

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER®



MYTH-SPEAKER

ADVENTURE PATH

Death Sails a Wine-Dark Sea

By Brian Duckwitz

THE ARCHIPELAGO'S MYTHIC POWER—LONG DORMANT—HAS AWOKEN! THE CYCLOPES PROCLAIM THE ASCENSION OF NEW HERO-GODS, AND IBLYDOS REJOICES.

OH IBLYDOS, GRANT THESE NEW DIVINITIES THE WISDOM TO GUIDE THE ISLANDS TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE. GRANT THEM THE COMPASSION TO SHARE THEIR BLESSINGS WITH ALL, GREAT AND SMALL, SHOWERING THE PEOPLE WITH PROSPERITY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. GUIDE THEIR STEPS AS THEY SCALE IMPOSSIBLE PEAKS, CLASH WITH NAMELESS LEVIATHANS, AND DEBATE THE SKY ITSELF. MAY THEIR GREAT DEEDS BE CHRONICLED TO INSPIRE GENERATIONS TO COME.

OH IBLYDOS, GRANT THESE FAVORS, FOR THE HERO-GODS' FUTURE IS NOT YET WRITTEN. THE PEOPLE PRAY THAT THESE CHAMPIONS WILL RESTORE IBLYDOS TO ITS PAST GLORY AND LEAD IT INTO A GRAND FUTURE. YET THESE HERO-GODS MIGHT BE THE LAST OF THEIR KIND—GRANTED ONLY ENOUGH POWER TO DEAL THE KILLING BLOW TO A DYING MYTHIC TRADITION. MAY THEY CHOOSE WISELY.



PATHFINDER

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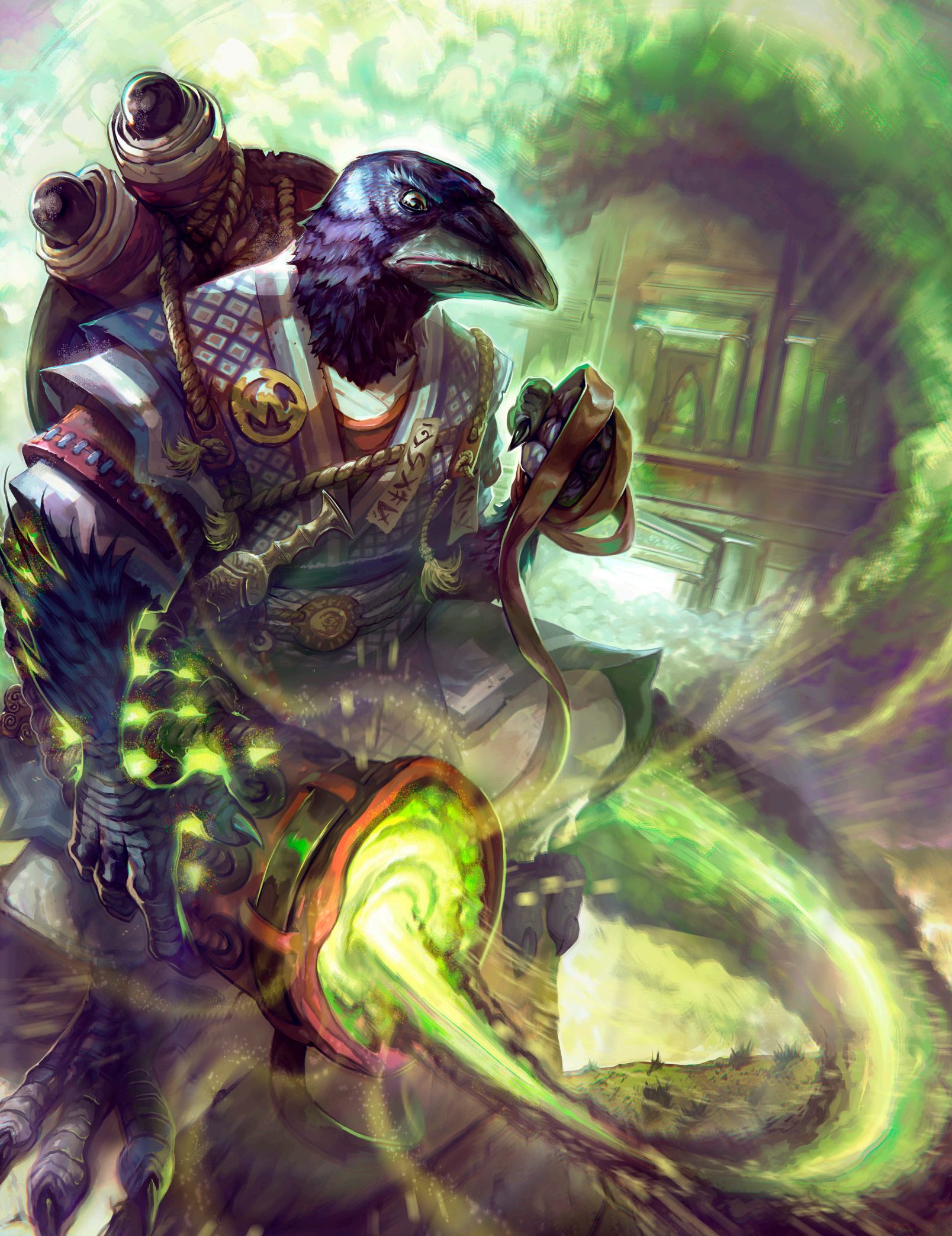
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Chapter 1: Riddle of Immortality4

The PCs' mythic power has awoken, yet it threatens to overwhelm their bodies and destroy them from the inside. The PCs seek out a sphinx sage versed in mythic power, hoping her wisdom can help them control their new abilities. However, the sphinx's price is a riddle whose answer is hidden across her island domain. If the PCs can't solve the riddle in time, they might become the sphinx's prey!

Chapter 2: Food of the Gods 22

To control their mythic power, the PCs must descend to the Iblydan afterlife, yet they'll never survive the journey as mortals. If they're to return, they must fortify their bodies with the ambrosia brewed by the mythic bees of a titanic hive. Then, they must claim a temple—built by a long-dead minotaur and now shrouded in a toxic miasma—for their burgeoning cult, knowing their followers prayers will serve as a beacon to guide them back to the realm of the living.

Chapter 3: To Fields Below 42

Fortified by ambrosia, the PCs descend to the Iblydan afterlife of Amneros, a realm hidden within Pharamasma's Spire. Their voyage involves sailing down the maw of an enormous sea beast, navigating the afterlife's ever-changing city, dealing with the realm's possessive ruler, and finally meeting with past hero-gods to receive their blessings and invaluable wisdom—all before making a hasty escape!

WHEN SOMEONE ASKS IF YOU'RE A GOD...

...do you say yes?

At least in this Adventure Path, the assumed answer is yes. Early in Chapter 1, the PCs begin attracting a cult following that recognizes them as the newest hero-gods of Iblydos. By Chapter 2, the PCs have direct control of their cult, using the rules for cult management that begin on page 62. This subsystem continues for the rest of the Adventure Path, providing the PCs a small religion of their own design and the useful contributions of their congregation.

That said, some groups might not enjoy running cults. It might be they'd rather focus on the adventure. Perhaps some players are happy to roleplay in a fantasy world that has gods, but they aren't comfortable actually masquerading as god-like beings. Whatever the reason, it's possible to dial back the cult aspects. Consider some of the following.

Additional Treasure: Cult management can earn the PCs additional wealth and Mythic Points. Without a cult and its Generate Wonders activity, the PCs should earn about 5-10% more wealth to make up for the loss. The PCs will also have about 1 fewer Mythic Point per character per chapter, which might warrant providing an additional opportunity to regain a Mythic Point while adventuring.

Chapter 2: The PCs might not need Vaveilos for their cult, but the site can instead be an important site connected to Amneros, providing an exit point they must secure.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Death Sails a Wine-Dark Sea" is designed for four characters.

- 4** The PCs begin this adventure at 4th level.
- 5** The PCs reach 5th level after completing Neshkefru's riddle at the end of Chapter 1.
- 6** The PCs reach 6th level by the time they depart for Amneros at the start of Chapter 3.
The PCs should reach 7th level by the end of the adventure.



CHAPTER 1: RIDDLE OF IMMORTALITY

The PCs' critical contributions in saving Bailax—from aiding civilians to performing a ritual that channeled a phoenix's cleansing flame to dispel the violent urges infecting the city—rightfully earns them praise. However, as the adrenaline fades and the celebrations abate, the PCs' mythic power roils painfully inside them, as if their bodies aren't strong enough to withstand the supernatural forces. With each passing day, the symptoms worsen; if the PCs can't learn to control their mythic power, it will consume them from within.

The PCs aren't the only ones affected. Across Ibydos, mythic energies are awakening like never before, transforming whatever they touch: creatures become beasts of legend, plants grow to titanic size, and some civilians even obtain mythic power

that slowly overwhelms and mutates them into aberrations.

In this adventure, the PCs encounter several of these phenomena. In the ruins of Pol-Xamne, a sphinx who hasn't prophesied in a century suddenly witnessed myriad visions she didn't understand. Mundane honeybees grow to massive size and build an equally giant hive used to store myth-infused honey. These changes and more have even shaken the Ibydan realm of the dead, Amneros, where its giant ruler watches with growing concern. In earlier ages, the archipelago's hero-gods would investigate and address these phenomena. However, with few hero-gods surviving—and those few busy maintaining their own domains—it falls to the PCs to explore these mythic challenges and in the process master their own mythic power.

GETTING STARTED

The PCs have roughly one week of downtime before the mythic power within them causes serious distress: the all-consuming hubris (page 6). Until then, the PCs can help repair the city or pursue other downtime activities. Whatever the case, take some time to allow each player to narrate something mythical and impressive about their character's accomplishments during the week. Simple examples include accomplishing the work of ten people, sudden bursts of strength or speed, or whatever else might be tied to the mythic feats they've chosen.

In addition to the fantastic accomplishments, also ask them to describe something strange and unexpected their characters witnessed during this time (or come up with your own example). This should help illustrate the wild nature of the mythical energies running rampant in the city. The idea here isn't to introduce something game-breaking, but to show that something is unstable in the city. The PCs might even notice their own abilities acting unpredictably, but keep in mind the following general rule: the more active and goal-oriented the character's actions are, the more reliable their powers. A character who spends their time passively finds strange things taking place more frequently as their mythic power isn't expended.

Old Rivals: The PCs aren't the only source of mythic rumors. The vexing trio of Akki, Tsemone, and Ulshuk apparently also performed several of their own minor miracles: Akki conjured waves that hurled fresh fish onto the docks, Tsemone crafted tonics said to cure the recent rage that gripped the city, and Ulshuk magically reassembled a burnt home. However, the PCs' actions in "The Acropolis Pyre" helped unmask the trio's selfish goals. Bailax might have explored the three as prospective hero-gods were it not for the PCs being clearly superior options. Rebuffed, Akki led her companions out of the city, bitterly cursing the PCs who upstaged them.

Burgeoning Cult

As the adventure progresses, the PCs' status as mythic beings attracts a cult following that establishes them as a pantheon of hero-gods. This uses the cult management rules on pages 62–69. As this adventure begins, the PCs can catch hints of their nascent religion, but news of their accomplishments are very local and disorganized. The full benefits of the cult don't begin until Chapter 2, but the GM could introduce the mechanic at the beginning of this adventure, instead. If so, the cult is Tiny with only 5 Recruitment Points and 10 Fervor Points.

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

As the PCs recover from their defense of Bailax, they realize their newfound mythic abilities are rapidly growing dangerous. After consulting with local cyclopes, they set off to find a sphinx who can help them learn to control their power. The sphinx won't help the unworthy and the unwise; she tasks the PCs with unraveling the cause of a city-state's demise, whose clues are scattered across the territory it once controlled. If they succeed, the PCs learn they must travel to Ibydos's realm of the dead (and learn how to survive). If they fail, the sphinx deems the PCs heroic pretenders worthy only of being hunted and slain by her paw.

Whether or not the cult system comes into play immediately, during Chapter 1, each PC witnesses a phenomenon linked to their future followers. These events are brief, don't all occur at once, and serve to help the PCs and players understand their evolving role in Ibydos. The following are several possibilities.

- A PC hears a desperate prayer for aid in their mind, its words barely discernible but its tone clear. The PC can sense they might solve whatever this request is by sharing a fraction of their divine power (by expending 1 Mythic Point). Doing so earns the PC a sense of relief from the petitioner, and when the PCs' cult formally begins, it starts with 1 additional Fervor Point; several adherents even identify that PC as the one who created an earlier miracle.
- While interacting with an NPC, a PC sees faint crimson threads that wrap around them and stretch off in various directions—reminiscent of the way cyclopes read a person's fate during the myth-speaking ritual. The PC finds one of these threads leads to and wraps around their hand. By tugging at this thread, the PC can nudge the NPC's behavior or emotions. This might delight some characters and horrify others. Either way, the PC's awareness of these ephemeral threads fades shortly afterward.
- After performing some impressive deed, a PC witnesses a brief vision of a future event or adventure site. This might involve the PC's oar stirring up an eddy into which they can see the *Tide Hunter* falling. A PC might instead slay a powerful beast, and as its body collapses to the ground in a cloud of dust, an image of the temple on Vaveilos (Chapter 2) appears.

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A WINE-DARK
SEA

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Immortality

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Cults

Ibydos

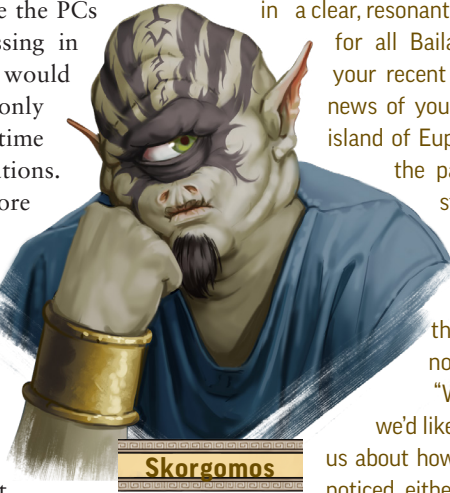
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A Heavy Burden

Two days after this adventure begins, each PC is afflicted with the all-consuming hubris curse below. This curse remains with them for the duration of this adventure, ending only once the PCs have received the hero-gods' blessing in Amneros (page 57). Effects that would remove or counteract the curse only suppress the curse until the next time that PC performs their daily preparations. Finally, the curse slowly becomes more dangerous over time, keeping pace with the PCs' modifiers as they gain levels and begin each chapter.

Within a day of being afflicted, the curse's effect triggers for one or more PCs, even if they aren't in combat. What first feels like a sudden bout of indigestion quickly builds to a burst of brilliant energy that knocks over furniture, scorches bystanders, or is an inexplicable surprise with other worrisome consequences.



Skorgomos

elegantly clothed diviner, his eye surrounded by magical tattoos. He stands with the help of a staff to welcome the new arrivals.

"Thank you for taking the time to speak with us," he says in a clear, resonant voice. "I am Skorgomos, and I speak for all Bailax's cyclopes in thanking you for your recent service. We have heard intriguing news of your abilities since returning from the island of Eupherae—abilities rarely witnessed in the past century." He pauses in careful study for a moment before meeting the gazes of his colleagues in silent consultation and nodding approvingly. "We could sense it in the meteor that fell from the sky, and now we can sense it in you.

"We have much news to share, but first we'd like to hear from you. What can you tell us about how you feel? What changes have you noticed, either in yourselves or those near you?"

The cyclopes listen patiently as the PCs explain their experiences. This is a good place for the players to share newfound abilities with the rest of the group. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, Skorgomos continues.

"Your experiences confirm our suspicions: this is an ancient power long absent from Iblydos and that we happily welcome. It is the power wielded by hero-gods. It is also the power found in legendary beasts and enchanted realms. If we're to believe recent reports, this power is welling up elsewhere across Iblydos, too. Sometimes with terrible consequences. I see how it flows through you—mighty, yet chaotic, demanding, even dangerous.

"We cyclopes have always aided worthy mortals in becoming hero-gods. That begins with myth-speaking. It is most famously an act of divination: how a hero might unlock their divine potential. But it's also an inoculation that helps prepare the body and mind to house the power of the gods." Skorgomos takes a seat to deliver grim news. "Your bodies are not ready. You have captured divinity, and it is burning you from the inside—perhaps even transforming you into some unique chimera that would bring ruin to these islands.

"We have not performed a myth-speaking in years. We would do so now. Even if it is too late to guide you toward divine power, the ritual might show us how you can control it."

The cyclopes work together to perform the PCs' myth-speaking. As they conduct the ritual, a cyclops rests a hand on each PC, making the threads of fate

ALL-CONSUMING HUBRIS

CURSE 4

RARE CURSE DIVINE MAGICAL MYTHIC

An overwhelming volume of mythic energy is more than your mortal form can contain. Unless directed toward some glorious destiny, it threatens to incinerate your body and mind.

Effect The first time each day you would become doomed or an enemy critically succeeds on a Strike against you, your excess mythic power erupts from your body. You and any adjacent creatures take 2d8 spirit damage (DC 18 basic Fortitude). If you critically fail this saving throw, you are also drained 1. You take a penalty to the saving throw equal to the number of Mythic Points you have.

Curse 5 At the beginning of Chapter 2, increase the spirit damage to 2d10 and increase the DC to 19.

Curse 6 At the beginning of Chapter 3, increase the spirit damage to 2d12 and increase the DC to 21.

Meeting the Cyclopes

Bailax's cyclopes take a keen interest in the PCs following the events of "The Acropolis Pyre," especially after hearing stories from the giant shepherd Yphani about the PCs' mythic deeds. Within one week, these one-eyed seers summon the PCs to meet atop the acropolis to assess the PCs' abilities and provide advice. Read or paraphrase the following.

A group of cyclopes has gathered within what's left of an open-air amphitheater. At the group's center sits an

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faintly visible to them both. In past ages, such threads for a would-be hero-god would stretch clearly toward some distant objective. By contrast, each PC's threads are tangled and frayed in the Age of Lost Omens. Even so, the cyclopes work diligently to unravel the chaos in search of some common lead. At last, they conclude the ritual and confer before presenting their findings.

"As we suspected, myth-speaking has shown us no clear solution. However, each of your fates did pull in a common direction: the isle of Xaktilos, once controlled by Pol-Xamne. We sensed a sage, a sphinx—I assume one whose riddles hold the answers you seek, though it might be that your great trial involves slaying the creature." Skorgomos calls for several texts from the acropolis archives and peers over them for a few minutes before adding, "The one sphinx I know of is Neshkefru. She foresaw Pol-Xamne's downfall and once tutored heroes in a past age."

He pauses a moment. "She is eccentric and dangerous and will certainly require payment for her services. There are few, however, who can tell you more than she."

The PCs likely have a few questions. Below are some potential answers. The information can also be garnered with a successful DC 19 Society or related Lore check.

Where is Pol-Xamne? "Pol-Xamne once controlled the largest island of Iblydos: Xaktilos, a hilly land bountiful in timber. Xamne itself is no port but is instead about 5 miles from the coast."

Why is it in ruins? "Like many of the other city-states of Iblydos, Xamne fared poorly as its hero-gods grew weaker. Its government collapsed into infighting factions about a century ago, and these scattered decades later. We have heard at least a hundred hypotheses for the city-state's downfall, but I do not know the actual truth. Whatever the case, the city's ruins are barely inhabited, and what does live there are supposedly monsters."

What more should we know of the sphinx? "Neshkefru has been alive for a very long time. She was highly regarded for her oracular abilities. Like most sphinxes, she enjoys riddles and games. She's wily and wise, but also reputed to be cruel and unforgiving."

Reward: The cyclopes present the PCs with a *dragon turtle scale* and a fine spyglass before seeing them off.

Finding Passage

Getting to Xamne requires an ocean voyage, and Yasmenei happily offers herself, the *Tide Hunter*, and her crew to help the PCs get there. Depending on the actions the PCs took in "The Acropolis Pyre," some of her crew might already view the characters with

starry-eyed deference. The following crew members are the most likely to become actual followers and members of the cult that worships the new hero-gods. Feel free to adjust them to better fit your PCs' narratives or add others.

Elteth Starspan: Blunt and tough, Elteth (taciturn male elf sailor 4) serves as a lookout on the ship. After being lost at sea when the rest of his crew was attacked by pirates, he managed to survive alone for several months. He tends to gravitate toward a PC whose emerging area of concern is related to strength, survival, determination, or similar attributes.


Louro: With a wide smile and hearty laugh, Louro (cheerful male halfling quartermaster 4) often negotiates the deals with harbormasters when the *Tide Hunter* reaches port. He loves a good adventure story and values guile, cleverness, social graces, or similar attributes.

Noreane: Thoughtful and kind, Noreane (studious female human Kellid sage 4) knows a great deal about mythology and religion. She prefers the company of a PC whose emerging area of concern is tied to research, intelligence, cooperation, or similar attributes.

SETTING SAIL

Once the PCs have gathered the supplies they need for a long journey, they set sail for Xamne, following the directions given by the cyclopes and Yasmenei's knowledge. Reaching the west coast of Xaktilos involves winding through the archipelago and periodically anchoring off smaller islands that hold their own dangers and opportunities. The following are optional diversions that provide role-playing options and could let the PCs find additional rumors, XP, and treasure to make up for any shortfall they might have from earlier adventuring. Feel free to add additional dangers if it fits the pacing of your game or ties to the backgrounds of the PCs; additional locations appear in the Iblydos gazetteer beginning on page 70. These sites can be presented in any order, and you can reserve unused islands for later parts of the Myth-Speaker Adventure Path. As written, none of the islands are very dangerous and serve more to add mystery and gravitas to the heroes' quest.

Island 1—Island of Sweet Tidings: Despite its pleasant name and appearance, this island is dangerous to sailors and serves as a tempting playground and resting spot from which they may never want to leave. Little is known about the island since most who find it never leave again, and those who do have only cloudy memories. The island has a harbor that protects from ocean storms, plentiful fish, and tall trees that provide shelter from the



wind. Closer inspection reveals half-buried skeletons, mostly of humans and halflings, who appear to have died in their sleep.

The entire island is quite literally hungry and consumes those who stay longer than 24 hours. Luckily for the PCs, the island isn't able to overcome their mythic power, and they can dwell here indefinitely. All others, however, including any NPCs they bring ashore, must attempt a DC 20 Will save every day at sunset. Those who fail or critically fail fall asleep and cannot wake up until they are removed from the island. Non-mythic creatures left behind on the island for longer than 1 day simply die as the island consumes them.

Island 2—Sinking Island: Tales of islands that move around or disappear into the ocean are told throughout Ibydos. Some simply have strange geology that causes them to rise and fall over time, while others are actually the backs of massive animals. As the PCs sail through the archipelago, they spot an island that appears barren and rocky except for a slippery, damp algae upon even the tallest hills. In the center of the highest hill is a white stone obelisk, perfectly clean and gleaming in the sun. The obelisk is etched with writing in Aklo and describes horrors that dwell in the darkest depths.

Each day at sunset, the island suddenly sinks below the waves and down hundreds of feet before it rests upon the seabed. Those who stand within 30 feet of the obelisk are able to breathe water instead of air. Throughout the night, a group of sedachies visit the island, cleaning the obelisk and glaring balefully at those standing near it. Their leader, **Thiskiski** (devoted female sedachy priest 4), interrogates any land-dwellers there and explains that she and her companions are guardians and caretakers of the obelisk. She doesn't know if it serves a larger purpose; she's merely following a long-standing tradition.

Island 3—Sparrow's Down: While pirates do exist in the Obari Ocean, they're not particularly common. Nevertheless, the small settlement of Sparrow's Down, on a small, otherwise unimportant and nameless island, is a meeting place for those with an eye toward plunder. Its sandy beaches and clear waters make it an inviting destination, although its residents are rather dangerous. Any ship is welcome there, as long as it can defend itself.

The leader of the settlement is a pirate queen named **Roahn Sixtoes** (wise female orc pirate queen 4). She knows the waters of the archipelago better than almost anyone and can serve as a source of just about any cartographic information the PCs might want.

Reward: Award the PCs 60 XP if they explore at least one of the island locations.

Event: Troubled Waters (Mythic Deed) Moderate 4

Shortly before arriving at Xaktilos, the PCs are beset by a storm. Read or paraphrase the following.

The skies have grown steadily darker as the day wears on, lightning flashing between glowering thunderheads. The ship rocks precariously from the choppy waves, and a faint, cawing laugh seems to ride the turbulent gale. The clouds briefly take the shape of a mocking tengu's head, its eyes flashing with lightning, before the winds disperse the image.

One of the PCs' rivals, Akki, has manifested this storm using her own mythic power in a fit of rage as she rants about being upstaged by the PCs. The weather is conjured intuitively, with the tengu barely able to control her newfound ability. Even so, the storm homes in on the PCs, as if the weather is trying to appease its creator by wrecking the *Tide Hunter*.

This encounter is a series of skill challenges in which the PCs earn Victory Points in each scene (*GM Core* 184), with each scene spanning 5 minutes. Each PC gets one chance to attempt a skill check against the round's DC, and they can either attempt the suggested skills and actions or come up with their own creative solution. Encourage players to describe actions that are suitably mythic as they attempt tasks that would be impossible for most mortals.

Round 1—Gales: The wind screams and tears at the sails of the ship. Suddenly the mainsail is shredded and the mast cracked in half! The PCs need to repair the damage or find another way to get the ship moving again by attempting a DC 26 skill check. They might weave a cloak into a new sail with Crafting, knit the mast back together with Nature, or grab a rope and Swim to tow the ship.

Round 2—Lightning: Bolts of lightning lance down at the ship, threatening to strike those on the deck. The PCs must shield the crew from the lightning or find a way to redirect the energy. Characters must attempt a DC 27 skill check. They might channel the bolts through their bodies and into the water with Nature or Occultism, deflect the lightning with a weapon Strike, or dissipate the energy with Arcana.

Round 3—Waves: A series of impossibly tall waves head toward the ship, threatening to sink it outright. Characters must attempt a DC 28 skill check. They might use Diplomacy or Nature to speak to the ocean and calm it, fire a ranged Strike to weaken the waves, or Intimidate the water to send it the other way.

Development: At the end of the 3 rounds, the storm subsides. Total up the VP. If the total is 9 or more,

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they protected the crew and ship without any further problem. If they earned less than 9 VP, the Fallen Chums combat encounter is triggered.

Fallen Chums

Moderate 4

While the PCs were fighting the storm, several crew members fell off the ship and are in danger from predators.

Creatures: Crew members fallen overboard have attracted the attention of hungry sharks. The sharks kill one crew member each round if left alone.

GREAT WHITE SHARK (2)

CREATURE 4

Monster Core 307

Initiative Perception +11

Rescuing the Crew: Once the sharks have been dealt with, the PCs are able to rescue the fallen sailors without any issue.

ISLAND OF XAKTILOS

Xaktilos, the island upon which Pol-Xamne once stood, rises sharply from the ocean. Its steep cliffs to the north and west make landfall there impossible—instead, visitors would enter from the southeast where a natural harbor is formed from twin peninsulas that extend like welcoming arms. The land near the harbor is sandy and unstable, preventing the construction of any large settlements. Instead, the harbor served as a place for ships to unload passengers and goods before they took traveled five miles overland to Xamne itself.

Yasmenei knows enough about the island to locate the harbor, although neither she nor her crew have ever been here before. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs arrive.

The sea gives way to a calm natural harbor. There are few signs that a small town once stood here: some stone arches covered in creeping vines, the remains of fallen-in roofs, and a courtyard dominated by a large tree. A road winds up from the former settlement, but it is choked by weeds and shrubs.

If the PCs search the remains of the village, they don't find anything particularly useful. A character who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check spots faint markings on the keystones of a still-standing archway that proclaim, "Beyond is the glory of Xamne, a jewel among jewels."

Among the ruined town is evidence of the attack by the behemoth Ousmariku over a century ago. A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Engineering Lore

check realizes many of the buildings appear to have been crushed entirely before they fell to ruin; on a critical success, they notice a somewhat guided trail of destruction. Those who investigate the ruins and succeed at a DC 19 Survival check find gigantic claw marks in the stone beneath vegetation; on a critical success, they can tell the source of these marks was a massive aquatic creature.

While overgrown, the path to the ruins of Xamne is easy to spot and follow. The journey to the city is about 5 miles, and the road switches back up the steep hills that lead northwest. Few creatures other than mundane wildlife spend time along this section of the road, the more dangerous residents of the island residing in the ruins. The trip between the harbor and Xamne is uneventful, but PCs who are Searching or Scouting and succeed at a DC 20 Perception check feel like they're being watched. This feeling intensifies the closer they get to the city.

Riddled with Questions

When the PCs arrive at the ruins of Xamne, read or paraphrase the following.

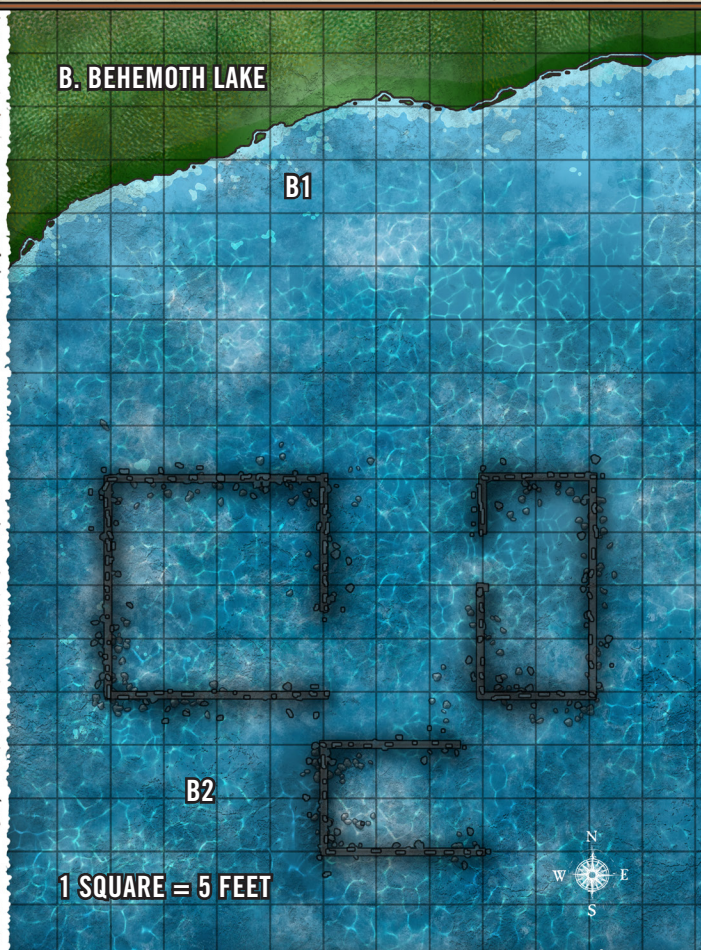
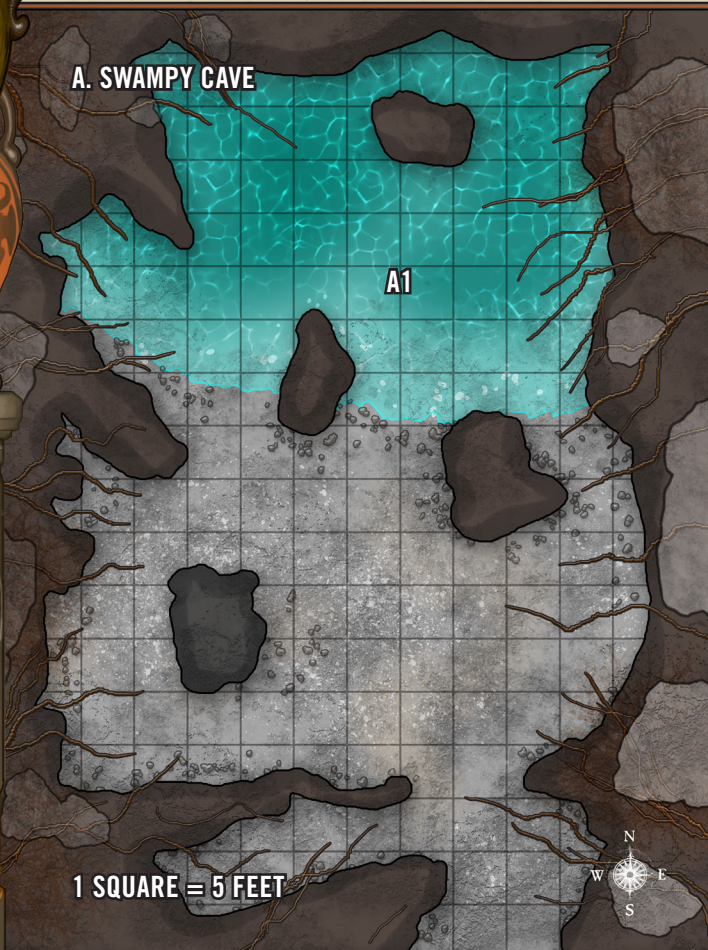
The road crosses over the crest of the hill, and beyond stands the ruins of a city. White stone buildings cluster atop the rolling landscape, the few walls still standing broken beyond repair. Empty doorways and windows stare blindly from among the structures like sockets in a bleached skull. Vines and tress grow haphazardly throughout the ruins, but all is dwarfed by two stone plinths standing at either side of the road, which appear to have once been part of a large gate.

Neshkefru (eccentric female sphinx oracle 8) is waiting atop the western stone plinth. In the day she sprawls in the sun while at night she curls up there and watches the stars. Either way, she's well aware of the PCs' approach, having spied on them with her *clairaudience* and *clairvoyance* spells.

The sphinx gives the PCs a moment to notice her. If they don't, she stands and arches her back before lying back down and addressing the group in *truespeech*.

"It has been some time since I have had visitors like you," says the sphinx in a low purr. "They come seeking answers, although they do not always enjoy the truth. I am Neshkefru, oracle and seer, watcher of the fall of Xamne, and advisor to many great rulers. Who are you?"

The PCs get a chance to introduce themselves. Ever curious, Neshkefru listens intently for any pieces of



information that could later be useful. If one of the PCs explains why they've come to her before she gets a chance to ask, read the section below immediately; otherwise she asks them first, and the answer leads to an onslaught of psychic visions.

The sphinx clenches her jaw and her lips pull back in a snarl as she reaches out to grasp her head in pain. "What is this?" she grits out, her eyes darting to each of the people gathered before her. She scrambles across the surface of the plinth as if to get farther away from the group but stops when she reaches the edge. Her eyes are wide and searching, and it seems like she's looking at things that are not actually there.

This skill challenge uses the Victory Points subsystem (GM Core 184) to track the PCs' progress in aiding Neshkefru, who's been besieged by both images of the party's future and the haunting memories of the city's past. Before she can help the PCs, they must calm and focus her by earning 3 VP. After two rounds, Neshkefru lashes out at a PC, performing a claw Strike. If the PCs don't earn 3 VP by the end of the third round, the sphinx flies away, only returning to the ruins later that day.

Characters might take a few different approaches to help; a character who succeeds at a DC 18

Medicine check determines she is acting as if she's hallucinating and can provide calming words and herbs. A DC 19 Occultism check reveals she is having some kind of oracular visions that she needs to find a way to channel. A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature or Society check realizes the sphinx needs to draw upon her penchant for riddles as a way to explain what she's seeing. The PCs can also attempt other skill checks or creative solutions per the GM's discretion.

Once the PCs have reached 3 or more VP, Neshkefru settles enough to speak again.

"I have never experienced anything like that before," the sphinx says, her eyes narrowed. "Thank you for helping me through it. My thoughts have calmed enough, but I feel knowledge, secret even to me, smoldering in my mind still."

"If you wish to learn of this power you possess and how to tame or bend it to your will, I can help. But you need to move quickly. For as certain as I am that I can unlock the secret to your tasks, I'm equally sure that if you can't be quick enough, my only relief can come from your deaths. That is the bargain I can make. Answer my riddle within a week, or else watch the skies for your doom by my claws."

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Neshkefru sits on her haunches and calls out in a strong, carrying voice: "Four dooms befell Pol-Xamne: one from within, one from without, one from below, and one from the sea. What were they? Across the moors to the west lies a many-headed horror, each of whose mouths lead to the truth. Begin your search there. Bring me your answers before a week is gone, else flee or die!"

Reward: Award the PCs 30 XP if they calm Neshkefru within 3 rounds.

History of Pol-Xamne

Throughout this chapter, the PCs work to learn about the reasons behind the fall of Pol-Xamne. That information is collected here for ease of reference. Keep in mind these details are inaccessible through skill checks alone—they need to be learned by exploration and study of the ruins.

Like all of Iblydos, the history of Pol-Xamne is long and storied, stretching back to the Age of Legends and beyond. Its influence has waxed and waned throughout that time, and its geographical position near the center of the Iblydan archipelago means it has often been a key player in the region's culture and politics. All Iblydos' city-states have fallen from the height of their power over the last few hundred years, but the specific reasons for Pol-Xamne's decay and ultimate ruin fall into four categories: overreliance on its pantheon of hero-gods, loss of faith in the hero-gods' abilities, overextension of military reach, and an assault by the thalassic behemoth Ousmariku.

The Fall of Pol-Xamne

Pol-Xamne's fall from the heights of greatness was not simple, nor was it unavoidable. As is often the case, however, spotting the clues in the moment is a difficult task, and halting its slide into ruin was beyond the reach of its rulers and people.

Certainly the most insidious and self-inflicted of the causes for Pol-Xamne's fall was its own cultural and governmental structure. Like many of the other city-states of the region, Pol-Xamne relied heavily upon its pantheon of heroes—too heavily. It lacked the robust bureaucracy to operate if those hero-gods were to vanish. And vanish many did when they joined the coalition to slay the whale-like behemoth Ousmariku, which began demolishing Pol-Liachora a century ago. Most of the local pantheon perished in the battle, and local cyclopes soon realized their myth-speaking abilities had become compromised with the failure of prophecy. Over the millennia, the city's hero-gods had often butted heads over policy, creating a culture of passing blame and forging grudges. The officials left

overseeing Xamne in this power vacuum soon fell into infighting. In the chaos, monsters ravaged the countryside, infrastructure failed, and the once stable city-state fractured.

The first of the major cracks was ironically caused by an epic accomplishment. In 4524 AR, the hero-god Basile lost her husband, Paneamon, to an attack by a terrible monster. Consumed by grief and certain that her own failing abilities were to blame, Basile decided to steal him back from the underworld. After all, she knew legends of other great heroes having bested its ruler, Amnerion, and won concessions. She vowed to repeat this accomplishment and return her husband to life. Basile successfully cut a path through the island's bedrock and pierced the planes to enter Amneros, stole away Paneamon's spirit, and returned with him to the living world. This accomplishment should have earned Basile an honored glory, but the hero-god had unwittingly carved too wide and too deep.

Basile's path had unwittingly cracked open the subterranean prison where Pol-Xamne's earliest hero-gods had imprisoned Kanvinalax, a conspirator dragon. Freed after millennia of slumber, the dragon shadowed Basile on her return home. After observing her temple and cult, the dragon orchestrated a violent schism and exploited the chaos to hunt the city's few remaining hero-gods (and perhaps even establish himself as its ruler). Ultimately, the tiny pantheon chased away Kanvinalax, but not before he destroyed Basile and Paneamon. That wasn't the only casualty of the dragon's attack; Xamne's populace had lost their trust in the hero-gods, which wasn't helped by the various false flag attacks the dragon orchestrated to undermine the mortal deities.

Over the next 50 years, Pol-Xamne withered under pointless wars, emigration, disease, and more. In a final bid to salvage the city-state's fortunes, the last of its hero-gods, Tarnelon the Lucky, took a page from neighboring Pol-Ungkore: sacrificing sapient creatures. Through these rites, Tarnelon endeavored to control the seas, conjure aquatic beasts to serve the city, and more. He succeeded at first, but the rite angered Gozreh, who roused Ousmariku to punish the shores of Xaktilos. The behemoth dealt the killing blow to Pol-Xamne, wrecking its port towns and sending a tsunami crashing over part of the island. The survivors formed desperate factions. Yet even these ultimately disintegrated as Xamne's few occupants scattered to villages across the island.

The tale of Pol-Xamne can serve as an object lesson for the PCs. As budding mythic heroes themselves, they can see some of the mistakes the leaders and

citizens of Pol-Xamne made and perhaps learn from them. Even if they don't take any lessons, they need at least some of the above information to satisfy the sphinx's question.

Hydra Tracking

With little more than a direction and geography to go on, the PCs first need to find the moors and swamps where the hydra dwells. Fortunately for them, the hill where they currently stand provides clear views of much of the island. A character who succeeds at a DC 18 Nature or Perception check can scan the lands and find the best route forward that takes only 3 hours of travel; this can be retried every morning. Otherwise it takes the PCs 6 hours to locate the swamps as they head west and stumble around the interior of the island.

