

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER[®]



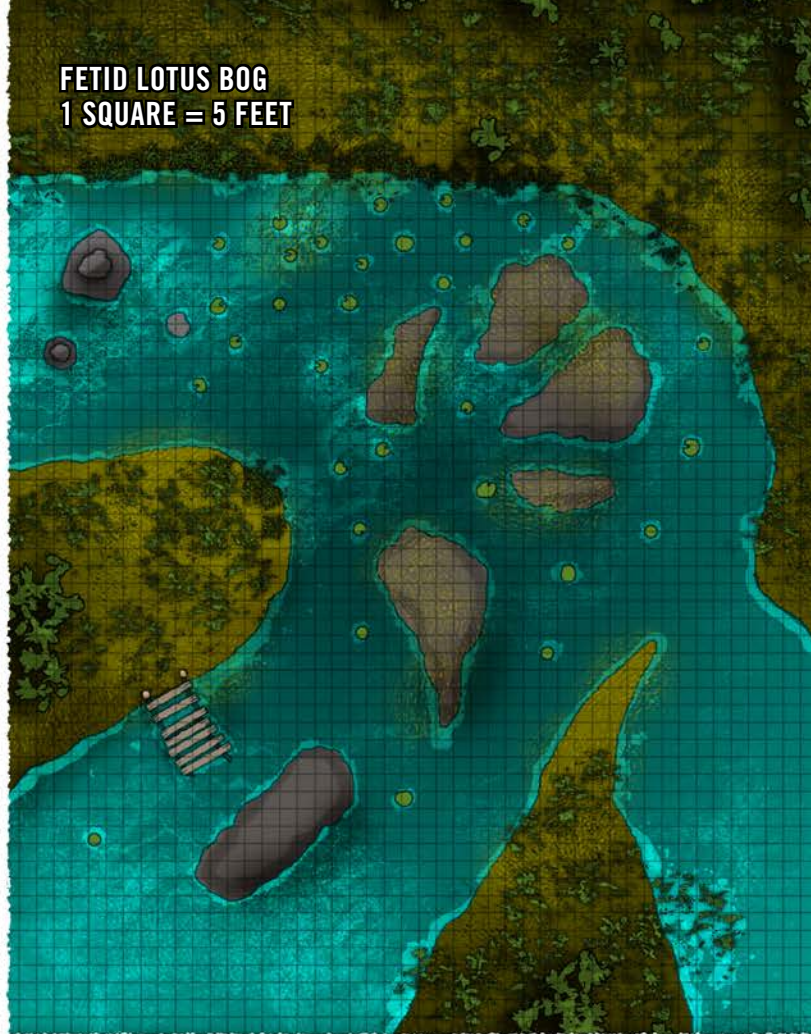
KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

By James Case

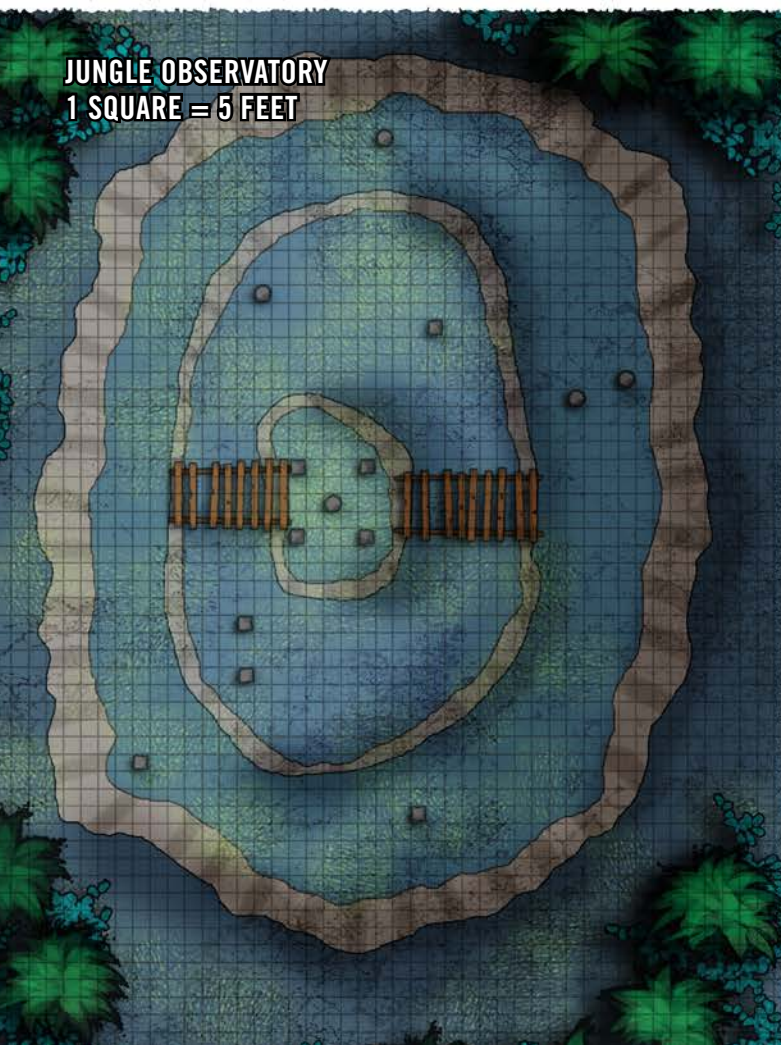
FLYING MOUNTAINS SHORELINE
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



FETID LOTUS BOG
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



JUNGLE OBSERVATORY
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



ROLLING MINES
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



PATHFINDER

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KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

Chapter 1: Race to the Peak4

With Hao Jin's disappearance, the heroes and all of the other contenders set off across the Flying Mountains to discover what happened to the tournament's patron. But when the heroes ascertain that the Ruby Phoenix has disappeared into an impregnable demiplane, they must track down the components for an ancient ritual to beseech a dragon for aid.

Chapter 2: Fragments of the Fractal Jungle34

The heroes have ventured into the floating demiplane called Syndara's Island. When they arrive, they find themselves contacted by a mysterious axiomite, Syndara the Sculptor. The axiomite claims he has the right to continue the Ruby Phoenix Tournament, and the heroes find themselves fighting their way across the demiplane, contending with a new wave of fiendish contestants to defeat in an otherworldly tournament for a cruel prize—the ashes of Hao Jin.

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Having fought their way across Syndara's Island, the heroes finally arrive at the evil axiomite's stronghold, the demiplane-within-a-demiplane known as the *Glass Lighthouse*. Inside, they'll have to put an end to things with their longtime rivals, the Lightkeepers, as well as defeat Syndara before he can absorb Hao Jin's magic for himself.

PURPOSEFUL PARALLELISM

Some of the situations and locations in this adventure—particularly in Chapters 2 and 3—are overt allusions to the player characters' exploits in the previous two volumes of the Fists of the Ruby Phoenix Adventure Path. Syndara's tropical island demiplane, for example, bears a striking resemblance to the island of Bonmu from "Despair on Danger Island."

Adjust the specifics of this adventure as necessary to make sure the parallelism between the challenges on Syndara's Island and during his Hungry Ghost Tournament land with your players. For instance, if your players had a particularly challenging time with the natural hazards of Bonmu, you might compare those with the hazards of Syndara's Island.

Likewise, throughout the first chapter of this volume your players will have numerous opportunities to roleplay with the other contenders from the Ruby Phoenix Tournament. The players' previous conversations, quarrels, and banter with the other teams should be a factor in their interactions here. Perhaps their adventures atop the Flying Mountains are the perfect time for the players' party to finally make amends after a tiff with the Arms of Balance—or maybe it's time to finally settle the score with Winter's Roar.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"King of the Mountain" is designed for four player characters. Characters should level up between chapters.

18 Player characters begin this adventure at 18th level.

19 Player characters should reach 19th level by the time they land on Syndara's Island.

20 Player characters should be 20th level before making their final assault on the *Glass Lighthouse*.

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CHAPTER 1: RACE TO THE PEAK

Hao Jin, the Ruby Phoenix, is justly known as one of Golarion's most legendary spellcasters. With immense natural talent honed by multiple lifetimes of study—possible in part due to her frequent use of resurrection magic—the sorcerer pushed the boundaries of many fields of magic as she traveled the multiverse, learning from every teacher she could find.

On one of these excursions across the planes, she befriended an axiomite sculptor and athlete named Syndara. Both shared a passion for the creation of demiplanes—locations where the laws of creation could be bent to suit the will of the creator. Both had their techniques and specialties: Syndara would sculpt demiplanes within his mind and then transpose them into existence through acts of sheer will and discipline, while Hao Jin wove together threads of magic and quintessence to craft her worlds. Syndara, an avid martial artist dedicated to perfection, took great joy in sharing with Hao Jin the techniques he used to hone his mind and body and give him greater control over

his crafting; the two would regularly spar to warm up before sitting down to create, leading to a love of martial arts that Hao Jin would later enshrine in her will in the form of the Ruby Phoenix Tournament.

However, over time, Syndara realized that Hao Jin, though originally less proficient at crafting demiplanes than he, was swiftly surpassing him. Where Syndara had once been sought out across the multiverse to create custom worlds for powerful rulers and wealthy aristocrats, these patrons now increasingly turned to “the sculptor’s protege” to create their visions. Syndara grew resentful of Hao Jin and her abilities, which he saw as an unearned benefit of magic she had been born with—a quirk of sorcerous inheritance rather than the result of hard study.

Syndara gradually became less discerning with his clients and was surprised to discover how much he enjoyed crafting the strange and often terrible personal pleasure playgrounds or extradimensional prisons his unscrupulous and undeserving clients commissioned.



His demiplanes grew crueler in tandem with his own disposition. Syndara eventually entered the employ of Sok Jyun-son, a wicked human aristocrat in league with Imperial Lung Wa, who viciously ruled what is now the peaceful nation of Hwanggot in Tian Xia. Syndara began forging for Sok Jyun-son what he believed would become his planar masterpiece: a simple structure he called the *Glass Lighthouse*.

When Hao Jin learned that Syndara was creating a world to enable the cruelties of a man who had wrought so much hardship so close to her own homeland, she was furious. She planned to absorb Sok Jyun-son's lands into her tapestry for safekeeping, to deny Syndara the chance, and release them once she was sure they'd be safe from the despot's depredations. Syndara, unwilling to allow Hao Jin to get the better of him yet again, confronted his former friend and pupil, and after days of combat across countless demiplanes culminating in a final showdown in the *Glass Lighthouse*, Hao Jin defeated Syndara, sealing him and his demesnes within the *Hao Jin Tapestry*.

The exit to Syndara's demiplane was meant to connect back to the Material Plane, but as the *Glass Lighthouse* was now within the *Hao Jin Tapestry*, this was impossible. Syndara found himself trapped outside of reality, with no way to escape. What's more, the interaction of the two opposing demiplanes affected the flow of time in ways unpredictable even by the wild standard of demiplanes. Time flowed a thousand times slower in the *Glass Lighthouse*, with Syndara having no company but his thoughts of revenge.

It's hard to say whether Hao Jin knew about time's strange flow in the *Glass Lighthouse*, or if she meant to eventually release Syndara. Soon after caging him in the *Hao Jin Tapestry*, she relinquished her memories of the tapestry's creation as part of her service to Axis, and with these forgotten moments also went most of her memories of Syndara. While she could remember the axiomite vaguely and knew they had collaborated in the past, she was unaware of his ultimate fate.

For his part, Syndara has had eons to hone his powers toward a singular end: to destroy Hao Jin and extinguish her legacy. Now, years after the destruction of the *Hao Jin Tapestry* and Syndara's release, he has set into motion his grand plan for revenge: He used the calamity of Mogaru's attack to jar Hao Jin's memories and draw her to the *Glass Lighthouse*. Within his private world, Syndara will face the Ruby Phoenix once and for all—and he will destroy her.

GETTING STARTED

This adventure begins the day after the end of the previous adventure, "Ready? Fight!", with the player characters attending a briefing by Empress Nai Yan Fei in the wake of Mogaru's attack on Goka. Evacuations were prompt and the damage well controlled due in no small part to the heroes' actions. Casualties were limited, and the team has been able to rest and recuperate from their battle. Still, the mood is tense as the city's heroes walk toward the main arena.

The day after the kaiju Mogaru's rampage, smoke still lingers in the air around the grand arena. What was supposed to be a celebration of technique, ability, and strength has instead become a somber vigil of the destruction wrought in Goka. The other fighting teams show their distress in different ways: the rigid monks of the Arms of Balance stand at the ready, their faces expressionless, while the

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

Lady Nai Yan Fei gathers the finalists after the kaiju Mogaru's devastating attack on Goka to announce that Hao Jin has gone missing, but a mysterious flare of energy to the southeast bears the grand sorcerer's magical signal. The tournament's many finalists race across the Flying Mountains toward the flare but find that it disappears into an impenetrable floating demiplane. The player characters must scour the Flying Mountains, running into past rivals along the way, to assemble a ritual that can summon Iron Mountain's legendary Celestial Dragon, rumored to grant a wish once every 12 years, and beseech the dragon for the power to enter the demiplane where Hao Jin must be.

LANGUAGE IN TIAN XIA

Tian Xia is a region home to a diverse array of peoples, each with their own languages. The most broadly spoken language in the region is Tien, which functions as a common tongue in the same way Taldane does in the Inner Sea region. Since the NPCs of this Adventure Path hail from across the globe, their statistics list the proper name of the language they speak, rather than Common. Creatures in the Adventure Toolbox, since they can be adapted for any game, still use Common to refer to the most prevalent language in the region where they appear.

For more information on the people of Tian Xia, see the *Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide*.

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battledancers of the Steps of the Sun shift uneasily from foot to foot. Curiously, two teams have yet to report: the Lightkeepers and Tino's Toughest. As ash falls from the sky, Empress Nai Yan Fei addresses the remaining contestants.

"Esteemed finalists, I know that today is not what we expected. Mogaru has laid waste to our city. Yet, it is due to your brave actions that we were able to repel the kaiju and capture Razu, the traitorous bard who lured Mogaru here. On behalf of the people of Goka, I thank you for your selfless actions.

"However. Our grand judge, the lady Hao Jin, has not been seen since yesterday. While we originally suspected she had gone to drive off the Final King, it seems she may have had a different aim, and Razu's confessions also indicate as much. My ministers noted a significant glow along the southern horizon last night. We originally suspected it was something to do with Mogaru, but further inquiries suggest it was in fact a massive display of spellcasting by Hao Jin.

"Without our grand judge, we cannot continue with the Ruby Phoenix Tournament. Moreover, as long as Hao Jin is missing, many questions remain and the safety of Goka is uncertain. Though the tournament has yet to conclude, all of you have demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication over the last several days. Therefore, I beg of you all, seek out and bring back the Ruby Phoenix!"

The team can use this opportunity to ask Nai Yan Fei questions about Hao Jin's disappearance. When the characters are ready to continue, proceed to Making Preparations.

How will we find Hao Jin? The barest of smiles crosses the empress's composed face. "She's an immortal sorcerer who walks between worlds the way you or I walk between rooms. Luckily, we've found a way to track her down." At this, several attendants bring out eight identical glass wind chimes, each tied with a red string. Lady Nai Yan Fei picks one up and holds it aloft, and the ringer moves to the southeast, knocking slightly against the chime, which lets out a silvery trill. "These *plover chimes* were created by Hao Jin herself, using axiomite dust smelted with phoenix flames. We had expected to give them to each of the finalists as mementos of participation at the awards ceremony. The chimes yet resonate with lingering traces of her magic, allowing my court scholars to modify them

into a tracking device of sorts. They should guide you to her location."

What if we cannot find her? Lady Nai Yan Fei consults with several court scholars before responding, "Though in the past, this tournament has always been run without its founder present, my legal scholars have informed me that the bylaws are clear: as Hao Jin has already been formally recognized as the grand judge of this decade's tournament, no one can name a winner except her. We have one week to recover Hao Jin and resume the tournament. Otherwise, it must be declared void, and the next tournament will not be for at least 10 years, if indeed it happens at all."

What's the best way through the Flying Mountains? "As you are still the one of two finalists of the tournament, you remain entitled to several of the finalists' regalia—some of the treasures from Hao Jin's vault—until such time as the tournament formally

ends. One item in particular might be especially useful in this case. I've sent for it, and its pilot, to meet you back at your residence."



YOH SOURAN

MAKING PREPARATIONS

The team can take the day to take care of any outstanding business in Goka (refer to Shaking Hands in Town on the next page) before returning to their residence in the Ruby Village to make preparations for their journey. Although Goka is still reeling from Mogaru's attack, the city's skilled administrators and hardworking citizens are already distributing food, water, and other necessities and arranging temporary lodging for those whose homes were damaged.

THE FINALISTS' PRIVILEGES

Back at the Ruby Village, the team finds a series of deliveries waiting for them: the finalists' regalia that Nai Yan Fei hinted at.

A massive vessel with two wings—held aloft by an impossibly massive balloon of finest canvas—hovers a foot off the tiles in the courtyard of the Ruby Village. A middle-aged Minkaian man bustles around the ship, checking valves and securing straps, then snaps to attention and gives a tight smile. But his officialdom is broken a second later by effusive, bubbling energy. "Yoh Souran, at your service! I caught you in the finals, and I have to say, what a match! The way your weapons moved! And the spellwork! I haven't seen such spellwork since Harrah the Painted's bout



in seventy-two-eleven!" He manages to compose himself. "Ahem. I'll be your pilot for as long as you have need of this ship, so wherever you need to go, just say the word."

The contestants can ask Yoh about the voyage and their new acquisition.

What's this? "Pride and joy of the Souran family, the *Solar Jian II*! Apparently my great-great-something-grandmother built it as a wedding gift for my great-great-something-grandfather. Or so I hear, wasn't there myself, but Hao Jin herself returned it to the family when I was younger. We lend it to the tournament's victory parade each decade, but seems like Lady Yan Fei says it's needed a bit longer this time around!"

What should we know about it? "Apparently, Grandmother was quite the crafter. The ship's fast and will protect you from the elements, but it's a pleasure yacht—no cannons or anything like that."

So you're a fan of the tournament? At this, Yoh launches into a breathless and extraordinarily detailed breakdown of the characters' matches so far, comparing their performance to past combatants such as Harrah the Painted pummeling the Forty-Seven Stars, the Bear of Whitethrone's record for most ring-outs in a single tournament, Song-Yoo the Gourmand's consuming shadows technique, and more. Once he realizes he's gushing, he runs his fingers through his shaggy hair and sheepishly concludes, "Yeah, I guess you could say so. My dad took me to my first one when I was five and I've been hooked ever since."

Treasure: In addition to the *Solar Jian II*, Lady Yan Fei has arranged more regalia for the finalists, including four true elixirs of life and a line of credit collectively worth 40,000 gp, usable anywhere in Goka.

SHAKING HANDS IN TOWN

If the team lingers in Goka, they may run into one or more of the other contestants who are preparing for their journey as well. While the players don't need to shake hands with every one of their rivals, feel free to have them bump into a few teams with whom they've made strong impressions over the course of the tournament, whether friendly or antagonistic.

Arms of Balance: As the characters make their way down the roads of Goka, they find themselves suddenly cut off by a horse with crystalline hooves, eyes of white marble, and a mane that flows like desert sand. Atop it, **Usvani** (LN male vanara ki elemental) calms his genie-bound steed before apologizing. The Academy of Golden Hymns once received a number of these horses from Qadira as a gift, and the Arms of Balance find that their elemental mastery allows them to give these steeds strength and endurance far beyond what they

PILOTING THE SHIP

While you can use the vehicle rules on page 174 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* to have player characters pilot the *Solar Jian II*, Yoh is a capable helmsperson and the ship exquisitely outfitted with several conveniences, so he can take the ship anywhere it needs to go with little trouble or need for checks outside of unusual conditions. The airspace immediately surrounding the exposed deck is protected by a 5th-level *endure elements* effect that also purifies the air, protects from sunburn, and diverts wind around the ship, allowing passengers to enjoy the view from the deck unprotected even in high-altitude conditions. As he's more a pilot than adventurer, and significantly lower level than the party, Yoh usually stays behind to mind the ship when the team lands to explore, rather than brave the unknown dangers of the mountain.

would normally be capable of. Usvani mentions that the Academy has had a longstanding, though distant, relationship with the Rai Sho Monastery in the Flying Mountains, which lie in the same direction indicated by the chimes, and says that his team will follow the Academy's directions through the mountain passes.

Biting Roses: The Biting Roses can be found having a leisurely meal at one of Goka's countless bridge-side tea shops. Harrow cards belonging to **Lantondo** (LN agender wyrwood harrow) are splayed out over their table. When asked why they're lounging instead of getting ready for the arduous journey ahead, **Yarrika Mulandez** (LG female human spiritualist) laughs and says something about taking it easy and always being in the right place at the right time. She finishes her tea and spots a single floating tea stalk in her cup. She excitedly mutters to herself, gathers her team, leaves a few coins on the table, and the three members step backward off the bridge... to land in the back of a cargo boat that happened to be passing by. Yarrika cheerily waves goodbye as the boat drifts into the harbor, saying that she'll see the player characters "on the other shore."

Steps of the Sun: The sounds of a morin khurr played by **Halspin the Stung** (NG male catfolk beast singer) drift from a wide marketplace, where a large crowd has gathered around a massive, steel-gray roc. The bird is clearly entranced by Halspin's notes and chirps along while bobbing her head to the music. The sisters **Amihan** and **Maalya** (N female human battledancers), as well as **Joon-Seo** (LN male samsaran bard), are leading a chant as the crowd helps them pass bundles of supplies in a bucket line towards a

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saddle on the roc's back. The sisters invite the player team to join the chant.

Speakers to the Winds: If anyone goes to buy potions, alchemical reagents, or the like, they're sure to run into **Boundless Hummingbird** (N female gnomish Cascade Bearer transmuted) as she haggles aggressively with a merchant over a truly massive amount of cinnabar. When asked what it's for, Hummingbird says that the Speakers to the Winds usually travel by teleportation, but the planar fabric around what people are calling "the Southern Flare" seems to be unusually distorted (a clue to the players that teleportation will be unreliable from here on out). The cinnabar will be used as a stabilizing agent in a complex ritual to carry them through the distortions.

