thin sheet iron (Hardness 5, HP 20, BT 10). Windows are made of pane glass, and most—except the control room’s viewport, which is made of tempered glass (Hardness 2, HP 8, BT 4)—can slide open to provide fresh air. The descriptions below use the standard nautical terms of “port” (while facing the control room, the left side of the ship), “starboard” (the ship’s right side), “fore” (toward the control room), and “aft” (the direction opposite the control room).

Rigid Envelope: A pair of circular frames enclose the main envelope of the dirigible. The frames are connected by a truss walkway on the top and both sides, and by the main cabin on the bottom. Inside the envelope are additional frames dividing the space into 12 segments that each contain an airtight bladder full of floranine gas. A narrow walkway runs the length of the dirigible along either side of the outer envelope, and ladders are built into each frame, allowing maintenance of the floranine gas bags even while in flight. Additional catwalks run along the sides to exterior walkways that lead to the engine nacelles.

Upper Observation Deck: The top of the *Second Kiss* has a flat platform where passengers brave enough to make the climb can witness spectacular panoramic views. The platform is accessible either by the ladders inside the main envelope or along a set of rungs built into the exterior skin of the dirigible’s gas envelope (the rungs are off limits while the vessel is in flight). In desperate times, Wyndslow posts one of her crew to the platform to keep watch—a very unpopular duty. This is also where the ship’s single armament is: a rusty but serviceable ballista (*Guns & Gears* 74).

While the airship is in motion, creatures on the upper observation deck or other exterior areas of the airship are exposed to wind and mild cold (*Core Rulebook* 517–518).

Engine Nacelles: Two massive clockwork engines are mounted on frames extending above and out from either side of the main crew cabin. They’re accessible by a narrow-railed walkway from doors in the rear engine compartment and from walkways leading into the rigid envelope. These clockwork engines provide the forward speed for the airship and are normally wound on the ground at appropriate port facilities, such as Pilot’s Square or Cloudreaver Keep. They can be partially wound in flight (with the built-in key) by

THE SECOND KISS

Phera Wyndslow’s vessel is a one-of-a-kind rigid airship. The full rules for vehicles can be found in the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* starting on page 174.

SECOND KISS

UNIQUE GARGANTUAN

Price 7,000 gp

The *Second Kiss* is a massive rigid airship. An oval fabric envelope stretched over a wood-and-metal frame contains a dozen sealed gasbags of floranine gas that provide lift to get the vessel airborne. A pair of clockwork-powered propellers mounted in nacelles on either side of the crew cabin provides forward motion. Crew steer the ship with rudders and ailerons in four massive tail fins.

Space 300 feet long, 50 feet wide, 60 feet high (not including fins)

Crew 1 pilot, 3 crew; **Passengers** 8

Piloting Check Piloting Lore (DC 30) or Crafting (DC 32)

AC 28; **Fort** +22

Hardness 20; **HP** 210 (BT 105); **Immunities** object immunities

Speed fly 30 feet (alchemical, clockwork)

Collision 9d10 (DC 30)

Sluggish This vehicle must move twice its length for each 90-degree turn it makes.

VEHICLE 12

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest’s Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

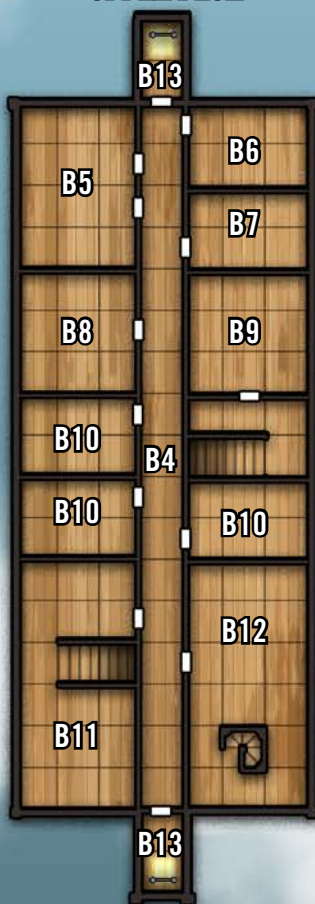
The Second Kiss

THE SECOND KISS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

FLIGHT DECK



UPPER DECK



OBSERVATION DECK



CENTRAL KEEL CATWALK



a character who succeeds at a DC 22 Athletics check that takes 1 minute and adds 1 hour of additional engine time.

Main Cabin: The main cabin is where passengers, crew, and cargo normally stay during a voyage.

B1. Control Room: A broad viewport at the front of this control room provides a commanding view of the skies ahead. The center of the room sports a large metal wheel, a series of levers, and various gauges and dials set into a metal panel. Several metal tubes emerge from the forward control panel and end in a cluster near the ship's yoke. On the port side is a metal wheel accompanied by more gauges and dials, while a chart table and navigational tools are to starboard.

This room is where the pilot and navigator drive the *Second Kiss*. During takeoff and landing, the pilot is stationed at the control yoke forward, while the co-pilot is stationed at the altitude controls to port. While in level flight, a single pilot can handle both controls in most weather conditions. See the vehicle rules in the on page 174 of the *Gamemastery Guide*, or just assume the crew handles the flying of the airship while the player characters are otherwise occupied.

Either Wyndslow or Dezzin pilots the airship under normal circumstances; both are present at the controls during dangerous weather or when taking off or landing. Lanks is a competent pilot as well, but Nulbee and Gebbin have no idea how to fly.

B2. Dining Cabin: Decorated with dated artwork and scuffed hardwood, this broad cabin looks like a fine dining room at an upscale inn, albeit one that hasn't seen much use lately. Tables with high-backed bench seating line both sides of the cabin against wide windows. Passengers board and exit the *Second Kiss* from one of two retractable stairways on either side of the dining cabin. Lanks greets passengers and ensures their luggage is taken to their rooms. Passengers tend to spend most of their time here since it offers splendid views but is protected from the elements. A permanent staircase leads to the upper deck.

B3. Lookback Lounge: This open-air patio with carved wooden railings boasts a bar, stools, wooden tables, and chairs. A spiral staircase leads up to the Society Lounge (area B12).

Passengers congregate at the Lookback Lounge after dinner, where Lanks mixes and serves drinks from behind the bar. Protected from rain by the dirigible's envelope overhead, the lounge is a popular place to watch the sunset in all but the worst weather. It's also an easy way for flying marauders to access the airship, as the only means of closing off the patio is a tatty bug net.

B4. Upper Deck: The upper deck is located above the main deck, inside the bottom of the dirigible's envelope.

The envelope's metal framework and gas cells are located just above the upper deck, separated by a flimsy plank ceiling. The upper deck contains a pair of public areas and several private cabins, as well as the galley and crew quarters.

B5. Crew Mess: This hall is a combination kitchen, dining room, and storage room. Back in the days when Captain Wyndslow ferried dozens of people every week, top-tier Alkenstar chefs staffed the mess; now, the cooking and serving duties fall squarely on Lanks's shoulders. Passengers who forget to pack their own lunches must endure the ungifted porter's steamed hardtack, jarred bread, candied grits, and other questionable culinary creations.

B6. Crew Cabin: A half-dozen simple cots line the walls of this communal sleeping quarters, which dates from the days when Wyndslow's ship boasted over a dozen crew. Now, Lanks has the run of this cabin since the rest of the skeleton crew sleep elsewhere.

B7. Storage Room: Spare furniture, simple tools, buckets of paint, cleaning supplies, and other gear that stays on the ship between voyages is stored in this simple storage room. The door is locked with a poor lock (which requires a character to succeed at two DC 15 Thievery checks to pick); each crew member has a key.

B8. Captain's Cabin: Captain Wyndslow retires to this sparsely appointed chamber to sleep but otherwise spends little time in her quarters.


B9. Copilot's Cabin: Second-in-command Dezzin Drakes spends his off-time in his cabin reading, writing, and doodling sketches of the airship he hopes to someday commission.

B10. Private Stateroom: Each of these three staterooms contains two bunks with hay-filled mattresses, a small table, and a pair of chairs. One room is reserved for the party.

B11. Games Room: Tables for chess, cards, and other games fill this room. Though the *Second Kiss* doesn't pitch and yaw as much as ships at sea, the tables are still securely fastened to the floor.

B12. Society Lounge: Passengers typically access this room via the staircase from the Lookback Lounge. It features sturdy lounge furniture, bookshelves with numerous volumes of Alkenstar fiction, and end tables bolted to the floor.

B13. Ladder to Keelway: The trapdoors to each of these areas are locked with poor locks (which requires a character to succeed at two DC 15 Thievery checks to pick); every crew member has a key. Through the trapdoor, a metal ladder leads through a hole in the ceiling into the dark depths of the dirigible's interior. The smell of grease and the echo of the engines filter



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

from the opening. At the top of the 15-foot-high ladder is the keelway.

B14. Keelway: This metal mesh walkway spans the length of the airship's interior. Through the mesh, the ceiling of the upper deck is visible about 15 feet below. A character who falls or jumps from the keelway likely crashes right through the flimsy wooden ceiling of the upper deck.

The crew can use the keelway to travel the length of the *Second Kiss* during maintenance or repair. When the ship is in flight, engineers Nulbee and Gebbin walk the keelway nearly every hour, day or night, regularly inspecting the fabric gasbags about 5 feet distant from the walkway and the dozen large metal rings that give the dirigible its shape. A leak in one of the ship's 12 gasbags won't bring down the vessel, but three leaking gasbags cause the dirigible to noticeably sag. Six leaking gasbags cause the ship to gradually sink toward the ground at a rate of 10 feet per round. Nine leaking gasbags increase this rate of descent to 100 feet per round. The ship reaches terminal velocity only if all the gasbags are totally destroyed, not just punctured, making a cataclysmic crash highly unlikely.

B15. Engineering Rooms: These tiny rooms reek of grease and sweat. Each room contains a small cot, a workbench, and mounds of tools and ship parts. The two rooms function as workshops and sleeping quarters for Nulbee (portside room) and Gebbin (starboard room). From here, the engineers have easy access to the keelway and to the walkways that lead outside the dirigible's envelope to the engine nacelles.

B16. Engine Nacelle: An open walkway leads outside the airship and through a small opening in the side of the engine housing. The massive clockwork engine block occupies the center of the space, surrounded by a mesh walkway squeezed between the whirring gears and the nacelle's aerodynamic outer casing. At the back of the engine block, a large metal key slowly turns as the propeller spins.

The roar of the engines and the wind whipping through the open hatchway preclude conversation. Additionally, the whirring gears constitute a hazard for anyone moving around the nacelle—especially anyone wearing loose clothing, scarves, or cloaks. In this area, the only safe way to move is to Step.

SECOND KISS ENGINE

HAZARD 6

UNCOMMON MECHANICAL TRAP

Description Exposed clockwork gears spin at high speeds.

Disable DC 28 Thievery (expert) to disable the engine, or DC 26 Engineering Lore to disengage the drive shaft. Either method disables the trap but also shuts down the engine, disabling the *Second Kiss's* propulsion.

AC 27; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18

Hardness 10; **HP** 50 (BT 25); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Spinning Gears ➤ **Trigger** A creature Strides in the engine nacelle; **Effect** The creature's clothing or limbs get caught in the spinning gears and axles of the engine. The creature must attempt a DC 24 Reflex save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 2d8+9 bludgeoning damage.

Failure The creature takes 4d8+18 bludgeoning damage.

Critical Failure The creature's clothing is pulled into the clockworks. The creature takes 4d8+18 bludgeoning damage and is restrained. Until the creature Escapes (DC 24), it takes 2d8+9 bludgeoning damage each round as it's pulled into the spinning rotors. A creature wearing clothing can automatically Escape by doffing its caught clothing; this destroys the doffed clothing.

SAILING THE SPELLSCAR

Once the player characters round up a group of at least four more passengers, Wyndslow prepares to take off in the early morning. At the appointed time, the airship is winched down to make the main cabin accessible from the tall wooden stairs on the roof of the Final Prospect pub. Each passenger group boards the vessel and mingles in the main cabin, introducing themselves to each other.

When all is ready, the airship drops ballast, and its two powerful clockwork propellers roar to life. The ship rises slowly into the sky, turning into the wind to gain altitude. Most of the passengers remain inside and watch the flight over the city through the slanted windows along the sides of the main cabin.

Once the ship is airborne, Lanks come through the main cabin, offering refreshments and giving an impromptu aerial tour of Alkenstar. The airship heads north over Alkenstar Castle, providing a dramatic view of Hellside, Alken Falls, the Screw, and the wealthy districts of Skyside beyond.

Beyond Alkenstar's walls, the *Second Kiss* turns slightly east and heads toward Cloudreaver Keep, the first stop on its route to the Cradle of Quartz. The rugged hills and inhospitable terrain of the Spellscar Desert sprawl before the ship: rocky cliffs, deep canyons, and fields of hoodoos, often obscured by blowing sand and dust. Other weather phenomena appear and disappear with uncanny speed, including thunderstorms, fog, and snow, all dissipating as quickly as they form and occurring in a surprising variety of colors. A sparkling shower of perfectly formed ice crystals that smells faintly of lilacs is preceded by dark purple thunderheads that reek of sulfur. None of the precipitation ever reaches the ground, keeping the Spellscar Desert true to its name.

The unpredictable winds typical of the Mana Wastes keep Captain Wyndslow and Copilot Dezzin Drakes busy holding the ungainly airship on course.

The following event encounters occur in the order presented as the *Second Kiss* flies east. The airship's crew leaves any fighting to the party; occasionally, a monster might attack the airship directly or otherwise threaten the ship's course. When necessary, refer to the full rules for vehicles starting on page 174 of the *Gamemastery Guide* and the *Second Kiss* vehicle stat block on page 25.

EVENT 2: PERYTON ATTACK MODERATE 5

After a few hours, the airship runs afoul of some of the Spellscar's malevolent denizens. Though perytons are normally quite solitary, these specimens banded together to take down the desert's largest prey—a category that currently encompasses the crew and passengers of the *Second Kiss*. Characters with a clear view aft (likely from the Lookback Lounge, area B3) can attempt a secret DC 15 Perception check. On a success, a character spots the dark silhouettes of the winged creatures following them.

The perytons stalk the airship for several minutes, spreading out to surround the vessel while slowly closing the distance. If anyone is on the upper platform or in the open-air observation deck, one peryton uses its Steal Shadow ability on that target to begin combat. The other perytons attack any exposed targets.

PERYTONS (3) CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 197

Initiative Perception +13

During this encounter, Nulbee and Gebbin argue over who should stay in the engine room and who gets to use the ballista. They both want to be the one to bring down a “flying deer-wolf-thing,” but neither fully grasp the dangers of such a proposition. The ballista requires two people to operate, so one of the engineers implores the characters to settle the debate and go with them to use the siege weapon.

EVENT 3: ENGINE FAILURE

Lanks uses the peryton attack as a distraction to cause trouble about the main deck. In the aftermath of the fight, he sneaks to the upper platform with a length of iron chain and tosses it into one of the engine nacelles, fouling that propeller. The *Second Kiss* loses speed and begins to circle lazily, its rudders unable to counteract the unbalanced thrust from the engines.

Nulbee and Gebbin can clear the jammed propeller with an hour's work, but suspicion runs throughout

the crew and passengers as it becomes clear there's a saboteur aboard. Lanks continues to sow dissent among the party and passengers, perhaps even confiding to the player characters that he saw one of the other passengers in the dirigible's framework just before the propeller went dead. He tells a different story to Captain Wyndslow, claiming the player characters are behaving suspiciously so that she'll cut the trip short at Cloudreaver Keep.

Lanks is tricky, but he leaves telltale traces of his malfeasance. When the engineers find the iron chain that caused the propeller's failure, they both recognize it from the storage room (area B7), which is accessible only to the crew; Nulbee or Gebbin might reveal this detail to the player characters, depending on how positive their interactions have been. Lanks also snatched a few tools and spare parts from the engineering rooms (area B15) and hid them under the cots in the crew cabin (area B6). At your discretion, Lanks might leave other evidence. If at any time it's clear his ruse hasn't worked, he attacks the party as a last-ditch resort.

XP Award: For discovering evidence of Lanks's sabotage, award each player character 30 XP. If the characters definitively prove Lanks is a traitor, award them each an additional 30 XP, in addition to the XP for the combat encounter against him (even if they don't end up fighting him).

EVENT 4: PASSENGER DRAMA VARIES 5

A few hours after the engineers clear the jammed propeller and the *Second Kiss* is back underway, another mishap occurs. Depending on which passengers joined the characters, this incident might be a piece of passenger-related drama—for example, if Mister Fly is aboard, he tries to lure one of the other passengers to a cabin for some impromptu brain surgery. If Hiram and Esther are aboard, they try to get one of the player characters alone to push them off the airship or otherwise make them disappear. Brem and Finn Gallan, the married traders, might get into a shouting match that grates on the other passengers' nerves. Worst-case scenario: all these dramatic episodes occur simultaneously.

XP Award: For weathering this episode of drama, award each player character 30 XP, in addition to any XP gained for overcoming a combat encounter that might result from this event.

EVENT 5: NIGHT FLIGHT LOW 5

After dinner, the *Second Kiss* continues its course for Cloudreaver Keep. Wyndslow heads to her stateroom to rest while Dezzin takes the controls. If a player character expressed interest in the operation of the airship, Dezzin is happier than Wyndslow to entertain

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

an aspiring pilot; he invites them to join him on the flight deck for a few quick lessons. The *Second Kiss* cruises all night with Wyndslow and Dezzin splitting piloting duties in four-hour shifts.

Creatures: Just before the end of Dezzin's first shift, a sudden peel of thunder presages foul weather, though it isn't rain or hail that starts falling on the *Second Kiss*, but rather hissing desert snakes. Anywhere else, this phenomenon would seem apocalyptic. Flying over the Mana Wastes? Dezzin calmly assures the party this isn't his first snake storm.

The rest of the passengers are asleep, though most awaken at the sound of thick, coiled snakes bouncing off the airship's envelope. Only a few vipers actually land on the lounge deck (area **B3**), but they quickly slither into the ship and attack anyone they intercept.

GIANT VIPERS (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 303

Initiative Perception +7

VIPER SWARM

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 249

Initiative Perception +12

Sabotage: During the viper encounter, Lanks—assuming he hasn't been apprehended—makes his most daring move yet. Whether Captain Wyndslow is alone on the flight deck or in her room, Lanks surreptitiously leads a viper into the area. When the viper is close to Wyndslow, he stabs the captain with a dagger he coated in hunting spider venom, then screams for help. Wyndslow is in agony and believes she has been bitten by a snake; she stumbles into the dining cabin (if she was in the control room) or the main deck's hallway (if she was in her room) and implores the characters to help her. It's clear the captain is in a bad way; if the party doesn't have a means of treating her poison, she falls unconscious in 4 rounds. Meanwhile, Lanks explains he was doing his routine walkabout on the ship when he saw a viper slither Wyndslow's way. He demands they stop at Cloudreaver Keep and cancel the rest of the expedition in light of the captain's predicament.

A character who succeeds at a DC 15 Medicine check can tell Wyndslow's wound is the result of a dagger, not a snake bite. With a successful DC 20 Nature check, a character discerns the poison is spider venom, not snake venom. Lanks builds upon his lie as much as possible, but as soon as he realizes the jig is up, he lunges at the party with all he has.

XP Award: If the party determines the cause of Wyndslow's poisoning or the nature of the poison, award each player character 30 XP. If they cure

her poison before she falls unconscious, award an additional 30 XP, in addition to any XP gained for any combat that results from this event.

EVENT 6: CLOUDREAVER KEEP

As the cold light of dawn creeps into the sky, the *Second Kiss* arrives at Cloudreaver Keep, the fortress marking the eastern end of what are commonly thought of as Alkenstar's holdings. This is the final destination for some of the passengers, who are extremely happy to depart the unlucky airship. If Captain Wyndslow fell unconscious during the last event, Dezzin takes her to a medic in the fortress, where she recuperates for 12 hours before she's well enough to pilot the ship once more. Otherwise, Wyndslow insists the *Second Kiss* continue its voyage as swiftly as possible; in this case, the player characters have 1 hour to resupply and purchase common equipment at the keep.

If Lanks or any others on the ship were identified as saboteurs, Alkenstar soldiers at Cloudreaver Keep detain the lawbreakers. Before leaving Cloudreaver Keep, Wyndslow checks with the fortress's forecasters, who predict bad mana storms over the next few days. She warns the party to prepare for a bumpy ride.

EVENT 7: SKY MARAUDERS

SEVERE 5

The hours after the *Second Kiss*'s stop at Cloudreaver Keep are surprisingly uneventful, and the party can enjoy a brief reprieve from saboteurs (assuming they identified and stopped Lanks) and flying monsters.

Mana Storm: At dawn on the third day of travel, a 1st-level mana storm envelops the airship, bringing with it a cadre of malevolent mutated monsters.

Roll on the table on page 71 to determine the mana storm's effect, which persists throughout this event. Depending on the exact effect, the encounter against the marauders (see Creatures below) might be easier or harder than usual; adjust the XP you reward the player characters accordingly.

Creatures: Amid the storm, three mutated maftet bandits take the airship by surprise. The sphinx-like humanoids land on the observation deck and attack anyone on the deck or lounge, forcing their way into the cockpit to kill the pilots and crash the airship.

SPELLSCAR SKY MARAUDERS (3)

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMANOID MUTANT

Mana Wastes mutant maftet bandits (page 84, *Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 166)

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Common, Sphinx

Skills Acrobatics +13, Arcana +11, Athletics +13, Intimidation +10, Spellscar Desert Lore +13, Stealth +13

Str +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -1

Items scimitar (2)

AC 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +10

HP 85; **Immunities** disease; **Resistances** acid 5

Acidic Pustules The marauder's skin is covered with necrotic boils that burst when struck. Whenever a creature deals slashing or piercing damage to the marauder, each creature within 5 feet takes 2d6 acid damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save). On a critically failed save, a creature also takes 1d4 persistent acid damage.

Runic Resistance ⤵ (arcane, abjuration) As maftet guardian.

Speed 30 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ⤵ scimitar +15 (forceful, magical, sweep), **Damage** 2d6+6 slashing

Melee ⤵ talon +15 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d4+6 plus mana fever

Arcane Innate Spells DC 22; **1st** sanctuary (×3), true strike; **Cantrips** (3rd) sigil

Paired Strike ⤵⤵ As maftet guardian.

Mana Fever (disease) A creature can't remove the fatigued condition while infected; **Saving Throw** DC 22 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 day; **Stage 1** fatigued and stupefied 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** fatigued and stupefied 2 (1 day); **Stage 3** fatigued and stupefied 3 (1 day); **Stage 4** gain immunity to mana fever and become a Mana Wastes mutant

Powerful Scimitars (arcane, evocation) As maftet guardian.

Raptor Dive ⤵⤵⤵ As maftet guardian.

EVENT 8: THE STORM BREAKS SEVERE 5

After the party defeats or drives off the maftets, the mana storm intensifies, and a new threat appears.

Mana Storm: The storm escalates to a 3rd-level mana storm. Use the table on page 71 to determine the mana storm's new effect, which persists throughout this event.

Creature: A terrible denizen created by the Spellscar, a chimeric mantichore, uses the mana storm as cover to approach the *Second Kiss*, hoping to devour the delicious creatures inside. It uses its unarmed attacks on the airship, and its breath weapon and tail spikes to attack exposed creatures.

CHIMERIC MANTICORE

CREATURE 7

RARE CE LARGE BEAST

Genderless chimera-manticore hybrid (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 63, 232)

Perception +15; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common, Draconic

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +17, Intimidation +11, Stealth +13, Survival +15

Str +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

AC 25; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

HP 120

Three-Headed As chimera.

Triple Opportunity As chimera.

Attack of Opportunity ⤵

Speed 25 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ⤵ dragon jaws +18, **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing plus 2d6 electricity

Melee ⤵ lion jaws +18, **Damage** 2d10+8 piercing

Melee ⤵ goat horns +18, **Damage** 2d10+8 piercing

Melee ⤵ claw +18 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+8 slashing

Ranged ⤵ spike +16 (range increment 40 feet), **Damage** 1d10+8 piercing

Breath Weapon ⤵⤵ (arcane, evocation) The chimeric mantichore's blue-dragon head breathes a 60-foot line



Chimeric Manticore

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Box

of electricity that deals 8d6 electrical damage to all creatures in the area (DC 25 basic Reflex save). The chimeric mantichore can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Spike Volley ♦ As mantichore, but DC 25.

Three-Headed Strike ♦♦ As chimera.

XP Award: The mana storm increases this encounter's threat level to severe for a party of 5th-level characters; for overcoming the chimeric mantichore and weathering the storm, award each 5th-level character 120 XP rather than the usual 80 XP.

In addition, if the party prevents the *Second Kiss* from becoming broken, award each character 80 XP.

THE CRASH

If the *Second Kiss* takes sufficient damage to gain the broken condition, it immediately descends 60 feet per round in addition to its regular movement. When the airship hits the ground, it comes to a stop, and all creatures aboard must succeed at a DC 25 Reflex save or be knocked prone.

Even if the *Second Kiss* remains airworthy after the mana storm and chimera attack, Captain Wyndslow still lands the airship to inspect the damage. The magical sandstorm's effects have worn down many of the gears in the ship's clockwork engines. While the ship can be partially repaired with the materials aboard, some of the complex clockwork components in the engines require replacement. Captain Wyndslow uses a *bird feather token* to send for help from the barkeep at the Final Prospect, but she thinks the Cradle of Quartz might have some of the components necessary to repair the ship. As a Brightite temple, it likely has stocks of clockwork components, and it's only 2 days' trek to the east.

If Lanks remains undetected, he chooses an opportune moment to make his move, hoping to kill Captain Wyndslow and take control of the ship. He hopes to arrange an accident for Wyndslow and assumes the crew will accept him as their new leader. The success or failure of this scheme is left to you to decide, based on your player characters' strategies and prior interactions with these characters.

Captain Wyndslow and her surviving crew remain with the *Second Kiss*, repairing what they can and stripping out unnecessary components to lighten the dirigible's load. Any passengers who remain likely stay at the ship, where there's enough food and water for those remaining to survive for a week, but they might ask to accompany the player characters to the Cradle of Quartz if they've formed a particularly strong bond with the characters. There isn't enough food or

water for the characters to take with them. "Besides," Wyndslow says, "hardy adventurers like you know how to find a bite to eat in the desert, right?"

TREK TO THE CRADLE

From the air, it's easy to mistake the Spellscar Desert's dry, rocky badlands for lumpy but easily traversable hills. On foot and up close, the wasteland is a tangle of dry riverbeds, jagged basins, and small but steep mountain ranges. Fields of hoodoos—rock columns naturally carved by flash floods or mana storms—punctuate the arid landscape. Dust devils are common, with less-common flash floods following just about any amount of precipitation.

If the player characters managed to keep the *Second Kiss* aloft through all the airborne encounters, they're already most of the way to the Cradle of Quartz—just under 40 miles, by Wyndslow's estimation. Assuming they travel 8 hours per day, it takes the characters most of 2 days to reach the Cradle of Quartz by foot. At your discretion, if the ship fared particularly poorly, the characters might have crash-landed much farther from their destination.

Run this section of the adventure as exploration mode interspersed with the following event encounters. Present these events in order as the player characters proceed from the *Second Kiss*'s crash site toward the Cradle of Quartz. For encounters where no map is provided, assume a barren landscape smeared with rubble (which is difficult terrain) and other natural obstacles of your own design, perhaps drawing from the Natural Disasters section starting on page 518 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for inspiration.

For more information on the Spellscar Desert, as well as ideas for additional encounters and creatures to meet in this wasteland, see the Spellscar Desert article starting on page 66.

EVENT 9: MEETING "I"

MODERATE 5

The party's first event encounter occurs about 10 miles into their journey across the Spellscar.

A dry riverbed slowly descends into a narrow, winding canyon with twenty-foot walls of sandstone on either side. A trickle of water cascades from a small natural spring about halfway up the western wall, near the mouth of the canyon. The canyon walls offer a rare spot of shade and shelter from the hot sun.

A player character who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check spots strange, sliding marks in the sandy bed of the river, as if several large snakes slithered through the sand while it was wet.

Creature: Originally named for the writhing, seaweed-like appearance of the hoodoos in its vicinity, Tentacle Canyon is a serendipitously appropriate moniker for a completely separate reason. A cave on the south side of the canyon is the daytime haunt of a strange alien being who resembles something like a telepathic octopus. The creature pulls itself across the ground with nine arms and can swim through sand or loose earth. The creature is extremely intelligent, but their concept of self is vastly different from what passes for normal on Golarion; they don't have a name or even think of themselves as an individual creature. When using telepathic communication with other creatures, the best fit for the creature's conception of themselves is "I," while other creatures are generally only distinguished into one of three categories: "food," "toy," or "danger."

Despite the creature's alien outlook, I is extremely intelligent, curious, and even gregarious when encountering other creatures. They've learned a few words of various local languages through conversations with the beings who travel the Spellscar, and I often tries to use these words without actually understanding what they mean. I has no sense of humor—or an ability to understand sarcasm, irony, or context—but they twist their limbs with glee upon hearing unfamiliar words (such as the names of the player characters). I sporadically uses these words in sentences just because they "feel like nice thoughts."