The swamps aren't particularly large. A character who Searches and succeeds at a DC 19 Perception or Survival check can locate the hydra's cave in 2 hours (1 hour on a critical success).

A. Swampy Cave

In the northern part of the swamp, a gaping cave entrance stands a few feet above the water. As the PCs approach, read or paraphrase the following.

The dark maw of the cave entrance is nearly fifteen feet tall and fifteen feet wide. Gnarled, stunted trees cling to the hill that rises above and behind the entrance. Their branches are draped in layers of mossy fibers that hang like a curtain over the cave's mouth.

Characters who are Searching and succeed at a DC 19 Perception or Survival check can see blood that glows dully red streaked over the rocks at the entrance and leading deeper in. Characters who are Investigating and succeed at a DC 18 Nature check realize the plant life here seems to have grown rapidly and vigorously; on a critical success, they see the roots have dug deeply into the rocks and begun to damage their integrity.

A1. Hydra Battle (Mythic Deed)

Severe 4

The cave is dangerously unstable. The natural fracturing of the stone has been accelerated by the rapid growth of the powerful roots from the trees above. The thin stone columns are nearly ready to collapse. The ceiling is 15 feet tall, but the roots

hanging down make it seem much lower. The interior of the cave is dimly lit by the light coming in through the entrance tunnel. When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.



An immense cavern stretches out ahead. The southern side of the chamber is merely damp, while the northern half is submerged in a pool of fetid water. The craggy ceiling is choked with hanging roots that have grown through from the trees outside. Several natural stone columns connect floor to ceiling, although they are riddled with deep cracks. Stones occasionally fall from above. The stench of mildew and decay

hangs in the air.

Creature: As the Godsrain soaked into the soil of the island, a newly hatched clutch of serpents feasted upon it. Twisted by the mythic power, these individual serpents conjoined together into a single hydra. The creature's body writhes and twists as it moves, and it immediately advances to attack any who enter its lair.

HYDRA

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Monster Core 204

Initiative Perception +17

The Battle: This encounter serves as a mythic deed and an important test for the PCs as they move down the pathway toward becoming hero-gods. As such, the combat should feel appropriately dangerous, harrowing, and epic. To help create that feel, the following guidelines build extra drama.

Rocks Fall: At the end of any round in which the hydra takes an action, its thrashing, twisting body strikes the ceiling and nearby supporting columns. Large rocks fall from the ceiling, and all creatures in the cave must attempt a DC 18 basic Reflex save or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

A character can attempt to prevent or mitigate the damage from the rocks falling through the following action.

SHORE UP THE CAVERN ♦♦

You quickly shove people out of the way, deflect falling rubble with a weapon, use your incredible strength to hold up the ceiling, or otherwise find ways to stall the collapse of the cave. Move up to your Speed and attempt

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a DC 21 Acrobatics, Athletics, Engineering Lore, Strike, or other appropriate check.

Critical Success You prevent rocks from falling this round.

In addition, all allies gain a +1 bonus to their Reflex saves against Rocks Fall on the following round.

Success You stave off the worst parts of the damage. Rocks Fall deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage instead of its normal damage this round (basic Reflex save still applies).

Critical Failure You exacerbate the damage.

All allies treat their Reflex saves against Rocks Fall as one degree worse.

Development: As the hydra dies, four of its heads detach (or if they were cut off, reanimate) and slither away through the entrance and out into the wilderness. They move at a speed of 60 feet and are out of sight within moments. Each leaves a slimy trail of glowing red blood that is simple to follow to each of the next locations.

Collapse: On the round following the hydra's death, the cavern begins to collapse in earnest. Those who remain in the area at the end of that round must attempt a DC 19 basic Reflex save or take 8d6 bludgeoning damage. The shaking continues after that, and those remaining at the end of the following round must attempt a DC 20 basic Reflex save or take 10d6 bludgeoning damage. Three rounds after the hydra is killed, the cavern completely falls in, instantly killing any remaining creatures inside.

Pieces of the Riddle

Animated by the torrent of mythic energy released by the hydra's death, the heads travel to four different locations on the island. Once there, they infuse (or fuse to) a monster that dwells near the piece of the riddle. Within the Makeshift Maze, the PCs learn about the problems created by Pol-Xamne's overreliance on hero-gods. In Volcanic Fissure, they learn the story of Basile's Folly and the rampage of the dragon. As they explore the Collapsed Crypts, the PCs see evidence of military overreach. Finally, in Behemoth Lake, the PCs locate information about the reasons for Ousmariku's attack.

B. Behemoth Lake

When Ousmariku battled the last remaining hero-gods of Pol-Xamne, it suffered a horrific wound and released a torrent of seawater from its belly. As the monster crumpled to the ground, it crushed a section

of the city, and its waters soon submerged this area along with Ousmariku and the remains of the fallen hero-gods. As an instrument of divine vengeance, however, the behemoth could not be slain by its wounds, and it soon healed. By then it had no more interest in battle and instead lumbered back to the ocean to fully recuperate, leaving behind a lake of salt water.

The surviving residents of Xamne named this place Behemoth Lake, although few who live now know that name. Although it has no natural inlets to refresh it, the waters of the lake are magically renewed such that its level never drops and its salinity doesn't grow any more concentrated. In addition, the mixture of the behemoth's blood and the blood of the fallen hero-gods led to spontaneous creation of life within the water.

The flora and fauna of the lake are as diverse as the ocean around the island. Fish, crustaceans, and even a small coral reef give the appearance of a place that has been part of the sea for millennia rather than a relatively new lake.

Riddle Piece: As the PCs explore the ruins beneath the water and the signs of the battle here, they gain insights into the city's doom. By the end of this section, they should understand the pantheon of Pol-Xamne had angered Gozreh and drawn the wrath of the monstrous Ousmariku.


Getting Air (Mythic Deed)

To plumb the depths of the lake, the PCs first need a way to have air long enough to sufficiently explore. Given that it takes roughly an hour for the PCs to locate the next piece of the riddle, this can be quite a challenge if no one in the group has access to the appropriate spells. This task serves as a mythic deed, so it's a good place to allow flexibility, creativity, and innovation on the part of the players as they come up with solutions. The following options are suggestions; feel free to use them as guidelines for the difficulty of other options the PCs come up with.

Sea Hag: The spontaneous life created after the clash of the hero-gods and the behemoth included more than just ordinary sea plants and animals. The anger, rage, and fear in the city coalesced into the form of a sea hag who sprang into existence as Ousmariku left the place. Born with the knowledge of her origin, this sea hag, **Meshix**, saw both the behemoth and the fallen hero-gods as her parents. When she tried to leave, however, she found her body rapidly shriveled and she had to rush back to Behemoth Lake or die.



Meshix



Over the next century, Meshix spent her time exploring every inch of her lake until she could navigate it effortlessly. The occasional visitor sought her out for her transformational abilities, and she bargained with them in ways that amused her. Several of these bargains worked out very much in her favor, and many of the lake's eels are her victims who didn't fulfill the terms of their agreements.

The arrival of the hydra head surprised her. She followed it and watched in horror as it attached itself to one of her eels, transforming into a gigantic monster that promptly chased her away. She's since been forced to the shallower areas of the lake where she's been brooding and trying to determine what to do next.

When she meets the PCs, she spots a possible solution. If the PCs ask for her help to breathe water, she's willing to do so. She'll provide them with gills so they can breathe water, but not in air. In exchange, she requires them to kill the monstrous eel.

If the PCs insist on other transformations, such as fins, webbed hands, or other features that allow them to gain a swim speed, Meshix gets more creative. She requires they leave behind their courage, which results in the PC being permanently frightened 1. In return she grants them a swim Speed equivalent to their land Speed. She agrees to return their courage to them only if they can defeat the eel before the next sunrise.

Unlike other sea hags, Meshix is effectively immortal within Behemoth Lake. If the PCs slay her to break the bargain, they are initially freed from it. Unless her body is buried on land, however, she returns to life in the lake at the next sunrise and her bargain returns in full force, which could prove deadly. While the characters might believe they've solved the problem by killing Meshix, a few hours later their necks feel itchy on the spot where the gills were, providing a subtle clue that they aren't yet free from the bargain.

Crafting: PCs skilled in Crafting might try to rig up a way to bring air with them or a temporary submersible vehicle. A non-mythic crafter would need weeks of planning and building, but the PCs can achieve the impossible with their mythic abilities. Whatever approach they take to getting adequate air under the water with them, such a task is DC 24 and requires an hour of work.

Mystical Herb: When the Godsrain watered the plants on the shore of the lake, a few of them transformed and suddenly gained new properties. A character who is Searching and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check notices some of the plants

have little bubbles forming on their leaves. Close examination and a successful DC 19 Nature or Survival check shows these herbs can be eaten to gain enough air to last an hour. It takes 10 minutes and a successful DC 18 Nature, Perception, or Survival check to gather enough herbs for 1 hour's worth of air; a critical success doubles the amount of herb gathered.

Reward: Award the PCs 40 XP for finding a way to deal with breathing underwater.

Arrival at Behemoth Lake

The trail from the severed hydra head leads to the shores of the lake. Read or paraphrase the following when they arrive.

A blue-green lake stands amid the ruins in this part of the city. The waters near the shore are crystal clear, and the road leading up to it goes straight into the depths. Barely visible stone walls poke above the water throughout the part of the lake closest to the shores, hinting at a once-populated area now sunk beneath the waves.

A PC who Investigates and succeeds at a DC 19 Nature, Perception, or Society check quickly realizes there are no visible inlets for water to enter and replenish the lake; on a critical success, they see the ground around the water's edge and the lake bottom nearest the shore are tightly compressed and sunken, as if something very heavy pushed them down. A character who wades into the water or takes other steps to identify the depth of the lake realizes the waters plunge very suddenly to over 40 feet deep.

The waters of the lake are quite clear. Visibility is 100 feet for the first 20 feet of depth, but below that, visibility is reduced to 60 feet.

B1. The Shallows

Low 4

The waters of the lake often move in strange, unpredictable ways. After the Godsrain, this strangeness has manifested even more powerfully. When anyone other than Meshix enters more than a few feet into the lake, an elemental force strikes out against the intruders.

LIVING WATERFALL

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Monster Core 148

Initiative Perception +10

B2. In the Depths

Moderate 4

Finding the clues to answer the sphinx's riddle requires the PCs to explore the depths of the lake.

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Since several city blocks were submerged when Ousmariku smote its ruin upon the city, the PCs have to do a bit of searching to get the information they need. This search takes at least 2 hours. If all PCs have a swim Speed, this time is reduced to 1 hour. Either of these times can be further halved by a character who Searches and succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check.

Once the PCs locate the eel's den, read or paraphrase the following.

These submerged ruins must once have been houses, but now lie in pieces upon the lake bed. Colorful coral grows along the structures, and schools of vibrant fish swim throughout the area, twitching away from any perceived dangers.

Creatures: This hydra head slithered into the lake, consumed one of the native eels, then grew to horrific proportions. It spends most of its day curled up in one of the remaining buildings. It tries to ambush any prey that it spots.

ELITE GIANT MORAY EEL

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Monster Core 6, 138

Initiative Perception +13

Treasure: A PC who Searches the area finds a coral pink +1 *low-grade silver breastplate* and a coffer containing 65 gp.

Riddle Piece: When the eel dies, its black blood flows out in a rivulet that forms letters and words on the skin of the PC who dealt the killing blow. That PC's entire body becomes a record of Tarnelon's attempts to quell nature to aid Pol-Xamne's war efforts, his pacts with dark creatures from the deepest parts of the ocean, and Gozreh's calling upon Ousmariku in vengeance. This information is covered in detail in the Fall of Pol-Xamne section on page 11. The words remain on the PC's skin for 1 hour before fading, but as they fade the story becomes etched in that PC's mind.

C. Makeshift Maze

About a decade ago, a mazecrafter minotaur named Vornen settled in Xamne's ruins. There, he adopted an abandoned neighborhood as his home, constructing new walls to turn it into an urban labyrinth. He had hoped the site would lure and trap prey for him to hunt, but few creatures risked the ominous tangle of ruined streets and shops. As he prayed for aid, a sinister power answered, dispatching a pair of barghests to aid Vornen. The two fiends tracked and

chased prey toward Vornen's lair, where the minotaur would trail, tire, and ultimately dispatch his targets to share with his new partners.

However, the barghests soon grew bored with this routine. They craved more exciting prey, eventually turning on Vornen and claiming the maze for themselves. Whatever power had sent the barghests has also tied the minotaur to this maze, and he's not been able to escape despite his best efforts. Worse, for the past few months, the barghests have hunted him yet never killed him, always preventing him from reaching an exit or the maze's heart.

The trail left behind by the detached hydra head leads to the western section of the ruins. As in the other sections, the trail is simple to find for the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs arrive.

Rubble blocks off this part of the city. In addition to quarried stones, columns, loose timbers, and shattered fragments of statues have all been arranged to create a wall. In the center of this edifice stands a large, irregular doorway.

A PC who Investigates the immediate area and succeeds at a DC 18 Engineering Lore or Society check quickly determines whoever constructed the maze used materials gathered from this neighborhood. A PC who Searches here and succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check finds large bovine hoofprints; on a critical success, they can tell the creature has two legs, not four.

Navigating the Mazelike Ruins

Navigating the maze is difficult. While the blood trail of the hydra's head is possible to follow, the nature of the maze causes that trail to double back on itself in seemingly impossible ways. Streets are blocked off, and buildings have been demolished and scavenged for their materials. Any remaining structures that were original to the city are now part of the maze. Portions of the maze are covered with makeshift roofs, more to lull those trapped into relaxing than for any other reason.

Features of the Maze: The walls of the maze are uneven and cobbled together from rubble. Nevertheless, the pieces are fitted together tightly and with great skill, so there are few gaps large enough to peer through. For the purpose of spells and abilities, treat the walls as 1-foot-thick stone walls (Hardness 14, 56 HP, BT 28), although there are sections that could be weaker at your discretion. The walls average 15 feet high and are DC 20 to climb. Walkways through the maze are typically 10 feet wide.

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statue as a representation of Cormion, a minotaur trickster divinity also known as Brother Guile from southern Casmaron.

1-3 Navigation Points: Read or paraphrase the following.

The passageway opens into a small courtyard. Neatly trimmed hedges surround a pool of clear water. Makeshift benches stand next to the water's edge and provide a beautiful view of the area.

Vornen built this area to provide a calm resting place and water source for himself and the barghests. He also believes his victims are likely to find the spot suspiciously calm, a conclusion he's more than happy to let them have. The water is safe to drink and supplied by a natural spring.

4-6 Navigation Points: Read or paraphrase the following.

Fresh blood drips down the walls here from the half-devoured corpse of a large humanoid creature. Its body hangs head down and its legs are held in place by several metal spikes. Its torso and head are half-embedded in the wall, as if it has begun growing around it like some murderous hedge.

The barghests cornered and killed an ogre who wandered into the maze several days ago. After feeding, they hoisted the corpse onto the wall a macabre art piece. Vornen has added his own touch: a small, circular maze pattern used as Cormion's sacred symbol.

A character who Searches here and succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check spots a number of doglike tracks in the dirt, although they are grouped together in a few places without a path between; a critical success reveals there are at least two different sets of these tracks as well as signs of a struggle with a large humanoid.

Treasure: A sack on the ground contains a lesser healer's gel, *invisibility potion*, and 58 gp.

7-9 Navigation Points: The PCs encounter Vornen in area C1.

10+ Navigation Points: Once the PCs encounter Vornen and earn at least one additional NP to bring their total to 10 or higher, they reach the maze's center in area C2.

C1. Desperate Mazemaster

Low 4

Read or paraphrase the following.

The walls here tower twenty feet high and are enshrouded with creeping vegetation. A pale, clammy mist obscures the bottom three feet of the passageway,

rippling like soft waves with each step. The mist barely conceals a pile of abandoned rags that might serve as some creature's bed.

Creatures: This is currently Vornen's refuge, where he hungrily lies in ambush for anything edible that might wander in. He watches from the periphery as the PCs inspect the area, launching his attack when they seem vulnerable.

Vornen fights until reduced to 20 Hit Points, at which point he tosses aside his weapons and loudly invites the PCs to kill him and end his suffering at last. This likely confuses the PCs and might even end the combat outright. If granted mercy, Vornen at first curses at the PCs for condemning him to further torment, but he's willing to explain his predicament and tell of the beasts that are now his jailors.

Vornen did spot the hydra's head as it slithered through the maze. He tried to take a bite of it but found the meat unpalatable, leaving it to continue deeper into the maze. He dared not follow; the barghests have kept him from reaching the maze's center because (he speculates) he might wrest control of the site from them once there.

He is willing to work with the PCs if it means he might finally escape. He knows that if he travels with the PCs, his presence will only draw the barghests' ire. Instead, he's willing to take a different path, possibly distracting the beasts.



Vornen

VORNEN

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE LARGE BEAST HUMANOID

Perception +16; darkvision

Languages Common, Jotun

Skills Athletics +13, Crafting +15, Deception +11, Maze Lore +13, Survival +14 (perfect orienteering)

Str +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +2

Items longspear, shortbow (20 arrows)

Perfect Orienteering Vornen automatically critically succeeds at Survival checks to Sense Direction or Track.

AC 21; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14

HP 75

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ longspear (reach 10 feet) +13, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

Melee ♦ horn +13, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

Ranged ♦ shortbow +12 (deadly d10, range 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing

One with the Maze ♦♦ (occult, teleportation)

Requirements Vornen is adjacent to the wall of a maze he helped build; **Effect** Vornen travels through a special extradimensional passageway, appearing at any point within 60 feet that is adjacent to another portion of the same maze. Creatures are off-guard against Vornen's melee attacks until the end of their turn.

Sneak Attack Vornen deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to off-guard creatures.

Surprising Charge ♦♦ Vornen Strides, then makes a horn Strike. If he moved at least 15 feet from their starting position, the target is off-guard.

C2. Maze's Heart

Severe 3

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs reach the center of the maze.

Blood and gore are plastered all over the walls of this room, obscuring the colorful mosaics beneath them. A statue of a proud minotaur has been desecrated, daubed with old blood to make the creature look demonic. The decapitated hydra head curls limply against one wall whose surface is studded with chunks of different friezes that have been assembled into a chaotic mosaic.

Creatures: The barghests now call this their lair, having usurped it from Vornen. They are absent when the PCs first arrive, but they arrive a few rounds later. If the PCs spared and worked with Vornen, the minotaur is close enough to shout a warning that the barghests are near, granting the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus to their initiative rolls. At the beginning of the fourth combat round, Vornen arrives to join the combat alongside the PCs.

ELITE BARGHESTS (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Monster Core 6, 38

Initiative +14

Mosaic Clues: Vornen constructed the inner walls of this room from pieces he found in the temples in this part of the city. These were some of the oldest temples to the hero-gods, and they serve as a record of how Pol-Xamne's political structure worked. A character who spends at least 1 hour cleaning the images and Investigating the scenes finds enough information to understand that Pol-Xamne's hero-gods were the center of all authority in the city-state. They also realize the images show suffering when the hero-gods were gone, and that the citizenry had no role in governance. This information is detailed in the Fall of Pol-Xamne section on page 11.

Treasure: Among the collected possessions of his victims, the PCs find a +1 *striking scimitar* and a *feather step stone* as well as 42 gp.

D. Collapsed Cavern

The catacombs beneath Xamne have long housed the remains of the dead. By the time of the city-state's fall, they comprised several layers of tunnels, rooms, and burial niches. But the battle between the pantheon of Pol-Xamne and Ousmariku shook the foundations of the island as they strove against each other. These earthquakes collapsed most of the catacombs under thousands of tons of earth and rubble and cracked open the top layer, exposing it to them to the surface. The now-open catacombs became a tempting target for the opportunistic creatures who moved to the fallen city after its residents were killed or driven off.

The trail left by the hydra's severed head leads to one of several entrances to the catacombs. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs arrive.

The ground ahead is noticeably sunken below the level of the surrounding city. A few ruined buildings stand in this depression, their columns cracked and fallen, their walls in great heaps. Just beyond the start of this area is tall, horizontal crack like the smile of some giant that leads to a passage underground.

The crack in the ground opens into the top layer of the catacombs. The air is mildewy and stale, and the walls are rough-hewn stone. There are no light sources beyond the entrance opening. Ceilings are 10 feet tall throughout.

D1. Cleanup Crew

Moderate 4

Read or paraphrase the following after the PCs have traveled about 200 feet.

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The walls of the winding passage are drier here. Dozens of niches are carved into the walls, although many of the once-interred bodies lie scattered on the floor. These remains are little more than highly-polished bones, some still clad in burial shrouds.

A PC who Investigates and succeeds at a DC 18 Occultism or Religion check can tell the niches here and the style of the catacombs match common burial practices for the region; on a critical success, they can tell these areas probably trace back 4,000 years or more.

Creatures: When the catacombs collapsed, a single tomb jelly survived being squished by the falling rubble. It slowly made its way back to the upper levels, where it scoured the long-dead bones for the little remaining tissue it could find. As other creatures began to explore the catacombs, however, the ooze found a much more regular source of food.

The ooze is accompanied by a single skeletal champion who helps it acquire meals. While they can't communicate, the skeleton enjoys the brief splashes of invigorating energy it receives from the ooze.

TOMB JELLY

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Monster Core 257

Initiative Perception +7

SKELETAL CHAMPION

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Monster Core 312

Initiative Perception +8

Items breastplate, spears (2), steel shield (Hardness 5, HP 20, BT 20)

Melee ♦ spear +10 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing

Ranged ♦ spear +10 (range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing

Treasure: The tomb jelly's body holds a *mentalist's staff*, a *feather step stone*, and 71 gp.

D2. Grim Brothers (Mythic Deed)

Moderate 4

Read or paraphrase the following.

The passageway opens here into a large chamber, its walls filled with burial niches. In the center of the room is a pile of half-burned logs with a broken spit dangling above. Three large headstones stand equally spaced around the logs. A harsh, dry wind whispers through the room from some deeper place.

After the city had fallen to ruin, some former citizens turned to thievery to line their pockets before they fled forever. A few died to collapses of the unstable ceiling

or at the hands of cruel monsters, but some did escape. Many creatures called the catacombs home over the next decades, pushing one another out until they were, in turn, pushed out by new arrivals.

A few years ago, three weakened cyclopes found their way to the catacombs and began rummaging. Due to their great strength, they were able to get at treasures others had missed. However, they couldn't agree on how to divide the spoils and began pushing each other as they argued. The commotion triggered a partial cave-in that resulted in their deaths.

Creatures: After being scoured clean by the tomb jelly, which had never before known such a feast, the cyclopes' skeletons rose as undead monstrosities who picked up where they had left off and immediately fell to fighting again. Whether due to the tomb jelly or some other magic, these giant skeletons rise again each day at midnight, ready to carry on an eternal squabble. While it's certainly possible for the PCs to engage the skeletons in combat, other options are available. The cyclops skeletons are about as intelligent in death as they were in life, and they can potentially be tricked into giving up the giant set of dice they've made from chunks of rubble that have inscriptions on them. These pieces of rubble contain the hints the PCs need to progress.



Skeletal Cyclops

SKELETAL CYCLOPES (3)

CREATURE 3

Skeletal giant (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 313)

Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: One of the giant skeletons wields a club that appears to have the head of a hydra carved into it. In reality, this is the actual hydra head, which was transformed into a *hydra head club* (page 77). Gathered in a large, rough sack are a *shark tooth charm*, a *sure-step potion*, and an amethyst worth 32 gp.

Riddle Piece: Close examination of the “dice” the skeletons have been playing with reveals they are pieces of several square columns that contain a brief history of the Xamne’s military overreach (described in the Fall of Pol-Xamne section on page 11). As long as a character can read Common, they can understand enough to satisfy the sphinx. Additionally, a character who succeeds at a DC 19 Society or Ibydos Lore check can recognize how untenable so many disparate military operations would be even for a powerful nation.

E. Volcanic Fissure

Geological activity beneath Xamne had been used for centuries to heat homes and public buildings. When the magic and machinery used to accomplish this task was no longer maintained, pressure built and rent a hole near the city’s center. Important administrative buildings are precariously perched on the rim of this sulfurous fissure. Read or paraphrase the following.

Gouts of steam and noxious fumes sporadically spew from a crevasse in the earth. Numerous large buildings stand perched at bizarre angles along the sides of the fissure. Deep within the hole is a bubbling mass of lava. Large metal pipes protrude from the walls of the fissure in a way that suggests they were once connected before the ground was rent apart.

A character who Investigates and succeeds at a DC 18 Crafting or Engineering Lore check recognizes the pipes as part of what must have been a larger system of geothermal heating, probably for water.

E1. Unstable Terrain

Low 4

The ground around the fissure crumbles frequently and moves without warning. Those who tumble down find themselves hurt by the lava below.

PRECARIOUS FOOTING

HAZARD 5

UNCOMMON ENVIRONMENTAL FIRE

Stealth DC 24 (trained)

Description The ground around the lava pit is crumbling and unstable.

Disable DC 18 Survival (trained) to weather the collapse safely; DC 20 Crafting (trained) to stabilize the ground

Lava Bath ➤ **Trigger** A creature steps into the pit or within 5 feet of its edge; **Effect** The ground crumbles apart and the creature slides into the lava. That creature can use the Grab an Edge reaction to avoid falling. Otherwise it falls 20 feet (taking 10 fall damage) and is exposed to lava, taking 6d6 fire damage per round of contact. Climbing the crumbling rock face requires a successful DC 20 Athletics check.

E2. Lava Pit

Moderate 4

In the chaos following the fall of Pol-Xamne, the caretakers of the geothermal heating system fled. Pressure eventually built up to the point where the system violently ruptured in several places. Most creatures avoid this area entirely. The hydra head, however, slithered into the exposed rift and reemerged as a horrific, fiery monster.

LAVA SPITTER

CREATURE 4

Page 84

Initiative Perception +11

Riddle Piece: When the lava spitter dies, its body releases a hallucinogenic gas that causes all PCs within 60 feet to have a vision of the past. Read or paraphrase the following.

A beautiful woman cradles the limp form of a heavily muscled man in her arms. Nearby, a monstrous centipede-like creature as large as an elephant twitches on the ground, a pickaxe buried in its head. The woman weeps, then gently lays the man’s body down. “Death will not hold you, my love,” she whispers to him. She strides to the giant insect, yanks the pickaxe out, and deals it a final blow. She then steps a few feet away and drives the weapon into the ground. The stones of the earth crack and shatter, seemingly flying away in their haste to escape her blows. Each strike moves an impossible amount of debris, and within a few swings she has dug a tunnel deep into the earth.

The scene fades, and a moment later a rain of rubble falls into an underground swamp, followed shortly by the same woman. She splashes down into the water then stands. Wide-eyed figures, pale and dressed in simple woolen shifts, stare at her. Without hesitation, the woman says, “I am Basile, from the land of the living. I seek my husband, Paneamon, who just arrived.” One of the figures points toward a city in the distance, somehow visible in the lightless realm.

Again the image shifts, and Basile gently leads her husband, though the latter is pale and wide-eyed. Fearsome canines nip at their heels, but Basile bats them

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aside with her pick before carving a new tunnel out of the haunting realm.

They emerge on the surface and embrace before triumphantly running toward the nearby city. They don't notice a pair of glowing eyes that watch from the tunnel they left behind. As night falls, an amber-scaled dragon slinks out of the tunnel. Brief vignettes of the dragon's schemes flash into view: the dragon taking the shape of a politician with golden eyes and whispering poisonous lies that fill listeners with rage; the dragon watching with amusement from afar as a mob tears apart a temple; and the dragon seeming to pull at marionette strings attached to Basile, her eyes filled with blind rage as she swings her pick at Paneamon.

The scenes then fade. A character who succeeds at a DC 15 Hero-God Lore or DC 20 Religion or Society check recognizes the story of Basile and Paneamon, one of a handful of tales of hero-gods who stole away a loved one from the land of the dead; a critical success is enough to remember rumors of a dragon that followed her from the underworld and brought ruin to everything she touched.

Treasure: A character who Searches the area finds a half-buried *wand of continuation* (1st-rank spell) and a statue of an ifrit worth 32 gp.

ANSWERS GIVEN

The four pieces (or fewer) of Xamne's history in hand, the PCs meet—or are ambushed by—the sphinx at the appointed time. Because of her own mythic insight, she knows whether or not the PCs have gathered all the information.

With All Four Pieces

If the PCs have found all four parts of the history, read or paraphrase the following.

With the beating of powerful wings, the sphinx lands gracefully on the ground. She spreads them wide, then folds them in place and looks toward the group expectantly. "I know you have found the answers I charged you to uncover. Tell me what you have learned."

Neshkefru waits patiently for the PCs to respond. If they refuse to answer, she roars in anger and attacks. If the PCs do share their findings, the sphinx feels a growing sense of relief. Each time they explain one of the four elements of Pol-Xamne's history, she sighs contentedly as her mind grows calmer. Once they've completed their response, she addresses them.

"Yes, you have found enough to answer me. Well done." The sphinx bows her head in a gesture of deference before

raising it back up a moment later. "Now I know what you must do next," she says, her voice strong and full of authority. "You must learn from those who came before you. You must speak to the dead who dwell in the Underworld. Only they know the secrets of your new power.

"But you could not yet survive the journey there, nor could you find your way back without a guidepost. To fortify your bodies and minds against the Land of the Dead, drink of Ambrosia; you'll find the secrets to its brewing on Moillios. To guide you back from the depths, you need a temple for your worshippers so you can follow their prayers and supplications back to the living. A suitable place exists on Vaveilos, though it is shrouded in misty death. If you stand upon the peak of a mountain and call for the voice of the wind, help will come."

Neshkefru answers questions before departing, but her knowledge doesn't extend much beyond what she's already said. She can provide enough context, however, for the PCs to find the locations she mentioned.

Treasure: In addition to her insights, Neshkefru gifts the PCs vestments of one of Pol-Xamne's last priests. These include a blue embroidered robe worth 25 gp and +1 *striking handwraps of mighty blows*.

Reward: If the PCs gain the above information without fighting the sphinx, award them XP as if they had defeated her in combat.

Fewer Pieces

With fewer than four pieces, Neshkefru attacks in a rage as the oracular insights flood her thoughts. She knows the visions won't end until she kills the offenders or is defeated herself. Fortunately, her anger is dulled by each piece of the riddle the PCs have acquired.

If the PCs have 1 piece of the riddle: Apply the weak adjustment to the sphinx.

If the PCs have 2 pieces of the riddle: As 1 piece, plus she can only use her claw rake every 1d4 rounds.

If the PCs have 3 pieces of the riddle: As 2 pieces, plus the PCs can share details they've found about the history. This is a 3-action activity and causes the sphinx to be slowed 1 on her next turn.

NESHKEFRU

CREATURE 8

Page 90

Initiative Perception +18

Final Clue: As Neshkefru dies, her blood runs across the ground and onto a flat rock. The blood squirms about and forms letters and words that provide the same information as above for the next steps in the PCs' quest.



CHAPTER 2: FOOD OF THE GODS

With information about the next steps of their quest revealed, the PCs now know they have two priorities: to fortify their bodies with the legendary ambrosia against a journey into the Underworld, and to prepare a holy site that can serve as a beacon and draw them back to the land of the living when they're done. Fortunately, the sphinx's information gives them enough leads to find the places themselves, though it doesn't tell them much about what they should do after.

This chapter is a sandbox-style adventure where the players can choose which of the leads they wish to follow first. The sections are listed in the order that the sphinx presented them, but that doesn't mean the PCs have to do it that way. The Ocean Voyage section on page 23 contains two portions of the journey that might be used anywhere in the chapter.

FINDING THE LOCATIONS

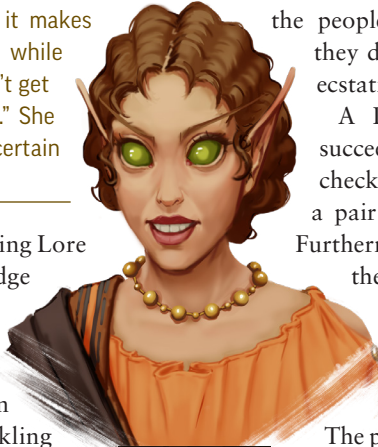
If the PCs sailed with Yasmenei and the *Tide Hunter*, she and her crew are eager to leave Xaktilos, whose monster-haunted ruins remain dangerous even after the PCs have finished their quests. Once the PCs tell Yasmenei what they learned from the sphinx, read or paraphrase the following.

"I know about these places," says Yasmenei. Smiling, she continues, "Moilios is famous for its honey. I clearly remember trying some of it when I was young. The island is a few days' journey from here and should be a much more pleasant place than Xaktilos!"

She thinks for a moment, her smile slowly fading. "And... I believe I know where this other location is, too, though you won't find anyone else who'll go there

willingly. Vaveilos, it is called. It's a poisonous cloud that squats in one spot. The winds don't seem to touch it, and ships don't dare go inside it. You can smell it from miles away, and even the memory of it makes my eyes burn. I got too close once while evading pursuit from pirates and couldn't get the smell out of my clothes for weeks." She pauses and narrows her eyes. "Are you certain there's an island within that?"

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sailing Lore or Society check to Recall Knowledge knows enough to navigate to these locations. Furthermore, if they critically succeed, they can not only confirm Yasmenei's information but also recall stories about cackling voices and screams that come from the toxic cloud.



Haemena

Ocean Voyage

The following encounters can take place at any point during the chapter. It works best, however, if the PCs come across the pilgrims early on, as it gives them time to work with the cult management system. The sargassum heap can work as a good encounter to break up an otherwise uneventful journey.

Pilgrims

Since they saved Bailax and gained mythic power, word of the PCs and their abilities has begun to spread throughout the archipelago. Around the time the party is finishing up their work on Xaxtilos, pilgrims from Bailax who have been inspired by the PCs' actions set out to track down the heroes and dedicate themselves to a faith in their honor. They don't yet have much information about the PCs, but the stories they carry with them are retellings of how the PCs saved their city. In the echo chamber of their own conversations, these stories have grown and changed slightly, which makes it possible the PCs don't recognize themselves in the pilgrim's words. Whether or not the PCs do anything to correct the pilgrims is up to them.

At some point, probably soon after the PCs leave Xaxtilos, the pilgrims finally locate the heroes. Read or paraphrase the following.

A small fishing boat bobs in the ocean ahead and off the port bow. A number of people dressed in simple tunics wave their arms frantically and yell in your ship's direction, but their words are lost to the sound of the bracing wind.

A PC who Searches the approaching boat and its crew and succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check finds a mixture of ancestries and genders among the people aboard; if they critically succeed, they discover that the crew becomes nearly ecstatic as they see the PCs.

A PC who Investigates the ship and succeeds at a DC 20 Religion or Society check spots an unfinished painting of a pair of blank white eyes upon its prow. Furthermore, should they critically succeed, they intuit that this painting and the white garbs of the passengers are a sign of a newly-formed cult that worships hero-gods but has not yet settled on a design.

The pilgrims try to get their small boat closer to the PCs and their ship. Unless the PCs or their crew intervene, this takes them 1 minute.

Once they're within 40 feet, read or paraphrase the following.

A bronze-skinned elven woman with chestnut-colored hair shouts out, her words clear. "Greetings, exalted ones! We are so glad to have finally found you, and we are humbled in your presence." She drops to one knee and bows her head. The rest of the group on the small boat does the same. After a moment, the elven woman looks up again. "We beg you: let us serve you and fulfill your wishes! We humbly ask to be allowed to remain in your presence so we may learn your commandments and become part of your flock."

At this point, the PCs likely have a number of questions for these would-be followers. A PC who speaks with the members of the group and succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check to Sense Motive can tell every pilgrim is earnest in their desire to follow this new faith; if they critically succeed, the PC also understands that these followers are likely to be quite zealous in their beliefs.

From here, the encounter is largely social and segues into an introduction of the cult management system (page 63). The PCs' nascent cult starts out with 10 Recruitment Points and 10 Fervor Points, making it size Small with a Fervor rank of observant. This is a good opportunity for the PCs to choose mantles (the thematic roles they play within their new pantheon) and for the players to learn the basics of what happens during a cult phase. Teaching the full subsystem in one sitting isn't necessary; cult management involves tracking a couple of numbers, making several choices at the beginning of a chapter,

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PANTHEON'S ORIGIN STORY

One of the key elements in the PCs' budding faith is the origin of their mythic abilities and their first acts as hero-gods. The story of these origins and first steps set the tone and beliefs of the followers who are drawn to it. While some elements of that story are common to all players undertaking this Adventure Path, the details are going to be as varied as the people around each individual table. Those details are something only the GM can connect to the rest of the adventure, but it's important to do so to show the PCs that these pilgrims are truly inspired by their respective actions. The boxed text here is only a bare-bones guideline.

and then rolling a several checks toward the end of a chapter. It accommodates complexity but doesn't require much more than that. What's more, the PCs can delegate tasks to their several eager adherents, letting the players and GM split decision-making depending on the group's interests.

Potential Cultists: The total number of potential cultists here is 2 per PC. Below are example cultists, but you should change any of them or add others to better fit your group's playstyle and approach.

The speaker's name is **Haemena** (excited female elf cult leader 4), and she wants nothing more than to become a member of the cult that worships the pantheon she hopes the PCs are about to start. Born to a family of traveling merchants, Haemena hopped islands throughout her youth, learning a variety of languages, cultural practices, and beliefs. Despite all this travel, however, she never found a faith that spoke to her. The religions she encountered felt either stale or disconnected from daily life. She was in Bailax during the attack and saw the PCs' actions at a key moment. Suddenly, she knew what she'd been missing: a close, personal connection to the divine. A natural leader, Haemena is likely to become a prominent voice in the PCs' growing flock.

Moeryn (observant female human cultist 3) dreams of glory and sees the PCs as exemplars of that dream. The second daughter of a minor noble family in Bailax, Moeryn fought alongside the cyclopes defending the city. When her cyclops companion fell, he whispered to her, "The seekers of the sphinx will help you achieve your greatest desires." This made little sense to her until recently, when she learned of the PCs and their quest.

Velnith (opportunistic male human cultist 3) grew up as a cutpurse on the streets of Bailax. He was abandoned by his family at a young age and has had to scrape out a meager living through any means he could employ. During the attack on Bailax, Velnith tried to rob a store whose door had been broken down in the battle. As he left the store with a handful of fine clothes, the building began to collapse, and Velnith looked up just in time to see a huge slab of masonry about to crush him. He died, but was returned to life as a result of the phoenix ritual and has been seeking the PCs ever since.

Development: When the PCs have finished speaking with the new adherents, they can set their cult's agenda for the phase before setting off in pursuit of adventure.

Reward: The PCs earn 30 XP for interacting with the pilgrims.

Deadly Seaweed

Low 5

The following encounter can take place any time the PCs are sailing. It works best before the PCs travel to Thyellados since the treasure they find here can be used as a bargaining chip when interacting with the living landslides.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs' ship gets caught in the vegetation.

The ship slows and suddenly stops, surrounded by what looks like a massive bed of purple and green vegetation.

A PC who Investigates the seaweed from the ship and succeeds at a DC 20 Nature or Sailing Lore check recognizes the weeds; they are a variety of plant that floats around the ocean in huge mats that live just beneath the surface. If they critically succeed, they recall these matted plants are not dangerous on their own, but that they often harbor other creatures like the sargassum heap, which lures and drowns victims with its spores.

The crew is at particular risk in this encounter. Unless one of the PCs is regularly positioned near the front of the ship, a member of the NPC crew is the first affected by the spores. On the first round of the encounter, an NPC of your choice moves to the prow. Unless stopped by a PC, they jump into the water at the end of the second round.

Creature: The sargassum heap begins 50 feet off the bow, so its mirage spores affect anyone who is on the ship. Once it has grabbed a victim, it tries to Reposition them into the water and drown them before swimming down to a depth of 100 feet and consuming them.

SARGASSUM HEAP

Pathfinder Monster Core 295

Initiative Stealth +14

Treasure: Tangled in the body of the sargassum heap is a waterproof *spacious pouch* (*Treasure Vault* 136) that holds *drums of war* made from stone and decorated with a mountainous motif, a shark tooth charm, and 42 gp.

MOILIOS, ISLE OF BEES

For thousands of years, the tiny island of Moilios's claim to fame has been its magnificent beehives, which produce honey shipped as far as the Inner Sea and Vudra. According to legend, the hero-god Untoia invented artificial hives, concocted the first Ibydan mead, and penned treatises that have guided apiary management ever since. To preserve as much of the rolling hills and vast fields of wildflowers as possible, inhabitants have carefully limited the growth of their settlement and restricted its development to the island's coasts, leaving the interior wild. Nearly everyone who lives here supports the beekeeping industry in one way or another.