Winter's Roar: The viking team can be found down by the docks, where they outfit a massive

longship. **Urnak Lostwind** (NG male half-orc viking) oversees operations while the rest of the team loads up supplies. If asked, Urnak boisterously and freely shares that they plan to travel toward the Southern Flare by sea and make land at Kaifen Bay, one of the few landing sites in the region, before continuing on foot.

If questioned about Tino's Toughest or the Lightkeepers, none of the other competitors are able to say for sure where they've gone, though someone does recall seeing Tino and Syu Tak-nwa amid the chaos of the kaiju attack, the normally cheerful Tino livid and screaming at the witch.

If the characters approach another team with the idea of traveling together, that team declines (politely or otherwise), citing that their unique mode of transport is not well suited for additional passengers. Similarly, the *Solar Jian II* can't transport additional passengers. The teams vow to meet again on the path to Hao Jin and wishes the party fortune for the great race ahead.

Starting off on the Right Foot: If the players' team has an especially friendly interaction with one of the other teams, take note of this for later—if the party comes into contact with that team later, give them a +1 circumstance bonus to any checks to interact socially with them. Try to grant this bonus for only one or two teams, to make such connections feel special.

THE FLYING MOUNTAINS

When the party is ready to embark, Yoh can easily lift off from Goka, the *Solar Jian II*'s wings articulating

to catch unseen solar winds. Ruby and sapphire trails illuminate the air in the ship's wake as it makes for the southeastern horizon.

Following the trills of the *plover chime* requires no check—the general direction is known and the chime trills more incessantly the closer

the *Solar Jian II* travels toward Hao Jin's magic.

Traveling by airship, the crew takes about 3 days to reach Iron Mountain. When they get to the Flying Mountains, the party can explore the following locations. See the sidebar on page 11 for more details about the party's airborne journey.

A. ISLAND IN THE SKY

The peak of Iron Mountain pierces the clouds that enshroud the rest of the Flying Mountains. A massive island floats upside down in the sky

above the peak's summit, the ocean that surrounds it blending into the stratosphere. Though the air up here is freezing, the air around the island ripples like shimmering heat wafting off summer stone.

The island protruding from the clouds is none other than Syndara's Island, the demiplane the entrants might have found hints about while traversing Bonmu during "Despair on Danger Island" or dealing with the strange extraplanar energies in "Ready? Fight!" Characters who succeed at a DC 38 Arcana or Occultism check or a DC 35 Demiplanes Lore check realize that the planar fabric has become horribly warped here and that the island resides in another dimension altogether—the visible image is just its reflection into the Material Plane.

The party will likely attempt to fly toward the island. Starting from about a mile away, it becomes apparent that something is amiss—the *Solar Jian II* sails through the air as fast as always, but makes no progress. Space seems to expand the closer the party draws to the island, the ship traveling only half the distance each second that it did previously. More exotic methods of travel are equally futile; attempts to directly reach the island via teleportation and planar traversal automatically fail and result in 12d6 mental damage (DC 40 basic Will save) as the traveler sees infinite versions of themselves fall into an oceanlike abyss of tessellating reflections.

B. IRON MOUNTAIN

Once the team has tried and failed to reach Syndara's



BOUNDLESS HUMMINGBIRD



Island, or at another convenient moment, the *pllover chime* lets out a final cry before going silent, releasing a ruby beam of magic, thin as a single thread—the chime is close enough to Hao Jin’s magical signature to attempt to reach her directly. The string splits, one thread trying (and failing) to reach Syndara’s Island, the other thread beaming directly down at the peak of Iron Mountain, where it illuminates some kind of shrine by an alpine lake. Yoh can easily land the *Solar Jian II* on the plateau near a set of stairs that switch back down the mountain.

The peak’s impossibly high altitude means that the entire area is a severe cold environment.

The Dais’s Keepers

Eleven thousand six hundred and sixty-four carved stone steps stretch from the base to the peak of Iron Mountain, the trees cleared out around the incredible staircase. The only sounds come from the flapping of prayer flags in the biting wind. The stairs open to an alpine plateau overlooking a vast, steaming lake that smells of sulfur and remains liquid in defiance of the low temperature. Twin vermilion shrine gates break the surface off a lone pier. Twelve statues depicting the Tian zodiac, some broken, stand a scattered watch over the plateau.

Creatures: Three evil water yai siblings dwell in the lake here. While normally they’re content to bicker with each other, their attention was drawn to the surface by Hao Jin’s expenditure of power. As they see the party arrive, they use their Change Shape ability to hide in puddle form on the surface of the lake. They are immensely territorial and attack immediately, fighting to the death and prioritizing any character who walks out to the end of the pier to observe the shrine gates.

WATER YAIS (3)

CREATURE 17

Bestiary 2 191

Initiative Perception +32

Fragile Architecture: The zodiac statues surrounding the battlefield have stood for ages, but this is partially because few visitors have disturbed them. The statues have Hardness 5 and 25 Hit Points. Breaking or outright destroying the statues (most likely with a mistimed spell or powerful special ability) makes it more difficult to scour them for information after the dust settles (see The Zodiac’s Lesson, below).

The Zodiac’s Lesson

Once the fighters have defeated the water yais, they can explore the summit of Iron Mountain. A character

who succeeds at a DC 35 check to Identify Magic of any tradition realizes that the dais is the site of an important ritual and acts as receptacle to gather natural energy, becoming full every 12 years. That character further realizes that, while it has been less than 12 years since the dais was activated, a huge amount of energy, aligned with the element of the phoenix, was recently released here, saturating the site and priming it for some task.

A character who succeeds at a DC 30 Dragon Lore or Tian Xia Lore check recalls the legend of the Celestial Dragon: an imperial dragon of immense power who appears atop Iron Mountain once every 12 years to grant a wish to a royal maiden. However, this is more than mere legend, as can be confirmed by studying the zodiac statues surrounding the dais.

Each of the zodiac statues bears an inscription in spirit tortoise script, an ancient dialect of Tien, that can be pieced together to uncover the legend of the Celestial Dragon. A successful DC 40 Society check is necessary to decode the script—if the reader understands Tien, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to this check, but the highly allegorical style of the writing, couched in historical references and metaphor, means that magic such as *tongues* does not automatically reveal the meaning. Any broken statues can be mended by restoring at least 20 Hit Points to them either using the Crafting skill or magic such as *mending*.

South Cluster: The southern cluster of statues comprises the Underworld Dragon, the Swordswoman, and the Sea Dragon. These statues are in excellent repair and require no additional check to uncover the following three inscriptions.

- “The Celestial Dragon once spanned the sky and shook the land, before they were sundered.”
- “Assemble the Celestial Dragon’s three fragments—their breath, their spirit, their bones—that they may be born again, as the wheel completes its turn.”
- “A wish granted.”

Upon piecing together these inscriptions, the player characters realizes this Celestial Dragon is clearly something more primordial than a common wyrm and that their power is likely sufficient to open a way to Syndara’s Island and Hao Jin with it. Further, the reader learns that if they want to summon the Celestial Dragon they must bring together the Dragon’s three components for the ritual—breath, spirit, and bones.

East Cluster: The Swallow, the Ox, and the Sovereign Dragon look out from an outcropping on the east of the plateau—or would, if the recessed nooks in the side of the mountain wall weren’t covered by a mass of icy stalagmites. Uncovering the statues requires



the heroes to make a successful DC 40 Athletics check to break the stalagmites by force or a DC 36 Thievery check or DC 34 Archaeology Lore check to carefully uncover the statues, though failing this check will break one of the statues beneath. The ice can also be melted by dealing 20 points of fire damage to it, but any damage over this threshold is applied to one of the statues. Their inscriptions read as follows.

- “A sacred art, the dance of Rai Sho.”
- “Steps and circles to surround the world.”
- “The Dragon’s breath.”

These inscriptions mean that the breath component of the ritual is actually a dance. A character who hears the name “Rai Sho” can attempt a DC 35 Tian Xia Lore check to Recall Knowledge to realize that this was the name of a priest of legend who founded a monastery near the foot of Iron Mountain. Players may also recall this name if they heard it from Usvani in Goka.

North Cluster: The Ogre, the Forest Dragon, and the Blossom guard the north of the dais. Unfortunately, the youngest of the water yais, seeking a companion, broke off the Ogre statue and moved it to his section of the lake shallows, where he talked to it for a time

before losing it deeper into the depths. Piecing together the message requires recovering the Ogre statue from the lake. A trail of rubble leads from the broken base to the lake; the statue is submerged in a fissure 60 feet below the surface and requires a successful DC 37 Athletics check to dislodge. Furthermore, the volcanically superheated water deals 10d6 fire damage per round of immersion. Once the statue is recovered, the characters can read all three inscriptions on the statues in this cluster.

- “A lineage of maidens, bold and noble.”
- “Those allowed the privilege of intercession.”
- “The Dragon’s spirit.”

The heroes, upon reading these inscriptions, realize that “maiden” is a mistranslation and that the original words are more faithfully translated as “intercessor,” and that the intercessor is the Dragon’s spirit component, the one who will actually need to perform the ritual.

West Cluster: The Dog, the Sky Dragon, and the Archer are plainly visible to the west. Each of these statues is protected by an 8th-level *glyph of warding* (DC 45 Perception to detect) containing a *feeblemind* spell (DC 44 Will save to negate). While all the statues



were once covered in magical wards, the abjurations have faded with time, except on these statues. Assuming the magic does not render the characters incapable of reading, they uncover the following inscriptions.

- “A branch growing between two worlds, which connects Heaven and Hell.”
- “Both implement and offering.”
- “The Dragon’s bones.”

These inscriptions indicate that the “branch” is the bones component of the ritual, required as an offering to the Dragon. A character can attempt a DC 40 Arcana or Occultism check or a DC 38 Nature or Religion check; on a success, they recognize the branch likely refers to a boundary cypress, a sacred but now-extinct plant once used to treat with the gods.

XP Award: For piecing together an ancient ritual to summon a divine being, award each character 80 XP.

REFORGING THE DRAGON

Once the team has learned that the power of the Celestial Dragon is necessary to breach the demiplane where Hao Jin is, they can explore the Flying Mountains to discover and obtain the ritual components necessary to summon the dragon. The map on page 10 shows the positions of areas A–F where the components can be found in the Flying Mountains.

The *Solar Jian II*’s pilot Yoh recommends that the party do a wide loop around the region of the Flying Mountains directly around Iron Mountain to get a bird’s eye view of the most notable landmarks (areas C, D, and E; see sidebar). The players can order the ship to land at the landmarks in any order, though their most likely first stop is the Rai Sho Monastery, as it’s the only location referred to by name at the zodiac shrine.

C. RAI SHO MONASTERY

Green and gold buildings surround the central plaza of this monastery, which is filled with monks walking to and fro, while others practice poses in a straw-floored training hall. Prayer flags flutter in the cold alpine wind, and snow rests on the orange petals of a sal tree in curious bloom despite the alpine environment. A massive stone statue of Irori sits in contemplation within a sheltered worship hall, gazing out over the mountainous vista.

This monastery was formed by Rai Sho, the first intercessor to the Celestial Dragon, who chose to retreat into the mountains so that the secrets needed to summon the wish-granting draconic deity couldn’t fall into the wrong hands. The monastery names and trains candidates for the position of intercessor under the tutelage of its current abbot, Tsujon.

A BIRD’S-EYE VIEW

From aboard the *Solar Jian II*, the party can catch an excellent glimpse of the notable areas around the Flying Mountains before touching down in a given area.

A. Flying Island: The magically warded portal to Syndara’s personal demiplane manifests as an ominously dark tropical island floating, impossibly, upside down in the sky above Iron Mountain. Try as they might, the party can reach Syndara’s Island only after they have secured the aid of the Celestial Dragon.

B. Iron Mountain: Once the party has collected all three pieces of the ritual needed to summon the dragon, they notice the other contestants have gathered at the peak of Iron Mountain.

C. Rai Sho Monastery: Nestled between snowy peaks is a rectangular structure with golden roofs and red-painted walls. The sporadic sound of shouted kiais and ringing bells can be heard from the monastery.

D. Kaifen Bay: Though the coastline is largely sheer cliffs that plunge directly into the choppy waters of the Embaral Ocean, a sizable black sand bay tapers to a road leading up into the mountains. Faintly visible on the sand are a trio of humanoid figures, surrounded by some sort of silvery circle that glints in the sunlight.

E. Blasted Lands: A ring of rock protrudes through the cloud cover, a clear caldera of some kind. The center of the caldera can’t be seen below the clouds, but every so often, a cry sounding like a cross between a whale and an elephant echoes through the caldera, and flashes of lightning illuminate strange, massive shadows below.

F. Winter’s Shore: A pair of serpentine leviathans—crag linnorms—writhe in the tidewaters along the northern shore of this unnamed island. Not far off, an Ulfen longboat makes a straight course for the monsters across the open ocean.

The party is met at the monastery’s entrance by **Leeyan** (LN male samsaran initiate), a short, nervous man whose head is shaved, like all the Rai Sho monks. If asked why he seems frazzled, he mentions that he has only been at the monastery for a few months, having come here on a pilgrimage for solace after the death of his husband the year prior.

Leeyan expresses his surprise that two groups of outsiders would arrive so close to one another, and he motions toward the plaza, where the Arms of Balance are tying up their genie-bound steeds and joining in a training regimen under the sal tree. He allows the party some time to explore the grounds—the training

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RAI SHO MONASTERY

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



hall, the worship hall, the quarters, and a hot spring that accelerates the healing process—and says that all are welcome to stay as long as they like. If the team mentions that they’re looking for information related to the Celestial Dragon, Leeyan informs them that the monastery’s abbot, **Tsujon** (LN female samsaran abbot), is likely the best person to ask. However, he adds, Tsujon is deep in meditation and can be interrupted only by those who’ve proven their dedication to the monastery.

Temple Chores

Leeyan notifies the team that if they are to receive instruction from the abbot, they need to show their devotion and humility by participating in some of the temple activities alongside the other newcomers to the temple, the Arms of Balance, who appear quite out of their depth. The party can divide the chores with the Arms of Balance, but the player characters must complete at least three of the four tasks. Each chore might take anywhere from just 1 hour to a day or more, at your discretion. By the end of their tasks, the party should be familiar with the monastery

and may even have some fondness for the place and its adherents.

Chopping Firewood: A previous monk from Hwanggot installed an ondol to heat the monastery’s floors with firewood collected from a grove of trees behind the temple. Unfortunately, the blessed water used to nourish the trees means that they’re extremely resilient. They fall only if reduced to 0 HP in a single turn; otherwise, they swiftly repair to full Hit Points. The trees have AC 39, Hardness 10, 150 Hit Points, and weakness 20 to slashing. Thankfully, only one tree’s worth of wood is required to keep the floors heated for the next year.

Catching a Dri: A small herd of yaks roam the mountain and provide food for the monks. A party member must catch a dri (a female yak) before bringing it back to the temple. A dri can move 60 feet a round, can easily scale steep cliffs, and is difficult to secure, requiring a DC 38 Athletics check to hold and carry back to the temple. A character who succeeds at a DC 40 Perception check notices that the yaks appear to move in strange spiral patterns, as if guided by some inner instinct.



Striking the Bell: The giant bell by the main gate needs to be struck in a specific pattern according to the time of day, cycle of the sun and moon, and current zodiac year. One of the monks displays the proper cadence for the party to follow. Striking the bell properly requires a successful DC 38 Performance check.

Aiding in Meditation: Several monks are creating a sand mandala in the temple's main worship hall and ask for aid in creating it. A character must succeed at a DC 38 Crafting or Thievery check to place individual grains in their proper place. On a failure, they foul the mandala, though the monks ensure them that the design is still a valid expression of their current skill. If the team successfully completes the mandala, they notice that it depicts a massive, black and white dragon descending upon the top of the mountain—a clear allusion to the Celestial Dragon. A character who notices this and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check notices that the figure featuring in the mandala has long hair in most scenes but has a shorn head in the scene of offering. The heroes can infer that a sacrifice of hair (an offering of humility that comes from divesting oneself of one's former appearance) can be used in the summoning ritual for added benefit (Points from Initial Offerings on page 29).

Thanks for Helping Out: The party need only succeed at three of their chores to secure a meeting with the abbot, but if they perform all four, the beleaguered Arms of Balance are grateful for the help, as this both lets them save face with the other disciples and gives them more time to train. This ensures that they aid the party in the dragon summoning ritual later.

A Friendly Spar

When the party has completed their chores, Leeyan states that since they've demonstrated their dedication to the monastery's ideals of peace and learning, they should now test their strength of body by way of a friendly sparring session while the abbot looks on. The session takes place in the temple's training hall. Abbot Tsujon, a wizened woman who can be heard approaching by the ringing of her golden khakkhara, sits solemnly near the back of the training hall, though she does not speak to the party or even acknowledge their presence until they have bested her disciples. The abbot is currently disguised as a human (she has found this form puts opponents off guard), though she is in fact a samsaran.

Creatures: Leeyan suggests the characters spar with four of the monastery's fighters—two wandering

yetis who are currently seeking admission to the monastery and two Rai Sho disciples. While the fight begins in the temple's training hall, the yetis don't hesitate to move the fight to the plaza or elsewhere in the temple complex, avoiding only the worship hall. They quickly move back indoors if the player characters resort to flight. The yetis open with their ki spell to create snowfall that they can hide within before leaping out to attack with a flurry of icicle hits. The combat ends when more than two combatants on either side fall unconscious. The monks are on standby to treat wounds of the fallen and carry others to the healing springs, meaning that except in rare circumstances, this fight shouldn't be fatal.

RAI SHO POSTULANT (2)

CREATURE 16

RARE N LARGE HUMANOID

Yeti martial artists (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 338)

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

Languages Aklo, Taldane, Tien

Skills Athletics +33, Stealth +28 (+34 in snow), Survival +27

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +2, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +2





Snowblind When Hiding, the yeti is concealed by any snowfall, even if it's not thick enough to make other creatures concealed.

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +29; +4 status to all saves vs. fear and dreams

HP 360; **Immunities** cold; **Weaknesses** fire 10

Nightmare Guardian As yeti.

Vanish ➤ As yeti.

Speed 60 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ➤ claw +33 (magical), **Damage** 3d10+17 slashing

Ranged ➤ icicle +31 (cold, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d8+17 piercing plus 1d8 cold

Divine Innate Spells DC 37; **8th** *obscuring mist* (manifests snowfall instead of mist)

Frozen Flurry ➤ (cold) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The Rai Sho postulant

makes two Strikes, which can be any combination of claw or icicle Strikes. If both hit the same creature, combine their damage for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses. If either Strike hits and deals damage, the target must succeed at a DC 37 Fortitude save or be stunned 1 (or stunned 3 on a critical failure); this save has the incapacitation trait.

Grisly Arrival ◆ (emotion, fear, mental) As yeti, but DC 37.

Nine Seals Spellcasting The Rai Sho postulants have learned a technique that allows them to cast their ki spells more effectively by way of specialized hand postures. They replace the normal somatic and verbal components of their spells with nine seals components; these require that the caster have a hand free, but don't add any traits to the Cast a Spell action (preventing the Rai Sho postulants from triggering certain reactions, such as Attack of Opportunity, when they Cast a Spell).

RAI SHO DISCIPLES (2)

CREATURE 16

RARE **LN** **MEDIUM** **HUMAN** **HUMANOID**

Tian-la monks

Perception +30

Languages Taldane, Tien

Skills Acrobatics +32, Athletics +30, Diplomacy +27, Performance +26, Religion +32

Str +8, **Dex** +9, **Con** +6, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

AC 40; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +30, **Will** +28; +1 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 300

Speed 40 feet

Melee ➤ fist +33 (agile, finesse, magical, nonlethal, unarmed), **Damage** 4d6+14

bludgeoning

Melee ➤ sal blossom +33 (deadly d10, finesse, magical, unarmed), **Damage** 4d10+14 negative

Ranged ➤ temple bell +33 (magical, range increment 60 feet, sonic), **Damage** 4d10+6 sonic

Monk Ki Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 37, attack +28; **8th** *ki rush* (Core Rulebook 401), *ki strike* (Core Rulebook 401), *wholeness of body* (Core Rulebook 402)

Crying Bell Stance ◆ (stance) The disciple cups one hand and poses the other to strike it, like the Rai Sho Monastery's central bell. In this stance, they can make temple bell Strikes (see Strikes).

While in this stance, a disciple gains a +2 status bonus to AC against ranged attacks.

Falling Sal Stance ◆ (stance) The disciple joins their palms together in the shape of a sal flower, evoking the truth that all things eventually decay. In this stance, they can make sal blossom Strikes (see Strikes) and are quickened 1,



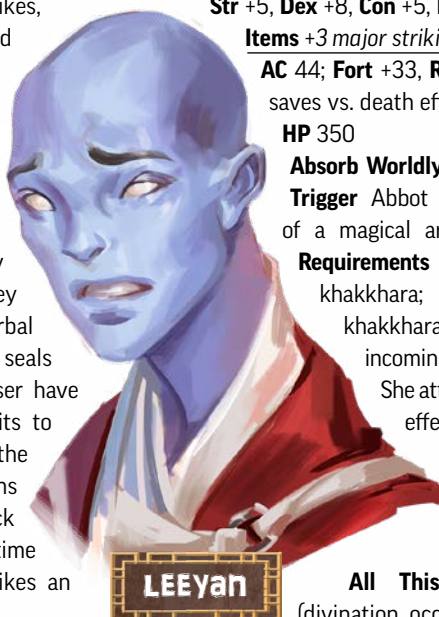
RAI SHO POSTULANT

and can use the extra action only to cast *wholeness of body*.

Flurry of Blows ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect**

The Rai Sho disciple makes two Strikes, each of which must be an unarmed Strike or temple bell Strike. If both hit the same creature, combine their damage for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses.

Nine Seals Spellcasting The Rai Sho disciples have learned a technique to cast their ki spells more effectively by way of specialized hand postures. They replace the normal somatic and verbal components of their spells with nine seals components; these require that the user have a hand free, but do not add any traits to the Cast a Spell action (preventing the disciples from triggering certain reactions when they Cast a Spell, such as Attack of Opportunity). Additionally, the first time each day that a disciple critically Strikes an enemy, they regain a Focus Point.



LEEYAN

A Test with the Abbot

Abbot Tsujon opens her eyes and stands while Leeyan hurries to her side. They both open their mouths and speak in unison with the same creaking voice. “You have done well to learn our ways and best my disciples. But whatever you require the Celestial Dragon for surely cannot be undertaken by the faint of heart or weak of body. I would test you myself—come.”