I is extremely curious about other living beings, although they don't have the same senses of propriety common to humanoid societies. They think nothing of having an earnest telepathic discussion with a creature they fully intend to consume once the conversation is finished. I begins the encounter as indifferent to the party but can be made friendly or helpful in the usual ways for adjusting creature attitudes.

The origins of I are uncertain, even to themselves, although certainly the freakish magic of the Spellscar is one possible source. I has as much conception of time as they do of themselves; they have no idea of how long they've dwelled here. They do know the area quite well, though, as well as which desert creatures are tastiest.

I is utterly fascinated by the player characters, having encountered few like them before. I asks all sorts of questions—where the party is from, how they know each other, where they're going, how they ambulate, speak, eat, and so forth. The creature loves to handle and manipulate

objects of all kinds, especially those with moving parts or interesting textures. Currently, they wear a *thunder helm* (page 78) by fondling it with alternating tentacles, oblivious to the item's lethal nature. I gladly trades the *thunder helm* for another clockwork item of any value (the concept of money is currently far beyond the creature's grasp, and incredibly dull besides). A character who gives or trades a clockwork object to I gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks to Influence the creature.

Besides being an engaging conversationalist, I also knows a good deal about the surrounding desert, though none of the proper names for the things they've seen or experienced. They can direct the party toward the Cradle of Quartz ("scary glass castle") as well as an Ulfen funeral ship ("soft rock full of tasty bugs"). If introduced to the concept of bartering, I excitedly attempts to practice trading with their knowledge, promising additional details that they



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

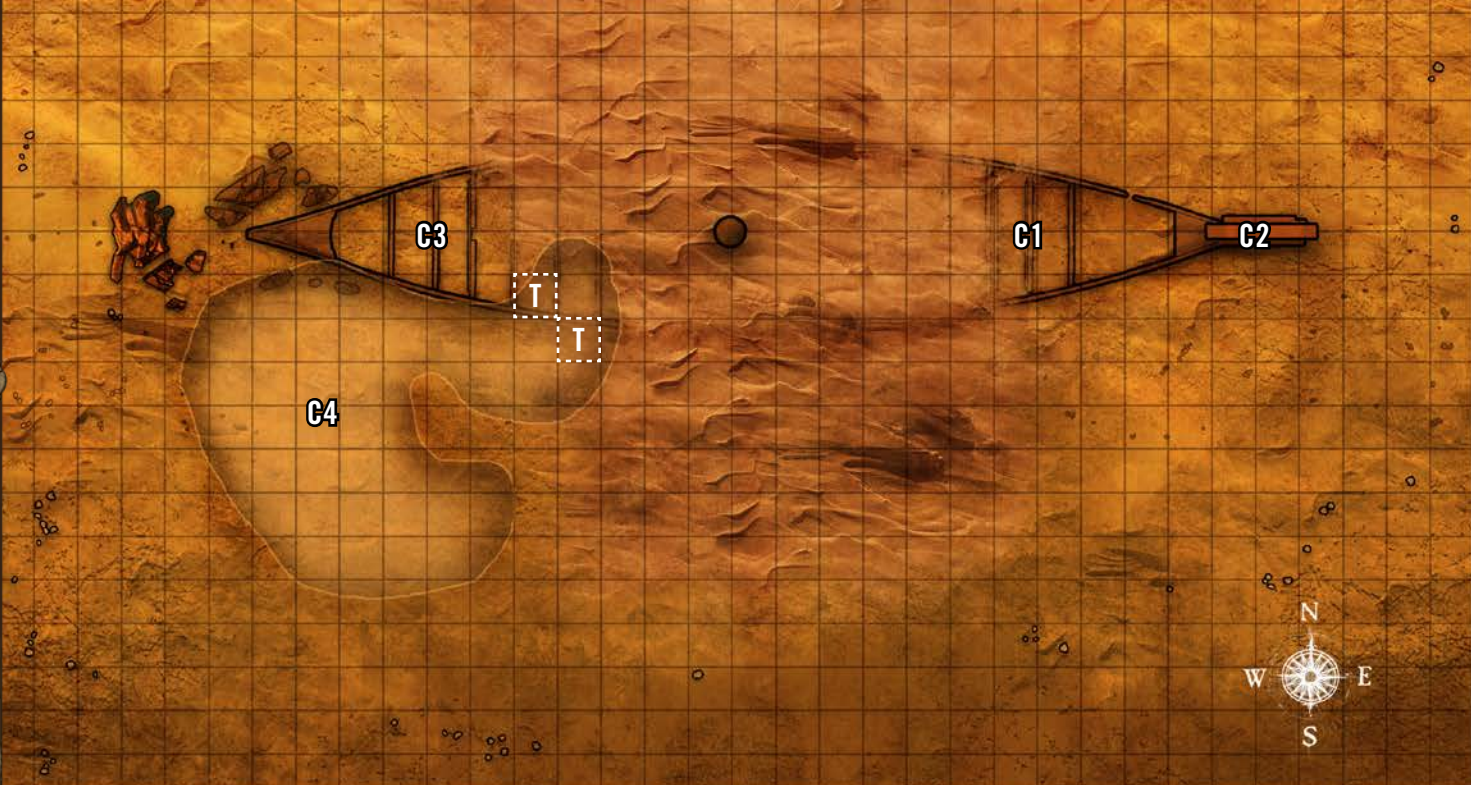
Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

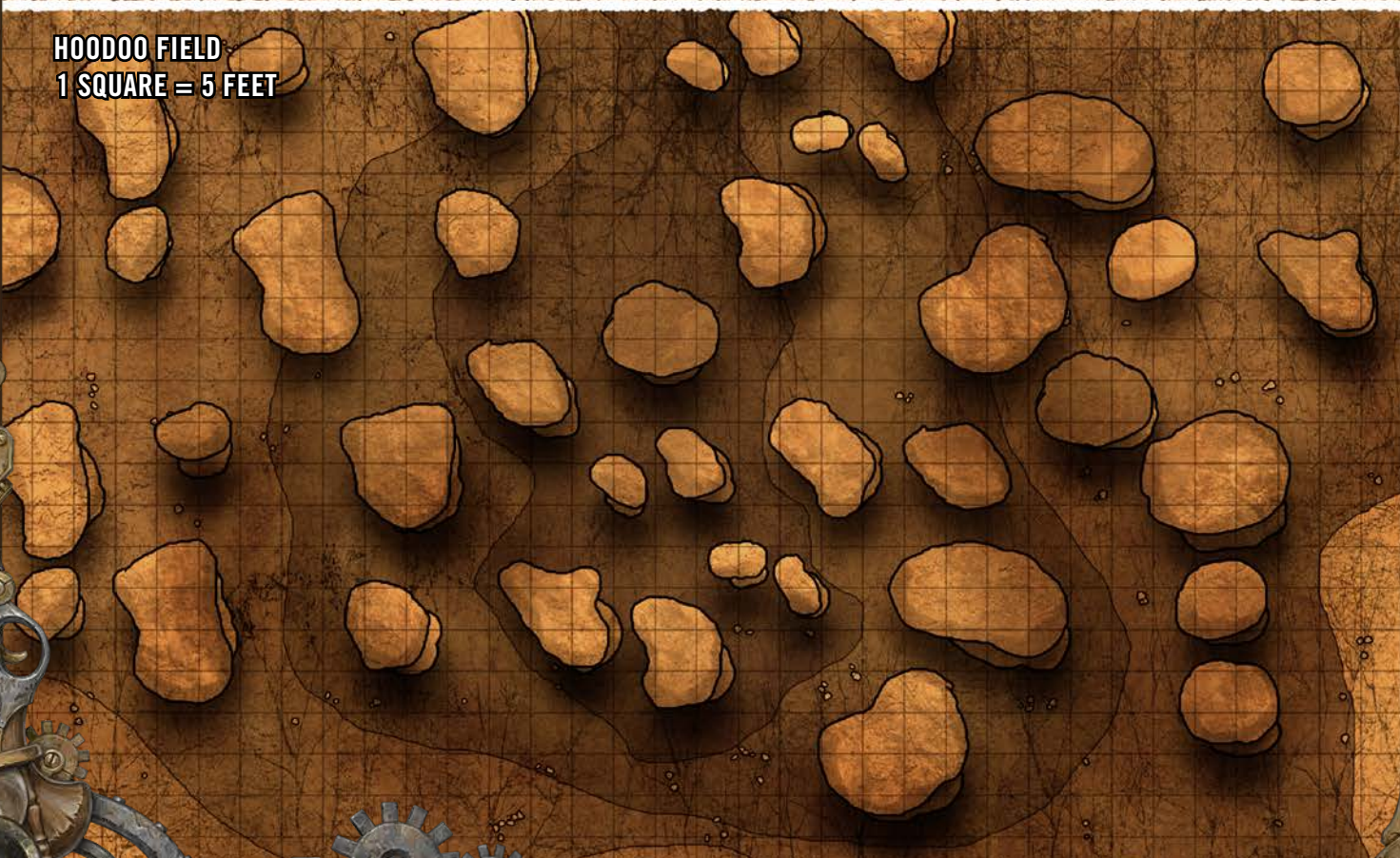
Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Tools

ULFEN FUNERAL SHIP
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



HOODOO FIELD
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



actually don't have in exchange for suitable goods, such as a creature to eat.

At some point, I becomes bored or hungry and attempts to eat their new friends. I is bewildered if the party responds violently; they can understand why their food would struggle, but hostility, according to the creature's utterly alien intellect, is an unexpected reaction. I attempts to put down their meal as quickly as possible, and the party must either flee or fight to survive the encounter.

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM ABERRATION

Genderless alien entity of unknown provenance

Perception +19; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Arcana +16, Athletics +16, Diplomacy +14, Spellscar Lore +19, Thievery +16

Languages Common, Gnoll, Osiriani (can't speak any language); telepathy 100 feet

Str +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

Items *thunder helm* (page 78)

AC 25; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14

HP 110; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10

Speed 25 feet, burrow 25 feet

Melee ♦ arm +16 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+6 bludgeoning plus Grab

Melee ♦ beak +16, **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing plus I venom

Primal Innate Spells DC 25; **3rd** *noxious vapors* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 222), *shifting sand* (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 110); **1st** *shockwave* (at will; *Gods & Magic* 110)

Constrict ♦ 1d8+8 bludgeoning

I Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 25 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d6 poison damage, enfeebled 1, and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 3** 2d6 poison damage, enfeebled 2, and flat-footed (1 round)

Writhing Arms ♦♦ I makes up to four Strikes with different arms, each against a different target. Each attack counts separately for their multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until all attacks have been made. If I subsequently uses the Grab action, they can Grab any number of creatures they hit with Writhing Arms.

EVENT 10: HAUNTED GUN

MODERATE 5

A few miles east of where they encountered I, the player characters meet another unusual (and unfriendly) stranger.

The desert sun beats down, with no wind and no shade for respite. Ahead, a ridge of hills offers the promise of at least some shelter from the blistering sun. Suddenly, a small plume of sand erupts from the ground a few feet ahead,

followed almost immediately by the crack of a rifle shot, arriving just after the projectile.

Creatures: Palzu was once a low-ranking grunt in a pack of Lamashtu-worshipping gnolls and captive hyenas that ranged across the northern Spellscar. On a day like any other, he and his packmates followed their huntmistress in a siege on a merchant caravan. They left no survivors—or so they thought. One of the caravan guards, a formidable Alkenstar-based escort named Jax, fought valiantly until she drew her last breath. Somehow, her spirit clung to her weapon, an expertly made firearm called a piercing wind (*Guns & Gears* 159). When Palzu claimed the rifle as his own, the spirit of Jax manifested and possessed the gnoll. Palzu watched helplessly as his body used the rifle to slaughter his own clan.

It has been many years since that fated day. Palzu wandered the desert ever since, hunting demon worshippers and bandits at *Jax's* command. The rifle allows the gnoll some freedom, but if the gnoll tries to discard the weapon or encounters other creatures, the weapon assumes full control.

Palzu fires a warning shot from cover to demonstrate his prowess and instill fear in his targets, then attempts to pick off each foe one by one. In *Jax's* mind, the motley crew of characters resemble nothing so much as bandits, so the weapon provides all of its abilities to Palzu during combat. After 4 rounds, or if the party demonstrates their benign intentions, *Jax* realizes its error and reasserts control over Palzu, forcing the gnoll to kneel in surrender or flee.

PALZU

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM GNOLL HUMANOID

Male dominated gnoll sharpshooter (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 178)

Perception +17; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +15, Intimidation +16, Stealth +18, Survival +17

Languages Gnoll

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items hide armor, *Jax* (page 77; 10 rounds), scimitar sheath (empty)

AC 25; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +18, **Will** +13

HP 135

Speed 25 feet

Melee *Jax* +18 (critical fusion, finesse, forceful, magical, sweep), **Damage** 2d4+7 slashing

Melee jaws +15 (agile), **Damage** 1d8+7 piercing

Ranged *Jax* +18 (concussive, fatal aim d10, magical, range increment 40 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d6+4 piercing plus crack shot

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

Crack Shot When Palzu critically hits a creature with a ranged Strike, the target must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save or be stunned 1.

Howling Bullet ♦ (fear) **Requirements** Palzu has rolled initiative but hasn't acted yet in combat; **Effect** Palzu lets loose a blood-curdling howl while firing his rifle, making the report sound unearthly and disturbing. Palzu makes a *Jax* Strike against a foe within 40 feet. On a hit, creatures in a 10-foot emanation centered on the target hit must attempt a DC 26 Will save or become frightened 1.

Rugged Travel Palzu ignores the first square of difficult terrain he moves into each time he Steps or Strides.

Aftermath: If Palzu lives and the characters accept his surrender, it's up to them to decide what to do with the unusual hunter. If they invite his companionship, Palzu accedes only at the behest of *Jax*. Each day just before dawn, *Jax* attempts to cast *dominate* on Palzu to retain control of the sharpshooter; if Palzu regains agency, he attempts to use *Jax* to murder the characters in their sleep, or failing that, he simply flees into the desert.

XP Award: Because *Jax* might bring the fight to an end before it becomes truly deadly, the threat category of this encounter is moderate for a 5th-level party rather than severe. Award XP for the encounter accordingly.

EVENT 11: HOODOO FIELD MODERATE 5

When the party is more than halfway to the Cradle of Quartz, the player characters spy an unusual rock formation in the distance. If they haven't rested since departing the crash site of the *Second Kiss*, the hoodoo field offers some appealing patches of shade in which to doze beneath the pillars.

Ahead, dozens of stone pillars stand, twenty feet high and irregularly shaped. They all share the same layering pattern of sediment, indicating they're all that remains of a riverbed that once filled this canyon. Eroded by wind and flash floods, some of the pillars seem carved almost intelligently, no doubt by the strange action of the mana storms that scour the landscape.

Hoodoos are a common sight in the Spellscar and are often twisted into unusual or gravity-defying shapes by the primal magic that formed them. Here, the mana storms did more than just shape the stone—they gave one of the hoodoos a malevolent sentence.

Use the map of the Hoodoo Field on page 34 for this encounter.

Creature: One of the hoodoo pillars is an animate stone creature that waits to ambush anything that dares to cross its territory. A player character must succeed at a DC 30 Perception check to spot the hoodoo while it uses its Stand Still ability, making it unlikely the party notices the creature until it's too late. If it seems like its prey might rest here for a while, the hoodoo waits until the characters have their guard down before striking.

ANIMATED HOODOO

CREATURE 7

Elite sand sentry (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 6, 109)

Initiative Perception +16 or Stealth +19

Palzu and Jax

ULFEN FUNERAL SHIP

Before they arrive at the Cradle of Quartz, the party reaches a peculiar desert site populated by even more peculiar denizens. Though the party doesn't need to engage with these creatures at all—indeed, the player characters might choose to leave the ship behind if they're eager to reach the Cradle of Quartz—the characters can gain a fair bit from aiding one of the groups inhabiting this strange locale.

From a distance, this site appears as another crag of rock emerging from the rugged terrain. As the party closes in, the characters notice its odd symmetry, which gives it the appearance of an Ulfen longship half-buried in the sand. A few hundred feet out, it becomes clear that an Ulfen ship is, in fact, exactly what the sight is. One side of the ship is staved in. Sand covers the main deck, and only the bow and stern prows jut from the earth. At a dozen yards out, a character can see the ship is embedded in the rock, as if it somehow materialized partially within the stone or sank into mud that later hardened.

Warring Factions: A colony of bat-like sprites called nykteras nests within the hull of this ship during the day. The nykteras emerge at dusk to feed on insects. Lately, the sprites have been locked in a conflict with a small clan of vexgits—evil termite-like gremlins that recently arrived and made their hive in the lower deck of the ship. The vexgits' depredations are undermining the structural integrity of the wooden ship, threatening the safety of both factions. The leader of the nykteras, an oracle named Kreeth-Ni, tried to reason with the vexgits' leader, a mutated giant termite named Akrida, to no avail.

The nykteras see the arrival of the party as a means to finally evict the vexgits and regain dominion over their homeland. If the characters begin to explore the ship, the nykteras peacefully make themselves known and introduce themselves. Queen Kreeth-Ni attempts to convince the characters to aid the nykteras' cause and offers the party a hand-woven necklace (about the size of a ring for a humanoid) as a token of friendship. She promises to make the characters honorary members of the colony if they destroy Akrida and his minions, and she gives them what little food and drink they can offer. If the queen learns the characters' ultimate goal is to reach the Cradle of Quartz, she promises to tell them all she knows about the place if they help her and her people. Like all nykteras, Kreeth-Ni's ire knows no bounds if her hospitality is rejected. If the characters insult her or any other nykteras, the queen flies into a rage and orders her entire community to attack the intruders.

The vexgits care nothing for the nykteras; Akrida plans to devour the ship bit by bit and then move on. Akrida's vexgit underlings, totally cowed by their violent boss, fight to the death to defend their leader and base of operations.

Kreeth-Ni and the other nykteras dwell on the eastern end of the ruined ship. Akrida and his vexgits—along with an unusual monster they keep fat and happy with regular sacrifices of nykteras—hold the ship's sunken central hull and the western end of the boat.

The following locations correspond to the Ulfen Funeral Ship map on page 34.

C1. PROW

The bow of the Ulfen longship juts from the sand, its carved wooden figurehead depicting a linnorm's face, jaws agape. The ship's bow rides on the desert floor as if it were floating on water, with several feet of hull encased in the rock-hard sandstone.

Since the vexgit invasion, Kreeth-Ni's nykteras now make their home in the vessel's prow, packing tightly under the gunwales during the day and coming out to hunt insects at night.

Creatures: There are 18 nykteras, excluding Kreeth-Ni, who make their home in the prow, but the party probably won't encounter them all at once. During the day, a dozen sleep while others patrol or guard the queen.

NYKTERAS (12)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 254

Initiative Perception +6

C2. FIGUREHEAD

The carved jaws of the giant figurehead open wide, creating a long, open space. Deep within the linnorm's gullet, several tiny pieces of wicker furniture are arranged in a rough semicircle around a single larger chair.

Creatures: Kreeth-Ni holds court from this end of the boat. During the day, six nykteras keep guard here while their queen and the rest of the nykteras sleep. The entire nyktera community is active during morning and evening hours, and the six daylight guards take their rest at night. If a guard senses danger, they shout in Sylvan to alert the other nykteras.

If the party arrives at the boat after dark or agrees to wait until dusk, Kreeth-Ni rises from her throne and greets them cordially. The queen is an elderly nyktera with patchy grey fur that contrasts with the

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

dark brown-black fur of her subjects. She begins the encounter indifferent to the party, uncertain of their motives, yet hoping for aid against Akrida and his minions. She attempts to persuade the characters to help her, as described above, but orders her followers to attack the party if her hospitality is spurned.

KREETH-NI

CREATURE 3

UNIQUE NG TINY FEY SPRITE

Female nyktera oracle (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 254)

Perception +11 (+13 to Seek creatures using hearing); low-light vision

Languages Common, Sylvan; speak with bats

Skills Acrobatics +11, Deception +11, Diplomacy +11, Nature +10, Occultism +9, Stealth +9

Str -3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Speak with Bats As nyktera.

Wrath of Spurned Hospitality As nyktera.

Items staff, *ventriloquist's ring*

AC 19; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12

HP 40; **Weaknesses** cold iron 3

Speed 10 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ staff +8, **Damage** 1d4-1 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ ultrasonic pulse +11 (evocation, magical, range 20 feet), **Damage** 1d4 sonic

Primal Innate Spells DC 20; **2nd** *heal*, *remove fear*; **1st** *anticipate peril* (*Gods & Magic* 107), *heal*, *mending*; **Cantrips (1st)** *dancing lights*, *ghost sound*

NYKTERAS (6)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 254

Initiative Perception +6

Kreeth-Ni's Aid: If the party takes care of the nykteras' enemies in area **C3** and **C4**, Kreeth-Ni tells the player characters what she knows about the Cradle of Quartz. She can describe the temple's general layout as well as the presence of cockatrices nesting outside the temple (area **D1**) and the undead clerics within (area **D5**). She alludes to the Claws of Time—"a terrible beast from another dimension, with eyes that reveal your past, see through your present, and destroy your future"—but can't provide details. She doesn't know anything about the temple's more recent inhabitants, including Oloman Kosowana or his clockwork sphinx.

Treasure: Kreeth-Ni's crown is a thin silver *ventriloquist's ring*. For helping her, she gives this ring to the party as a token of her friendship. Though useful in its own right, Kreeth-Ni explains the ring's true value as a sign of her favor should the characters meet the nyktera colony within the Cradle of Quartz (page 47).

C3. STERN

TRIVIAL 5

The aft section of the longship tilts upward at an angle, as if the keel were broken underground. The rear figurehead is carved to resemble the spined tail of a linnorm, but the tail has broken and lies in several pieces on the rocky desert floor. The sides of the vessel are riddled with small holes and seem to be suffering from an infestation of insects.

The port side of the ship has a hole chewed through it about 5 feet across, from which a bitter smell emerges. The hole opens into a tunnel that leads to the vexgits' lair (area **C4**).

Creatures: Three vexgits—the strongest of their small hive—guard their tiny demesne. If they spot intruders, the guards clack their mandibles rapidly to alert their allies in area **C4** of trouble.

ELITE VEXGITS (3)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 134

Initiative Perception +8



Kreeth-Ni

C4. VEXGIT HIVE

MODERATE 5

A hole in the side of the ship leads into a low, narrow tunnel that twists through the desert floor. A bitter odor wafts from the tunnel opening, and the floor is littered with the bones of small animals and broken bits of insect carapace.

Medium or larger creatures must Squeeze to enter the underground portion of the vexgits' hive. In addition, Small or larger creatures take a -2 circumstance penalty to Strikes made with melee weapons that lack the agile trait while in the area.

Creatures: The vexgits in this tunnel, weaker than those in area C3, are all that remain of a once-larger colony that ran afoul of I (page 32). They're led by a giant mutated termite who spontaneously gained sentience and other strange powers during a mana storm. The termite, who calls himself Akrida, quickly tired of his own kind, and he wandered the Mana Wastes before falling in with the vexgits. His strange anatomy, strength, relative cunning, and sheer ruthlessness earned Akrida total dominion over the vexgits in no time.

The group pampers a giant desert viper that lives in this part of the ship, and they revere the serpent as a kind of slithering god. The viper is content to keep the strange little bugs around as long as they continue to provide it with steady meals.

AKRIDA

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE CE SMALL ANIMAL MUTANT

Male Mana Wastes mutated giant termite hive boss (page 84)

Perception +10; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +13

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items +1 *striking light pick*, studded leather armor

AC 21; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11

HP 60; **Resistances** acid 5

Speed 20 feet, burrow 10 feet

Melee ♦ *light pick* +13 (agile, fatal d8, magical), **Damage** 2d4+7 piercing

Melee ♦ mandibles +13, **Damage** 1d6+7 slashing plus 1d6 acid

Melee ♦ claw +13 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+7 slashing

Primal Innate Spells DC 19, attack +11; **1st** *acidic burst* (Gods & Magic 106); **Cantrips (1st)** *acid splash*

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (acid, evocation, primal) Akrida spits a gout of slimy green acid in a 30-foot line that deals 5d6 acid damage (DC 20 basic Reflex save). Akrida can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Frantic Scrabble ♦♦ Akrida makes three claw Strikes

against a single creature within reach. His multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after he makes all three Strikes.

GIANT VIPER

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 303

Initiative Perception +7 or Stealth +8

VEXGITS (3)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 134

Initiative Perception +6

Snare Traps: The vexgits have placed spike snares (*Core Rulebook* 591) around the entrance to this area. These snares are each marked with a "T" on the map on page 34.

Treasure: The spoils of the vexgits' war with the nykteras are slim but noteworthy, and Kreeth-Ni implores the characters to keep these treasures, which are scattered amid the sand in the vexgits' tunnels: an array of tiny gemstones worth 50 gp total, a *scroll of shatter*, and a hemp sack containing five *lodestone pellets* (page 78).

The bones of an Ulfen warrior named Frey Uldgard still lie at the bottom of this funeral ship, concealed under the desert floor but accessible from the vexgits' tunnels. Uldgard is girded in chain-mail armor and bears her favored weapons: a +1 *striking spear*, a battle axe, two throwing axes, a cold-iron sword, and a *spellguard shield*. Scattered throughout the grave area is a total of 90 gp worth of silver and gold ornaments and grave goods.

XP Award: For befriending the nykteras and fulfilling Kreeth-Ni's request to destroy Akrida and the vexgits, award each player character 30 XP.

THE CRADLE OF QUARTZ

Once the party overcomes all the challenges in this chapter and completes their trek through the Spellscar Desert, the player characters arrive at last at the threshold of the Cradle of Quartz. In Chapter 3, the characters explore this mysterious shrine's interior and face off against its malevolent denizens. To end this chapter, read the following aloud.

Ahead, one wall of the curved canyon is carved into an elaborate facade visible even at a distance. Pillars, circles, and geometric patterns give the impression of an entrance into a giant temple. Towering bronze double doors gleam in the light, surrounded by windows and bas-reliefs depicting the face of the Whisper in Bronze. Her visage stares across the desert from above the doors of the Cradle of Quartz.



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

Adventure Toolbox



Chapter 3: The Cradle of Quartz

Quartz is a holy stone for the servants of the Clockwork Goddess, so when Harcourt the Fisher reported his discoveries to the Temple of Brigh more than a century ago, the leading cogs swiftly launched an expedition to investigate the holy site for themselves. Traveling by airship, the Brighite clergy brought supplies and equipment for a major exploratory effort.

In addition to the amazing wall of quartz Harcourt described, the Brighites discovered a natural chamber containing the largest and most perfect amethyst geode any had ever seen. Mysteriously, the geode sported a 5-foot-diameter hole in one side that allowed access into its hollow center. The Brighites used the hollow

geode as a meditation chamber for those seeking Brigh's wisdom.

Over the years, the Brighites carved a sizeable shrine into the cliff surrounding the geode, which they named the Cradle of Quartz. Pilgrims traveled deep into the Spellscar to receive Brigh's inspiration and to attend rituals amidst the crystalline wonders.

Soon thereafter, the shrine skelm Droxolos the Eroder chose the Cradle of Quartz as his base for a faith-breaking conspiracy aimed at the heart of the Brigh clergy. Under the pseudonym "the 13th Ordinal," Droxolos spun a web of deception, claiming that the Cradle of Quartz held the secrets of time itself—as well

as power over its flow. The Temple of Brigh's grand cog branded Droloxos's theory the "Concurrent Heresy" and suppressed all information regarding the Cradle of Quartz, restricting site access to only the highest-ranking clergy—an action which only reaffirmed the conspiracy's veracity in the eyes of its adherents. Droloxos and his followers fled to the Cradle of Quartz and cut themselves off from the outside world and from Brigh. Under the shrine skelm's instruction, Droloxos's followers altered their religious obeisance, but they found they still maintained divine power of a sort. Only Droloxos knew the power his disciples called on was not given by Brigh but by the foul Outer God Yog-Sothoth.

Despite all the lies, strangely, there may have been a kernel of truth to the Concurrent Heresy after all. The misuse of the Cradle of Quartz and the debased faith of the Concurrent Heresy attracted the attention of a mysterious guardian of the flow of time, a dread being called a hound of Tindalos. One bloody night, the hound squeezed through a corner from the Dimension of Time and laid waste to every living thing in the Cradle of Quartz. Some of the slain devotees arose as undead horrors. The hound hides in the angles, spaces between dimensions, waiting to pounce on any who seek to continue Droloxos's blasphemous efforts.

THE CRADLE OF QUARTZ

The following areas, starting with area **D1**, correspond to the map of the Cradle of Quartz on page 42.

Dungeon Features: Within the Cradle of Quartz, chambers have 15-foot ceilings, and hallways have 10-foot ceilings. The entire complex is well-lit by glowing hexagonal quartz crystals set like lamps in sconces on the walls; these crystals also serve as center points for the Claws of Time's tremorsense (page 43).

EVENT 12: THE CLAWS OF TIME

SEVERE 6

The creature that ended Brigh's clergy all those years ago still stalks the complex: a powerful hound of Tindalos. The undead who arose from the hound's victims refer to this aberration as the Claws of Time.