Traveling to Moilios: The PCs have enough information to find the island, whether they learned its location from the sphinx, from Yasmenei, or simply relied on their own knowledge. They can stop at other ports to confirm the rumors, though, which gives them a chance to restock their supplies and buy new equipment. Most NPCs who know anything about Moilios have similar reactions to Yasmenei: they have fond memories of its honey and seem uneasy regarding recent stories about bees of monstrous proportions.

Dorain, the island's main port, lies along the east coast. It's barely more than a village featuring a single inn, several dozen small homes, and a handful of hero-god shrines. The most prominent of these shrines is dedicated to Untoia, a hero-god of beekeeping and brewing from millennia ago.

The islands' awakening mythic power has struck Moilios. Dorain's inhabitants have spotted massive bees on the horizon and guessed that these insects are the size of horses. Accounts conflict regarding where these bees live, for nobody's been brave enough or fast enough to follow them to their source. Thankfully, the consensus is that most hives are unaffected and healthy, but a few have been destroyed. Residents can give the PCs directions to where the giant bees were last sighted.

Destroyed Apiaries

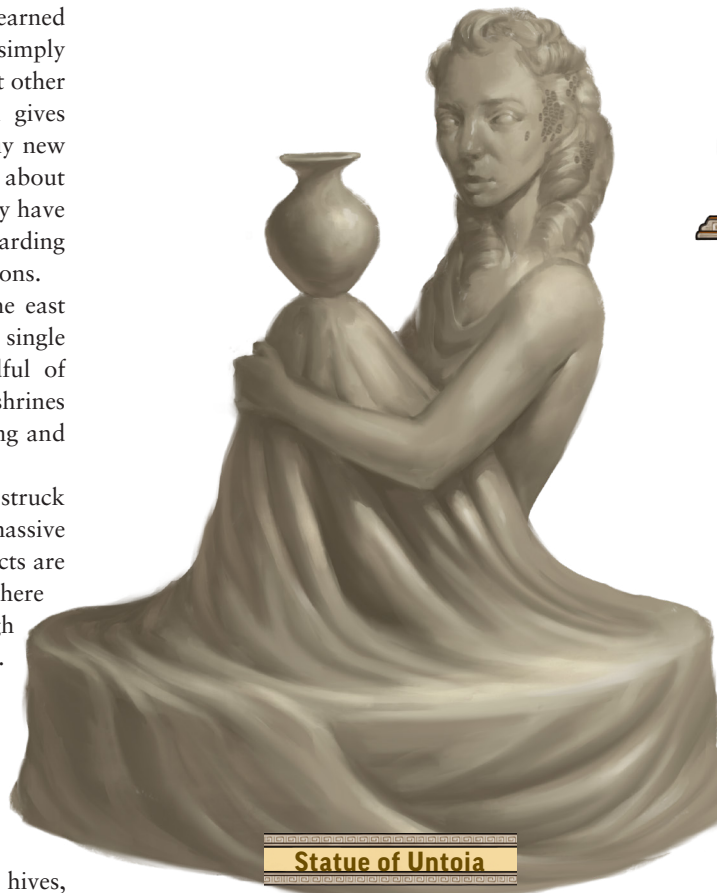
Mythic power seeped into several of the island's hives,

causing bees from each to swell to enormous size. These insects have since formed a new hive on a neighboring island. Locals' directions guide the PCs along a 5-mile-long trail into the interior, where Untoia built some of Moilios's original hives. These have been repaired and rebuilt hundreds of times since, and inhabitants commissioned a 15-foot-tall statue of the hero-god in their midst.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs find the apiary where the giant bees originated.

The warm sun shines on a grassy field. At least two dozen smashed and flattened beehives clutter the entire area, their wicker frames split open. Towering over the scene, a 15-foot-tall statue of a beekeeper sits peacefully, gazing with affection at several stone bees that rest on her arm. A single-story building stands beyond the giant statue, its walls broken in many places, although it looks like someone has been trying to repair it.

The PCs can explore the wreckage, looking for clues. A PC who rolls a successful DC 18 Survival check or DC 20 Perception check determines that the hives were broken from the inside, not torn apart; the affected



Statue of Untoia

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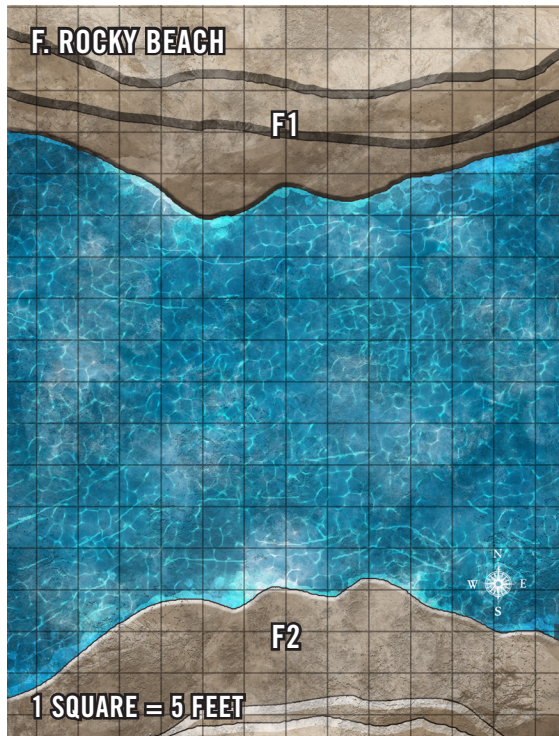
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bees swiftly outgrew their hives, bursting them apart at the seams. Hundreds of crushed, discombobulated, and conventionally-sized honeybees litter the area around the damaged hives, demonstrating how whatever phenomenon caused the growth only affected a handful of the bees from each hive.

The statue depicts the mythic beekeeper Untoia. A PC who approaches the statue can feel it tug at their mythic essence. The monument isn't magical by design; however, the mythic power that enlarged the bees also awoke Untoia's legend, granting the statue a hint of the hero-god's intelligence. By touching the statue and expending a Mythic Point, a PC can temporarily awaken and animate the statue. A PC can also intuit how to commune with the statue if they succeed at a DC 20 Occultism or Religion check.

When they do, the statue shifts unsteadily, tilting its head to gaze at the PCs. The stone bees carved into the statue's surface excitedly skitter across its arm and clothing.

Moving its mouth experimentally, the statue stretches and speaks while remaining seated. "Visitors," it intones, with a smile that sends several flecks of stone tumbling from its face. It glances at the ruined hives and then back at its guests. "I sense kinship in you—you are blessed by the cyclopes' myth-speaking, yes? Have you caused this damage? Awoken me to show off your strength? I should hope not. What business brings you—or brings me—here?"

The PCs likely have a number of questions for the statue. Below are examples of its possible answers.

Who are you? "I don't quite know, but..." The statue trails off, lifting a hand to its ear as if listening to several of the stone bees. "Ah! Untoia! Yes, that seems familiar. That seems to be me. A hero-god. Or—I was a hero-god? I feel that was lifetimes ago."

What happened here? The statue studies the nearest hive. "Such strength! I can feel bees growing. The giants scream in confusion, and their tiny kin scream in terror. But you see the tracks? The way they wander? The giants were dancing at each other as they sought a new home. A new hive."

Where did they go? After more study, the statue raises a hand to test the wind. "They favored the west. I can smell the nectar on the breeze. Such giant bees must surely have an appetite. I don't know where their hive is, but the bees know the way. Find where they forage, and you can follow them home." The statue hesitates, then glances at the PCs and adds, "Or perhaps they are big enough to give you a lift?"

Why were we sent to find bees? The statue seeks clarification. Once the PCs summarize the sphinx's instructions, Untoia's statue nods with understanding. "It is because your godly nature gnaws within you, yes? It did for me as well. But it's nothing a healthful tonic could not cure: ambrosia, distilled from the finest honey and infused with the dreams of heroes." The statue flexes its hands as if checking its dexterity. "The recipe I used long ago... I am starting to recall it. And I could likely brew a new batch—enough to fortify your bodies."

What does the recipe require? "Truly unique honey. And if the giants have made a hive, they have also started setting aside honey. Bring me what you can. But bring something more: a larval queen and enough royal jelly to nourish her. A new species is fragile; with whatever life I have in me, I want to study the creature and establish a second colony for future generations."

Reward: If the PCs speak with the statue, award them 30 XP.

Mythic Meadow

Before the Godsrain, the bees native to Moilios were known for their incredible productivity and their exceeding gentleness. For most of the honey bees on the island, that remains the case today. They spend their days in the meadows and fields and in their hives just as they always have. So, too, do most of the farmers and workers on the island continue to support the production of Moilios's renowned honey.

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One group of bees, however, was transformed when the Godsrain fell and flowed into their hive. Overnight, the bees grew to the size of horses; some of them grew even larger. Fortunately for the bees, the fields of wildflowers they considered their own also grew to massive size. After the initial confusion over what seemed to the bees like the destruction of their hive, the group of giants flew off to find a location to build a new nest. They soon found one just a short distance away.

During the day, dozens of the gigantic bees fly around the meadow, collecting nectar and pollinating the various flowers. Unless attacked, the bees make no aggressive movements toward other creatures, even allowing those who succeed at a DC 18 Apiary Lore or Nature check to touch them gently. Their main interest is gathering nectar and returning to the new nest.

Hop a Ride (Mythic Deed)

Since the bees move directly between the meadow and their nest, it's possible to follow them back to the Erosthies. More daring adventurers, however, can even attempt to catch a ride on a bee and entirely avoid areas **F1** and **F2**, instead entering the nest directly in **G1**. Such a task easily meets the requirements of a Mythic Deed.

Should the PCs decide to hitch a ride on a bee, here are some possible ways to handle it. Before they can do so, though, the PC needs to climb into one of the massive flowers growing in the meadow. A successful DC 15 Athletics check is enough to accomplish this feat. Alternatively, a PC might use other methods such as Crafting to construct a lift up to the petals or to leverage the stem to the ground. Because this is a mythic deed, consider allowing the PCs to propose a wide range of solutions to this challenge and ask the player to describe the mythic nature of their approach.

Dancing: A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Performance check can move in such a way that the bee thinks the performer is a member of the colony and allows that PC to ride on its back; if they critically succeed, the bee allows the performer to bring an additional companion along.

Grabbing: A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Athletics check can grab onto a bee and ride it back to the nest.

Tricking: A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Deception check can cover themselves in enough pollen to fool the bee's senses, allowing them to ride on the bee's leg.

Sneaking: A PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Stealth check can sneak aboard a bee's back without being noticed.

Reward: If at least 1 PC was able to ride a bee, award the party 30 XP.

F. The Erosthies

Two islands, little more than tall spires of bare rock, rise from the Otari Ocean about a mile west from the shore of Moilios. They are so close to each other that they form a U shape, with the gap between them facing south. Ages ago, the sides of these spires that face one another were carved by unknown crafters into gigantic statues of humans that reach out and almost, but not quite, touch each other's hands. Dubbed "the Erosthies" by passing sailors, the statues remain a marvel of construction and a mystery to those who study them. Scholars' best guess is they stand as a monument to mythic, star-crossed love. They could represent a number of hero-gods and their stories, but there's no consensus on which ones.

The gigantic bees, however, only saw the statues and their outstretched arms as a place where they could build their nest. Bracing their construction on the arms and bodies of the statues, they built a nest similar to what they might have made in a hive. The close proximity of the islands and their natural shape serves as adequate protection from the wind and weather, much like a partially-rotted stump might to their tiny cousins. Without the framework and limitations they had in a hive, though, the design of the nest is more complex than usual.

Any PCs who are not riding a bee must travel for 10 miles overland before arriving at the shore of Moilios. From there, they need to swim for 50 feet to arrive at either the north or south island (**F1** or **F2**). PCs who ride a bee are deposited in area **G1**.

Scaling the sides of the Erosthies to gain entry to the nest is possible but requires 3 consecutive DC 22 Athletics checks (a critical success counts as 2 successful checks).


F1. Rocky North Beach

Trivial 5

The bees aren't the only ones infused with mythic power. They're being parasitized by giant mites (not the gremlin kind) who have burrowed into a number of bees. Ill, these bees have fallen to the rocky shores beneath the nest. Read or paraphrase the following.

Water laps against the rocky shore here. Only a few feet to the north, the island rises sharply and becomes a carved statue of a figure whose outstretched hand is pointing south. A bee's nest of massive proportions hangs from this arm and is anchored to the wall of this island's spire as well as to the spire wall of a similar island to the south.

Creatures: Several gigantic bees, too parasitized to fly, lie scattered on the beach. Most are too weak to move anymore, but one of them still buzzes



occasionally in a vain effort to remove the embedded parasite. The bee has two destructive mites known as bee borers attached to it. If attacked, they detach from the bee and try to latch onto their assailant.

BEE BORERS (2)

CREATURE 3

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Initiative Perception +11

Development: If the parasites are removed, the bee is healthy enough to fly back to the nest. First, however, it approaches one of the PCs who helped it and gently presses its mandibles against them, excreting a dab of thin liquid. This is a pheromone the bees emit to mark each other as part of the same colony. If at least one PC is marked this way, the group gains a +1 bonus to all Infiltration checks in area G.

F2. Rocky South Beach

Moderate 5

The southern shore is the new home of a recent arrival to the area. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs arrive.

The southern island's beach is pebbly and smooth, although the terrain rises sharply within only a few feet and becomes a narrow spire. Farther up this spire, a statue of a human has been carved into its surface, a single arm extending out to point north. An enormous bees' nest is anchored to the statue's arm as well as the spire. A dark depression in the wall near the beach forms a small cave.

Creatures: A local bear managed to swim here, climb far enough up the wall to break off a piece of comb, then ate some of the honey along with a few gigantic worker bees. Overnight, it grew into epic proportions. It isn't pleased with competition moving in and moves to attack anyone who comes to the island. It fights to the death.

ELITE CAVE BEAR

CREATURE 7

HUGE ANIMAL

Pathfinder Monster Core 41

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: The cave where the bear has been living contains the partial remains of several gigantic bees. A PC who Searches here finds a *protector's final gift* (page 78) beneath one of the corpses.

G. Honey Heist

The bees that formed this nest don't really understand what has happened to them, so they've continued to follow the same general pattern they had in the

domestic hive: gather nectar, build a nest, defend the hive, store honey, and help care for larvae. They are overall a gentle species, only roused to sting those who don't belong in the nest. Unfortunately for the PCs, this includes them.

Navigating the Nest

Rather than using a series of maps to lay out the entire hive, this portion of the adventure relies on the infiltration subsystem (GM Core 196) to abstract movement and instead focus on the most important challenges the PCs might encounter to allow for a more narrative, dynamic experience. At the very least, the PCs need to secure honey from the upper levels and royal jelly from the lower levels. If they want the giant statue's help, they also need a larval queen. These objectives are each laid out in their own phases.

To build tension and make the PCs' progression through the nest feel epic, be sure to add transitions between each obstacle. This can be a good time to describe simple problems the PCs overcome as well as heroic moments that make for legendary stories.

The bees' nest is an imposing structure. Much of it is vertically oriented, making it very difficult to navigate for a creature without wings or a climb Speed. Handholds are plentiful, however, so unless noted otherwise, the Climb DC is 15. The temperature inside the hive is quite warm, although not enough to be harmful, and it is humid as well. Except where noted, the constant low buzzing of bees' wings makes hearing very difficult, and all Perception checks that rely on sound are automatically one degree of success worse.

The bees of the colony are constantly moving about the nest as they go about their duties. They crawl over and around each other, their bodies packed tightly together. While they don't go out of their way to land or step on the other residents of the nest, they are all used to living in close quarters. PCs who enter the nest and move within it can't avoid touching the creatures, but unless their Awareness Point total is too high, the resident bees don't pay any attention to them. Until an alarm is raised, the bees in the nest assume all other creatures among them are part of the colony, or at least not a threat.

Awareness Points: The bees are in constant communication with each other through their movements and numerous pheromones. The nest is massive, however, and it's difficult for the entire place to turn against the PCs at once. That said, if the PCs aren't careful, they could stir up more trouble than they can handle. The infiltration's Awareness Point mechanic measures the bees' tolerance of intruders; if the total gets too high, the PCs are forced to leave.

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5 AP: The DCs to overcome obstacles are increased by 1.

10 AP: A trio of gigantic bee guards comes to investigate.

20 AP: The DCs to overcome obstacles are increased by 2, and a pair of gigantic bee drones is alerted and attacks the PCs.

Smoking Them Out: A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Apiary Lore, Bee Lore, or Nature check knows that honey bees have a very specific reaction when they detect smoke: they gorge themselves on honey to in case they need to flee the nest and start a new one. In this state, they suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls. Additionally, the smoke masks the bees' alarm pheromones, granting the PCs a $+1$ item bonus to their next Infiltration check (or a $+2$ if they critically succeeded at their check to Recall Knowledge).

Given the size of the nest, smoking the entire place is a daunting task, but with mythic characters, nearly anything is possible. Should the PCs land on a plan that involves smoke in some large-scale way, assume that the PC creating or utilizing the smoke needs to succeed at a DC 28 check (probably Survival, although other skills could work) to make sure the smoke is directed and as useful as desired. How many successful checks they need depends entirely on the PCs' plan.

While the use of smoke is a great way to avoid being detected or having an alarm spread throughout the nest, it does not have any useful effect on a bee that's not eating honey and is in combat or about to enter combat. A few bees, in particular the apothecary bee and the bees serving as royal guards, are not affected by smoke in ways other than how smoke affects all breathing creatures.

Honey Heist Threats

Navigating the nest is mostly a skill challenge, but there are several creatures that might harm the PCs directly. Those events reference these stat blocks.

GIGANTIC BEE DRONES (2) CREATURE 4

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Initiative Perception +12

GIGANTIC BEE GUARDS (3) CREATURE 4

Page 83

Initiative Perception +14

GIGANTIC BEE ROYAL GUARDIAN (2) CREATURE 6

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Initiative Perception +15

Getting Inside

Just as the PCs enter the nest, a lone, wandering ant that has been enlarged by the recent influx of mythic energy also enters. Read or paraphrase the following.

The sound of deep buzzing fills the air, and even the floors vibrate. Everything, from the floors, to walls, to the ceiling, is made of yellow wax hexagons. A short tunnel leads into a massive central chamber that rises hundreds of feet overhead. The western wall that forms this chamber is covered in gigantic bees that crawl up and down the structure, occasionally flying off into another of the innumerable passageways that lead out of the room, each found at different heights.

A giant ant the size of a pony clammers down the entrance passageway, its antennae testing the path as its mouthpieces move menacingly. It enters the main chamber and pauses, as if looking for where to go next. One of the nearby bees bumps into the ant, turns, and inspects it. After a moment, the bee begins twitching its body and flicking its wings.

From the nearby walls, several larger bees detach and fly directly at the intruder, stabbing it with their jagged, sword-length stingers. The barbed stingers penetrate the ant's exoskeleton, and the bees fly off, their stingers ripping out and leaving behind a venom sac the size of a human head. The ant soon collapses, and other bees gather to tug and pull it down a side passage and out of sight.

ALERT ENTRY GUARDS

Trigger The PCs enter the nest.

Overcome DC 18 Performance, DC 20 Crafting, Disguise, or Survival, or DC 22 Diplomacy

COMPLICATION

After the wandering ant's entry, the guards are particularly cautious. Each PC attempts a check to overcome this complication, and the total Infiltration Points earned determines the outcome. Afterward, move to Phase 1.

Less than 2 Points: Certain the PCs are invaders, the guards move to attack! Begin a combat with three gigantic bee guards in a 30-foot-square room.

2–3 Points: The PCs convince the guards to let them pass, but they leave signs of their passage in the process. The PCs earn 1 AP.

4–5 Points: The PCs convince the bees they belong in the nest.

Phase 1: Gathering Honey

The three-dimensional layout of the nest makes movement tricky. Additionally, busy, massive bees

crowd the place, constantly jostling, climbing over, and bumping into each other. Reaching locations where honey is stored involves overcoming three obstacles, during which the PCs encounter one opportunity. Afterward, move to Phase 2.

CONFUSING LAYOUT

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 18 Bee Lore, DC 19 Survival, DC 20 Nature, or DC 22 Perception

Although they're amazing architects, the bees still build by instinct rather than plans. It's difficult for anything that isn't a bee to navigate the twists, turns, and multiple passageways of the nest.

BUILT FOR FLYERS

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 1 (individual); **Overcome** DC 17 Acrobatics or DC 19 Athletics

Given their ability to fly, the bees' most efficient path to the honey storage is an opening far above the floor. The PCs need to either climb up the waxy wall or follow a narrow, slippery ledge from one high passage to another. This obstacle follows the normal degrees of success rules for an obstacle, with the following modification for a critical failure.

Critical Failure The PCs accrue only 1 AP, but the PC who critically failed slips, falls, and takes 25 damage; the PC can't Grab an Edge, as this is already factored into the Overcome roll. That PC successfully passes the obstacle after recovering from the fall.

RESEARCH LAB

OPPORTUNITY

Overcome DC 18 Crafting, DC 19 Arcana or Performance, DC 20 Diplomacy, or DC 22 Stealth

A lone, medium-sized apothecary bee (*Pathfinder Howl of the Wild* 125) works in this room, experimenting with new concoctions that use the mythic power now infused in their honey. The tall, hexagonal chamber is much quieter than most of the nest. Along three walls are a series of shelves that hold numerous containers. A long, tall table covered with numerous gigantic flower parts stands in the center of the room. High up the southeastern wall is a raised platform. The apothecary bee has unlocked the secrets of making ambrosia. Only one PC can attempt to Overcome this opportunity, but others can Aid them as normal.

Critical Success The PC gains not only the recipe for ambrosia, but also an *invisibility potion*, a *shrinking potion*, and a *potion of swimming*.

Success The PC gains the recipe for ambrosia and their choice of one of the potions listed in the critical success entry.

Failure The PC manages to get the recipe for ambrosia, but their efforts cause a ruckus. The PCs earn 1 AP.

Critical Failure The PC is unable to gain anything from the lab, and they earn 1 AP.



Ambrosia

EXTRACTING HONEY

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Primary Overcome** DC 18 Nature or DC 20 Perception; **Secondary Overcome** DC 18 Crafting or Thievery, DC 20 Nature, or DC 22 Athletics

The storage area features thousands of cells full of honey and capped with wax. Bees move about in great numbers, some storing honey while others remove the wax caps and transport it.

To overcome this obstacle, the PCs must first earn at least 1 Infiltration Point with the Primary Overcome skill, which lets them identify a spot in the room where they're less likely to be noticed. Once they've accomplished that, they must earn at least 1 Infiltration Point with a Secondary Overcome skill to extract the honey.

Phase 2: Collecting Royal Jelly and Larvae

Ambrosia requires both honey and royal jelly, so once the PCs have honey, they can turn their attention to the deeper sections of the nest where the royal jelly is stored. In addition, if they've decided to help the giant animated statue, they'll need to secure a gigantic larval queen as well. This phase involves overcoming two obstacles and encountering one opportunity. The PCs can choose to exit after acquiring the royal jelly or push further to capture a larval queen.

WATCHFUL DRONES

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Overcome** DC 19 Stealth or Performance, DC 20 Acrobatics, Athletics, or Crafting, or DC 21 Nature

The eastern end of the royal jelly storage room has a many-tiered collection of stacked-up combs. Each tier rises 10 feet above the previous one, and dozens of giant bees crawl and fly from level to level. The ceiling here stretches 70 feet above the floor, and several holes in or near the ceiling provide access for the workers moving in and out. While the workers stay focused on the comb itself, storing and sealing royal jelly, bee drones patrol the floor and sky for invaders. The PCs must avoid garnering too much notice while climbing to the top tier of combs. Once there, recovering the jelly is a simple task.

ROYAL NURSERY

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Primary Overcome** DC 18 Performance, DC 20 Stealth; **Secondary Overcome** DC 16 Apiary Lore, DC 18 Medicine or Thievery, DC 20 Nature or Survival, or DC 22 Athletics

A long hallway opens to a large, circular chamber. Near the center of the room, the floor sinks down to a layer of cells that hold white, squirming larvae. Worker bees fly in and out of holes in the upper sections of the dome, landing near the larvae cells and disgorging royal jelly into them.

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before once again flying away. Unlike most bee colonies where a new queen is created from any larvae that is fed royal jelly, this colony separates out some of its larvae for special treatment ahead of time. This is a recent change to the colony's behavior, beginning after the bees were infused with mythic energy, but what it signifies for the future remains to be seen.

To overcome this obstacle, the PCs must first earn at least 1 Infiltration Point with the Primary Overcome skill, which lets them get close enough to a larva to grab it. Once they've accomplished that, they must earn at least 1 Infiltration Point with the Secondary Overcome skill to carefully remove the squirmy larva.

There are four available larva. Each is about 2 feet long and counts as 3 Bulk. Because they're uncomfortable being pulled from their cells, the following results apply to the Secondary Overcome check.

Failure: The larva is unhappy and hard to manage. It counts as 4 Bulk.

Critical Failure: The wriggling, uncooperative larva counts as 5 Bulk. It also triggers the Royal Guard Alarm complication.

Complication: Protecting their future queens is a high priority for the bees. The royal guards are always on the watch for trouble and particularly sensitive to alarm pheromones released by larvae.

ROYAL GUARD ALARM

COMPLICATION

Trigger A PC critically fails the Secondary Overcome check in the royal nursery.

Overcome DC 22 Athletics, Crafting, Nature, Performance, or Stealth

The gigantic royal guardians are always present in the nursery. They are exceptionally sensitive to the alarm pheromones from the larvae. Each PC attempts a check to overcome this complication, and the total Infiltration Points they earn determines the outcome.

Less than 2 Points: The PCs are unable to evade the bees and are attacked. Begin a combat with two gigantic bee royal guardians in a 20-foot-wide tunnel.

2-3 Points: The PCs increase the agitation of the bees in the nest as they escape. The PCs earn 1 AP.

4-5 Points: The PCs completely evade the bees.

Getting Out

If they've done well, the PCs retrieve both honey and royal jelly from the nest as well as a living larva for the animated statue to rear. By retracing their steps, the group can leave the nest and make their way back to the ruined apiary or their own ship.

Brewing Ambrosia: With the royal jelly and honey in their possession, the PCs can return to Untoia's statue.

As long as the PCs recovered the larva and royal jelly as promised, the statue can brew the ambrosia. Similarly, if the PCs obtained the recipe from the apothecary bee and have royal jelly and honey, any PC at least Trained in Crafting can create ambrosia. This creation process takes two full days of work—much faster than normal brewing, but certainly not immediate.

Reward: If the PCs deliver a larva safely, the statue peels a bee-shaped brooch from its carved form and gifts it to the PCs. The jewelry transforms from a stone facsimile into a golden brooch with diamond-studded wings and a silver stinger. In all, it's worth 125 gp.

CHASING THE WIND

Bearing in mind the sphinx's advice to find the highest peak in the archipelago, the PCs might decide to undertake this task at any time. Fortunately for them, almost every sailor knows about the tallest peak: the Pinnacle of Winds, which rises from a relatively barren, tiny island called Thyellados that isn't far from Xaktilos. Yasmenei knows the location, as does a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Nature, Sailing Lore, or Society check to Recall Knowledge or at a DC 18 Diplomacy check to Gather Information from sailors at any port.

Because the PCs can travel to Thyellados at any point in the chapter, the journey's length varies from 2–5 days. This is a good place to introduce any of the unused island encounters from Chapter 1.

Thyellados

When the PCs approach the island, read or paraphrase the following.

Ahead, a small island stands in the ocean, and a tall, narrow mountain spar rises from its center and soars high into the sky. The peak is hidden by clouds that swirl around it as if held in place by the wind. The shores of the island are little more than a low incline; they are rocky and covered in low grasses and scrubby trees.

Visible for miles on a clear day, Thyellados stands out from other islands in the archipelago and is frequently used by mariners to orient themselves on long ocean voyages. It is home to a number of birds who nest in the rocky crevasses and ledges along the slope of the mountain. These colonies of birds have helped lost travelers find their way to safety, guided by their cries and the sight of the island. Aside from the birds, however, no other animals make their permanent homes on Thyellados, as it is inhospitable. The occasional vessel anchors off its coast to weather a powerful storm, but the terrain is too steep—and the resources too slim—to



EPIC NARRATION

Some GMs and players might find tracking the progress of the characters as they climb the mountain to feel tedious rather than mythic. If that's the case at your table, you can adopt a narrative approach instead. Take some time to set the stage for the challenges, but instead of rolling and adding up points, ask each player what amazing, seemingly-impossible act their character does to help with the ascent. If they really want to roll something, tell them to assume that they succeed eventually, but use the skill check to find out how much difficulty they had getting there. This is also a good place to encourage teamwork and collaboration. When done well, the story that emerges from this approach can become an exciting part of their growing legend.

support any kind of permanent settlement. The island is roughly circular and about 2 miles wide.

The island's main feature, of course, is the mountain that dominates its landscape. In fact, it's more accurate to say it's simply a mountain that's mostly submerged in the ocean. If measured from the island's base to its peak, it would be one of the highest mountains on all Golarion. Furthermore, although the distinction is perhaps academic, the mountain is often referred to as the Pinnacle of Winds, while the name Thyellados refers to the entire island.

Climbing the Mountain

The sphinx's instructions call for the PCs to ascend to the peak of the mountain and call to the voice of the wind. This is no simple task, and it is certainly one worthy of mythic heroes who are coming into their own power. While there are no creatures on the island who can stop the PCs from climbing, finding a way up the pinnacle is more than enough of a challenge. To determine how the PCs arrive at the top and what kind of challenges they face along the way, the adventure uses Climbing Points (CP), a version of the Victory Point subsystem (*GM Core* 184). The PCs need to accumulate 7 CP to reach the top of the Pinnacle of Winds. For these mythical characters, assume each CP takes 1 hour to obtain, a feat already far beyond the reach of most mortals, but which fits the epic nature of their quest.

Special: You can grant up to a +2 bonus on appropriate checks for PCs who have a climb Speed, who packed appropriate equipment, or who use spells or other abilities in particularly creative ways.

Below are a series of obstacles.

Finding a Route: DC 20 Perception to locate the best path; DC 21 Athletics to push heedlessly ahead.

Climbing the Slope: This is the main portion of the ascent. The terrain is steep, and much of the PCs' time is spent on hands and feet. DC 20 Athletics or Survival to scale the mountain; DC 22 Crafting to make or use appropriate tools.

Enduring the Altitude: As the air grows thinner and oxygen starts to become scarce, breathing becomes a more difficult task. Each PC must attempt a DC 20 Fortitude save or become enfeebled 1 (enfeebled 2 on a critical failure).

Holding on Against the Winds: The winds rip and tear at the PCs as they close in on the pinnacle, threatening to throw them from the mountainside. DC 19 Mountaineering Lore, Survival, or Thievery to secure themselves to the mountain with the correct equipment; DC 20 Arcana, Nature, or Occultism to speak to the winds and calm them; DC 22 Athletics or Fortitude to hold on tightly. On a critical failure, in addition to losing 1 VP, the PC takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage as they tumble and fall.

Pinnacle of Winds

When the PCs reach the top of the mountain, they pass through a brief layer of clouds. Read or paraphrase the following.

The clouds give way to dazzling brightness. Ahead, the once-mountainous slope becomes a gentle path that leads to a flat meadow of tall grasses growing around a sky-blue pool of water. Far from a roaring gale, the wind here is gentle and carries a subtle, flowery scent reminiscent of spring. Around the edges of the peak are fluffy white clouds that extend only a few feet in each direction. Beyond these clouds, the view is stunning, and it's possible to see for miles around. The island-dotted ocean's expanse stretches to the horizon.

Once here, the PCs are safe from the elements and are protected from falling. If a PC moves toward the clouds surrounding the peak, they discover that the clouds are as solid as the ground. Should a PC leap off them, a powerful wind blows them back, depositing them where the path reaches the central pool. A PC who tries to climb back down the mountain finds that works perfectly well, although the anemos can help them get back to ground level much more safely.

Calling the Anemos: Following the sphinx's directions to call for the voice of the wind, the PCs can attract the attention of the anemos. Whatever method the PCs use (even just yelling into the wind),

the creature arrives 1 minute later. When it does, read or paraphrase the following:

A lone, skittering cloud moves across the sky from the west, drifting directly toward the mountain. Bright, cheerful music begins to fill the area, growing louder as the cloud approaches. Within moments, it reaches the pinnacle, and the air coalesces into the appearance of a young adult human dressed in a breastplate, helmet, and yellow clothing. The cloud becomes a set of fluffy wings sprouting from their back, and the music reaches a dramatic crescendo as their attractive features solidify. They hover above the pool and speak in a melodious tone. "You have called upon the winds, and I have answered. I am Avelis, of the West. I see before me beings both mortal and divine. Could it be you are new hero-gods, beginning your ascent? You have chosen a mighty task, to scale the Pinnacle of Winds. Tell me: who are you, and why have you called me?"



A PC who Investigates and succeeds at a DC 22 Nature or Religion check recognizes the appellation "of the West" in this context to be related to the service of Zephyr, ruler of the West wind. If they critically succeed, they glean that Avelis is an anemos—a powerful wind spirit.

Creatures: Avelis spends their days flying through the skies of Iblydos, guiding the winds along their proper paths and stopping those who would interfere with their free flow. They don't often interact with mortals, although a longstanding agreement made when the first winds blew compels them to answer a call for aid performed at the Pinnacle of Winds. They consider the pinnacle a sacred place where they often rest at the end of a long day. The anemos is bound not to harm those at the top of the Pinnacle, but if faced with hostility, the call for aid is voided, and Avelis flies away, never to be seen again.

Avelis's starting attitude is indifferent. Because the PCs have scaled the Pinnacle of Winds and clearly have divine power, their checks to Make an Impression are rolled at DC 22 rather than being based on the anemos's Will DC. After the PCs have introduced themselves and explained why they have scaled the Pinnacle of Winds, they likely have questions. Use the following to guide Avelis's answers.

Can you help us clear the miasma from the island? "The foul air you speak of is vexing indeed. I have tried to blow it away with all my skill, but each time I do, the miasma returns. It hovers like a cloud that is

alive with foul intent. If I still had my *vortex pouch*, however, this would be a trivial matter."

What is a *vortex pouch*? "A small bag woven of purest threads of air by my cousins in the Plane of Air. It was gifted to me long ago, but I foolishly loaned it to another mortal, and it has passed beyond my sight."

What mortal? What happened? "A hero-god, like you may one day become, called me. His name was Uldnir, and he claimed he wanted to bring air and life to a place deep beneath the earth. I was so taken by this idea of bringing air to my enemy, earth, that I agreed. Uldnir set off to an island south of here and never returned. He must surely be dead by now, and my pouch is lost."

Why didn't you seek it? Avelis's expression grows grim. "May as well ask why I did not bring the sun in her glory underground to light all the caverns of the world!" The winds of the pinnacle whip fiercely, and Avelis's eyes flash with electricity. A moment later the winds calm, and Avelis's eyes once again become clear blue. "I apologize. The embarrassment still stings. Uldnir went deep into the earth, and that element is my enemy. As powerful as I may be in the skies, there are many beings who are my equal but of the rock and soil. They would be drawn to my presence immediately. I would surely be captured, and to be fettered is worse than being dead."

What if we retrieved it? "Yes, I had thought that might be where the winds of fate were guiding us. You have proven your potential and dedication by coming here. If you retrieve my *vortex pouch*, I can use it to clear the miasma for you."

Development: If the PCs agree to retrieve the pouch, Avelis provides detailed directions to Koikolos, a rocky island a day's journey south and the place where Uldnir vanished. If their attitude is at least friendly, Avelis also offers to take the PCs back down the mountain by gently lowering them with control of the wind. Otherwise, the PCs need to retread their steps to the bottom.

Take note of Avelis's attitude, as they likely meet the PCs again later.

Koikolos

The anemos's directions are simple to follow, and the rocky island of Koikolos is a day's journey away from Thyellados. From a distance, the island seems to sparkle when the sun is at its zenith, and as the PCs draw close, they can see large, crystalline

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protrusions from the rocky hill that is the island. These protrusions are gigantic quartz deposits. Although beautiful, they aren't worth enough for miners to bother with and have remained untouched for a long time.

There isn't a natural harbor at the island, so the PCs' ship has to moor in the deeper water while the party takes a smaller boat to shore. Read or paraphrase the following when they arrive.

The shore here sparkles and glitters. Instead of tiny grains of sand, miniscule, glassy fragments of clear crystal form a spectacularly beautiful beach. The island looks to be a single, gray hill of rock studded with building-sized chunks of quartz.

Koikolos is barren of vegetation and animal life aside from the occasional sea bird. It takes about an hour for the PCs to locate the cavern entrance that Avelis described.

Glittering Caverns Moderate 5 (Mythic Deed)

After the PCs enter the cave, read or paraphrase the following.

Sparkling walls line a narrow crevasse that leads sharply downward. Flecks of green and red crystals provide a strange illumination. After several hundred feet, the narrow passage opens out into a wide room split in half by a deep rift that sinks deep into the darkness. Across the rift, the passage ends abruptly against a jumbled pile of boulders.

As Avelis claimed, the hero-god Uldnir had a daring plan for an epic accomplishment. A member of Pol-Xamne's pantheon, Uldnir was caught up in the same fervor to outclass his fellow hero-gods that had become normal for that group. His primary divine concern was the mining of gems and other precious materials, so in 4514, he conceived an ambitious plan—to create an outpost of Pol-Xamne within the resource-rich island of Koikolos. For centuries, stories had told of the riches within that island, but no one had successfully found a way to make the air breathable for long enough to gather more than a gem or two at a time.

With the *vortex pouch* in hand, Uldnir filled the caves with clean air and descended into the twisting caverns. Before long, he'd found a perfect place—a cave large enough to hold a few structures for workers. Excited, Uldnir opened the pouch and began blasting air into the cave. In his enthusiasm for success, however, Uldnir hadn't properly surveyed the cavern, and the

sudden rise in air pressure caused a series of collapses. The hero-god was struck by a falling chunk of stone and killed, while the pouch, like an air-filled balloon, flew from his hand and zipped around for some time until it was buried, too.

The excitement attracted several earth elementals. They soon found the pouch, although they were afraid to touch such an air-infused item, even one pinned to the ground by rubble. Over the years, the pouch has pressed against this surrounding earth, forming a cyst of air within.

The Pouch: The rift descends straight down for 300 feet. At the bottom is a single, roughly circular room about 40 feet in diameter, surrounded by more signs of the collapse. Passages that once led from this spot are buried in rubble. A PC who Searches the bottom of the rift can detect a faint whistling noise coming from the rubble. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check discovers a pocket in the rubble where the whistling comes from. The *vortex pouch* is beneath 3 feet of stone, and the trickle of whistling air is the only sign of its location.

Acquiring the pouch by digging it out requires getting through the stone, which has become harder than normal (Hardness 15, HP 64, BT 32). If the PCs start chipping away at it to retrieve the pouch, the living landslides attack.

Creatures: A pair of music-loving living landslides enjoy the whistling sound and often spend time here tapping a rhythm to create their own songs. Lately, however, they've become bored with this single-tone pastime and are open to something new. When the PCs arrive, they are within the walls of the rift near the bottom. Their starting attitude is indifferent, and one of them emerges, curious to see why the PCs are there. Since they speak only Petran, communication between both groups can be difficult, but unless the PCs attack first, the living landslides are patient and open to making conversation, even if it is slow going.

The living landslides know all about the source of the whistling noise, having traveled through the earth to marvel at it. They've even slightly adjusted the aperture of the crack to get different sounds over the years, but this too has gotten boring.

If a fight breaks out, the living landslides take full advantage of the terrain. They try to trip or otherwise knock foes at the top of the aperture (or any who are climbing) down into the rift. When battling in the rift proper, they can spend 3 actions to cause rocks to tumble down onto the PCs. This causes 6d6 bludgeoning damage to all creatures at the bottom of the rift (basic Reflex save). If reduced below 30 HP, a living landslide moves into the rock and leaves, never to return.

Making a Trade: If the PCs obtained the *drums of war* from the sargassum heap, the living landslides happily exchange it for the *vortex pouch* and even retrieve it for them.

LIVING LANDSLIDE (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Monster Core 142

Initiative Perception +12

Using or Returning the Pouch

The container in hand, the PCs can head to the location of the temple and can dispel its miasma. In this case, Avelis arrives only moments after the PCs accomplish the task. Alternatively, they can return to Thyellados and the Pinnacle of Winds to return it to the anemos first. In such an event, Avelis senses the pouch as they draw close to the island and flies down to greet them. They are overjoyed by the PCs' success and offer to use the pouch to remove the miasma right away.

Reward: If Avelis ended their previous interaction with the PCs with a friendly attitude, they are willing to wait until the PCs are done at Vaveilos to get the pouch back; if they are helpful instead, they offer it to the PCs as a gift for them to keep. Either way, Avelis also gives the PCs an *invisibility potion* and a silver ring inset with a star sapphire worth 80 gp.