Leeyan is an incarnation of one of Abbot Tsujon’s past selves, brought forth through a secret technique to observe the party and judge whether they were worthy of instruction. If the party confided frustration at the tasks given to them or about the abbot’s ways before now, Tsujon and Leeyan both receive a +2 circumstance bonus to their initiative checks.

Creatures: If Leeyan is reduced to 0 Hit Points during the fight, rather than falling unconscious, he implodes into blue ripples that return to Abbot Tsujon’s heart and forehead. Abbot Tsujon calls the fight when she reaches 20 or fewer Hit Points or when Leeyan is knocked unconscious, whichever occurs first.

ABBOT TSUJON

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM HUMANOID SAMSARAN

Female samsaran abbot (*Bestiary* 3 224)

Perception +33, low-light vision

Languages Celestial, Samsaran, Tien

Skills Acrobatics +36, Athletics +33, Deception +33 (+37 to Impersonate a past self), Diplomacy +31, Occultism +33, Religion +34

Str +5, **Dex** +8, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Items +3 *major striking khakkhara*

AC 44; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +36, **Will** +34; +1 status to all saves vs. death effects

HP 350

Absorb Worldly Influence ⤵ (abjuration, divine)

Trigger Abbot Tsujon is within the emanation of a magical area effect as it’s being created;

Requirements Abbot Tsujon is wielding a khakkhara; **Effect** Abbot Tsujon uses her khakkhara as a medium to absorb the incoming area effect into its central ring.

She attempts to counteract the triggering effect. For 1 round after Absorbing Worldly Influence, a glowing orb floats within the khakkhara’s central ring, allowing Tsujon to Release Worldly Passions.

All This Has Happened Before ⤵

(divination, occult) As samsaran anchorite.

All This Will Happen Again ⤵ (divination, occult) As samsaran anchorite.

Negate Projectiles ⤵ **Trigger** Abbot Tsujon is the target of a ranged attack; **Requirements** Abbot Tsujon is aware of the attack, is not flat-footed against it, and has a hand free; **Effect** Abbot Tsujon gains a +4 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack. If the attack misses, the projectile loses momentum and drops harmlessly to the ground.

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ sal blossom +36 (deadly d10, finesse, magical, unarmed), **Damage** 4d10+13 negative

Melee ♦ fist +36 (agile, finesse, magical, nonlethal, unarmed), **Damage** 4d6+13 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ khakkhara +34 (magical, shove, two-hand d10, versatile P), **Damage** 4d6+13 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ temple bell +36 (range 60 feet, sonic), **Damage** 4d10+8 sonic

Monk Ki Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 40, attack +32; **8th ki blast** (*Core Rulebook* 401), **ki rush** (*Core Rulebook* 401), **ki strike** (*Core Rulebook* 401), **wholeness of body** (*Core Rulebook* 402)

Crying Bell Stance ♦ (stance) Abbot Tsujon cups one hand and poses the other to strike it, like the Rai Sho Monastery’s central bell. In this stance, she can make temple bell Strikes (see Strikes) and gains a +2 status bonus to AC against ranged attacks.

Falling Sal Stance ♦ (stance) Abbot Tsujon joins her palms together in the shape of a sal flower, evoking the truth that all things eventually decay. In this stance, she can make sal

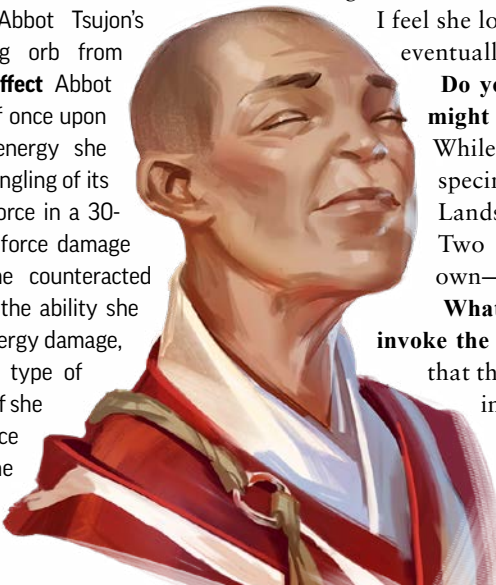


blossom Strikes (see Strikes) and is quickened 1, and can use the extra action only to cast *wholeness of body*.

Release Worldly Passions ♦ (divine, evocation, force, manipulate) **Requirements** Abbot Tsujon's khakkhara holds a glowing orb from Absorb Worldly Influence; **Effect** Abbot Tsujon strikes her prayer staff once upon the ground, releasing the energy she captured in it along with the jingling of its rings. She blasts a wave of force in a 30-foot emanation, dealing 2d6 force damage per level of the ability she counteracted (DC 40 basic Reflex save). If the ability she counteracted usually deals energy damage, she can choose to deal this type of damage instead (for instance, if she used Absorb Worldly Influence to counteract a *fireball*, she could deal either fire or force damage).

Stunning Flurry ♦ **Frequency**

once per round; **Effect** Abbot Tsujon makes two Strikes, each of which must be an unarmed Strike or crying temple bell Strike. If both hit the same creature, combine their damage for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses. If either Strike hits and deals damage, the target must succeed at a DC 39 Fortitude save or be stunned 1 (or stunned 3 on a critical failure); this save has the incapacitation trait.



ABBOT TSUJON

LEEYAN

CREATURE 18

As Abbot Tsujon, but without *khakkhara*

Revelations

After the match, Abbot Tsujon kneels on the straw mat and places her prayer staff beside her. She motions for those around her to sit as she prepares to answer questions.

If Leeyan still exists, he bows to Tsujon before dissolving into blue ripples that Tsujon inhales like a trail of smoke. With this, Tsujon has acknowledged the party's strength of spirit and body and is ready to pass on her knowledge.

Can you name us as intercessors to the Celestial Dragon? A disappointed look crosses Abbot Tsujon's face. "If only I still could. Once, it was the sacred duty of the Rai Sho monastery to locate and confirm future celestial intercessors. There can be only one at a time, and the temple bell lets out a dragon's roar when the previous holder has passed, indicating that the mantle is free for another. Though she died, the bell still has not rung. Somewhere, she must still hold the title."

Can you tell us where she might be? "Jin-Hae loved battle more than her studies. While there is righteousness in striking down the forces of evil, I feel she loved it more than was healthy. She eventually lost her life at Kaifen Bay."

Do you know where boundary cypress might be found? "Boundary cypress. While indeed it is all but lost, one living specimen still remains in the Blasted Lands—that crater that roars and roils. Two kaiju have claimed it as their own—tread warily."

What is the breath component to invoke the dragon? Tsujon smiles and notes that the team has already been grounded in the basic steps of the Kagura of Invocation, the sacred dance to invoke the dragon, from the circular motions and rhythmic steadiness imparted by the chores they completed at the monastery. She leads them to the main plaza and teaches them the kagura more deliberately, showing

them the steps. Learning the dance in full likely takes the party the rest of the day, after which they are welcome to rest at the monastery and use it as a base of operations before setting back out. The rest of the ritual is described in full starting on page 29.

Treasure: If the party sufficiently impresses Tsujon, she bequeaths them a number of objects associated with the intercessor that have been gathering dust in a shed under the main temple. These constitute a *third eye*, a *possibility tome*, two *necklaces of fireballs (type VII)* in the shape of prayer beads, a *greater phylactery of faithfulness*, and a single unwilting sal blossom fixed in time worth 10,000 gold.

D. KAIFEN BAY

For most of its existence, Kaifen Bay—more commonly known as the Bay of Blades—was protected by a unique formation of naturally occurring basalt columns known as the Adamant Cousins. But when they were about to be destroyed in a massive earthquake, Hao Jin transported the columns into her tapestry for safekeeping. Though the exquisite natural formations remained safe, their disappearance left Kaifen Bay exposed, and the bay became a strategic landing point for invading armies. Numerous battles have been waged upon its shores and the rusted weapons buried throughout the sand now give the bay its current moniker.



Blacksand Dunes

Creatures: When the party arrives here, they see that their fellow competitors, the Biting Roses, have already been here for some time.

Small white hermit crabs, wearing scrap metal instead of shells, scuttle in sharp contrast to the black sand of this shoreline, water welling up in the depressions left by their tracks. The air is quiet and the sound of gentle waves breaking and retreating fills the air. Bits of metal in varying states of degradation lie among the sand, adding to its glitter. Near the water's edge, none other than the Biting Roses stand as if at a loss. The spiritualist Yarrika idly traces patterns in the sand with a single toe from her unsandled foot.

Yarrika looks up and waves merrily as the player characters disembark their airship.

How did you get here? “Funniest thing, after we got onto a boat in Goka, we stayed onboard for a time until the captain discovered us and threw us overboard. Just then, a pod of whales came by, carrying us inland, before a rogue wave washed us all ashore. Right place, right time!”

What are you doing? Yarrika’s easygoing demeanor becomes uncharacteristically sober as the spiritualist’s phantom materializes behind her. “The Bay of Blades is legendary. So many souls have been lost here. It’s said that they still reverberate collectively along the boundary between this life and the next. I hoped that in coming here, I might be able to feel it for myself, and in doing so, answer some questions about the afterlife. We’ve spent some time preparing the site so that we might be able to glimpse the boundary, but all that remains is to wait. Sunset should bring clarity.”

Yarrika is willing to add the player characters to the ritual circle she and her team have constructed on the sand, but only if they agree that both teams will equally share whatever they might find on the other side, as there is no telling what might happen at sunset. If they players agree and wait until sunset, a strange fog rolls in. Allow each player character to attempt a DC 38 Occultism check as they are consumed in the mists. If at least two characters succeed at the check, the party passes to the Shore between Worlds. If the party fails, they still pass through, but they’re disoriented upon arrival, taking a –2 status penalty to their initiative check when they begin their fight with Jin-Hae in that section. They can choose not to cross over, but they will have to wait until the next sunset to try again.

The Shore Between Worlds

A strange ethereal fog surrounds the bay, thick and tinged with salt. As if riding a beaching whale, the surface of the ocean comes crashing down. The beach reappears, but seemingly in a different time. The sand is covered in unburied



YARRIKA

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swords, polearms, and countless other weapons, and the Biting Roses are nowhere to be seen. The sun barely touches the horizon; before it, the ocean waves are frozen in place. A lone figure sits on a rock outcropping, dipping her feet into the unmoving waves and watching the eternal sunset.

The flash of sunset has bridged the way to this place between worlds that Yarrika spoke of and deposited the player characters in the ocean of the same beach, but at a different point in time. Here, the spirit of **Jin-Hae** (LN female human spirit warrior 18) waits. Though she was named as intercessor by Abbot Tsujon decades ago, she reneged on her priestly duties to defend the coast from invaders, finding that she loved the song of blades and arms more than the ascetic life. When she fell in battle, her title should have been released so the Rai Sho monastery could choose a new intercessor, but Jin-Hae remained in this twilight realm rather than passing on to the afterlife, her soul yearning for one last chance to face a worthy opponent. She remains the intercessor, even in death, and so another can't be named while she holds the mantle.

A Land Between: In this halfway point, there is no difference between spirits and corporeal entities. The entire shore is covered in an *ectoplasmic interstice* (*Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 117) effect, removing spirits' usual incorporeality. It also prevents the phantoms from moving into the Ethereal Plane (causing them to lose Walk the Ethereal Line). Attempting to stray too far from the beach results in the same fog rolling back in, depositing a character back in conventional reality with the Biting Roses.

Creatures: Jin-Hae has waited here for decades in search of one last fight. She's happy to answer any questions that the team may have and make pleasant conversation, but she remains fixated on a duel. When combat begins, a massive kirin coalesces next to Jin-Hae and joins the combat—this is Cloudsplitter, Jin-Hae's steed in life who was slain in the same battle as she. Jin-Hae and Cloudsplitter coordinate their attacks expertly, splitting off to flank opponents or joining together to use Combined Charge. Her extraordinary skill with her weapons allows Jin-Hae to deal much more damage with them than typical. She occasionally further isolates targets with her Wind-Fire Charge. Her first action in combat is to Call a Battle Echo and use it on the party, demonstrating that the weapons in this realm can still be used in combat.

JIN-HAE

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM ETHEREAL PHANTOM SPIRIT

Female phantom knight (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 202)

Perception +33

Languages Taldane, Tien

Skills Acrobatics +35, Athletics +37, Performance +36, Religion +31, Warfare Lore +38

Str +9, **Dex** +9, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Items wind and fire wheels (2; *Pathfinder* #166: *Despair on Danger Island* 76), hook swords (2; *Pathfinder* #166: *Despair on Danger Island* 76)

AC 43; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +30, **Will** +27; -1 status penalty to all saves vs. death effects

HP 340; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Susceptible to Death As phantom knight.

Combined Charge ↻ (move) **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** Cloudsplitter Strides or Tramples within 5 feet of Jin-Hae; **Effect** Jin-Hae leaps onto Cloudsplitter's back as he charges. She can make a single melee attack against any target they pass during Cloudsplitter's movement.

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ *hook sword* +35 (disarm, magical, parry, trip, twin), **Damage** 6d6+20 slashing

Melee ♦ *linked hook swords* +35 (magical, reach 10 feet, sweep), **Damage** 6d6+20 slashing

Melee ♦ *wind and fire wheels* +35 (agile, disarm, finesse, magical, parry, thrown 20 feet, twin, versatile P), **Damage** 3d6+15 slashing plus 3d6 fire

Ranged ♦ *vacuum slash* +35 (air, divine, range 60 feet), **Damage** 6d6+10 slashing

Divine Innate Spells DC 40; **Constant (7th)** *air walk*

Call a Battle Echo ♦ (conjuration) **Effect** Jin-Hae pulls one of the *battle echoes* (page 19) to her hand. She is fully aware of every echo and can always pull the one she wants, but she cannot call an *echo* that has already been unsealed.

Link Swords ♦ (flourish, stance) **Requirements** Jin-Hae is wielding two hook swords; **Effect** Jin-Hae either links her swords together or unlinks them. If the swords are linked, she can make linked hook sword Strikes; if the swords are unlinked, she can make hook sword Strikes.

Wind-Fire Charge ♦♦ (divine) **Requirements** Jin-Hae is wielding her wind and fire wheels; **Effect** Jin-Hae blasts off on her wind and fire wheels, leaving an elemental trail in her wake. She Strides up to twice her Speed and makes a wind and fire wheel Strike at any point during her movement. The path left by her movement is filled with her choice of an 8th-level *wall of wind* or *wall of fire* spell. Jin-Hae is unaffected by any walls she creates with this ability. She cannot use Wind-Fire Charge again for 1d4 rounds. If she uses Wind-Fire Charge again, the wall created by her previous Wind-Fire Charge disappears as soon as her action is completed.

Wind-Fire Chariot (divine) **Requirements** Jin-Hae is wielding two wind and fire wheels; **Effect** Jin-Hae's wind and fire



wheels float by her feet, giving her the benefits of 7th-level *air walk*. While this lasts, she can wield her wind and fire wheels even while her hands are full by kicking with them, and her wind and fire wheels gain the thrown 20 feet trait as well as the effects of a *returning rune*.

CLOUDSPLITTER

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE LG LARGE AIR FIRE PHANTOM SPIRIT

Variant kirin (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 148)

Perception +32; greater darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Auran, Celestial, Draconic, Tien; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +35, Diplomacy +37, Nature +30, Religion +30, Stealth +35

Str +7, **Dex** +9, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +9

AC 42; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +32, **Will** +30; -1 status penalty to all saves vs. death effects

HP 335; **Immunities** disease, fire, paralyzed, poison, precision

Peaceful Aura (abjuration, aura, divine, emotion, mental) 60 feet. As kirin, but DC 39. Cloudsplitter allows anyone involved in the player character's bout with Jin-Hae to use hostile actions without a Will save.

Deflecting Gale ➤ As kirin.

Susceptible to Death As phantom knight (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 202).

Speed 60 feet

Melee ♦ phantom hoof +35 (force, magical),

Damage 4d10+15 force

Melee ♦ phantom horn +35 (agile, force, magical), **Damage** 4d8+15 force

Divine Innate Spells DC 41; **8th** *calm emotions* (at will), *gust of wind* (×3), *heal* (×2), *punishing winds*, *spirit link* (with Jin-Hae only); **2nd** *detect alignment* (at will); **Cantrips** (9th) *light*; **Constant** (9th) *air walk*

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (divine, evocation, fire)

Cloudsplitter breathes fire in a 30-foot cone, dealing 18d6 fire damage (DC 40 basic Reflex save). Cloudsplitter can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Rearing Thrust ♦♦ As kirin, but 2d8 additional damage.

Trample ♦♦♦ Medium or smaller, phantom hoof, DC 40

Battle Echoes: Though most have rusted away in the present day, in this realm of memories, the legendary relics wielded in past ages yet remain. A character who succeeds at a DC 38 Perception check to Seek can find a random *battle echo* within 30 feet of them. It takes an Interact action to draw an *echo* from the sand or water. If a character wants to find a *battle echo* with a particular function (for instance “something that can protect me” or “something to burn my enemy”), they must also succeed at a DC 34 Warfare Lore, Tian Xia Lore, or similarly applicable Lore check that would let them recognize a famed

weapon. Weapon *battle echoes* function as +3 *major striking weapons*. When the characters leave the Shore Between Worlds, any *battle echoes* they might still be carrying return to their true state as hopelessly rusted and broken weapons with no value.

A character can unleash an *echo*'s full power by unsealing it. This involves spending a single action to Activate it (Interact), causing the item to release a unique effect and permanently dissipate into mist.



JIN-HAE



- **Bamboo-cutter's Burden:** A bamboo-cutter was attempting to clear the land beside his home, but no matter how many times he cut, one stalk would always grow back by morning. The bamboo-cutter eventually dug up the ground around the stalk and transplanted it, clearing the land and letting the stubborn plant live a long life, after which it was made into this lightweight staff. When unsealed, *Bamboo-cutter's Burden* causes a wave of sharpened bamboo stakes to erupt from the ground in a 50-foot cone, dealing 10d6 piercing damage (DC 35 basic Reflex save); on a critical failure, enemies are also pushed to the end of the cone.
- **Dream of Fireworks:** Magnificent illustrations of clouds and waterfalls cover this parasol, which is said to have been created by a master artisan enamored with a vampire who wanted nothing more than to see a summer festival with her own two eyes. The parasol shielded the two women from the blazing sun, allowing them to enjoy the festival until night fell. When unsealed, the *Dream of Fireworks* grants the user resistance 20 to fire damage for 1 minute.
- **Huli-Po, the Echoing Gourd:** This double-headed gourd was played by a former intercessor to the Celestial Dragon, who so enjoyed the music that they sang along with the intercessor for a brief moment. The gourd captured some of the celestial music, which can move the listener to tears. When unsealed, *Huli-Po* releases a celestial song that makes one creature within 60 feet fascinated for 1 round if they fail a DC 35 Will save.
- **Kalikra, the Lancet:** This cruel-looking kama appears to be a fearsome weapon of war, but it was actually created by a doctor to cut disease and pain out of the body, passing harmlessly through flesh. When unsealed, *Kalikra* excises the wounds of a creature within 30 feet, restoring 6d8+48 Hit Points.
- **Nameless (No. 17):** This unadorned zhanmadao (use scimitar stats) bears no notable features other than a tiny "17" etched at the base of the blade. It is, however, exquisitely well-made: an example of a basic concept executed with supreme skill, rather than a complex or flashy design. When unsealed, the sword does what all swords are meant to do—it cuts, dealing 10d6 slashing damage to all creatures in a 120-foot line (DC 35 basic Reflex save).
- **The Wall of Heaven:** This laminated tower shield, used by Leihua the Immaculate, so defended its master in battle that their robes and armor emerged from each fight perfect and unstained by blood or dust. It is said the shield was so impregnable that

the mountain chain was named for it, rather than the other way around. When unsealed, it casts an 8th-level *wall of force*, except that the resultant wall is not invisible, but rather shines with a faint, watercolor pattern of painted mountains.

A Satisfied Spirit: If the team manages to defeat Jin-Hae and Cloudsplitter, they re-form from ghostly essence as soon as combat is over.

The ancient warrior's armor and weapons disappear into memory. She lets out a contented sigh and stretches, as if waking from a much-needed nap. "I have waited here for many years to stretch my arms and ride with Cloudsplitter as I once did. You have given this old echo one last bit of satisfaction. Tell me, before I cross, is there anything I can do for you?"

If the party defeated Jin-Hae within 4 rounds of combat, she deigns to tell them a secret in honor of their decisive victory: that the Celestial Dragon, while a noble god, does still appreciate the gift of sacred spirits, and that they might be able to sway them ever so slightly by scattering wine or another appropriately blessed alcohol before they attempt to call them (see page 29 for more information on this additional offering).

Decisive victory or not, Jin-Hae also provides the following answers to their likely questions.

Do you know anything about the boundary cypress? "I made my way, as all intercessors must, to the land where the last boundary cypress yet lives, hidden in a caldera, protected from the ravages of time. But the way is dangerous—the Blasted Lands hold the sacred branch, but that's not the only primordial species kept safely hidden. Do not anger Alru or Toraloe—they have kept each other occupied for a millennium at least, and it is best they do so for a millennium more. Best to approach on nights when the moon pierces the clouds, as moonbeams somehow calm them both."

What can you tell us of Rai Sho? Jin-Hae spits on the sand. "The first intercessor caused nothing but problems, her contract with the Celestial Dragon was good for nothing more than her own legacy. Yet, the monks of the monastery that bears her name are by no means evil people. Abbot Tsujon looks out for her students. Watch out with her, though. She's a mischievous one—likes her tricks."

Will you relinquish the mantle of intercessor to us? A mournful look crosses Jin-Hae's face. "Who of you will bear this responsibility? The Celestial Dragon's wishes are not a thing to be spent frivolously. There is a cost to everything." Only if pressed on the matter does she go on. "The intercessor's spirit is the wood that burns to set the Dragon's miracles alight. The more offered,



the greater the wish possible. Many intercessors have found themselves unable to provide the fuel necessary, and have thus been consumed in the process. So I ask, is one of you still willing to accept?”