Creature: As soon as the player characters enter the underground portion of the Cradle of Quartz, the Claws of Time detects them via its lamp vision. The hound uses this information to track intruders, attacking them at points where it can pick off stragglers or catch the party by surprise. The hound uses its Angled Entry ability to ambush the characters with its ripping gaze aura, then retreats by the same means. It uses this hit-and-run tactic to instill dread in its prey; only when the characters are at their most vulnerable does the hound of Tindalos commit to a full assault.

THE CLAWS OF TIME

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM ABERRATION TIME

Hound of Tindalos hunter (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 146)

Perception +21; greater darkvision, lamp vision 30 feet

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language); telepathy 300 feet

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +19, Occultism +22, Stealth +22, Survival +17 (+23 to Track)

Str +5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +3, **Int** +7, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

Lamp Vision The Claws of Time is specially attuned to the crystal lamps in the Cradle of Quartz. It can sense creatures within 30 feet of any crystal lamp in

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

The characters have reached the entrance of the Cradle of Quartz. Within these refractive halls, they are stalked by a shadowy killer that exists in a space between dimensions: a hound of Tindalos called the Claws of Time. Other strange denizens lurk in the forgotten shrine, many that mean the characters harm, but also some—like the nyktera relatives of Queen Kreeth-Ni—who might aid them. Ultimately, the party must penetrate the spherical geode at the Cradle's heart to rescue the high priest Oloman Kosowana from his interminable fate. Only then can the party return to its crashed airship in the desert, which Kosowana can easily repair.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

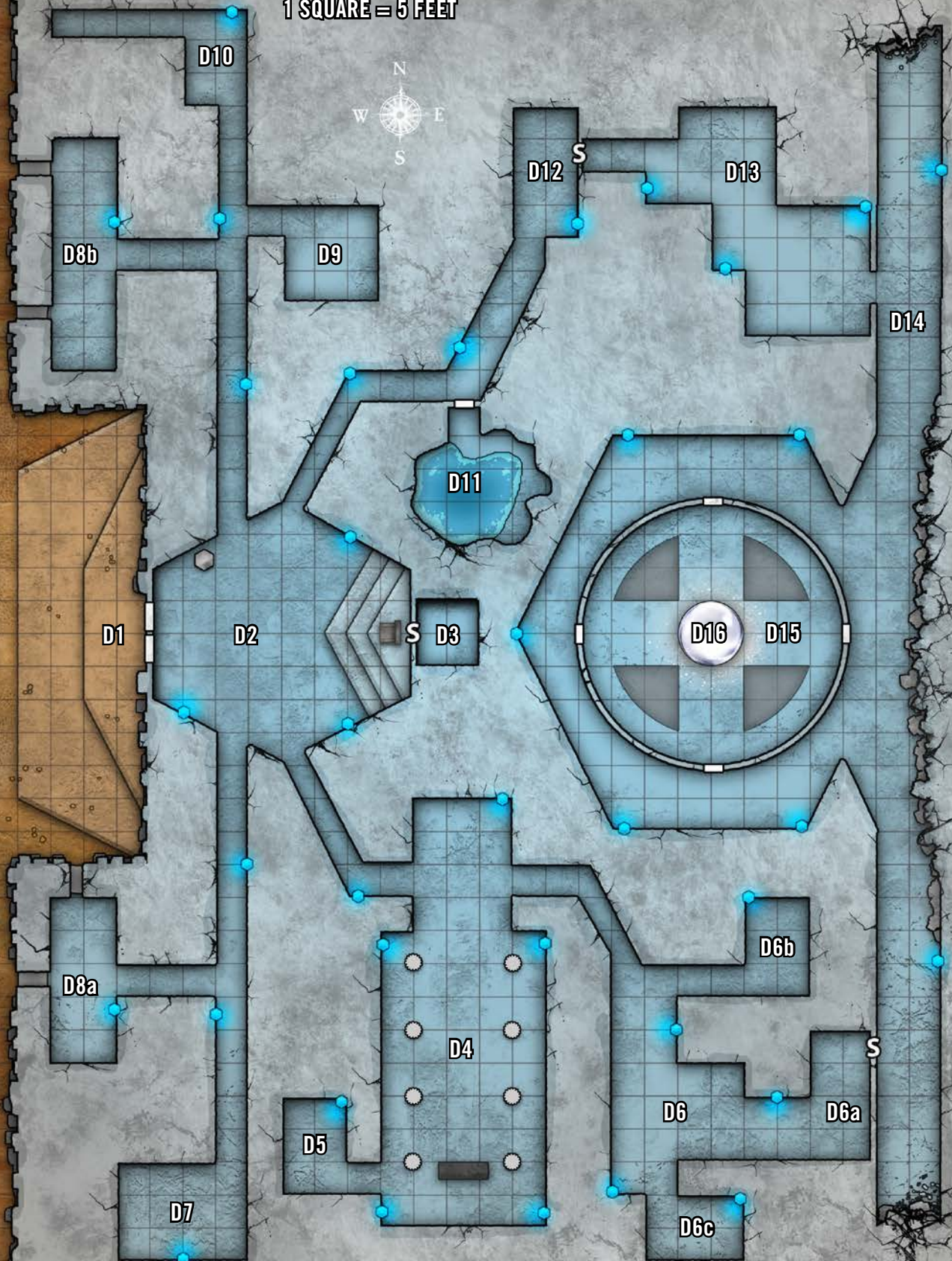
Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

CRADLE OF QUARTZ
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



the Cradle of Quartz. These lamps are marked as glowing blue dots on the map on page 42. This is a precise sense.

AC 30; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +21, **Will** +19

HP 150; **Immunities** controlled, emotion; **Resistances** mental 10, physical 10, poison 10

Otherworldly Mind (mental) As hound of Tindalos, but DC 29.

Ripping Gaze (aura, evocation, occult, visual) 30 feet. As hound of Tindalos, but 6d6 slashing damage and DC 29.

Vulnerable to Curved Space As hound of Tindalos.

Speed 30 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +22, **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +22 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+11 slashing

Occult Innate Spells DC 28; **8th** *discern location*; **4th** *dimensional anchor*; **3rd** *agonizing despair* (Advanced Player's Guide 214), *haste*, *slow*; **2nd** *invisibility* (at will; self only)

Angled Entry ♦ The Claws of Time casts a 4th-level *dimension door* spell, but it must transport itself into a space adjacent to an angle of 90° (or more acute) in the structure or environment around it. This means the hound can use *dimension door* to appear adjacent to any wall or corner in the Cradle of Quartz except for the central geode (area D16).

Once per day, the hound can use this ability to *plane shift* to or from the Dimension of Time, with the same restrictions on what angles next to which it can appear.

D1. ENTRANCE PROMENADE

MODERATE 6

A wide, paved road covered by blown sand leads to a two-level platform set before the temple's entrance. A stone shelf above the entry provides shade. The double door is ten feet tall and made of weather-beaten bronze. The walls surrounding the bronze portal are inscribed with an intricate network of gears that circle the doorway and cover most of the visible surface. Massive crystalline spears of ice-blue quartz jut from the surrounding cliffs. Several window shafts cut into the face of the cliff show only darkness beyond.

Creatures: A flock of desert cockatrices shelters from the sun under the entrance's overhang. The cockatrices don't leave the shade unless threatened, in which case, they attack mercilessly.

ELITE COCKATRICES (4)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 66

Initiative Perception +10

D2. ENTRANCE HALL

MODERATE 6

This hexagonal chamber evokes the shape of a crystal, with perfectly flat walls rising twenty feet high, angling inward toward the chamber's center and meeting at a

central point forty feet above the floor. The walls are inset with flat crystal faces in decorative patterns that mimic a humanoid form composed of gears and wheels. Two sets of corridors head further into the complex on either side of the bronze doorway, each partially obscured by tattered scraps of rotten curtains. To the east is an angular dais with three stone steps carved from translucent stone.

The Cradle of Quartz's foyer is an impressive sight. The wall-mounted crystals are specially crafted *everburning torches* whose light reflects off the multitude of crystalline facets around the chamber.

Atop the dais sits a simple chair, its upholstery frayed but its frame adorned with quartz crystals. The shrine skelm Droxolos, the 13th Ordinal, would hold court here, meeting incoming petitioners and pilgrims to determine whether they were worthy of entering the Cradle of Quartz.

Creature: Standing in the center of this hall is a brass-colored construct crafted in the likeness of a regal sphinx. This is Kosowana's "clockwork cat," upon which the inventor was seen fleeing Alkenstar after the Gilded Gunners raided his workshop. The clockwork sphinx is awaiting its master's return in standby mode, its intimidating presence also inadvertently keeping the herexens penned in area D6. When the player characters enter this area, the sphinx activates and issues a grinding roar. If the characters don't immediately flee, the sphinx leaps toward them and attacks with the aim of driving the party from the Cradle of Quartz. It doesn't pursue the intruders beyond the temple's threshold but otherwise fights until destroyed.

CLOCKWORK SPHINX

CREATURE 8

Page 81

Initiative Perception +19

Treasure: The hundreds of shiny minerals set into the walls of this chamber are a mix of semiprecious gemstones and worthless quartz crystals. It would take days to remove them in their entirety; however, a character who succeeds at a DC 15 Crafting or Mining Lore check to Recall Knowledge can identify which stones are worth the effort necessary to pry loose. Armed with this knowledge, it takes a single character 4 hours to remove 150 gp worth of gemstones; a team of four can complete the work in a single hour.

Secret Door: A secret door stands in the wall behind the chair on the dais. A character who Seeks around the dais and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check discovers that one of the nearby quartz lanterns can be rotated in its sconce. Doing so causes the wall behind the dais to shift aside, revealing area D3.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

D3. SECRET CHAMBER

This dusty square chamber contains a stone chest and a large, leather-bound book on a makeshift wooden desk.

False Prophet's Tome: Droxolos used this secret chamber to store records of the Concurrent Heresy as well as more earthly valuables. The leather-bound book is an endless grimoire where Droxolos recorded his notes and heinous plans for destabilizing the Temple of Brigh. Although reading the entire volume would take most readers several days, it contains every detail related to the founding of the Cradle of Quartz, Droxolos's role as the 13th Ordinal, all the deceptions Droxolos employed to draw adherents of Brigh to this remote sanctum, and his true goal to trick these pilgrims into venerating the Outer God Yog-Sothoth.

Treasure: In the stone chest, Droxolos stowed assorted gems and valuable objects stolen from the

Temple of Brigh in Alkenstar. Altogether, the mundane treasures are worth 450 gp. In addition to these valuables, the chest contains two magic items: a *clear quartz octagon aeon stone* (page 79) and a *winder's ring* (page 79).

D4. HALL OF WORSHIP

TRIVIAL 6

Once a worship chamber of some kind, this hall has been thoroughly looted and vandalized. Though detritus covers the chamber, there is no furniture—save for a remarkably unscathed sarcophagus on the altar at the southern end of the room.

This hall was ostensibly dedicated to the Concurrent Heresy so pilgrims could worship Brigh, but those who know what to look for see unmistakable signs of devotion to the Outer Gods. A character who succeeds at a DC 27 Religion check spots the remains of carvings in Aklo along the walls and defaced reliefs of horrifying entities from the Dark Tapestry carved into the basalt altar, linking the chapel not to Brigh but to Yog-Sothoth. The antechamber to the west was once a vestibule.

Creature: The sarcophagus on the altar contains the body of the highest-ranking cog from the Temple of Brigh to fall for Droxolos's lies. The cog's name is lost to history, and the temple's caretakers were readying the body for burial when the Claws of Time struck, interrupting the consecration. In the years since it was left in this profane hall, the sarcophagus absorbed some of the malignant energies that suffused the chamber, becoming something far more than a mundane coffin. This monstrosity animates and attacks as soon as any character comes within 10 feet of the altar.

SCARECOPHAGUS

CREATURE 6

Page 86

Initiative Perception +14

Treasure: The body inside the sarcophagus is outfitted in an array of eerie jewelry and valuables resembling writhing tentacles—each twisted piece made from a sacred Brighite object that was broken and pieced back together into something profane.

The Temple of Brigh wants nothing to do with the tainted relics, which are altogether worth 300 gp.

D5. ANTECHAMBER

MODERATE 6

This room appears to be a vestibule for the chapel to the east. Scattered among



The Claws of Time

the torn books and broken pottery are bones, some of which have been split like logs.

Creatures: Two of the priests sought refuge here while the Claws of Time wreaked vengeance upon their colleagues. The priests called out for aid from any entity willing to give it, but their calls went unanswered until after they were slain. In the aftermath of the massacre, both arose as undead abandoned zealots.

The zealots ignore combat in area **D4**, remaining here in quiet meditation. They attack only if disturbed or if a creature attempts to take any of the ruined items from the vestibule.

ABANDONED ZEALOTS (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 8

Initiative Perception +14

Treasure: Three scroll cases on the floor remain in good condition, containing a *scroll of curse of lost time* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 217), a *scroll of day's weight* (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 98), and a *scroll of time jump* (*Secrets of Magic* 136).

D6. PRIESTS' CHAMBERS

MODERATE 6

Each of these alcoves contains the remains of a bed, a worktable, and a writing desk, all preserved in the arid desert air and covered with a thick layer of dust. The ruins of a bookshelf lie in a heap along the easternmost wall.

These rooms once served as living quarters and workshops for newer adherents of the Concurrent Heresy, who still believed they were servants of Brigh, and continued to tinker and invent in her name. The easternmost alcove (area **D6a**) also served as a library, but the wooden bookshelves and fragile scrolls rotted long ago.

Creatures: The last priests of Brigh who believed in the Concurrent Heresy are still here, after a fashion. The priests' souls were not claimed by Brigh after their mortal bodies were slain by the hound of Tindalos; instead, these bitter heretics were reanimated as undead called herexens.

When Kosowana arrived, he stationed his clockwork sphinx guardian to protect the foyer (area **D2**). Wary of the mechanical sphinx, the herexens resigned themselves to remaining trapped in these alcoves. If the herexens hear noise from area **D2** or **D4**, they rush to join the fray. This increases the threat level of the encounter against the scarecrophagus to severe for a 6th-level party. Against the sphinx, the herexens initially attack the clockwork guardian, using the

player characters as erstwhile allies to clear their path. Once the sphinx is destroyed, the herexens attack the party as well, targeting in particular anyone who wears overt Brighite imagery.

BRIGHT HEREXENS (5)

CREATURE 3

Elite herexens (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 6, 134)

Initiative Perception +10

Items light hammer, defiled religious symbol of Brigh

Melee ♦ light hammer +12 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+6 bludgeoning plus heretic's smite

Ranged ♦ light hammer +12 (agile, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+6 bludgeoning plus heretic's smite

Cleric Domain Spells DC 22, 1 Focus Point; **1st** delay consequence (*Gods & Magic* 118)

Airship Parts: The chests, boxes, and workbenches in this room contain all the components Captain Wyndslow needs to repair the *Second Kiss*.

Secret Door: A secret door is hidden by the destroyed bookshelf along the wall of the easternmost alcove. A player character who Seeks in the area and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds an iron lever fastened to the wall, obscured by rubble. The mechanism—which opens a sliding pocket door in the wall connecting to area **D14**—has long since jammed; a player character who succeeds at a DC 24 Thievery check to Disable a Device fixes the mechanism so the secret door operates normally. The secret door can also be Forced Open (DC 20) or destroyed (Hardness 14, HP 56, BT 28).

D7. CRACKED ALCOVE

LOW 6

The floor, ceiling, and walls in this alcove are all cracked and pocked with pin-sized holes. A desiccated corpse lies slumped in the southwestern corner of the chamber.

Upon examination, the bones of the corpse are clearly humanoid, though they're decades old. A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Nature check to Recall Knowledge identifies the pin-sized holes around the room as the tunnels of sportlebores, tiny bugs that can imitate dried fruit, nuts, and other common rations. A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Medicine check to Recall Knowledge determines the corpse's cause of death as a pest infestation of some sort—as though bugs devoured her from the inside out.

The corpse was a desert traveler who sought refuge in the Cradle of Quartz. She stayed in this chamber for several days, eating her tainted rations and hoping to wait out whatever was causing her so much stomach pain. The bugs infesting her food eventually killed her.



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

Hazard: Sportlebores silently crawl into the bags of anyone who rests in this alcove. Roll a secret DC 27 Perception check for each character who spends more than 1 hour in this chamber; on a success, the character notices the bugs crawling into their foodstuffs.

SPORTLEBORE INFESTATION

HAZARD 7

Sportlebore (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 251)

Stealth DC 26 (expert)



Brighite Herexen

D8. WINDOW ROOMS

Windows are cut into the walls of this sparse chamber.

Two chambers, one to either side of the main entrance, provide views of the desert and the entrance.

D9. LAY QUARTERS

MODERATE 6

This chamber contains crumbling beds and tattered clothing. Two withered corpses lay on the floor, their skin split open from the long wounds covering their bodies, which are otherwise well preserved by the dry desert air.

The more ascetically minded members of the Concurrent Heresy lived (and died) here. Eschewing experimentation and invention for a more mentally focused exploration of time, these monks were slain as they meditated by the Claws of Time.

Creatures: The corpses here are the undead remains of the monks killed in this chamber. Droloxos's vile rituals infused the Cradle of Quartz with unholy energy, causing the monks to rise as kuroboz. With no living creatures to feast upon, they entered a sort of suspended animation and don't immediately react to the party's presence. If one of the corpses is disturbed, both rise from their torpor and attack.

HERETICAL MONKS OF BRIGH (2)

CREATURE 6

Kuroboz (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3* 157)

Initiative Perception +14

D10. INCOMPLETE TUNNEL

This room seems unfinished. Tools for tunneling lean against the walls, and several woven baskets partially filled with stone fragments sit nearby.

Droloxos had ordered the expansion of the Cradle of Quartz's tunnels when the Claws of Time put an end to his plans.

D11. FLOODED ROOM

This room is sealed by one of the only remaining wooden doors in the complex. Although not locked, the door is swollen tight against its frame from the water that soaked into it. The door doesn't budge unless Forced Open (DC 20).

A swollen door separates this roughly worked cavern from the rest of the temple. A series of holes in the ceiling drip water into a clear pool. The remains of long-rotten buckets and barrels lie heaped in one corner of the chamber.

The Brighites used this room to catch rainwater using an ingenious series of reservoirs and drainage channels cut into the cliff above the Cradle of Quartz. During a typical year, the Brighite priests would supplement the natural water with plentiful applications of *create water* to keep the reservoir filled. The reservoirs and channels have mostly eroded over the decades since the Brighites' eradication, though a bit of water still dribbles down the walls and into the pool here.

Creatures: A group of nykteras makes their home here, entering and exiting the building by flitting through the drainage channels in the ceiling. These nykteras are cousins of those living in the Ulfen funeral ship in the Spellscar Desert (page 37). If the characters befriended Queen Kreeth-Ni and can display the ring she gave them, these nykteras recognize the sacred item and offer to help the party as best they can.

The nykteras know the layout of the Cradle of Quartz and the location of various undead horrors throughout. The nykteras can tell the characters an "odd human" (Kosowana) recently found his way into the Cradle of Quartz. He made his way to the "crystal orb" on the eastern side of the temple (area D16). The Claws of Time, the nykteras observe, can't go near the orb. The hound of Tindalos has shown curiosity toward the nykteras but no outright hostility, perhaps because the sprites scuttle to safety whenever the hound comes near.

If the characters don't bear Kreeth-Ni's ring, the nykteras are initially unfriendly toward the player characters and ask the party to leave them alone.

NYKTERAS (14)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 254

Initiative Perception +6

D12. PUBLIC ARCHIVE

Shelves are carved into the stone walls of this chamber, filled with scrolls and texts of all sizes. A large bronze gear is set decoratively into the eastern wall.

Most of the reading material here crumbles to the touch. A few fragments reveal most of these texts were scholarly work on areas related to Brigh's domains of invention and clockworks.

Secret Door: The bronze gear is part of a secret door set into the eastern stone wall. Touching the gear with a holy symbol of Brigh causes the hidden pocket door to slide aside, as does a successful DC 24 Thievery check to Disable a Device. The door opens with a loud grinding sound that echoes throughout the area, alerting the denizen of area D13.

D13. SECRET ARCHIVES

MODERATE 6

Faded circles of occult runes and winding scripture adorn the walls of these alcoves, the curving architecture and winding facades of which stand in sharp contrast to the precise, angular designs of the rest of the temple.

This small complex was Droxolos's inner sanctum, where he inducted Brigh clergy members into the worship of Yog-Sothoth. Prospective applicants believed they were being inducted into a higher order, one that used more than just *Logic of Design* as its basis. Numerous Brighites fell for the Droxolos's duplicities before the Claws of Time put a bloody end to the whole charade.

Creature: The shrine skelm Droxolos still haunts the Cradle of Quartz. The last to be claimed by the hound of Tindalos, Droxolos spent weeks living in terror before the Claws of Time finally slew him. Perhaps as a form of divine punishment for his crimes, his spirit rose as a specter. With no living creatures to feed on and unable to leave this area, the spectral priest now suffers from the effects of pain starvation; he begins a combat encounter with the party quickened.

Once free of his pain starvation, Droxolos boasts of his vile plan to corrupt the clergy of Brigh with his fabricated conspiracies and false legends of the Cradle of Quartz's time-travel powers. He brags there was no such legend until he created it; he formed his splinter sect of Brigh using nothing but lies. If Kosowana is present to hear this, he sinks to his knees, stunned by the revelation.

DROXOLOS

CREATURE 8

Elite specter (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 6, 248)

Initiative Perception +17

D14. HALL OF CRYSTAL

This long hallway appears more like a natural fracture in the rock than a corridor created by design. The eastern wall is covered with giant hexagonal prisms more than a foot across and several feet long, ending in six-sided pyramids that cover the wall in glittering, razor-sharp points. The many-colored crystals appear to grow directly from the wall in a jumbled arrangement.

This was the first portion of the Cradle of Quartz discovered by Harcourt the Fisher over a century ago. Harcourt stumbled into the caves from a small sinkhole atop the cliff and discovered a stunning wall of quartz that captured his heart and imagination. According to

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

Harcourt, he spent many moons in these caves, though when he emerged it was as though no time had passed at all. The wanderer's tale eventually reached the Temple of Brigh, which sent an expedition to explore this fabled deposit of Brigh's favored mineral.

Though dazzlingly pretty, the crystal wall here is of little value if disassembled; even the purest quartz crystal fetches a meager price in major cities like Alkenstar, where such stones are a silver per dozen.

Creature: No creatures dwell specifically in this hall, but if the party makes it here and the Claws of Time hasn't yet made its final attack, it does so now.

D15. CHAMBER OF THE ORB

The ceiling of this hexagonal chamber comes to a pyramidal point nearly eighty feet above the black stone floor. The most striking feature of the room, however, is front and center: a massive hemisphere of dazzling sandstone forty feet across. The orb—only half of which is visible above the stone floor in which it's set—is impossibly smooth, like a massive ball bearing or glass marble.

This spherical amalgamation of quartz dust would be a wonder of the natural world even if it weren't a tremendous geode. When Harcourt the Fisher came upon the orb, he claimed he felt a supernatural compulsion to get close to it.

Secret Door: Examining the exterior of the sphere shows no way into the hollow wonder. The entrance is below the stone floor: a player character who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check while Seeking around the stone tiles of this room discovers one of the tiles can be pried up and pushed aside. Below the tile is a stone compartment just big enough for an average human. From this compartment, one can access the spectacular interior of the geode.

D16. CENTRAL GEODE

This hollow amethyst geode is as perfectly smooth on its interior face as its exterior. If not for its luster, sheen, and array of colorful hues, it would be easy to mistake the orb's interior for glass or obsidian. A disc-shaped platform of purest iron floats in the center of the sphere. A five-foot-tall, five-foot-wide segment has been cut from the lower half of the sphere, which leads to a compartment outside the geode, below the level of the stone floor surrounding the orb.

Kosowana ran halfway through the Cradle of Quartz's monster-infested halls before discovering the temple's most dangerous entity, the Claws of Time. He discovered the false tile that led into this geode in a

moment of sheer desperation; in his words, "It was as though my hand were being guided by something beyond myself." (Brigh guided him to safety, though no one can prove this fact, and Kosowana is unwilling to entertain it.) He was safe from the hound of Tindalos since it could not teleport anywhere within the perfectly smooth orb.

Droxolos added the iron platform floating in the center of the orb. The platform is similar to an *immovable rod*, but it can only be activated or deactivated by a devotee of Yog-Sothoth, making it beyond the ken of most player characters to remove.

Aside from its amazing natural beauty and the unlikeliness of its formation, there is nothing remarkable, magical, or supernatural about this massive geode. Rather than detract from its magnificence, this mundanity perhaps explains why Brighites—a pragmatic bunch who cherish logic and planning over the unpredictable or unknowable—so cherish this place.

Creature: Oloman Kosowana is here, hiding in the only place the Claws of Time can't reach. He leaves the safety of the geode only if the hound is defeated.

Weary of life, Kosowana doesn't fight in combat, though he carries a +1 *dagger* that he half-heartedly uses to defend himself. If necessary, Kosowana has the same stats as a priest of Pharamasma (*Gamemastery Guide* 213); however, he can't cast divine spells or use any of his usual divine abilities until he atones for his heresy and returns to the Brighite faith. Considering his personality and all he has seen, this outcome is highly unlikely and would take many months.

WHAT KOSOWANA KNOWS

After the Claws of Time is dispatched and Kosowana freed, the inventor shows obvious signs of stress and fatigue. If he discovers his deeply held beliefs in the Concurrent Heresy are nothing but fiction (such as by encountering Droxolos in area D13 or reading the skelm's grimoire from area D3), Kosowana breaks down, fainting and remaining comatose for 1d8 hours or until revived with any kind of healing magic.

Oloman Kosowana remains despondent and morose even after he recovers. He has an initial attitude of indifferent toward the party. If the party improves his attitude to friendly or helpful, he shows some interest in the party's story, asking how the characters solved his puzzle, about the health of his cat, the safety of his soulbound construct, and so forth. Regardless of the exact nature of the tortuous conversation, it takes several hours of frustrating discussion to pry Kosowana's full story from the disengaged inventor.

Piece by piece, Kosowana explains what happened: how he spiraled into despair after witnessing Vashon Gattlebee's pyronite demonstration, and how he became even more despondent when he realized how easy it was to reverse-engineer the dangerous explosive. (Kosowana is a rare talent; the process isn't quite as easily repeatable as he fears.) When Ambrost Mugland and the Gilded Gunners broke into his workshop, he panicked and hid while they ransacked the building. He saw Mugland snatch the formula from one of Kosowana's workbenches and overheard him say something about testing the explosive at a demonstration in the "Steaming Kingdom," whatever that means. Kosowana left clues for his old colleagues, whom he believed would search for him, before activating his winged construct to escape the robbers. He fled to the Cradle of Quartz, hoping the ancient shrine might hold the key to turn back time so he could stop Gattlebee before he invented pyronite.

Kosowana isn't interested in discussing any of his previously held conspiracy theories about time travel or the power of quartz crystals. He takes the first opportunity to burn all his notes and the few books he brought with him, renouncing his faith in Brigh and the world in general. If it ever comes, recovery for Kosowana will take time and support from friends or family—assets he currently lacks. If the characters don't intervene, Kosowana turns to the worship of Groetus, god of the end times, over the next several weeks. In the months to come, he becomes a fanatical doomsayer preaching on the street corners of Alkenstar, prophesying the end of the world at the hands of those who wield powerful explosives like pyronite.

RETURNING TO ALKENSTAR

When Kosowana hears the party arrived via airship and must return to the broken-down vessel to return to Alkenstar, the ex-priest shows a rare spark of enthusiasm. With or without prompting, he gathers some tools and spare parts left in the Cradle of Quartz, and then waits at the temple's entrance until the player characters are ready to depart. The return journey through the Spellscar should proceed without incident, as the characters already dealt with the location-based encounters along the route. You might introduce a random encounter if the party is a bit short on XP.

When they arrive at the crash site, the party sees a huge array of furniture sitting in the middle of the desert next to the airship. The engineers patched the gas bags as much as possible and stripped out any unnecessary weight. Kosowana helps Captain Wyndslow and any surviving crew members repair the clockwork engines. Depending on how long

the characters' journey to the Cradle of Quartz took, the crew might be fed up with one another or starving. In the worst-case scenario, only Wyndslow is left.

If the ship is short on supplies, Wyndslow might ask the characters to find food or water while she and Kosowana work on the ship. Kosowana and Wyndslow hit it off as repairs progress. The two have much in common, and both need a reason to get up in the morning. After 2 days, the *Second Kiss* is repaired enough to lift off and limp back to Pilot's Square over the course of 4 days. Take this opportunity to introduce another random combat encounter if the characters need any more XP to reach 7th level before the start of the next chapter.



Oloman Kosowana



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox



Chapter 4: The Steaming Kingdom

As soon as the player characters return from the Spellscar Desert, their employer, Foebe Dunsmith, calls upon them for a full report at the Barrel & Bullet Saloon. She tells the party that Ambrost Mugland hasn't been seen in public since the break-in at Kosowana's workshop. While the party was at the Cradle of Quartz, Dunsmith pinpointed Mugland's location. More importantly, she discovered that Mugland's paid accomplices, the Gilded Gunners, have pieced together the pyronite formula they stole from Kosowana's workshop—and they intend to try it out soon.