VAVEILOS

Minotaurs trace their genesis to the legendary stonemason Tavdrinos, whom a hero-god tasked with making a temple in their honor. Tavdrinos followed the hero-god's confusing instructions as best he could, creating a masterpiece that the hero-god ultimately rejected. In anger, the hero-god transformed Tavdrinos into the first minotaur, and the mason fled Ibydos. Most of his minotaur descendants have held Ibydos's living deities at arm's length since.

A rare few, however, have sought and undergone myth-speaking themselves, becoming hero-gods. One of these was Karskios, a hero-god of fiend-hunting and imprisonment. His small faith tracked and killed evil beings across the region for years, even after Karskios's death. However, some of their quarry proved too strong or would be even more dangerous if slain—in particular, a rare type of asura known as a *pyrkaion*. Knowing that if killed, the asura would likely reincarnate and resume its mischief, the hunters captured it, brought it back to Karskios's temple, and used one of their deceased hero-god's rituals to trap the asura in a magical maze.

The maze sealed the asura but could not suppress its voice. It pleasantly chatted with the hunters whenever they approached, slowly seeding doubts and

paranoia into their minds. Over the years, the hunters became convinced that for every fiend their hero-god had defeated, another five had sworn to take revenge and would fulfill that vendetta by destroying his cult from within. The hunters began accusing each other of treachery and seeing enemies in every shadow. Desperate to purge the evils they perceived among their number, one of Karskios's adherents unleashed a toxic miasma that the hero-god had trapped as one of his first mythic deeds. The cloud filled the temple, killing everyone who couldn't resist its poison. It has shrouded the temple since, preventing anyone from exploring the site.

When the PCs arrive at the island, read or paraphrase the following.

A sulphurous stench on the breeze grows stronger and stronger until the source becomes clear: a massive cloud of yellowish-green fog filled with glowing cinders. Vaporous wisps of the fog curl at the edges, reaching out before flowing back into the cloud. Although there is a stiff ocean breeze, the wind barely shifts the cloud.

A PC who Investigates the cloud or uses *detect magic* on it and succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana, Nature, or Occultism check realizes that its source is supernatural, ancient, and extraplanar; on a critical success, they realize the cloud is similar to those found in the Outer Rifts.

Dangerous Cloud: The cloud extends across the island, though it's strongest in the 100-foot-radius area surrounding the temple. Once per 10 minutes while exploring the island, a PC must attempt a DC 26 Fortitude save, becoming sickened 1 on a failure or sickened 2 on a critical failure; this condition cannot be reduced or removed while in this area. A PC who ends their turn in the cloud's densest area (near the temple) must attempt a DC 26 basic Fortitude save or take 3d10 poison damage. On a failure, the PC is sickened 2 (sickened 3 on a critical failure). The creatures still dwelling in the temple are immune to the cloud's effects.

In addition to its poison, the miasma contains cinders that tend to cling to creatures that die here, sometimes transforming them into fiery mockeries of their former selves. This effect has shaped several of the foes the PCs encounter in the temple. At your discretion, a PC who dies soon after being exposed to the cloud might also be transformed. This can restore them to life yet replace their heritage with that of a fire-themed nephilim (*Player Core* 79), turn them into a fire-themed undead creature, or any other fate that suits the campaign.

DEATH SAILS A WINE-DARK SEA

Chapter 1: Riddle of Immortality

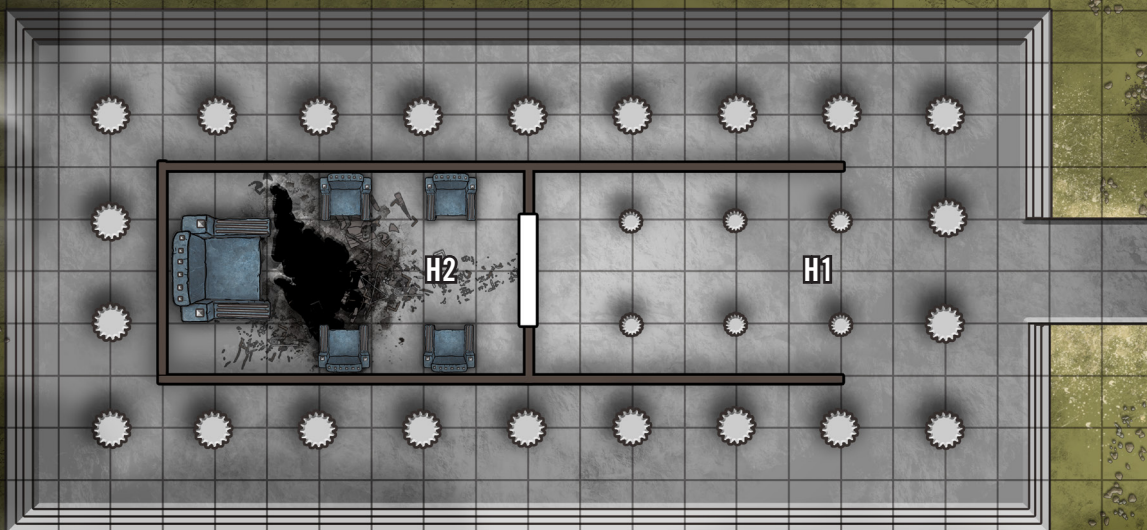
Chapter 2: Food of the Gods

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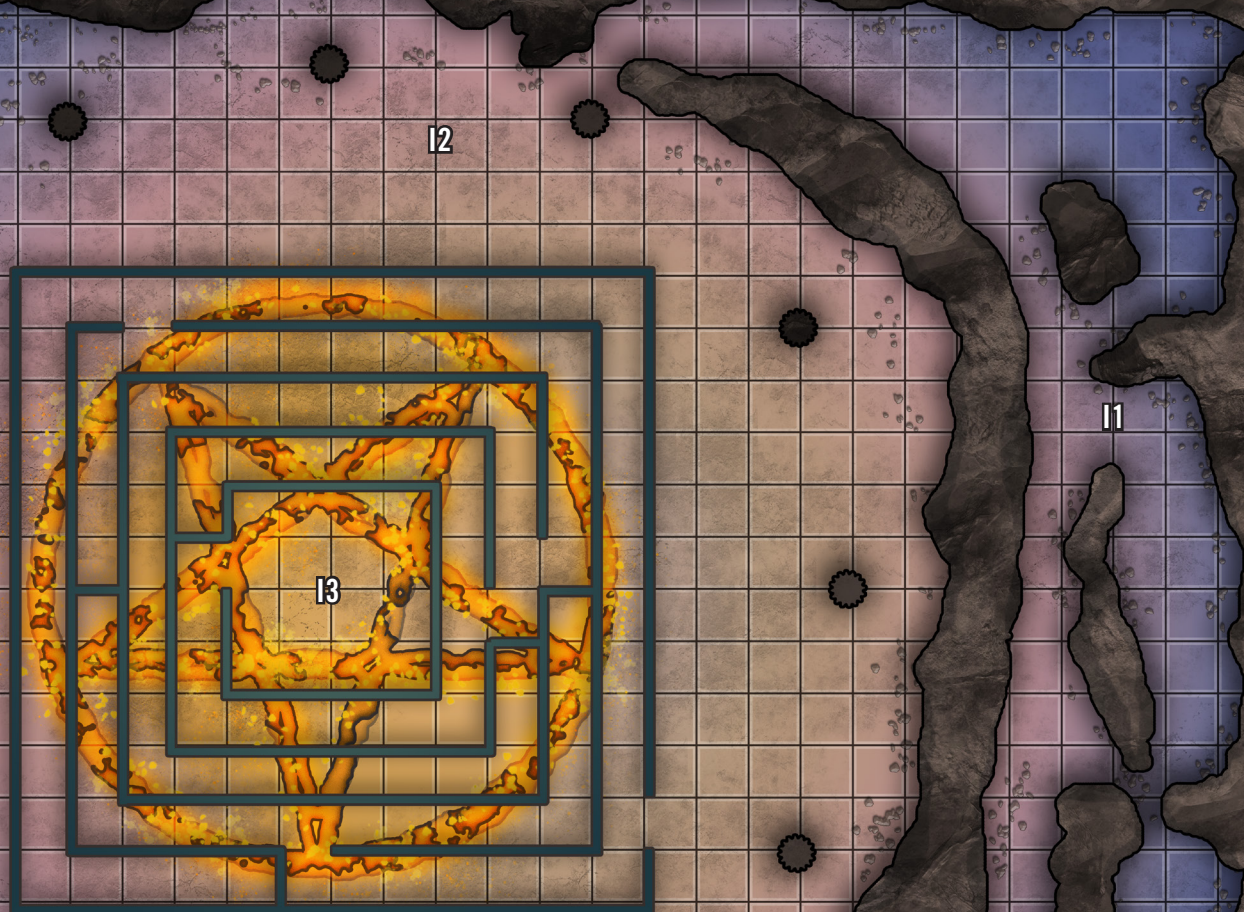
Ibydos

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H. TEMPLE MAIN LEVEL
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

I. TEMPLE UNDERBELLY



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



DEATH SAILS A WINE-DARK SEA

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Dispersing the Cloud: The miasma is persistent and fills any space cleared by high winds or similar effects again after 1 round. If the PCs possess the *vortex pouch*, that item can easily suck up all the miasma over the course of a minute, which prevents the miasma from returning. Without the *vortex pouch* or a similar effect, any solutions the PCs might arrive at are temporary at best until the pyrkaion is slain or reimprisoned.

A PC who expends a Mythic Power can, at the GM's discretion, clear a path through the miasma and the temple's upper level with a successful DC 30 skill check. Such a path remains clear for only 1d6×10 minutes (or 1 hour on a critical success).

Caretaker Ghost

Ceead Gwem (haunted male human priest 5) served the cult Karskios left behind and, like his colleagues, fell under the asura's sway. In his final days, however, he began to see through the creature's deceptions, only to be slain when the miasma flooded the temple. Gwem has wandered the island as a ghost ever since, certain that he should know what caused the disaster yet too forgetful to piece together the mystery. His ghostly body reflects his memories; he appears as a vaguely humanoid ghost with almost no defined features.

The first time the PCs set foot on the island, the ghost senses their presence and approaches. Read or paraphrase the following.

A pale, ghostly figure with blurred features materializes and gazes at the visitors beseechingly. He looks to have been human in life and is dressed in a tattered and torn tunic tied shut with a simple rope at the waist. His mouth begins to move, but his words seem to lag behind as if the sound must travel several miles before it can be heard.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check to Recall Knowledge recognizes this is a ghost whose memories and very essence have eroded—likely through long stretches of inactivity and isolation. Until the ghost can be reminded of who he was, he's unlikely to remember much else. His mind is too full of holes to communicate anything more than vague warnings and wary suspicions regarding the PCs' motivations. As the PCs explore,

Gwem often lurks nearby, inspired to remember bits of his past life while the PCs make their own discoveries. This process is tracked through Memory Points (MP), which are referenced in subsequent encounters. As he gains MP, Gwem remembers parts of his past, becomes more visually distinct, and communicates more with the PCs; the entries below note his responses each time the MP total increases. Ultimately, he is a font of information as to what befell the temple and how the PCs might defeat what lurks at its heart. In addition, Gwem might remain even after the PCs claim the temple for themselves, serving as its caretaker.

0 MP: Gwem's spirit starts out at this level. His image is unstable, wispy, and shaky, fading in and out of existence. He can speak in short, choppy sentences,

but he struggles with forming new memories.

This might lead to frustrating interactions as the spirit loses track of what's happening even mid-conversation. Gwem refers to himself as "the Caretaker," knows this was once a temple, and is aware that it is overrun with evil influence.

He often repeats phrases about "the fog and the fire" in conversation.

1 MP: The caretaker's spirit stabilizes and is easier to understand. His speech remains stilted, but he can now remember what happened within the last 24 hours—including his recent conversations with the PCs. He knows the layout of areas **H1** and **H2**, including what the temple looked like in the past.

2 MP: Ceead Gwem finally remembers his full name. He knows a great and evil presence infects the island from the caverns below the temple, although he doesn't remember more about its nature. He also remembers being an important priest.

3 MP: Gwem recalls he served the hero-god Karskios, a great hunter. He remembers that the faithful hunted evil beings even after Karskios died and that some of those were trapped below the temple using a special ritual. Learning the name Karskios is enough for a PC to attempt to Recall Knowledge (DC 19 Hero-God Lore, DC 21 Religion, or DC 22 Society check) about the hero-god's faith and its tragic collapse.

4 MP: The spirit fully takes form in the shape of an elderly human dressed in a dark tunic with a blue





sash. He remembers the site's background as detailed on page 35, though he doesn't know who unleashed the miasma. Importantly, he can also remember the *labyrinthine prison* ritual (page 77) and teach it to the PCs in a day.

H1. Temple Main Level

Low 5

The temple's main level follows ancient traditions of architecture, and this style of building can be found throughout Iblydos. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs arrive.

A simple yet impressive marble building stands here. It is rectangular in shape, and three of its sides have stairs running from the ground up to the main platform, while the eastern end also has a ramp. A set of tall pillars, each nearly five feet wide, follow the perimeter of the building, although whatever roof they once held is now gone. A single building stands in the center, its eastern end completely open and revealing a large interior lined with yet another set of pillars. These are narrower and more delicate, their stonework beautiful. The roof covering this chamber is present, but it is full of large holes that do little to stop either rain or sun. At the western end of the room is a wide metal door, pitted and broken. The entire area stinks of sulfur, and a sickly, yellowish-brown residue is caked on every surface.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check to Search detects several tiny pests moving along the walls and floor. These resemble cockroaches, mice, and flies, but their bodies seem to be made of living charcoal that sheds bits of ash and glows faintly when blown upon. A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Arcana or Nature check notes that these pests are elementals. On a critical success, the PC makes the connection between the fiery pests and the cinder-filled miasma, positing that the cloud might have transformed simple pests into elemental beings (rather than these being summoned from an elemental plane).

PCs who Investigate the architecture of the building and succeed at a DC 15 Engineering Lore or Hero-God Lore check, or a DC 17 Society check, recognize the design as classical temple construction associated with hero-gods' sanctuaries—especially the ratio between its length and width. On a critical success, they notice motifs of bulls and mazes hidden in the temple's architecture.

Creatures: Though most of the fiery pests are harmlessly small and timid, a trio of larger rats were transformed and are more aggressive. They lurk amid the outer columns and try to ambush creatures that approach the temple's doors. They lack any sense of self-preservation and fight to the death.

CINDER RATS (3)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Monster Core 144

Initiative Perception +9

Reward: Award the PCs 1 MP for Gwem if they destroy all the cinder rats. The spirit approaches and makes another attempt at communicating with the party.

H2. Hall of Thrones

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter.

Massive stone doors stand in the east end of the room. Within, the marble walls are unscathed and the complete, decorative friezes carved onto their surfaces remain intact. Several large fractures mar the ceiling, however. Two pairs of stone thrones stand against both the north and south walls, and a fifth, far larger throne stands against the west wall. A large crack in the center of the floor descends to some cavern below.

Karskios held court here, using the space to teach his followers, welcome visiting hero-gods, and declare judgment upon unholy captives. The edges of the broken floor are smoothed rather than jagged, as if they were heavily eroded or even melted. With a successful DC 20 Perception check, a PC finds a recess along one of the hole's edges where a hinge might have once been fitted, suggesting there was once a trapdoor here. The hole descends 20 feet into a small antechamber, from which a corroded spiraling staircase carved into the bedrock descends another 100 feet to area I.

The Thrones: The thrones in the room are imbued with two unique enchantments. First, if a Medium or smaller mythic creature sits upon the largest throne, they feel their body wanting to grow. They can stop this effect with a thought. However, if they wish to grow, they are affected by *enlarge*. If they are at least 8th level, they can instead spend 1 Mythic Point to either gain the effects of *enlarge* heightened to 4th rank or to extend the effect's duration to 4 hours.

Second, after a mythic creature sits in any of the thrones for at least 10 minutes, a perfect statue matching their likeness appears upon the throne when they stand and leave. This statue vanishes if a mythic creature lightly pushes the statue aside as if getting ready to sit on the throne. The statue also vanishes if the creature it resembles dies.

The power of the thrones is still active. A PC who Investigates the thrones with *detect magic* and succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check recognizes the nature of the enchantment and understands how to use them. Gwem can also relate this information once he has 4 MP.

Reward: If the PCs successfully use one of the thrones, award the PCs 1 MP for Gwem. The spirit immediately manifests and tries to communicate with the party.

I. Temple Underbelly

The space below the temple was hollowed out to imprison threats that Karskios and his followers either couldn't reliably destroy or hoped to reform. Longtime exposure to the miasma has caked its surfaces with a slick, yellow residue that's pooled in some places and eroded its features.

Hazard: The PCs' efforts swept away the miasma aboveground and drew out almost all the vapor from the underground areas, yet a thin mist evaporates from the toxic residues and puddles in area **II**. This mist provides concealment to creatures in these tunnels, and any creature in the mist that takes piercing or slashing damage takes an additional 1d4 poison damage as the vapor seeps into their wound. Rapid movement (such as combat) disperses the mist after two rounds, and air effects that affect an area (such as *gust of wind*) clear the hazard from the entire area immediately.

II. Side Caverns

Moderate 5

The PCs enter this area from the south tunnel, near where the staircase ascends to the surface. The passages' ceilings loom about 15 feet overhead, studded with slimy stalactites of congealed toxin. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana or Nature check while Investigating can study the mist hazard, determine its slightly caustic effects, and realize it can easily be dispersed. There are also drake tracks a PC might uncover if they succeed at a DC 20 Survival check while Tracking or a DC 22 Perception check while Searching.

A stone statue of Karskios stands in an alcove of the northernmost cavern. The minotaur demigod is shown holding a spear and crouching as if scanning the area for tracks. Sickly fungi grow on the statue, seemingly untouched (or even fed) by the miasma that had filled this area until recently.

Creatures: Ages ago, disciples of Karskios subdued a pair of mythic drakes that terrorized the slopes of Mt. Ebaeos, an infamous Iblydan volcano. The drakes regenerated from even the most grievous injuries, so the disciples imprisoned them here. The miasma killed and transformed the drakes, whose bodies have slowly been eaten away by the gases, reducing the creatures to elemental beasts a fraction of their original size.

The drakes spend most of their time sleeping here, only occasionally venturing to the surface to explore and stretch their wings before wandering back. The miasma's dissipation has roused them, and they have explored the tunnels with curiosity.

When it seems there are intruders approaching, the drakes seek cover to prepare an ambush.

WITHERED FLAME DRAKES (2)

CREATURE 5

MEDIUM DRAGON ELEMENTAL FIRE

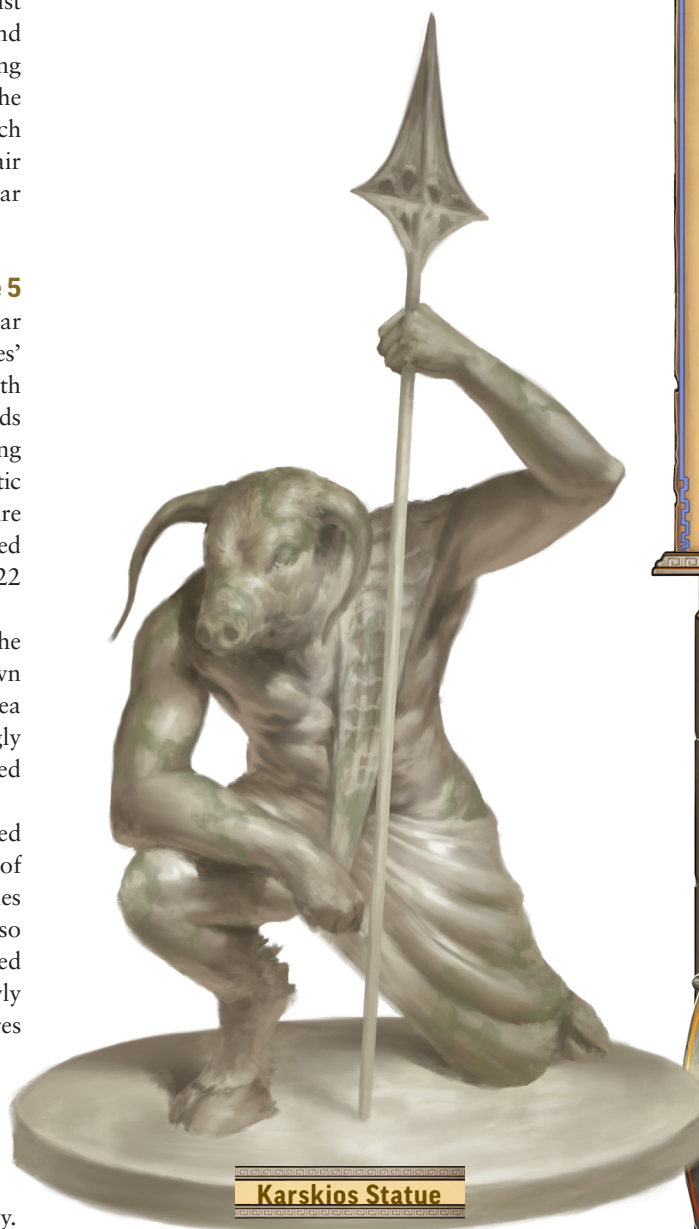
Variant flame drake (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 129)

Perception +12; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet, smoke vision

Smoke Vision Neither smoke nor the miasma impairs the drake's vision; it ignores concealment caused by these effects.

Resistances poison 5

Miasma-Proof The drake is immune to damage caused by the miasma.



Karskios Statue

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Melee ♦ fangs +14, **Damage** 2d8+5 piercing plus 1d6 fire
Melee ♦ tail +14 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning

Reward: Amid the residue-coated rubble in the northeast cavern is a corroded lockbox that's easy to snap open. Its contents are untouched by miasma and include a *lesser potion of fire resistance* and a *deck of illusions* (*Secrets of Magic* 182). If PCs destroy the drakes, award the PCs 1 MP for Gwem. The spirit soon approaches and tries to communicate with the party.

12. Cavern of Imprisonment

Moderate 5

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the cavern.

The passage gives way to a massive natural cavern, its walls coated in the same yellow residue. The ceiling is roughly dome-shaped, soaring to at least 50 feet high. Sickly, sulfurous stalactites loom menacingly overhead.

A ring of 12 pillars, each 10 feet tall, encircles a large, low stone building carved from the bedrock in the center of the chamber. Unlike the walls and surface of the building, most of the pillars are clear of the yellow pollution, their white marble unmarked and clean; several others are chipped and damaged, and these columns are dappled with patches of the miasma's residue. The pillars are evenly spaced, and the undamaged ones glow softly with dim light.

A PC who Investigates the pillars and succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check notices they are infused with some manner of mythic power; on a critical success, the PC notes the columns resonate with some of the memories of this place, accessible by touching the columns and concentrating.

A PC who touches one of the pillars can hear faint voices and notices movement in their peripheral vision. By focusing on the phenomena, the PC can experience the past moment that echoes in that column. The intact columns have different moments experienced by the temple's previous occupants, though these aren't in chronological order. Beginning with the northern column and proceeding clockwise, the columns contain the following memories (which the GM can expand upon further at their discretion).

- **North:** Karskios excavates these caverns, taking care to follow his blueprints as he chisels out a labyrinth from the bedrock.
- This damaged column holds no memories.
- Karskios sits in the temple's largest throne as he speaks with two elegant visitors seated in two of the smaller chairs. One of the visitors

stands, and a statue of them appears seated in the seat they just vacated, much to the visitor's amusement.

- **East:** Clearly terrified yet determined, a minotaur disciple emerges from the underground labyrinth while carrying a metal coffer that she seems ready to open. Other disciples confront her, hefting spears and accusing her of treachery.
- Two disciples—a minotaur and a human—stand outside the labyrinth, listening to a soothing voice (the pyrkaion) originating from somewhere deep within the maze. The human backs away, declaring what she's hearing are lies. The other disciple waits until she leaves before asking the voice to tell them more.
- Several disciples review a map of Iblydos as they worriedly discuss a Vudran fiend bedeviling the eastern islands.
- **South:** The minotaur disciple (seen in the east column's vision) accuses her colleagues of working with fiends. A thrown spear strikes her in the shoulder, but not before she tears open the coffer she's carrying, unleashing a toxic cloud that spreads quickly.
- A pair of disciples drags an anthropomorphic creature bound in nets through the eastern caverns before pausing at the statue of Karskios to announce their successful hunt. This is the pyrkaion asura, and a PC experiencing this memory can attempt to Recall Knowledge to identify the creature.
- This damaged column holds no memories.
- **West:** This damaged column holds no memories.
- This damaged column holds no memories.
- Three disciples—two humans and a minotaur—sit outside the labyrinth, listening to the pyrkaion's voice and philosophy. The asura speaks of shape-changing fiends who can take the form of humans, and the three disciples glance at each other with growing suspicion.

Creature: The hunter **Gyogni** (wary female minotaur tracker 7) was one of the last disciples of Karskios to serve this temple, and it is she who appears in several of the column's visions above. Believing that her allies were fiends in disguise and acting at the asura's behest, she sought some weapon able to eliminate the infiltrators. What she found was a metal coffer containing a malevolent miasma that Karskios had trapped lifetimes before she was born. Believing she could direct the miasma, she took the coffer and opened it when her colleagues tried to stop her. The gas killed the disciples, and Gyogni was

transformed into an ageless firehoof minotaur that has lurked here ever since.

Gyogni tries to avoid notice while studying the PCs. She assumes the PCs are new infiltrators and fiends, especially since the demon-killing miasma has faded. It's possible yet difficult to dissuade her of this notion; she might parley if noticed before she attacks or if she's subdued, yet the DCs of skill checks to earn her trust or Make an Impression are 4 higher due to her deeply ingrained mistrust. She ambushes the PCs after they have explored part of this chamber, fighting to the death if needed. In the event the PCs do talk her down, she is willing to share her experiences here, surrender her treasure, and maybe even serve as a temple guardian. However, her existence is linked to this temple; her fiery body crumbles if she ever leaves the island.

FIREHOOF MINOTAUR

CREATURE 7

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Initiative Perception +16

Rewards: Gyogni has an *eternal eruption* and three rubies worth 40 gp each. If the PCs defeat her, award the PCs 1 MP for Gwem. The spirit immediately manifests and tries to communicate with the party.

13. Prison Maze

Severe 5

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the building.

This southeast corner of this rectangular building is shattered and broken open, allowing access inside. Within, a series of grime-streaked walls form a labyrinth. The floors of the maze are natural rock of the cavern, and numerous channels have been cut into the stone. These channels are caked with the yellow-green residue of the miasma.

Though seemingly finite in size, this labyrinth was enchanted by Karskios to seem far larger than it is for the villains he sealed inside, keeping these foes trapped in a maze they were unlikely to ever escape. Binding a creature inside requires the *labyrinthine prison* ritual (page 77). All other creatures can enter, traverse, and exit the small maze normally, though they sometimes catch glimpses of creatures trapped inside or hear these creatures' speech. The cult's disciples sometimes wandered its passages to familiarize themselves with the threats inside and build up courage.

The labyrinth walls are made of stone slightly corroded by the miasma (Hardness 10, HP 44, BT 22).

Creatures: When Gyogni unleashed the miasma, the pyrkaion trapped here noticed the fumes and followed them to their source, allowing the asura to escape the labyrinth. They have lingered here ever since, admiring their handiwork and the downfall of this once-magnificent temple. They spend decades at a time deep in meditation at the maze's center, and the miasma's disappearance slowly rouses them. By the time the PCs explore this cavern, the asura is awake, alert, and studying them while staying out of sight.

Upon sensing the PCs' mythic power, the pyrkaion hopes to gradually corrupt the PCs and lead them down a years-long path of hubris and self-destruction. This might involve offering their services as an advisor or even acting as a servant if bested in combat. These schemes far exceed the scope of this encounter, though, and it's very likely—especially with Gwem's or Gyogni's insight—that the PCs decide to destroy or even trap the asura.

The pyrkaion favors parleying with the PCs from hiding to see if they can be manipulated. Failing that, they try to lure the PCs into the labyrinth, strike quickly, and withdraw to choke points that provide a means of escape in case the battle goes poorly. They're not too proud to surrender if they think they can use it to their advantage, and they know that if they're killed and their essence isn't trapped, they're likely to reincarnate somewhere else in the multiverse. Their least favorable outcome is being magically sealed in the labyrinth once more.

PYRKAION

CREATURE 8

Page 80

Initiative Perception +18

Reimprisoning the Pyrkaion: While killing the pyrkaion is a victory, the best outcome involves sealing the asura so that they can't torment others. Accomplishing this task requires that the pyrkaion be subdued and trapped using the *labyrinthine prison* ritual (page 77). If the asura is destroyed, the ritual can still seal them if it is performed within 24 hours, but the DCs of the ritual's skill checks all increase by 2. If the PCs seal the asura, award them 30 additional XP.

Reward: In the center of the labyrinth is a small pile of treasure containing 78 gp, a *lesser snarling badger* (*Treasure Vault* 95), and a bone scroll tube that holds a *scroll of noxious metals* (*Rage of Elements* 145). If the PCs destroy the pyrkaion, even temporarily, award the PCs 1 MP for Gwem. The spirit immediately manifests and tries to communicate with the party.

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CHAPTER 3: TO FIELDS BELOW

To control the mythic power boiling inside themselves, the PCs have obtained fortifying ambrosia and claimed a temple for their growing cult. However, the sphinx Neshkefru indicated they require one more element to inoculate themselves against their own power: the wisdom of now-dead hero-gods. To seek these divinities' counsel, the PCs must descend into Amneros, the Ibydan underworld, and survive the return trip.

Ambrosia can strengthen the PCs' bodies and shield their minds from the realm's memory-leeching properties. Without it, they would wander the land aimlessly and soon truly join the ranks of the dead. However, the PCs' limited supply of ambrosia can only protect them for about a week, so once in Amneros, they must act quickly. The trip is one they must make

alone; there's barely enough of the drink for them (and any of their creature companions), much less their mortal followers.

With the sphinx's clues as well as information from lore checks, gathered information, and other leads found in their recent adventures, the PCs learn the way to the underworld: through the maw of a titanic sea monster. This creature haunts the many straits of Ibydos and has a maw so massive it can swallow entire ships. While this would destroy normal mortals, the PCs are mythic heroes fortified with ambrosia and can survive the journey.

CULTISTS ARRIVE

Within a day or two after the PCs defeat the pyrkaion, the pilgrims they met in Chapter 2 arrive at the temple.

They're eager to get to work preparing the place for permanent habitation and listen intently to whatever the PCs want to tell them of their adventures.

Rebuilding and Consecration

After the major accomplishment of seizing a temple for themselves, the PCs have a brief respite from their all-consuming hubris affliction for the next few days. Exactly how long this period lasts is up to you, but it should be less than a week. During this time the PCs can review and set the agenda for their cult. Based on what they know about their upcoming descent into the underworld, the PCs understand that repairing their new temple is of utmost importance. While the cultists can carry this work out under the direction of Gwem, it's more dramatically appropriate to have the PCs be involved themselves.

KATABASIS (MYTHIC DEED)

A character who succeeds at a DC 15 Sailing Lore, Society, or Religion check to Recall Knowledge or a Diplomacy check to Gather Information knows of the mighty Rykestho, a semi-divine sea monster that dwells in the many straits of the archipelago. The beast is easily spotted, as it travels the ocean with its gigantic maw open, perpetually devouring anything it crosses. A dangerous whirlpool is the clearest sign of Rykestho's approach, and sailors do their best to spread word to their peers when such a vortex is spotted. All the tales the PCs learn of the beast say that its maw leads directly to Amneros.

A character who succeeds at a DC 18 Diplomacy check to Gather Information can track down Rykestho's location in a week; a critical success reduces this time to two days. Once the PCs know the location of the beast, they can arrive there within two more days.

Simply finding the location is not enough, however; the PCs still need to get there and into the whirlpool. Yasmenei and her crew are almost certainly devoted followers of the PCs by this point in the adventure and would gladly deliver the group aboard the *Tide Hunter*. Such a voyage, however, would certainly end in the crew's death in the whirlpool or destruction in Amneros. In addition, if the PCs' vessel is destroyed too early, they simply won't make it to the underworld. A solution to this problem is to build or reinforce a smaller vessel with staves of barrels in which ambrosia is fermented. A PC trained in Crafting automatically realizes this option, otherwise the giant animated statue, Yasmenei, or a crew member loading a barrel realizes how tough the wood is when they see it fall onto rocks and remain unharmed. There's enough of this wood to be used to craft a small boat or reinforce

one of the *Tide Hunter's* (or another ship's) dinghies. A character who succeeds at a DC 18 Crafting check can accomplish this task in 2 days; a critical success reduces the time to 1 day.

Learning About the Underworld

Before they depart, the PCs likely want to learn or recall as much information about the land of the dead as possible. Between the cultists, the crew of the *Tide Hunter*, the ghostly caretaker, recovered records in the temple, and their own knowledge, they can piece together quite a bit. Rather than listing separate information for each skill, a range of skills might allow the PCs to Recall this Knowledge or otherwise find it from other sources with the following DCs.

DC 15: Sometimes called "the underworld" or "the land of the dead," the proper name for the place is Amneros, after its ruler, Amnerion. When people die, their souls travel there.

DC 20: Amnerion is a harsh but fair ruler. Their realm exists deep below the ground in a massive cavern with three lobes called the Marshes, Bothrion, and the Glades of Euphoria. In the center of the cavern is Amnaia, the City of Forgetting.

DC 22: The water and air of Amneros corrode the living; only a shade can withstand the place for any length of time, and even a shade is slowly scoured of its memories.

DC 24: Myth commonly places Amneros somewhere in the Darklands, for whirlpools are said to take souls of the dead to its depths. In fact, the realm lies beyond the Universe, occupying a hollowed out cavern within Pharamasma's Spire. That said, shades are able to access Amneros, suggesting there's some connection between them.

Pharamasma has an uneasy relationship with Amnerion since souls normally migrate immediately from their mortal vessels through the planes until they join the River of Souls and on to judgement. Amneros seems to act like a net to capture those souls temporarily before they eventually travel to the Boneyard. It's unclear why Pharamasma allows this to continue.

DC 25: Travel of souls to Amneros is limited to those who die while in Iblydos, although where exactly that boundary exists is debatable. While in Amneros, the souls slowly have memories of their past lives stripped away.

DC 28: Legends say Amnerion carved out the caverns of Amneros himself, perhaps to escape some greater danger or potentially out of some older promise or service.

DC 32: Amnerion is reputed to be a gigas, one of the first creations of the titans. The few existing stories

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of their origin suggest they were created from the blood of a titan who was injured in a mighty battle. Amnerion then carved their own domain from the caves beneath Iblodydos and guards it jealously.

RUNNING THE WHIRLPOOL

Entering and traveling down the whirlpool and into Amneros is handled using the chase rules (*GM Core* 192), with the PCs facing a sequence of obstacles. At each obstacle, the PCs must earn a certain number of Chase Points (CP) to be able to progress to the next.

During each chase round, each PC can attempt a check to overcome the obstacle. Several possible choices are given along with the DC required to succeed, but you should encourage players to come up with clever ways to use other skills as appropriate. The PCs might also have a spell, ability, mythic feat, or magical item that seems like it would work, earning one or more CP as you see fit (or even automatically bypassing the obstacle).

The PCs have 5 chase rounds to pass through Rykestho's maw and gullet and into the passage to Amneros unscathed. Once the group launches their craft toward the whirlpool, they cannot fail to be swallowed by the creature, but taking more time puts them in a worse situation when they arrive.

For this chase, Chase Points are earned as a group, representing characters helping each other to overcome obstacles. After each round, be sure to describe Rykestho's tremendous size and power; the PCs might see it swallow schools of fish, floating debris, or a large ocean predator like a shark as its whirlpool draws them in.

Arrival at the Whirlpool

Once the PCs have completed their preparations and arrived at Rykestho's location, read or paraphrase the following.

The ocean suddenly erupts as an enormous shape breaches the surface. Part of its serpentine body emerges—one of its eyes spotting the nearby ship—before the creature plunges back into the sea and sends a huge wave radiating from its body's passage. A moment later, the choppy water begins swirling as the beast twists its body like a giant corkscrew. The beast then opens its maw to gulp in the ocean and any animals unlucky enough to get caught in the whirlpool its coils have created.

APPROACH TRAJECTORY

Chase Points 4; **Overcome** DC 18 Sailing Lore to launch

OBSTACLE 5

the smaller boat at the right time and pilot it to the whirlpool in a controlled way or Athletics to row the boat; DC 19 Diplomacy or Intimidation to coordinate the PC crew's approach; DC 20 Survival to read the flow and velocity of the water.

The whirlpool rages and swirls unpredictably.

TAIL LASHING

OBSTACLE 6

Chase Points 3; **Overcome** DC 19 Sailing Lore to steer through the danger or Athletics to control the speed of the boat; DC 20 Perception to spot risks and call out warnings; AC 22 Strike to ward off the massive beast's tail so it doesn't crush the boat.

The sea monster's tail lashes out, thrashing the water as you get closer.

GETTING CHOPPY!

OBSTACLE 6

Chase Points 2; **Overcome** DC 19 Athletics or AC 22 ranged Strike to attach a rope to the creature's body; DC 20 Sailing Lore to navigate the rough waters; DC 21 Reflex save to balance and shift weight to help keep the boat from capsizing.

Rykestho begins swirling its body around to amplify the whirlpool's speed.

YOU HAVE MY ATTENTION

OBSTACLE 7

Chase Points 3; **Overcome** DC 20 Stealth to hide the boat in the foamy waves; DC 21 Deception to distract the creature's attention; DC 22 Intimidation to cause the monster to flinch for a moment; DC 23 Athletics to prop the massive jaws open long enough to get inside; AC 24 Strike to fend off the teeth.

The creature peeks an eye out of the water, looking for the boat it had spotted earlier. Its jaws gnash eagerly, as if it wants to bite the boat in half, not swallow it whole!

GOLDEN GULLET (OPTIONAL)

OBSTACLE 8

Chase Points 2; **Overcome** DC 20 Acrobatics, Athletics, or Thievery to grab the treasures.

Glittering treasures are wedged into Rykestho's mouth and throat, free for the taking. If they gain 1 success, the PCs recover a golden statue of a solar chariot worth 130 gp and a small ornate silver box worth 95 gp containing a pouch with 67 gp; if they get 2 successes, they also recover a +1 *shifting striking spear*.

Special: This is an optional obstacle—if the PCs choose not to face the obstacle, they can proceed immediately to Down the Hatch.

Down the Hatch

Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs have bypassed all the obstacles or if the chase continues for more than 8 rounds.

The cavernous inside of the monster's body stinks of rotten fish and seaweed. The river of water and detritus washing down its throat forces everything in its path deeper and deeper in. There is a sudden drop as you begin to free fall into utter darkness.

Count how many rounds it took for the PCs to bypass all the obstacles to determine their condition when they arrive in Amneros.

5 rounds or fewer: The PCs arrive unharmed in Amneros along with all their possessions and the craft they used to get there. The journey seems to take only a few minutes and their ship comes to rest on a dark, sandy beach on the edge of the swamps.

6 rounds: As with 5 rounds or fewer except the PCs' vessel is destroyed beyond repair.

7 rounds: As with 6 rounds except each PC takes damage equal to half their maximum Hit Points and has lost one item worth at least 75 gp (determined randomly). The lost items have washed into the swamp nearby. A PC can recover one of these items by spending an hour Searching and succeeding at a DC 24 Perception check, though spells like *locate* could expedite this.

8 or more rounds: The PCs are battered and beaten by the ordeal. They arrive in Amneros unconscious at 1 HP, and each PC has lost 1d4–2 items (minimum 1). If a PC loses two or more items, one of the items has been scavenged and claimed by nearby shades. The PCs can come across their scavenged items as they explore Amneros, and while the new owners are sympathetic to the PCs' losing their gear, the shades aren't interested in giving their new treasures for free. In general, regaining an item involves a little roleplay and a successful DC 22 skill check (for example: Diplomacy to convince a shade to return the item or Thievery to steal the item back). If successful, the PC regains the item at little to no cost—it's just an inconvenience. At worst, a PC must pay half the item's price to recover the item.

Reward: For arriving in Amneros alive, award the PCs 60 XP.

AMNEROS

Born from Sangeh's blood after she was defeated by Gorum and Gozreh, Amnerion hid within Ibydos while watching civilizations slowly arise in the region. However, the gigas had inherited two notions from their progenitor: this world was not safe, and the multiverse must be made beautiful through art. In time, they seeped between the planes and ultimately settled in a hollow within Pharasma's Spire. There, driven by Sangeh's creative spark, Amnerion shaped the cavern into a personal kingdom of beauty and a refuge for the people

living near the titan's grave. Amnerion's willpower acts as a magnet for Ibydan souls, which veer from the River of Souls just before reaching Pharasma's Court.