The team can decide who will accept the burden of interceding with the Celestial Dragon when the time comes. They can also choose not to accept the mantle, in which case Jin-Hae nods, understanding their decision (the sidebar on page 30 describes how the party can still attempt the ritual using the replacement items from one of the other two adventure sites in this chapter to advance the story). In this case, as the sun sets on this strange bay between words, Jin-Hae vanishes, and the team finds themselves back in reality.

However, if one team member is willing to accept the mantle, Jin-Hae’s brow creases and she motions the character to kneel before her in the sand.

The ancient warrior places a hand on the brow of her soon-to-be successor. She motions to Cloudsplitter. “Go on, friend. I’ll be there soon,” she says, and the majestic kirin rides off across the sea, treading along the reflection of the setting sun on the water. As Jin-Hae utters a simple decree, “I relinquish my mantle. May my successor burn bright,” the sun and sea finally move again.

“Good luck.”

The last of the sun disappears below the horizon, and in a green flash, Jin-Hae is gone, and reality washes over the scene in an instant.

This grants the character the title of intercessor. If the player characters decide they wish to change the bearer of the title, they can repeat the same gesture and words to pass the title on to another willing person.

Treasure: While most of the *battle echoes* exist only in the realm of memory, as Jin-Hae’s unique dimension collapses, a few of them are expelled out to reality with the adventurers. The party finds washed up on the shore alongside them a *greater storm flash*, a +3 *greater striking vorpal kama*, and a dusting of black stardust from the shores of the other side worth 20,000 gp.

A Gift from the Other Side: When the party resurfaces back in reality, Yarrika is overjoyed to see that her ritual was a success, and she asks the party if they managed to bring anything back from the other side. If the party gifts the black stardust they found to the Biting Roses, Yarrika and her allies perform a ritual of their own. Just as Lantondo throws the stardust upon Yarrika’s phantom Grandfather Mantis, Yarrika steps into the phantom’s space and Artus fires one of his soul arrows into the pair. This infusion of spiritual material stabilizes Yarrika’s phantom, causing its mantis head to revert to a humanoid one—that of Yarrika’s grandfather,

INFINITE ECHOING TALES

Feel free to imagine different legendary relics here that fit your player’s characters’ backstories and specializations. For instance, if one of the team uses a glaive, perhaps the legendary polearm *Writhing Serpent*, which can strike through shadows at a distance, might present itself. If the party includes a tengu, they instead find *Stormpillar*, a tengu gale blade made of translucent feathers. Use the existing *battle echoes* to determine a good effect for your own—these should be useful one-time effects, but not so powerful that they make or break the combat by themselves. As a general rule, a *battle echo* should deal 5 weapon damage dice when used normally and when unsealed should deal 10d6 damage in a line, cone, or burst—with a DC 35 for any effects created. No two *battle echoes* should have exactly the same story or effects.

confirming her suspicions that her phantom has been her grandfather all along. This moves Yarrika and her team to tears, and the Biting Roses swear their aid to the player characters in the dragon summoning ritual later.

E. THE BLASTED LANDS

The blighted caldera known to locals as the Blasted Lands serves as the prison for two kaiju. One, Toraloea, is a spirit of life and creation, though what it creates is truly alien: living trees of rock that bloom with fungal life and choke out most plants and creatures native to the Material Plane. The other, Alru, is a spirit of destruction, wielding a bizarre emerald lightning that directly converts anything it strikes to violent energy. The two are equally matched and have fought each other for eons, Toraloea creating matter at the same rate Alru destroys it. Their conflict once raged across Tian Xia until the two were led to the caldera and the entrances were sealed by a wish to the Celestial Dragon. The wish ensured that the two kaiju cannot leave: If Toraloea attempts to fly out, he immediately becomes lost and crashes to the ground. If Alru attempts to burrow out, she similarly always finds herself emerging elsewhere in the caldera.

The two kaiju are beyond mere mortals’ ability to engage directly. Thankfully, they are also singularly fixated on each other and pay no more heed to minuscule humanoids than a horse reflexively flicks its tail to shoo away a fly. The environmental effects of the titanic battle are represented in each section as Kaiju Clash events that happen each time the party reaches a new area. If the party has somehow managed to part the clouds over the caldera to reveal the moon, (they can learn this tip from

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Jin-Hae at Kaifen Bay on page 20), Alru and Toraloe are enthralled somewhat by its peaceful light, reducing the DCs of any checks in a Kaiju Clash event by 2.

As the player characters may have learned from Abbot Tsujon at the Rai Sho Monastery, they're here to retrieve a branch from the boundary cypress. Unfortunately for the party, there's only one good path into the caldera, and it starts on nearly the opposite side of the crater (area E1) from the cypress tree (area E6).



KAMINARI

Skies Above the Blasted Lands

A ring of rock protrudes in a miles-long circle through the clouds, outlining the shape of a volcanic caldera. Flashes of light and fire flare from the bottom of the clouds, a harsh, green light unlike the warm glow of a volcano. Impossible screeching and distorted sounds echo, and every so often, a massive, writhing shape is silhouetted against the clouds.

Though the party can attempt to enter the Blasted Lands from the air, a combination of volcanic cloud cover, battling kaiju, and sacred barriers erected by the boundary cypress tree at the caldera's heart make this all but impossible. If pushed, Yoh attempts to enter the cloud cover, but the *Solar Jian II* is swiftly blasted back out of the clouds by a massive shockwave, after which point Yoh refuses to take the ship any closer, calling it a fool's errand.

A character who can fly or otherwise survive great falls might try to jump from the airship to land in the caldera. If they do so, they must attempt three basic DC 38 Reflex saves while falling as they are exposed to toxic gasses, arcs of lightning, and a flailing kaiju limb. Each of these three hazards deals 13d6 poison, electricity, and bludgeoning damage, respectively, and flings the character back out of the cloud cover, where Yoh can pluck them out of the air. In this case, right before a blow lands, the struck character glimpses a massive eye as large as a galleon.

Two groups of airborne creatures catch the player characters' attention as they fly over the Blasted Lands. The Steps of the Sun, their musically inclined rivals from the Ruby Phoenix Tournament, soar on the back of their roc mount, pursued by two demonic red and green figures riding storm clouds. The roc is clearly wounded, and before the player characters can act it crashes to the ground on the caldera rim.

Creatures: Two kaminari kami reside in the clouds here, their mastery of air and lightning allowing them to pass unfettered through the Blasted Lands' rough skies.

The kami attack the *Solar Jian II* as soon as they notice the vessel or someone attempts to enter the cloud layer, incensed that lesser beings would have the gall to enter their domain.

The kaminari are fierce rivals over the matter of whether wind or lightning is superior. Though both brothers are capable



of using their full suite of powers, the elder brother prefers lightning and refuses to use his Hurricane Bag, and the younger brother believes in the superiority of wind and refuses to use his Thunder Drums. If for whatever reason one of the brothers uses the element they don't favor, they take a -2 circumstance penalty to their AC and saves for the rest of the day, ashamed that they've shown the other brother the superiority of their element. Nevertheless, they fight together as a team, attempting to catch the party in their Tempest Tether and detonations. If one of the kaminari is defeated, the other will surrender when reduced to 50 or fewer Hit Points, at which point it can be convinced to help the team break the clouds over the Blasted Lands (see Clearing the Skies, below).

FLYING MOUNTAIN KAMINARI (2) CREATURE 18

RARE CN HUGE HUMANOID KAMI

Kami of lightning and thunder

Perception +33

Languages Senzar, Tien

Skills Acrobatics +31 (+36 to Maneuver in Flight), Athletics +31, Flying Mountains Lore +35, Nature +37, Religion +35

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +8, **Int** +5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

Stormsight Wind, precipitation, and clouds don't impair a kaminari's vision; they ignore the concealed condition from storms, mist, precipitation, and the like.

AC 42; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +33, **Will** +27

HP 320; **Immunities** air, electricity, sonic

Speed 25 feet, fly 60 feet; stormflight

Melee ♦ fist +35 (agile, reach 15 feet, unarmed), **Damage** 5d6+17 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ storm blast +32 (air, electricity, magical, range 120 feet), **Damage** 4d6 bludgeoning plus 3d12 electricity

Hurricane Bag ♦♦ (air) A kaminari's bag holds the four winds. The kaminari unleashes four 20-foot bursts within 60 feet with the effects of a 9th-level *wall of wind*. In addition, a creature that enters one of the bursts takes 6d6 slashing damage (DC 40 basic Reflex save). The bursts can't overlap. After using this activity the kaminari can't use Hurricane Bag for 1d4 rounds.

If a kaminari creates a column of lighting using Thunder Drums that intersects one of the areas of the wind, the wind explodes in a peal of thunder, dealing 6d10 sonic damage to creatures in the area of that *wall of wind* burst. Affected creatures must attempt a DC 40 Fortitude save. The kaminari can detonate only one burst per use of Thunder Drums.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes half damage.

Failure The target takes full damage and is deafened for 1 minute.

Critical Failure The target takes double damage and is deafened permanently.

Stormflight A kaminari can move in wind with ease. They ignore all difficult terrain from wind and don't need to Maneuver in Flight in high winds.

Tempest Tether ♦♦ (air, electricity) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Electricity leaps between two kaminari. The kaminari establishes a connection with another kaminari within 150 feet, and lightning and thunder form a line between the centers of their spaces. For the next minute, a creature that begins its turn in the line or enters the line on its turn takes 4d12 electricity damage (DC 40 basic Reflex save). A creature can take this damage only once per round, even if it moves through several tempest tethers. If the distance between the kaminari ever exceeds 150 feet, the tether breaks.

Thunder Drums ♦♦ (electricity) The peal of a kaminari's drums bring thunder and lightning. The kaminari summons four 100-foot-tall columns of lightning to strike in 5-foot bursts within 60 feet. These columns can't overlap. Creatures in the burst take 8d12 electricity damage and must attempt a DC 40 Reflex save. The kaminari can't use Thunder Drums again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The target takes half damage.

Failure The target takes full damage and is stunned 1.

Critical Failure The target takes double damage and is stunned 2.

Clearing the Skies: The party may have learned that the kaiju that live in the Blasted Lands can be pacified by clearing the cloud cover and letting them glimpse the moon. Three consecutive air effects of 8th level or higher clears the clouds for a few hours. If the party secured the help of one or both kaminari, they are happy to use their weather-manipulation abilities to part the clouds for a few hours at an agreed-upon time. More creative solutions, such as by flying rapidly to create a slipstream, might also work, though these unconventional methods should require a skill check and have a relatively high DC of 40 to 42.

Thanks for Saving Us: As long as the party neutralizes the kaminari, the Steps of the Sun are grateful for the rescue. They tell the characters of a strange boulder they saw on the way here which might allow entrance into the Blasted Lands (E1, below). The team also promises to aid the heroes in the ritual to summon the Celestial Dragon.

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Race to the Peak

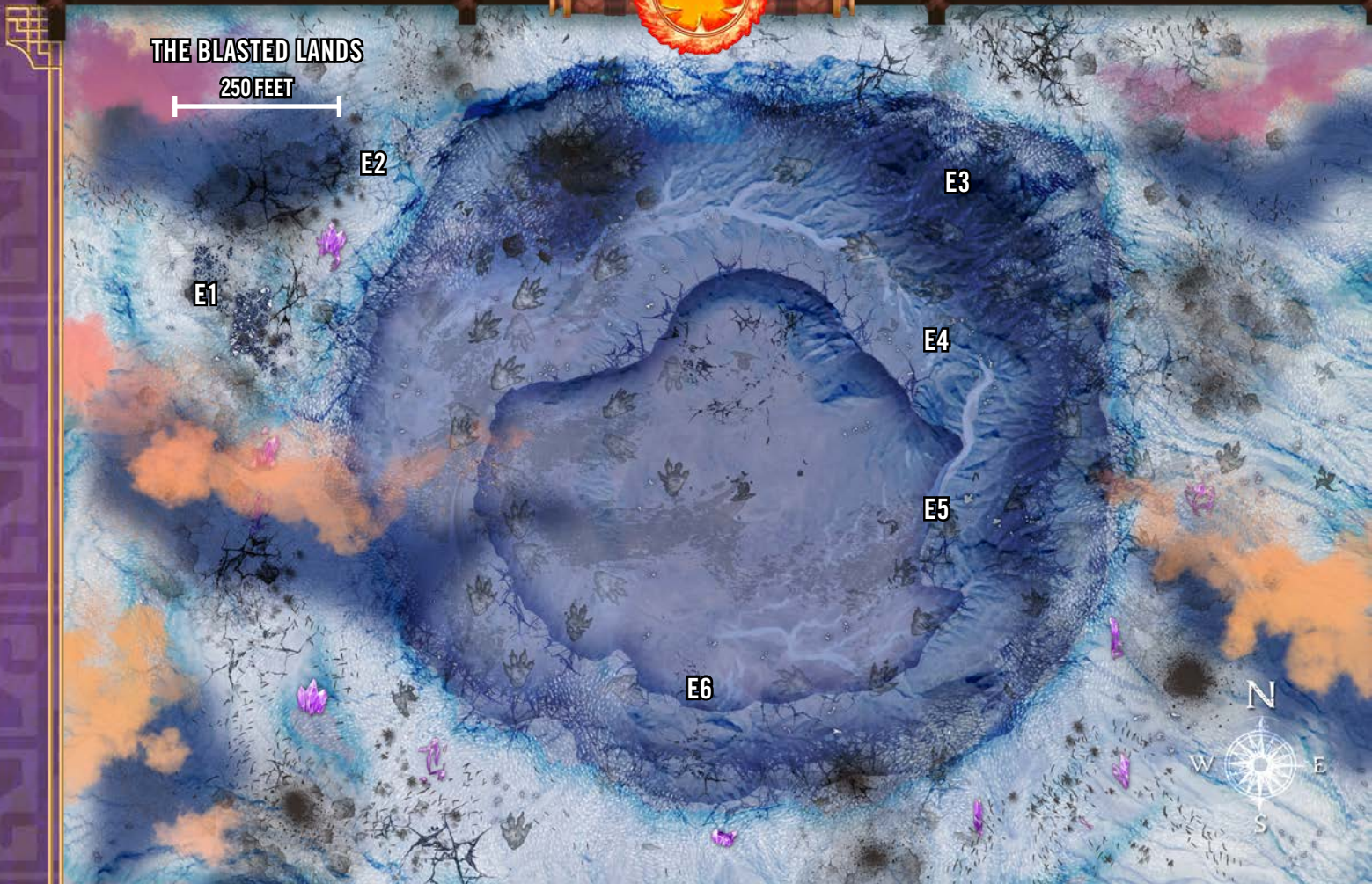
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E1. Gate to the Past

Yoh brings the *Solar Jian II* down through the clouds, landing at the base of the massive mountain. Loose volcanic cinder clinks and crunches underfoot, broken only by the occasional spindly red ohia flower. Every so often, a distorted screech echoes through the air, causing the pebbles on the ground to rattle. A twenty-foot-wide boulder covered in rectangular paper talismans rests against the side of the hill.

Since aerial approaches into the Blasted Lands are next to impossible due to the wind, lightning, and never-ending kaiju battle, those making a pilgrimage there used an old lava tube in the side of the crater wall as a covert passageway inside. To prevent trespassers, a large boulder guards the entrance when not in use.

Moving the Boulder: The party can attempt to simply shove the boulder aside by force, which requires three successful DC 40 Athletics checks. Magically inclined adventurers might attempt to teleport past it or phase through the boulder, casting spells such as with *passwall* or *meld into stone*. However, the paper talismans affixed to the boulder

project a lattice of force through the stone for hundreds of feet in all directions (including straight down) that also attempts to counteract teleportation effects and planar travel. This has the effects of a 9th-level *dimensional lock* spell, except that it affects only attempts to cross through the mountainside within 300 feet of the boulder. The heroes can disable the talismans' magic with two successful DC 35 Religion checks or remove them from the boulder with two successful DC 38 Thievery checks. Once the talismans are negated or removed, the boulder can be moved with a single DC 30 Athletics check, as the magic anchoring it in place fades.

E2. Lava Tube

Moderate 18

The cool air within this cavernous tunnel is sticky and humid, and the dripping of water can be heard between distant cries and crashes. Any light from the outside is quickly lost in the cavern's twists and turns.

Creatures: The lava tube winds for a quarter mile before the team comes across a nest of two cavern



worms. They attack as soon as they detect trespassers, which they're likely to do given their tremorsense. The worms burrow into and out of the walls to make hit and run attacks, usually choosing not to leave tunnels in their wake to make it more difficult for enemies to follow them. Once the Kaiju Clash (see below) has occurred, the worms cluster around the lava pool to take advantage of their fire healing ability.

To map out this fight, use the Volcanic Arena map on the inside rear cover of this volume.

CRIMSON WORMS (2)

CREATURE 18

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Initiative Perception +25

Kaiju Clash: This close to the crater, the effects of the kaiju's fight start to become tangible to anyone nearby. At the beginning of the third round of the player characters' fight against the crimson worms, Toraloe deflects some of Alru's lightning into the earth, forcing a deep pocket of magma to the surface. This can occur anywhere on the battlefield and deals 18d6 fire damage (DC 40 basic Reflex save) in a 20-foot burst; position the volcanic burst to catch the crimson worms in it as well, giving them a source of healing for the remainder of the fight.

Treasure: Strewn about are the partial remains from a previous band of explorers. Though mostly decayed and rusting, some of their equipment remains useful, namely a suit of dragonhide armor and a +3 *greater striking greater thundering pick*.

E3. Into the Light

The lava tube exits into the Blasted Lands proper, revealing a spectacular (and terrifying) conflict of titanic proportions.

Steep vertical cliffs ring the caldera, and a few hundred feet up, the trapped clouds form a thick overcast ceiling, though one that still lets through dispersed light. Two massive creatures battle in the center of the caldera. One, shaped like a massive purple manta ray, scatters numerous black orbs as it flies through the air. Wherever the orbs land, bizarre trees made of obsidian and basalt bloom in an instant and are covered in multicolored lichen. The other, a gargantuan behemoth composed of green ooze that constantly emits emerald lightning, stomps across the caldera, crushing and frying the alien forests as quickly as they manifest.

As the adventurers step out into the caldera, Alru—the earthbound kaiju of destruction—and Toraloe—the flying source of alien life—are clearly visible in the distance. The walls of the caldera are smooth and have the texture of melted wax, having been turned to slag and re-formed millions of times during the kaiju's endless conflict. A path leads down the rocky ledge to a kipuka of ginkgo trees—an island of life spared from the surrounding devastation.

As soon as the heroes emerge from the lava tube, they are exposed to the following event.

Kaiju Clash: Alru's bellow drowns out thunderclaps as emerald lightning courses through her body.





In response, Toraloe flares his wings and lets out a piercing screech. The angled walls of the caldera magnify the sound many times over. All creatures in the area must succeed at a DC 38 Fortitude save or take 9d6 sonic damage and be deafened for 1 hour; on a critical failure, the damage is doubled and the creature is deafened permanently.

E4. An Unfortunate Field Trip

Moderate 18

Through the trees is a clearing with a fifteen-foot-tall rock formation at its center. Six masked figures—recognizable as the Speakers to the Winds—remain atop it, though four of them lie unconscious. Beneath the rock, three horned beasts circle the group, the ground beneath their glowing claws clearly furrowed by their repeat passage. As one of the humans—recognizable as Phuthi Nuware—raises a hand that crackles with magic, the creatures roar loudly, causing her spell to disappear with a fizzle. She collapses, and the sole remaining figure, Professor Mafika Ayuware, raises his staff with a hopeless expression.

As the team might have learned from running into Boundless Hummingbird in Goka, the Speakers to the Winds attempted to use a modified teleportation ritual to cross the Flying Mountains and beat the other contestants to the Southern Flare. However, despite their meticulous calculations, the spatial distortions caused by Syndara and Hao Jin's conflict and the presence of Syndara's Island's meant that the spell was much less accurate than usual, causing the team to materialize off-target in the Blasted Lands. Though they thought they'd be able to simply teleport out and try again if anything went wrong, the team materialized near a group of leydroths, primal creatures possessing an intense hatred of magic and the ability to detect and disrupt it. With the Speakers unable to bring their magic to bear, the creatures have been pursuing them for over a day. The leydroths now toy with their food, waiting for the spellcasters to collapse from exhaustion before devouring them.

Creatures: Three leydroths prowl around the rock clearing here. A player character who succeeds at a DC 34 Stealth Check can Sneak past the preoccupied creatures. If combat begins, one of the leydroths has already used Dispelling Roar on the Magaambyans, but the other two open by using their Dispelling Roar abilities, then focusing their attacks on the party's most obvious spellcaster. If a player character proves an annoyance to the leydroths through use of a magic item, such as using a *broom of flying* to evade from the air, the leydroths target the item with their *disjunction*

or *dispel magic* innate spells, but they don't attempt to disjoin magic weapons, as they are more resistant to enchanted weapons than non-magical ones. As long as there are conscious spellcasters in the party, the leydroths don't flee; otherwise, each leydroth retreats deeper into the crater when reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points.

LEYDROTHS (3)

CREATURE 17

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Initiative Perception +30

Kaiju Clash: At the beginning of the second round of combat, Toraloe beats his wings to drive back Alru, sending a mighty gust of wind screaming throughout the caldera. All Medium or smaller creatures on the ground, or all Large or smaller creatures who are airborne, must succeed at a DC 40 Reflex save or be pushed 40 feet to the east, knocked prone, and dazzled for 1 round. Airborne creatures take a –2 circumstance penalty to their checks.

A Thankful Team: If the player characters defeat or drive off the leydroths, the Speakers to the Winds thank them and say that they're taking a few minutes to rest and recuperate before they use the lava tube to exit the Blasted Lands. Saving the team ensures the spellcasters will lend their aid in the ritual to call the Celestial Dragon.

If the player characters ignore the Speakers to the Winds or leave them behind to deal with the leydroths unaided, the team does manage to escape the Blasted Lands, but only at great cost. Professor Ayuware is heavily injured while serving as a distraction to allow his students the chance to make a break for it. Though the professor manages to make it out alive, Akila Stormheel must take over as the group's acting leader until Professor Ayuware can receive more specialized treatment back at the Magaambya. While the team eventually makes it to Iron Mountain, she (and her classmates) never forgive the player characters, and they refuse to lend their aid in the ritual to call the Celestial Dragon.

XP Award: If the player characters sneak past the leydroths, grant them XP as if they had defeated or driven them off in combat.