Read or paraphrase the following to set the scene and begin this chapter.

Dunsmith paces the now-familiar back room of the Barrel & Bullet Saloon. "Based on the intel you collected at Kosowana's workshop, I managed to dig up dirt on our old friend Mugland while you were rescuing Kosowana," she says. "I'll be blunt: the situation's gone down the latrine." She sits down and steeple her hands, peering over them grimly.

"It turns out Mugland and the Gilded Gunners figured out enough of Kosowana's pyronite formula to make a working prototype. They're planning to test it out on the vault of an establishment owned by one of Mugland's business rivals, a speakeasy in Skyside called the Steaming Kingdom, tomorrow night. Needless to say, we don't want them to succeed. *You* don't want them to succeed, and here's why:

"Mugland is counting on this payday to settle his debts with the Gilded Gunners. It seems he ran up quite a tab with that gang. The Gunners' boss, a deadly assassin named Sabora Sharkosa, is holding Mugland as collateral till he pays off what he owes her. If the Gunners can't get into the vault at the Steaming Kingdom, then they don't get paid, and Mugland stays in the Gilded Gunners' hideout. As long as he's there, we know where he is, which means you can finally get your sweet revenge."

Dunsmith stands and begins pacing again as she continues, "I pulled a few strings and got your names on the Steaming Kingdom's guest list—you can thank me later. Anyway, I suggest you go there and meet with the place's owner, Vivielle Ramsley. She's not going to shut down her establishment for even a single night, so you'll have to figure out how to get on her good side so you can save her club from becoming the next Ironside Quarter."

"Once you've foiled the Gilded Gunners' attack, tail them back to their hideout or pry the directions from them some other way—it doesn't matter to me. What matters is that you find the gang's lair. Find Mugland, get your revenge, and stop the secret of pyronite from getting out and ending the world. Deal?"

MUGLAND'S PLAN

Ambrost Mugland's current plan is straightforward: pay off his sizable debt to the Gilded Gunners by giving them enough pyronite to blow up the gold-filled vault of his rival, Vivielle Ramsley, owner of the Steaming Kingdom. The Gilded Gunners' leader, Sabora Sharkosa, is devoting only a portion of her gang's resources to the endeavor. In the meantime, she and the rest of her gang are holding Mugland as collateral at their hideout. If the heist succeeds, she'll let him go. If, on the other hand, the plot fails, Sharkosa has other ideas for Mugland—most of which involve interminable hard labor excavating more rooms in her gang's hideout.

On the evening of the heist, two Gilded Gunner assassins entered the Steaming Kingdom, posing as patrons but carrying concealed weapons. They then co-opted the nighttime bartender, who provided a map of the establishment and agreed to fight alongside the gang for a piece of the prize. Of course, the Gilded Gunners don't think the bartender stands a chance of surviving once the bullets start flying. These advance gunners play darts in the southwestern communal area (area E5), where they can scope out customers and security. If anything seems amiss, they call off the heist until the next day. If all seems normal, they remain incognito until the shooting starts.

PARTY PREPARATIONS

According to Dunsmith's information, the Gilded Gunners will attempt to test their pyronite formula at the Steaming Kingdom tomorrow night, giving the player characters just over 24 hours to prepare for the assault. They can spend their time however they wish, though Dunsmith suggests the party visit the speakeasy to study its layout and meet its proprietor.

Vivielle Ramsley is a savvy socialite and a busy woman, but she carves out a few minutes to meet with

CHAPTER 4 SYNOPSIS

The party must deflect the Gilded Gunners' siege on a high-class speakeasy called the Steaming Kingdom, then track the gang to their hideout, where they finally come face-to-face with their archrival, Ambrost Mugland. However, the Gilded Gunners' leader, Sabora Sharkosa, stands in the way of their revenge. The party can either pay off Mugland's debt to Sharkosa to purchase the right to kill him, or they can try to get through Sharkosa by force. Either way, with his dying breath, Mugland laughs in the characters' faces and reveals their efforts have been in vain—with the help of Deputy Loveless, he has already sold the formula for pyronite to a pair of treacherous buyers.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

Adventure Toolbox



Vivielle Ramsley

STAFF AND CLIENTELE

Because the party likely won't fight any of the Steaming Kingdom's staff or clientele, stat blocks for these NPCs aren't included in the adventure text. Where important, the text indicates how many NPCs are in a given area. In general, use the following summaries to determine what NPCs might be doing in the background while the characters repel the Gilded Gunners.

Patrons (use drunkard stats if necessary; *Gamemastery Guide* 239) sit at tables or stand at the bar. Most are minor members of Alkenstar's criminal element. Unless personally challenged, patrons attempt to flee or cower if combat breaks out.

Servers (*Gamemastery Guide* 238) walk a circuit between the bar, kitchen, and the tables in their assigned common room or the private saunas to which they're assigned. If in danger, a server flees to the kitchen.

The Steaming Kingdom's guards are muscular and attentive, watching the crowd from their post against a wall or next to a door. They challenge any unruly patrons, asking them politely (once) to leave before forcibly removing them from the premises. Each Steaming Kingdom guard uses the stats of a palace guard (*Gamemastery Guide* 206) but wields a pepperbox (*Guns & Gears* 153) with 10 rounds instead of a halberd. During the Gilded Gunners' assault, the guards do their best to protect customers but otherwise leave the fighting to the party.

Ramslay alternately holds court in her office and visits with special guests in one of the private saunas. Use the stats for a lawful evil mastermind (*Gamemastery Guide* 246) to represent Ramslay in combat if necessary.

the characters in one of the Steaming Kingdom's private saunas. She puts on a nonchalant air but is shrewd, never speaking without considering her words. Many find Ramslay intimidating, particularly during conversations, because of her tendency to let moments of silence linger.

If the characters warn Ramslay of the impending attack, she arches an eyebrow but waves away their concerns. "My security can handle Mugland's petty goons, I assure you," she says. If the characters improve her attitude to helpful and repeat their warning, Ramslay relents somewhat. "I cannot shutter my establishment on the basis of rumors, but if you'd like to stay and keep an eye out, please, be my guest." Ramslay doesn't permit the party to explore restricted

areas, including the kitchen, other private saunas, her office, and the vault. If the player characters want to locate the vault or determine the speakeasy's full layout, they'll have to do so surreptitiously, without alerting Ramslay or her guards.

Dunsmith (and Ramslay) insists the player characters don't draw any attention while at the Steaming Kingdom. If they make a scene or spook the Gunners, the gang might call off the assault, and there would be no telling when or where they might strike. Dunsmith encourages the player characters to blend in with the speakeasy's patrons or otherwise make themselves scarce until the raid begins. Once bullets start flying, the party can launch a counterattack before the Gilded Gunners put the pyronite in place.

On the evening of the scheduled attack, ask what each player character does while they wait. Once the characters establish their positions in the speakeasy and what they're doing, run **Event 13: Div Assassins** and then **Event 14: Gilded Gunner Assault**.

THE STEAMING KINGDOM

The Steaming Kingdom occupies what was once a half-dozen disparate cellars of buildings long-since demolished, but few would notice its modest heritage. Ramslay oversaw the excavation and renovation of the subterrane into a large common space for her new bar. As they dug, the work crew broke into a natural hot spring near the back of one of the cellars. Never one to see an obstacle as anything other than a new business opportunity, the imaginative Ramslay added steam baths and saunas to her business plan, and the Steaming Kingdom took shape.

Accessible only by members and their escorted guests, the steam baths are often used as a safe territory for complex negotiations between powerful rivals and allies alike. The club's no-weapon policy is often violated in the common rooms, but even concealed weapons don't make it into the baths, where clients enter only in the flesh in which they were born.

As Ramslay's enterprise flourished, her rivals suffered, but none more than Mugland, whose own crime-friendly taverns saw substantial drops in revenue as his highest-paying customers abandoned their old haunts for the luxurious Steaming Kingdom. While their rivalry has never spilled into outright violence, the ever-vindictive Mugland has long sought a way to put Ramslay out of business—permanently.

Ramslay doesn't view Mugland as a true threat, and she underestimates her rival's pettiness and thirst for revenge. Perhaps now that Mugland has a working pyronite formula, he can turn up the pressure on their long-simmering standoff.

Environment: The ceilings of the Steaming Kingdom are 10 feet high, often with a tangle of pipes or steam conduits filling the top foot of space. Walls are wooden panels over stone foundations, and all spaces are lit by oil-fueled lamps mounted on the walls and that hang from the ceiling. Doors are simple wooden affairs except for the entrance (area E1) and in areas E9 through E13 (see those areas for details). Due to the thick, sweet-smelling steam that wafts through the air in much of the establishment (areas E2 to E8), characters take a –2 circumstance penalty to Perception checks that rely on vision or scent in these areas.

The following areas correspond to the map of the Steaming Kingdom on page 54. Because the party isn't expected to face the creatures or hazards associated with each area—it's more likely the characters will use these creatures and hazards against their enemies during the Gilded Gunners' attack—the threat level for such dangers isn't included next to the name of each area. For suggestions on which stats to use for Steaming Kingdom staff and customers, see the Staff and Clientele sidebar on page 52.

E1. Entrance: Despite its rickety appearance, the door to the Steaming Kingdom is made of reinforced wood with two narrow sliding panels—one at 3 feet from the bottom and the other at 5 feet. Prospective guests knock, and the door guard opens both panels. If the guard recognizes the patron, the panels slide shut and the door opens after a few seconds (the guard moves to the far end of the hall and around the corner, opening the door with a lever in the west wall). Otherwise, the guard asks for the guest's name and consults a list that's updated nightly. Anyone not on the list is removed from the premises—by force, if necessary.

One of three door guards stands outside the Steaming Kingdom's entrance at all times. The door guards brook no nonsense and are loyal to Ramsley, unwilling to accept a bribe of anything less than 50 gp (enough to flee and start a new life elsewhere).

This door is rigged with a poisoned lock (*Core Rulebook* 523), which activates if anyone tries to unlock the door or Pick the Lock. When the trap triggers, a bell rings in the kitchen, alerting the guards there of the intruder.

E2. Southeast Common Area: The Steaming Kingdom lives up to its name: the common areas are thick with sweet-smelling steam that accumulates like thunderheads near the ceilings. The walls are well-maintained

stone with various niches and shelves containing interesting sculptures or artifacts. Each common area is dimly lit by candles and oil lamps throughout, though the entry is flanked by a pair of magical torches to better examine newcomers' faces.

Over the bar hang several menu boards for food and drink, as well as listings of the cost to access the baths. Access to the public room is only 5 sp per 15 minutes, but a private room is 2 gp for the same amount of time. Customers can leave the names of those they wish to join them with the bartender, who provides each such person with an invitation card hand-lettered in gold script. This invitation allows them to pass the guard outside area E6 without question.

E3. Stage Seating: This is where entertainers perform, often drawing a raucous crowd. If the player characters inquire about performing, they're directed to the bard in charge, **Kepiki** (LN female goblin troubadour 3). A character who improves Kepiki's attitude from indifferent to helpful (her Will DC is 18) can snag a spot on the evening's lineup. Performers are given the run of areas E1 through E8 except during their performances.

E4. Northwest Common Area: Crowds spilling over from the stage area fill this area most nights. Two simple doors in the north wall lead to commodes—simple benches with holes over a 10-foot-deep stone



Clockwork Disposer

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

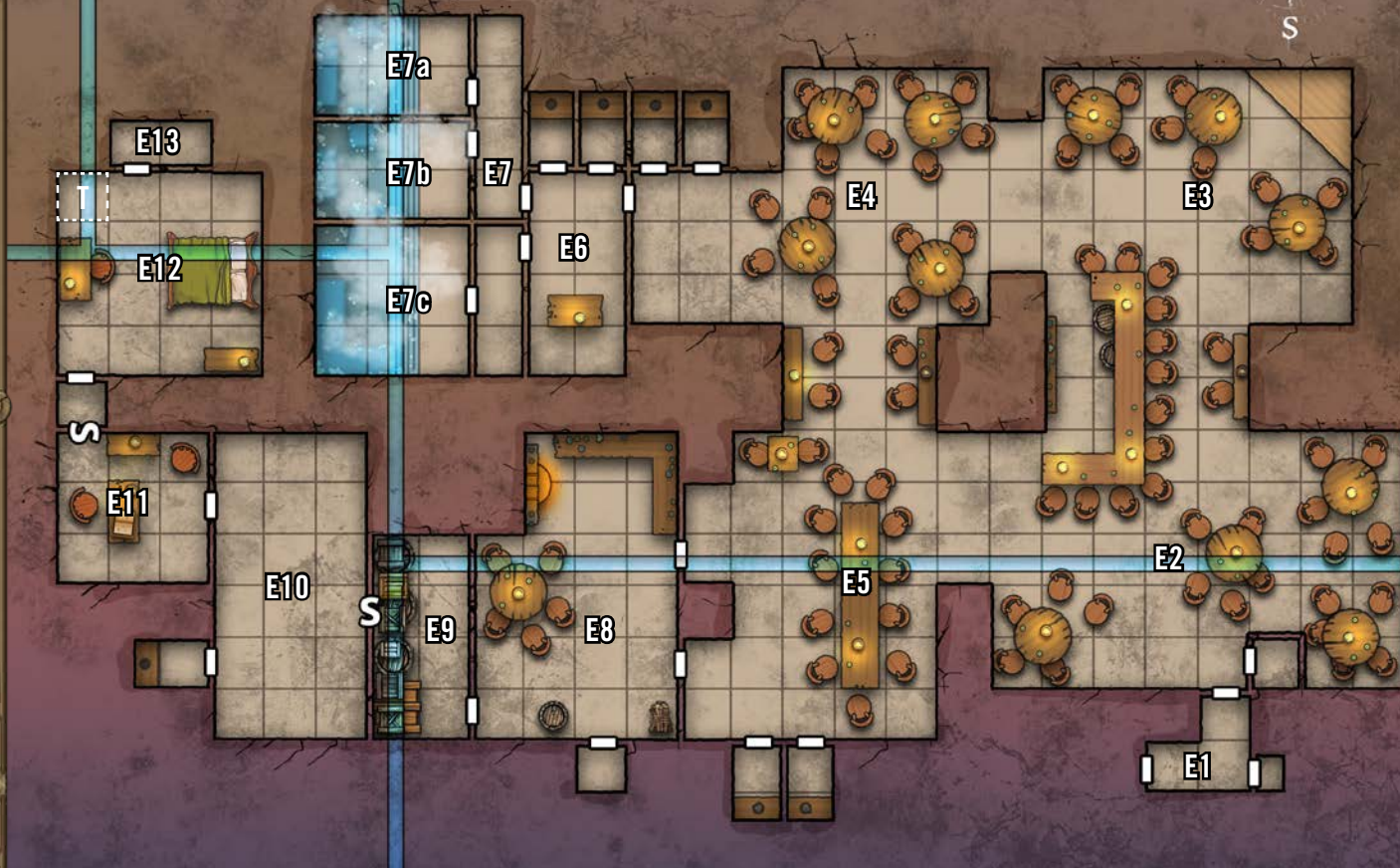
Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

THE STEAMING KINGDOM

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



pit, which is cleaned out nightly by the speakeasy's clockwork disposers.

E5. Communal Table: Serving staff flit about this area more frequently than the other common rooms, owing to its proximity to the kitchen (area E8).

E6. Baths Anteroom: Candles and incense line the edges of this antechamber, which connects to the baths and changing rooms. An attendant and a security guard occupy this room at all times. The attendant explains the rules for using the baths—all patrons are required to disrobe completely in the changing rooms before entering the baths with nothing but a towel, and guests are asked to refrain from speaking loudly while in this section of the Steaming Kingdom. A rope behind the attendant's counter triggers an alarm in the kitchen should trouble arise.

E7. Baths: A large-stepped pool of steaming water fills the western end of these steamy rooms. Racks of towels line the wall near the doors, and steps lead into each pool.

A bisected hall connects the baths anteroom to the baths themselves. The public bath (area E7c) has 1d6–2 patrons in it at any time of day. Each bath is 4

feet deep with benches of various depths set into the walls. Hot water pours into the pool from a waterfall fountain on the west wall, while steam bubbles from vents in the floor. Clockwork disposers keep the waters sanitary with regular cleaning. Lush towels and sponges are on shelves and tables placed around the perimeter of the bath, and a velvet rope hanging by the door can be used to summon the attendant.

The steam is thicker in these rooms, and the sound of running water also affects hearing. The result of any creature's Perception checks inside the baths is reduced by one degree of success (a critical success becomes a success, a success becomes a failure, and a failure becomes a critical failure).

E7a: This is one of two private baths, often used by Ramsley for personal meetings. The steam vents in the floor can be opened with a hidden catch (DC 22 Perception to notice while Seeking), allowing access into the steam-filled tunnel below in case of emergency.

E7b: Another private bath, but without the emergency access to the steam tunnel.

E7c: This is the public bath area, a sparsely appointed larger area where strangers can mingle.

E8. Kitchen: This large kitchen features wide counters for food preparation, several ovens, and a massive stove set into the northwestern alcove. Crates and barrels are piled near a large dumbwaiter in the center of the south wall. Enterprising characters can use the dumbwaiter to infiltrate the establishment. It takes 1 minute for the dumbwaiter to move from the surface level (where it emerges in the back room of a market building Ramsley owns) to this level. It can be operated either from this room or onboard using a winch.

Besides the three kitchen staff working here, a team of three quick-response guards occupy this room in case of emergency. They stay in the kitchen, out of sight of customers, playing cards and eating until summoned by the alarm bell or other staff. Ramsley sometimes hosts less-private meetings at the kitchen table, especially if she wants her security team nearby.

E9. Storage: Spare furniture, crates of perishable foodstuffs, and other basic supplies for the Steaming Kingdom are stored in this room. The pervasive steam throughout the complex doesn't reach this room or any of the rooms beyond (areas **E10** to **E13**), removing the penalty to Perception checks.

One of the tables in here is stacked on its end with its legs out; it's actually part of a secret door, which a character can detect with a successful DC 24 Perception check while Seeking. When triggered, the table swings outward to the right, revealing a doorway to a private suite (area **E10**).

The Steaming Kingdom's two clockwork disposers (page 81) are stored in this closet, in standby mode, until business dies down or a significant mess needs cleaning up.

E10. Private Suite: This luxurious room is designed for the most discerning (and wealthy) clientele, and Ramsley brings only trusted patrons to this space. Rich wooden paneling, thick rugs, and magically illuminated glass chandeliers create an ambience of quiet comfort. A small stage with several musical instruments fills the southern end of the room, and a rack of scarves and diaphanous curtains attest to its use for dancers as well. A suit of plate armor stands in the northwest corner on a stone dais, and various painted shields and decorative helmets line the walls.

The suit of armor is actually an elite clockwork door warden (page 80) in standby mode. The clockwork remains in standby mode while Ramsley is present, but it activates if anyone enters the room without her or in response to a special whistle Ramsley wears around her neck. The clockwork door warden tries to prevent intruders from entering Ramsley's office, ignoring those who flee to area **E9**.

E11. Office: This lavishly appointed chamber is ostensibly Ramsley's office, and it's the room to which she brings important clients and customers. In actuality, the entire affair is a farce, and Ramsley rarely spends time here. More often, she uses her inner sanctum to plan her far-reaching schemes, the secret door to which is hidden behind a sliding bookcase on the north wall (which a player character can locate by Seeking and succeeding at a DC 24 Perception check).

E12. Inner Sanctum: This chamber looks more like a magistrate's office than a speakeasy back room. Maps dotted with colored pins line the walls, and a wheeled chalkboard is covered in strange notations. It's part office, part bedroom, including a desk, a table and chair, and a four-poster bed with a canopy. The north wall bears a large metal vault door.

Ramsley plots her takeover of Alkenstar's nightclubs and illicit businesses from this inner sanctum; she retreats here in case of trouble. The map of Alkenstar denotes Ramsley's allies, rivals, and informants using colored pins and extensive notes; Mugland receives little more than a minor footnote.

Near the desk is a secret trapdoor that connects to the network of steam tunnels that run underneath the Steaming Kingdom. The trapdoor is rigged with an explosive charge that can be detonated either by opening the door or via a remote switch on Ramsley's desk. As a last resort, Ramsley can trigger the explosive charge on the door to puncture the tunnel and fill the room with superheated steam; she can then escape through the tunnel, depending on her *greater ring of fire resistance* to protect her from most of the effects of the scalding steam.

EXPLOSIVE STEAM TRAP

HAZARD 7

COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 20 (trained) to find the desk switch; DC 28 (expert) to find the trapdoor and charge

Description A black-powder charge fastened to a trapdoor (marked with a "T" on the map) blows a hole in a steam tunnel, filling the room with superheated steam.

Disable DC 18 Thievery (trained) to disarm the desk switch; DC 28 (expert) to disarm the trapdoor charge

AC 25; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +15

Trapdoor Hardness 8; **Trapdoor HP** 50 (BT 25); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Explosive Charge ➤ **Trigger** The desk switch is pressed or the trapdoor is opened; **Effect** The charge on the door explodes. All creatures within 10 feet take 2d10+6 fire damage, 1d10+3 piercing damage, and 1d6 persistent bleed damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save). The room is filled with steam, making all creatures within the room concealed. The trap then rolls initiative.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

Adventure Toolbox

WEAPONS AND ARMOR

Weapons are forbidden in the Steaming Kingdom, though few customers actually abide by this rule; just about everyone in the establishment carries a dagger or discreet pistol. Weapons with the concealable trait (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 248) and one-handed firearms in a concealed holster (*Guns & Gears* 179) are easy to sneak in; player characters can bring in such weapons unchallenged. They can bring in a weapon of light Bulk by succeeding at a DC 24 Stealth check to Conceal an Object from the guard at the speakeasy's front door. A player character can get contraband through the door by bribing the door guard with at least 50 gp.

Armor is allowed within the Steaming Kingdom, but it attracts attention.

Routine (1 action) The trapdoor emits a jet of superheated steam. Each creature in the room must attempt a DC 28 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d10+3 fire damage.

Failure The creature takes 2d10+6 fire damage and is blinded for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature takes 2d10+6 fire damage, is fatigued, and is blinded for 1 round.

E13. Vault: The vault's heavy iron door (Hardness 18, HP 72, BT 36) is locked with a good lock, which a character can pick with five successful DC 30 Thievery checks. The vault door swings open to reveal a series of shelves, meticulously organized and labeled. Small boxes and bags sit on each shelf. Here, Ramslay keeps her most sensitive documents and plans, as well as her emergency funds and blackmail materials. Most of her true wealth is tied up in other business ventures and fees she pays her network of informants and spies.

EVENT 13: DIV ASSASSINS

MODERATE 7

Mugland knows when to split his bets. To make sure the pyronite test at the Steaming Kingdom goes according to plan, he hired a fiendish assassin named Nalyir Jemeki to eradicate anyone at the speakeasy who might threaten the plan.

This event occurs after the party tells Ramslay about the Gilded Gunners' attack but before the assault begins. While the player characters prepare for the Gunners' raid, an unusual speakeasy patron attempts to get close to them.

Creatures: Jemeki, a shape-changing div called a pairaka, uses duplicity and guile to lower his targets' guard and then attacks when they least suspect. Jemeki adopted an appearance he believes is attractive or alluring to one or more of the player characters: a dashing goblin playboy, a sultry elven temptress, a burly human charmer, or some other form. Regardless, his clothes are always a beautiful indigo blue that stands out from the monotone shades worn by most Steaming Kingdom clientele.

Jemeki brought three aghashes with him. The cyclopean divs wait outside the Steaming Kingdom until Jemeki sends them a telepathic order to commence their attack.

They wear thick, heavy cloaks to hide their faces and bodies until it's time to rush into the speakeasy and wreak havoc. While the Steaming Kingdom's guards are distracted by the aghashes' tumult, Jemeki drops his ruse and attacks the player characters. On the second round of combat, the aghashes break away from the guards to fight the party alongside Jemeki.

Nalyir Jemeki

NALYIR JEMEKI

CREATURE 7

Male pairaka div (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 70)

Initiative Deception +20

AGHASHES (3)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 69

Initiative Stealth +10

Variant Encounter: Depending on how furtive the party has been throughout the campaign so far, Mugland might know the location of their hideout. In this case, he sends Nalyir to greet them in advance. The night before the Gilded Gunners' attack at the Steaming Kingdom, Nalyir infiltrates the Barrel & Bullet Saloon in disguise. The pairaka discreetly uses his Tormenting Dreams ability to fill one of the character's dreams with visions of failure and doom, but he doesn't outright attack the characters unless confronted.

EVENT 14: GILDED GUNNER ASSAULT SEVERE 7

A few minutes after **Event 13: Div Assassins**, while the Steaming Kingdom staff are still reeling from the div attack, the Gilded Gunners make their move. The Gunner safecrackers each drink an *invisibility potion* before disarming and picking the lock on the front door. Once the door opens, the remaining Gunners burst in, shooting the door guard and wreaking havoc so the invisible safecrackers can reach the vault.

Creatures: The attack consists of six Gilded Gunners total—four veteran assassins and two expert safecrackers. Two of the assassins are already in area **E5** at the beginning of the attack (refer to Mugland's Plan on page 51); the other two burst into area **E2** and cause a panic, grabbing patrons to use as shields, turning over tables, and so forth. The two safecrackers, still under the effects of their *invisibility potions*, head toward area **E13**. In addition, the Gilded Gunners have drawn the bartender into their schemes with promises of wealth.

GILDED GUNNER ASSASSINS (4)

CREATURE 5

RARE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID

Veteran Gilded Gunners

Perception +15

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +12, Deception +12, Intimidation +10, Stealth +13

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1

Items concealed holster (*Guns & Gears* 179), dueling pistol (*Guns & Gears* 152; 10 rounds), golden silencer (page 76; affixed to dueling pistol), knuckle duster (*Guns & Gears* 153), moderate thunderstone (2)

AC 22; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

HP 75

Shot of Opportunity ➤ **Requirements** The Gilded Gunner has a loaded firearm in hand; **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet uses a manipulate action, uses a move action, or makes a ranged attack; **Effect** The Gilded Gunner makes a ranged Strike against the triggering creature. If the attack is a critical hit and the trigger was a manipulate action, the Gilded Gunner disrupts that action. This Strike doesn't count toward the Gilded Gunner's multiple attack penalty, and its multiple attack penalty doesn't apply to this Strike.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ knuckle duster +15 (agile, free-hand), **Damage** 1d4+6 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ thunderstone +15 (alchemical, bomb, sonic, splash, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d4 sonic damage plus 2 sonic splash and deafened (DC 20)

Ranged ♦ dueling pistol +15 (concealable, concussive, fatal d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing

Sneak Attack The Gilded Gunner assassin deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

GILDED GUNNER SAFECRACKERS (2) CREATURE 4

RARE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID

Locks experts

Perception +12

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +8, Stealth +12, Thievery +14

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Items alchemical fuse (page 75), concealed holster (*Guns & Gears* 179), dagger, dueling pistol (*Guns & Gears* 152; 10 rounds), golden silencer (page 76; affixed to dueling pistol), *invisibility potion*, pyronite (page 75)

AC 20; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +10

HP 65

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +14 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+5 piercing

Ranged ♦ dueling pistol +14 (concealable, concussive, fatal d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing

Sneak Attack The safecracker deals an additional 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

STEAMING KINGDOM BARTENDER CREATURE 2

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Male dwarf elite barkeep (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 238)

Initiative Perception +8

Items dwarven scattergun (*Guns & Gears* 153; 5 rounds), flask of whiskey, padded armor, pewter mug, sap

Ranged ♦ dwarven scattergun +7 (concussive, kickback, scatter 10 feet, range increment 50 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d8 piercing

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

STOPPING THE GUNNERS

Below is a brief breakdown of the Gunners' actions, round by round. This timeline assumes the gang's plan goes off without a hitch; the situation changes depending on how the party handles the attack. If the characters stop the safecrackers, the remaining Gilded Gunners consider their mission a failure and flee.

Round 1: The assassins in area **E2** shoot the guards and use patrons as human shields. The bartender grabs his dwarven scattergun and shoots the nearest guard. The two incognito assassins in area **E5** move to the kitchen door and toss their thunderstones at the security detail in area **E8**. The safecrackers move to the kitchen door.

Round 2: The Gilded Gunner assassins shoot any guards or patrons who resist (although most are too surprised by the assault and the bartender's betrayal). The safecrackers move through the kitchen and storage room to open the secret door in area **E9**. Ramslay hears the commotion and casts *clairaudience* into area **E5** to find out what's going on.

Round 3: The safecrackers enter area **E10** and are engaged by the elite clockwork door warden. Ramslay retreats into her inner sanctum (area **E12**).

Rounds 4–6: Combat in the common areas turns into a shoot-out, with Gilded Gunners, guards, and patrons hunkered behind tables or corners, firing wildly. At the end of the sixth round, the safecrackers in area **E10** disable the elite clockwork door warden, placing it into standby mode with orders to attack anyone not wearing the color gold.