Noticing this oddity, the Lady of Graves confronted Amnerion. However, she found the gigas's creative passion endearing, even if she couldn't condone their subverting the Cycle of Souls. Pharasma made a deal with Amnerion: they could maintain their curious afterlife, but a shade's residence there would be a mere detour—a matter of years or even centuries spent coming to terms with death before ultimately ascending to receive Pharasma's judgment. The gigas had little choice to agree, and the full details of their contract remain a mystery to anyone but those two. Amnerion has ruled over their realm ever since, guided by a psychopomp counselor at all times.

It's said that limitations breed innovation. Indeed, Amnerion found Pharasma's rules a fruitful source of inspiration as the gigas led their shades in turning Amneros into a wondrous realm. However, they've grown frustrated because everything fades in Amneros. Its waters are drawn from the River Styx that pools at the base of Pharasma's Spire, and though diluted, the swamp, streams, and even humidity gradually leech color and memories from whatever they touch. Thus, Amnerion directs shades in a constant battle to redecorate the realm, with neighborhood facades fading and eroding by the time shades have finished redecorating a nearby district. The result is an evolving cityscape ranging from vibrantly festive to hauntingly desolate.

Amneros exists in a massive cavern that has three lobes and a central hub: the southern lobe contains the Marsh of Lost Things and the Moat of Memories, the northwestern lobe holds the Glades of Euphoria, a land of pleasant rewards, the northeast is Bothrion, a pit of punishment for the wicked, and the central hub is the Amnaia, the City of Forgetting. The cavern is approximately 5 miles from east to west, although with the relative nature of time in Amneros, traversing it can seem to take anywhere from minutes to months.

Cleansing of Souls: The primary purpose of Amneros is to scour away memories and personality from a soul until it's ready to rejoin the River of Souls. This is a slow, insidious process that the PCs are protected from for a week after consuming ambrosia. If this protection fades, however, the character is exposed to Amnerian Amnesia.

AMNERIAN AMNESIA

CURSE MAGICAL MENTAL

The Ibydan underworld slowly saps inhabitants' memories before shunting them to their final afterlife.

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TIME TRAP

The rules of time in Golarion don't operate in Amneros. Instead of a predictable progress, time in the underworld is literally relative to how purposeful and intentional an individual is. If they work to stay on task, time moves in the way that's most beneficial to them. The typical shade, with its vague, nebulous sense of purpose and no clear goals, spends decades or centuries aimlessly going about their days. Those who have a clear mission, like the PCs, find events timed almost perfectly for them. If they become distracted from their mission, however, they too can be caught up in this relative time.

Instead of complex record-keeping, just decide if each character's experience with time hinders or benefits them. You could have injured characters notice their wounds heal at different rates, point out how long a journey seems to take for different PCs, or note that recent memories seem to be from years ago. These clues can serve to keep the party moving forward: the ambrosia only protects them for a week, so its effects might wear off at different times.

Saving Throw DC 24 Will; **Effect Onset** 1 day; **Stage 1** stupefied 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** drained 1 and stupefied 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** drained 1 and stupefied 2 (1 week); **Stage 4** drained 1, stupefied 2, and whenever the creature would fail a save against this curse, the value of their stupefied condition increases by 1 (1 month); **Special** A creature who becomes stupefied 5 by this curse cannot recall anything from before they entered Amneros, and over the next week they meld with Amnaia's landscape and are transported to Pharasma's Court for judgment.

Once the characters awake in Amneros, they feel hollow, as if missing a part of themselves. A character who Investigates this sensation and succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana, Iblydos Lore, Occultism, or Religion check understands now that they're in the underworld—and that, away from the buzz of life, their mythic power is more obviously uncontrolled and directionless; in order to correct this problem, they need to find information about how to incorporate their divine essence fully into their beings.

Progress toward this goal requires two factors: tempering and understanding. Tempering measures the PCs' bodies' resilience—both in containing their mythic power and surviving their return to Iblydos at the end of the chapter.

Understanding measures the practical wisdom the PCs acquire to help them control their power; it's tracked throughout the chapter with Understanding Points (UP). The PCs earn these points by speaking with important shades, conducting research of historical records, and accomplishing tasks. It's possible for the PCs to earn UPs at different rates.

14 UPs: Once a PC reaches 14 Understanding Points, read or paraphrase the following.

As if an iron band restricting your chest had suddenly been broken, you take a full breath for what feels like the first time in your life. A tingling sensation runs along your skin. You feel pleasantly warm. You feel complete.

Characters can continue to participate in tasks to earn UP, but it has no more effect on a PC who has already reached this threshold.

All PCs have reached the threshold: When all the PCs have reached 14 UP, read or paraphrase the following.

A bright white light flashes between each of you. There is a moment of connection where you touch each other's minds or perhaps something deeper. You know you have a bond together. You are a pantheon.

This can be a powerful role-playing moment. Ask each player what the others feel, see, or sense about their character in that brief connection. The characters also realize in this moment that they're ready to leave the underworld and have done what they came to do. Proceed to the Escaping Amneros section (page 59).

J. Marsh of Lost Things

The marshes are irrigated by the memories of the dead that flow from the moat that surrounds Amnaia. The tall, pale grasses and clinging mosses are clogged with diaphanous, faded possessions that represent these lost memories. Forlorn shades comb through the marshland in a vain effort to recover something important to them. Eventually these sad figures realize they don't know what they're doing anymore and wander back to the Moat of Memories or the city. It is a desolate, sad place.

The characters arrive at the southern edge of the marshes. Read or paraphrase the following.

Marshy ground stretches out in all directions except south in a cavern so wide the walls are not visible. The ceiling stretches at least fifty feet overhead, though its true height is shrouded by luminous clouds that cast dim light throughout the cavern. To the south, the marshes end at a rough stone cavern wall, while far to the north what looks like a city wall blocks passage, dim lights glittering along its length.

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The tall grasses, ferns, and low shrubs that grow from the ground are pale, gray, and translucent, like ghostly cousins of plants. The ground's muck grasps at feet and boots.

The entire marsh is difficult terrain in most places, but a character who succeeds at a DC 22 Survival check can pick a path that avoids the worst hazards. On a success, the PC picks a path that ensures none of the terrain in area **J1** is difficult terrain. On a critical success, this effect also extends to area **J2**.

A character who Investigates and succeeds at a DC 22 Nature or Perception check realizes there is no sound of insects, nor any other animals; a critical success reveals there are no living things here, just occasional ghostly images of them.

Navigating

The PCs can see the dim lights on the wall to the north, but getting closer takes more than just walking in a straight line. Instead, they must begin to think like the dead to travel that distance; the more they dwell on their physical woes and hindrances, the less progress they make, whereas mentally releasing their attachments to the world of the living lets them flow around obstacles like ghosts. This section works as a modified Victory Point system in which the PCs earn Navigation Points (NP). They encounter special scenes and conditions when their point total reaches specific thresholds detailed below.

Earning Navigation Points: A character can spend an hour moving through the marsh and adapting their mindset to make progress. They then attempt a DC 21 Occultism check, Religion check, Performance check, Undead Lore check, or Will save to earn Navigation Points.

1–3 NP: The characters begin to feel their bodies chill and their minds lose focus. The city appears closer, and it's clear there are farm fields they'll need to cross before reaching it. Any PCs who lost items during their trip here can attempt a DC 24 Perception check to find lost gear.

4–5 NP: The PCs begin to feel emotionally flat and tired. They encounter a group of three wanderers, **Broli**, **Franzeskos**, and **Vasilikos** (human male shades; *Monster Core 2* 282) who are combing the marshes for their lost possessions, although they don't remember exactly what those possessions were. Like most shades, they're confused about where they are and that they're dead. Instead, they've decided to focus on their search. If the PCs spent 8 or more chase rounds reaching Amneros, these shades likely have one or two of their lost items.

The shades begin as indifferent to the PCs, but if they are made friendly or helpful they return any

items the PCs claim belong to them. If the shades are attacked, they drop the items and attempt to flee. A character who spends at least a few minutes interacting with the shades gains a +1 circumstance bonus to their next attempt to navigate the marshes since this conversation provides insight into the dead. In place of a shade's statistics, you can instead use a gravedigger (NPC Core 69) with the psychopomp and shade traits.

6–7 NP: The PCs encounter the guardian beasts in area **J1**.

8–9 NP: The PCs encounter the forgotten dead in area **J2**.

10+: The PCs arrive at the Moat of Memories (page 48)

Reward: Award the PCs 30 XP when they reach the Moat of Memories.

J1. Narrow Crossing Moderate 6

As the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

Diaphanous streams of gray fog curl around the marsh here. Narrow pools of muddy water stand to the north and south, while the way forward is to the west. The marsh grasses are much shorter here.

All of the spaces in this area are difficult terrain unless a PC found a clear path while navigating.

Creatures: Not all who wander through the marshes are spirits of the dead. A number of vicious creatures patrol the periphery in search of intruders. Two of the beasts have followed the PCs for the last few minutes, finally choosing this spot to ambush them. They fight until destroyed.

Reward: This area provides the PCs an additional opportunity to find and recover a missing item.

KERIBOS (2) CREATURE 6

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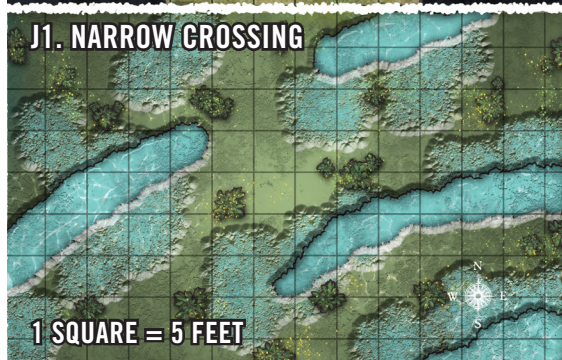
Initiative Perception +18

J2. Northern Marshes Moderate 6

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs arrive.

A narrow piece of solid ground crosses between two streams of slow-moving water. Only a few hundred feet beyond, the terrain looks far more stable.

The marsh's northern half is relatively busy. Not only do recent arrivals eventually find themselves here and travel toward the city, but also various city dwellers and laborers venture here in search of lost items and wayward memories.



Creatures: As their memories are stripped away, some shades who haven't earned entrance to Bothrion yet have cruel tendencies give into those impulses shortly before their identities disappear. Four such shades travel the edge of the marsh in search of victims to rob. If reduced to 10 or fewer Hit Points, a shade flees; if two have fled or been destroyed, the remaining shades flee or surrender.

FORGOTTEN DEAD (4)

CREATURE 4

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Initiative Perception +14

Treasure: In addition to a *sneaky key* and a pouch with 128 gp, the shades have any remaining gear the PCs lost on their journey to Amneros.

Moat of Memories

Moderate 6

Amnerion constructed the moat between the marshes and the city to begin the process of cleansing the shades of their memories. The water is only 2 feet deep, functioning as difficult terrain for Medium and smaller creatures. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs arrive.

The water of the shallow moat is slightly luminous. The liquid appears still, but wispy white clouds drift through it, eventually flowing into the marsh to the south. Shades nervously gather along the near bank before one

tentatively steps into the moat with a shiver and crosses the knee-deep water. By the time they reach the other side, the shade seems momentarily confused before ambling toward the open city gates beyond.

A second shade looks about before finding and hefting a sturdy, straight branch, as if preparing to vault the moat without touching the water. Their unspoken plan is interrupted by the disapproving growl of an immense, five-headed hound that lazes on the far side, its many eyes watching the moat in each direction.

Memory-Stripping Waters: A PC who Investigates the water and succeeds at a DC 22 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check realizes the wispy clouds are memories that have been stripped from those who touched the water. The first time per week a non-monitor creature comes in contact with the water, they must attempt a DC 22 Will save.

Critical Success The character can choose to use the memory-stripping effect to their benefit. They can select a painful, embarrassing, or sad memory that becomes inaccessible to their mind. The character chooses three skills and gains a +1 circumstance bonus checks with those skills until they depart Amneros.

Success The character is unaffected.

Failure An important memory is stripped away. The PC randomly selects three skills in which their proficiency is trained or better. The character takes a -1 circumstance penalty to checks with those skills until they depart Amneros.

Critical Failure A vital memory is stripped away and the character is stupefied 1 until they depart Amneros.

The PCs can devise myriad means of crossing the water without touching it—anything from weaving a raft from marsh foliage to conjuring a creature to carry them across. A few shades even approach to watch or help, hoping to use the PCs' method to also cross with dry feet. However, the guardian (see below) moves to intercept the PCs shortly after they cross or begin constructing some means of bypassing the barrier.

Creatures: An especially powerful keribos named Omorphos is Amnerion's favorite, and they guard the moat to ensure shades cross—and do not bypass—the waters. The beast is less certain about how to handle living visitors like the PCs. They casually intercept the strange visitors, their five heads sniffing and softly barking hypotheses to each other like "Smells alive," "Forgot to die?", and "Oh, Master won't like" to each other about the PCs' origins. They continue speculating and observing until the PCs address the creature or continue bypassing the moat.

Though not smart, the many heads are keen judges of character. If addressed, they firmly insist that Amneros is for the dead, and the dead must walk the moat. Omorphos begins the encounter as unfriendly. They're willing to listen to the PCs and perhaps be convinced to let these strangers pass, which involves improving the creature's attitude to indifferent, though Omorphos still insists on the PCs traversing the moat like everyone else. If their attitude is improved to friendly or helpful, the PCs can Make a Request to cross the moat without making contact. Likewise, PCs might Lie or Coerce to convince Omorphos to make an exception or even assist their crossing, though the canny keribos gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their Will DC to resist such trickery.

In addition to words, Omorphos is swayed by tasty treats—anything from meat to strange bones to pastries. A PC can use Crafting or Cooking Lore in place of Diplomacy to influence and Aid checks against Omorphos. A PC might learn of this weakness by Recalling Knowledge with skills like Legendary Beast Lore or Religion.

If the PCs try to act against the keribos's wishes, the beast attacks. Two forgotten dead join the fight, hoping to earn favor by defending Amneros, though Omorphos ignores them. When Worrying a captured PC, Omorphos enjoys throwing them into the moat they were so eager to avoid.

OMORPHOS

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE HUGE BEAST MONITOR

Powerful agender keribos (page 87) guardian

Perception +21; darkvision, lifesense 30 feet, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common, Requian

Skills Athletics +18, Intimidation +15, Survival +15 (+18 to track)

Str +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

AC 27; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13

HP 140; **Immunities** death effects, unconscious

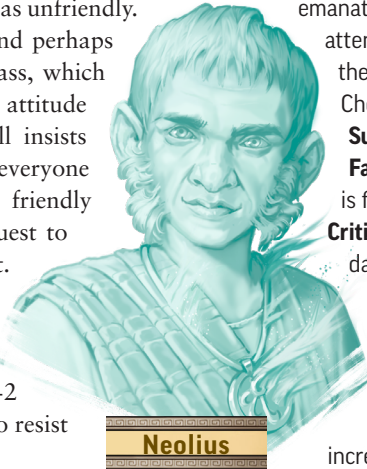
Pack Mentality Mental effects that target fewer than five creatures struggle to affect all of Omorphos's heads, which encourage each other to shake off the effects. Such effects gain the incapacitation trait against Omorphos.

Reactive Strike ⚡

Speed 35 feet

Melee ⚔ jaws +18, **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing plus 1d6 mental plus Grab

Chorus of Baying ⚡ (auditory, emotion, fear, mental) Omorphos's heads howl in a discordant chorus; a



Neolius

creature immune to other keribos' Chorus of Baying, though such creatures gain a +2 circumstance bonus to their save. Each non-keribos within a 30-foot emanation takes 6d8 mental damage and must attempt a DC 23 Will save. After the save, the creature is temporarily immune to all Choruses of Baying for 24 hours.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature takes full damage and is frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage and is frightened 2.

Vicious Mauling ⚡ Omorphos makes five Strikes, each against a different target. These attacks count toward Omorphos's multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after they make all their attacks.

Worry ⚡ **Requirements** A Large or smaller creature is grabbed or restrained in Omorphos's jaws; **Effect** Omorphos vigorously shakes the creature and deals 2d8+10 piercing damage (DC 23 basic Fortitude save). As a free action, Omorphos can throw a creature that critically fails this save up to 15 feet.

FORGOTTEN DEAD (2)

CREATURE 4

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Initiative Perception +14

AMNAIA

Amnerion constructed their namesake city to be a place of organization and structure for the souls who arrive. As messy and sentimental those in the marshes feel, within the walls of the city there's a regular order and its residents exist in a relatively pleasant, if bland, state. This order helps the dead come to terms with their demise, say goodbye to those they've left behind, and prepare themselves for judgment.

To a living person, life in Amnaia is relatively dull. Along the outskirts, the architecture is all the same drab gray. The dead have no need for food, and almost no need for clothing or possessions. Without any beasts of burden—or any other animals—the shades who move about the city simply walk, and often the only sound on a crowded street is bare feet slapping on stone.

Amnaia's shades follow many of the habits they had in life, albeit with dwindling verve or vigor. Over time, they slowly forget or become bored with their old skills. Once that happens, they wander aimlessly or just sit outside the buildings and watch as other shades go by. Eventually all memory fades, and the shade simply vanishes.

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Closer to the palace, however, the tenor of the city shifts slightly. There are colorfully painted buildings, some public art installations, and a few parks filled with ghostly images of trees. The shades here are a bit more outgoing, although they still have an air of indifference found among all the residents. Nevertheless, it's clear that Sangeh's love of art and beauty was passed along to Amnerion.

The primary occupation in the city is maintaining the city itself. The shades are corporeal and able to use tools, but it has been millennia since there was new construction. Laborers haul and work stone in an orderly way. There's no obvious hierarchy of command within the workers; if asked, they say they're just doing the job they're meant to. To an outsider, it looks like the city itself directs them.

Treasure Trove

Soon after they arrive in Amnaia, the PCs are approached by a shade. Read or paraphrase the following.

A shade of a halfling man walks steps forward, a large smile on his face. He's dressed quite unlike the other residents in the area, with bright orange and yellow clothing. A few other shades pass by and frown at him.

"Don't mind them," says the shade, "they don't have the same adventuring spirit that I can tell you have!" He makes an elaborate bow and says, "Neolius Zrimble at your service!" Without pausing, he continues. "And you are living, are you not? Probably wondering how you'll get back to the land of the living, yes? Perhaps we should talk."

While most of the shades have become indifferent to their surroundings and situation in Amnaia, **Neolius** (enterprising male shade con man 7) continues to cook up schemes as he did in life. Perhaps because of his natural verve or through some quirk of fate, the halfling has retained most of his memory and personality.

In life Neolius was a minor adventurer in Iblydos, building a reputation for talking his targets (as well as his companions) out of their money and possessions. His actions never rose to a level of crime that would have led him to Bothrion, but he did manage to annoy the leader of a thieves' guild enough to push him off a tall bridge to his death. Since arriving in Amnaia, Neolius has sought rumors and opportunities to keep his mind sharp—and maybe even escape this strange prison and return to life.

His most ambitious target is the *Iron Grasp*, an artifact that can enthrall a whole city-state at its wielder's command. Even if it has only a tenth of

its rumored power, it could enable countless heists for Neolius back in Iblydos! Unfortunately, the item is sealed in the Thistle, reputedly a highly guarded and watched treasure vault near the palace. Neolius has also overheard (and developed) an alternative means to escape Amneros. He's willing to share those secrets if the PCs help him, believing that the PCs are strong enough to execute one of his sundry schemes to escape.

He proposes a deal: if they help him infiltrate the Thistle, he can help guide them out of the underworld when they conclude their business here. He also assures them that they can take some of the treasure for themselves, too.

Neolius is cunning but not malicious. His offer is sincere, even if it's ambitious. With a successful DC 22 Perception check to Sense Motive, a PC determines Neolius isn't trying to deceive or betray the PCs, and his knowledge of Amnaia suggests he could be a clever albeit mischievous ally. With a critical success, a PC notes that though Neolius is underselling the risk involved in breaking into the Thistle, it's not an impossible objective. PCs can also Gather Information about Neolius, learning that other shades consider the halfling a busybody and nuisance. However, the shades struggle to remember details of why they believe that to be the case.

What Neolius doesn't realize is this wouldn't be his first time breaking into the Thistle. Like other residents, he's slowly losing his memories, including those tied to his earlier failed heist.

Infiltrating the Thistle Moderate 6

This section of the adventure operates as a brief side quest that uses the infiltration subsystem (*GM Core* 196) rather than maps. Although Neolius' own goal of finding the scepter known as the *Iron Grasp* is ultimately futile, the PCs can learn about how to escape back to the land of the living. This infiltration has only a single phase.

Awareness Points: While there are few guards in the city overall, the Thistle is better protected than most places. The infiltration's Awareness Point mechanic tracks how alerted the guards have become to the PCs' presence. If the total is too high, the PCs are forced to leave.

3 Awareness Points: The DCs to overcome obstacles are increased by 1.

6 Awareness Points: A keribos and a eumenid investigate the disturbance, very likely using violence to chase off intruders.

8 Awareness Points: So many guards have been alerted that the infiltration fails.

Thistle Threats

Navigating the Thistle is mostly a skill challenge, but the following creatures might harm the PCs directly. The events reference these stat blocks.

KERIBOS

CREATURE 6

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Initiative Perception +18

EUMENID

CREATURE 6

Page 86

Initiative Perception +18

Phase 1: Getting to the Vault

The PCs and Neolius have no trouble locating the Thistle: a narrow tower bristling with thin spines and capped with a sharp peak, reminiscent of its namesake. Accessing the treasure vault involves overcoming three obstacles, during which the PCs encounter one opportunity. Afterward, move to Phase 2: Getting Out.

WATCHFUL GUARDS

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 20 Stealth, DC 22 Deception, DC 22 Performance

While there aren't many guards in the city, few shades ever approach the Thistle, making it far more obvious when the group tries to enter. The PCs can try to sneak past or talk their way through a tricky moment. An exciting street performance nearby could also distract the shades, who crave novelty.

BUILT FOR A GIANT

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 4 (group); **Overcome** DC 22 Acrobatics or Athletics, DC 23 Crafting

The only being who really visits the Thistle is Amnerion himself, and the building is made for their proportions. The entrance door is heavy to move, and navigating inside requires a great deal of climbing for those who aren't as large as the lord of the dead.

Special: A Large PC has an easier time traveling here, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to Overcome the obstacle. A PC who has a climb Speed or fly Speed also gains a +2 circumstance bonus to these checks.

TREASURED MEMORIES

OPPORTUNITY

Overcome DC 20 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion, DC 22 Ibydos Lore, DC 24 Society

The storeroom Neolius is searching for contains a number of treasures, but they are all ghostly memories of the things, rather than the items themselves. Nevertheless, PCs who examine the contents of the room can gain valuable insights into their own mythic power and clues

about the location of hero-god sword Aerekostes. Each PC can attempt to overcome this opportunity once, or they can use their attempt to Aid another PC, as normal. The PCs can only gain the benefits of a success once and a critical success once.

Neolius searches for the *Iron Grasp*, finding a ghostly version that corresponds to the rumors he's heard. He ultimately can't convince it to manifest in any physical form.

Critical Success By manipulating the memory items and drawing upon their mythic power, the PC causes a +1 wounding *striking shortsword* to manifest. Each PC also gains 1 UP.

Success The PC draws upon their mythic power and manifests one of the memories into a ruby worth 210 gp; they also learn the last-known location of the fabulous sword Aerekostes by communing with the memory of its scabbard. Each PC gains 1 UP.

Critical Failure The PC is unable to gain anything from the memory treasures and earns 1 AP.

Phase 2: Getting Out

When Neolius sees the treasure he's been seeking is nothing more than a diaphanous memory, he sighs mightily and apologizes for leading the group into danger for no reason. He keeps his end of the bargain, however, and explains that he's heard there is a route out of the underworld that starts in Halls of Quiet Stone in the palace—an escape option detailed further on page 59.

If they've done well, the PCs can easily leave the Thistle without further difficulty. Neolius follows them out.

Development: Should the PCs encounter Neolius again, he remembers their adventure into the Thistle, although he can't recall what they were seeking. Ever since the disappointing heist, the halfling succumbs more to the realm's memory-sapping power. He fades from this realm over the next several months. However, he still remembers his desire to return to life, and if invited to join the PCs in their eventual escape, he happily accepts.

K. Outer Palace

The House of Amnerion stands on a low hill near the northern end of Amnaia. It serves as the administrative headquarters for the underworld as well as the abode of the realm's ruler. The palace is busy, with minor functionaries moving hurriedly between various halls of records. Most of the work is done by shades who had some skill at bureaucracy in life, although as their memories fade these shades are replaced by newcomers. This means Amnerion himself has to deal

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with most problems directly or with a close eye on the work of these subordinates.

From outside, the palace seems an austere, imposing structure with tall pillars and little decoration. Inside, however, its hallways are beautiful and colorful. Intricate friezes decorate the walls, some abstract, others depicting important events from throughout the history of Iblydos. It's clear that while the shades who pass through these halls lose their memories and pass on, the work and history they leave behind endures.

Past the entrance is a series of wide passageways and numerous rooms filled with organized libraries, records, and shades going about the business of recording and storing information about the dead. The most important and useful information lies in the Hall of Historic Dead. Deeper in the structure is the antechamber, and beyond that, the throne room.

Unlike most royal residences, there are very few guards in the palace. As the ultimate ruler of the realm, Amnerion doesn't have to worry about their own safety, and the majority of the most dangerous shades are banished to Bothrion. There are, however, a few wandering guardian beasts who make sure any intruders are dealt with and quickly put down any threats to the palace residents.

Each shade is eventually drawn to the palace by a powerful compulsion. The functionaries examine each shade's behavior in life and make a decision about where they should spend their time. Most shades are assigned to dwell in Amnaia, whereas the cruelest are sent to Bothrion. Only the most deserving and heroic are assigned to the Glades of Euphoria. Each shade is allowed to appeal the decision of where to be sent directly to Amnerion, so there is usually a long line of shades seeking an audience. As living creatures, the PCs are not compelled to visit the palace in the same way, although they do instinctively know how to get there.

Psychopomp Saboteur

Low 6

Although Amnerion has an agreement with Pharasma—or at least an understanding of some kind—her

faithful servants are not privy to the details. Most psychopomps consider Amneros a distasteful oddity worth destroying, were it not for their patron's contract. The following encounter can take place anywhere in the city, although it's most likely to happen in the hallways of the palace.

Creatures: An arrogant vanth psychopomp named Hushed-Grave seeks to undermine Amnerion's authority and foment rebellion in their realm. She believes she is following Pharasma's wishes, although she's not operating with Pharasma's authority. Given the indifference the shades have toward their current state, the vanth has had little luck. While Hushed-Grave can change minds through coercion, those few who do change their minds soon forget what they were angry about. The entire situation is terribly frustrating for the vanth, so she has become more brazen, stalking the halls of the palace and threatening the shades to get them to rise up. Amnerion knows of Hushed-Grave's presence but has not done anything about it, explicitly instructing their guards to leave the creature alone unless tries to physically harm residents. After all, harming a psychopomp could draw Pharasma's ire.

Hushed-Grave does have some information about a route out of the underworld that begins in the Halls of Quiet Stone. If the PCs have not learned about this route from another source, this could be a useful bargaining chip for the vanth.

This encounter can be used in several ways. Seeing they are mortals, Hushed-Grave might approach the PCs and attempt to enlist their help in a scheme to undermine Amnerion's realm. She might also try to foil the PCs as they help conduct Amnerion's census (page 57). Finally, if the party is itching for a fight, they might just stumble upon her as she's bullying a shade, demanding they join a protest outside the palace.

If the PCs rebuff her overtures, she verbally rebukes them and eventually withdraws to watch them from afar, potentially confronting them again later. If the PCs thwart any of Hushed-Grave's objectives—including physically intervening to save any shade's she's coercing—she responds with lethal force. The more certain she is of the PCs' allegiance to Amnerion, the less likely she is to flee or negotiate her own surrender.



Hushed-Grave

HUSHED-GRAVE

CREATURE 7

Vanth (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 275)

Initiative Perception +15

Antechamber

Severe 6

The antechamber leading to the throne room is primarily used to manage the long line of shades waiting to speak with Amnerion. These shades have little interest in conversation with anyone. Occasionally one of the shades changes their mind about an appeal to the lord of the dead and simply walks out of the palace and back to the city.

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs arrive.

The beautiful, polished marble floors and red pillars in this large chamber are reminiscent of ancient structures found throughout Ibydos. Benches stand against the walls, and statues of toga-clad people stare out from the east and west. In the center of the room is a large statue depicting a powerfully-built person with crossed arms and a gleaming crown.

The four smaller statues always represent the most significant shades who have not yet faded from Amneros. As such, the statues change over time. A character who Investigates the statues and succeeds at a DC 22 Hero-God Lore, Religion, or Society check recognizes the central statue as Amnerion, ruler of the underworld; with a critical success, the PC notes that the four statues are prominent hero-gods from the past: Loptoleon, sailor and spirit guide, Gylenos, a famous musician, Takibiados, a powerful warrior, and Amphila, a remarkable prophetess.

Old Enemies or Friends: If you wish, shades of any of the PC's familiar friends, family, or even enemies who have died can be found here in line. They still maintain much of the personality and memory of their former lives, but their emotions and connections to the past are dulled. Any interactions with these shades are marked by a distinct disconnection from the living and a foggy, distant memory.

Creatures: A trio of eumenids patrol the room, keeping a watch out for intruders. As living creatures, the PCs count as such, and the eumenids immediately move to attack. They fight until destroyed.

EUMENIDS (3)

CREATURE 6

Page 86

Initiative Perception +18

Reward: The creatures have a pouch with a *scroll of paralyze* and 120 gp. A character who interacts with

the shade of a former friend or enemy gains 1 UP as they understand more about the fleeting nature of life.

Hall of Historic Dead

This gigantic, seemingly endless museum is populated by shades who tell the history of Ibydos. The sculptures illustrating much of the history move and reenact important scenes while the shades sing of their deeds. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs enter.

A vast, darkened room spreads out ahead. Simple white columns are spaced evenly supporting a tall ceiling. Pools of light shine around statues and sculptures in all directions, each separated from the others by darkness. Shades are near each of these artworks; some stand at rigid attention, while others sprawl listlessly on the floor. The faint sound of singing carries from numerous areas, each one a different tune.

The shades who dwell here have all been chosen because they retain clear memories of a significant event in their lives, at least for a while. Like everywhere else in Amneros, their memories eventually fade, but during this window of clarity, they share what they can remember, often through song.

The hall is a storehouse of information and works as a research library for the PCs to discover the past. Because of the limited time they have before the ambrosia protection wears off, however, this section follows the rules for the research subsystem (*GM Core* 190).

Detailed Sculptures: Some songs are wordless tunes and the true information comes from understanding the message in the art; **Maximum RP** 10; **Research Checks** DC 22 Art Lore or Crafting to gain insight into the mind of the artist; DC 24 Perception to notice fine details.

Pointed Questions: After the shades sing their songs, there is time to ask questions to flesh out the details and clarify the events; **Maximum RP** 10; **Research Checks** DC 20 Deception to trick the performer into oversharing; DC 21 Diplomacy, Ibydos Lore, or Society to collaborate with and contextualize the shade's memory.

Reluctant Storytellers: Some of the shades inhabiting the hall are ashamed of their stories or otherwise hesitant to share what they know; **Maximum RP** 5; **Research Checks** DC 22 Diplomacy or Society to encourage the shade to share, DC 23 Intimidation to convince them to comply.

Subtle Lyrics: Many of the shades sing lyrics that are complex and full of rich detail for those who listen

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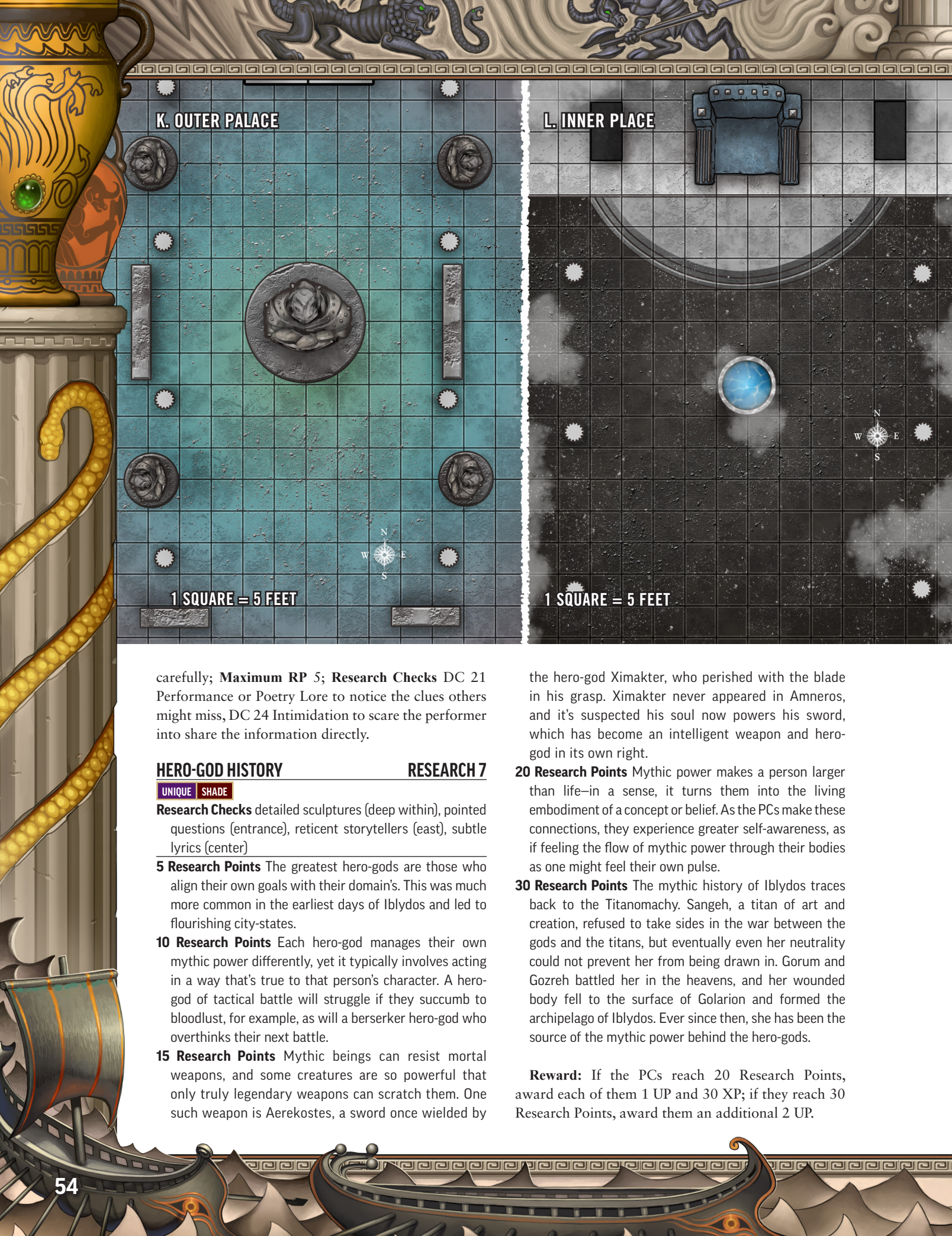
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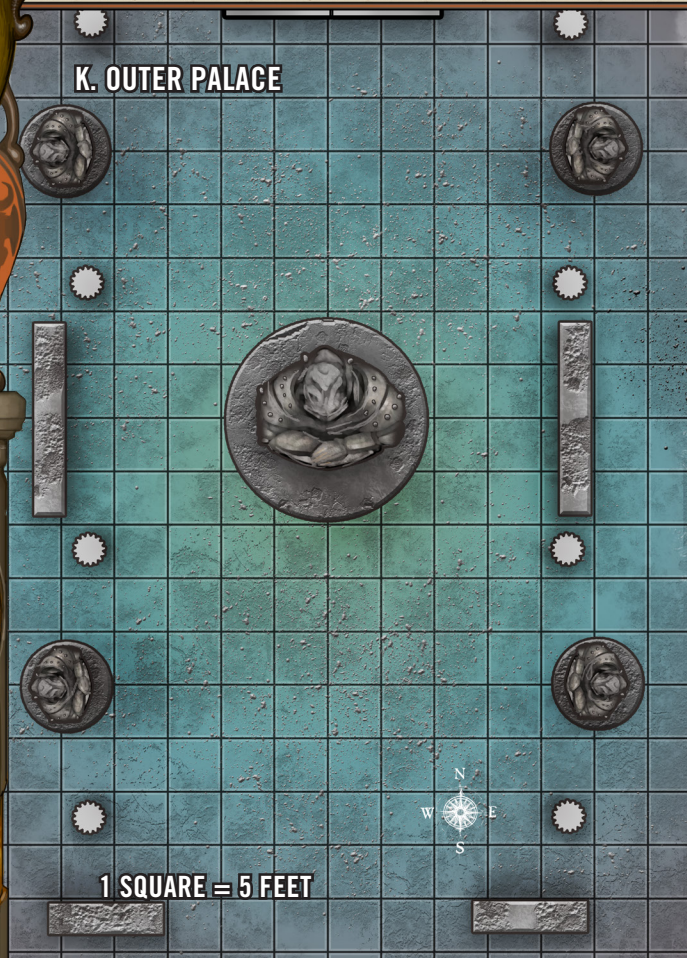
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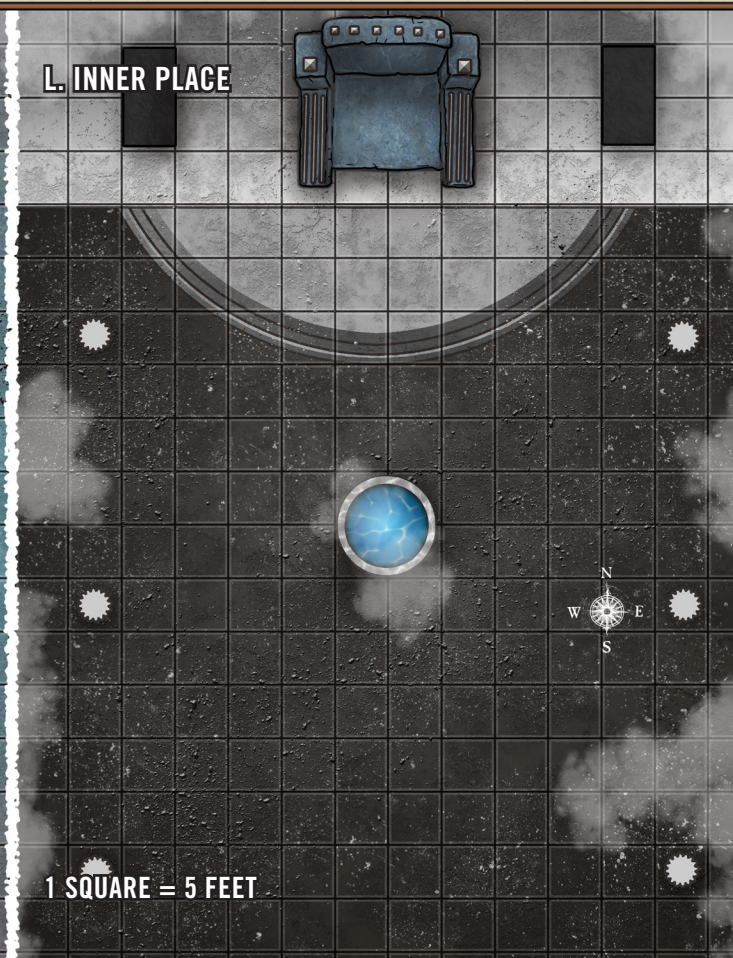
Adventure Toolbox



K. OUTER PALACE



L. INNER PLACE



carefully; **Maximum RP 5**; **Research Checks** DC 21 Performance or Poetry Lore to notice the clues others might miss, DC 24 Intimidation to scare the performer into share the information directly.

HERO-GOD HISTORY

UNIQUE SHADE

Research Checks detailed sculptures (deep within), pointed questions (entrance), reticent storytellers (east), subtle lyrics (center)

5 Research Points The greatest hero-gods are those who align their own goals with their domain's. This was much more common in the earliest days of Iblydos and led to flourishing city-states.

10 Research Points Each hero-god manages their own mythic power differently, yet it typically involves acting in a way that's true to that person's character. A hero-god of tactical battle will struggle if they succumb to bloodlust, for example, as will a berserker hero-god who overthinks their next battle.

15 Research Points Mythic beings can resist mortal weapons, and some creatures are so powerful that only truly legendary weapons can scratch them. One such weapon is Aerekostes, a sword once wielded by

RESEARCH 7

the hero-god Ximakter, who perished with the blade in his grasp. Ximakter never appeared in Amneros, and it's suspected his soul now powers his sword, which has become an intelligent weapon and hero-god in its own right.