E5. Running the Gauntlet

At the edge of the gingko kipuka lies the vast crater floor which serves as Toraloe and Alru's battlefield. Beyond the barren plain, in the distance, lies a solitary hill covered in green and silver foliage, perceivable even through the devastating battle of the kaiju.



The two kaiju shower the caldera in destruction as they battle. If the adventurers attempt to cross the plain, they must brave the following hazards. Each round, the two kaiju clash, emitting shock waves that deal 2d6 force and 2d6 sonic damage (DC 37 basic Fortitude save) to any creature in any area other than the safe zones of the ginkgo kipuka and the area surrounding the cypress tree. Creatures who succeed at a DC 35 Perception check notice that there is a third area that seems untouched by the chaos—a stone obelisk some distance toward the edge of the caldera. This is area **E5d**, the Dragon's Shrine, which contains additional information that the team can find useful.

For the sake of avoiding clutter, the following areas are not shown on the map on page 24. Rather, assume that each area falls in the path of the player characters' route across the caldera. If any leydroths escaped from the fight in area **E4**, consider having them chase the party to add tension to this mad dash through kaiju territory.

E5a. Shrapnel Fields: The landscape here is littered with sharp rock fragments from Toraloa's ever-growing alien trees. The ground is difficult terrain and hazardous terrain, and creatures that move on it through the area take 10 piercing damage for every square of that area they move into.

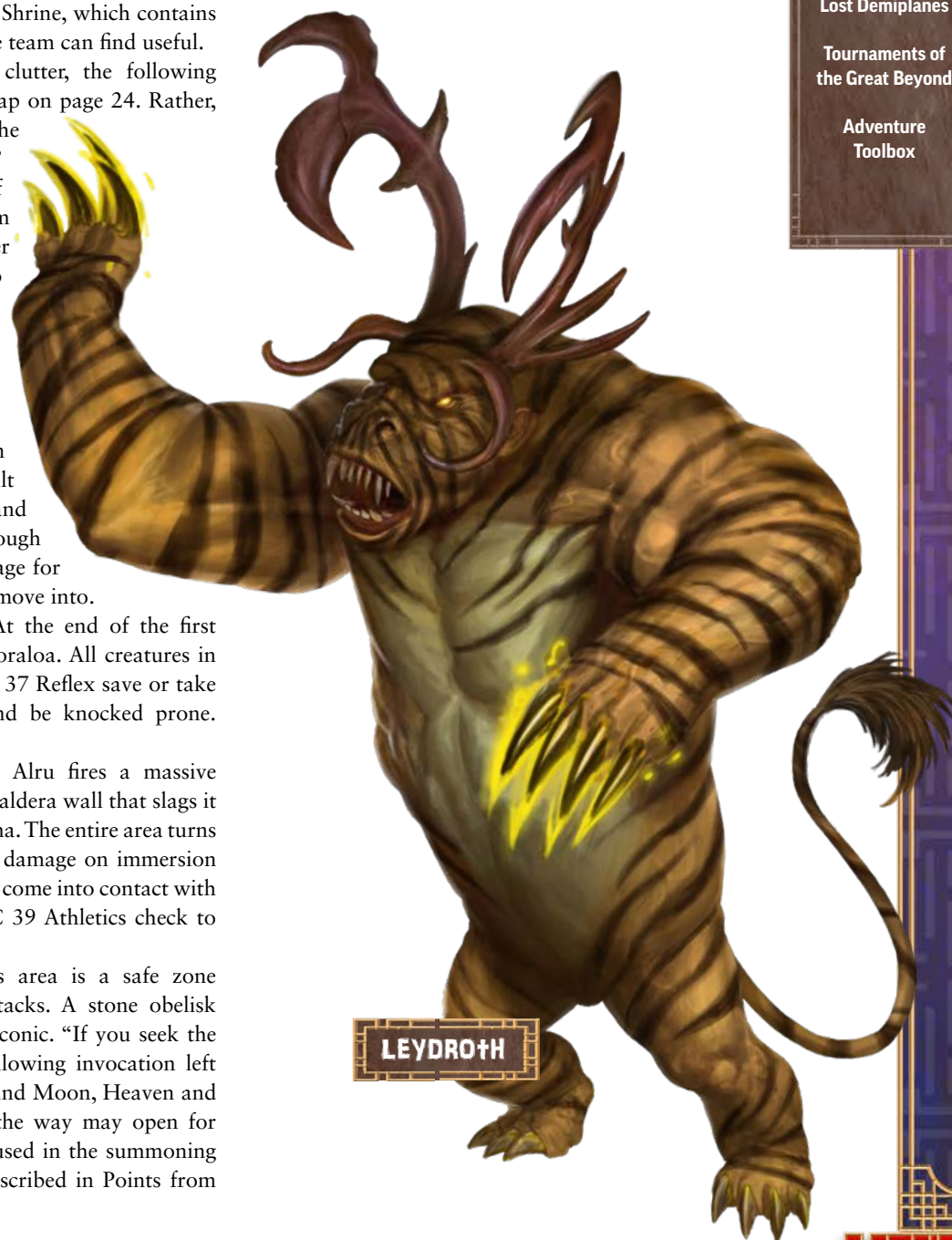
E5b. Monstrous Footstep: At the end of the first round, Alru charges toward Toraloa. All creatures in the area must succeed at a DC 37 Reflex save or take 12d6 bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. This occurs only once.

E5c. Lava Waterfall: Here, Alru fires a massive blast of green lightning at the caldera wall that slags it instantly into a torrent of magma. The entire area turns to lava, which deals 16d6 fire damage on immersion and immobilizes creatures who come into contact with it unless they succeed at a DC 39 Athletics check to free themselves.

E5d. Dragon's Shrine: This area is a safe zone protected from the kaiju's attacks. A stone obelisk contains an inscription in Draconic. "If you seek the Celestial Dragon, read the following invocation left by an intercessor of old: 'Sun and Moon, Heaven and Earth, Light and Dark,' and the way may open for you." This invocation can be used in the summoning ritual for added benefit (as described in Points from Initial Offerings on page 29).

E5e. Dead Air: The alien lichen that covers Toraloa's trees grow precipitously as it consumes Alru's lightning as fuel. The rapid growth depletes all the oxygen in the air, exposing air-breathing creatures to suffocation. The foul stench of lichen also causes creatures to be sickened 1 unless they succeed at a DC 39 Fortitude save (sickened 2 on a critical failure); retching to remove the sickened condition expels the rest of the creature's air.

E5f. Dispelling Clash: The two kaiju launch ranged attacks at each other that warp and clash the air where





they meet. Something about the primordial interaction is inimical to magic; each creature in the area is affected by 9th-level *dispel magic*. This occurs only once.

E5g. Steep Ridge: This ridge of shifting ash becomes a cascade of ash each time the kaiju's impacts jostle it. A player character who succeeds at a DC 35 Acrobatics check to Balance can move safely across the ledge. A character who critically fails the check slides into the caldera below, and must spend 2 rounds climbing back up to the ridge before proceeding.

E5h. Ground Zero: A blast detonates as soon as a player character enters the area, dealing 16d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 38 basic Reflex save). On a critical failure, the target is stunned 1. This occurs only once.

E6. The Extinct Tree

In the center of the volcanic plain, a lone tree stands on a hill, its white flowers unmoved by the shock waves and blasts of the battling kaiju. The air around it is muted and serene. Dozens of silversword plants, spearlike flower stalks reaching six feet from their glittering leaves, cover the hill where the lone tree stands.

The last boundary cypress tree lives here, where its magic protects it from the kaiju's rampage. Though Alru and Toraloe continue their battle, their attacks break harmlessly in a transparent hemispheric magical shield centered on the tree. No matter how chaotic the fight becomes, the grove remains unaffected.

A player character who succeeds at a DC 38 Nature check can beseech the tree to give a branch to the party. If this occurs, the branch retains some of the tree's warding magic even after it is removed. The branch protects any creatures within a 20-foot-radius aura centered on it from kaiju effects, allowing the player characters to simply walk or fly out of the Blasted Lands. A branch can also be taken forcibly, in which case it still will function for the summoning ritual later, but it will not shield the characters on their way out of the caldera.

Treasure: Several relics are scattered about the hill, resting near a series of burial mounds. An elaborate plaque nearby states that anyone who has managed to brave the Blasted Lands can take these treasures without upsetting the spirits, as long as they're used for a good cause. The treasures include a *dispelling sliver*, a suit of *impenetrable scale*, a *staff of power*, and a 7th-level *wand of manifold missiles*.

F. WINTER'S SHORE

MODERATE 18

Choppy surf breaks against an island off the coast of the Flying Mountains. A longboat has been pulled onto the

gravelly shore. Below, all of Winter's Roar save Urnak lie unconscious on the beach while their leader does battle with a serpentine creature. Unknown to Urnak, another such beast approaches from the water, moving toward the shore.

Creatures: Winter's Roar had traveled by longboat to reach the base of the great mountain range, but near the end of their voyage they were distracted by the sight of a legendary monster—a cairn linnorm—waiting on an islet just off the main shore. The crew changed course and challenged the linnorm, but everyone save Urnak was quickly defeated by the ferocious beast. Now, Urnak fights the linnorm alone, hoping to secure his claim to a throne but completely unaware of the linnorm's mate creeping up from behind.

Use the map of the Flying Mountains Shoreline on the inside front cover for this encounter.

CAIRN LINNORMS (2)

CREATURE 18

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 166

Initiative Perception +30

You've Secured My Legacy: To become a Linnorm King, one must defeat a linnorm in single combat. While the player characters can fight and even kill one of the linnorms if they so desire, Urnak commands the party to not damage, interfere with, or otherwise perform any hostile actions toward the linnorm he's fighting, so that Urnak can still claim to have defeated the linnorm unaided. If the party successfully occupies the other linnorm for 5 rounds without interfering with Urnak's fight, Urnak successfully defeats his linnorm. Occupying the second linnorm so Urnak can defeat his without interference ensures that Winter's Roar will lend their aid in the ritual to call the Celestial Dragon. Interfering with Urnak's fight, on the other hand, deprives the warrior of his birthright and earns the party his eternal enmity.

Treasure: A cargo ship crashed recently in the waters offshore, and several crates have washed up on the beach, bearing the insignia of the Harvest Moon Shipping Co. A *potion of undetectability*, *universal solvent*, two juggernaut mutagens, and two *wyrm dragon's breath potions* are all salvageable, as is an *inexplicable apparatus* used to load crates.

TO WISH UPON A DRAGON

As the *Solar Jian II* descends once more upon the peak of Iron Mountain, a large crowd has gathered around the summit. Golarion's mightiest warriors stand ready to enact a miracle.



Each of the five other finalist teams still on this plane has, one way or another, managed to find their way to the peak of Iron Mountain and arrived at the same conclusions as the players—Hao Jin is located in the mysterious floating island in the sky, the one that can't be reached. Barring extreme circumstances, all of the other finalist teams should have survived their journeys. Allow some time for the players to interact with the other finalists and modify each NPC team member's responses according to the players' interactions with the teams as the player characters scoured the Flying Mountains. For instance, if the party came to blows with Winter's Roar, the team of vikings is terse and standoffish at the mountaintop.

INVOCATION

When the player characters have said everything they need to say to the other teams and made their preparations, they can begin the invocation. Once the elected intercessor begins the Kagura of Invocation, they can't stop for any reason—doing so disrupts the ritual, causing all of the DCs associated with it to increase by 1 the next time it is attempted.

During this invocation, the intercessor makes the offerings, performs various rituals, and calls upon their friends to tally up their total Soul Offering Points. The sum total of these Soul Offering Points determines the outcome of their wish to the Celestial Dragon. Once the invocation is complete and the player characters have accumulated all the Soul Offering Points they believe they'll need, proceed to Intercession on page 32.

Points from Initial Offerings

Throughout their exploration of the Flying Mountains, the team might have discovered additional offerings that can be made before the ritual to help ensure its success. Each offering can be performed just once and doing so automatically increases the party's total number of Soul Offering Points.

- **A Draconic Prayer:** Beginning the ritual with the phrase "Sun and Moon, Heaven and Earth, Light and Dark" in Draconic automatically adds 2 Soul Offering Points to the ritual's total.
- **A Lock of Hair:** Cutting off enough hair to significantly change the donor's appearance (or an analogous offering from an ancestry that doesn't have hair) and burning it before the ritual automatically adds 2 Soul Offering Points to the ritual's total.
- **A Splash of Wine:** Scattering any form of alcohol around the dais that has been blessed (requiring a successful DC 30 Religion check, which Abbot

Tsujon is happy to provide), automatically adds 2 Soul Offering Points to the ritual's total.

Points from the Ritual

The elected intercessor must complete the dragon's dance in three movements. Each phase of the invocation requires two checks: one from the intercessor and one from another creature (either a player character or an NPC as noted below).

Accompaniment: If the party remains in good standing with the Steps of the Sun, the team of musicians comes together to accompany the player character designated as intercessor. Halspin the Stung and Joon-Seo's musical accompaniment helps the intercessor keep time, and Amihan and Malaya dance a pattern around the dais that accentuates the intercessor's movements without disrupting focus. These measures grant the intercessor a +2 circumstance bonus to their Performance checks during the invocation.

First Movement: The intercessor begins their dance by slowly turning to the four corners of the dais and gesturing with the sacred cypress branch. A strange tension washes over the mountaintop as it is clear the ritual has begun to push at the barrier separating the Material Plane from the world beyond. The intercessor must attempt a DC 36 Performance check to dance; a party member must attempt a DC 38 Occultism or Religion check to ward off wandering spirits from interfering with the ritual. For the Occultism or Religion check, a character who casts *sanctified ground* heightened to at least 7th level gets an automatic success on the check. If the party is in good standing with the Biting Roses, the trio of spiritualists create a barrier around the dais using Artus's arrows and Lantondo's cards as mediums, automatically protecting the dais from spirits.

Second Movement: As the intercessor tears a leaf from the offered boundary cypress and places it in their mouth, the branch's shape ripples into that of a wooden fan. The intercessor performs a series of complex circular motions with the implement, and winds howl about the peak of the mountain. The intercessor must attempt a DC 37 Performance check to dance. The winds dislodge a large boulder precariously balanced atop the mountain, which rolls toward the dais. The intercessor takes 12d6 bludgeoning damage and a -2 circumstance penalty to Performance checks to dance for the next hour unless the boulder is destroyed or stopped. The boulder has 10 Hardness, 60 Hit Points, and a Broken Threshold of 30. The party has 1 round to break the boulder, which causes it to crack, reducing the damage to 6d6

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MISSING PIECES

If the party fails to acquire one or more of the components to complete the dragon-summoning ritual, they might yet be able to attempt it with a substituted component taken from elsewhere. These substitutes don't hold the weight of the originals and impose cumulative -2 circumstance penalties to checks to perform the Kagura of Invocation (pages 29-30) and checks to socialize with the Celestial Dragon.

The Breath: If the characters permanently sour their relationship with the Rai Sho Monastery, they might still learn how to perform the kagura dance. Jin-Hae, the previous intercessor, knows the dance, though her rejection of her office has left her out of practice. Similarly, the burial mound at the foot of the boundary cypress tree in the Blasted Lands contains a basic diagram and instructions of the dance's primary forms. If the PCs don't uncover any of these sources whatsoever, you can reveal that the Steps of the Sun team eventually managed to get Abbot Tsujon to teach them the kagura, which they pass on to the PCs.

The Spirit: If the player characters are defeated by Jin-Hae and she does not grant them the mantle of intercessor, they can gain a ritual sash that signifies the holder as the intercessor's deputized representative from Abbot Tsujon or from the burial mound at the foot of the boundary cypress in the Blasted Lands. If the characters do not uncover any of these sources, you can reveal that Urnak Lostwind and the rest of his team eventually landed at Kaifen Bay and met with the Biting Roses, aiding them in their ritual to open the door to Jin-Hae's realm and defeating her in combat. This grants Urnak the title of intercessor, which he is happy to pass on to one of the player characters, as he is terrified of dancing in public.

The Bone: If the characters cannot navigate the Blasted Lands to retrieve a stick of boundary cypress, they can still gain a single preserved leaf of the plant from Abbot Tsujon's private collection or one of two time-displaced flowers that are each attached to one of Jin-Hae's hook swords. If they do not uncover any of these sources whatsoever, you can reveal that the Speakers of the Wind and the Arms of Balance used a combination of halcyon magic and ki control to create a synthetic sample of boundary cypress and imbue it with life.

stone, might also automatically resolve this challenge (at the GM's discretion). If the party is in good standing with Winter's Roar, the vikings immediately deflect the stone off the path with a wall of shields, before Troff shatters it in a single punch.

Third Movement: The sacred branch transforms once more from a fan to a small wooden stick that holds 12 flower-shaped bells, letting out a ring as the intercessor charts a wandering path around the dais. With each ring of the bells, the sky grows darker and the bells glow brighter, until they become a harsh sun and the sky shifts to a black void. The darkness swallows up the ritual braziers at the four cardinal directions. The intercessor must attempt a DC 38 Performance check to dance, while the rest of the party has 1 round to ensure that all four braziers are relit, which can be done by successfully striking each brazier with a different elemental effect (air, water, fire, or earth). The braziers are located at the four corners of the dais, which are 60 feet apart from each other. Lighting at least two braziers contributes 1 Soul Offering Point, lighting all four contributes 2 Soul Offering Points. If the party is in good standing with the Arms of Balance, the elemental masters each provide the necessary material to relight the braziers, using their unique elemental ki as a focus.

Final Movement: The bells from the intercessor's staff become streaks of light that shoot to the sky above the lake, spinning in a great wheel until the afterimages form a great circular gate wide enough for two warships to pass through. The intercessor must attempt a DC 39 Performance check to dance. The gate crackles unstably—a party member must attempt a DC 38 Arcana or Nature check to stabilize its formation. If the party is in good standing with the Speakers to the Wind, Professor Ayuwari leads his students in a collaborative halcyon working that automatically shores the gate with a treelike lattice of arcane and primal magic.

Points from the Finalists

The teams that the player characters helped in the Flying Mountains can offer their own energy to the ritual as well. For each of the following teams, read or paraphrase the following. Each befriended team contributes 2 Soul Offering Points to the ritual.

Arms of Balance: If the party is in good standing with the Arms of Balance, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

Usvani steps forward and bows, one hand clasped over the other. "We thought that by gaining entry to the Ruby Phoenix Tournament, we had already completed our training. But I see now that we have much left to learn.

and the penalty to -1 (this contributes 1 Soul Offering Point); destroying it fully negates the damage and penalty altogether (this contributes 2 Soul Offering Points). Clever uses of other abilities, such as *wall of*



It falls to you now to conclude this tournament." The Arms of Balance each place a hand to their chests and begin to shine with the color of their respective elements.

Biting Roses: If the party is in good standing with the Biting Roses, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

Yarrika Mulandez's phantom, now bearing a human face, phases into existence and stands by her side. "You've shown us glimpses of a land beyond—one I did not think I'd ever have the fortune to see, and you've brought me closer to my grandfather. May fortune carry you further." The Biting Roses each place a hand to their chests and begin to shine with an ethereal light, transparent and gentle as a spirit at rest.

Steps of the Sun: If the party is in good standing with the Steps of the Sun, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

The sisters Amihan and Malaya move forward with deliberate steps. "We see now that we were far out of our depth, and we thank you for rescuing us from the Blasted Lands. We hope you dance ever further." The Steps of the Sun each place a hand to their chests and begin to shine with a clear, rippling light that rings with harmonizing chimes and tones.

Speakers to the Winds: If the party is in good standing with the Speakers to the Winds, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

Professor Ayuwari calls his students to fall in line, and each gathers themselves. "You saved us in the caldera when the strength of our magic alone was insufficient. We stand on the strength of thousands, and we now pledge that strength to you." The Speakers to the Wind each place a hand to their chests and begin to shine with a soft light like the sun's rays dappling through leaves.

Winter's Roar: If the party is in good standing with Winter's Roar, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

Urnak Lostwind throws his axe into the ground, where it embeds itself to the haft as Winter's Roar lets out a howl befitting their namesake. The warrior intones, "The Tournament was only ever a way for us to test ourselves.

By helping me slay a linnorm, you have brought us one step closer to our true goal, a kingdom of our own. You will always be welcome among us." The members of Winter's Roar each place a hand to their chests and begin to shine with a scintillating light like the aurora seen through a glacier's side.

Points from Sacrifice

If the players wish to improve the power of the ritual, they can make additional sacrifices to empower the wish. If they have not accumulated enough Soul Offering Points to proceed, they must make these sacrifices to continue forward; the Celestial Dragon can only remain manifested for so long, and pressures the player characters to move forward if they dawdle. Even if the players have already accumulated enough Soul Offering Points to have the Celestial Dragon grant their wish, let them know that further sacrifice might result

in greater power. Any persistent conditions incurred as a result of this sacrifice, including death, can't be reversed until one day after the party enters Syndara's Island, thereby seeing through the Celestial Dragon's boon. Be sure to amply warn each character of the general nature and weight of each sacrifice before they make it. A sacrifice can be made multiple times, but only once by any given player character.

My Darkest Secret: Secrets mean something. A character who utters a truly deep secret aloud empowers the ritual, gaining 2 Soul Offering Points. However, the secret, whether positive or negative, also fundamentally shakes one of the other finalists' trust in that character—for instance, if they admit to leaving an elderly relative at home to chase their dreams, perhaps Yarrika Mulandez can't believe they would throw family away, but if they admit to staying at home to care for the relative, Artus Rodrivan might instead lose respect for them giving up on their passions—in either case, this broken bond means that the character can't gain the Affinity Ablaze power from that team (though other player characters can).

My Greatest Ability: Offering the talent one has honed is a sacrifice worth 4 Soul Offering Points. The player character takes a –1 status penalty to the two skills with their highest modifier. On a tie, the player character chooses which skills are affected. They can attempt a DC 38 Will save each day during their daily preparations; on a success, they lose this penalty.



USVANI

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My Health and Body: Voluntarily weakening oneself is a sacrifice worth 6 Soul Offering Points. A character who gives up the defenses that they've trained for permanently gains weakness 7 against three energy types of the GM's choosing. They can attempt a DC 38 Fortitude save each day during their daily preparations; on a success, they lose this penalty.