Round 7: The safecrackers use an *insistent doorknocker* to enter Ramslay's office (area **E11**) and open the secret door to reveal the door to area **E12**, which they wrongly believe is the vault.

Round 8: Combat continues. The safecrackers set a pyronite bomb on the door separating area **E11** from area **E12** and retreat to area **E9**. The pyronite explodes at the end of the round, destroying the door and corridor to area **E12** and causing the ceiling to collapse in a 20-foot radius. Ramslay is badly wounded in the explosion and trapped under the rubble (see burial rules on page 518 of the *Core Rulebook*).

Round 9: The safecracking team reenters area **E11** but is stymied by the collapsed area.

Round 10: The safecrackers realize they blew up the wrong door. They have one more pyronite rod, which they set against the actual vault door. They attach an alchemical fuse to the pyronite and light it, delaying the explosion by 1 round and allowing them to scramble across the rubble in area **E11** to safety.

Round 11: The pyronite explodes at the end of the round, killing Ramslay and blowing open the vault.

Round 12: All the Gilded Gunners grab as much

as they can from the vault and then retreat, shooting anyone who attempts to stop them.

AFTERMATH

If any Gilded Gunners retreated from the Steaming Kingdom, the player characters can chase the thieves or stay behind and interrogate a defeated Gunner (who, it should be assumed, was rendered unconscious rather than outright killed). If any pyronite was detonated, the Steaming Kingdom is in tatters: pipes gush hot water and steam, and support beams groan under new stress. Numerous guards, patrons, and staff lie dead or dying throughout the speakeasy. The duplicitous bartender is gravely wounded, his treachery making him a priority target for the guards. If healed, he reveals he was paid by the Gilded Gunners for his part in the raid.

If the Gilded Gunners successfully detonate both pyronite charges and make off with the vault's contents, the party's efforts might seem foiled. As long as at least one Gilded Gunner was defeated and Ramslay still lives, she enchants or coerces the gangster to share the location of their hideout with the party so they can retrieve her fortune. The considerable riches in her vault weren't quite enough to pay off Mugland's debt to the Gilded Gunners, so he remains in captivity at the Gilded Halls until the player characters arrive.

Treasure: If the characters manage to foil the attack on the Steaming Kingdom, they earn Ramslay's gratitude as well as whatever gear (including, possibly, some pyronite) the Gilded Gunners were carrying.

XP Award: For stymieing the Gilded Gunners' assault on the Steaming Kingdom, award each player character 80 XP.

THE GILDED HALLS

Whether by following the Gilded Gunners to their hideout or by teasing the information out of them, the party can reach the gang's lair shortly after the attack at the Steaming Kingdom. Give the player characters an hour to recuperate as much as they can, and then begin their exploration of the Gilded Gunners' hideout at area **F1**.

Environment: Sabora Sharkosa's hideout reflects her pragmatic personality, her pride in her accomplishments, and her love of gold. The walls are decorated with gold-leaf accents, and each door bears an inlaid golden symbol unique to that door.

Unless otherwise noted, the walls, floors, and ceilings are stone (Hardness 14, 56 HP, BT 28). Ceilings are 10 feet high. All areas are lit by oil lamps with bright normal light inside rooms and dim light in hallways.

All doors are reinforced wood (Hardness 15, 60 HP, BT 30). The unique golden symbol embedded in each door is meaningless except to Sharkosa, who carved the symbols as a form of artistic expression. Intruders might mistake the symbols for important clues or as indicators of false doors or esoteric meanings.

Sharkosa devoted a significant number of her gang members to Mugland's pyronite project. By the time the party reaches her hideout, she's more than a little concerned she chose the wrong side. Anticipating trouble in the aftermath of the Steaming Kingdom attack, Sharkosa pulled most of her forces back to the areas surrounding her personal chambers (areas F5 through F8) to concentrate her defenses.

Hazard: Sharkosa's engineers placed several false doors throughout the complex to confound intruders. Each door looks like any other but opens to a wall of bricks. Unless otherwise noted, any false door in the complex is trapped to explode when opened.

FALSE DOOR TRAP

HAZARD 6

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 28 (expert) to see the brick wall behind the edges of the door


Description A black-powder charge detonates as soon as the doorknob is turned, shattering the door into splinters.

Disable DC 27 Thievery (expert) to disable the doorknob trigger

AC 24; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +11

Hardness 8; **HP** 50 (BT 25);

Immunities critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Explosive Charge  **Trigger** The doorknob is turned; **Effect** The charge behind the door explodes, dealing 2d8+9 fire damage and 2d8+9 piercing damage to all creatures in a 10-foot cone blasting outward from the door (DC 27 basic Reflex save). The sound of the explosion can be heard up to 50 feet away.

F1. SMITHY

An unassuming workshop operated during the day by Sharkosa's trusted minion Koreole (area F11) obscures the entrance to the Gilded Halls. A player character can locate the trapdoor hidden under a dusty carpet in the corner of the smithy

(marked with an "F" on the map) with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

If the characters arrive late at night, the blacksmith Koreole has retired to the hideout below (area F11), leaving the smithy unattended.

Alarm: The trapdoor rings alarms in the complex below if opened without being disarmed. A character who Seeks around the trapdoor and succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check notices a hidden catch on the trapdoor's handle that disables the alarm. Opening the trapdoor without pressing the catch sounds alarms in areas F3, F4, and F7. If any gunners escaped the Steaming Kingdom, they warned their boss and raised the alarm. The rest of the text assumes the alarm was raised, but suggestions are included for enemies' locations in case the player characters managed to sneak in.

F2. GILDED FOYER

This chamber's stone walls appear clean and show signs of recent repair. A bas-relief in the south wall depicts a pair of crossed pistols, each with a handle resembling a stylized letter S. The pistols are painted in vivid colors and glint with the luster of gold. Reinforced wooden doors are set into the east and south walls, and a sturdy wooden ladder leads to a trapdoor in the ceiling.

Normally, Sharkosa and three Gilded Gunner agents welcome invited guests here, patting down visitors for concealed weapons before escorting them to area F3 to conduct business. At other times, including now, the foyer is unguarded since the Gilded Gunners depend on their alarms and traps to alert them of any serious intrusions. The trapdoor in the ceiling is marked with a "C" on the map.

Treasure: Removing the gilding from the bas-relief nets 10 gp worth of gold leaf.

F3. MEETING ROOM TRIVIAL 7

A large table with padded chairs fills the center of this well-lit room.

The walls are decorated with paintings depicting calming pastoral scenes. A carved wooden sideboard on the western wall bears small golden sculptures. Doors in the west and south walls each display a symbol of gold inlaid in the reinforced wood.



Gilded Gunner Assassin



**Cradle
of
Quartz**

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

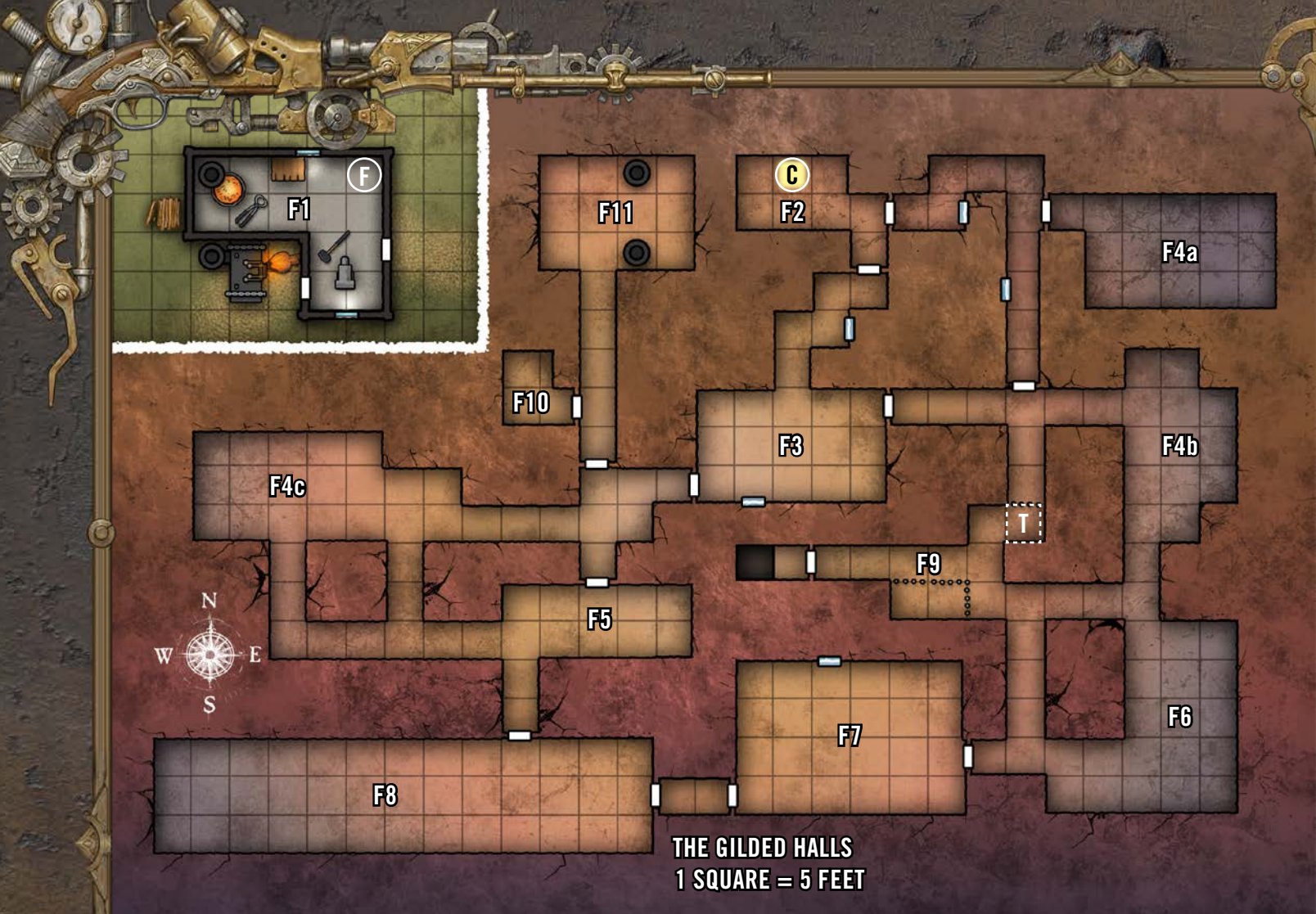
Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox



Sharkosa meets with prospective clients here, usually accompanied by three of her agents. No one is in the room at present.

Hazard: The door in the south wall is a false door, but it's armed with a different trap from the others in the compound; after all, Sharkosa doesn't want to destroy her best furniture just to dispose of a few unsavory types.

COLOR SPRAY TRAP

HAZARD 4

AUDITORY ILLUSION INCAPACITATION MAGICAL TRAP VISUAL

Stealth DC 22 (trained) to notice the glyph on the doorjamb
Description A loud pop sounds when this door is opened, followed immediately by a blast of colorful lights that washes over whoever opened the door.

Disable DC 25 Thievery (trained) to disable the glyph, or *dispel magic* (1st level; counteract DC 22) to counteract the glyph

AC 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +10

Door Hardness 8; **Door HP** 50 (BT 25); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Color Spray → **Trigger** The door is opened; **Effect** The trap casts *color spray* on the triggering creature (DC 21).

Creatures: If the party triggered the alarm in area **F1**, two Gilded Gunner assassins are positioned opposite the eastern door of this room. One of them holds her ear to the door, listening for the sound of the *color spray* trap. If the trap is triggered, the two Gunners rush into the room and attack.

If the alarm wasn't raised, these Gilded Gunners instead lounge in the eastern barracks (area **F4a**).

GILDED GUNNER ASSASSINS (2)

CREATURE 5

Page 57

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: Several statues on the sideboard represent Sharkosa's efforts to add gold to other artists' work. A bronze sculpture of a mother and child with gold accents is worth 15 gp; a fully gilded marble sculpture of a rearing gold dragon is worth 50 gp. The cabinets also contain glassware and serving trays—all decorated with gold filigree—worth 35 gp.

F4. BARRACKS

Each of these areas is similar in content, if not in shape.

This area serves as barracks for a half-dozen humanoids. Three sturdy bunk beds line the south wall, each with a pair of wooden chests at its foot.

These three barracks can accommodate more members than the Gilded Gunners currently have, since Sharkosa plans to expand the gang over time. Each of the chests is either empty or contains worthless personal clothing.

If the party doesn't encounter them in area F3 (see Creatures on page 60), two Gilded Gunner assassins lie in wait in area F4, their ears pressed against the door to area F3. They're concentrating so hard on listening for the trap to trigger in area F3 that they take a -2 circumstance penalty on Perception checks to detect anyone approaching from any other direction.

F5. ARMORY

LOW 7

The northern door is locked with a simple lock.

The walls of this room are covered in wooden racks filled with rifles, pistols, and other lethal weaponry. An auspicious wooden chest covered completely in gold leaf sits against the eastern wall, next to an equally unusual-looking clockwork construct armed with built-in guns. In the southwestern corner, two corridors head west and south. The southern corridor ends in a stout wooden door.

This is the Gilded Gunners' armory and weapon storage area. Each weapon is secured to the racks with a simple lock. A character can break the racks (Hardness 5, 20 HP, 10 BT) or Forced them Open with a successful DC 20 Athletics check, but doing so risks breaking the delicate weapons; for each rack so destroyed, a player character must attempt a DC 20 Reflex save. On a failure, the weapon in the rack becomes broken.

Hazard: The golden chest is rigged with a hallucination powder trap.

HALLUCINATION POWDER TRAP

HAZARD 6

Pathfinder Core Rulebook 524

Stealth DC 24 (expert)

Creature: The clockwork construct in the eastern corner isn't for decoration. It lies in standby mode until one of three criteria is met: it's attacked, the golden chest is opened by someone not wearing gold, or someone not wearing gold tries to leave the area.

CLOCKWORK GUNNER

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE N MEDIUM CLOCKWORK CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Custom-built clockwork prototype

Perception +16; darkvision

Skills Athletics +16 (+18 to Disarm, Grapple, or avoid being Disarmed)

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +2, **Int** -5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** -5

Items integrated dragon-mouth pistol (Guns & Gears 152), integrated +1 striking mace multipistol (Guns & Gears 159)

Wind-Up 24 hours, DC 24, standby

AC 26; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16

HP 100; **Immunities** death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, sickened, unconscious; **Weaknesses** electricity 10, orichalcum 10; **Resistances** physical 10 (except adamantine or orichalcum)

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ mace multipistol +19 (critical fusion, magical, shove), **Damage** 2d6+7 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ dragon-mouth pistol +20 (concussive, range increment 20 feet, reload 1, scatter 5 feet), **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

Ranged ♦ mace multipistol +21 (capacity 3, concussive, fatal d8, magical, range increment 20 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d4+3 piercing

Integrated Weapons An integrated weapon is built into the limb of the clockwork gunner. They can't be disarmed, and they take 10 minutes to attach or remove. Each of a clockwork gunner's firearms can be loaded with 10 shots before they must be reloaded. Reloading a single round into either of these firearms takes 3 actions, or 10 minutes to fully reload a weapon. A clockwork gunner can't reload its own weapons.

Treasure: The racks hold six common simple weapons, four uncommon simple weapons, and three uncommon martial weapons; three of these weapons are outfitted with +1 *weapon potency* runes. Include whatever weapons you think your party would like best, including firearm weapons from page 151 of *Pathfinder Guns & Gears*. The golden chest contains a bevy of specialized Gilded Gunner equipment, including a vial of *alchemist's damper*, two *golden branding irons*, 10 *golden-cased bullets*, a *golden silencer*, two vials of *liquid gold*, and a *gyroscopic stabilizer*. See page 77 for details on these items.

F6. LIEUTENANTS' QUARTERS

Two beds, a small table, and several chairs occupy this room, which appears to serve as semiprivate quarters for two people.

This area is where Sharkosa's lieutenants, Drela and Hansin, typically reside.

If the alarm wasn't raised, Hansin is asleep here while Drela attends to Sharkosa in area F7.



Cradle
of
Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

F7. SHARKOSA'S LAIR

A beautifully upholstered chair sits behind a fine wooden desk engraved with gold filigree. Plush couches and chairs are scattered about the room, and a well-stocked table of food and drink stands against the chamber's western wall.

Sharkosa has remained in this chamber since dispatching her underlings to rob the Steaming Kingdom. She invited Mugland to remain here until the heist team returns. As time passes, she realizes something has gone wrong, and she grows increasingly irritated with Mugland. If some of the heist team escaped to warn Sharkosa, she's prepared for an assault on her stronghold.

Sharkosa waits here to greet intruders. If the alarm was raised, she's accompanied by her lieutenants Drela and Hansin, three Gilded Gunner assassins, and Ambrost Mugland. Otherwise, only Sharkosa, Drela, and Mugland are here.

Sharkosa greets the player characters cordially, introducing herself as the leader of the Gilded Gunners; she introduces Mugland as her "one-time partner," a phrase that makes Mugland go pale. Sharkosa tries to mitigate any further damage to her gang, offering to negotiate with the party rather than fight. While negotiating, Sharkosa invites the player characters to sit and offers them refreshments. She gives her word that no violence will occur during negotiations and resorts to force only if the characters instigate a fight.

See **Event 15: Sharkosa's Deal** on page 63 for the full details of this confrontation, along with the enemies' stat blocks.

F8. TRAINING HALL

A sandy area in the center of this long hall seems to serve as a fighting pit, while various targets and practice dummies are positioned throughout the chamber. Several wooden rapiers and daggers hang on the northern wall between two doors. Iron weights, jump ropes, and other exercise equipment hang on hooks or lie scattered along the periphery of the room.

Gilded Gunners train with firearms and other weapons in this room. The sandy pit is used for both unarmed combat and sword practice. The room's length allows for longer-range target practice with guns or other missile weapons. Rough stone outcroppings along the walls allow for combat while climbing, and there are even some handholds along the ceiling.

If the player characters get this far into the Gilded Halls without the alarm being raised, three Gilded Gunner assassins are currently honing their skills in this chamber. Otherwise, the assassins wait in area **F7** with their boss.

Sharkosa and the player characters duel in this room if they accept her proposal (see **Event 15: Sharkosa's Deal** for more details). She suggests the characters take the far end, away from the doors; if pressed, she assents to a coin toss to determine which team stands nearest the doors.

F9. PRISON

Iron bars divide part of this hallway into a single cell with a latching door. The hall to the west ends in a reinforced wooden door.

The gang keeps any prisoners awaiting interrogation in the barred cell. It contains a filthy sleeping mat and a wooden bowl (for food or waste). Tiny, harmless spiders nest in the southwest corner of the room.

Hazard: In the tunnel north of this room, a pressure plate on the floor triggers an iron portcullis to fall from the ceiling, blocking the way. If forced to flee, Sharkosa goes this way and avoids the pressure plate, hoping her pursuers will trigger it and cut themselves off.

FALLING PORTCULLIS TRAP

HAZARD 7

MECHANICAL TRAP


Stealth DC 22 (expert) to spot the sockets in the floor where the portcullis drops; DC 28 (expert) to spot the floor trigger

Description An iron portcullis drops from the ceiling when a pressure plate is triggered.

Disable DC 27 Thievery (expert) to disable the floor trigger, or DC 27 Athletics or Engineering Lore to jam the portcullis in the ceiling

AC 25; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18

Hardness 18; **HP** 72 (BT 36); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Slam Shut  **Trigger** The pressure plate is depressed;

Effect The portcullis falls, closing off the hallway.

Any creature under the portcullis when it drops takes 4d10+18 piercing damage and is immobilized. A creature that succeeds at a DC 26 Reflex save takes no damage and rolls away in a random direction; on a critical success, they can choose the direction. (For the rules on freeing an immobilized creature, see the sidebar on page 515 of the *Core Rulebook*.)

If the trap was triggered by a creature moving north with a Speed of at least 10 feet, they're considered to be under the portcullis when it triggers. Creatures moving south when triggering the portcullis aren't considered to be under the portcullis when it triggers.

F10. VAULT

The door is made of iron (Hardness 18, HP 72, BT 36) and locked with a good lock (requiring four successful

DC 15 Thievery checks to pick). Only Sharkosa has the key to the vault.

Shelves line the walls of this small stone chamber. Each shelf contains a number of small boxes, coffers, and containers, each engraved with a golden symbol and rigidly organized. A small wheelbarrow leans against the wall near the door. Several larger chests sit on the floor under the shelving.

The Gilded Gunners keep their most precious treasures here, as well as the raw ore and gold bullion they use to gild their namesake weapons. The coffers contain gang members' personal shares, while the two chests on the floor are used to store gold and lead items, respectively (to be melted down and crafted into items in area F11). All coffers and chests are locked with simple locks.

Treasure: The locked coffers contain 120 gp worth of gems, precious jewelry, silver coins, and other valuables. The gold inlay on the coffers is worth an additional 20 gp. The chest of lead has little value except for making bullets or fishing weights, but the other chest contains 300 gp in gold items: rings and other jewelry, candlesticks, religious symbols, and even a few raw chunks of gold ore.

F11. FORGE

This room's ruddy light comes as much from the two furnace forges as from the oil lamps on the walls. Large iron pipes lead from the furnaces through the ceiling, but the room is still smoky and smells like ash and hot metal. Crucibles, tongs, and other metalworking implements lie atop a workbench in the middle of the room; a smaller desk on the north wall bears smaller tools and an adjustable lens more at home in a jeweler's shop.

This is where the Gilded Gunners decorate their signature weapons as well as craft bullets and other metal items. A small furnace vents through the blacksmith's shop above, and it contains equipment for melting gold, lead, and other softer metals. The small forge in the chamber allows for repair and the creation of small metal items.

The blacksmith **Koreole** (NE male gnome smith 5) works here. He has no interest in fighting for the Gilded Gunners or anyone else—he just wants to practice his craft. He rises from the hideout before dawn to work the forge in the market aboveground. At night, he returns here and continues to ply his trade by gilding weapons for his current employers. He boasts a prodigious output because he requires little

sleep—getting by on as few as three or four hours nightly—and he knows his incredible skill makes him a valuable asset. If the Gilded Gunners are ever defeated, Koreole assumes he can simply hire on with whatever force defeats Sharkosa. Depending on how the player characters interact with him, he might offer to work for them if they can pay his hefty retainer fee of 50 gp per week, plus materials. Whether or not they want to employ a cruel and selfish smith is up to the characters.

Treasure: Koreole is working on a pistol for Sharkosa: a completely gilded pepperbox with fine electrum tracery along the barrel. In its present state, it's worth 100 gp; the completed weapon would be worth as much as 200 gp to the right buyer. Assorted supplies of gold, silver, and other metals here are worth 50 gp. Koreole feels no particular attachment to the equipment Sharkosa bought, and he allows the characters to take the goods freely.

EVENT 15: SHARKOSA'S DEAL

VARIES 7

To Sharkosa, there's little in the world more valuable than gold—and Mugland owes her a lot of gold. She sees the party as an annoyance but also as an opportunity to get what she wants. When the player characters meet her, likely in area F7, she greets them cordially and asks if they'd like to strike a deal.

"I'm a reasonable woman," the leather-clad gang leader coos. "I have no qualm with you, personally. In fact, I understand you and I might share a common goal: we both have matters to resolve with this man right here." She nods, almost imperceptibly, toward Mugland, who scowls in return. "Now, my affairs with Mr. Mugland are purely financial. He owes me gold, and—well, I love gold, you see—so I want him to pay up. Because of your actions at the Steaming Kingdom, he wasn't able to give me the gold he owes. Now, I don't necessarily blame you for that, but you must see that you are at least somewhat culpable for our current predicament.

"With that in mind, I'd like to offer a compromise: you pay me what Mr. Mugland owes, and I'll give you Mr. Mugland. As I said, I really only want the gold. Once I have my gold, I have no need for Mr. Mugland. His debt is so substantial, though, that I'm afraid you might not be able to afford it—I won't accept anything less than pure gold coin, you see. If that's the case, I have another proposal: you pay me just part of what Mr. Mugland owes me, and I agree to duel you for the honor of deciding his fate. What do you say?"

Mugland owes Sharkosa 500 gp, but the gang leader is willing to accept 200 gp if the player characters agree to a fight with her and one of her lieutenants. If the party has significantly less or more wealth than typical for a party of 7th-level characters, adjust these

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

Adventure Toolbox

amounts as necessary; the higher sum should be just attainable or just out of reach, whereas the lower sum should sting but be doable.

There are three likely outcomes to Sharkosa's deal. If your players do something unexpected, use these outcomes as guidelines to resolve the situation.

- If the characters pay Sharkosa 500 gp, she bows politely, then steps aside and gestures toward Mugland. "He's yours to do with as you wish." The party effectively skips this encounter and proceeds immediately to **Event 16: Mugland Makes His Move**.
- If the characters pay Sharkosa 200 gp and agree to a duel, she and her crew escort the party to the training hall (area **F8**), where she explains the party must pick two of their own to fight her and her lieutenant Hansin. The pairs start on opposite ends of the hall, decided by a coin toss. Use the rules for dueling (*Gamemastery Guide* 166) to resolve this encounter, or run it as a traditional combat encounter. If the player characters win the duel, award each character in the party 80 XP (in place of the XP for a typical combat encounter). Sharkosa is true to her word and would give Mugland to the party, but on the last round of the duel, Mugland signals for Drela to throw him his gun; the duel evolves into **Event 16: Mugland Makes His Move**.
- If the characters opt to pay Sharkosa nothing, she gives a *tsk* in disappointment before snapping her fingers dramatically. Sharkosa, Hansin, and her three Gilded Gunner assassins attack the characters. Meanwhile, Mugland and Drela use this opportunity to flee the Gilded Halls. Effectively, **Event 16: Mugland Makes His Move** occurs simultaneously with this event.

A fight with Sharkosa and her crew is a severe-threat encounter for 7th-level characters. It's also risky since Mugland might slip from their grasp. Go easy on your players if they try this tack and chaos ensues; if the characters chase Mugland, for instance, Sharkosa might agree to a temporary truce until the dastardly mogul and her treacherous lieutenant are dealt with. Perhaps Mugland or Drela become pinned by the portcullis trap north of area **F9** or are otherwise slowed, giving the player characters time to deal with Sharkosa and the rest before giving chase to Mugland and Drela.

SABORA SHARKOSA

CREATURE 7

Page 91

Initiative Perception +16

HANSIN

CREATURE 7

Male human gang leader (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 249)

Initiative Perception +14

Items +1 flintlock pistol (*Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 153; 10 rounds), *minor potion of healing*, +1 shortsword, studded leather, tanglefoot bag

Ranged ♦ flintlock pistol +19 (concussive, fatal d8, magical, range increment 40 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing

GILDED GUNNER ASSASSINS (3)

CREATURE 5

Page 57

Initiative Perception +15

XP Award: No matter which course of action they choose, award each player character an additional 80 XP for dealing with Sharkosa, in addition to any XP they might have earned from combat.

EVENT 16: MUGLAND MAKES HIS MOVE MODERATE 7

This event occurs after the previous event, as soon as Sharkosa hands over Mugland to the party.

Creatures: Never one to leave things to chance, Mugland engineered a back-up plan in case he couldn't pay his debt to Sharkosa. Before he hired the Gilded Gunners for the pyronite job, Mugland co-opted one of Sharkosa's lieutenants, Drela, with promises of power and riches. Drela agreed to fight on Mugland's behalf. As soon as the mogul whistles, Drela tosses Mugland his magical dueling pistol. The two then engage the player characters in combat, alternately attacking and fleeing through the Gilded Halls.

Sharkosa is amused at this turn of events; as long as she has her money, she doesn't really care one bit what happens to Mugland. As for her traitorous lieutenant Drela, should he survive, Sharkosa's punishment will be swift and lethal.

AMBROST MUGLAND

CREATURE 8

Page 89

Initiative Perception +14

DRELA

CREATURE 7

Male human gang leader (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 249)

Initiative Perception +14

Items +1 flintlock musket (*Guns & Gears* 153; 10 rounds), *minor potion of healing*, +1 shortsword, studded leather, tanglefoot bag

Ranged ♦ flintlock musket +19 (concussive, fatal d10, magical, range increment 70 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing

Mugland's Deal: Mugland begins combat with every intention of destroying the player characters. His mood shifts, however, if he's reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points or Drela falls unconscious. At this point, he drops his pistol and surrenders, hoping to strike a final deal with the party.

"Okay, okay, that's enough!" Mugland growls, his business attire soiled and bloody. "I'll tell you everything I know—just let me go. You think I work alone, without some protection, without a way out? I have friends in very high places—friends who can help you if you help me, or who can make your life a living hell if I'm killed. Just let me go, and I'll give you my buyers' names, right here and now. You can go see them for yourselves. Do whatever you want with them. It doesn't matter to me. But you kill me, and their names die along with me. If you want to put this genie back in the bottle, you have to let me live."

At this point, it's entirely up to the player characters to decide what they wish to do with Mugland. If they accept his offer and let him live (even if just for the moment), he gives them some important information—information that will lead the party into the final adventure of the Outlaws of Alkenstar Adventure Path, "The Smoking Gun."