20 Research Points Mythic power makes a person larger than life—in a sense, it turns them into the living embodiment of a concept or belief. As the PCs make these connections, they experience greater self-awareness, as if feeling the flow of mythic power through their bodies as one might feel their own pulse.

30 Research Points The mythic history of Iblydos traces back to the Titanomachy. Sangeh, a titan of art and creation, refused to take sides in the war between the gods and the titans, but eventually even her neutrality could not prevent her from being drawn in. Gorum and Gozreh battled her in the heavens, and her wounded body fell to the surface of Golarion and formed the archipelago of Iblydos. Ever since then, she has been the source of the mythic power behind the hero-gods.

Reward: If the PCs reach 20 Research Points, award each of them 1 UP and 30 XP; if they reach 30 Research Points, award them an additional 2 UP.

L. Inner Palace

Requesting an appointment with the ruler of the dead usually requires a long wait in line behind dozens of other shades. When the PCs enter the palace, however, **Amnerion** (page 88) stops their current work and beckons the group to approach. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the throne room.

The walls and floors of the throne room are made of dark stone that glitters with ghostly specks of light reminiscent of strange, distant stars. Hexagonal columns carved from a deep red stone line either side of the room. The capitals of each column are indistinct and hazy, obscured by a luminous fog.

In the center of the room is a low, circular pool filled with dimly glowing liquid that stretches to some infinite depth. Indistinct shapes flit and swirl within, occasionally forming into mournful faces before dissipating. A single-file line of shades dressed in simple clothes winds through the room, ending at the well and progressing back through the entrance.

The north end of the chamber is dominated by alabaster stairs that lead to a dais. A gigantic throne of glittering obsidian stands upon the platform, flanked on either side by tables where functionaries scribble in tomes. Upon the throne sits a gargantuan being with indigo skin, garbed in fine robes of black and white. Atop their brow is a translucent crown of glittering light, a single amethyst the size of a human head at its center.

A deep, rumbling voice fills the otherwise quiet room as the figure speaks. “Now this is unexpected. Tell me, mortals, how you came to be in my realm and why you are here.”

Amnerion listens intently as the PCs speak. They likely know quite a bit about the PCs already from their servants’ reports, but they want to judge the nature of the PCs character, especially their honesty. Amnerion begins as indifferent. Fortunately for the PCs, the attitude of the unflappable ruler of the underworld cannot drop below unfriendly, although it can’t go above friendly, either.

The gigas has a deeper motivation to help the PCs: if Sangeh returns, the ensuing destruction could stretch into this realm. Since Amnerion is born of the titan’s blood, it’s likely the angry gods would tear Amneros down and destroy the gigas as well. Amnerion has long worried that Pharasma has been biding her time and looking for an excuse to wipe out the land of the dead. In the PCs, the gigas sees potential help in keeping Sangeh from returning.

The PCs probably have a number of questions or requests. Below are some likely responses. Keep in mind Amnerion isn’t likely to give the PCs all this

information right away, although they do direct the conversation toward the subject of Sangeh.

Who are you? A deep chuckle fills the chamber. “To be in my realm yet unaware of my name? I am Amnerion, and this is my kingdom. A place of rest and calm, where the dead come to forget themselves and accept eternal peace.”

Don’t the dead go to Pharasma for judgement? “Yes, that god sits in ultimate judgement on all creatures who live and die. But those who die in Ibydos first come to my realm so they may be purified and prepared. It is the purpose given to me by my progenitor, the blessed titan Sangeh.”

Who is Sangeh? “I should not be surprised you know so little. The gods were jealous of their greatest servants and remain so. They hide such information. Sangeh was—is—a titan, created by the gods at the dawn of time. She is a builder of planes and worlds and a lover of beauty.”

Where is she now? The figure laughs. “You have walked upon her very tomb. The islands of Ibydos rose from the oceans to catch her as she fell from the heavens and embraced her in their protection. Yet she was not dead. Indeed, she stirs again.”

She can return? “It may be so. But should that happen, my kingdom would be filled beyond capacity as the jealous gods intervene to battle the titan. They would strike the islands with force not seen since the battles at the dawn of creation. How many mortals could withstand such trouble, do you think?”

How do we stop her from returning? The giant looks surprised. “You would take up such a task? Impressive.” They pause in thought, then continue. “She tried to remain out of the war between gods and titans, so perhaps you can convince her that remaining interred is best. Remind her of the beauty she created in this world and how the gods would destroy it to reach her. And if she doesn’t listen to reason, perhaps she might listen to force. A legendary weapon might be enough. There are a few such items. One of the shades in the Glades of Euphoria may know more.

Will you allow us to leave your realm? “Those who enter this realm have only one way out once their memories have been washed clean: they merge with the River of Souls and complete their journey to Pharasma’s court. You are courageous to have come here, yes. But foolish. Whatever protection you have cannot last. As welcome a distraction as you are, I see no reason I should help you.”

Could we make some kind of deal for a way out? The gigantic figure raises a coal-black eyebrow and leans forward. Their eyes glint, and the functionaries at the

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tables look at each other. “You would bargain with me? I am unsure if I should laugh at your audacity or applaud your bravery.” They pause and sit back. “Fates, perhaps,” they say quietly.

“I do have a task for you. My covenant with Pharasma allows for souls to remain here for some time, but not forever. She demands the occasional census to ensure nobody lingers too long. That deadline approaches. However, time moves differently here—my servants’ minds are like sieves, and even their tallies eventually melt off parchment. You, however, have knowledge of the time in the land of the living and memories that are—for now—intact.

“Go to the Glades of Euphoria. Seek out those shades who have been here for longer than 500 years and gather their names. If you can complete such a list, I can provide you with knowledge of a way out.” They pause and lean forward once again, a smile upon their lips. “Mark well, this is no promise of escape, merely a road that can be taken. Whether you can survive it is another matter.”

Exploring Amneros: If the PCs accept the quest from Amnerion, they each receive a simple copper coin that proves they’re working on the lord of the dead’s behalf. Showing the coin grants a +2 circumstance bonus to all Diplomacy, Intimidation, and Performance checks against any shade in Amneros. Should the PCs leave the underworld with the coin, it reverts to a simple copper piece engraved with the symbol of a closed eye.

Requesting Thistle Access: Especially bold PCs might ask Amnerion for access to the Thistle (in the event they haven’t already completed that infiltration. If a PC succeeds at a DC 22 Diplomacy check to make the Request, the gigas chortles at their audacity. Amnerion doesn’t give them full access to the site, but they do bestow a paintbrush made from keribos bristles embedded in some saber-toothed beast’s canine. The token acts like a badge, giving the PCs an Edge Point that helps them bypass guards or unlock doors. The gigas isn’t too worried, knowing that the PCs would struggle to recover more than a few trinkets.

Revisiting the Ruler: The PCs might speak with Amnerion multiple times and seek help on their quest, or run into trouble, etc. The ruler isn’t interested in excuses, although they can provide a bit of guidance. In addition, few others have knowledge of Sangeh and this can be invaluable information for the PCs.

Glades of Euphoria

At the western side of Amnaia stand the Silver Gates and beyond that, the Glades of Euphoria. Only the most heroic, valiant, and worthy shades pass into the glades. It is a place of boundless joy, peace, and tranquility, where those who enter never find themselves wanting. It’s also a place where heroes from the past can meet, test each other’s mettle, and share a glass of finest wine when they’re done.

Getting Inside: While the shades of the realm can only approach these gates if they’re assigned here, the PCs are under no such restriction. As they get near, read or paraphrase the following.



Amphila

A thirty-foot-tall set of gleaming silver doors stand in the western wall of the city. Elegant geometric shapes decorate the perimeter, and images of joyful figures engaged in celebration and competition are carved into the surface.

A character who Investigates the door immediately realizes there’s no handle or lock. A successful DC 20 Arcana, Occultism, Religion, or Society check reveals the geometric shapes begin to solidify into words: “Enter if worthy, you who stand here. Show your proof or name what you leave of yourself at these gates, and they shall open.”

If the characters possess the copper coins from Amnerion, the doors open easily when the coin is displayed. If not, each PC must surrender something of themselves to gain entry. This might be a treasured memory, a valuable item, or even a skill. Whatever it is, the PC doesn’t have access to it while in the glades, although it’s returned to them once they leave.

As the gates open, read or paraphrase the following.

Beyond the gates the cavern is entirely different. The ceiling is replaced by a clear blue sky complete with fluffy clouds. Sunlight streams down, its warmth a shocking change from the cool dampness of the city. Ahead are fields and rolling hills covered in vibrant green grasses, flowers, and trees. The air smells fresh and a gentle breeze carries the sounds of song and laughter from further to the west.

A paradise for the virtuous, heroic, and good, the glades are the home of the honored dead. Unlike the other places in Amneros, those who stay here wish to remain. In fact, the corrosive, memory-wiping nature of the rest of the realm is much milder here.

There are numerous shades throughout the glades, all of them much happier than any residents of Amnaia. They are generally friendly, open, and pleased to see newcomers. They spend their days listening to or performing music, dancing, feasting, and engaging in mock combat. Unlike the rest of Amneros, there is a cycle of light and dark, although most of what changes is the type of celebration or pleasant passing of time. The only true danger to the PCs in the Glades of Euphoria is distraction. Residents are interested in the PCs and pester them with questions, offers to enjoy a good meal, and friendly games of skill or chance.

Conducting the Census

It takes only an hour of walking through the glades and a DC 18 Diplomacy check to Gather Information to learn there are only four residents who have been here longer than 500 years; they can even learn this on a failure after two hours. The residents are rather famous: Amphila, Gylenos, Loptoleon, and Takibiados. Statues of these four also appear in the antechamber of the palace. Perceptive players might note that it seems likely Amnerion already knows who these four people are, given the statues are right outside their throne room. The ruler of the dead is, in fact, quite aware; their interest is in making sure the PCs gain control of their mythic abilities to better deal with the immanent return of Sangeh. If confronted about their manipulation, the gigas denies any ulterior motives with a wry smile.

Each of the four famous heroes can easily be located by asking any resident.

Blessings of the Heroes (Mythic Deed)

The PCs' goal is to gain insights into their abilities and learn to control them. The famous heroes can provide them with both, but such a process requires working closely with those heroes. To track this progress, this section of the adventure uses the influence subsystem (GM Core 187) with 5 rounds, each an abstract amount of time the PCs have before the famous heroes move on to other pursuits. Even though the heroes occupy different sites, the rounds are long enough that they include any travel time. If a PC gets sidetracked once the party begins speaking with the famous heroes, however, they can miss out on a round or more, at your discretion.

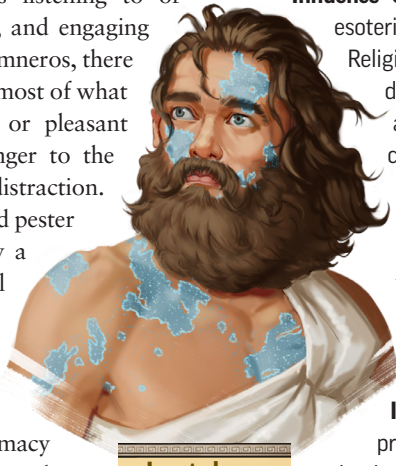
AMPHILA

LEVEL 7

UNIQUE MEDIUM DWARF SHADE

Remarkable propheticess

Perception +20



Loptoleon

Will +18

Discovery DC 20 Hero-God Lore or Occultism; DC 22 Dwarf Lore or Society; DC 23 Perception

Influence Skills DC 19 Occultism (to discuss the esoteric magic of fortune and future), DC 21 Religion (to consider the effects of Aroden's death on prophecy), DC 22 Nature (to talk about the connections between living creatures), DC 24 Performance (to sing songs about loss and memory)

Influence 3 Amphila takes the PC on a short walk to help them connect with their mythic nature. The PC earns 1 UP.

Influence 5 Amphila teaches the PC about the connections between fate, mythic power, and their lives. The PC earns 2 UP.

Influence 7 Amphila nods in approval and presents the PC with a *scroll of vision of death* and a *scroll of whispers of the void*. This can only happen once; if the treasure has already been earned, award the PC 1 UP.

Resistances Amphila thinks joking about serious matters is a sign of weakness and lack of discipline; the DC of any checks that employ humor increase by 2.

Weaknesses Amphila sees those who sacrifice their own happiness for others as admirable and stories of sacrifice lower the Diplomacy or Performance DC by 2. If she learns that the PCs defeated the pyrkaion in Chapter 1, she's delighted that one of her old nemeses won't threaten Ibydos again; lower all of her Discovery and Influence DCs by 1.

Background Amphila was born 2,500 years ago and was one of the cultists whom the pyrkaion tricked into despoiling their own temple. She escaped before the miasma sealed her inside. The experience convinced her to seek out her own power, not accept gifts from honey-tongued fiends. She went on to become a member of the pantheon of Pol-Hoimpeia and spent much of her time sharing prophecies with visitors.

Appearance A tanned dwarf woman with a square jaw and a long braid, Amphila wears loose robes and gold jewelry bearing astrological signs.

Personality serious, self-aware, thoughtful

GYLENOS

LEVEL 6

UNIQUE SMALL GNOME SHADE

Famed musician

Perception +16

Will +15

Discovery DC 18 Hero-God Lore or Performance; DC 20 Diplomacy or Perception

Influence Skills DC 19 Performance (to perform a song together), DC 20 Crafting (to tune and repair

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instruments), DC 22 Society (to regale him with stories of his accomplishments)

Influence 3 Gylenos shares insights about peaceful solutions to problems. The PC earns 1 UP.

Influence 5 Gylenos is delighted by the PC and teaches them a song to help focus and tap into their mythic abilities. The PC earns 2 UP.

Influence 7 With a flourish, Gylenos hands the PC a *swift block cabochon* and a *moderate healing potion*. This can happen only once; if the treasure has already been earned, the PC gains 1 UP.

Resistances Gylenos dislikes bullies and those who turn first to violence; attempts to threaten him or performances that glorify violence increase the DC by 2.

Weaknesses Gylenos dearly misses his friend, Thexmerinas, and songs about friendship cause him to get teary-eyed and reduce the Performance check by 2.

Background Gylenos died 600 years ago. He was born to a wealthy family in Pol-Reanphoros and dedicated his life to music, founding a school that drew students from across Iblydos. He found remarkable ways to infuse his music with mythic power and was able to soothe a rampaging dragon named Thexmerinas to sleep with a song. After the dragon awoke, the two became friends and adventured together.

Appearance Gylenos has bright blue hair that stands on end; he dresses in simple white togas and always has an instrument in his hands, usually a lyre.

Personality cheerful, outgoing, and kind

LOPTOLEON

LEVEL 7

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMAN SHADE

Spiritual sailor

Perception +18

Will +18

Discovery DC 18 Hero-God Lore; DC 21 Perception or Society

Influence Skills DC 19 Sailing Lore (to share tales about their maritime voyages), DC 20 Pol-Bailax Lore (to discuss the city-state's funerary rites), DC 21 Religion, DC 22 Performance, DC 23 Diplomacy

Influence 3 Loptoleon shares insights about his trips to and from Amneros when he served as a guide for Iblydos's dead. The PC earns 1 UP.

Influence 5 Loptoleon shares how he steeled his own body to survive Amneros, as well as some of the old waterways that once wound their way back to Iblydos. These have since closed, but the more the PC learns, the better equipped they are to recognize similar paths out of Amneros. The PC earns 2 UP.

Influence 7 The more he chats, the more cognizant Loptoleon becomes of his mortality and time spent in the Glades of Euphoria. Feeling his stay will come to an

end soon, he bequeaths his *cloak of illusions* to the PC. The cloak shimmers with phosphorescent diatoms as it moves, helping break up the wearer's outline.

Resistances Loptoleon fervently believes in Iblydos and its traditions. A PC who demeans the hero-god tradition or speaks fondly of introducing foreign faiths increases their next check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses As a one-time ferryman of the dead, Loptoleon respects those who have traveled between life and the afterlife. A PC who has died and been restored to life can reference their experiences to reduce the DC of a check by 2.

Background Loptoleon roamed the islands 1,100 years ago, sailing his ornate skiff to escort Iblydos's dead to Amneros. Bioluminescent plankton scintillated in his wake, inspiring the superstition that photoreceptor tracks winding through the sea are the ghosts' footprints. After centuries of service, he made a last voyage here and retired.

Appearance This handsome man's skin is dappled with swaths of bioluminescent algae.

Personality patient, firm, open-minded

TAKIBIADOS

LEVEL 7

UNIQUE MEDIUM LIZARDFOLK SHADE

Powerful warrior

Perception +16

Will +15

Discovery DC 18 Games Lore or Gladiatorial Lore; DC 20 Athletics; DC 22 Perception or Society

Influence Skills DC 19 Athletics (to engage in some light wrestling practice); DC 20 Games Lore or Gladiatorial Lore (to chat about athletic competitions); DC 22 Acrobatics (to show ways to escape grabs and holds) or Intimidation (to shout and show confidence)

Influence 3 With a strong slap on the back, Takibiados roars in approval and explains the importance of being true to one's nature. The PC earns 1 UP.

Influence 5 Takibiados holds the PC's shoulders and looks seriously into their eyes. He teaches a special breathing technique that allows better control of their mythic powers. The PC earns 2 UP.

Influence 7 Takibiados presents the PC with a suit of +1 *size changing scale mail*. This can happen only once; if the treasure has already been earned, the PC gains 1 UP.

Resistances Takibiados is bored by purely intellectual conversations; attempts to influence her without some kind of demonstration increase the DC by 2.

Weaknesses Takibiados is a sucker for teaching others her favorite wrestling holds; asking her to show some of these lowers the Athletics DC by 2.

Background Takibiados was born almost 950 years ago. She made a name for herself in Pol-Xamne, rising from

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a simple foot soldier to a commander of expeditionary forces. She was undefeated as a grappler in the annual wrestling championships for 30 years, well into old age. She is best known for subduing the great cyclops champion Lorthelan in a wrestling match that went on for days and caused minor earthquakes.

She survived and escaped Pol-Xamne's pernicious hero-god tradition—specifically how the city-state pampers hero-gods for years before sacrificing them. She misses her old homeland yet was always wary of its bounty hunters trying to drag her back.

Appearance Takibiados is a tall lizardfolk with green scales and numerous ivory bracelets adorning her body.

Personality affable, loud, and loves to hug others

Reward: If the PCs earn at least 2 Influence Points from each famous hero, award them 80 XP.

Truth-Speaker

Once they have spent 5 rounds socializing with the famous heroes, Amphila gathers residents together for a celebratory party. If any PCs express concerns about their ambrosia protection wearing off, she brushes those aside and tells them that she'll make sure they're safe and hands them each a cup of a drink that extends the protection another week.

The celebration is lively and pleasant, with dozens of shades participating. There's a drinking contest, friendly unarmed combat sparring, dancing, and a great deal of singing. After a few hours of the celebration go by, read or paraphrase the following.

A hush falls over the gathering as Amphila rises for a speech. She looks wistful and even surprised.

"This certainly isn't what I expected today," she says with a soft smile, "but I believe—" She breaks off suddenly. Her eyes roll back into her head, and her body goes rigid. She begins to speak, but her words come out in a tight, raspy voice.

"The archipelago's bleeding heart stirs, and she who has hidden since her fall from the heavens awakes. The gods' eternal enmity turns back to her. Sangeh! She must not rise. Either she must again slumber, or she must perish in truth."

Her face and sightless eyes land on each of you. "Stop her, mortals! There are no others who can. Seek a way to help her sleep, or seek the blade Aerekostes!"

Amphila's head slumps and she relaxes. Clarity returns to her vision and she looks around her. "My final vision. Goodbye friends," she says, and her body fades out of existence.

The assembled revelers, surprised only for a moment, end the celebration soon after and return to other pursuits.

Escaping Amneros

Once the PCs have reached the Understanding Points threshold, they're ready to leave. Their mythic powers are now firmly under their control, but they're not officially hero-gods until they survive the trip back to the land of the living. There are two ways out: taking a ship provided by Amnerion or traveling the Halls of Quiet Stone.

Completed the Census

If the PCs made a deal with Amnerion and completed the census of counting all four of the long-term residents, the gigas keeps their word. The PCs are given a ship that floats in the moat outside the city. When they board it, the ship begins moving on its own, suddenly entering darkness. They go directly to Following the Light.

Halls of Quiet Stone

Moderate 6

The other route is through the Halls of Quiet Stone, a seemingly endless room filled with pillars marking the departed. Navigating the halls is normally impossible, but with their temple as a metaphysical guidepost, the PCs can find their way, although strange echoing sounds seem to follow them. As they near the exit, the PCs arrive in a fog-shrouded room, 40 feet long and 15 feet wide. Any creature not adjacent is concealed.

Creatures: Two keribos move to attack immediately, and they are not affected by the fog.

KERIBOS (2)

CREATURE 6

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Initiative Perception +18

Development: Afterward, the PCs travel onward and reach the Following the Light encounter.

Following the Light (Mythic Deed)

Moderate 6

If the PCs took the ship, they arrive on a rocky beach with a pier. The ship pilots itself there and waits. If they traversed the Halls of Quiet Stone, the PCs arrive through a passage at the edge of the water. Ahead is a dark cavern that stretches for hundreds of feet. Read or paraphrase the following.

The steady drip of water from tiny, flute-like stalactites is the only sound in this huge cavern. Far ahead, a dim light shines down a tunnel, and a hint of fresh air is carried upon a breeze.

Hazard: The final challenge for the PCs provides the tempering of their abilities and certifies them as hero-gods. It presents images of past loved ones and temptations for personal glory. Like other mythic deed challenges, this is a good time to allow the PCs

to be creative and narrate larger-than-life solutions and accomplishments.

TEMPTATION OF GLORY


HAZARD 8

RARE COMPLEX MENTAL MAGICAL TRAP


Stealth +18 (expert)

Description Ghostly images of your heart's desire appear and beckon you toward them.

Disable Arcana or Religion DC 25 (expert) to disrupt the images; Occultism DC 26 (expert) to shout a countering chant; Intimidation DC 27 (expert) to scare the images away; Will DC 28 (expert) to refuse to listen

Tempt  (mental, occult) **Trigger** A PC moves down the exit hallway; **Effect** The ghostly images turn cruel and hungry, grasping and slashing at the PC

Routine (1 per PC) The hazard targets a PC and uses cruel temptation

Cruel Temptation  claw +20, **Damage** 2d10+10 mental

Special The hazard continues each round until defeated, and the hallway's end cannot be reached until the hazard is stopped.

ANABASIS

The PCs emerge back in the land of the living from their temple on Vaveilos to find a few dead and wounded followers and a group of lamias who have raided the temple. Now is their time to rescue their flock! The PCs have some advantages here on their home turf against the invaders.

When the PCs leave Amneros and return to the lands of the living, read or paraphrase the following. Adjust as needed if the group took a ship back.

A dim haze fills the way ahead, and within moments it's utterly dark. The ghostly, echoing sounds of Amneros fade, and even the persistent chill of the underworld dissipates. You move forward as if in a blank, empty void of pure darkness and silence. After what feels like hours, a barely perceptible voice calls out as if from a great distance, the words too indistinct to hear. Then another voice calls, this one more plaintive, and it's joined by others in a rhythmic chant. You realize they're calling your names.

A pinprick of light appears ahead, the only landmark in a place of endless nothing. It grows closer and closer, moving impossibly fast until it resolves into a tall doorway of light. The voices are crying out your names now, but louder and desperate. They're screaming in pain, and you know with certainty these are their final words, a final plea for help from you. From their gods.

As the PCs step through the doorway, they return to the temple in area **G2**, each appearing in front of one

of the thrones, which whomever walked through first appearing in front of the largest chair.

The blinding light of day fills the room. The crack in the floor has been covered by several large slabs of wood. Blood and gore are splattered everywhere, and several corpses dressed in simple clothing are splayed about, their bodies covered in vicious wounds. Bloody trails lead through the closed door to the east.

The lamias have been piling bodies in this room to save for later. There are five victims of various heritages and genders. At your discretion, you can include one of the prominent NPC pilgrims here. It's clear the victims were killed by bladed weapons. A character who Investigates the bloody trail and succeeds at a DC 20 Nature check realizes it was made by what seems to be a giant snake.

Mythic Fate: With a successful return from the underworld and deeper control of their mythic abilities, the PCs are all cured of the all-consuming hubris affliction (page 6).

Emergence

Moderate 6

This encounter takes place in area **H1** (page 38). Numerous lamias are busily slaughtering the PC's worshippers on the island. When the PCs open the door to this area, read or paraphrase the following.

The floor of the temple is slick with blood, and the sounds of distant shrieking and cries of pain fill the air. The crumpled figure of an old man lays on the ground, but as he looks up and sees you, his eyes widen in rapturous happiness. "I knew you would return," he says. Behind him are two terrible creatures with the upper bodies of human women and lower halves giant serpents. One stands stricken in surprise, a spear poised to run the man through.

Creatures: The two lamias have been finishing off the captured faithful. Completely flummoxed by the sudden appearance of the hero-gods, they're stunned 1 on the first round of combat. They fight to the death.

LAMIAS (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Monster Core 214

Initiative Perception +13

Leader of the Pack

Extreme 6

After defeating the first lamias, the PCs hear nearby reinforcements. They have three rounds to heal and take up defensive positions before the lead lamia makes her appearance. Read or paraphrase the following.

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A tremendous shriek echoes from the east of the temple, amid a jumble of broken pillars. One of the half-snake women points toward the temple and shouts, her voice clear. "Sisters, our work has been successful and drawn these godlings to us! Now slay them so we may take their blood and break our curse!" She points a scimitar toward the temple and advances, flanked by another creature with similar features.

Creatures: As with many other lamias, Encalidi is obsessed with breaking her curse. Seeing the curse as the fault of the gods, she hatched a plan to kill some. She believes bathing in the blood of a hero-god will allow her, or perhaps her offspring, to have the curse lifted. This belief is baseless, but the matriarch has been driven to desperation and fights to the death, as does the lamia accompanying her.

Divine Intervention: The PCs' limits are stretched by this extreme encounter, especially without much time to rest after the previous battle. Fortunately for them, their trip to the land of the dead has unlocked a number of abilities tied to being on their own sanctified ground.

First, all mythic PCs who are part of the pantheon the temple is consecrated to gain fast healing 3 and treat all saving throw results as one degree better while they're within 100 feet of the temple. In addition, any mythic PCs can use the following activity.

DEIFIC FURY

RARE DIVINE FORCE MYTHIC

You channel your own mythic power through the temple, launching beams of energy from the architecture at an enemy within 60 feet. The target attempts a DC 25 Fortitude save. A creature destroyed by this damage turns to stone, glass, or dust (PC's choice).

Critical Success The target is dazzled until the end of its next turn.

Success The target is dazzled for 1 minute.

Failure The target takes 7d6 force damage and becomes blinded for 1 minute.

Critical Failure The target takes double damage and is permanently blinded.

ENCALIDI

CREATURE 8

Lamia matriarch (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 215)

Initiative Perception +15

LAMIA

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Monster Core 214

Initiative Perception +13

Final Repulsion

At least a dozen more lamias are on the island, but with the death of their leader, their resolve quickly fades and they don't pose much of a threat given how scattered they are. Rather than a series of combat encounters, this final part of the adventure works best as shared narration. Give each player a chance to describe the way in which their character contributes to destroying or driving off the remaining invaders. Encourage them to describe a few details of the character's seemingly-impossible feats of skill, prowess, or cleverness. With the proximity to their temple and the new surge of mythic power after returning from the underworld, the PCs are supercharged in this moment and can achieve legend-defining successes.

With the threat from the invaders ended, there are followers to heal, dead to bury, and information to be shared. Soon, however, the cultists hold a feast in honor of their hero-gods, giving PCs a chance to rest and recuperate. Soon enough, they'll have to face the greater threats ahead in the final volume of the Adventure Path!



Encalidi



CULTS

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In Iblydos, the mortality of and limited power wielded by hero-gods are features, not failures. Century by century, the divine cast gradually evolves, making space for new hero-gods whose interests reflect contemporary Iblydan concerns. Unshackled by the timeless perspective of true deities, a hero-god's values might change and their alliances shift, all while their followers scramble to keep pace. Then, even after a hero-god perishes and their magic dwindles, their legacy might survive through the wisdom they left behind.

During the Myth-Speaker Adventure Path, the PCs gather their own cult that draws divine power from them and in turn grants the PCs labor and divine support. The following rules present the basics of managing such a cult, beginning in the first chapter of "Death Sails a Wine-Dark Sea."

CULT CREATION

Starting a cult involves a few prerequisites. First, the PCs must have mythic power. It's possible for an organization to form around the teachings of a particularly charismatic leader without mythic power, of course, but such figures can't gain divine energy from worshippers.

Second, the PCs must have or recruit their first followers. In the Myth Speaker Adventure Path, these first followers find the PCs on their own; in other campaigns, the GM typically brings in NPCs who are already developing a veneration for the pantheon. If no NPCs have sought out the hero-gods, then the characters can seek them out. This is best handled narratively or in conjunction with skill checks to find and impress potential cultists.

Once the pantheon has fulfilled these prerequisites, they can begin establishing their headquarters and recruiting adherents.

CULT STATISTICS

The PCs' cult has two main statistics—Fervor and Size—that determine its overall power and how difficult it is to control. These values change over time depending on events and the cult's actions.

Level

The cult's level determines its modifier when attempting checks, the item level of goods it can create

CULTS IN IBLYDOS

In Iblydos, cults are a regular part of religious life. While the term is often used pejoratively in other lands, here it's simply a term to describe a small religious group that venerates a particular hero-god or pantheon of hero-gods. While religions tend to be relatively open in who can join the faithful in celebrations and membership, cults are secretive and require more work on the part of the initiate to join.

when Creating Wonders, and other effects. By default, the cult's level equals that of the PCs, gaining levels as they do. At the GM's discretion, the cult's level might be as much as 3 higher or lower than the PCs' level. However, be aware that significantly lower-level cults struggle to meet level-based DCs, whereas far higher-level cults are very potent yet difficult to control.

Optionally, these cult rules can also be combined with the leadership subsystem (*GM Core* 204). If so, it's recommended that the cult and leadership levels match each other.

CULT BONUS

Level	Modifier	Level	Modifier
1	+5	11	+18
2	+6	12	+20
3	+8	13	+21
4	+9	14	+22
5	+10	15	+24
6	+12	16	+25
7	+13	17	+26
8	+14	18	+28
9	+16	19	+29
10	+17	20	+30

Attempting Checks: Most checks involve rolling 1d20 and adding the cult's modifier from the table above. The DC varies by the task, usually using the standard DC of the cult's level or the PCs' level (*GM Core* 53). This DC is increased by 1 for cults whose Fervor is fanatical or apathetic, reflecting the difficulty of reining in or motivating those adherents, respectively.

CULT TERMS

These rules use a handful of terms for tracking a cult's strength and status.

Control Check: This is a flat check that determines how successfully the PCs managed their cult.

Cult Phase: Like a combat round, this is the sequence of decisions, events, and checks that a cult performs over a given time period—typically once or twice per level.

Fervor: This tracks the cult's enthusiasm, which can empower the cult but make it harder to control.

Mantle: This is the role a PC plays in the cult's pantheon, granting the PC bonuses toward specific actions.

Miracle: While adventuring, these are deeds a PC might perform that further inspire their cult. At the end of a cult phase, each PC who performed at least one miracle befitting their mantle can increase the cult's Fervor Point or Recruitment Point total by 1.

Size: This is a qualitative measure of the cult's size. Larger cults are stronger but more difficult to control.

CULT PHASE

The cult phase is broken into the following steps, with more information about the activities and other steps detailed over the following pages.

1-Events: The GM randomly determines a special event or condition that affects the rest of the cult phase.

2-Set Agenda: The PCs decide what activities they and their cult will perform during the cult phase.

3-Assist and Worship: Resolve the effects of the Assist Pantheon and Oversee Rites activities.

4-Go Adventuring: The PCs resume their adventures as the cult works in the background. Several cult activities might be resolved during gameplay.

5-Resolve Activities: The players attempt checks and resolve any remaining activities at the end of the cult phase.

6-Apply Effects: Make any changes to the cult's Fervor, Size, and other statistics based on the PCs' actions.

Fervor

Fervor measures the cult's devotion, separated into five ascending ranks: apathetic, observant, inspired, reverent,

and fanatical. Fervor affects the flat check DC to control the cult, the cult's productivity, and the types of events the cult experiences at the beginning of each phase.

Fervor Points (FP): A cult's Fervor is determined by the cult's Size and the number of Fervor Points it has; larger cults require more Fervor Points to change their Fervor rank. Events and Activities can adjust the Fervor Point total and cult's Size, which can change the Fervor rank at the end of the cult phase.

To calculate the cult's Fervor rank, divide its Fervor Point total by its Size modifier (rounded down) and reference the table below.

CULT FERVOR

Fervor	FP / Size Modifier	Check DC	Event Modifier
Fanatical	10+	+1	+2
Reverent	8–9	+0	+1
Inspired	5–7	+0	+0
Observant	3–4	+0	–1
Apathetic	0–2	+1	–2

Fanatical: In this dangerously high level of Fervor, adherents begin seeing themselves as instruments of the hero-gods' will, sometimes taking extreme actions in the name of the cult even if not instructed to do so.

Reverent: The adherents are committed to the cult wholeheartedly. While not self-destructive, followers are much more willing to take major risks in the cult's name.

Inspired: Adherents are dedicated and enthusiastic, willing to take small risks to benefit the pantheon.

Observant: Intrigued, adherents eagerly want to learn more from the pantheon. They accept inconveniences (but not serious risks) as they explore the faith and determine if it's a worthy path to enlightenment or power.

Apathetic: Though a few adherents might believe fervently in the cause, most adherents are disenchanted with the cult or are distracted by other opportunities. The pantheon's directives are more likely to discourage an adherent than inspire them.

Size

Most cults begin with only a handful of adherents, but a carefully managed cult can become a city-state's central faith or even have religious strongholds spread across Ibydos. The larger the cult, the more power it has. That said, larger cults are also more difficult to serve, control, and inspire, lacking the intimacy and sense of exclusivity of smaller operations.

Rather than track an exact number of adherents, this system abstracts the cult's Size with an estimated number of adherents. In addition, Size affects several other factors, detailed below.

Recruitment Points (RP): A cult's Size is determined by the number of Recruitment Points it has. Events and Activities can change this value, causing the cult to grow or shrink in Size based on its current RP total at the end of the cult phase.

Size Modifier: This value affects the flat check DC to control the cult and more. A cult can perform a number of Activities (page 67) per cult phase equal to its Size modifier (minimum 1).

CULT SIZE

Size	Membership	Size Modifier	Recruitment Points
Gargantuan	tens of thousands	5	100+
Huge	thousands	4	60-99
Large	hundreds	3	30-59
Medium	dozens	2	10-29
Small	dozen or fewer	1	1-9

Mythic Points

Adherents' devotion doesn't just feed the pantheon's egos; it also generates additional mythic power the PCs can draw upon during their adventures. These Mythic Points are typically earned by the Oversee Rites activity (page 68), though additional events might affect the total. A cult can have at most a number of Mythic Points equal to 3 or its Size modifier, whichever is greater. When a PC who belongs to the pantheon would spend a Mythic Point but has none remaining, they can gain and expend one of the cult's Mythic Points.

Failed Cults

Due to mismanagement or misfortune, a cult's FP or RP value might be reduced to 0 (though these totals can't be reduced below 0). When this happens, the cult enters a period of crisis at the beginning of the next cult phase. While in crisis, all flat check DCs are increased by 1 (by 2 if the cult's FP and RP totals are both 0). A cult in crisis must end the cult phase with at least 1 FP and 1 RP; otherwise, the cult fails and disperses, and the PCs lose their pantheon status and any cult benefits. At the GM's discretion, this might be avoided by clever roleplay, quests of atonement, expending considerable wealth, or other efforts.



MANTLES

Upon starting their mythic journey, each PC gained a calling (*War of Immortals* 78-81). In a similar way, each PC chooses a mantle that represents their archetypal role within the cult's pantheon. Each of the six mantles provides both a benefit to the cult as well as a range of exploits and miracles the PC might perform to inspire the cult (listed in the Miracles entry under each mantle). More than one PC can choose the same mantle; however, a diverse pantheon provides many benefits to the cult, and too much overlap might lead to one PC overshadowing another.

Creator

In the most literal sense, a creator creates—anything ranging from artifacts and poems to palaces and islands. A creator could also be a hero-god known for being inventive, clever, far-seeing, or wise. Whatever the case, the acts of a creator inspires or outright generates novel creations.

Cult Benefit: When Creating Wonders (page 68), the cult's proficiency when calculating progress becomes expert at 1st level, master at 7th level, and legendary at 15th level.

Miracles: Create a permanent item, stage an extraordinary performance, invent something precious to future generations.

Leader

A leader inspires the cult, makes difficult decisions, and behaves in a way illustrative of the cult's values. That said, there's no singular leadership style a hero-god must use to secure their followers' faith—anything from trust and love to xenophobia and terror can work. As the name suggests, a leader might speak for the cult and even rule the pantheon. However, be sure the other hero-gods (and their players) are in agreement before someone with this mantle declares themselves first among equals.

Cult Benefit: The cult can reroll any die result of 1 on a d4 when calculating the number of Recruitment Points gained from the Recruit Adherents activity. The cult must use the die's second result.

Miracles: Ally with a powerful being, inspire others through courage, achieve a political marvel.

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Mentor

While other mantles pursue lofty ideals and grand feats, the mentor focuses on the cult, its teachings, and future generations. A mentor might draft philosophical treatises and esoteric scrolls they bequeath to followers. They might relish preaching doctrine to an adoring crowd or lead by example, ensuring their deeds espouse the cult's values. Such a hero-god might even focus on a handful of students, training new heroes and philosophers.

Cult Benefit: The cult can reroll any one die (and use either result) to randomly determine the number of Fervor Points gained or lost by the Teach Doctrine (page 68) activity.

Miracles: Adopt an unlikely student whose legendary potential you help unlock, lead others in executing a cunning plan, share knowledge that dramatically changes the odds of a challenge or the perspective of a creature.

Mystic

Even though some might join the cult for camaraderie and moral teachings, many crave the magical esoterica hero-gods offer. A mystic is a master of the cult's divine enigma. They often dole out wisdom in small doses, knowing that to share the enormity of their secrets all at once could devastate a mortal's mind. In return, the cult's devotion channels ineffable power to its pantheon—power the mystic might use to unlock even greater mysteries.

Cult Benefit: Once per phase, a mystic can increase the die result of one d4 roll by 1 (maximum 4) when calculating the number of Mythic Points a cult gains when Overseeing Rites (page 68).

Miracles: Perform a potent ritual, unravel an enigma, create a way that you and others can tap into an esoteric source of power.

Rebel

A rule breaker, outcast, trickster, or transgressor, the rebel ignores convention and disrupts the norms. They might be a thorn in the side of their own pantheon, ever ready to deflate their colleagues' massive egos, challenging pointless dogma, or seeking out trouble that keeps the cult interesting. For all the rebel's mischief, the pantheon often benefits from the eclectic opportunities their errant colleague digs up.

Cult Benefit: When rolling for a random event, the pantheon rolls twice, chooses for one of the events to happen, and ignores the other. If the pantheon can't agree on which event to choose, the rebel chooses. If the two rolls would result in the same event, roll for an event a third time; both the original event and the third event both occur during this cult phase.

Miracles: Challenge tradition, subvert the heroic tropes others expect of you, do something that complicates a situation that nonetheless ends in your success.

Warrior

The heavily muscled brawler, the armor-clad knight, and the fire-slinging battle wizard might all take up the mantle of the warrior. They see life as a struggle where the ability to attack enemies and defend friends and followers is the best route to success. They tend to prefer action over inaction.

Cult Benefit: The cult can Assist the Pantheon (page 67) one additional time per cult phase. In addition, the cult loses the minimum number of FP on a critical failure to Assist the Pantheon.

Miracles: Stand strong against a terrible foe, accept a challenge that poses a real risk of serious harm, exceed your limits in order to overcome a daunting obstacle.

EVENTS

A cult doesn't evolve in a vacuum. Over time, different Events present new opportunities and conditions that help vary the experience. At the beginning of each cult phase, roll 2d6 and add the cult's Event Modifier (between +2 and -2; see Cult Fervor table on page 64). Compare the result to the table below.

The events presented here aren't an exhaustive list of possibilities. A GM can create and substitute comparable events. Results of 8 or higher present situations caused by the cult's excitement and activity, which are often positive. Results of 6 or lower present uncertainty, discontent, or demands, which typically drain resources or introduce threats.