My Dearest One: The memories of a friend, parent, or lover are a sacrifice worth 8 Soul Offering Points. The sacrificer recalls only a gnawing feeling where these memories once were, causing them to instinctively reject aid from others. After making this sacrifice, whenever the sacrificer would be the recipient of a beneficial ability from an ally (such as a *heal* spell), the sacrificer must roll a flat check; on a roll of 17, the spell fails. Each morning, the sacrificer can attempt a DC 38 Will to make peace with their lost memories; on a success, this effect is removed, though the memories remain lost.

My Life and Soul: Placing one's life on the line is worth 12 Soul Offering Points. As the Celestial Dragon chuckles, a wispy sphere floats from the character's mouth, and they slump over. The character is immediately reduced to 0 Hit Points and becomes dying 2. For 3 rounds, no other characters can attempt to offer aid. If the character dies from this damage, they can be resurrected only with powerful magic such as *miracle*.

INTERCESSION

With a clap of thunder, the impossible darkness of the sky and the impossible light of the gate atop Iron Mountain intertwine, deepest black and brightest white intersecting and spiraling, but never totally mixing. The colors recede from the sky, and a coiling shape massive enough to encircle the mountain's peak manifests, the form covered in black and white scales wider than most dragons are tall. Two eyes, each a serene gray bright as the moon, loom from the being's head. As the titanic dragon opens their whiskered jaws to reveal black and white teeth the size of towers, they speak in a voice that is at once old and young, ringing in the ears and resounding in the chest.

"Children, you have called us. And yet, it has been only eleven years since we were last called to Iron Mountain. We see not just one intercessor, but a legion of warriors. But somehow, enough magic and ceremony has been shed here to call us. What is it you desire? Speak now."

The other teams look on in awe as the Celestial Dragon descends upon Iron Mountain. The divine being encompasses the duality of heaven and earth, the material and beyond.

The Celestial Dragon allows the player characters to present their wish to access the demiplane above.

When they do, the Celestial Dragon informs the team that such a wish requires a great amount of spiritual power to grant. While the team's skill in summoning the Celestial Dragon has allowed the dragon to manifest with a certain amount of power, breaching Syndara's dimensional barrier to Syndara's Island requires at least 20 Soul Offering Points. The result of their wish depends on the total number of Soul Offering Points the party acquired. Before the result is finalized, the Celestial Dragon makes sure the characters have made all the sacrifices they intend to; even if the party has accumulated 20 or more points, the dragon might still tantalize them with an implicit promise of greater power should they make additional offerings.

Fewer Than 20 Soul Offering Points: If the players have not accumulated sufficient Soul Offering Points, the Celestial Dragon is not able to grant their wish at all. The players must make additional sacrifices to empower the ritual (see Points from Sacrifice on page 31).

20–25 Soul Offering Points: The Celestial Dragon can bestow only the most rudimentary of blessings upon the player characters. While this allows them to breach the dimensional boundary, the haphazard blessing means that the players take a –2 circumstance penalty to checks attempted during the Navigating the Dimensional Seas challenge (page 35).

26 Soul Offering Points: The Celestial Dragon grants the player characters the power to breach the dimensional boundary to Syndara's Island.

26–30 Soul Offering Points: The Celestial Dragon grants the party the power to breach the dimensional boundary to Syndara's Island, and in addition, allows the transfer of soul energy between teams to further empower the characters. The characters gain the Affinity Ablaze ability (page 33) with one other team.

30–32 Soul Offering Points: The Celestial Dragon grants the player characters the power to breach the dimensional boundary to Syndara's Island, and the large amount of soul energy binds more of the combatants together. The characters gain the Affinity Ablaze ability with two other teams.

33+ Soul Offering Points: The Celestial Dragon grants the player characters enough power to shatter the barrier between worlds, and the souls of the combatants resonate powerfully. This grants the players (and Yoh), a +2 circumstance bonus to all checks in the Navigating the Dimensional Seas challenge (page 35). The player characters gain the Affinity Ablaze ability with as many teams as they are in good standing with, and they gain a single extra use of Affinity Ablaze each day that can be used by any member of the team.

While most mundane wishes are within the Celestial Dragon's power to grant, the other teams present

should steer the conversation back to accessing the demiplane if any of the player characters attempt to use this once-a-zodiac-revolution chance for some other frivolous wish.

INCURSION

However they managed to find the necessary soul energy, as long as the contestants have at least 20 Soul Offering Points when they make their offering to the Celestial Dragon, spiritual energy flows out from the player characters as well as from any of the other finalists with whom the characters formed bonds throughout this chapter. The wispy energy gathers in the space between the Celestial Dragon's talons.

The Celestial Dragon speaks, and the air trembles. "Children, you have come far and sacrificed much. It is done." The energy coalesces into single half-black, half-white pearl, microscopic against the colossal deity. With a crack of thunder, the Celestial Dragon taps the pearl, which flies like a bullet toward each of you, passing through your bodies with a trail of energy before striking the *Solar Jian II*. A dragon-headed lance appears at the tip of either prow, shining with divine light.

"I have granted your wish. It now falls to you to see it through." The Celestial Dragon's last words echo as they split again into light and dark, vanishing for another zodiac cycle.

The Celestial Dragon's blessing to the supplicants has used their energy to empower a vessel of choice. Whenever the party chooses, they can pilot the *Solar Jian II* toward the floating island in the sky. This time, as they near the island, the two draconic lances on the ship strike something imperceptible around the island, grinding against it in a shower of sparks. The air shudders, then shatters, and with a sound like the tinkling of glass, the airship disappears into the demiplane before space knits shut behind it.

AFFINITY ABLAZE

CONCENTRATE EMOTION MAGICAL

Frequency once per day

There are few bonds like those between fighters who have shared blows in an arena, and in so doing, come to understand each other. You focus on your emotional connection to one of the other tournament teams, and their power roars along it to you like a string set alight. You use one of the following abilities, which you must have gained access to from the original team.

- **Arms of Balance: Walking the Cardinal Paths** ♦ The ki within you surges to coat your attacks in energy matter. For 1 minute, one of your weapons or your unarmed Strikes deal an additional 2d6 fire, cold, acid,

A ONE-WAY TRIP

Once the heroes enter Syndara's Island, the only way they'll have to return is by defeating Syndara. Ensure that the players realize that while the Celestial Dragon has given them the power to break into the demiplane containing Syndara's Island, this is a one-way trip, and they should take care of any business they might have in Goka or elsewhere before continuing through to find Hao Jin. Thankfully, the empowerment of the *Solar Jian II* increases its speed such that it can reach Goka easily in a half-day of travel, allowing for an easy last trip back to the metropolis before the player characters continue on their way.

or electricity damage. The Strikes gain the appropriate energy trait as well.

- **Biting Roses: Glimpses to Beyond** ♦ You gain a sense for the supernatural and the flow of fate. For 1 hour, you gain spiritsense as a precise sense with a range of 60 feet. Spiritsense enables you to sense the spirits of creatures, including living creatures, most non-mindless undead, and haunts within the listed range. As with your hearing and other imprecise senses, you still need to Seek to locate an undetected creature. As spiritsense detects spiritual essence, not physical bodies, it can detect spirits projected by spells such as project image or possessing otherwise soulless objects. It can't detect soulless bodies, constructs, or objects. Once during the spell's duration, when you roll a failure or critical failure on a saving throw or skill check, you get a success instead.
- **Steps of the Sun: Grand Harmony** ♦♦ Your heart harmonizes with those of your comrades before pounding once in a devastating shock wave. You deal 18d4 sonic damage in a 60-foot cone. Enemies can attempt a basic Fortitude save with a DC equal to your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. If you are adjacent to at least 1 ally, this deals d6s, if you are adjacent to at least 2 allies, this deals d8s.
- **Speakers to the Winds: All is One, One is All** ♦♦♦ Borrowing the magic of the Magaambya, you use a legendary spell from Old-Mage Jatembe himself. You cast *all is one, one is all* (*Lost Omens Legends* 64) as a 9th-level arcane or primal innate spell.
- **Winter's Roar: Rampaging Glacier Charge** ♦♦♦ You emulate the inexorable movement of a glacier. You Stride up to your Speed and make a melee Strike. Regardless of whether your attack hits, the path of your Stride is filled by a 9th-level *wall of ice*.

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CHAPTER 2: FRAGMENTS OF THE FRACTAL JUNGLE

Hao Jin is a magnificent figure. But the brighter the light, the darker the shadow. When Syndara finally broke free of his imprisonment in the *Hao Jin Tapestry*, his first thought was to see what had happened to his captor. From the *Glass Lighthouse*, Syndara tore discreet observation portals into the Material Plane and other worlds. He began his search, naturally, where things had last left off—in Tian Xia.

This led him to discover Hao Jin's activities on Bonmu. Bonmu's smaller island of Amotana, located in the rain shadow of Bonmu's Mount Haminabu and lashed by waves, was not much inhabited even in the days of the Taumata empire, instead being seen primarily as a haunted and desolate island used mostly for rituals related to death. Syndara found himself drawn to the smaller island that lacked the natural blessings of Bonmu, seeing in it a reflection of his own relationship with the Ruby Phoenix. He visited the barren place and meditated in its center for several days, drawing planar boundaries around it before

his working was complete. With a lurch, he forced Amotana into a demiplane of its own, ripping it from the sea and leaving nothing but an atoll ring to show where the island once lay.

Syndara spent a lot of time—though this time continued to pass at a strange rate within the new demiplane—structuring Amotana into an island fortress befitting his own moniker, Syndara's Island. He placed the *Glass Lighthouse* at one end to serve as his stronghold and stole several other locations from across the multiverse to patch up the island's shortcomings: a source of water from the elemental plane, a mine from Hongal, a forest from Garund—whatever he desired, Syndara took, with little thought for what was left behind.

Though the desolate island was uninhabited, Syndara knew he needed strong fighters to carry out his plan, and so he kidnapped many powerful beings as well. Those who showed promise and power, he allowed to serve as his lieutenants, nicknaming them



his Hungry Ghosts and allowing them a certain amount of autonomy over the less powerful. But while Syndara searched for allies, his controlling nature made him more likely to attempt to create them himself. He did so through an insidious technique called dimensional superimposition. By placing two creatures within the same demiplane, and then constricting its boundaries ever smaller, Syndara forced the two to fuse at the fundamental level, resulting in a more powerful combatant—though, unless the two subjects were already quite similar in their metaphysical nature, a gruesome death tended to be the more common result.

When Tino's Toughest chased after the Lightkeepers during Mogaru's assault on Goka in the previous volume, the Lightkeepers viciously defeated the team of underdogs before spiriting their unconscious and battered bodies back to their master's demiplane in the *Solar Jian I*, which Syndara let pass through his magical boundary unmolested. The axiomite grandmaster used his dimensional superimposition technique to warp each of the Toughest into abominable warriors to oppose Hao Jin's champions, the player characters. With this final group of fighters assembled, Syndara was now ready for the last step in his poetic plan—to conduct his own, cruel mockery of the Ruby Phoenix Tournament and crush Golarion's mightiest warriors before the trapped ashes of Hao Jin.

BREACHING THE BARRIER

As the team pierces through the boundary surrounding Syndara's Island, they find themselves in a bizarre extraplanar void filled with planar effects and defenses. Lights blur and stars warp as the view of the Material Plane grows dimmer. Nine of the stars—actually three-legged legendary birds called sanzuwus—detach from the heavens and begin chasing the *Solar Jian II*, clearly intent on its destruction, beginning a chase through this area between dimensions.

NAVIGATING THE DIMENSIONAL SEAS

MODERATE 19

The party's flight from the sanzuwus through the bizarre airspace is handled using the chase subsystem on page 156 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*. Your players should already be well familiar with this subsystem after playing through the events of the previous adventure, "Ready? Fight!" In addition to the players' checks to gain Chase Points, Yoh Souran attempts a roll each round automatically, using his Piloting Lore each time (his stats appear on pages 90-91).

The party must surmount the following obstacles to get the *Solar Jian II* through the spatial phenomena guarding the skies of Syndara's Island without being caught by the sanzuwus. On each round, the crew acts first, followed by the sanzuwus. The sanzuwus do not act on the first round. When they act, the sanzuwus automatically clear one obstacle per round, but one crow is killed, incapacitated, or driven off with each obstacle so cleared and are thus removed from the final confrontation (see below). If they catch up, the sanzuwus immediately engage in combat, receiving a +2 circumstance bonus to their initiative roll.

INVERTED THUNDERHEADS

OBSTACLE 18

Chase Points 5; Overcome DC 39 Nature to predict lightning strikes; DC 35 Piloting Lore to steer the ship; DC 40 Perception to plot a course; using an ability that can prevent at least 15 points of electricity damage, such as 7th-level *resist energy*, automatically grants a Chase Point

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

Having called upon the Celestial Dragon and been empowered by the fighting spirit of their tournament compatriots, the tournament finalists fly into the island in the sky, Syndara's demiplane, where they believe Hao Jin to be. After breaking through the treacherous defenses of the planar boundary, the team crash lands on Syndara's Island, where the one responsible for the attack on Goka and Hao Jin's disappearance finally reveals himself: Syndara the Sculptor. The cruel axiomite tells the heroes that he has taken over as administrator and grand judge of the Ruby Phoenix Tournament, and that he's changing the tournament's rules to ones that suit him better, with a new set of challengers for the player characters to face. The team must face mythical monsters and treacherous terrain alike before coming tragically face-to-face with some familiar foes in the Hungry Ghost Tournament!

Chapter 1:
Race to the Peak

Chapter 2:
Fragments of the
Fractal Jungle

Chapter 3:
Unmaking the
Sculptor

Lost Demiplanes

Tournaments of
the Great Beyond

Adventure
Toolbox



As the *Solar Jian II* first breaks into the demiplane, the sky is below the craft and the land is above it. Sparks arc between black thunderheads as trees of lightning erupt from beneath the ship to bloom above.

TOXIC CLOUDS

OBSTACLE 19

Chase Points 4; **Overcome** DC 40 Medicine or Nature to identify and neutralize the compounds in the clouds; DC 36 Piloting Lore to steer the ship; using an ability that can counteract the oncoming winds, such as *gust of wind*, automatically grants a Chase Point

To shake the pursuing creatures, Yoh takes the *Solar Jian II* closer to a bank of nearby clouds, only to find that they are made of a corrosive fog that the gale-force winds blow at the ship.

MAGNETIC FLUX

OBSTACLE 18

Chase Points 6; **Overcome** DC 35 Athletics to force the wings back into position; DC 34 Crafting to repair the ship's mechanisms; DC 33 Piloting Lore to steer the ship. Powerful magnetic distortions ripple through the sky, arresting the *Solar Jian II* and preventing its wings from articulating, holding the ship in place. Any character wearing metal armor takes a -1 circumstance penalty to their checks against this obstacle.

INFINITELY FALLING STARS

OBSTACLE 19

Chase Points 5; **Overcome** DC 37 Occultism or DC 39 Arcana or Religion to prevent the portals from opening; DC 35 Piloting Lore to steer the ship; succeeding at an attack roll against AC 37 and dealing at least 20 damage shoots down one of the falling stars, granting 1 Chase Point

The sky lights up with fist-sized meteorites that burn through the sky, only to disappear into portals and reappear back in the sky to fall again in an infinite shower.

GRAVITATIONAL INVERSION LAYER

OBSTACLE 20

Chase Points 4; **Overcome** DC 40 Acrobatics to maintain balance; DC 36 Piloting Lore to steer the ship; using an ability that manipulates gravity, such as *reverse gravity*, automatically grants 2 Chase Points

After clearing the web of stars, the *Solar Jian II* finally reaches a layer in the sky where gravity reasserts itself, with the sky once more becoming up and the ground once more becoming down—though the sudden change is enough to cause the ship to go into freefall!

SKY GUARDIANS

LOW TO SEVERE 19

ELITE SANZUWUS (4 TO 9)

CREATURE 16

Pathfinder Bestiary 6; page 85

Initiative Perception +28

Creatures: The sanzuwus finally catch up and engage the ship in combat. The number of these crows depends on how many obstacles the *Solar Jian II* successfully cleared before the crows caught up. The crows use hit-and-run tactics, circling around the ship and taking advantage of their greater aerial mobility. As with other aerial combats, Yoh limits himself to piloting the airship.

Hazardous Conditions: If the crows catch up to the *Solar Jian II* before the ship has made it through the gauntlet, the combat takes place within one of the obstacles, further disadvantaging the crew. The crows are used to this strange space and so are not affected by any of these hazards.

- **Inverted Thunderheads:** One randomly selected character each round takes 10d12 electricity damage (DC 39 basic Reflex save).
- **Toxic Clouds:** All characters take 10 poison damage at the start of each round.
- **Magnetic Flux:** All characters wearing metal armor take a -20 foot circumstance penalty to Speed, and all characters wielding metal weapons take a -3 circumstance penalty to attack rolls.
- **Infinitely Falling Stars:** All characters must succeed at a DC 39 Will save or be fascinated for the first round of combat and dazzled for 2 rounds thereafter.
- **Gravitational Inversion Layer:** Inverted gravity disrupts the inner ear, making all characters who fail a DC 39 Fortitude save sickened 1.

XP Award: Grant the party Experience Points for defeating 9 crows (135 XP for a party of 19th-level characters) even if they actually face fewer crows.

CRASH LANDING

As the *Solar Jian II* clears the last of the strange dimensional barriers, a small, low island looms in the distance, surrounded by a black sea. Where a horizon would normally be, the ocean water simply curves up to form a starless, moonless sky. The island appears patchwork: dark jungles abruptly transition to flat rocks along unnatural demarcations, as if the landscape were carved with a great knife. At the farthest end of the island stands a tall, thin tower constructed from what appears to be cubes of spiraling glass. The tower shines twin, rotating beams of pale blue light outward. One beam fixes upon the *Solar Jian II* and, with a low sound more palpable than audible, gravity increases manyfold, driving the airship to the ground.

The tower at the far end of the island is Syndara's stronghold and former prison, the *Glass Lighthouse*, from which the Sculptor exerts control over his island.



As the beam strikes the airship, it pulls it violently to the ground, damaging it irreparably and dealing 8d6 bludgeoning damage to all aboard (DC 35 basic Reflex save). The party then has a few minutes to gather themselves and assess damages to the ship before Syndara makes himself known, addressing them for the first time.

Treasure: The force of impact uncovered the skeleton of an oni mage, still gripping the *wand of continuation* they wielded in life.

FACE TO FACE WITH THE GRAND JUDGE

A portal dozens of feet across tears open in the air above, its edges bounded by glowing mathematical equations. Within, a golden-skinned axiomite sits upon a glass throne, peering disdainfully down through the portal with stormy blue eyes. Behind him, a whorl of stars and spheres glow from a clear firmament. “Welcome, contestants, to my island demiplane, and to the final round of your tournament.

“We haven’t met, but I’ve heard a lot about you. My name is Syndara, and I have taken it upon myself to slay the sorcerer Hao Jin and expose her Ruby Phoenix Tournament for the sham that it is. To that end, I invite you to take part in my ‘Hungry Ghost Tournament.’ The format should be familiar to you, though I trust you’ll find the setting a bit more exciting than Hao Jin’s pitiful ‘Danger Island.’

“I am your new grand judge. Defeat my enforcers. I’ve left them around the island. Each carries a piece of the key you’ll need to make it to my lighthouse and challenge my champions. It should be simple enough for Hao Jin’s best! I recommend you hurry, though. Every moment wasted is a moment for my own champions to train. And a moment for me to recover from my little tiff with the Ruby Phoenix.” At this, Syndara holds up a charred arm, which slowly but visibly begins to heal in a swirl of axiomite dust.

“So, no more of this Ruby Phoenix Tournament! Now begins the Tournament of Hungry Ghosts! May the strongest team win. And if you do, I’ll even give you a prize.” With a bemused smirk, the villainous grandmaster holds up an hourglass filled with a gray powder: “The ashes of your beloved Hao Jin.”

Why are you doing this? The barest flicker of rage passes over the Sculptor’s face, “Your so-called ‘grand judge’ trapped me here a long time ago while she traipsed about the planes proclaiming herself a savior. She knew this day was coming.”

Champions? Syndara gestures, and the view through the portal expands to show the Lightkeepers—Syu Tak-nwa, Shino Hakusa, Ran-to, and Blue Viper—who brandish their weapons with a hint of excitement.

“I think you’ve met some of them already.”

How can you be the grand judge?

Syndara smirks to himself. “Who do you think it was that taught Hao Jin the martial arts? She was once my collaborator... no, my friend. We used to dream of this: gathering the planes’ most powerful warriors together in a show of strength and technique. We promised we would make it a reality someday. I am as much the rightful adjudicator of this tournament as she is!”

It is clear that Syndara is relishing this moment, the culmination of millennia of planning and scheming. The portal he communicates through is largely one-way, allowing him to send objects through but little else—only what’s needed to hold a conversation with the contestants. When the conversation concludes, the communication portal implodes in a shower of runes, and from it cascades a single crystalline fragment that lands at the characters’ feet.

This is a fragment of the *conch of the depths*. Like the *phoenix necklace* the contestants carried in “Despair on Danger Island,” this conch serves as a record of battles won. Each enforcer carries a conch fragment of their own, and when all are put together, they can open a way to the *Glass Lighthouse*. From the shape of the conch shell, a character who succeeds at a DC 35 Crafting or Nature check can surmise that there are likely 7 fragments in total.

THE HUNGRY GHOST TOURNAMENT

The crash brought on by the gravitational beam of Syndara’s *Glass Lighthouse* means that the characters won’t be able to continue on the *Solar Jian II* for this phase of the journey. Yoh says he will stay behind to repair the ship, but as long as the lighthouse is operational, further attempts to take off will just result in another crash landing. Personal flight by magical or natural means is certainly an option the players can consider, though the dimensional seas swirling about the demiplane means they will likely encounter some variation of the hazardous conditions they’ve already experienced at your discretion. The *Glass Lighthouse*’s energy beam may also target



SYNDARA

SYNDARA'S ISLAND



flyers who exceed 60 feet in elevation, causing them to immediately plummet to the ground and take falling damage. Traveling by foot is the safest means of getting to the *Glass Lighthouse*.

Syndara's Island is made of an amalgamation of stolen locales from the Material Plane, not dissimilar to the way Hao Jin absconded with cities and regions for her *Hao Jin Tapestry*. The bulk of Syndara's Island is made of the jungle island Amotana, but he also teleported pieces of many other lands into his demiplane.