It's also fine if the player characters kill Mugland before he can reveal these details. Impressed by the characters' ruthlessness, Sharkosa is happy to share the following information, which she also knows from questioning Mugland. If the party kills both Sharkosa and Mugland before either can give them these pertinent details, Dunsmith tracks down the information and fills in the characters at the end of this adventure or just before the start of the next.

Following are the most important points which Mugland, Sharkosa, or Dunsmith should convey to the party.

- Mugland's support among the shieldmarshals is absolute; if the party turns him over to law enforcers, he'll walk free and the characters—who are still wanted outlaws, thanks to him—will be thrown in prison. Mugland's strongest ally from the beginning of the pyronite scheme is a high-ranking shieldmarshal named Anjelique Loveless.
- Mugland has already delivered the pyronite formula to his partner, Deputy Shieldmarshal

Anjelique Loveless, who arranged to sell it to two buyers. According to Mugland, Loveless should arrive any day now with the money to get him out of the Gilded Halls.

- The two buyers are wizards: a necromancer from Geb named Parsus and a geomancer from Nex named Ibrum. At first, Mugland thought they were separate clients, but he now thinks they might be working together.

XP Award: For defeating Mugland at last and learning about his pyronite buyers, award each player character 80 XP.

CONCLUSION

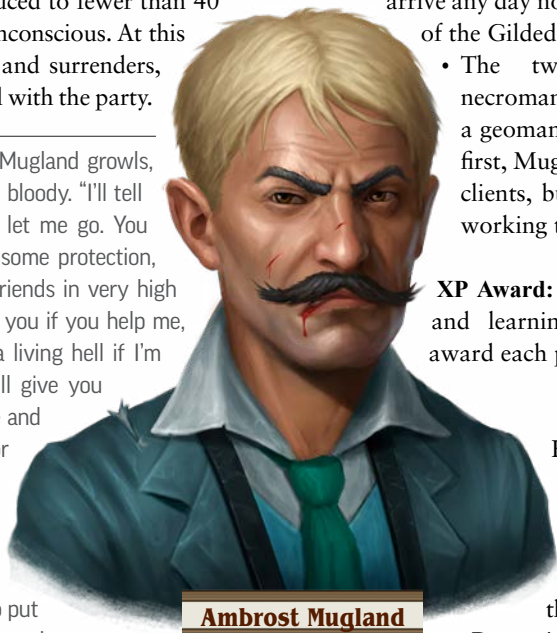
Having achieved their revenge against Mugland and learned Loveless already sold the pyronite formula to two buyers, the party can return to the Barrel & Bullet Saloon to give

Dunsmith a full report. Their employer is

at turns nonplussed and bewildered. It was no secret that Loveless was conspiring with powerful business interests throughout Alkenstar, but Mugland outing her as his accomplice is significant. More alarming, of course, is the revelation that Mugland and Loveless had buyers for the pyronite formula in the wings.

"If Mugland was telling the truth," Dunsmith says, "then Alkenstar is about to be caught between two nations with some very dangerous new toys." She turns her gaze to the party. "You've got what you came for—revenge against Mugland. Maybe you still have some bad blood with Loveless, too. Either way, I have a feeling I'll be calling on you again before this whole pyronite dilemma is over. Don't worry—there's plenty of gold in it for you."

Dunsmith is at first surprised wizards are interested in pyronite, but the reasons why soon dawn on her. The nations of Geb and Nex have been bitter enemies for thousands of years, effectively stalemated by the Spellscar and its effect on magic. A non-magical weapon as powerful as pyronite would be a huge advantage to one side or the other. What Dunsmith can't figure out, though, is why wizards from the rival nations would want to work together. This particular mystery and others will unravel in the next, final adventure in the Outlaws of Alkenstar Adventure Path, "The Smoking Gun." Dunsmith tells the characters to get some rest while she reports to the grand duchess. "Prepare for the worst," she sighs with finality. "It looks like this whole situation might go out with a bang."



Ambrost Mugland



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox



Spellscar Desert

**Cradle
of
Quartz**

**Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle**

**Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar**

**Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz**

**Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom**

**Spellscar
Desert**

**Adventure
Toolbox**

Although its rocky bluffs, dry winds, and stunted vegetation make the area more than daunting, the Spellscar Desert harbors far more dangers than a desert's mundane hazards. The bedrock beneath the sands is wracked with raw, wildly unpredictable magic that still leaks into Golarion through the tears in reality inflicted by the archmages Nex and Geb. The furious battles they fought more than 4,000 years ago turned the region between their mighty nations into an inhospitable waste.

In the Spellscar Desert, many creatures contract a gradual illness that, over time, makes hair and fur fall out in clumps; imparts dry coughs or other internal ailments; and causes mutations, stillbirths, or worse. Some magical creatures simply sicken and die of indiscernible causes. Fortunately, these conditions usually clear up with time once outside the hazardous desert. After generations, however, creatures that remain within the Spellscar have become all but unrecognizable: they might grow to phenomenal size or gain bizarre coloration, sprout bony protrusions or tumorous masses, or grow additional limbs and sensory organs. Many of the humanoid mutants of the Spellscar Desert—formerly humans, dwarves, gnolls, and others pushed to the outskirts of civilization—are now all but unrecognizable.

The following pages include ideas and inspiration for GMs running adventures in the Spellscar Desert. Much of the general advice can be adapted or extrapolated to apply to other regions of the Mana Wastes as well. For even more rules and details for Mana Wastes adventures, see the Mana Wastes section in *Pathfinder Lost Omens: Impossible Lands*.

ADVENTURING IN THE SPELLSCAR DESERT

A band of hardy travelers might brave the Spellscar Desert for any number of reasons. Academics might seek information about the long-ago clash between Nex and Geb, while other historians might include knowledgeable treasure hunters seeking relics from

that age of impossible wonders. Brave scholars might seek to understand the storms of twisted magic that wrack the land, either to better predict them or to harness their power for their own ends. The people who inhabit the Spellscar Desert sometimes harbor secrets of interest to the wider world: an escaped criminal hiding in the desert might be the sole keeper of valuable information, or a mutant gang might know where to find strange ruins or unique firearms. Plucky merchants might enter the desert only to cross it quickly, shuttling high-value items between Nex and Geb. Regardless of the reason that travelers brave the desert, it's wise for all of them to keep the following points in mind.

Prepare for Bad Weather: Outsiders assume there's only one kind of weather in the Spellscar Desert: dry and hot. This oversimplification ignores three dangerous environmental conditions of the area. First, temperatures plummet after dark as the land quickly surrenders the heat it soaked up during the day; nights can be cold enough for frost to form, depending on the season. Second, storms regularly scour the Spellscar Desert. Swaths of land entirely devoid of life likely have the worst weather and should be avoided. Finally, water in the desert comes fast and hard. Springs might pulse with primal magic, erupting in geysers; while riverbeds swell with each rare rain, sluicing water through the thirsty landscape. In narrow canyons and dusty gulches, flash floods are both common and deadly.

Stay Hidden and Move Quickly: Predators in the Spellscar Desert come in many varieties, and all have honed their talents and natural gifts to survive the harsh climate. Monstrously mutated animals and beasts are common, but bandits and other two-legged predators are just as canny and dangerous. It's important to wear concealing clothing and to seek cover when traveling or camping to avoid becoming a target. Even travelers convinced of their combat prowess should remember that there's often something bigger or tougher prowling the desert and apply caution. Worse, some

magic-twisted predators might have strange senses (such as the ability to scent despair or see souls), so a traveler can't ever fully assume they'll be able to wander entirely undetected. Those crossing the Spellscar should stay on the move when possible.

Looks Can Deceive: For a place of openly brutal terrain, the Spellscar Desert abounds with hidden perils. The most significant of these are mana storms (see page 70). Although genuine storms are dangerous, it's usually possible to see them coming. The effects of a mana storm, however, are random, occurring with no warning. One moment magic works normally, and the next, everything changes. Rains of squealing leeches can patter down from a cloudless sky, or gravity might suddenly shift—but only for random creatures. Beyond the menace of mana storms, creatures and people also might not be all they seem, leading travelers to misjudge threats. A rail-thin figure in a tattered

cloak might be a deadly assassin robot, or a hulking mutant might be an afflicted scholar with intellectual sensibilities. Even the terrain can lie: clean water might rest beneath a crust of dust, and mirages are all too common. A wise traveler never makes decisions based on appearances alone.

Avoid Abandoned Technology: The magic that flows wildly through the Spellscar means that some travelers, especially those from nearby Alkenstar, rely on technological marvels to survive. They might use a steam-powered wagon to cross the barren terrain, a mechanical condenser to pull water from the air, or a large-bore firearm to keep predators at bay. When technology breaks down in the desert, there's usually little to do except abandon it to the elements. The desert is therefore littered with broken technological inventions, some of them unique contraptions that failed at the worst possible time. Wasteland gangs sometimes recover these devices (particularly weapons) and try to repair them, but such tinkering can leave items even more dangerous than before.

In any case, it's best to approach any abandoned technology in the Spellscar Desert with caution; it's likely failed someone else in the past and could do so again.

FACTIONS AND NPCs

The Spellscar Desert is home to many rival mutant gangs, hardscrabble survivalists, and worse. The factions below are among the region's most significant groups.

Boneseekers: The region known as the Dinosaur Uplands is usually avoided by travelers due to its lack of potable water and large population of monstrous reptilian creatures (including, but not limited to, dinosaurs). However, the recent discovery of strange fossilized bones in the area has sparked interest from universities and academies all across the Inner Sea region. Each group of these so-called Boneseekers has staked out claims where they diligently work to excavate the fossils and their secrets from the ground. The most scrupulous of these scholars, such as those from the Magaambya led by **Aluopunu Salsket** (NG female human paleontologist 8), must defend themselves against sabotage and theft by unprincipled Boneseekers. Chief among these is **Alastair Harbrum** (LE male human historian 9), a scholar from Ustalav



Kagati Wizard-Eater

whose claim has proven nearly devoid of interesting finds but whose reputation hinges on a significant discovery. All Boneseekers must contend not only with the rough environment and dangerous fauna, but also with the revitalized haunts of long-dormant creatures disturbed by their excavations.

Children of the Fireball: This pack of overzealous firebugs and arsonists is among the most desperate and violent of the Spellscar gangs. The so-called Children of the Fireball live in caves and huts in the shelter of Fireball Mesa, where they purport to worship the erratic fiery displays that coruscate atop the rocky tableland. They tend to raid other wasteland dwellers and assault desert travelers using alchemist's fire and other incendiary devices of their own creation, insisting that their violent acts of banditry are in fact displays of religious reverence. Only the group's leader, **Falthin Born-From-Fire** (CE male fleshwarp fire priest 10), whose great-grandfather founded the gang, actually believes this theological rhetoric, but his zeal is fervent enough to fuel the entire enterprise. He claims to glean guidance by unlocking messages from the strange shapes burned into the side of the mesa long ago.

Kagati's Clan: Most followers of the mutated gnoll warlord **Kagati Wizard-Eater** (NE female gnoll warlord 9) are her blood relatives. All bear Kagati's patchy brown-and-orange fur, but none have her hulking musculature, four arms, or keen organizational skills. Yet her "clan," as they call themselves, also consists of other humanoid mutants who serve the warlord in exchange for spoils and protection. Operating out of a fortified estate created years ago by a short-sighted wizard, Kagati's clan seeks to dominate the Spellscar Desert not with open warfare, but with alliances of convenience and calculated strikes against enemy leaders. Kagati knows that to share spoils is to earn allies, and she often sets up "market days" where anyone can come to trade, carouse, or swear allegiance.

Gragked's Stormchasers: Scholars journey to the Spellscar Desert to study the mana storms surprisingly often, and a few of them even survive the trip. The most knowledgeable scholar currently in the desert is **Gragked** (NE male ghoulish professor 10), a popular teacher from Geb's highly regarded Mortuarium. Gragked has been steeped in the cutthroat intrigue of Geb's academic scene for centuries, and he's found this excursion to be not only enlightening but liberating.

Although he and his team of undead graduate students have made copious notes about mana storms and the effects they can produce, he's considering taking his research to Absalom rather than back to Geb. As two of Gragked's students are covertly affiliated with Geb's secret police, the well-intentioned academic is in more jeopardy than he realizes.

Voidenders: Millennia ago, tribes of six-armed giants called calikangs (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 42) fled enslavement in Nex and resettled upon the coast to the east of the Spellscar Desert. Calikang locals see the Mana Wastes not as a tear in reality through which uncontrolled magic can pour, but as the result of the absence of natural magic. They've committed themselves to refilling this void left by the archmages' battles and healing the Spellscar Desert for good. To do so, they venture out of their coastal homes to acquire magical items from other lands, bring them back, and release their energies into the Spellscar Desert. The largest of these calikang tribes is the Voidenders, led by **Sool** (N agender calikang prophet 13), but many use that name to refer to any of the calikang groups that pursue these same ends. Some consider the Voidenders to be environmental activists—as their holdings of Sixfists are indeed fertile—while others consider them bullies who merely steal and destroy magic items.



Gragked

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

TABLE: MANA STORM EFFECTS

d20	Mana Storm Effect
1	Bleaching (primal, transmutation) Fortitude. Creatures and objects within a radius of 10 feet per level are drained of color for 1 hour. A gnome affected by this effect must succeed at a Will save or become frightened 1 and unable to reduce this frightened condition below 1 while bleached of color; this is a mental and fear effect.
2	Crawling Vermin (conjunction, primal) A monstrous, strangely colored insect hostile to all creatures appears within 60 feet. The creature that appears should be insectile in appearance and of a level approximately equal to the level of an animal summoned by <i>summon animal</i> of the storm's level. The GM determines the specific creature. After 1 minute, the creature can choose to either return where it came from or to remain. It's neither summoned nor a minion.
3	Anchored (abjuration, arcane) Will. Creatures within a radius of 10 feet per level are affected by <i>dimensional anchor</i> . Creatures that fail their saving throws also have their Speeds reduced by 10 feet (to a minimum of 5 feet) during the effect's duration.
4	Unluck (arcane, divination, misfortune) Will. A zone of unluck and strange violet illumination fill a radius of 10 feet per level for 1 hour. Creatures in this area roll attack rolls, Perception checks, saving throws, and skill checks twice and take the lower result.
5	Strange Reversal (curse, transmutation) Fortitude. One creature's body and all its possessions reverse into a mirror image of themselves. This effect is permanent.
6	Gravity Surge (arcane, transmutation) Reflex. Creatures within a radius of 10 feet per level, in random order, are pushed 10 feet per level away from the nearest creature. A pushed creature that hits an object or another creature stops but takes falling damage equal to the distance moved (a creature hit takes the same amount of falling damage).
7	Psychic Assault (illusion, mental, nonlethal, occult) Will. Creatures within a radius of 10 feet per level are affected by <i>phantom pain</i> .
8	Dazzling Mein (illusion, occult, visual) One creature is affected by <i>cloak of colors</i> ; that creature is immune to the effects, but all others around it are affected normally.
9	Geyser (evocation, primal, water) Fortitude. Water erupts from the ground, but rather than spraying directly up into the air, the water bends impossibly to surge along a horizontal path just above the ground, like a floating, torrential flood. This torrent of water manifests as a <i>hydraulic torrent</i> at first, eerily doing so in the most efficient line to catch as many potential targets in its path as it can. The water then splashes down into the sand, remaining as a long, thin swath of water that can provide a drinking source until it's soaked up or evaporates.
10	Sudden Pit (conjunction, earth, primal) Reflex. A pit opens beneath a random creature. The pit is as wide as the creature's space, so the creature can Grab an Edge to avoid a fall. The pit is 20 feet deep per level of the mana storm and remains open even in terrain normally unable to support such a structure. After 1 hour, the pit vanishes and anything that fell in is restored to the surface.
11	Befuddlement (arcane, emotion, enchantment, mental) Will. A number of creatures up to the level of the mana storm within a radius of 10 feet per level become confused for 1 round per level.
12	Death Field (necromancy, primal) Fortitude. Normal vegetation within a radius of 10 feet per level immediately dies and turns to ash. Plant creatures take 2d6 damage per level of the mana storm (basic Fortitude save).
13	Strangers to All (arcane, curse, enchantment, mental, misfortune) Will. A number of creatures up to the level of the mana storm within a radius of 10 feet per level are affected by <i>outcast's curse</i> .
14-15	Weird Rain (conjunction, primal) A rain of small objects (anything from flowers to rotten fruit) pelts an area with a radius of 10 feet per level of the mana storm for a number of rounds equal to the level. This rain doesn't harm creatures in the area. Creatures in the area have concealment. The objects remain even after the rain is over.
16-17	Wellspring (primal, varies) The mana storm draws magical potential from deep within a random creature. That creature rolls 1d20 and uses the Wellspring Surges table (<i>Pathfinder Secrets of Magic</i> 250) to determine a wellspring effect.
18-19	Wondrous Effect (arcane, evocation) Randomly choose one creature to be a "wielder" and a different random creature to be a "target." Roll d% on the <i>rod of wonder</i> table (<i>Core Rulebook</i> 575) to determine what sort of strange effect occurs between the creatures.
20	Double Strength (varies) Reroll two results and apply both in the order rolled; further results of 20 on these rerolls have no effect.

MANA STORMS

Storms of misdirected magic scour the Spellscar Desert, bringing strange magical effects to sudden life. These mana storms are short-lived but have wracked the land ever since Nex and Geb tore at the fabric of reality with their dueling magic millennia ago. Mana storms sometimes accompany mundane dust storms or dry lightning, adding menace to the bad weather. A bolt of electricity crackling from the sky might bear a malign, temporary intelligence, zig-zagging among travelers with murderous glee. The dry winds might drop flowers or frogs, bringing the desert to unexpected and ersatz life in a profusion of primal magic. Yet mana storms are often invisible as well, with nothing to herald their arrival other than a strange rippling in the air easily mistaken for heat shimmer. The magical power in these mana storms is often as immense as the storms are uncontrollable. Although a lucky traveler might find a trusted magic item suddenly working even better than before, the arrival of a mana storm is just as likely to overload and detonate the item with a sudden influx of magical energy.

Mana storms have a spell level just like any spell effect. You can roll 1d10 for this level (on a roll of 10, reroll, keeping a level of 10 only if you roll a second 10), but it's rarely fun or fair to inflict a mana storm on your players that has a much higher level than the highest-level spells their characters can cast. Several elements of a mana storm are determined by its level. If the storm's effect duplicates a spell, that spell's effects resolve as if heightened to the storm's level (if you roll an effect for a spell with a minimum level above the mana storm's level, choose a different result or roll again). The mana storm's level also sets the relevant DC for a saving throw or skill check required by the mana storm. Use the hard DC that corresponds with the storm's spell level on the DCs by Level table on page 503 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*.

Mana storms have unpredictable effects. You can choose an effect from the table on page 70 or roll d20 to select one at random. In this table, "level" or "storm's level" means the spell level of the mana storm. The mana storm's traits appear in parentheses after the effect's name. Immediately following this is the type of saving throw a character can attempt against the storm's DC to resist being affected by the storm (an entry that creates monsters or other hazards to challenge the party resolves in encounter mode, and so doesn't list a saving throw type). You might consider replacing any entry you use with a new one of your own design, so the players never see the same result twice.

GAZETTEER

The Spellscar Desert may be desolate, but it's far from monotonous; its rolling wastes house numerous geographical anomalies, unusual communities both violent and benign, and safe landmarks (by Mana Wastes standards, at least). The following locations are among the points of interest travelers can find in the wasteland.

Ancren's Estate: One of the largest and most recent structures in the Spellscar Desert is an estate built by the Nexian transmuter **Ancren** (deceased N male human transmuter 9). Predicting a moment of intense earth magic, Ancren raised the stone of the fortified estate in a single night. After the magic departed, the estate remained, and Ancren soon outfitted it with sumptuous luxuries from his homeland. Although the estate's walls were wide and tall, Ancren dramatically underestimated how appealing such a fortification would be to Spellscar inhabitants. He was besieged in his estate within a month, and a mutated gnoll warlord named Kagati finally fought through his guards and defenses. Now known as Kagati Wizard-Eater, the gnoll has entrenched her position in Ancren's Estate and turned the courtyard into something of an open market welcoming wasteland denizens.

Baffled Lowlands: This lowland is covered in a silt with a dazzlingly bright yellow hue like no other colors in the area. The silt is never more than a few inches deep and appears to prevent anything other than a few low-lying succulents from growing. A number of small, amber-colored lizards flit among the silt, occasionally snapping at tiny insects or drinking from pools of yellow-tinged water. Sapient creatures who spend a long time in the silty region report hearing strange susurrations and seeing strange movement within the yellow silt, as though the substance itself were alive. This appears to be an entirely mental effect, as outside observers witness neither sound nor movement. Those gripped by this hallucination, however, never forget the shuddering fear imparted by the yellow silt.

YELLOW SILT CURSE

CURSE 6

CURSE ENCHANTMENT FEAR MAGICAL MENTAL

You never forget the eerie song and frightening movements of the yellow silt. You need to make this save after each full day you spend in the Baffled Lowlands, increasing the save DC by 1 for each consecutive day.

Saving Throw DC 22 Will; **Effect** Whenever you gain the frightened condition while in the Baffled Lowlands, increase the value of that condition by 1 (maximum frightened 4). If you can see anything yellow when you become frightened, you are also confused for 1 round.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

Adventure Toolbox

Burning Stone Mesa: Rising 200 feet above the Gritty River, the sides of this daunting mesa feature stripes of red and blue rock in strikingly contrasting horizontal bands. The side against the river is steep, requiring successful DC 25 Athletics checks to Climb; the DC is only 18 on the mesa's other sides. The top of the mesa has a stunning view and is covered with thorny berry bushes and ruins reduced to scattered stones. A group of harpies (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 204) and their trained falcons control the mesa and scour a huge area around it to feed themselves and grow their flock. These harpies are insular and suspicious, as commanded by their elder, **Mother Dunfeather** (LN female harpy leader 6) but they're less bloodthirsty than most harpies and are willing to negotiate with explorers who bring them food and colorful cloth with which to decorate their wings.

Cloudreaver Keep: Built to guard Alkenstar's northern border, Cloudreaver Keep stands on the Ustradi River and is considered by many to be the

easternmost outpost of civilization in Alkenstar. This makes Cloudreaver Keep the westernmost point of the Spellscar Desert. Its soldiers don't venture far into the desert, preferring instead to act as sentries who repel monsters from populated lands. Despite the soldiers' disinclination to leave Cloudreaver Keep, the fortified structure is the best place from which to launch most expeditions into the desert.

Desperation Arroyo: This broad cleft in the ground runs north to south near Burning Stone Mesa. Its sides are dangerously unstable, accounting in most places as a treacherous scree hazard (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 77). Parts of the arroyo's bottom are exposed patches of the same blue stone as Burning Stone Mesa. Scoured by the winds that blow through the arroyo and covered with pebbles from past landslides, these streaks of blue stone often resemble pools of water. Several travelers have ventured into the arroyo, eager for a drink, and found themselves trapped within by the unstable walls. The bones of these travelers (as well as the treasures they were carrying when they died) lie scattered in the arroyo near the deceptively enticing stone.

Dinosaur Uplands: This region features sharp hills made of thick sections of layered sedimentary rock pushed up in haphazard angles through tectonic instability millennia ago. The rock faces are thus a striation of colorful layers dotted with fossilized leaves and petrified bones. Many of these bones belong to creatures that perished during Earthfall or even earlier; dinosaur bones mostly, but also bones of massive reptilian humanoids who died alongside the dinosaurs as well. Word of these bones have recently reached the academic centers of the Inner Sea region, causing an influx of scholars and excavators eager to pull bones—and knowledge—from the rocks. These scholars, collectively called Boneseekers, vie with each other as they race to make significant discoveries.

Fireball Mesa: This large, pale mesa gets its name from the pattern of scorch marks along its sides. The area attracts mana storms on a frequent yet unpredictable basis, and its storms most often manifest with blasts of fire that make for dramatic displays visible from far away. A few canny wasteland dwellers, including the Children of the Fireball, live in the lee of the mesa, as they've learned that the mana storms aggregate at the mesa's top, making the region at its foot relatively tame.

Gritty River: This river is the primary source of water for the Spellscar Desert, flowing east into the Obari Ocean. Once occupying a wide riverbed, the river is now unreliable. In the late summer through



Mother Dunfeather

the fall, long stretches of the river dry up, leaving large sections of marshy sand between worn boulders. These sections function as quicksand (*Core Rulebook* 526). Where water remains, it becomes stagnant until the river flows again. Creatures and wasteland gangs jealously guard this water. Even in late winter and early spring, the river is generally low and difficult to traverse except in a canoe or on a barge. The water's color, for the sections and seasons that see a steady flow, is a curious turquoise due to strange minerals leached from the worn boulders along the river's length. Rumors hold that these boulders are leftover ammunition from a skirmish along the long border between Nex and Geb—though it's unclear which side launched the boulders or what the minerals imbuing the stony ammunition were intended to do.

Screaming Fields: The only sandy waste within the Spellscar Desert, this area is dotted with stands of sagebrush and little else. Burrowing insects of startling size prowl the hills, fighting with each other in titanic battles that shake the sands and reshape the dunes. When these colossal creatures clash above the surface, which is thankfully rare, their screeches echo across the landscape and instill strange psychic rages in creatures that hear them.

Sixfists: This coastal area in the northeast corner of the Spellscar Desert is the domain of calikang tribes. Although the tribes aren't enemies with each other, they have restrictive social structures that prevent them from outright cooperation with one another. Sixfists is what outsiders call this area, as the calikang tribes refer to their own tribal territories individually.

Stargazer's Tower: At the southern edge of the Baffled Lowlands rises a single, massive sandstone column. Roughly rectangular, the tower rises 200 feet above the silty floor. Narrow, shallow stairs rise in a steady run around the column's exterior, their chipped and rounded edges demonstrating their ancient age. Near the top is a small cave containing etchings of various constellations. A successful DC 25 Nature or applicable Lore check reveals that these star charts are predominantly of the Cosmic Caravan, the zodiac in Golarion's sky, but they also incorporate specific celestial events. These events aren't concurrent; for example, the meteors of Earthfall are depicted, but so are much more recent meteorological impacts. Other, unknown symbols might represent cosmological events yet to occur. Characters performing divination rituals within this cave gain a +1 circumstance bonus to their ritual skill checks

or a +2 bonus if the divination ritual is connected to prophetic events heralded in the stars.

Stonewatcher Ridges: The southeast section of the Spellscar contains some of the most difficult yet spectacular features in the desert. Four nearly parallel ridges of sandstone pillars run through the area, separated by strips of uneven ground awash in sand and gravel. Bands of red, orange, and tan cover the naturally carved pillars. Most are connected, the thinner sandstone forming walls between the thicker pillars. Scrambling over these slippery ridges requires a successful DC 30 Athletics check to Climb. Most creatures traverse the channels between, though this can make them easy pickings for those who hunt at either end of the ridges. A large group of earth elementals revere the sandstone ridges with religious fervor. Anyone disturbing the ridges—including climbing over them without taking exceptional care to avoid scarring or chipping them—risks an attack by a small army of earth elementals, but those traveling between the ridges are generally safe. A xorn known as **Erosion's Escalation** (N xorn prophet 12; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 146) leads these elementals in their strange veneration.



Erosion's Escalation

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox



Adventure Toolbox

Cradle
of
Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

PYRONITE

The entire impetus behind the Outlaws of Alkenstar Adventure Path is a disruptive new technology called pyronite: an alchemical explosive with the power of a *fireball* that can be used by anyone with a tindertwig.

In its raw state, pyronite is an unstable explosive paste that can detonate with the slightest concussion—far too dangerous for use. However, the Alkenstar alchemist Vashon Gattlebee has recently invented a way to stabilize the material, making its use as a weapon viable.

PYRONITE

ITEM 11

RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE FIRE

Price 250 gp

Usage held in one hand; **Bulk** L

A stick of pyronite is a devastating explosive that fills an area with fire and concussive force when it detonates—as long as its fuse has been lit!

Pyronite is an unstable material with a limited shelf life. Sticks of pyronite must be kept dry and cool; otherwise, the raw pyronite will leak out of the rods and collect as a semi-transparent goo that explodes on any impact or loud noise, with an explosive effect equal to half the number of rods.

Activate ♦ or ♦♦ Interact; **Effect** Activating a stick of pyronite is usually a two-action activity. First, you interact with the pyronite to light its fuse with a source of fire. This fire source can be an object you hold in another hand, such as a tindertwig or a lit torch, or it can be a free-standing adjacent fire. Once the fuse is lit, you throw it (an Interact action with the ranged trait) up to 50 feet away—if you hurl it into an existing fire, you don't need to take the initial action to light its fuse and can Activate the pyronite with only one action. You can toss the pyronite anywhere within 50 feet, though at the GM's discretion, you might need to make an attack roll if the throw is unusually challenging.

Once a stick of pyronite's fuse is lit, it explodes at the end of your turn, regardless of whether you've thrown it or not. (A lit fuse can be extinguished with an Interact action.)