EVENTS

2d6	Event
14	Divine Renaissance
13	Cult Collaboration
12	Zealous Schism
10-11	Wave of Evangelism
8-9	Cult Rivalry
6-7	Business as Usual
4-5	Persistent Petitions
2-3	Empty Pews
1	Infectious Nihilism
0	False Gods

14 Divine Renaissance: The figurative stars align, and the cult overflows with energy, enthusiasm, and focus. Increase the number of cult activities the cult can perform during this phase by 2.

13 Cult Collaboration: Impressed by the cult's zeal, another faith proposes collaboration toward a common goal. During this cult phase, treat any success when Creating Wonders as a critical success.

12 Zealous Schism: A topic captures the congregation's imagination yet exposes a doctrinal flaw that fuels intense disagreement and debate for the duration of the cult phase. This could end catastrophically, yet the followers are also perfectly primed to receive fresh wisdom. During this phase, increase the DC of all checks to Teach Doctrine by 2, and treat any d4 rolled to determine the maximum FP change as a 4. However, a critical failure has devastating, variant results: the cult loses half of its Recruitment Points at the end of the cult phase, representing a splinter faith that departs the cult in outrage.

10–11 Wave of Evangelism: Adherents can't help but spread word of their patrons' wonders. During this phase, treat any success when Recruiting Adherents as a critical success.

8–9 Cult Rivalry: The growth and miraculous claims of the PCs' cult have drawn the attention of another cult, jealous of their new rival. At the end of this phase, the rival cult attempts a DC 9 flat check to steal an important relic, lure away followers, or inflict other kinds of damage against the PCs' cult. The PCs' cult can Assist the Pantheon one or more times during this phase, dedicating the effort toward fending off the rival cult rather than granting the PCs Aid on checks. For each success, increase the flat check DC by 2. For each critical success, increase the flat check DC by 1d4+1. The following occurs based on the flat check result.

Critical Success As success, but the cult loses 2d4+1 FP and 2d4+1 RP.

Success The rival cult accomplishes its goal, disgracing the pantheon. The cult loses 1d4+1 FP and 1d4+1 RP. Optionally, this rival cult becomes a recurring thorn in the PCs' side, and its members occasionally appear in the PCs' adventures as antagonists and unfriendly NPCs. The GM might even include gameplay opportunities to lure back wayward adherents or steal back a lost relic, potentially reversing any losses from this event.

Failure The rival cult's plot fails.

Critical Failure The rivals are thwarted so decisively that the PCs' cult gains 1d4+1 FP.

6–7 Business as Usual: No special event or conditions apply to this phase.



Symbol of Korakai

4–5 Persistent Petitions: Followers bombard the pantheon with prayers and requests for small miracles, doubting their patrons' power the more these prayers go unanswered. During this cult phase, a PC chosen at random hears a number of their followers' prayers equal to the cult's Size modifier. They can fulfill one prayer by spending 3 actions and expending 1 Mythic Point within the next hour. At the end of the cult phase, the cult loses 1d4 FP for each prayer that went unanswered.

2–3 Empty Pews: Followers lose interest and stop attending services. However, the right miracle or attention might reinvigorate the cult like never before. During this cult phase, any time the cult earns 1 or more RP, it earns 1 additional RP. Likewise, any time the cult earns 1 or more FP, it earns 1 additional FP. At the end of the phase, the cult loses 1d6 FP and 1d6 RP.

1 Infectious Nihilism: Uninspired adherents spend more time complaining among themselves than working toward the cult's ends. During this cult phase, any flat check that results in a failure is treated as a critical failure instead.

0 False Gods: Discouraged adherents have come to a terrible conclusion: their pantheon consists of charlatans! Several followers arm themselves and hone their skills before launching an attack at some point during this cult phase. This is a moderate combat encounter, and the followers wait to strike until the PCs have expended some of their daily resources. Whatever the result, the cult loses 1d10 RP to reflect the followers who perish in the fight or flee in the aftermath.

ACTIVITIES

During a cult phase, the cult can perform one or more of the following activities, based on its Size.

ASSIST PANTHEON

Requirements The cult's Fervor isn't apathetic.

The cult is tasked with directly helping the pantheon with a task, such as investigating an organization, recovering a rare book, exploring a region, or thwarting a specific foe. This usually doesn't involve the adherents fighting alongside the PCs or following them in a massive pack; instead, adherents might report to the PCs with useful leads, prepare potential battlefields in a way that favors their patrons, fire arrows that distract a beast, leave a pilfered key where the PCs can find it, or provide similar assistance at the adventure's periphery.

CULT ACTIVITY

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The pantheon defines the task, working with the GM to refine it if need be. The cult attempts a check against a standard DC of the PCs' level.

Critical Success As success, but the cult grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the triggering checks. This increases to +3 if the cult's level is 7 or higher, and it increases to +4 if the cult's level is 15 or higher.

Success Adherents disperse to assist the pantheon in its upcoming endeavors. The PCs can invoke the cult up to three times while pursuing the task; the cult Aids the PC, granting the PC a +1 circumstance bonus to the triggering check before rolling. The number of times the PCs can gain this Aid increases to four times if the cult is Medium or Large, and it increases to five times if the cult is Huge or Gargantuan.

Failure As success, but the cult can Aid the PCs only once.

Critical Failure Tragedy befalls some of the adherents as they provide support, such as being captured by foes, stepped on by a giant, or shipwrecked. The cult loses 1d4 Fervor Points and 1d4 Recruitment Points.

Special At the GM's discretion, the cult might cache a useful tool where the PCs will find it rather than granting a circumstance bonus to a check. This might be a fistful of arrows made of a special material, a coiled rope stowed near where the PCs have to make a hasty escape down a cliffside, or a similar boon. The item's level shouldn't exceed half the cult's level.

CREATE WONDERS

CULT ACTIVITY

Requirements The cult's Fervor isn't apathetic.

The cult is directed to create anything from manuscripts to magic items to buildings. When scheduling this activity, identify up to three projects the cult works on; any items they create must either have common rarity or be items for which the PCs have access or a formula. During the cult phase, the cult attempts a number of checks to Craft (*Player Core* 236) equal to twice the cult's Size modifier. The PCs decide at the beginning of the phase how to divide these checks between multiple projects.

Each check represents the initial 2 days of work plus 18 additional days of labor. For the purposes of tracking progress, the cult's proficiency is trained, which increases to expert at 7th level and increases to master at 15th level. At the end of the phase, the PCs can choose to conclude the cult's Crafting and pay the projects' remaining costs to finish the project, or they can leave the project unfinished—likely continuing work during subsequent cult phases.

Recommended prices for real estate appear on page 17 of *Pathfinder Lost Omens Travel Guide*, ranging from 100 gp for a thatch hut to 15,000 gp for a fine villa.

OVERSEE RITES

CULT ACTIVITY

Requirements The cult's Fervor isn't apathetic.

The cult performs special rites to empower their pantheon—anything from prayers to fasting to magical rituals that channel the world's energies into their herogods. The cult attempts a check against the standard DC of the PCs' level.

Critical Success The cult gains 1d4 Mythic Points (minimum 2), and the cult gains 1d4 Fervor Points.

Success The cult gains 1d4–1 Mythic Points (minimum 1).

Failure The cult's rites have minimal effect, earning the cult only 1d4–2 Mythic Points (minimum 0).

Critical Failure The rites backfire horribly, such as causing a magical explosion, invoking spirits that possess ritualists, or accidentally conjuring a hostile fiend. The cult loses 1d4 FP and 1d4 RP.

RECRUIT ADHERENTS

CULT ACTIVITY

Under your direction, the cult focuses on evangelism and developing its reputation to attract new members. The cult attempts a check against a standard DC of the cult's level.

Critical Success The cult's messaging resonates spectacularly! The cult gains 2d4+4 Recruitment Points.

Success The cult's efforts result in a steady stream of new recruits. The cult gains 2d4 Recruitment Points.

Failure The evangelism changes few minds, earning the cult only 1d4 Recruitment Points.

Critical Failure Whether due to pushy apostles, poor messaging, or unintended scandals, recent evangelism disillusioned followers. The cult loses 1d4 Recruitment Points.

TEACH DOCTRINE

CULT ACTIVITY

You reinforce the pantheon's edicts and anathema. This might involve directly teaching disciples or training higher-rank adherents in how to instruct their disciples. You might also create sacred literature to guide the cult, introducing new lore or revising troublesome canon. Choose whether to increase or decrease the cult's Fervor Points, then the cult attempts a check against a standard DC of the cult's level. The result determines the maximum amount by which you can change the cult's Fervor Point total, though you can choose to change the FP total by a lesser amount after rolling.

Critical Success The cult embraces your teachings. Roll 2d4+2. You add or subtract a number of FP from the cult that doesn't exceed the roll's result.

Success As critical success, but roll 1d4+1.

Failure As critical success, but roll 1d4–1.

Critical Failure The teachings inadvertently introduce contradictions and spark arguments that will fuel arguments for months to come. Roll 1d10 and either add or subtract the result (determined randomly) from the cult's FP total.

LEGACY CULTS

Sustained more by philosophy, ritual, and tradition than any direct divine connection, mystery cults revere long-dead hero-gods whose sacred wisdom survives.

The Ebaïos Key: The lava spewed by the infamous volcano Mount Ebaïos transforms those it burns into ashen zombies, convincing all but daredevils to keep their distance. However, the Ebaïos Key cult sees the volcano not as a necromantic catastrophe, but a gateway to a grander nonexistence. To the cult, reality is a cage created by Pharama, whose Cycle of Souls keeps mortals' essence circulating eternally, unable to find escape or rest. The typical mortal transformed by Mount Ebaïos becomes undead, anathema to the Lady of Graves. Yet—at least as far as the cult believes—an enlightened adherent who surrenders themselves to the lava won't be reanimated but will instead be erased completely from this reality, soul and all. This might simply be an escape, but the cult speculates this disintegration untethers the adherent from this reality, allowing them to travel beyond the walled garden of this limited multiverse.

Ekriathe, Stone-Speaker: Attributed to her third incarnation as a medusa, the cult of Ekriathe the Stone-Speaker believes Ekriathe has hidden ineffable wisdom within stone. After lengthy rites of physical and mental purification, one of the cult's prophets voices a difficult question before willingly being petrified by a medusa, basilisk, or other creature. The rest of the cult then moves the statue to a safe location, checking it regularly for portentous changes or phenomena like tears or a changed expression. At that point, the cult revives the prophet and faithfully records whatever their first words are upon being restored to flesh, believing these utterances are the divine answer granted to the petrified mind.

Ongalte, Cycle-Breaker: Ongalte (*The Acropolis Pyre* 78) hunts hero-gods. However, the mythic cyclops is a hero-god herself, her very nature anathema to her goal of decide. Thus, many of Ongalte's disciples refuse to worship or draw power from her directly, instead revering a variant known as Ongalte, Cycle-Breaker. This cult collects ruined relics of hero-gods to study these shattered treasures and even consume the residual mythic power trapped within. Due to Iblydians' widespread love of their hero-gods, the cult rarely operates openly. Instead, its headquarters is sequestered deep within the Ungkore's undercity, offering secrecy as well as a stream of sacrificed hero-gods whose vestiges the cult can try to steal.

Ousmariku, the Purifier: Ousmariku is a living disaster. However, as hero-gods gradually pass away without replacements, some have questioned whether

Ousmariku isn't a threat but rather the cure to an imperfect system. The cult of Ousmariku the Purifier isn't a united movement but instead describes a dozen or more scattered circles of dissidents who have arrived at similar conclusions independently. When two cells discover each other, the odds are even that they unite, refuse to acknowledge each other following vigorous debate, or forcibly try to subjugate the other to conform to that cell's particular brand of dogma. Most cells agree that any opposition to Ousmariku only slows Iblydos's purification, so adherents undermine various hero-god initiatives and maritime defenses. The cult has mixed feelings about Ongalte and her hero-god hunts, being unsure whether to support her similar goal or contest her on principle.

The Three-Sails League: Founded 900 years ago, the Three-Sails League supported adventurers and budding hero-gods across the archipelago by founding hostels, workshops, and other facilities funded by city-state donations. When the ascension of new hero-gods slowed a century ago, donations dwindled, and the league faced an existential crisis. Many of the facilities have since been abandoned or sold in recent decades, yet the league hasn't vanished entirely. A fraction still maintains the buildings part-time and in good faith. However, a large contingent decided the falloff in new hero-gods wasn't due to cyclopes, myth-speaking, or prophecy; it was a lack of opportunity. This philosophy has birthed the Three-Sails cult, which seeks ever-greater threats to awaken or introduce to Iblydos to ensure would-be heroes always have worthy foes to overcome—collateral damage be damned. The cult's efforts haven't paid off reliably. Clearly, its adherents reason, this is because they haven't found a sufficiently mythic threat whose demise would spawn a new generation of hero-gods.

Ximakter Within: When Ousmariku ravaged the coasts, a coalition of hero-gods counterattacked, led by the leviathan-slaying legend Ximakter. Tragically, Ousmariku prevailed, killing many hero-gods and even swallowing Ximakter whole. It's widely believed he perished, yet the cult of Ximakter Within believes the hero-god survives inside Ousmariku's gut, working on a way to destroy the beast from inside. This speculative contest has inspired the cult's doctrine, which encourages infiltrating criminal organizations, fighting tyranny from within the system, and wrestling with one's own inner demons. Understandably, adherents rarely advertise their affiliation openly. That said, members regularly seek out and recruit adventurers to aid in their clandestine operations—and perhaps even join in a future fight against Ousmariku to slay the beast and free Ximakter.

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The Iblydan archipelago spans Kardaji Bay along Casmaron's southern coast. Its maritime isolation has preserved Iblydan culture and sovereignty for millennia, and the lucrative Obari Crossing trade route fills its coffers. However, Iblydos isn't a united nation but rather a collection of city-states bound by their shared traditions and mostly good-natured rivalries.

GEOGRAPHY

Iblydos bears identifiable volcanic traits, such as cratered mountaintops and smoking peaks. However, the largest isles' coastlines seem to fit together like weathered puzzle pieces, suggesting some mysterious, non-volcanic cataclysm ripped a larger landmass into smaller pieces. Whatever the case, roughly 85 islands comprise Iblydos, which includes seven major islands defined by their size and extensive continental shelves, atop which most of the minor islands arise.

Eons have weathered the older islands to the southwest, leaving rolling hills and ancient forests. Active volcanoes reign among the newer islands, many of which are defined by craggy coasts and foreboding promontories. Unforgiving currents race through the many straits crisscrossing the archipelago, some choked with vibrant reefs or other, stranger hazards. It takes an experienced navigator to traverse these currents and sail among the islands in record time.

The Obari Ocean's seasonal winds dictate Iblydan trade and climate alike. The summer sun heats Casmaron, drawing in moist air from the sea. As it collides with Iblydos and mainland mountains, the moisture rises and showers the region with rain. The downpours are welcome; Iblydos has few permanent rivers, so inhabitants rely on springs, seasonal ponds, and artificial reservoirs for fresh water.

The islands lie just far enough from the mainland that they've developed unique ecologies. Sundry birds nest here, joined by reptiles and small mammals that have rafted over. Larger predators like lions and wolves have no fear of water, with some having developed webbed toes over the generations to help them move between islands. Yet it's the archipelago's mythic influence and hero-gods that have had the greatest impact; magical metamorphosis has created a host of legendary creatures, often cited as the origin of minotaurs, harpies, chimeras, centaurs, and more.

HISTORY


Humans colonized the Kardaji Bay area by the Age of Legend. Known as Aishmayars, these people radiated across Casmaron's southern coast, founding distant colonies that gradually developed into independent states like Midea, Mishyria, and Khattib—even as far as modern Qadira—while retaining their Aishmayar identity and influence. When Earthfall later carved out the Inner Sea and heralded the Age of Darkness, its impact devastated Casmaron's coast with tsunamis and choking dust that smothered the vibrant Aishmayar societies. Survivors scattered to the inland deserts and mountains, abandoning the coast for generations.

Yet the proto-Iblydan populace weathered the storm with minimal damage. Centuries earlier, cyclopes refugees fleeing the turmoil of their western Garundi kingdom of Ghol-Gan arrived at the islands and prophesied a grim possible future: they and the humans would both perish unless they cooperated to prepare for a future cataclysm. Together, they created bunkers, stored food, and carefully sequestered lore for future generations. Thus, even though Earthfall swept away some settlements, the islanders and giants had everything they needed to survive and rebuild.

By comparison, the mainland Aishmayars' fall from once-sophisticated empires to crude, subsistence lifestyles seemed downright barbaric; within decades, the islanders developed an exclusive identity not as Aishmayars but as Iblydians. Within generations, Iblydians had founded far-flung colonies to oversee the "unsettled" coast. These cities had an ethically dubious impact, both rebuilding some of the fallen mainland societies while also marginalizing locals, exploiting their labor, and extracting their resources. Ultimately, these colonies' connections to Iblydos faded, and the settlements integrated fully into the local cultures.

The tides fully swung against Iblydos when it fell between Kelesh's crosshairs. The Padishah Empire assembled an armada to subdue Iblydos and fold the islands into its vast territory. This immense threat inspired the city-states to unite under General Ylianti, whose cunning tactics lured the Keleshite armada to its defeat in the Battle of Shattered Reefs.

Iblydos maintained its relative isolation until 534 AR, when the magnificent treasure fleet of Khiben-Sald arrived from Vudra. The maharajah's visit



and subsequent voyage to the Inner Sea sparked an insatiable fascination with Vudra and demand for its goods, beginning a stream of merchant ships along the Obari Crossing that's not ceased since. Perfectly positioned along this route, Iblydos transformed into an international marketplace and favorite resupply stop—especially when city-states began undercutting the tariffs and docking fees charged by mainland ports. In the four millennia since, this windfall has fueled Iblydos's military scuffles, scholarship, and monumental architecture, the latter littering the islands with temples and palaces.

In the Age of Lost Omens, trade has remained consistent, but prophecy's failure has threatened the Iblydan hero-god tradition (detailed further in *Pathfinder* #216: *The Acropolis Pyre* 72–79). With each hero-god's death, Iblydos appears to grow a little weaker. Not only have evangelists flocked to the islands to fill the perceived vacuum, but also Kelesh, which controls much of Kardaji Bay's mainland, has maneuvered to annex the region.

POLITICS

Iblydos is united more by culture than politics. With the threat of Earthfall over, city-states arose to rule various islands, regularly clashing with their neighbors with both weapons and words. Many of these powers have since fallen, and only nine notable city-states are recognized today. Each is linked to its neighbors by millennia of partnerships, unresolved rivalries, trade deals, and grudges so ancient that nobody agrees on the details (though they're confident the other side is at fault). Only the occasional ephemeral empire or common enemy has united these polities, and even then only for a few decades at most.

A city-state includes its capital city (such as Hoimpeia) and all of its surrounding territory (denoted with the prefix Pol-, such as Pol-Hoimpeia), typically consisting of a large island and nearby minor islands. Governments vary widely by city-state and over time, with most incorporating democratic or representative institutions. Many hero-gods take an active political role, acting as advisors, generals, or even monarchs.

PEOPLE

Iblydan humans remain the islands' most numerous inhabitants. They're famed for their hospitality and loyalty, the flip side of which is a reputation for outspoken opinions, mostly friendly rivalries, and life-long grudges. Many other ancestries inhabit Iblydos.

Awakened Animals and Beastkin: Metamorphosis is a common fixture in Iblydan legend, whether its targets are warped by magical sites or cursed by a hero-god for their hubris. Transformed beings sometimes pass their bestial features to their descendants, resulting in human-animal hybrids, generations of talking deer, and even stranger manifestations. These creatures are viewed with a mix of acceptance, wonder, and silent judgment—after all, one can't help but speculate about the transgression that transformed them in the first place.

Centaur: Few centaurs settle in cities, instead forming semi-nomadic bands that roam between communal camps on the larger islands. Most specialize as farmers and foragers who maintain wild orchards and remote plots that mature at different times of the year. However, when misfortune devastates their crops, centaurs rarely ask for help; they raid.

Cyclops: These giant diviners' influence and numbers have faded since Earthfall, dwindling to several thousand cyclopes in modern times. Many retain ritual roles like priests, philosophers, and judges. Especially in the Age of Lost Omens, cyclopes have shifted to farming, herding, construction, and adventuring to contribute meaningfully in Iblydan society.

Nephilim: Hero-gods' offspring often inherit a trace of their parent's divine power, manifesting as a nephilim child. Thanks to the hundreds of hero-gods over the ages, Iblydan nephilim are fairly common. Whatever their form, being a nephilim is considered a blessing. After all, even fiendish features inherited from a sinister hero-god are nevertheless signs of divine ancestry—especially if they can demonstrate who they're descended from and how.



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Faun: Like centaurs, fauns prefer rural and unsettled regions. This suits urban folk just fine, for fauns have a mixed reputation, being both charming sources of stress relief and tempters who can coax diligent people to abandon their responsibilities and disappear forever. In the wild, fauns have a knack for coexisting with fearsome beasts, though not because of any special alliance. Instead, monsters seem captivated by fauns' art, even attacking nearby settlements if a favorite fey performer is threatened.

Minotaur: Supposedly descended from an architect cursed by a petty hero-god, minotaurs favor the eastern coast of Kardaji Bay, as if wary of staying in Iblydos. Those who do commonly settle in the mountains, building subterranean settlements that cunningly blend into the landscape.

THE CITY-STATES

Nine city-states control the archipelago of Iblydos. In most cases, these center on a capital city that shares the city-state's name, which in turn controls a constellation of smaller settlements and islands whose ownership has shifted over time. Each city-state's entry that follows lists several noteworthy exports, inhabitants (other than humans and cyclopes), and faiths.

POL-BAILAX

Exports books, copper, dyes, spices, wine

Inhabitants centaurs

Religions Atreia, Vudran heroes and deities

Due to its proximity to the mainland, the island of Qoshith is a natural crossroads between Iblydan and Kardaji Bay cultures. Pol-Bailax has controlled the island for millennia, receiving little Obari Crossing trade yet making up for it in its shipments to neighboring Mishyria, Midea, and Thieron. Yet its greatest boon comes from its phoenix patron, Salquin, who returns to Bailax every 137 years to immolate himself and be reborn, in the process shedding life-giving ash that rejuvenates the island's otherwise poor soil. However, Salquin's return is a year overdue, worrying Bailaxians that tragedy has befallen their beloved patron.

Additional information about Bailax appears in *Pathfinder #216: The Acropolis Pyre*.

POL-DHURAXILIS

Exports bricks, mercenaries, spices, timber

Inhabitants sundry monsters, especially chimeras, harpies, medusas (including sthenos), and minotaurs

Religions Iapholi, Lamashtu

In earlier ages, Pol-Dhuraxilis exported timber, pigs, and weaponry, with its hero-gods renowned for slaying terrible monsters. Yet when Sylicia invaded, the harpy Ekriathae mustered an eclectic army of monsters that defended the

island and saved Dhuraxilis. Realizing it had misjudged its fearsome neighbors, Dhuraxilis extended legal protections to any creatures willing to abide by local laws. Over the millennia since, chimeras, harpies, and other creatures traditionally viewed as monsters have become the majority population. Local humans and other ancestries have learned to live alongside these creatures with minimal conflict.

Pol-Dhuraxilis was widely settled in Ekriathae's era, but much of it has been ceded to less urban beasts since then, becoming reclaimed by old growth forests. Few laws extend beyond the capital, and even that city seems anarchic by Iblydan standards. District oligarchs and power brokers compete with each other for political and territorial influence in Dhuraxilis while uniting in the face of outside threats. They're equal-opportunity employers who happily hire adventurers for countless schemes.

POL-HOIMPEIA

Exports alchemy, clothing, olive oil, perfume, pottery

Inhabitants fauns, merfolk, vishkanyas

Religions Vudran heroes and deities

Though westbound ships' most direct route would pass Chozdos, that island's fearsome inhabitants and dangerous waters make it more practical to resupply at Pol-Hoimpeia instead. As the gateway to Vudra and its treasures, Pol-Hoimpeia has styled itself as a trend-setter in art and fashion. Its relatively poor soils produce little. Thankfully, its industrious and creative populace creates a wide variety of labor-intensive goods ranging from fine clothing to elegant ceramics that often make their way onto merchant ships bound for the Inner Sea.

The city-state's vibrant entertainment scene attracts a sizable minority of fauns, satyrs, and other fey. Their presence is like a wildfire: they roam between settlements bringing chaos, debauchery, and the occasional arson, yet like ash fertilizing a prairie, their whimsical exploits rejuvenate the local art scene with priceless inspiration.

POL-LIACHORA

Exports education, fruit, pearls, seafood

Inhabitants merfolk, sedachthies

Religions Gozreh, Kelksiomides, Psomeira

Westmost of the city-states, Pol-Liachora welcomes traffic from the Inner Sea and sells countless services to the ships and their weary crews. However, the city-state suffered most as the Age of Lost Omens began; the whale-like behemoth Ousmariku rose from the depths and devastated Liachora. Aelysos has since become the acting capital, though Liachorans refuse to formalize the change, hoping that they might eventually destroy Ousmariku and rebuild the now sedachthy-occupied ruins.

Additional information about Aelysos and its environs appear in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Shores*.



IBLYDAN LEGENDS

Countless myths chronicle Iblydan history, often with different versions of each legend blurring truth and fiction. The following are two of the region's most enduring, unsolved legends.

Lost Islands: Historical archipelago maps often depict islands that either only existed in legend, have since disappeared for unknown reasons, or even relocate themselves unexpectedly. Most famous of these potentially fictitious shores are the Pegasus Isles. Every few years, pegasi migrate beyond the southern horizon for weeks at a time, yet none have successfully followed them (or stowed away atop one) to learn where they go.

Seasplitter: Many believe Iblydos was once a small continent that was torn apart by some catastrophe older than Earthfall. The favorite hypothesis features *Seasplitter*, a powerful bident that a hero-god or even Gozreh hurled at Iblydos, shattering it into an archipelago. The weapon's said to still be lodged in the seabed somewhere, and new rumors of its location circulate every few years—especially since it's believed to be strong enough to slay the behemoth Ousmariku.

POL-PTIRMEIOS

Exports gems, iron, marble, ships, timber, wine

Inhabitants kobolds

Religions Aerekostes

Pastoral, hilly, and peaceful, Pol-Ptirmeios boasts a robust populace spread across scattered towns, with even Ptirmeios itself being small by Iblydan city standards. These decentralized riches have always made Ptirmeios a tempting target for Pol-Sylirica, which shares the island of Tos and is separated only by hills. Fortunately, Ptirmeian diplomats maintain strong alliances with Pol-Liachora, Pol-Xamne, and other city-states, ensuring that a coalition (augmented by Pol-Ptirmeios's famously deadly slingers) will mobilize to punish any Sylirican aggression.

A ship of kobolds immigrated here a millennium ago, earning their neighbors' respect for their crafting and mining prowess. In turn, the kobolds delight in the mythic power coursing through the archipelago, which imparts wondrous characteristics to any eggs incubated here.

POL-REANPHOROS

Exports cloth, grain, honey, pottery

Inhabitants centaurs

Religions Chinostes

Volcanoes pepper the island Nenakari's northern coast, raising jagged mountains that intercept rain clouds and

supply most of Iblydos's few permanent rivers. These inundate the shallow, lowland valleys with rich silt and ash that have made Pol-Reanphoros the breadbasket of the archipelago. However, the volcanism and earthquakes topple buildings so often that most inhabitants live a semi-nomadic lifestyle, with even hero-gods' temples mounted atop wagons or built small enough to be carried. Reanphoros is the only permanent settlement of note, its buildings straddling the Siestin River atop stilts to avoid the occasional flood triggered by Mount Ebaio's eruptions.

POL-SYLIRICA

Exports cheese, leather, meat, mercenaries, wool

Inhabitants dwarves

Religions Gorum, Moloch, Psomeira

Sylirican belligerence is one of the few constants in Iblydan history. In Pol-Sylirica, battlefield prowess is so associated with personal virtue that the city-state starts a few wars every generation, though most of these are little more than performative skirmishes or years-long periods of raiding. When at peace, its warriors seek mercenary opportunities, even leasing armies to would-be warlords across Casmaron.

Despite being a menace to its neighbors, Pol-Sylirica's countryside is remarkably safe; militias quickly assemble to hunt down any monsters that threaten civilians or the expansive herds of cattle and sheep grazing the hills. The livestock slowly tramples the ruins of past ages into the ground and sometimes unearth forgotten sites, making the city-state an attractive destination for foreign archaeologists and adventurers.

POL-UNGKORE

Exports art, magic items, mercenaries, ships

Inhabitants ratfolk

Religions cyclops and Vektateon mystery cults

If Pol-Sylirica embodies wrath, greed calls Pol-Ungkore home. The city-state experiences irregular cycles of feast and famine, having nearly faded from existence dozens of times before a rapidly squandered windfall begins a decade of renaissance. These productive periods fuel vast building projects, often knocking down part of a neighborhood to make way for fresh construction. Modern Ungkore now rises as much as 300 feet above its surroundings, built atop dozens of past layers. Enterprising citizens and scallywags have carved tunnels and rediscovered buried buildings within the rubble and ruin, creating a vast undercity that Ungkore can't police.

Pol-Ungkore's pernicious policies also extend to its hero-gods. The secretive Vektateon mystery cult doesn't worship hero-gods so much as their mythic power, treating living gods as livestock. The cult relentlessly recruits new hero-gods, whom the city-state showers in luxuries and vice for years. Then with minimal warning, the cult sacrifices

the fattened hero-god, channeling their divinity into the land and its people. With few hero-gods in the current age, Ungkore now dispatches teams of godcatchers to capture any mythic beings they can find.

POL-XAMNE

Exports books, stone, timber

Inhabitants fauns, leshies

Religions Drokalion, the Eldest

With the largest territory and central location, Pol-Xamne thrived as the first among equals until recently. The failure of myth-speaking, a tragic series of hero-god deaths, infighting, and more have caused its gradual collapse over the past century, leaving its major settlements in ruins and its inhabitants fleeing. Most of the island of Xaktilos has become feral, with nature reclaiming once-thriving orchards, palaces, and neighborhoods. This has also attracted monsters from Pol-Dhuraxilis seeking their own territory, as well as enterprising treasure hunters—all eager to extract the riches of this once-great city-state.

OTHER DESTINATIONS

These are just a handful Ibydos's other sites of note.

The Cowries: Named for the way the jagged islands resemble a cowrie shell's ridges, these uninhabited promontories serve as a neutral ground for settling differences—anything from military clashes to roaring debates—with each side claiming one island and launching attacks from there. The narrow bay dividing them is a mess of shipwrecks, dead heroes, skeletonized leviathans, and more. Yet for all the treasures buried underwater, there are just as many dangers that shelter among the wreckage and would happily feast upon unwary divers.

Hectin: This tiny island's aquifer bubbles up in three springs. However, its aromatic waters dull the imbiber's senses and memories, with some visitors losing track of time entirely and wasting away. Only the Cult of Lysianassa Lethete resides here year-round. Its disciples revere a variant of the elemental lord, incorporating the water into secret recipes to create teas and cordials with finely tailored effects—anything from dulling the sting of a specific trauma to wiping out all memories of one's past. The only thing a visitor won't forget is the price the disciples negotiate, which must be paid within three years. Those who default often become catatonic from a rush of suppressed memories or are found drowned in nearby streams.

Itia: The infamous Chimera Isle is the domain of Zeaki, the hero-god of tides and transformation. This island of salt marshes and damp dunes barely rises above the sea, and its interior is dotted with ancient

monuments that slowly sink into the silt. An eclectic population of chimeric creatures dwell here, many being visitors who offended Zeaki and were transformed for their impertinence. Even so, these creatures enjoy Zeaki's protection; would-be heroes who come here to hunt indiscriminately usually join the menagerie instead. Zeaki rescinds her protection from monsters that cause trouble or flee here seeking sanctuary for other crimes, allowing polite adventurers and bounty hunters to seek specific quarry with her permission.

Mount Ebaeos: The archipelago's greatest volcano is a byword for a cure with terrible side effects. Mount Ebaeos hasn't cooled in a millennium, its crater bubbling with molten rock that sheds ominous red light for miles. Yet it's not its relentless rumbling and heat that gives Mount Ebaeos its reputation; it's the thanatotic lava it spews, believed to originate from the Ibydan

underworld or even a fiendish realm. Creatures caught in the lava burn to death before being trapped like a fly in amber, only to revive and break free weeks, even years, later. These zombie-like creatures exhale clouds of toxic cinders and are notoriously belligerent.

Few have ever settled near the volcano. The cyclops siblings Uor and Pelkion founded a school for aspiring hero-gods in the mountain's shadow generations ago, only for it to be buried—students, teachers, architecture, and all—in a single night's eruption. Mythic treasures and texts might still survive, buried beneath an obsidian crust amid crisscrossing lava tunnels.

Satyr Shoals: Upwelling currents from the Obari Ocean carry sand and shells, much of which have become trapped amid a cluster of islands called the Satyr Shoals. The narrow strait are utterly clogged, creating a single landmass, with expanses of blinding dunes shimmering with limestone amid expanses of solid land. Permanent dwellings have a bad habit of getting buried and occasionally being unearthed. Unwanted by nearby city-states, the Shoals have become the domain of pirates, revelers, and others who would live dangerously far from judging eyes. That includes several eponymous satyr clans who throw wandering parties that can draw in unwary visitors into the revelry indefinitely.

Various city-states periodically raid the Satyr Shoals for peacekeeping purposes; it's good for Obari Crossing business when city-states at least appear to crack down on piracy. In practice, these operations (which often include adventurers and mercenaries) usually strike a few outposts and merely discourage piracy for a year or two.



Seasplitter

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NEW RITUAL

This ritual features in this adventure's second chapter.

LABYRINTHINE PRISON

RARE MYTHIC TELEPORTATION

Cast 1 day; **Cost** fine paper and ink worth a total value of the target's level \times 25 gp; **Secondary Casters** 2

Primary Check Deception (expert), Maze Lore (trained), or Religion (expert); **Secondary Checks** Art Lore (trained), Crafting (trained), or Thievery (trained)

Range 60 feet; **Targets** 1 creature of up to 8th level

Duration varies (see below)

This ritual was developed by a long-dead minotaur hero-god whose cult trained to hunt and trap evil beings. It creates a maze of ever-shifting warped space woven from intertwined demiplanes that twist in ways few can solve.

You and the secondary casters draw a maze of twisted space into being with the target at its center. An unwilling target must be immobilized, unconscious, or otherwise prevented from leaving the area for the entire casting time, or the ritual fails. An unwilling target can attempt a Will save to resist the ritual; on a critical success, treat the result as critically failing to cast the ritual. While the target is trapped within the *labyrinthine prison*, they cannot escape it, as even abilities that give access to other planes are subject to being twisted into the maze. Instead the only way to escape is by succeeding at a Maze Lore, Perception, or Survival check against the *labyrinthine prison*'s DC. This check can be attempted once per week, and the first check can only be attempted after a week has passed. If all casters spend one Mythic Point each, this interval changes to one year, and the DC uses the primary caster's mythic proficiency.

Critical Success As success, and the twisted space renders the target stupefied 2 while within.

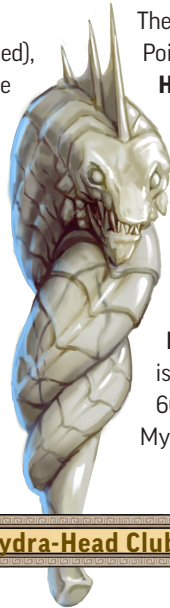
Success The target is trapped within the labyrinthine prison for the duration of ritual.

Failure The ritual fails to trap the target.

Critical Failure As failure, and the casters are all stupefied 4 for 1 week.

Heightened (4th) The maximum level of the target is 10. The cost is the target's level (minimum 1) \times 40 gp. The interval becomes 1 month, and spending Mythic Points increases it to 5 years.

RYTUAL 3



Hydra-Head Club

Heightened (5th) The maximum level of the target is 12. The cost is the target's level (minimum 1) \times 75 gp. The interval becomes 2 months, and spending Mythic Points increases it to 10 years.

Heightened (6th) The maximum level of the target is 14. The cost is the target's level (minimum 1) \times 125 gp. The interval becomes 6 months, and spending Mythic Points increases it to 30 years.

Heightened (7th) The maximum level of the target is 16. The cost is the target's level (minimum 1) \times 200 gp. The interval becomes 1 year, and spending Mythic Points increases it to 50 years.

Heightened (8th) The maximum level of the target is 18. The cost is the target's level (minimum 1) \times 300 gp. The interval becomes 2 years, and spending Mythic Points increases it to 100 years.

Heightened (9th) The maximum level of the target is 20. The cost is the target's level (minimum 1) \times 600 gp. The interval becomes 5 years, and spending Mythic Points increases it to 200 years.

NEW EQUIPMENT

The following gear can be found in "Death Sails a Wine-Dark Sea."

HYDRA HEAD CLUB

ITEM 6

RARE MAGICAL

Price 225 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This spine and skull of a slain hydra has been picked clean by a carrion bird and crafted into this +1 *striking club*. In addition to its normal traits, the *hydra head club* also has the modular P trait, as it can be manipulated to cause the jaws to spring open. Even in death, its head twitches independently. The creature's famed regenerative powers are still present, despite the creature's death; if damaged, the *hydra head club* repairs itself at the rate of 1 Hit Point per minute, unless it has been completely destroyed.

Activate-Reactive Snap \diamond (attack) **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** You attempt a Strike as a Reaction; **Effect** The *hydra head club* snaps with a momentary burst of its former glory. Your Strike attempt deals an additional 1d6 damage. If your Strike misses, the activation does not count against the *hydra head club*'s activation frequency.

Craft Requirements You must supply a skull and spine of a hydra when crafting this weapon.

PROTECTOR'S FINAL GIFT

ITEM 5

RARE MAGICAL POISON

Price 150 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk 1

Within hives of giant bees, some become protectors of their hive and etch runes onto their stingers via dance. Upon such a bee's death, its stinger can be removed from its body and used as +1 *striking rapier*, though a hilt often needs to be attached for skilled swordsmanship. The imbued magic allows the stinger to slowly renew a small bit of its venom supply. The wielder can gather this and deliver it during a Strike. The victim is made to see prophetic flashes of their future as it courses through their system.

Activate—Apiprophecy Sting ◆ (manipulate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The *protector's final gift* secretes apiprophecy venom, which coats the blade and affects the next creature successfully struck with the blade within the next minute.

Apiprophecy Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 20 Will; **Maximum Duration** 4 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 mental damage and dazzled

VORTEX POUCH

ITEM 6

RARE AIR MAGICAL MYTHIC

Price 240 gp

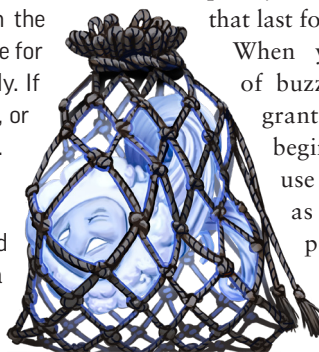
Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk —

When empty, the *vortex pouch's* net seems too loose to hold much. However, when used to catch the wind, it stretches to hold the air. With nowhere for the wind to go, the air inside it swirls violently. If the caught wind includes a storm, clouds, fog, or similar effect, it's visible among the whirlwind.

Activate—Catch Wind ◆◆ (air, manipulate)

Requirements The *vortex pouch* is empty;

Effect You gather the nearby air and wind within the *vortex pouch*. Creatures within a 20-foot emanation must attempt a DC 20 Fortitude save or be moved 5 feet closer toward you as the air rushes into the pouch. Targets that critically fail the save are moved 10 feet. You can Sustain the activation once per round, up to 1 minute, to continue Catching Wind. If you spend a Mythic Point when Catching Wind, the *vortex pouch* gathers air in a 10-mile radius; though the vortex is only strong enough to forcibly suck in creatures within the original 20-foot emanation, weaker creatures with the air trait and creatures associated with the sky in the 10-mile radius will know your general direction and feel a sense of unease, granting you a +2 status bonus to Intimidation checks against those creatures for 1 week. When you end the activation, the *vortex pouch* becomes 1 Bulk and you can empty it using Release Wind.



Vortex Pouch

Activate—Release Wind ◆◆ (air, manipulate)

Requirements The *vortex pouch* contains air or wind;

Effect Wind rushes out of the *vortex pouch* in a 30-foot cone. All creatures in the cone take 8d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 20 basic Fortitude save). Creatures that fail their saving throw are pushed 5 feet away from you; creatures that critically fail are pushed 10 feet. If the caught wind included weather that might deal a different type of damage, Release Wind deals this damage instead (for instance, dealing electricity damage if it caught a thundercloud or cold damage if it caught a blizzard).

NEW EXEMPLAR OPTIONS

New Dominion Epithets

These dominion epithets are available to all exemplars but are especially relevant to accomplishments made during the *Myth-Speaker* Adventure Path.