As they travel the island, the party encounters the following dangerous locales corresponding to the map above, where they must defeat Syndara's Hungry Ghosts to gather the pieces of the *conch of the depths*. The map purposefully does not include a scale; the mutable and unpredictable nature of time and space on Syndara's Island makes calculating distance both impossible and largely unnecessary.

G1. THE ROLLING MINES

MODERATE 19

The ground transitions abruptly to rocky substrate near a massive pit that ends in a lava-filled pool. Two bridges cross

from either side of the pit, which is dotted with abandoned mining helmets and pickaxes. Gravel and pebbles jump as a low rumble courses through the earth.

Syndara lifted a relatively barren island from the Material Plane to serve as the base for this demiplane, but the island's lack of natural resources presented several logistical complications. In the past, Syndara acquired raw materials by creating a demiplane full of them, then harvesting from it. However, his desire to explore the outside world—and with it, things he did not create himself—for the first time in millennia led him to instead locate a rich vein of ore and rare minerals in Hongal that had only just begun to be mined. Syndara ripped a massive cubic section out of the fledgling mine and teleported it to his island, where he placed two aolazes as guardians. The aolazes thunder down the winding tunnels and across the bridges, treating it as a massive racetrack that they can roll along to their hearts' content.

Use the map on the inside front cover of this volume for this encounter.

Creatures: Two aolazes shaped like stone lion



guardian beasts roll through the mines in sphere form. Collectively these two beasts constitute one of Syndara's Hungry Ghosts. Each turn, one aolaz attempts to roll across the bridge and Trample any enemies it can, while the other maneuvers within the mines, creating the illusion that there is only one construct here that happens to move preternaturally quickly through the tunnels. The aolazes are identical, and the rapid rotation of their sphere form makes it even harder to tell them apart; a successful DC 38 Perception check is necessary to tell that one aolaz is different from the other, though parties that mark one of the aolazes might be able to tell them apart more easily. One aolaz may covertly fire its Ultrasonic Blast from one of the lookout windows around the perimeter of the mines towards the bridge, the imperceptible nature of the blast further hiding its origin. With their flawless hearing, the aolazes are virtually guaranteed to notice any intruders coming. They fight until destroyed.

ELITE AOLAZES (2)

CREATURE 19

Bestiary 2 6, 21

Initiative Perception +35

Conch of the Depths Fragment: Embedded in one aolaz's crown is a *conch of the depths* fragment, which the characters can easily pry free once combat is over.

Treasure: The abandoned mines hold a wealth of ore and items. The characters find 12 orichalcum ingots in the shape of stamps, each representing a zodiac creature.

G2. JUNGLE OBSERVATORY MODERATE 19

The side of this hill is covered in vertical stone obelisks laid out in precise measurements. Telescopes, orreries, and other astronomical devices dot the ruins. Though the sky is the same impossible night as everywhere else on the demiplane, here things seem somehow clearer, the stars nearer.

Many of Tamauta's greatest accomplishments were in the field of astronomy and wayfinding. Syndara took this array of stones and observational devices from a flat, barren mountaintop where there was little interference or light pollution. Master Taumatan observers bound themselves to their telescopes when they reached the end of their lives, ensuring they could gaze at the stars forever.

Use the map on the inside front cover of this volume for this encounter.

Creatures: Four of the telescopes here are actually radiant wardens in disguise—two activate on the first round of combat while the other two wait for the second round of combat to see how the party reacts. They prefer to bombard the characters with ranged attacks, using their Radiant Blast when available and their radiant beams otherwise, and they teleport around the battlefield to keep their distance if combatants get too close.

Conch of the Depths Fragment: Lodged into a section of one of the observational obelisks is a *conch of the depths* fragment, which the characters can easily locate once combat is over.

RADIANT WARDENS (4)

CREATURE 17

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 220

Initiative Deception 53 (automatic result from orrery ability)





Treasure: Several jewels and foci are built into the obelisks—while many are hewn glass or quartz, an *obsidian crystal ball* and a *lavender and green aeon stone* are among them.

EVENT: A VISIT FROM THE NIGHT PARADE MODERATE 19

Rather than occurring when the explorers reach a particular point on the island, this event occurs the first time the team makes camp on Syndara's Island. Any sleeping characters wake to the following sight; even characters posted as watches find their eyelids drooping for the briefest of moments before snapping open to see:

In the center of the clearing stands a fifteen-foot-tall yagura platform with strings of paper lanterns leading out in all directions. The sound of flutes and drums fills the air, as does the smell of frying skewers and buns. An array of creatures dance around the platform, from animated

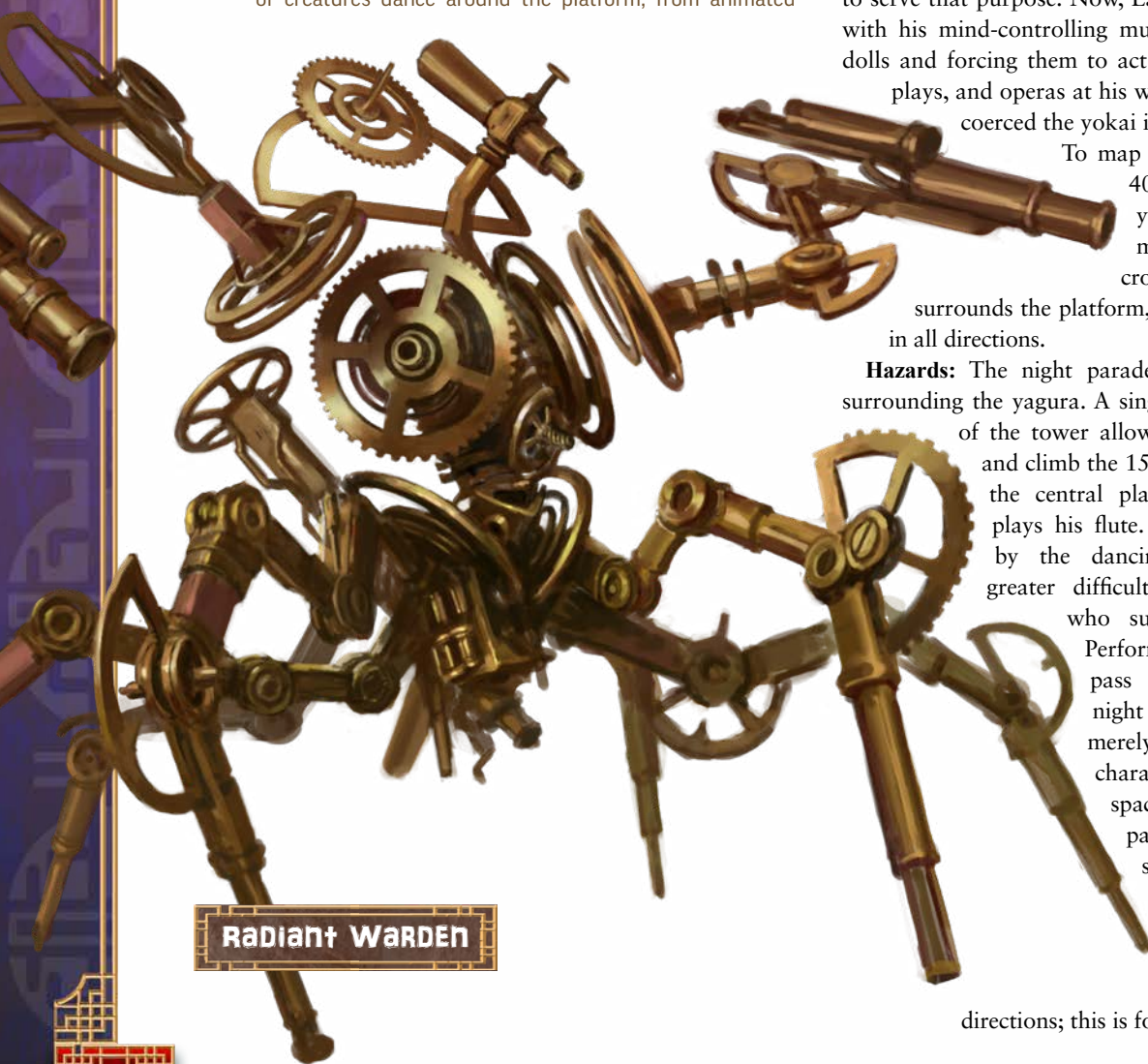
umbrellas to women with long necks to old men with enormous heads, and though there's a joyous abandon in their steps, a look of desperation gleams in their eyes.

Though Syndara intentionally sought out powerful demons and spirits to join his tournament, many lesser creatures were simply caught up in the forests and towns he stole from the Material Plane. Trapped in what was effectively an interdimensional prison, the orphaned lesser creatures banded together to form their own unusual, but functioning, society. They call themselves yokai, a Minatan word used throughout Tian Xia to collectively refer to a myriad of supernatural entities.

Unfortunately, while most of Syndara's recruited lieutenants are content to ignore the lesser creatures, finding them too weak to be of much use, one of his Hungry Ghosts, Laruhao, decided that if he was to be subordinate to Syndara, he may as well have his own minions to rule over. Thus, he hunted down these yokai to serve that purpose. Now, Laruhao rules over them with his mind-controlling music, treating them like dolls and forcing them to act out various scenarios, plays, and operas at his whim. This night, he has coerced the yokai into a bon dance.

To map this encounter, draw a 40-foot-wide square (the yagura platform) in the middle of a jungle. A crowd of dancing yokai surrounds the platform, spanning a full 30 feet in all directions.

Hazards: The night parade covers the dirt area surrounding the yagura. A single door at the bottom of the tower allows a character to enter and climb the 15-foot-tall steps to reach the central platform where Laruhao plays his flute. Any squares occupied by the dancing night parade are greater difficult terrain. A character who succeeds at a DC 40 Perform check to dance can pass through the dancing night parade as if it were merely difficult terrain. A character who occupies a space within the dancing parade is automatically swept 15 feet clockwise or counterclockwise at the end of their turn, alternating every turn as the dancers change directions; this is forced movement.



Radiant Warden



Creatures: The sadistic Laruhao controls the night parade, content to sit atop the central yagura platform and play his flute until the assorted creatures are forced to laugh and dance themselves to death. While individually weak, the various spirits, apparitions, and mortals he's enthralled pose a threat as they form a troop that can sweep the party up in the dance. Rather than engage the heroes directly, he sits atop the yagura and maintains his *house of imaginary walls* to shield himself, then uses Dance, Puppets, Dance! to force the parade to attack in his stead.

The troop creature presented below is but a small segment of the full parade that marches around the yagura platform (see Hazards); unlike the hazard, though, this segment can stray farther than 30 feet from the platform.

DANCING NIGHT PARADE**CREATURE 19**

UNIQUE CN GARGANTUAN SPIRIT TROOP

Troop of corporeal spirits (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 310)**Perception** +28; darkvision**Languages** Senzar**Skills** Acrobatics +34, Athletics +33, Dancing Lore +34, Deception +37, Performance +37, Society +32**Str** +8, **Dex** +7, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +6**AC** 40; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +26, **Will** +34**HP** 450 (16 squares); **Thresholds** 300 (12 squares), 150 (8 squares); **Weaknesses** area damage 20, bludgeoning 15, splash damage 10

Riotous Parade (auditory, aura, emotion, enchantment, mental) 60 feet. The night parade sweeps up those nearby in a riotous celebration. All creatures in the aura must attempt a DC 39 Will save. The target is then temporarily immune for 10 minutes.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target laughs and dances. It can't use reactions as long as it stays in the area, and if it attempts to use a concentrate action, it must succeed at a DC 5 flat check; on a failure, the action is lost.

Failure As success, except the target is also slowed 1 while in the area.

Critical Failure As success, except the target is also slowed 1 while in the area and the flat check DC is 10.

Attack of Opportunity ➤ *Bestiary* 3 304.**Troop Defenses** *Bestiary* 3 306.**Speed** 25 feet; troop movement

Seiya! Soiya! ➤➤ (emotion, mental, sonic) The night parade shouts a series of energetic call-and-responses, dealing 3d10 sonic damage and 4d6 mental damage to all creatures in a 10-foot burst within 20 feet (DC 41 basic Will save). If the troop is reduced to 8 or fewer squares, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Form Up ➤ *Bestiary* 3 305.

Troop Movement Whenever a troop Strides, it first Forms Up as a free action to condense into a 20-foot-by-20-foot area (minus any missing squares), then moves up to its Speed. This works just like a Gargantuan creature moving; for instance, if any square enters difficult terrain, the extra movement cost applies to the whole troop.

Wasshoi! Wasshoi! ➤ to ➤➤➤ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The night parade dances with wild abandon, unintentionally striking nearby creatures. It deals damage to each adjacent creature (DC 41 basic Reflex save), and any creature that fails its save is pushed 10 feet in any direction as the night parade bounces it overhead. The damage depends on the number of actions.

➤ 1d10+7 bludgeoning damage

➤➤ 4d10+14 bludgeoning damage

➤➤➤ 6d10+14 bludgeoning damage

LARUHAO**CREATURE 19**

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID

Male humanoid minstrel

Perception +35; darkvision**Languages** Senzar, Tien; *tongues***Skills** Acrobatics +35, Athletics +31, Dancing Lore +38, Deception +37, Occultism +34, Performance +39**Str** +6, **Dex** +8, **Con** +7, **Int** +7, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +9**Items** fighting fan (*Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 120), *greater maestro's instrument* (flute)**AC** 43; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +29, **Will** +35**HP** 360**Speed** 25 feet

Melee ➤ fighting fan +35 (agile, backstabber, deadly d6, finesse, monk), **Damage** 6d4+14 slashing

Ranged ➤ piercing note +35 (range increment 60 feet, sonic), **Damage** 4d10+17 sonic

Bard Composition Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 41; **10th** *house of imaginary walls* (*Core Rulebook* 386), *inspire heroics* (*Core Rulebook* 387), *inspire courage* (*Core Rulebook* 386), *inspire defense* (*Core Rulebook* 386)

Call Dancers ➤➤ (auditory, healing) Laruhao sends out a pulse of inviting melody that calls more yokai from the ether, restoring 30 Hit Points to the dancing night parade.

Dance, Puppets, Dance! ➤➤ (auditory, linguistic) Laruhao plays an invigorating melody that signals his horde to attack. The dancing night parade can use either Seiya! Soiya! or the two-action version of Wasshoi! Wasshoi! as a reaction.

Master of Barriers Laruhao wishes for nothing more than to dance atop his yagura, undisturbed. When he uses his *house of imaginary walls* composition spell, he creates four 10-foot-by-10-foot walls in a cube around him. A creature must succeed at a DC 41 counteract check to teleport within these walls; otherwise, the teleportation attempt fails.



Freed Apparitions: If the heroes defeat Laruhao without completely killing the dancing night parade troop, the various enthralled creatures are freed. A tanuki (raccoon dog) named **Rikanzo** (CN male tanuki elder) introduces himself to the characters and thanks them for saving the society of orphaned yokai.

"Wow, wow!" exclaims an enormous tanuki in a straw hat. "Thanks ever so much for getting rid of that terrible musician." The tanuki pats his considerable belly with a laugh. "I'd usually say to join us in a dance, but after all that, I think we're danced out. But just as well, we were

getting hungry anyways. Sit down a spell! Name's Rikanzo, and this is the night parade!" He gestures at the sea of creatures behind him. "Don't worry, though some of us might look a bit rough around the edges"—at this, an emaciated woman with an impossibly long neck gazes at you from behind her mask—"we've been here long enough that we've learned to band together. Have a drink!" He pulls a ludicrously large drinking gourd from nowhere, takes a swig that lasts a full ten seconds, and offers it.

Rikanzo is more than happy to answer questions about the geography of the island, though he insists that the party sit down for a meal as an endless procession of yokai serves a feast of skewers, buns, dumplings, and the like, and he constantly offers to refill a character's mug the minute it gets the slightest bit empty. The tanuki's advice is spot on, and he punctuates his guidance by placing a leaf on his head and transforming into various landmarks to illustrate how the player characters might find their way about. The yokai remain here for the rest of the night, allowing the characters shelter and safety, before they relocate to the Yokai's Night Market, where they set up tents and services, as detailed in that area.

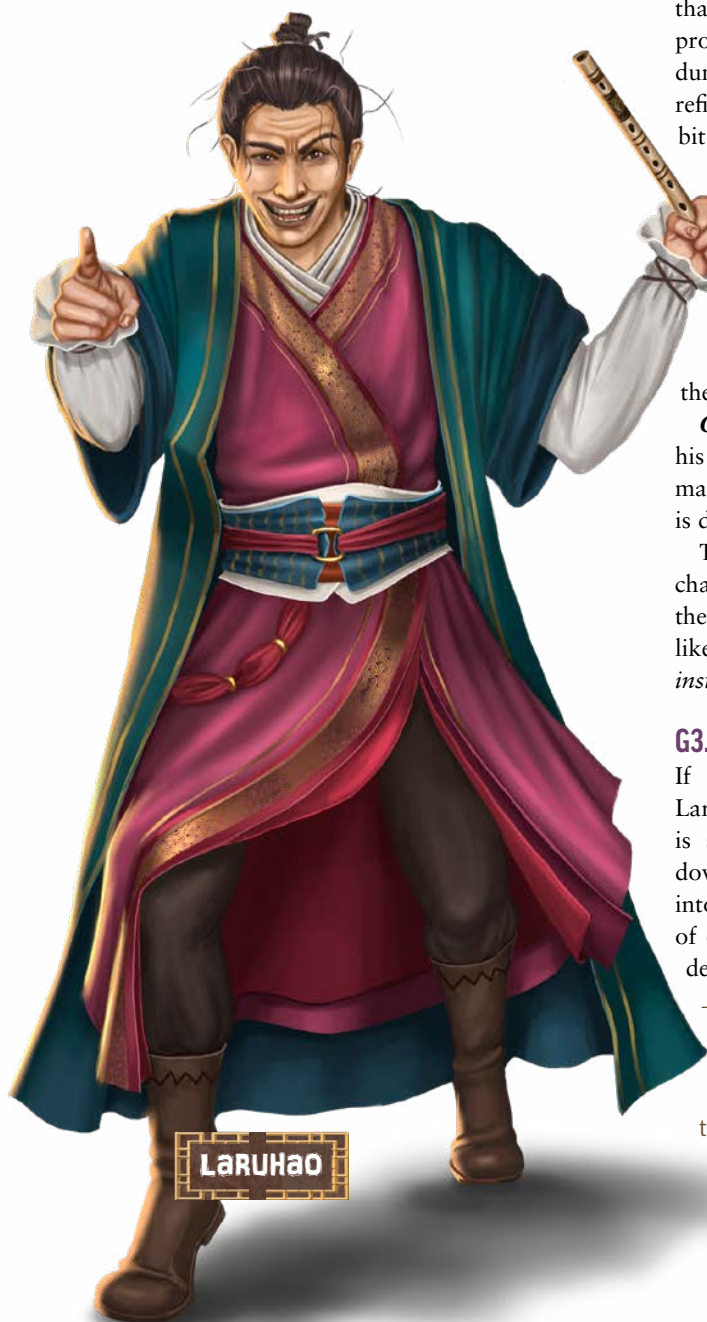
Conch of the Depths Fragment: Laruhao wore his *conch of the depths* fragment around his neck, making it easy to identify and take once the musician is defeated.

Treasure: Rikanzo happily rewards the player characters with various items collected by the yokai—these include a *greater mask of the banshee* shaped like an opera mask and Laruhao's *greater maestro's instrument*.

G3. THE YOKAI'S NIGHT MARKET

If the team hasn't yet encountered and defeated Laruhao and the night parade, this large grassy field is strewn with abandoned tents that have blown down in the wind. If they have, this field transforms into a bustling night market that serves as the base of operations for the yokai society on the island, as detailed below.

Dragonflies flit through the tall grass of this field, which is as warm as a late summer evening. Throughout the clearing, all manner of yokai go about their business from tent to colorful tent. In one section of the camp, a turtle-like creature with a basin of water in its head bargains for cucumbers at a produce stand run by a humanoid with a hundred eyes, while in another corner, a fish with three tails swims through the air,



LARUHAO



applying ointment to a scrape on a horned oni. While some of the creatures seem frightful, they're all in good spirits and seem to get along quite well.

After being freed from Laruhao's control, Rikanzo leads the yokai of the night parade to this location, where they resume their odd society. With the yokai's help, Yoh also manages to wheel the grounded *Solar Jian II* here, reasoning that he's better protected here among the yokai that oppose Syndara. The party is free to speak to Rikanzo here and procure the services of the night market. Despite the Night Market's ramshackle composition, the collection of beings and items collected from across the planes makes it a settlement whose variety of shops and services rival any city on the Material Plane. Among many others, the inhabitants include:

Ora, Hatsuo, and Riko: This trio of tsukumogami (*Bestiary* 3 276) take the shape of a furnace, bellows, and hammer, and run a quaint smithy that also doubles as a treatment facility of sorts for the more object-based yokai. All three originally became tsukumogami when they were discarded as objects, and seek to spare others the same fate. They are happy to transfer runes, upgrade armor, and generally perform any item-based services.

Suri: This diminutive but foulmouthed creature, resembling a three-tailed fish with the head of a beaked humanoid, serves as the Night Market's resident physician. In addition to providing normal medical treatment at no cost, they are also capable of removing curses, curing disease, and raising the dead, though they ask that the party provide a work of art in payment; a DC 38 Crafting check is required to create a depiction that will satisfy Suri's needs.

Rikanzo: The leader of the society can be found in a large outdoor tavern, usually eating, drinking, or sleeping in his chair while he waits for another course. He gladly reiterates any information the player characters may need, though in practice, his secretary, **Chioh** (CN male kuda-gitsune), answers most of the party's questions. The tiny pipefox, small and thin enough to fit inside a bamboo pipe, is knowledgeable on a variety of subjects and happy to share, but for every question he answers about Syndara's Island, he asks the player characters to tell him something he doesn't know about a different topic.



This lets the characters attempt a Lore check for any topic, then use that check's roll for any other topic. For instance, a player character could attempt a check to Recall Knowledge using Sailor Lore to tell Chioh about a new ship in the outside world, getting a 40 on their roll. In return, Chioh will tell them a fact about a past battle that he knows of with Warfare Lore, giving a result of 40. However, Chioh is easily bored and will only accept a fact from a given Lore topic once.