If multiple sticks of pyronite detonate at the end of your turn, you can increase the area, but not the damage, of this effect. When the pyronite explodes, all creatures in a 20-foot burst must attempt a DC 28 Reflex save or take 3d6 fire damage and 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes half damage and is deafened for 1 round.

Failure The creature takes full damage and is deafened for 1 minute.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage and is knocked prone, stunned 1, and deafened for 1 hour.

ALCHEMICAL FUSE

ITEM 1

ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE FIRE

Cost 3 gp

Usage held in one hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦ Interact

An alchemical fuse is a length of treated cord that can be used to time the detonation of an alchemical bomb or a stick of pyronite, or simply as a timer—at the GM's option, fuses can be used as timers to trigger other devices that can be triggered with a single appropriate action, as well.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Effect** You attach the alchemical fuse to an alchemical bomb, stick of pyronite, or other device that can be triggered by a fuse. Alternately, you can attach one fuse to another to extend its burn time by 1 round.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Effect** You light the alchemical fuse with an adjacent fire source or a fire source that you hold in a hand. If you have a tindertwig in your other hand, you can activate the tindertwig and use it to light a fuse with the same Interact action. A lit fuse takes 1 round per attached fuse to burn down. During the round that the fuse runs out, the device to which the fuse has been attached explodes or otherwise activates at the end of your turn. For a bomb, this deals splash damage, and for pyronite, it deals pyronite's normal damage. An alchemical fuse burns underwater or in up to moderate wind.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Effect** You extinguish the fuse.

Pyronite

GILDED GEAR

To the Alkenstar-based Gilded Gunners, gold is both a tool and a status symbol. The lowest-ranking members of the gang—the intimidators, petty thieves, and new recruits—merely paint their clothes in shiny yellow hues. On the other hand, veteran Gilded Gunners—assassins, safebreakers, and the leader Sabora Sharkosa herself—deign to wear and wield nothing but armor, weapons, and tools made of the purest golden ore.

ALCHEMIST'S DAMPER

ITEM 5

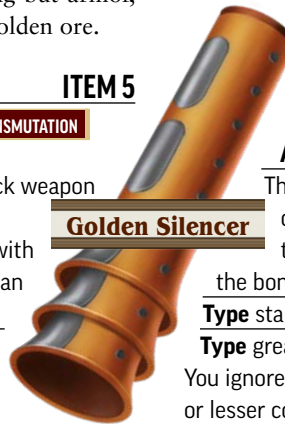
UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TALISMAN TRANSMUTATION

Price 30 gp

Usage attached to a firearm with the kickback weapon trait; **Bulk** –

Activate ◆ envision; **Trigger** You attack with the affixed firearm; **Requirements** You're an expert with the affixed firearm.

A glass tube of mercury is contained within this golden clasp that's fitted in front of a firearm's trigger. On the triggering Strike, the mercury turns briefly to gold, reducing the effect of recoil, allowing you to ignore the circumstance penalty of the attached weapon's kickback weapon trait.



Golden Silencer

DUPE'S GOLD NUGGET

ITEM 5

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TALISMAN TRANSMUTATION

Price 30 gp

Usage affixed to a ranged weapon; **Bulk** –

Activate ◆ envision; **Trigger** You hit with a ranged Strike with the affixed weapon; **Requirement** You're an expert with the affixed weapon.

This nugget of gold and lead amalgam is attached to the weapon by thick, twisted wire or chain. When activated, the target's limbs become like lead weights. For 2 rounds, each time the target Strides it must attempt a DC 23 Fortitude save. On a failure, it takes a -10-foot status penalty to its Speed for that Stride (to a minimum Speed of 5 feet). On a critical success, the *dupe's gold nugget* effect ends early.

GOLDEN BRANDING IRON

ITEM 5+

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TALISMAN TRANSMUTATION

Usage affixed to a two-handed firearm or crossbow; **Bulk** –

Activate ◆ envision; **Trigger** You hit a target with a ranged Strike with the affixed weapon; **Requirements** You're an expert with the affixed weapon.

This talisman is a gold-plated brand that can be affixed to a ranged weapon's stock. When you activate a *golden branding iron*, you mark the target with your magical sigil.

Type golden branding iron; **Level** 5; **Price** 25 gp

You harmlessly place your unique magical sigil, which is about 1 square inch in size, anywhere on the target

creature, as long as the location is visible to you. The mark is only visible to you and up to 6 of your allies. The mark can be scrubbed or scraped off with 5 minutes of work. It fades naturally over the course of a month.

Type greater golden branding iron; **Level** 9; **Price** 120 gp

Your arcane sigil fades naturally over the course of a year.

Type major golden branding iron; **Level** 13; **Price** 450 gp

Your arcane sigil never fades naturally.

GOLDEN-CASED BULLET

ITEM 4+

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE DIVINATION MAGICAL

Ammunition round

Activate ◆ envision

The magic-infused metal of this bullet's golden casing allows it to curve just a bit in flight once the bullet has been fired, allowing you to ignore the bonus to AC granted to a target in lesser cover.

Type standard; **Level** 4; **Price** 20 gp

Type greater; **Level** 10; **Price** 200 gp

You ignore the bonus to AC granted to a target in standard or lesser cover.

Type major; **Level** 16; **Price** 2,000 gp

You ignore the bonus to AC granted to a target in greater, standard, or lesser cover.

GOLDEN SILENCER

ITEM 6+

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE ILLUSION MAGICAL TALISMAN

Usage affixed to a firearm; **Bulk** L

Activate ◆ Interact; **Requirements** You're an expert in Stealth.

The Golden Gunners are dreaded for their use of their *golden silencers*, which they put to good use in clandestine raids. They silence both the loud gunshot and the screams of creatures wounded by its shot. A weapon with a *golden silencer* attached emits no light and makes no noise when fired. A target hit by a ranged Strike from the affixed weapon must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or be silenced as well until the start of its next turn. A silenced creature can't call for help or use sonic abilities, nor can it use abilities with the auditory trait. This prevents it from casting spells that include verbal components.

Type standard; **Level** 6; **Price** 50 gp

Type greater; **Level** 10; **Price** 200 gp

The save DC is 27, and the silence effect on the target creature lasts for up to 1 minute. The silenced creature can attempt a new Fortitude save at the end of each of its turns to end the duration early.

GOLDEN SPUR

ITEM 11

UNCOMMON CONJURATION CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TALISMAN TELEPORTATION

Price 300 gp

Usage affixed to a firearm or crossbow; **Bulk** –

Activate ◆ command; **Trigger** You hit a target within 120

feet with the affixed weapon; **Requirements** You're a master in Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion.

This *golden spur* is affixed to a weapon by a braided leather cord. You teleport to a space you can see within 10 feet of the target. You must have line of effect to the space.

LIQUID GOLD

ITEM 6+

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE EVOCATION MAGICAL TALISMAN

Usage affixed to a one-handed firearm or hand crossbow; **Bulk** –

Activate ♦ Interact; **Trigger** You roll for initiative; **Requirements** You're an expert in Stealth.

This glass vial containing liquid gold is fastened to a weapon by a fine gold chain.

Type *liquid gold*; **Level** 6; **Price** 40 gp

You draw the attached weapon as a free action instead of as a reaction.

Type *greater liquid gold*; **Level** 8; **Price** 80 gp

You load the weapon as you draw it.

GYROSCOPIC STABILIZER

ITEM 4

UNCOMMON DIVINATION MAGICAL

Price 115 gp

Usage attached to a two-handed firearm; **Bulk** L

A *gyroscopic stabilizer* appears as a gold disk suspended within three rotating golden bands inside a gilded case, itself attached to a set of clamps. These clamps allow you to attach the gyroscopic stabilizer to any one-handed firearm as an Interact action.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per hour; **Requirements** The *gyroscopic stabilizer* is attached to a one-handed firearm without the fatal or fatal aim traits; **Effect** The *gyroscopic stabilizer* begins spinning for 1 minute. While the *gyroscopic stabilizer* is spinning, the weapon it's attached to gains the fatal aim weapon trait (*Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 232) with a die one size larger than its damage die (maximum d12). This allows you to wield it in two hands to grant it the fatal trait.

MANA WASTES ARMAMENTS

The mutants of the Mana Wastes are living reminders of the region's terrible warping power. While their deep-seated distrust of magic drives their reliance on inventive, non-magical technology, they still find ways to utilize magic in their creations—even if it's a bit more unpredictable and dangerous to craft magical items in the Spellscar Desert.

HARPOON BOLT

ITEM 4

UNCOMMON CONJURATION CONSUMABLE MAGICAL

Price 15 gp

Ammunition round

This iron spike can be fitted into the barrel of a two-handed

firearm that doesn't have the scatter property with an Interact action. The spike is attached to a 50-foot-long coil of rope held in a simple spool that can be attached to a weapon's barrel. The weight and awkward balance of the bolt and its spool reduce the range of the weapon by 10 feet when fired. A creature hit by a *harpoon bolt* takes normal damage from the shot and must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save. On a failure, the *harpoon bolt* becomes lodged in its body.

Once a *harpoon bolt* is lodged, a creature can remove the *harpoon bolt* with a DC 18 check to Escape or Force Open, but on a failure, the creature takes 1d4 piercing damage. As long as the *harpoon bolt* remains lodged, the creature can't move more than 50 feet away from you. You can attempt to Trip a creature by tugging on the rope attached to the *harpoon bolt*, even if it isn't within your reach, but if you fail this attempt, the bolt rips free, causing 1d4 piercing damage to the target but releasing it from the bolt. If you reload, drop, or fire the firearm again, the creature is no longer limited in its movement. Once a *harpoon bolt* is removed from a creature, the bolt, its rope, and the spool all decay away, consumed by the same magic that empowers the unusual ammunition to function in the first place.

JAX

ITEM 8

UNIQUE LN CURSED DIVINE EVOCATION INTELLIGENT

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** 1

Perception +13; precise vision 30 feet, imprecise hearing 30 feet

Communication empathy

Skills Diplomacy +14, Survival +16

Int +1, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

Will +18

Jax was a caravan guard who died defending her charges from a pack of Lamashtan cultists in the Spellscar Desert. Her spirit of fury and hopelessness infused her weapon upon her death, imbuing the firearm with a fragment of her soul and intelligence. The rifle, upon awakening, remembered just enough of Jax's former life to think of her former wielder's name as her own.

Jax is a +1 *striking fearsome piercing wind* (*Guns & Gears* 159) whose driving purpose is to protect innocent travelers in the Spellscar Desert from raiders, bandits, and cultists. Jax allows any creature to wield her, but she doesn't reveal her intelligence or powers until she detects an innocent in danger or if her wielder has proven themselves a worthy champion of justice. If she deems a wielder to be unworthy, Jax uses her *dominate* ability to control the wielder until she can find a new one.

If ever used to attack an innocent traveler, or if, in Jax's opinion, the attack could be considered banditry, the weapon automatically misfires. If Jax witnesses an innocent harmed or killed, she empathically urges her

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

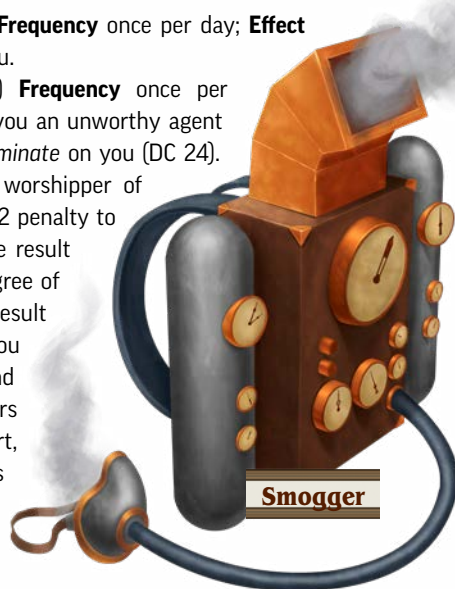
Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

wielder to avenge the victim. If the wielder doesn't comply, *Jax* attempts to cast *dominate* (below). Even if the *dominate* spell fails, *Jax* withholds all magical abilities, including the +1 *weapon potency* rune and *striking* rune, until her wielder redeems herself.

Activate ⬢⬢ (command) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** *Jax* casts *heroism* on you.

Activate ⬢⬢ (command) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** *Jax* deems you an unworthy agent of justice. She casts *dominate* on you (DC 24). If you're chaotic or a worshipper of Lamashtu, you take a -2 penalty to your Will save, and the result of your save is one degree of success worse than the result you rolled. *Jax* orders you to fight banditry and protect innocent travelers in the Spellscar Desert, renewing the spell as often as necessary until you cease your lawless ways.



LODESTONE PELLET

ITEM 3

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 12 gp

Ammunition pellet

Activate ⬢ Interact

These round, black pellets are made from magically enhanced magnetic lodestone. They can be loaded into an air repeater or long air repeater. When activated, *lodestone pellets* provide a +1 circumstance bonus to ranged Strikes made against creatures made of metal or wearing metal armor.

SMOgger

ITEM 9

UNCOMMON CONJURATION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 600 gp

Usage worn backpack; **Bulk** 2

Some mutants savor the acrid smog of Alkenstar and the Gunworks. A *smogger* recreates this pollution by sucking in clean air and spewing it back out as pungent smog.

Activate ⬢⬢ (poison) Interact; **Frequency** once per hour;

Effect The *smogger* creates a 10-foot-radius emanation of smog centered on you, which moves with you. You and other creatures in the smog are concealed while inside the smog, and other creatures are concealed to you and other creatures in the smog. A strong wind doesn't disperse the smog but reduces it to a 5-foot-radius emanation. A creature that must breathe that begins its turn inside of the smog can choose to hold its breath as a free action for the round, but if it doesn't, it becomes sickened 1. The *smogger* can maintain this

effect for up to 1 minute, and the wearer of the *smogger* can Dismiss the effect.

Activate ⬢⬢ (poison) Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** The *smogger's* above activation is in effect; **Effect** The smog created by the

smogger thickens into a toxic element that burns the eyes, blisters flesh, and causes fits of coughing. All creatures in the smog cloud, including you, must attempt a DC 32 Fortitude save—creatures that must breathe and aren't holding their breath take a -2 circumstance penalty to this save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is sickened 1.

Failure The creature is sickened 1 (or increases their sickened condition value to 2 if it isn't holding its breath). The creature also takes 4d6 poison damage.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature takes 8d6 poison damage.

THUNDER HELM

ITEM 5

UNCOMMON CONJURATION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 160 gp

Usage worn headwear; **Bulk** L

The creator of the original *thunder helm* tried and failed time and again to craft a reliable, helmet-mounted firearm that enabled hands-free gunplay, but even after resorting to magical enhancements, they were never quite able to realize their vision. The allure of the *thunder helm* continues to compel certain mindsets in the Mana Wastes, and these items continue to be crafted to this day.

A *thunder helm* appears as a cylindrical iron helmet adorned with a crown-like display of gun barrels extending out in all directions. A slit in the front allows for limited visibility, while sound is muffled by the inner lining. As long as a creature wears a *thunder helm*, it takes a -1 circumstance penalty to auditory and visual Perception checks but also gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saving throws against auditory and visual effects.

Activate ⬢⬢ envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The helm's gun barrels swivel and aim randomly, then conjure enough gunpowder and bullets to fire in all directions around you. Every creature within a 20-foot emanation takes 4d6 piercing damage (DC 19 basic Reflex save). When determining a creature's resistance or immunity to this damage, use the weaker of the target's resistance or immunity to piercing or bludgeoning.

VESTIGES OF BRIGH

Brigh's holy relics are taken apart, studied, copied, replicated, and reproduced by her faithful in an endless cycle of improvement and optimization. Whether any

one item came from Brigh herself or is a copy of a copy of one that originated from her is immaterial, for they all bear her inspiration.

AEON STONE (CLEAR QUARTZ OCTAGON) ITEM 4

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 90 gp

Usage worn; Bulk –

This clear quartz stone appears to have been smashed and then repaired by pouring molten copper into the cracks and fitting the shards back together using the copper as a sort of mortar. When a non-magical item in your possession with a value of 90 gp or less and a Bulk of 1 Bulk or less would become broken, this *aeon stone* automatically activates, preventing the item from breaking by restoring the item's current Hit Points to the item's maximum Hit Points. The stone then turns permanently into a *dull gray aeon stone*.

The stone's resonant power allows you to cast 1st-level *mending* as a divine innate spell once per day.



Aeon Stone (Clear Quartz Octagon)

CONTAINMENT CONTRAPTION ITEM 8

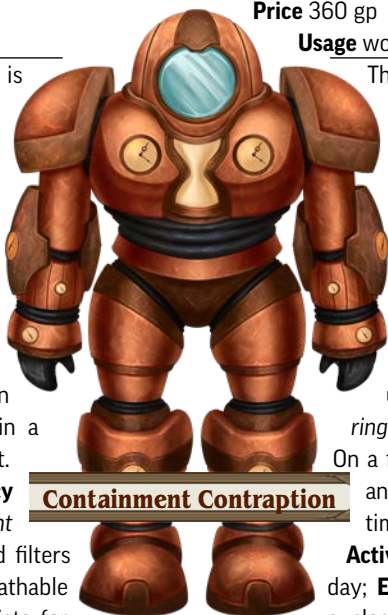
UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 500 gp

Usage worn armor; Bulk 6

This heavy, mechanized brass suit is studded with pistons, gears, dials, and gauges and topped with a front-facing thick glass porthole. The suit is a suit of +1 *full plate*. While worn, it completely encloses you, providing protection against inhaled toxins—you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to all saving throws made against such effects. The suit isn't airtight, however, and doesn't protect against drowning if you're immersed in water or suffocation if you're placed in a vacuum—at least, not until you activate it.

Activate ♦ envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The *containment contraption* fills with breathable air and filters exterior air or water to create more breathable air for you, as needed. This state persists for up to 1 hour, during which time you can breathe normally in environments where you normally couldn't. During this time, your circumstance bonus to saving throws against inhaled toxins increases to +2, and you also gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saves against olfactory effects. This effect ends immediately if the *containment contraption* becomes broken.



Containment Contraption

METRONOMIC HAMMER ITEM 5

UNCOMMON EVOCATION MAGICAL

Price 160 gp

Usage held in 1 or 2 hands; Bulk 1

A polished brass metronome ticks rhythmically within the haft of this +1 *striking gnome hooked hammer*. Gnome adherents of Brigh often attempt to reproduce this item as part of a ritual symbolizing methodical problem-solving and thoughtful craftsmanship.

Activate ♫ envision; **Trigger** You attempt to Trip a creature with the *metronomic hammer*; **Effect** By timing the sweeping arcs of your Trip attempt to the built-in metronome of a *metronomic hammer*, you gain a +1 item bonus to your Athletics check to Trip the target. This item bonus increases by 1 with every subsequent Trip attempt you make with the *metronomic hammer* against the same target this turn, to a maximum of +3 on your third Trip. The bonus resets to +1 if you successfully Trip the target, if you critically fail to Trip the target, or if your turn ends.

WINDER'S RING ITEM 7

UNCOMMON MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 360 gp

Usage worn; Bulk –

This ring contains dozens of minute, interlocking bronze gears that buzz incessantly. The ring grants you a +1 item bonus to all Crafting checks to construct or repair clockworks.

Activate (varies) Interact; **Effect** The *winder's ring* extends a winding key that fits any clockwork contraption or creature, allowing you to fully wind a clockwork device or creature in half the usual time. When you activate a *winder's ring* in this way, attempt a DC 16 flat check. On a failure, the *winder's ring* exhausts itself, and you can't activate it again until the next time you make your daily preparations.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The *winder's ring* transforms into a clockwork spy (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 48) that doesn't require winding and obeys your spoken commands for up to 1 hour. In this form, the *winder's ring* has the minion trait. You can use this action again to return the clockwork spy to *winder's ring* form as long as you're adjacent to the clockwork spy. If the clockwork spy is slain, it reverts to its ring shape, and the *winder's ring* can't be activated again until 1 week has passed.



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

Adventure Toolbox



VERSATILE DESIGNS

Most clockwork builders design their mechanical minions to perform a single specific task, as in the case of the clockwork door warden or clockwork disposer. Though these constructs' intended functions are typically limited, creative owners can find workarounds or loopholes to exploit, effectively turning their single-purpose clockwork into a versatile guardian or servant. Of course, nearly every clockwork is pre-programmed to defend itself against foes, a function which typically requires no special action on the clockwork's part.

Clockwork

In the Grand Duchy of Alkenstar, the creation of constructs is complicated by the intermittent interference of the nearby Mana Wastes. Golems and animated objects depend on lengthy magical rituals that the magic-warping effects of the Wastes often disrupt, but clockwork constructs use far less magic in their creation. A clockwork device replaces magical intricacy with superb manufacturing skill, using magic only for the final acts of animating and powering the device. Skilled local creators and inventors rarely follow someone else's design, so most clockworks found in Alkenstar are custom creations with abilities designed for a specific purpose or individual's needs.

Additional rules on clockworks, including details on their Wind-Up ability, appear on page 48 of *Pathfinder Bestiary 3*.

CLOCKWORK DOOR WARDEN

This mechanical humanoid serves the role of a gatekeeper or even a greeter, but its strength also enables it to repel unwanted visitors.

CLOCKWORK DOOR WARDEN

CREATURE 4

RARE N MEDIUM CLOCKWORK CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Perception +12; darkvision

Skills Athletics +10 (+12 to Disarm or Grapple)

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** -5

Item repeating hand crossbow (*Guns & Gears* 63, 5 bolts)

Wind-Up 24 hours, DC 19, standby

AC 20; **Fort** +10 (+12 vs. Disarm), **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

HP 50; **Immunities** death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, sickened, unconscious; **Weaknesses** electricity 5, orichalcum 5; **Resistances** physical 5 (except adamantine or orichalcum)

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fist +14 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+7 bludgeoning plus Push

Ranged ♦ repeating hand crossbow +12 (range 60 feet, reload 0, repeating), **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

Brace Door ♦ The door warden holds shut an adjacent door. This ends the door warden's turn. Until the start of its next turn, as long as it remains functional and in the same square, other creatures trying to get through must succeed at a DC 21 Athletics check to Force Open the door.

Slam Door ↻ **Trigger** The door warden Pushes a creature through an open doorway; **Effect** The door warden slams the door shut on the creature.

CLOCKWORK DISPOSER

Wealthy business owners sometimes employ clockwork disposers to pick up trash around their establishment and keep the place tidy. Many are designed with handy (but dangerous) built-in furnaces, which they use to quickly incinerate collected refuse.

Clockwork Disposer

CLOCKWORK DISPOSER

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON N SMALL CLOCKWORK CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Perception +13; darkvision

Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +12

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

Wind-Up 24 hours, DC 20, standby

AC 21; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +9

HP 70; **Immunities** death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, sickened, unconscious; **Weaknesses** electricity 5, orichalcum 5; **Resistances** physical 5 (except adamantine or orichalcum)

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ gripper +15 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d8+4 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ spike +15 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d8+4 piercing

Furnace Belch ♦♦ (fire) The clockwork disposer coughs up a cloud of hot ash and embers that deals 6d6 fire damage in a 15-foot cone (DC 22 basic Reflex save). The clockwork disposer can't use Furnace Belch again for 1d4 rounds.

CLOCKWORK SPHINX

This imposing construct resembles a bronze lion with the wings of a great bird and the head of a humanoid.

CLOCKWORK SPHINX

CREATURE 8

RARE N LARGE CLOCKWORK CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Perception +19; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +18

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** -5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -5

Wind-Up 24 hours, DC 24, standby

AC 26; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13

HP 130; **Immunities** death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, sickened, unconscious; **Weaknesses** electricity 10, orichalcum 10; **Resistances** physical 10 (except adamantine or orichalcum)

Self-Destruct (arcane, aura, evocation) When a clockwork sphinx is reduced to 0 Hit Points, it collapses and emits a steady ticking sound. At the beginning of what would've been its next turn, the sphinx explodes into a 20-foot emanation of shrapnel, dealing 6d10 piercing damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save). An adjacent creature can cancel the self-destruct sequence by succeeding at a DC 26 Thievery check to Disable a Device at any point before the sphinx explodes, but on a critical failure, it explodes immediately.

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ claw +20, **Damage** 2d12+9 slashing

Pounce ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The sphinx Strides and makes a Strike at the end of that movement. If the sphinx began this action hidden, it remains hidden until after the attack.



OTHER LOOKS

The clockwork sphinx bears a resemblance to an actual sphinx more out of tradition than any intrinsic requirement. As such, some creators build these creatures to resemble other flying quadrupedal creatures, such as chimeras, manticores, or even dragons. Regardless of appearance, the clockwork sphinx's statistics remain the same.



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
K...

Advent
Tool



Clockwork Sphinx



DAELUM CLAIMS

Officials in Alkenstar regularly refuse to recognize claims purchased by daelums and have been known to hand down heavy penalties even if the claim was otherwise legally purchased. It's not surprising then, that daelum cohorts prefer to operate far from Alkenstar or, barring that, to ally with gangs of mutants or outlaws hoping to eke valuable metals from the ground.

Daelum

During the height of the legendary war between Nex and Geb, Nex's agents grew increasingly creative in their "recruiting" methods for their armies. One such effort involved the construction of mechanical soldiers powered by arcane engines but directed by transplanted minds. While the process generally involved willing donors who were eager to give up dying bodies to "live on" in constructed frames, rumors persist that Nex harvested the minds of prisoners of war and criminals for these creations.

Today, thousands of years after those wars ended, hundreds of daelums still live. Their intellects have, in large part, fully embraced their new "lives," and very few remember their previous existences today. Daelums can be found throughout the Mana Wastes serving as guides, porters, mine workers, and mercenaries.

DAELUM

CREATURE 4

RARE N LARGE CONSTRUCT

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Common, Kelish, Osiriani

Skills Athletics +11, Mining Lore +10, Survival +11

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items pick

AC 21; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

HP 76; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, sickened, unconscious

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Speed 25 feet

Melee ➤ pick +13 (fatal d10, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+7 piercing

Melee ➤ claw +13 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d4+7 slashing

Melee ➤ hoof +13, **Damage** 2d6+7 bludgeoning

Belly Hatch The daelum can Interact to stow or remove an item from their belly hatch, which can hold up to 10 Bulk.

Gallop ➤➤ **Requirement** The daelum is in quadruped form; **Effect** The daelum Strides twice. They have a +10-foot circumstance bonus to their Speed during these Strides.

Shift Form ➤ The daelum transforms into a quadruped. While in this form, their Speed increases by 10 feet and they don't count the contents of their belly hatch against the total amount they can carry. The daelum can make hoof Strikes in quadruped form, but not pick or claw Strikes. Using this ability again returns the daelum to their bipedal form.

Smog Cloud ➤➤ (arcane, evocation, poison) The daelum unleashes a cloud of smog in a 10-foot emanation. The cloud persists for 3 rounds, but doesn't move with the daelum. All creatures within the cloud are concealed. A creature that begins its turn in the smog cloud must attempt a DC 18 Fortitude save (creatures that must breathe and don't hold their breath take a -2 circumstance penalty on their save).

Critical Success No effect and temporarily immune for 1 hour.

Success The creature is sickened 1.

Failure The creature is sickened 2.

Critical Failure The creature is sickened 2 and slowed 1.

Giant, Smog

Corrupting magical storms and the interference of unethical gear-smiths birthed the first of the so-called smog giants. These hot-tempered behemoths all originate from a clan of unfortunate hill giants which became so attuned to their strange environment they developed unique mutations and incredibly violent dispositions. For all their physical abnormalities, it's still fair to say the violent confrontations common along the Western Ravage are the true cause of smog giants' monstrous nature.

Smog giants can eat meat and bone, but they prefer diets of black powder and the raw materials that make up this alchemical concoction. Their bodies store repositories of the stuff infused with the unstable occult energies that lace their flesh, granting them the ability to "crack" these pockets of subdermal explosives when they attack, much like a tough cracking their knuckles during a fight. In this case however, the results are much more violent—especially when coupled with the large quantities of weaponized body piercings and adornments smog giants often wear.

SMOG GIANT

CREATURE 7

RARE CE LARGE GIANT HUMANOID

Perception +13; low-light vision

Languages Common, Jotun, Kelish

Skills Athletics +17, Intimidation +15, Survival +13

Str +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

AC 23; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +13

HP 145; **Immunities** ingested poisons; **Resistances** fire 10, poison 10

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Catch Rock ↻

Speed 35 feet

Melee ✦ headbutt +18, **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning

Melee ✦ fist +18 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+8 bludgeoning

Ranged ✦ shrapnel +16 (range 30 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 2d4+8 bludgeoning

Explosive Headbutt ✦✦ The smog giant cracks their neck, triggering pockets of black powder at the base of their skull to impart additional power to their attack. The giant then attempts a headbutt Strike. This counts as two attacks when calculating the giant's attack penalty. If this Strike hits, it deals 2d10+8 bludgeoning damage and the creature struck must attempt a DC 25 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature suffers no additional effect.

Success The creature takes an additional 1d10 bludgeoning damage.

Failure The creature takes an additional 2d10 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone if it's Large or smaller.

Critical Failure As failure, but without a size limit.

Shrapnel A smog giant has a dozen implanted knives, rocks, chunks of metal, spikes, and other adornments that they can fire from their body with great force to make ranged shrapnel Strikes. Once a smog giant has used all 12 shots, they must replace them one at a time using a 1-minute Interact activity.