Plunderer of the Hive's Riches

You take what's yours, even if an army should stand in your way. You gain the Energized Spark (*War of Immortals* 35) feat, with your choice of either poison or sonic damage. When you critically succeed at a Strike, the taste of honey fills your mouth as you plunder part of your foe's vitality for yourself, gaining temporary Hit Points equal to half the creature's level that last for 1 minute.

When you Spark Transcendence, a mass of buzzing insects fill the air around you, granting you concealment until the beginning of your next turn. You can't use this concealment to Hide or Sneak, as normal for concealment when your position is still obvious.

Trespasser in Death's Realm

You slide through death's realm, not caring that death is jealous of those who escape. You gain the Energized

Spark feat (*War of Immortals* page 35), with your choice of either vitality or void damage. When you critically succeed at a Strike, you pull your target closer to death from your stolen connection. The target must attempt a Will saving against your class DC. On a failure, they become enfeebled 1 for 1 minute. This has the curse trait.

When you Spark Transcendence, your divine spark draws part of death closer to you. Until the start of your next turn, any living enemy that starts it turns adjacent to you or enters a space adjacent to you takes 1d6 void damage.

NEW EXEMPLAR FEATS

The following feats reflect the mighty deeds and accomplishments of Ibydan hero-gods.

FOLLOW THE THREADS OF FATE ♦

FEAT 4

UNCOMMON EXEMPLAR FORTUNE IKON

Usage imbued into a worn ikon made of cloth or a weapon ikon with a tassel, wrapping, or similar feature.

A norn's thread—spun from fate itself—runs through or wraps around your ikon.

Transcendence—Unravel the Future ♦ (fortune, transcendence) You pluck a single thread from your ikon, which ties itself in three loops about your wrist, where it remains for the next minute. If you fail an attack roll or skill check, and a +1 status bonus would change your failure into a success or your success into a critical success, you gain a +1 status bonus to this check retroactively, changing the outcome appropriately as the thread pulls you to the future you desire. The thread then falls from your wrist. You can have only one thread in existence at a time.

TOPPLE THE TITANS ♦

FEAT 4

UNCOMMON EXEMPLAR

Frequency Once per minute

Requirements Your previous action was a successful or critically successful Trip against a creature at least one size larger than you, and the enemy became prone.

Even the greatest titans of the world are easier to kill when they're lying on the ground. You've made it your mission to topple such giants and can make others fall with a force that shakes the very earth. The triggering creature's toppling body shakes the ground, emitting a quake in a 10-foot emanation from their space. Apply the result of your triggering Athletics check against the Reflex DC of each creature in the emanation to Trip them as well. You do not need to have a hand free, and you do not lose your balance if any of your attempts to Trip are a critical failure.

RIDDLE THE SPHINX

FEAT 6

UNCOMMON EXEMPLAR IKON

Usage imbued into a body ikon

You've learned the secrets of the sphinx's riddles and empowered your ikon with them. You can voice these mysteries, forcing others to overcome them as you did.

Transcendence—Tangle in Riddle ♦ (auditory, mental, transcendence) You speak a bizarre koan that transcends language and is understood by only one creature within 30 feet. The target must attempt a Will save against your class DC. It's then immune to this ability for 1 hour.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is stupefied 1 for 1 round.

Failure The target is stupefied 1 for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Failure The target is stupefied 1 and confused for 1d4 rounds.

SHIELD OF STONE

FEAT 6

UNCOMMON EXEMPLAR IKON

Usage imbued into the *mirror aegis*

You stole a gorgon's gaze and trapped it in your ikon. You've learned how to brandish it for your advantage, subduing the rage of the trapped gaze by turning it on your enemies.

Transcendence—Brandish the Gorgon's Gaze ♦ (earth, transcendence, visual) **Effect** You Raise your *mirrored aegis*, though it seems to lose some of its usual luster in favor of the dull sheen of stone. If you Shield Block a melee attack with the *mirrored aegis* before the beginning of your next turn, the gorgon's eyes upon it flash at the triggering creature, who must attempt a Fortitude save against your class DC. On a failure, they are slowed 1 for 1 minute as their body partially petrifies. Regardless of the outcome, that creature is temporarily immune to this effect for 24 hours.

AS A THOUSAND SOLDIERS ♦♦

FEAT 8

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE DIVINE EXEMPLAR POLYMORPH

Prerequisites plunderer of the hive's riches

Frequency once per hour

Though you may have stolen from the hive, you've nothing but respect for the armies guarding it, and you borrow their strength to overwhelm your foes. Your body transforms into a swarm of bees. You Fly up to twice your Speed; during this movement you can pass through any space that would be small enough for a single insect, and your movement does not trigger reactions. If you pass through an enemy's space, you can inflict a storm of stings that deals 3d4 piercing damage and 3d4 poison damage, with a basic Reflex save against your class DC. At the end of your movement, you return to your original form. At 10th level and every two levels thereafter, the damage increases by 1d4 piercing damage and 1d4 poison damage.

FORWARD GAZE INTO LIFE ♦♦

FEAT 8

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE DIVINE EXEMPLAR VITALITY VOID

Prerequisites trespasser in death's realm

Frequency once per hour

Despite the constant cold of death at your back, you keep your gaze forward into the realm of life. You release two 15-foot cones, aimed exactly opposite each other, one ahead of you that deals 5d10 vitality damage and one behind you that deals 5d10 void damage, each with a basic Reflex save against your class DC. Creatures that critically fail also take 5 persistent damage, of the same damage type dealt.

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PHILOSOPHICAL ZEAL

With each philosophical victory, these asuras increasingly wrestle with their own thoughts, recognizing that they're as vulnerable to self-delusion as their victims. This can drive a pyrkaion to ravenous fits of reading and research before jealously sequestering the texts.

Sometimes a pyrkaion with an inflated ego instead seeks and loses debates, craving the sting of humility to recenter their thoughts.

ASURA, PYRKAION

Reality is imperfect, yet many mortals focus on their world's virtues while refusing to address its failures. A pyrkaion believes mortal delusion is the last wall propping up a broken universe, and wisdom is the pickaxe that will tear it down. Pyrkaions vacillate between teaching mortals enough to wither from indulgent self-awareness and shredding their students' institutions through insidious interrogation that leads to infighting as the asura watches.

PYRKAION

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON MEDIUM ASURA SPIRIT UNHOLY

Perception +18, darkvision

Languages Common, Diabolic; telepathy 60 feet

Skills Academia Lore +18, Athletics +16, Diplomacy +16, Intimidation +16, Occultism +16, Religion +18

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

AC 27; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +18

HP 132; **Immunities** curses; **Weaknesses** holy 8; **Resistance** mental 8

Aura of Sophistry (aura, divine, mental) 40 feet. The pyrkaion hones others' thoughts, enabling extraordinary reasoning or ruinous revelation. If the pyrkaion has the holy trait (see Glorious Visage below), all allied creatures within the aura gain a +1 status bonus to checks to Recall Knowledge and resistance 4 to mental damage. If the pyrkaion has the unholy trait, all unallied creatures in the area take a -1 penalty to checks to Recall Knowledge and gain the effects of the Dubious Knowledge feat when Recalling Knowledge; whenever an affected creature Recalls Knowledge, they become stupefied 1 and gain weakness 4 to mental damage for 1d4 rounds.

Witty Reversal (linguistic) **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet uses a linguistic or mental effect; **Effect** The pyrkaion attempts to counteract the effect (counteract rank 4, counteract modifier +16). If successful, the pyrkaion can choose to corrupt the effect, dealing 2d6 persistent mental damage to the triggering effect's targets unless those targets succeed at a DC 26 Will save.

Speed 25 feet

Melee (claw) +18 (agile, unholy), **Damage** 2d8+8 slashing

Melee (tusk) +18 (unholy), **Damage** 2d10+8 piercing

Ranged (riddle) +20 (agile, mental, range 60 feet), **Damage** 3d8 mental plus 1d6 persistent mental damage

Glorious Visage The asura sanctifies themselves as either holy or unholy, gaining the trait corresponding to their choice and losing the opposing trait; their strikes, spells, and abilities also gain the trait corresponding to their choice. The asura also gains weakness 8 to the opposing sanctification and loses any weakness to its chosen sanctification. The choice is permanent until the asura uses this ability to change their sanctification.

Insidious Query (auditory, linguistic) The pyrkaion questions a creature within 40 feet, who must attempt a DC 26 Will save.

Critical Success The creature becomes immune for 1 hour.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure If the creature doesn't Recall Knowledge by the end of its next turn, it becomes confused for 1 round.

Critical Failure As failure, but until the end of their next turn, the creature also takes 2d6 mental damage when Recalling Knowledge.

FORGOTTEN DEAD

Amneros, the underworld that houses the spirits of those who die in Ibydos, is a home to countless shades. While there, the memories of their lives are slowly washed away until they completely forget who they were. It's only at this point the spirits fade from Amneros and join the River of Souls as they head to Pharasma's judgment.

Most of the shades in the underworld grimly accept this reality. They spend their days exploring the vast city, speaking with other shades who share their predicament, and eventually come to terms with the end of their mortal lives.

Those few who lived exemplary lives are granted access to the Glades of Euphoria and experience something close to paradise. Others who spent their mortal days performing evil deeds find themselves suffering punishment in Bothrios until they can be released into the city of Amnaia. A few, however, are so filled with dread at the loss of their memories that they refuse to acquiesce to such a fate.

These desperate shades spend much of their time in the Marshes of Memory, a quagmire of tangled echoes of the past that have been washed away by the moat surrounding Amnaia. Lurking in the marshes, the dead spirits frantically search for their own washed-away memories, but occasionally they attack newcomers to the underworld in hopes of stealing new memories to fill the holes in their own existence. Even if stolen memories are incongruent with their own lived experience, having something to recall is better than annihilation. These shades are dubbed "forgotten dead" by the other residents and are spoken of in guarded whispers.

The forgotten dead often find themselves captured by the guardians employed in Amneros and sent to Bothrios as punishment. Nevertheless, there are tales of forgotten dead who've become so successful at stealing the memories of others that they stave off rejoining the River of Souls for hundreds, even thousands, of years.

FORGOTTEN DEAD

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON MEDIUM SHADE

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +12, Deception +10, Stealth +12, Thievery +13

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +2, **Int** +4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3

AC 20; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

HP 65

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fist +13 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning plus memory lapse

Memory Lapse (mental); **Effect** The touch of a forgotten dead pulls away gossamer strands of their victim's memories. The target must attempt a DC 19 Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is stupefied 1 for 1 round.

Failure The target is stupefied 2 for 1 round, then stupefied 1 for 1 minute. Once the creature has become stupefied 1, the target can attempt another saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the stupefied condition, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each such save

Critical Failure As failure, but the target cannot attempt saving throws to end the condition.



MERCHANTS OF MEMORIES

Rumors speak of forgotten dead who collect memories from the marshes and resell them to other shades in exchange for favors. Some powerful hero-gods or practitioners of magic able to travel to the underworld actively seek out such merchants in the hopes of uncovering long-lost magic or ancient secrets. In the Koinon, a carefully guarded museum in Bailax, there sits a small silver coffer with pearl runes that reputedly holds a number of memories gained in just such a fashion.



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HONEY AND MEDICINE

The honey produced by bees possesses several properties that make it useful for the treatment of wounds. It helps prevent infection and inflammation, and many folk remedies make use of it. The honey of gigantic bees, being infused with mythic power, is an even more potent healing aid. A character who manages to get their hands on such a substance heals 1 extra point of damage when using it as part of a successful Treat Wounds skill check.

GIGANTIC BEE

The honeybee is industrious and generally quite gentle. Following an upwelling of mythic power, however, a number of bee colonies found themselves transformed into gigantic specimens, along with the fields where they harvest nectar. These bees act mostly as they did prior to the infusion of mythic power, except they're far better able to defend themselves and their hives.

Gigantic Bee Borer

Parasites come in a wide variety of types and are usually highly specialized. Bee borers are one such parasite. An infestation of bee borers can cause the collapse of a honeybee colony within a single season, devastating the harvest and local economy. Occasionally, however, some magical mishap transforms these animals into much larger, aggressive versions. With bigger bodies to feed, these parasites are soon forced to feed upon any prey they can latch onto.

BEE BORER

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON TINY ANIMAL MINDLESS

Perception +11; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12

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

AC 18; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

HP 40; **Immunities** mental

Speed 20 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ chelicerae +12, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing plus attach

Attach When a bee borer hits a target larger than itself, its legs attach it to that creature. While attached, the bee borer moves with the creature. The bee borer and the creature it's attached to are both off-guard. The borer remains attached until the creature dies or Escapes (DC 19).

Drain Fat ♦ **Requirements** The bee borer is attached to a living creature.

Effect The bee borer uses its chelicerae to suck fat from the creature it's attached to. This deals 1d8+4 damage. A creature that has its fat drained by a blood borer is drained 1 until it receives healing (of any kind or amount).

Gigantic Bee Drone

Honeybee drones have a single role in most hives: to mate with a queen. Gigantic bee drones, however, also work as defenders of the nest. Although they lack stingers, their mythic mandibles can do remarkable damage.

GIGANTIC BEE DRONE

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON LARGE ANIMAL

Perception +12; darkvision

Skills Athletics +12

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3

AC 20; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +7

HP 60; **Weaknesses** smoke susceptibility

Smoke Susceptibility A gigantic bee drone is slowed 1 for 1 round if it starts its turn in smoke.

Speed 20 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +12, **Damage** 2d8+5 piercing plus Grab

Lift and Drop ♦♦ **Requirements** A Medium or smaller creature is grabbed or restrained in the gigantic bee drone's mandibles; **Effect** The gigantic

bee drone Flies up to its Speed, taking the creature with it, then drops the creature, who takes falling damage as normal.

Gigantic Bee Guard

These specialized worker bees investigate danger, protect the hive, and attack intruders. They're particularly sensitive to the pheromones of their colony and respond quickly to threats.

GIGANTIC BEE GUARD

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON LARGE ANIMAL

Perception +14; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 50 feet

Skills Athletics +12

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** -5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

AC 21; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

HP 60; **Weaknesses** smoke susceptibility

Smoke Susceptibility A gigantic bee guard is slowed 1 for 1 round if it starts its turn in smoke.

Speed 20 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +13 (agile), **Damage** 2d4+4 piercing

Melee ♦ stinger +13, **Damage** 2d6+4 piercing plus gigantic bee venom

Bee Line ♦♦ **Requirements** An ally is adjacent to a foe; **Effect** The gigantic guardian bee Flies up to twice its Speed in a straight line and makes a stinger Strike against the foe.

Gigantic Bee Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 18 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 4 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison damage (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison damage and sickened 1 (1 round)

Gigantic Bee Royal Guardian

Tasked with protecting the queen and her eggs, gigantic bee royal guardians are even larger than most others in the nest. Their unusual anatomy gives them the ability to project a stream of venom from their stingers, and unlike their kin, they're unaffected by smoke.

GIGANTIC BEE ROYAL GUARDIAN

CREATURE 6

RARE HUGE ANIMAL

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

Skills Athletics +13

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

AC 23; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

HP 115

Reactive Strike ↻

Speed 20 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +17 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ stinger +17, **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing plus gigantic bee royal guardian venom

Ranged ♦ venom stream +15 (poison, range 15 feet), **Effect** target is exposed to gigantic bee royal guardian venom

Gigantic Bee Royal Guardian Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 22 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 4 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d8 poison damage (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d8 poison damage and sickened 1 (1 round)

Targeted Sting ♦ **Requirements** A Large or smaller creature is grabbed or restrained in the gigantic bee royal guardian's mandibles; **Effect** The gigantic bee royal guardian makes a stinger Strike at the target. On a hit, it deals an extra 1d6 precision damage on a hit.



OTHER GIANT PARASITES

With the sudden infusion of mythic energy in Iblydos, the danger of giant versions of parasitic creatures is a very real threat. Increased size usually means increased appetite, and such creatures pose a danger not just to adventurers but livestock as well. Giant ticks, for instance, have long been a danger in the deepest wilderness, and now there are reports of housecat-sized fleas and lice.

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FIRE GIANT FRIENDS

With their ability to crawl through small areas and an understanding of how to clean out blockages and slag, lava spitters have developed a symbiotic relationship with fire giants in their settlements. The giants appreciate the work the creatures do and have little fear of being harmed by them, while the lava spitters are happy to frolic in the giants' forges. Some fire giants even keep the little creatures as pets. It has become the height of fashion among fire giant royalty to have lava spitters curl around their fingers like rings.

LAVA SPITTER

The archipelago of Iblydos is quite geologically active, with sinkholes, volcanoes, and lava fissures pockmarking many of the islands. The island's more industrious inhabitants have created methods to tap into this power to heat their cities and water supply. Unfortunately, these public works require a level of maintenance not every city-state can afford or has the engineering acumen to perform successfully. In addition, several ancient city-state governments that employed such technology failed long ago, leaving behind sprawling networks of pipes and tunnels that either no longer function or are on the precipice of failure. When these systems fail, the result is often catastrophic to any living creatures in the area, not to mention to the overall infrastructure and civic property.

To combat this, a group of engineer-minded hero-gods tried to develop mechanical creatures that could not only survive the tremendous heat in these networks but feed on it. They imagined deploying these constructs into damaged geothermal systems where they could repair the structures and be used again. They designed the constructs with serpentine bodies to easily move about the narrow pipes and tunnels. That the constructs could consume and be fueled by the dangerous debris they cleared was a bonus intended to maintain the network of tunnels so they didn't fall into disrepair.

A few of these constructs operate as intended, but many rebelled against their creators, causing massive damage to any place where they were deployed. Dubbed lava spitters, these constructs now roam the pipes and tunnels beneath cities, their red-hot bellies scorching the ground wherever they crawl.

LAVA SPITTER

CREATURE 4

RARE **SMALL** **CONSTRUCT** **ELEMENTAL** **FIRE**

Perception +11; darkvision, smoke vision

Languages Pyric

Skills Acrobatics +12, Stealth +10

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

Smoke Vision The lava spitter ignores the concealed condition from smoke.

AC 20; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

HP 60, fiery healing; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, fire, healing, mental, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, spirit, unconscious, vitality, void; **Weaknesses** cold 5, water 5

Fiery Healing If a lava spitter is in contact with lava or an area of equivalent heat, it gains fast healing 5

Too Hot to Handle A creature that successfully grapples or hits a lava spitter with an unarmed attack takes 3d6 fire damage (DC 20 basic Reflex save).

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +13 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+3 piercing plus 2 persistent fire

Ranged ♦ lava spit +13 (range 20 feet), **Damage** 2d8+1 fire plus 2 persistent fire

Spew Lava ♦ (fire, primal) The lava spitter expels a 15-foot cone of lava, dealing 5d6 fire damage to every creature within the cone (DC 20 basic Reflex save). This area becomes hazardous terrain for 1 minute. A creature takes 2 fire damage each time it moves into one of these squares.

The lava spitter then can't Spew Lava for 1d4 rounds.

MINOTAUR

As the birthplace of the legendary first minotaur Tavdrinos, Iblydos is still home to many varieties of minotaurs not found elsewhere in the world. Among these are firehoof minotaurs, large creatures who are fused with elemental, sometimes even infernal fire. Firehoof minotaurs are known for their fierce tempers and skill at combat. Instead of mazes, they prefer to fill an area with smoke and stalk their prey while they're hazily visible.

FIREHOOF MINOTAUR

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON LARGE BEAST FIRE HUMANOID

Perception +16; darkvision, smoke vision

Languages Common, Jotun, Pyric

Skills Athletics +17, Intimidation +14, Stealth +14, Survival +16 (perfect orienteering)

Str +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items +1 greataxe

Perfect Orienteering A minotaur automatically critically succeeds at Survival checks to Sense Direction or Track.

Smoke Vision Smoke doesn't impair a firehoof minotaur's vision; they ignore the concealed condition from smoke.

AC 24; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14

HP 140; **Resistances** fire 10; **Weaknesses** cold 10

Fiery Blood **Trigger** A creature scores a critical hit on the firehoof minotaur; **Effect** The firehoof minotaur's splashes its fire-infused blood onto the creature and deals 2d6 fire damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save).

Speed 25 feet

Melee **greataxe** +18 (magical, reach 10 feet, sweep), **Damage** 1d12+6 slashing plus 2d6 fire

Melee **horn** +17, **Damage** 2d8+10 piercing

Belch Smoke **Fire** (fire) The firehoof minotaur takes a huge breath, then belches a cloud of smoke, filling a 40-foot cone. All creatures within the smoke cloud become concealed, and all creatures outside the smoke become concealed to creatures within it. The smoke dissipates after 1d4 rounds, and the firehoof minotaur can't Belch Smoke again until the smoke clears.

Fire Stomp **Fire** (fire) The firehoof minotaur vigorously stomps the ground with a hoof, releasing an explosion of fire in a 10-foot emanation that deals 4d6 fire damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save).

Hazy Fear **Fire** The firehoof minotaur snorts and stomps fire as they hunt their prey, inspiring terror. The minotaur makes an Intimidation check to Demoralize all living creatures within 60 feet who can hear the minotaur but not clearly see them (whether the minotaur is concealed, hidden, or undetected). Roll once and apply the result to all creatures. If the targets have their vision effected by smoke or a similar effect, the minotaur gains a +4 circumstance bonus to this check. Each target is temporarily immune for 10 minutes.



MAZES AND LABYRINTHS

Although they're often used interchangeably, the terms maze and labyrinth have slightly different meanings. While a labyrinth has a single path to the center, a maze has multiple ones. Minotaurs see this distinction as vital and symbolic of free will versus fixed fate. Some traditionalist minotaurs see life as having one path: to follow in the footsteps of Tavdrinos. They believe there's no escape from this. But most minotaurs prefer to see life as a maze where one must choose the best way forward.

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GUARDIAN CREATION

To protect the vulnerable shades of Amneros, Amnerion created specialized guardians adapted to the particular environment of their realm. These creatures, called stygian guardians, serve primarily as deterrent against unwelcome visitors, although they're sometimes tasked with capturing or redirecting wandering shades.

STYGIAN GUARDIAN

Places in the afterlife are constantly under threat from those who seek the souls of the deceased for their own uses. Most realms in the Outer Sphere, however, have denizens who are tasked with guarding against such threat. Although psychopomps are best known for this task, even demons greedily protect the souls hoarded in the Outer Rifts. Other pockets of reality, such as Amneros, house great numbers of shades with fewer defenses aside from the ruler of the realm itself.

Eumenid

While the keribos (page 87) proved effective at protecting shades against those who traveled to Amneros to steal away souls, they weren't enough of a deterrent to prevent larger incursions. In response, Amnerion created eumenids for a new purpose: to track down and punish those who invaded and stole souls or memories from Amneros. Driven by a deep protectiveness of the shades, they react with fury against any who would do them harm. Able to follow their quarry across dimensional boundaries, eumenids track down their targets or speak words of vengeance no matter the distance.

Eumenids can be found in the skies of Amneros, constantly on the lookout for danger to the shades. They're occasionally tasked to capture a shade who has become a problem or wandered off. Most eumenids appear to be feathery-winged humans outfitted in leather armor.

EUMENID

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON MEDIUM MONITOR

Perception +18; darkvision, lifesense 60 feet

Languages Common, Chthonian, Empyrean

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +14, Intimidation +13, Survival +15 (+18 to track)


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

Items +1 spiked chain, bola


Unerring Tracker A eumenid can Track at its full speed and treats all results of Survival checks to Track as one degree of success better.


AC 24; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +17, **Will** +13

HP 80


Trip Quarry  **Trigger** The eumenid's quarry uses a move action within reach of the eumenid's spiked chain; **Effect** The eumenid Trips the creature.

Speed 30 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee  *spiked chain* +17 (disarm, finesse, magical, reach 15 feet, trip), **Damage** 1d8+4 slashing plus 2d6 spirit

Ranged  *bola* +16 (nonlethal, ranged trip, range 20 feet, thrown), **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 24, **7th interplanar teleport** (self only; no planar key required for Amneros and the plane the quarry is on)

Designate Quarry  (concentrate, mental) The eumenid designates a single creature as their quarry and focuses their attention on that creature. The eumenid must be able to see or hear the creature, or they must be tracking it. As long as the eumenid has the creature as their quarry, the eumenid gains telepathy with that creature with unlimited range, even between planes. Each day, the quarry can attempt a DC 24 Will save; a success breaks the connection and makes the creature immune to that eumenid's Designate Quarry for 24 hours. The eumenid can only have one quarry at any given time.

Stretching Chain In the hands of a eumenid, any spiked chain has a reach of 15 feet.

Taunt Quarry ♦ (detection, divine, emotion, fear, mental) **Frequency** once per day; **Requirement** The eumenid has Designated a Quarry; **Effect** Using their telepathy, the eumenid mentally harangues and threatens their quarry, who must attempt a DC 24 Will save.

Critical Success The quarry is unaffected.

Success The quarry is frightened 1. The eumenid learns on what plane the quarry is on.

Failure The quarry is frightened 2. The eumenid learns the quarry's rough location, accurate to within 10 miles.

Critical Failure The quarry is frightened 3 and off-guard for as long as it is frightened. The eumenid also learns the quarry's exact location.

Keribos

The most common stygian guardian, a keribos resembles a heavily built dog or wolf with reddish-brown fur, a wide head with a row of six or more eyes, and six legs. When they're not on alert, they're playful with the shades of the underworld and eager to be petted. If they sense trouble, however, their true nature becomes much more obvious as their broad faces separate, revealing multiple heads filled with sharp teeth. Most keribos have three heads, but they can have up to five. The warning growl of a keribos is enough to send most shades running for shelter, and their baying draws the attention of any nearby stygian guardians.

KERIBOS

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON LARGE BEAST MONITOR

Perception +18; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common (can't speak)

Skills Athletics +15, Intimidation +13, Survival +13 (+16 to track)

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

AC 23; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

HP 100

Reactive Strike ↻

Speed 35 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +16, **Damage** 2d8+5 piercing plus Grab

Chorus of Baying ♦♦ (auditory, emotion, fear, mental) The keribos' heads howl together in a discordant chorus. Every non-keribos within a 30-foot emanation takes 6d6 mental damage and must attempt a DC 21 Will save. After the save, the creature is temporarily immune to all Choruses of Baying for 24 hours.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature takes full damage and is frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage and is frightened 2.

Vicious Mauling ♦♦ The keribos makes a number of Strikes up to its number of heads, each against a different target. These attacks count toward the keribos' multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after the keribos makes all its attacks.

Worry ♦ **Requirements** A Medium or smaller creature is grabbed or restrained in the keribos's jaws; **Effect** The keribos vigorously shakes the creature and deals 2d6+5 piercing damage (DC 21 basic Fortitude save).



OTHER STYGIAN GUARDIANS

While keribos and eumenids are the most frequently encountered stygian guardians, they're far from the only ones. Amnerion also created multi-armed giants called thalisons to carry out jobs requiring great strength and serve as protectors of their palace, although these giants spend most of their time melded into the cavern walls. Within Bothrios, horrid half-mantis, half-scorpion creatures called scynoxthis mete out punishments to the wicked.



Eumenid

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AMNERION

Mythic Ruler of Iblydos's Underworld

Like eddies swirling in a ship's wake, mighty giants known as gigas arose from the titans' footsteps and feats. Such a gigas also coalesced from the Sangeh's blood when Gorum-inflicted wounds felled her among the Iblydan isles. Born of violence, this particular gigas's first thoughts were filled with terror. They dove deep beneath the waves to escape, letting the currents guide them to safety as they drifted in and out of consciousness. Sangeh's blood hadn't only formed the gigas; it had also eaten a figurative hole in reality, sweeping the gigas along the River of Souls and ultimately to a recess in Pharamasma's Spire.

The stark, bone-white realm instinctively offended this gigas, whose very body had formed from the blood of the titan of artistry. Such a canvas needed beauty. They set to expanding and beautifying the space, at the same time experimenting with a name for themselves before settling on Amnerion. As souls of Iblydan dead drifted to the cavern, caught up in the same pathway Amnerion had traveled, the gigas recruited the shades in myriad building projects to create a wondrous afterlife realm. The population swelled, the realm grew, Amnerion's mythic power seeped into the rock, and adoring shades called their new home Amneros in their ruler's honor.

However, the paradise escaped neither conflict nor notice. The first threat came from rebellious shades whose mortal lives had been ruled by malice and vice. They began reliving their old crimes among Amneros's unsuspecting populace and (worst of all) vandalizing the realm's public art. Furious, Amnerion banished them to a far corner of their realm, which they gradually reinforced to ensure the troublemakers wouldn't escape.

Next came the hags, who curiously followed the wayward souls that veered down a hitherto unknown rivulet of the River of Souls. Greedily, they raided Amneros. Unable to defend all their city's fronts, Amnerion recruited a militia of shades, shaping them into powerful guardians, like the keribos and eumenids, to chase off invaders. The clashes then attracted an even stronger force: Pharamasma herself.

Compared to the number of souls traveling to

her for final judgement, the number who migrated instead to Amneros was miniscule. Over time, however, Pharamasma's agents discovered and tracked down the discrepancy. Deeming it worthy of her personal attention, Pharamasma manifested an avatar in Amnerion's throne room. The gigas had imagined such a moment would come and knew they could not withstand the Lady of Graves through force. Amnerion instead proposed a compromise: allow the souls of Iblydos to spend time in Amneros until their memories faded. They could then rejoin the River of Souls—their time was a diversion from the flow of that body, not a destination. It was, by this time, a thriving part of Iblydos' belief systems, after all, and to disrupt it would be traumatic. Pharamasma would still receive the souls eventually.

Pharamasma saw merit in this compromise, but made a further condition: Amnerion could not leave their realm nor could souls from outside Iblydos rest there. The gigas agreed to not leave as long as they could remain there as lord until their work was done. Pharamasma, perhaps amused, but certainly uninterested in a time-wasting conflict, agreed. Amnerion could not die until the last shade left Amneros. She even agreed to divert a trickle of the River Styx from the base of her spire in the Boneyard to form a moat at the city's gates. While this meant the souls would move on faster than they'd planned, Amnerion knew they weren't in any position to push farther.

Today Amnerion continues to do the work they have for so long, assisting shades in the transition to death and helping them let go of their lives, all while sheltering them from outside invaders.

AMNERION

CREATURE 22

UNIQUE GARGANTUAN GIGAS HUMANOID MYTHIC

Perception +43; darkvision, lisesense 100 feet, truesight

Languages Common, Chthonian, Diabolic, Empyrean, Requian; truespeech

Skills Arcana +37, Athletics +43, Crafting +44, Diplomacy +37, Iblydos Lore +45, Intimidation +40, Occultism +42, Religion, +42, Society +40

Str +11, **Dex** +8, **Con** +10, **Int** +6, **Wis** +10, **Cha** +6

Items +3 ghost touch major striking trident

AC 48, mythic defenses (*War of Immortals* 168); **Fort** +39, **Ref** +33, **Will** +36; mythic resilience (*Fort and Will*)

HP 540; imprisoned immortality, mythic resistance 11; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, poison

Imprisoned Immortality If killed or otherwise permanently incapacitated (such as petrified), Amnerion returns to life and appears on their throne, fully healed with all conditions removed and with full uses of their spells and abilities 24 hours later. Only if all the shades in Amneros are gone can Amnerion be permanently killed.

Master of Amneros While in Amneros, Amnerion can command the realm's very environment and architecture to animate, twist, and defend them. This allows them to make living architecture Strikes. In addition, Amnerion can Take Cover as a free action once per round, willing nearby obstacles to stretch and shield them from harm.

Reactive Strike

Speed 35 feet; realm step

Melee ♦ trident +42 (reach 20 feet, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 4d8+24 piercing

Melee ♦ fist +39 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d10+24

Ranged ♦ living architecture +39 (agile, range 500 feet), **Damage** 4d8+22 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 47, attack+37; **10th** freeze time; **9th** manifestation, overwhelming presence (at will), unfathomable song; **8th** canticle of everlasting grief, disappearance (at will; self only), spirit song (*Pathfinder Player Core* 2 252), unrelenting observation (at will, within Amneros only); **Constant (5th)** truespeech

Call Upon the Dead ♦♦♦ Amnerion calls out for aid from their subjects, whose spirits appear and strike all enemies within a 60-foot burst. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 47 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature takes 4d8 spirit damage.

Success As critical success and the creature is drained 1.

Failure The creature takes 8d8 spirit damage and is drained 2.

Critical Failure The creature takes 12d8 spirit damage, is drained 2, and is doomed 1.

Mythic Power 3 Mythic Points. These abilities are further detailed on page 168 of *War of Immortals*.

• **Mythic Skill** ♦ **Cost** 1 Mythic Point; Crafting or Occultism

• **Recharge** ♦ (concentrate) **Cost** 1 Mythic Point; **Effect** Amnerion regains one spell.

• **Remove a Condition** ♦ (concentrate) **Cost** 1 Mythic Point; **Effect** Amnerion ends one condition affecting them.

• **Undying Myth** ♦ **Cost** All Amnerion's Mythic Points; **Trigger** Amnerion would die and has at least 1 Mythic Point; **Effect** They remain conscious and regain 270 HP.

Punish Soul ♦♦ (teleportation) Amnerion moves up to twice their speed and makes a melee Strike against a target within reach. If the attack hits, it does no damage

and the creature must attempt a DC 48 Will save.

Critical Success The target is stunned 2.

Success The target is stunned 4.

Failure The target is immediately teleported to a prison cell in Bothros, the place of punishment in Amneros.

Critical Failure As failure and the creature is stunned 2 for 1 hour.

Realm Step ♦♦♦ (teleportation) Amnerion disappears and reappears instantaneously at any location within Amneros. They can then immediately Seek, Step, Stride, or Recall Knowledge, typically in response to whatever awaits them at their destination.

Self-Imprisoned Amnerion cannot leave Amneros, nor can they be forced or compelled to depart by any means until either they receive Pharamasma's permission or there are no more shades in Amneros.



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NESHKEFRU

Eccentric Oracle

Neshkefru has lived for at least 800 years, but she claims to remember times even older. To those who bother to listen, she says she was born on a small, unnamed island in the Iblydos archipelago, but at other times has said she is from the deep deserts of Casmaron or under one of the pyramids of Osirion. The truth is, even Neshkefru doesn't recall exactly where she spent her earliest years. Instead, her oldest memories are a tangle of her experiences, stories she's heard, and her travels.

Born with a powerful gift of prophecy, Neshkefru became a favorite advisor sought out by various budding hero-gods for clues to their futures and instructions for greatness. She enjoyed the attention from these seekers, coyly testing them, dropping hints and suggestions of further truth before demanding a steep price for her wisdom. Most often her payment was something unique to the giver or at least an object with an interesting story. After bargaining, she would usually say what she had foreseen. Sometimes she instead killed and ate these would-be rulers, especially when she saw they were fated to have little consequence in the world. On such occasions the sphinx would later contemplate whether her own actions had been fated too, although she never felt particularly concerned with such philosophical questions.

Over time, the name Neshkefru became known as a source of wisdom as well as danger. This suited her just fine. The added aura and mystery about her personality and actions kept all but the sincerest questioners away. Eventually, the sphinx found a comfortable home in the city-state of Pol-Xamne, where she collaborated with the local pantheon for several centuries by answering their occasional question, lecturing on history to students, and granting bits of prophecy as inspiration struck her—all in exchange for a secure lair and the city-state's resources in continuing her own research. During this time she developed a reputation as an eccentric fixture of the polis: she enjoyed perching atop the tallest buildings in town and pronouncing the fate of the citizens who walked by. As time went on, these proclamations became less prophetic and more jokingly performative, with Neshkefru finding

scholarly amusement in studying who changed their behavior based on her claims. Understandably, citizens learned to keep their distance and not pay her too much attention.

After numerous human lifetimes of learning, absorbing, and distributing information, she became an expert on matters of state. She foresaw the fall of Pol-Xamne long before its rulers did, not via prophesy but through close observation. At first she waited for city officials to ask her for advice—the growing problems seemed so obvious and pressing to her, after all.

Instead, caught up in their little games of power, the hero-gods and bureaucrats didn't see the signs. Neshkefru waited, smug satisfaction growing into eventual true concern and finally disgust at the behavior of the rulers. When the hero-god Basilios promised to travel to Amneros in 4524 AR and return with his wife Aneam's spirit, the sphinx saw the destruction that would follow that choice. Unable to wait any longer, she pronounced her Doom of Pol-Xamne and left the island kingdom. By now, however, it was too late. Basilios did not listen, and the island's fate was sealed.

Neshkefru fled Pol-Xamne for a time and traveled throughout Iblydos. It was during these travels that Aroden died in 4606 AR and the power of prophecy broke. With her own abilities so tied up in prophecy, this loss was shattering to the sphinx and damaged her memory considerably. The prophecies she'd pronounced became like chewed-out holes in her mind. While she still knew much of what had happened in the past, the loss of such a vital part of her personality and purpose further aggravated the already eccentric sphinx. She struggled to find a new guidepost to help navigate life. In the ruins of the past, she found it, serving not as the advisor to monarchs, but to the brave few who entered the remains of Pol-Xamne.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Neshkefru fits the supernatural guide archetype of classical mythology—a mystical, wise, yet dangerous sage comparable to Circe, Chiron, or the Graeae. The sphinx is the PCs' first step toward understanding and controlling their newfound mythic power. However,

the sphinx isn't easily impressed. She won't pass up on an interesting opportunity, though, so she presents a challenge to the PCs that will either end in edification or eradication. Both will disrupt her dreary solitude.

However, her first meeting with the PCs begins with an unfamiliar and painful rush of visions tangled in an incomprehensible web. While this isn't true prophecy as it existed before Aroden's death, it is a path for the PCs to follow in their own work of being hero-gods. The sphinx needs relief from the images just as much as the PCs need to find a solution to their mythic burden, so their goals align, at least initially.

If the PCs can't find all the pieces of history to ease the sphinx's pain, however, she becomes a highly dangerous adversary. Should Neshkefru survive, she could become a useful source of information—and perhaps even a cult member—in the future.

NESHKEFRU

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE LARGE BEAST HUMANOID

Perception +18; darkvision

Languages Common, Draconic, Sphinx; *truespeech*


Skills Arcana +17, Athletics +18, Bardic Lore +19, Deception +16, Diplomacy +16, Intimidation +18, Occultism +17

Str +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +4


Bardic Lore Sphinxes are naturally curious, and their love of puzzles and mysteries leads them to gather information on a broad range of topics. Neshkefru has Bardic Lore, a special Lore skill that can be used only to Recall Knowledge, but on any topic.

AC 27; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +19




HP 135

Prescient Pounce  **Trigger** A creature ends its movement within 30 feet of Neshkefru; **Effect** Neshkefru moves up to her speed to a location adjacent to the triggering creature and makes a Strike. This movement does not trigger reactions.

Speed 35 feet, fly 40 feet


Melee  **claw** +20 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+9 slashing

Occult Innate Spells DC 27; **4th** *clairaudience* (at will), *clairvoyance* (at will), *cleanse affliction*, *read omens*; **3rd** *dispel magic*, *locate*; **2nd** *see the unseen*; **Cantrips** (4th) *detect magic*; **Constant** (5th) *truespeech*

Claw Rake    Neshkefru rears back on her hind legs and makes two claw Strikes at the same target, using the same attack bonus as her

highest melee attack. If both attacks deal damage, the target takes extra damage equal to one claw Strike.

Riddler's Rune Once per week, Neshkefru can create a magical symbol as the *rune trap* ritual. She usually shapes it to take the form of a written riddle and sets the password to the answer. A creature that gives the wrong answer or tries to pass without answering must succeed at a DC 26 Will save or be affected by one of the following spells, chosen by the sphinx when creating the symbol: *synaptic pulse* (5th), *charm* (4th), *fear* (4th), *phantom pain* (4th), *sleep* (4th). The sphinx learns the identity of any creature that answers the riddle and tends to be friendly to them if they answered correctly.

Unleash Visions  (auditory, mental) **Frequency** Once per day; **Effect** Neshkefru howls a torrent of prophecies that overwhelm listeners. All creatures in a 20-foot emanation must attempt a DC 27 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d4 persistent mental damage.

Failure The creature takes 2d4 persistent mental damage and is dazzled until the persistent damage ends.

Critical Failure The creature takes 3d4 persistent mental damage and is confused until the persistent damage ends.

DEATH SAILS
A WINE-DARK
SEA

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Riddle of
Immortality

Chapter 2:
Food of the
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Below

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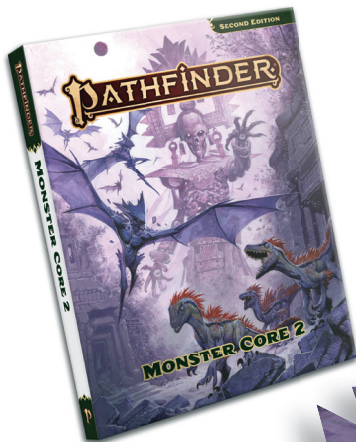


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