BROW BEATING

Smog giants are fond of smashing their craniums together to establish dominance, under the logic that whoever's the strongest is usually right, with the first giant knocked prone being declared the loser. This simple ritual is used to determine rank, settle disputes, impress a mate, or even as a greeting between friends. Smog giant arguments are explosive, loud, violent, short, and sometimes fatal.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox





CREATING MUTANTS

In most cases, it's better to build a new Mana Wastes mutant from the ground up, using the standard rules for monster creation (this is how the mutants presented here were built). An existing creature can be turned into a Mana Wastes mutant by increasing its level (generally by 1 or 2), increasing its statistics accordingly, and giving it one or more of the Mana Wastes mutant abilities on this page.

Mana Wastes Mutant

The magic-warping effects of the Mana Wastes extend to the life forces of creatures unfortunate enough to become lost in the cursed desert. Those who undergo the wasteland's most dramatic metamorphoses are referred to as Mana Wastes mutants.

MANA WASTES MUTANT ABILITIES

All Mana Wastes mutants gain darkvision (replacing low-light vision if the creature had it), and the DC to Recall Knowledge about a mutant increases by 2. They usually have one or two of the following abilities, or potentially three if the mutant is 9th level or higher. If you apply these abilities to an existing creature, either raise the level and adjust the statistics, or remove some of the creature's abilities to make room for the new abilities.

Afflicting Strike The mutant must have a jaws, claw, sting, or other melee Strike to gain this ability. That Strike now inflicts a disease, poison, or similar affliction on a hit, with a Fortitude save to resist. You can use the rules for existing monsters of the mutant's level for diseases, poisons, and similar afflictions to give to your mutant, or you can simply say the strike inflicts an additional 1d6 poison damage + an additional 1d6 points per 4 mutant levels on a hit, with a basic Fortitude save. This makes the Strike significantly more deadly, so reduce the damage in other ways to account for this increase.

Energy Resistance The mutant has strangely colored skin or fur and gains resistance to a single type of energy damage. The amount of energy resistance gained depends on the mutant's level:

Mutant's Level	Energy Resistance
2 or lower	2
3-7	5
8-14	10
15+	15

Energy Blast ♦♦ (evocation, primal) Choose an energy type; this ability gains that energy type as a trait. The mutant gains some sort of physical alteration to its shape that suggests how it triggers its energy blast, be it numerous pustules on its body, an additional limb, or additional opening in its throat to exhale the blast as a breath weapon. Choose whether the mutant creates a 60-foot line of energy or a 30-foot cone of energy when it activates this ability. The energy deals 1d6 damage per level with a basic Reflex save. The mutant can't use Energy Blast again for 1d4 rounds.

Inoculation The mutant's flesh is distorted with the addition of unexpected fur, scales, warts, or other growths. The creature gains a +2 status bonus to saves against disease and poison. In rare cases, you might choose to grant immunity instead.

Increased Speed The mutant's limbs change, or it grows new limbs to accommodate its mutation. Either one of its existing Speeds increases by 20 feet, or it gains a new Speed (such as fly or swim) of 15 feet.

MUTANT TOAD

Mutant giant toads prefer to dwell in polluted refuse heaps, contaminated swaths of sand, or other poisonous wastes. Often afflicted with a vestigial face or limbs, its back is studded with acid-filled pustules.



MUTANT GIANT TOAD

CREATURE 3

RARE N LARGE ANIMAL MUTANT

Mana Wastes mutated giant toad (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 261)

Perception +9; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Athletics +10 (+12 to High Jump or Long Jump), Stealth +7

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -2

AC 18; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

HP 44; **Resistances** acid 5

Poisonous Warts As giant toad.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +12, **Damage** 1d8+7 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ tongue +12 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** tongue grab

Giant Toad Poison (poison) As giant toad, but DC 20.

Squirt Acid ♦♦ (acid, evocation, primal) The mutant giant toad squirts a 60-foot line of acid from the pustules on its back. Creatures in the area take 3d6 acid damage (DC 20 basic Reflex save). The mutant giant toad can't Squirt Acid for 1d4 rounds.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Medium, 1d8+3 bludgeoning, Rupture 8

Tongue Grab As giant toad.

MUTANT DESERT DRAKE

A mutant desert drake often dwells in regions where magic has transformed the desert sands into sheets of glass or growths of strangely growing crystals.

MUTANT DESERT DRAKE

CREATURE 9

RARE NE LARGE DRAGON EARTH MUTANT

Mana Wastes mutated desert drake (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 135)

Perception +17; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +19, Intimidation +14, Stealth +16, Survival +16

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** -1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

AC 28; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +15

HP 150; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious; **Resistances** electricity 18

Sensitive Eyes The mutant desert drake's cluster of extra eyes are connected to a gland that, when punctured, causes the drake to rush into a fury. When a desert drake takes damage from a critical hit, it becomes dazzled and quickened for 1 round.

Wing Deflection ♦ As desert drake.

Speed 20 feet, burrow 40 feet (sand only), fly 50 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +21, **Damage** 2d12+9 piercing plus 1d6 electricity

Melee ♦ tail +21 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+9 bludgeoning plus Push 5 feet

Draconic Frenzy ♦♦ As desert drake.

Sandstorm Breath ♦♦ (arcane, electricity, evocation) As desert drake, but DC 28.

Speed Surge ♦ (move) As desert drake.

Surprise Attacker As desert drake.



OTHER MUTANTS

The Mana Wastes are notorious for the production of mutants but the strange energies of the Spellscar Desert are far from the only things that can transform a creature into a mutant. You can use the rules for creating a Mana Wastes mutant to create any sort of mutated creature, such as might occur after exposure to otherworldly radiation in Numeria, succumbing to planar effects from a chaotic outer plane, imbibing a potent mutagen like the notorious milk of Lamashtu, or suffering potent side effects from a ritual gone catastrophically wrong.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox





WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The original name for this frightening construct has been lost to time, with the farcical nickname of "scarecrophagus" granted it by a band of particularly infamous adventuring bards. As their comedic tales spread throughout the Impossible Lands, the name quickly stuck. The original creators of the monsters were, no doubt, displeased.

Scarecrophagus

Originally created by Gebbite necromancers during the war against Nex, the scarecrophagus is an evil construct that draws power directly from the undead mummy trapped forever within its sealed core. This necromantic energy is channeled throughout the construct's body, allowing it to scuttle about on legs of stone, animate tentacles to strike at foes, and use the mummy's trapped mind for its own sapience and magical powers.

SCARECROPHAGUS

CREATURE 6

RARE **LE** **LARGE** **CONSTRUCT**

Perception +14; darkvision, magic sense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common, Necril, Osiriani

Skills Athletics +15

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Magic Sense (magical) The scarecrophagus detects the presence of magic items and spell effects within 30 feet as an imprecise sense.

AC 24; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +10, **Will** +16

HP 100; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, sickened, unconscious

Despair (aura, divine, emotion, enchantment, fear, incapacitation, mental) 30 feet. Living creatures are frightened 1 while in a scarecrophagus' despair aura. They can't naturally recover from this fear while in the emanation but recover instantly once they leave it. When a creature first enters the emanation, it must succeed at a DC 22 Will save (after taking the penalty from being frightened 1) or be paralyzed for 1 round. The creature is then temporarily immune to this paralysis for 24 hours.

Disgorge Mummy If a scarecrophagus is reduced to 0 Hit Points by any damage other than positive energy, it cracks open as it's destroyed, allowing the undead mummy trapped for eons within its core to rise. This is a weak mummy guardian (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 240); if the mummy guardian survives on its own for a month, it loses the weak adjustment. If the scarecrophagus is reduced to 0 Hit Points by positive energy, it cracks open as it's destroyed and the mummy within turns to dust, destroyed as well.

Vulnerable to Positive Energy A scarecrophagus takes damage from positive energy as if it were an undead creature.

Speed 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Melee ♦ tentacle +15 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet),

Damage 2d6+7 bludgeoning

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 24, attack +16; **3rd** *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, *wall of wind*; **2nd** *acid arrow*, *dispel magic* (×2); **1st** *magic missile* (×2), *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips** (3rd) *daze*, *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *shield*, *tanglefoot*

Sarcophagus ♦ (concentrate) Until the next time it acts, the scarecrophagus appears to be a normal stone sarcophagus. It has an automatic result of 34 on Deception checks and DCs to pass as a sarcophagus.

Shifting Scuttle ♦ **Frequency** once per turn; **Effect** The scarecrophagus Steps up to 10 feet.



Trapjaw Tangle

Sometimes the best intentions result in dire consequences and even a successful project can turn into an unending nightmare. Such is the grim tale of the first trapjaw tangles. These mechanical swarms were initially created as a solution to the pestilence of mutated rodents that plagued Alkenstar. These mobile rat traps, bound together by a magical matrix of occult energy, were programmed to wait in ambush or chase down their prey. The first trapjaw tangles proved effective and their creators were well rewarded for their ingenious designs. Soon trapjaw tangles were deployed throughout Alkenstar, Martel, and the Gunworks. Waves of them would be sent to roam into the Spellscar Desert, and the ever-present vermin were quickly forgotten.

Then disaster struck. A rogue wave of magical energy washed over an airship that carried a trapjaw tangle in its hold. The magical affliction scrambled the tangle's programming and gave the swarm just enough intellect to send it on a red frenzy through the ship. When the airship crashed into the outskirts of Alkenstar, its crew perished but the infected tangle survived to infect every trapjaw it met with the same deadly scrambling of magic. Now, trapjaw tangles are an even greater menace to society than the vermin they were originally designed to eradicate.

TRAPJAW TANGLE

CREATURE 5

RARE N LARGE CONSTRUCT SWARM

Perception +11; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +6 (+10 to Trip and Tangle), Stealth +13

Str -1, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2

AC 22; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

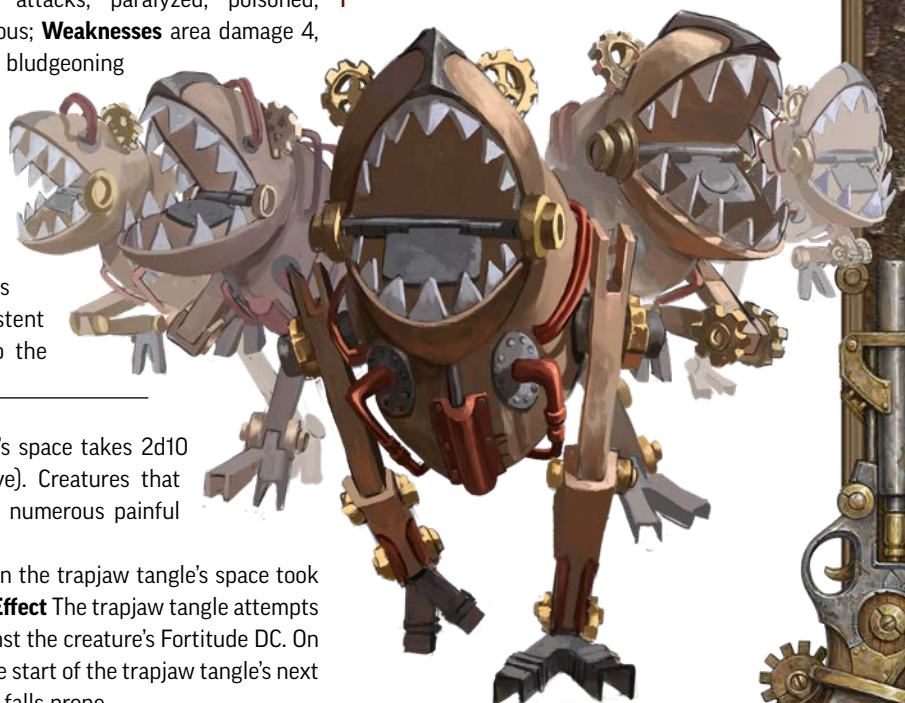
HP 58; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, precision, sickened, swarm mind, unconscious; **Weaknesses** area damage 4, electricity 8, splash damage 4; **Resistances** bludgeoning 4, piercing 8, slashing 8

Cling ➤ **Trigger** A creature leaves the trapjaw tangle's space; **Effect** The swarm takes 1d6 damage as individual traps cling to the creature and continue chewing, dealing 2d10 persistent slashing damage. High winds or electricity damage reduces the DC of the flat check to end this persistent damage by 5. Any area damage dealt to the creature destroys these clinging trapjaws.

Speed 25 feet

Snapping Jaws ➤ Each enemy in the swarm's space takes 2d10 slashing damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save). Creatures that fail this save become sickened 1 from the numerous painful wounds caused by the swarm.

Trip and Tangle ➤ **Requirements** A creature in the trapjaw tangle's space took damage from the swarm during this round; **Effect** The trapjaw tangle attempts an Athletics check with a +10 modifier against the creature's Fortitude DC. On a success, the creature is flat-footed until the start of the trapjaw tangle's next turn. On a critical success, the creature also falls prone.



TRAPJAW FACTORIES

The engineers of Alkenstar created large trapjaw factories to meet the initial demand for these constructions. By design, these factories were erected near the edges of the city, where the trapjaws could be released easily to effectively combat vermin originating in the Spellscar Desert. Today these factories lie dormant or have been repurposed. However, there's speculation that some hidden factories still function, filled to the racks with trapjaw tangles awaiting their next hunt.

Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

Ambrost Mugland

Cutthroat Underworld Mogul

Ambrost Mugland is one of the most powerful underworld kingpins in Alkenstar—at least to hear him tell it. In truth, he's a mid-level crime lord with an ego far larger than his coffers. In spite of his petty and delusional personality (or perhaps because of it), he's nonetheless a very dangerous man to cross. Mugland believes he's worked hard to get to where he is today, and he's grown used to having everything he feels he deserves: money, power, and infamy. His most strongly held conviction of all though, is that he's totally immune from any negative consequences of his actions.

Mugland comes from humble beginnings but always had a taste for the finer things in life. His parents owned a tavern on the outskirts of posh Graeson's Fingers, and from an early age the boy practiced taking advantage of patrons too distracted or deep in their cups to notice the server boy picking their pockets. His mischief extended to extracurricular activities when he fell in with some friends his parents deemed "undesirables"—cutpurses, cons, charlatans, and all the rest. He left home for good when he was just 12 years old to join one of Alkenstar's many nameless gangs of miscreant youths.

Mugland swiftly built a reputation as one of the most ruthless go-getters in the city. He was a keen lookout and scout, known for his quick wits and feet; within a year, he was second in command. Shortly after that, the gang's leader was found dead in his room one night. Mugland assumed control and motivated his underlings with the promise of revenge. So spurred, Mugland and his goons set about enacting one of the grandest campaigns in Alkenstar's criminal underworld. They eliminated potential rivals, cut deals with corrupt shieldmarshals, cowed businesses into protection rackets, invested in unsavory businesses, and consolidated Mugland's control. At the apex of his power, he betrayed every last one of the minions who helped him ascend to the highest echelons of organized crime, leaving a river of blood in his wake.

He can shed his public persona of the cunning businessman in an instant, revealing a cold-hearted killer devoid of mercy and regret.

These days, Mugland is a silent partner in a number of successful inns and taverns in Alkenstar, brokering protection from one of his hired gangs in exchange for a cut of the take. He has repeatedly tried to bring Vivielle Ramslay and the Steaming Kingdom under his umbrella but has been rebuffed at every turn. Theft, extortion, and murder continue to be the tools of Mugland's trade—tools he wielded to dramatic effect against the protagonists of this Adventure Path shortly before launching on his latest criminal crusade.

When Mugland witnessed Vashon Gattlebee's pyronite exhibition at Blythir College, he knew he had to get his hands on the deadly new invention. To say nothing of what it could do for him personally should he wield it against his rivals, pyronite also promised Mugland a fortune in blood money if he could find the right buyers. With the help of his highest-ranking accomplice among the shieldmarshals, a corrupt deputy named Anjelique Loveless, Mugland located not one, but two customers: a Nexian and a Gebbite who both claimed to seek pyronite to bolster their side of the interminable war between their nations.

Mugland's persistence has paid off in the past, but it seems his luck may have finally run out. He's all but gone bankrupt funding his pyronite scheme, which has been stymied at every turn by the betrayed outlaws he'd all but disregarded. It's too late to turn back, so Mugland continues to double down on his plans to seize pyronite, heedless of the potentially dire consequences.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Ambrost Mugland, along with Deputy Anjelique Loveless, the crooked high-ranking shieldmarshal he's (so far) kept in his pocket, functions as a common nemesis to unite the characters during their early adventures. The *Outlaws of Alkenstar Player's Guide* includes backgrounds that give the characters different reasons they might hold a grudge against this brutal business tycoon or Deputy Loveless, and the assumed personal impetus for much of this Adventure Path is to enact vengeance against this craven crook. Beyond these origin stories though, Mugland is also the chief instigator of the campaign's central events—it's by

his hand that the secrets of pyronite are released to Alkenstar and, potentially, beyond. Unfortunately for Mugland, his grandiose pursuit ultimately cost him his entire fortune. After the characters stop the Gilded Gunners' assault on the Steaming Kingdom in Chapter 3 of this volume, Mugland has nowhere left to turn. He's forced to concede to the Gunners' demands, taking up residence with them until he can settle his debt.

This precarious situation is what finally allows the party to corner Mugland and settle their score with their otherwise-untouchable archenemy. When the player characters meet the Gilded Gunners' leader, Sabora Sharkosa, in Chapter 4 of this adventure, they can either spend their hard-earned capital to strike a deal with her so she'll hand over Mugland peacefully, or they can fight their way through the Gilded Gunners to reach their target by force. Either way, Mugland—spiteful to the very end—doesn't go down without a fight.

AMBROST MUGLAND

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE NE SMALL HALFLING HUMANOID

Male halfling criminal mogul

Perception +14

Languages Common, Halfling, Osiriani

Skills Acrobatics +16, Alkenstar Lore +16, Athletics +14, Deception +18, Intimidation +18, Society +18, Stealth +18, Thievery +18, Underworld Lore +16

Str +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +4

Items cane pistol (10 rounds; *Guns & Gears* 159), +1 striking dueling pistol (10 rounds; *Guns & Gears* 152), eroding bullet (5; *Guns & Gears* 169)

AC 26; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +19, **Will** +17

HP 140

Deny Advantage Mugland isn't flat-footed to creatures of 8th level or lower that are hidden, undetected, flanking, or using Surprise Attack (*Advanced Player's Guide* 158).

Evasion When Mugland rolls a success on a Reflex save, he gets a critical success instead.

Exploit Blunder **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet rolls a critical failure to Strike Mugland; **Effect** With a sneer, Mugland takes advantage of the opening. He makes a ranged *dueling pistol* or *cane pistol* Strike against the triggering creature. The creature is flat-footed to Mugland's attacks (including this one) until the beginning of its next turn. This attack doesn't count toward Mugland's multiple attack penalty, and his multiple attack penalty doesn't apply to this attack.

Slippery Dodge **Trigger** Mugland is hit by a Strike, but wouldn't be hit with a +2 circumstance bonus to AC;

Effect Mugland gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack and the attack misses.

Speed 25 feet

Melee **◆** cane pistol +15 (critical fusion, thrown 10 feet),

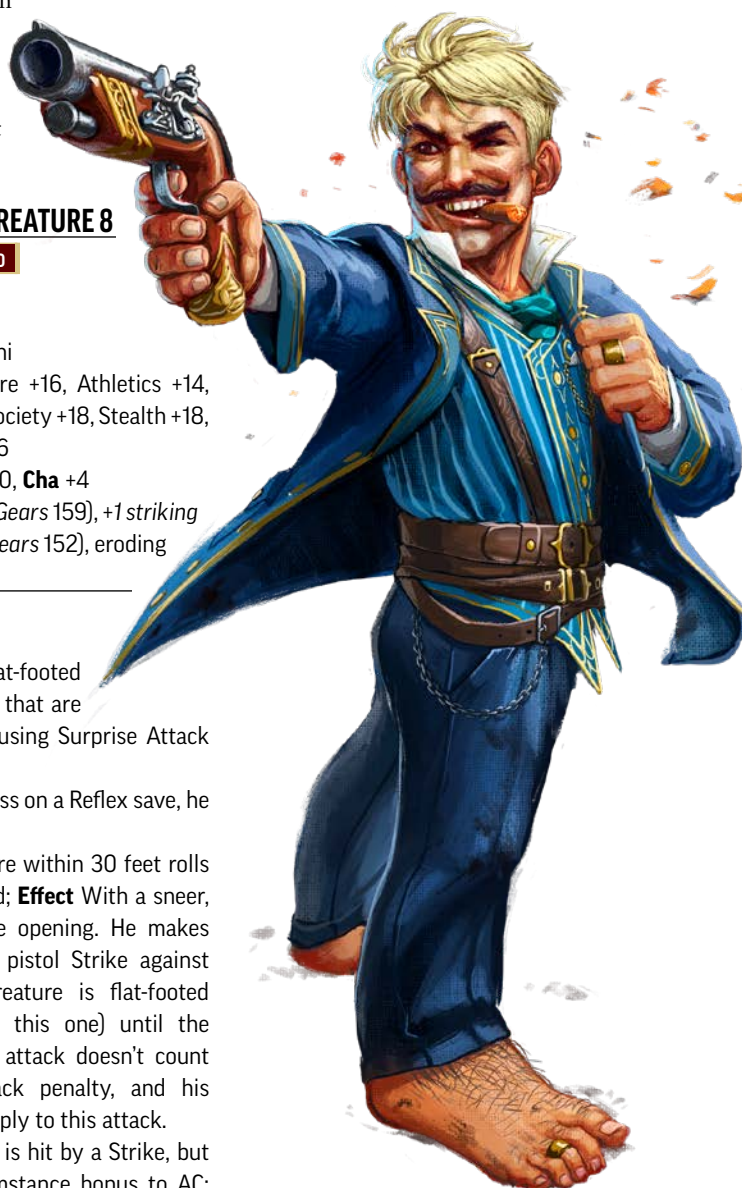
Damage 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Ranged **◆** *dueling pistol* +19 (concealable, concussive, fatal d10, magical, range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing

Ranged **◆** cane pistol +18 (combination, concussive, fatal d8, range increment 30 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d4+6 piercing

Quick Draw **◆** Mugland Interacts to draw a weapon, then Strikes with that weapon.

Sneak Attack Mugland deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming Kingdom

Spellscar Desert

Adventure Toolbox

Sabora Sharkosa

Leader of the Gilded Gunners

Sabora Sharkosa was born on a ranch half a day's ride from Alkenstar in the harsh Spellscar Desert. Though life was tough, she inherited her father's determination and her mother's fighting spirit. Growing up in the Mana Wastes gave her a pragmatic sense of honor and justice.

One night, a stranger collapsed on the Sharkosas' doorstep, weak from days of stumbling through the wilderness. He carried a mysterious bundle in his burn-scarred hands. Asking no questions, the family took him in and nursed him back to health as they would any living being. The man, a gunsmith named Regaro, recovered and quickly became a fixture around the farm, repairing the clockwork machines and improving the ranch's vital wind pumps. He even taught Sabora and her brothers hand-to-hand fighting and how to shoot. Sabora proved to be his best student, often matching her brother's strength with her speed and technique.

Then one night, the shieldmarshals of Alkenstar arrived. Regaro confessed to the family he was a wanted man and revealed a pair of gold-studded gloves in the bundle he'd been carrying the night he first appeared. He fled into the desert, the shieldmarshals on his heels. Sabora followed after. That was the last she ever saw of her home.

Regaro and Sharkosa traveled together for many months until the gunsmith met his undignified end on the streets of Alkenstar, shot in the back by petty thieves. From that day on, Sharkosa wore Regaro's golden gloves on her fists and golden pistol in her holster. She assembled Regaro's closest allies to avenge their fallen friend, but the group stayed together even after justice had been dealt, with Sharkosa now their de facto leader. By the time they excavated a hideout along the banks of the Ustradi, the group had grown into a veritable street gang, though one known more for ruthless efficiency than wanton violence. To Sharkosa, the Gilded Gunners, as they soon called themselves, were never in it for the money or power, but rather the support and camaraderie they offered one another. For many members, the Gunners are as close to a real family as they've ever had, and Sharkosa takes this responsibility seriously.

That said, Sharkosa is no saint and the Gilded Gunners aren't a charity. Back on the farm, workers who were lazy or sloppy didn't get hired for the next harvest. Sharkosa runs the Gilded Gunners with the same ethos, brooking no cowards, hypocrites, or slackers. Though she'll go to great lengths for Gunners who have proven their loyalty, she's also quick to berate or banish them if they step out of line or besmirch the honor of the group.

As for the Gilded Gunners' goals: Sharkosa is primarily concerned about the strength and honor of her gang. She loans her group's skills to high-paying clients, mainly for assassinations or robberies, though Sharkosa rarely takes part in the jobs herself anymore. Instead, she administers the Gilded Gunners' schemes from their headquarters, the so-called Gilded Halls, though she also trains for hours every day in isolation to maintain her incredible strength and speed.

As she fights dummies and performs drills, part of her heart is always with Regaro and her family back in the Mana Wastes. She sometimes dreams of leaving the gang to go back home and live with her aging parents, but something dark and heavy within always prevents her from truly considering such a possibility. In her heart of hearts, Sharkosa believes she has spilled too much blood to ever again be worthy of her old life. Some nights, she lies awake in her spartan bed, staring up at the ceiling, questioning everything that has led to her present circumstances. During such dark hours, she commandeers the Gilded Halls' training area and puts everything she has into each punch and kick.

The Gunners' gilded equipment and golden bullet casings are an aesthetic as well as a way of life. To Sharkosa, gold is the perfect status symbol and a mark of her gang's magnificence. In her own words, "The gold standard always passes the acid test." Meaning, there are no shortcuts to success—only true grit can ever suffice.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

The Gilded Gunners have been a recurring threat for the characters since the beginning of this Adventure Path, but Sharkosa herself only becomes a known quantity in the latter half of "Cradle of Quartz." After

her gang's failed siege on the Steaming Kingdom, the characters learn that Sharkosa's holding Ambrost Mugland prisoner in the Gilded Gunners' hideout until he can pay off his debt to her. The time is finally right for the party to attack Mugland and get their sweet revenge, but Sharkosa stands in the way. A formidable combatant, she offers the characters a choice: they can either pay off Mugland's debt—in which case she'll gladly hand him over—or they can fight their way through her and her best lieutenants.

SABORA SHARKOSA

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM ELF HALF-ELF HUMAN HUMANOID

Female half-elf martial artist gang leader

Perception +16; low-light vision

Languages Common, Elven, Kelish, Osiriani

Skills Acrobatics +17, Alkenstar Lore +11, Athletics +17, Deception +15, Diplomacy +15, Society +11, Stealth +17, Thievery +17

Str +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

Items +1 striking knuckle dusters (*Guns & Gears* 152), +1 striking dueling pistol (*Guns & Gears* 152; 10 rounds), meteor shot (*Guns & Gears* 171)

AC 25; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +17, **Will** +13

HP 120

Quickest Draw **Requirements** Sharkosa is aware of at least one of her enemies and not flat-footed;

Trigger Sharkosa rolls for initiative;

Effect Sharkosa makes two melee Strikes, or draws her pistol and makes a ranged Strike, against an enemy she is aware of.

Speed 30 feet

Melee **knuckle duster** +16 (agile, free-hand, magical), **Damage** 2d4+10 bludgeoning plus concussive fist

Ranged **dueling pistol** +16 (concealable, concussive, fatal d10, magical, range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing

Concussive Fist (incapacitation) A living creature hit by Sharkosa's *knuckle duster* must attempt a DC 23 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is immune to this ability for the next 24 hours.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature is confused for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature is confused for 1 round and falls prone.

Golden Bullets (arcane, transmutation) Sharkosa's supernatural connection to gold allows her to alter

the trajectory of her gold-cased bullets in flight. As long as her target is within 120 feet, Sharkosa gains a +1 circumstance bonus to ranged Strikes against targets with lesser cover and a +2 circumstance bonus to ranged Strikes against targets with standard or greater cover.

One-Two Punch Sharkosa makes three melee Strikes with her *knuckle duster*. Each Strike counts against her multiple attack penalty as usual.

Reload Trick **Requirements** No enemies are within 60 feet of Sharkosa and her *dueling pistol* is loaded; **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** Sharkosa makes two *dueling pistol* Strikes, reloading after each shot.

Sneak Attack Sharkosa deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



Cradle of Quartz

Chapter 1:
The High
Priest's Puzzle

Chapter 2:
Searching the
Spellscar

Chapter 3:
The Cradle of
Quartz

Chapter 4:
The Steaming
Kingdom

Spellscar
Desert

Adventure
Toolbox

Next Month

THE SMOKING GUN

by Cole Kronewitter

With the chips down and the cards stacked against them, our crew of vengeance-seeking vigilantes must infiltrate Alkenstar's upper crust in order to clear their names and halt a villain's plot to bring the city to its knees. In this action-packed finale, the characters must pull off a daring high-rise heist at a garish gala, shut down a necromancer's shocking schemes in a volatile hydropower plant, and dismantle their last remaining rival's master plan aboard a luxury gearboat.

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