G4. FETID LOTUS BOG MODERATE 19

The smell of rot and methane burns the nose well before this fetid pond comes into view. Lily pads float on the surface and carnivorous plants line the water's edge, feasting on the many insects drawn to the stagnant pools and cloying mud.

Syndara originally thought that he would fill his island with the natural resources it lacked on the Material Plane, chief among them being fresh water. He absconded with a lake from the Valashmai Jungle and placed it here, not realizing it was just a pool of standing water with no source. Before long, the low-nutrient water became a fetid bog that, rather than nourishing the surrounding areas, merely bred disease. Syndara soon grew bored with his ecological experiment and left the area to fester.

Use the map on the inside front cover of this volume for this encounter.

Creatures: Two eight-headed dragons called orochis live here, hiding beneath the waters and preying on anything that comes by. The dragons lie in wait to ambush the party as they seek a *conch of the depths* fragment. At first, the beasts each let only one of their heads protrude from the opaque waters, then raise the other 14 heads in unison to catch their opponents unawares.

Hazards: The bog water is opaque and filled with disease. A character who comes into contact with the water while they have taken any amount of slashing or piercing damage is exposed to crimson ooze (*Gamemastery Guide* 119). The lily pads floating on the surface can each support up to 200 pounds of weight without issue, but they immediately collapse if any more weight is added.

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OROCHIS (2)

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Initiative Perception +33

CREATURE 18

Conch of the Depths Fragment: A *conch of the depths* fragment lies at the bottom of the bog, which is 40 feet deep, meaning that the characters will need some way of detecting it through the diseased waters.

Treasure: Several items also lie sunken in the bog, many grasped by the still-intact bodies of those who fell in, preserved in peat. The items constitute six major crystal shards (*Advanced Player's Guide* 252) as well as three antimagic oils.



G5. SYNDARA'S TRASH HEAP

TRIVIAL 19

At the bottom of a sandy dune lies a pile of statues, shattered into pieces, each depicting a female figure. Pieces of metal, gold, and jewels protrude from the sand, sliding down to a central point.

Syndara spent much of his imprisonment perfecting various forms of art, such as painting and sculpture. With nothing but his rage towards Hao Jin to focus on, she was the subject of almost all of his works, which he would store for a time before eventually destroying in a fit of cathartic rage. He has repeated this cycle of creation and destruction countless times over the eons, casting the refuse here, along with various other items he created.

Hazards: The trash heap is guarded by a dimensional darkside mirror—more powerful than most of its kind after having been exposed to potent interplanar energies. Syndara made occasional use of this duplicate-spawning trap to procure more test subjects. As the evil duplicate versions spawned by the mirror lack the connections to the other contestants held by the real characters, they cannot use abilities such as Affinity Ablaze.

DIMENSIONAL DARKSIDE MIRROR

HAZARD 19

COMPLEX **MAGICAL** **MECHANICAL** **TRAP**

Stealth +37 (master) to notice it isn't a regular mirror

Description A magic mirror replaces characters with evil mirror duplicates from another dimension.

Disable Thievery DC 40 (legendary) to retrieve a creature from the other dimension within 10 minutes of the switch (possible only if their mirror duplicate is dead), Thievery DC 45 (master) to permanently disable the mirror once all mirror duplicates are dead, or *dispel magic* (8th level; counteract DC 37) to counteract the mirror for 1 minute and prevent additional replacements during that time

AC 34, **Fort** +25, **Ref** +20

Hardness 1, **HP** 4 (BT 2), the mirror can't be damaged while any mirror duplicate is alive

Reflection of Evil ☞ (arcane, conjuration, teleportation); **Trigger** A non-evil creature is reflected in the mirror; **Effect** The mirror absorbs the creature into the mirror, replacing it with an evil mirror duplicate (DC 41 Reflex to avoid being absorbed into the mirror), and rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) The mirror absorbs another reflected creature into the mirror and replaces it with a mirror



duplicate. Mirror duplicates attack on their own initiative, using the same statistics as the original creature, but with an evil alignment (changing only abilities that shift with the alignment change). A mirror duplicate can spend 3 actions in contact with the mirror to return to its original dimension and release the creature it duplicated, but most mirror duplicates prefer not to.

Reset The mirror is always ready to absorb creatures into the other dimension. Ten minutes after a creature is sucked into the mirror, if an ally doesn't rescue the creature with Thievery, it reaches the other dimension, where it might be captured or killed. In the mirror dimension, it counts as a mirror duplicate, so the denizens of the other dimension can't destroy the mirror on their side while the absorbed creature is there. These dimensions are alternate realities, not planes, so even rituals like *plane shift* can't reach them.

Conch of the Depths Fragment: A *conch of the depths* is hidden in the pile of statues.

Treasure: The trash heap contains a large number of Syndara's castoffs, some of which are still valuable. The party finds a supreme sturdy shield, +3 *major handwraps of mighty blows*, a *wand of smoldering fireballs* in the shape of a circle, a set of pins that function as *bracers of armor type III*, and a *ring of spell turning* that bears the image of a tortoise.

G6. THE TORTOISE AND THE KAIJU

A large hill rises abruptly from the ground, covered in pyramidal ridges. At the top of the hill is a massive tree with gnarled branches that droop under the weight of an overabundance of fruit, each shaped like the head of a humanoid—goblin, elf, human, and more. A cloying smell fills the air, as does a low drone issuing from the mouths of the tree's many fruits.

This hill is actually the shell of a spirit tortoise—a powerful guardian spirit that lay in hibernation on Amotana when it was plucked from the Material Plane. The tortoise slumbered for several years of subjective time before he awoke to find a wandering creature: the newly hatched son of the kaiju Mogaru, the Final King. One of Syndara's enforcers, an evil dryad, pursued the kaiju child in hopes of draining his power and using him to better control Mogaru. The spirit tortoise defeated the dryad in combat, but not before the dryad planted the seed of an evil tree on the tortoise's back, which would prevent him from further hampering Syndara's plans, even in death.

The tree is a jinmenju, a cursed tree that feeds on knowledge. As the spirit tortoise has

lived a truly immeasurable lifespan, the tree has grown laden with the fruit of the spirit tortoise's knowledge. As long as it blooms, the tortoise will not awaken. Any creature who approaches within 120 feet of the tree must succeed at a DC 41 Will save or be fascinated and compelled to approach the tree and bite into one of its fruits, though it can attempt a new save every minute to recover from this effect; this is an olfactory effect. If a player character bites a fruit, they take 10d8 mental damage (DC 41 basic Will save) but instantaneously glean some of the spirit tortoise's immense knowledge. The fruit casts a *legend lore* ritual on the eater, focused on a subject of the Game Master's choice. There are 20 fruits covering the tree, each of which can be severed from the tree if dealt any amount of damage, though the tree sprouts 4 new fruits every round, plus an additional





fruit for each creature adjacent to it. Alternatively, if the tree's central trunk is dealt at least 300 damage in a single turn, the tree will wither; it has resistance to all damage 30 (except slashing) and weakness 20 to fire. A successful DC 38 Nature check is sufficient to reveal the tree's abilities and nature.

If the jinmenju is cleared from the spirit tortoise's back, the tortoise awakens, pleased to be freed from the jinmenju's effect. He opens his mouth to reveal a curious creature: an elephant-sized reptile with two tails and a row of pink spines down its back—the spitting image of the Final King, the kaiju Mogaru. The spirit tortoise (similar to the spirit turtle described on page 86) reveals that this is Mogaru's offspring, which he has taken to calling Mokku. For his part, Mokku is quite curious about the characters, his tongue flicking in the air near them to take in their scent. The spirit tortoise thanks the party, though he clearly struggles to tell them apart, constantly mistaking one for the other—they're just too small and similar-looking for him to tell the difference. He's a wealth of information regarding the history of Bonmu and Amotana and can answer most questions the characters might have about these isles.

Conch of the Depths Fragment: After the spirit tortoise killed Syndara's enforcer dryad, Mokku took to wearing her *conch of the depths* fragment on his head. Though Mokku is reluctant to part with it, he does so after a stern glance from the much larger spirit tortoise.

Treasure: Stuck between the spirit tortoise's claws is a terrible splinter, which turns out to be a slightly worn but still very functional *true staff of providence* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 264).

G7. CHAMPIONS' GATE

This simple promontory looks out towards Syndara's lighthouse. If the team has not yet assembled the *conch of the depths*, they find that they cannot close the distance to the islet on which the *Glass Lighthouse* rests—just as with Syndara's Island in the sky of the Material Plane, the Lighthouse is ever-distant from this demiplane, and no physical movement toward it can bring one closer.

If the team has located all seven pieces of the *conch of the depths*, they can blow it at the promontory to open the way to the *Glass Lighthouse*. Read or paraphrase the following:

With the ringing of the conch, the dark ocean surrounding the island parts to reveal a sunken path along the sea floor. Two walls of black water fifty feet high remain to either side as if held by invisible walls. The shadows of trilobites, crustaceans, and other lost creatures flit through the primordial sea.

The First Ruby Phoenix Tournament Severe 19

Nestled between the walls of water sits a cracked stone dais, rung with bleachers and seats, many of which are damaged by water or covered with outgrowths of sponges and coral. Two thirty-foot-tall statues stand on either side of the arena, or at least one does, that of an axiomite man; his counterpart statue, of a Tian-Shu woman, lies in pieces on the arena floor.

This sunken arena is the one location Syndara dared to steal not from the Material Plane, but from Axis—the training grounds where he and Hao Jin first assembled a small tournament of fighters from the City of Law in a friendly fighting tournament. Over time, more and more joined the festivities, until the tournament became a small, but well known fixture in the city. The event also helped inspire Hao Jin to create the Ruby Phoenix Tournament.

Syndara ensured that before Hao Jin's champions can reach the *Glass Lighthouse*, they'll face proper semifinalists, by sending the warped Tino's Toughest to face them. The four fighters wait in the center of the area, almost unrecognizable as they have been shaped by Syndara's dimensional superimposition technique. The Toughest are incapable of speech, though this doesn't impede their effortless teamwork.

Creatures: If the players don't realize their opponents' identities, ensure that they notice the Toughest's signature fighting styles after a few rounds. The Toughest have become much more powerful, and they use their flawless Toughest Teamwork abilities to support each other in combat. They each attempt to engage and occupy a single character, but will swap if they seem poorly matched up.

I Know You're in There: While the bodies of their opponents are indisputably those of Tino's Toughest, their minds are held prisoner by the evil spirits with whom they've been superimposed. When one of the Toughest is reduced to 20 Hit Points or less, the spirit remains only barely connected to the body, allowing a moment of vulnerability. At this point, if the spirit is targeted with an attack that can directly attack it, such as *spirit blast*, it is purged from the fighter's body, leaving the fighter in their original form, albeit unconscious and severely weakened. Alternatively, a character can issue a heartfelt plea with a DC 40 Diplomacy check; on a success, the fighter's trapped psyche is temporarily roused, allowing them to expel the evil spirit. If the fighter is reduced to 0 Hit Points without purging the evil spirit, they fall unconscious as normal, and if they die they remain warped and bound to the evil spirit even in death (and, if later targeted with *raise dead* or similar magic, in resurrection).



TINO (ONI FORM)

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE LE LARGE FIEND GIANT HUMANOID ONI

Dimensional superimposition form of Tino Tung

Perception +30; darkvision

Languages Nagaji, Taldane, Tengu, Tien (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +35, Athletics +35, Deception +24, Diplomacy +31, Intimidation +35, Irori Lore +31, Medicine +29, Occultism +29, Religion +31

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** +5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

Items +3 *major striking kanabo* (as greatclub with reach)

AC 41 (43 with Wall of Iron); **Fort** +32, **Ref** +32, **Will** +28

HP 320

Ferocity ⤴

Retributive Strike ⤴

Stalwart Guardian Tino gains a reaction at the start of each enemy's turn that he can use only during that enemy's turn.

Toughest Teamwork: Catapult Ally ⤴ **Trigger** An ally using a move action moves within reach of Tino's kanabo; **Effect** Tino scoops his ally with his kanabo and flings them 30 feet in any direction. They can continue any remainder of their movement from their landing location.

Speed 35 feet

Melee ⤴ head +35 (deadly d10, reach 10 feet, sweep), **Damage** 5d8+17 piercing

Melee ⤴ fist +35 (agile, finesse, nonlethal, reach 10 feet, unarmed), **Damage** 5d6+17 bludgeoning

Melee ⤴ kanabo +33 (backswing, reach 15 feet, shove), **Damage** 5d10+15 bludgeoning

A Kanabo to an Oni ⤴⤴ Tino loses himself further to the oni, pulling out even more strength. He makes a kanabo Strike that deals two additional weapon dice of damage.

Earth-Shattering Strike ⤴ **Requirements** Tino's previous action was to successfully Strike an enemy with a weapon that dealt bludgeoning damage; **Effect** A shockwave blasts out from the force of Tino's strike. Tino attempts a single Athletics check against the Fortitude DC of all enemies within 15 feet. Regardless of the result of the check, all terrain within the area becomes difficult terrain as the ground is cracked into loose shards.

Critical Success Tino pushes the creature 10 feet, knocks it prone, and deals 6d6 bludgeoning damage to it.

Success Tino pushes the creature 10 feet and knocks it prone.

Failure Tino pushes the creature 10 feet.

Flurry of Blows ⤴ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Tino makes two unarmed Strikes. If both hit the same creature, combine their damage for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses.

Wall of Iron ⤴ Tino raises his kanabo defensively, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to AC.

Ji-YOOK (GUMIHO FORM)

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID KITSUNE

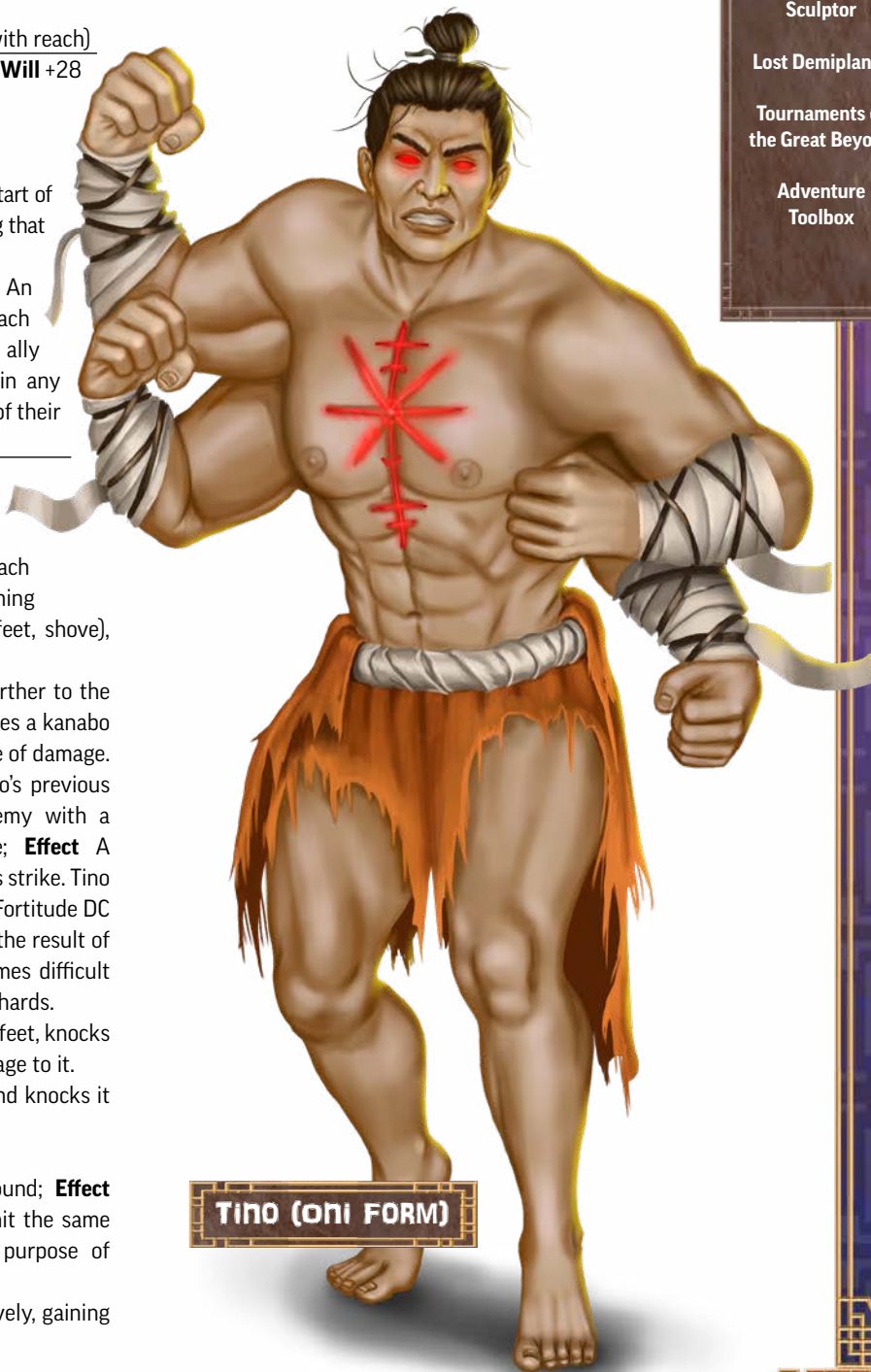
Dimensional superimposition form of Ji-yook

Perception +29; darkvision, emotionsense

Languages Nagaji, Taldane, Tengu, Tien (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +37, Athletics +35, Deception +35, Diplomacy +31

Str +2, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +6



TINO (ONI FORM)

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Emotionsense Ji-yook can sense the emotions of those within 60 feet as an imprecise sense.

Items +3 *greater striking returning darts* (5), +3 *greater striking handwraps of mighty blows*, +2 *greater resilient explorer's clothing*, *greater smokesticks* (2)

AC 42; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +34, **Will** +29

HP 331; **Immunities** emotion

Toughest Teamwork: Unsettling Murrur (emotion, fear)

Trigger An enemy within 60 feet is the target of a Strike or attempts a Will save; **Effect** Just when an enemy is preparing to defend itself, Ji-yook sends an illusion of herself to whisper a disquieting secret or threat into their ear. The enemy takes a -2 circumstance penalty to their AC or Will save against the triggering attack or effect.

Speed 25 feet; waylay

Melee ♦ claw +34 (agile, finesse, magical, nonlethal, unarmed), **Damage** 6d4+10 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ dart +34 (agile, magical, reload 0, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 6d4+10 piercing

Ranged ♦ foxfire +34 (range 20 feet, versatile), **Damage** 6d4+8 electricity

Change Shape As kitsune.

Disquieting Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, divine, polymorph, transmutation) Ji-yook selects one enemy within 60 feet, then Changes Shape into humanoid form, taking the form of a person emotionally close to that enemy, such as a dead family member. Ji-yook is not aware of the form she will take until she transforms. If her target sees her, even if they are aware it is a trick, they must attempt a DC 40 Will save or be frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure) for 1 round. This is a fear effect.

Firefox Blast ♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Ji-yook makes a fist strike. On a hit, the target takes an additional 3d6 electricity damage and is pushed back 5 feet. On a critical hit, the target is pushed back and then knocked prone.

Pinning Shot ♦ Ji-yook makes a dart Strike. If the attack hits, it deals no damage and instead imparts the bow critical specialization effect against the target. If the attack is a critical hit, the target must succeed at two separate Interact actions to pull the missile free. The target is flat-footed while it remains immobilized in this way.

Sneak Attack Ji-yook's Strikes deal an extra 4d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Waylay (illusion) When Ji-yook Strides at least 10 feet, illusions make her concealed until the start of her next turn.

TAKATORRA (DAITENGU FORM)

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM HUMANOID TENGU

Dimensional superimposition form of Takatorra

Perception +32; low-light vision

Languages Nagaji, Taldane, Tengu, Tien (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +31, Athletics +37, Intimidation +31, Performance +29

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

Items +3 *major striking fell tengu gale blades* (2; *Advanced Player's Guide* 248)

AC 42; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +29, **Will** +29; +2 status to all saves vs. air and electricity

HP 331

Attack of Opportunity (air)

Toughest Teamwork: Wind Shell (abjuration, air) **Trigger**

An ally within 60 feet is targeted by a physical ranged attack; **Effect** Takatorra wraps their ally in a protective shell of air. The ally gains a +4 status bonus to AC against physical ranged attacks until the beginning of their next turn.

Speed 25 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee ♦ *tengu gale blade* +35 (agile, disarm, magical, finesse), **Damage** 4d6+14 slashing

Ranged ♦ vacuum slash +35 (air, range 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+14 slashing

Blade Barrage ♦♦♦ Takatorra unleashes a flurry of attacks. Takatorra makes five melee Strikes. They gain a cumulative +2 circumstance bonus to damage for each successful Strike. If one target is hit with at least two of these Strikes, they also take 2d6 persistent bleed damage. They then become stunned 1 and flat-footed until the start of their next turn.

Disarming Whirl ♦♦ (flourish) Takatorra spins, striking at their foes' weapons. Takatorra attempts an Athletics check to Disarm against each enemy within their melee reach. Each attempt counts toward Takatorra's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until they have made all the attempts.

Airflow Blades ♦ (air) Takatorra extends the cutting surface of their blades with high-pressure airflow. Until the end of their turn, their blades have a reach of 15 feet.

YABIN (WHITE SERPENT FORM)

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID NAGAJI

Dimensional superimposition form of Yabin the Just

Perception +28; darkvision

Languages Nagaji, Taldane, Tengu, Tien (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +31, Athletics +35, Diplomacy +31, Intimidation +37, Occultism +31

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +6

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +28, **Will** +33

HP 256; **Immunities** poison

Poisonous Floodwaters (aura, poison, water) 10 feet.



Yabin is surrounded by magically generated waist-deep poisonous waters. Enemies that enter the water are exposed to his white serpent venom. The aura is difficult terrain for creatures without a swim Speed. Every time Yabin Casts a Spell, the aura increases in radius by 5 feet, up to a maximum of 60 feet. He can activate or suppress this aura as a single action, which has the concentrate trait.

Toughest Teamwork: Envenomed Strike **Trigger** An ally within 20 feet makes a Strike that would deal piercing or slashing damage and hasn't yet rolled the attack roll; **Effect** Yabin spits venom on his ally's weapon. The Strike, if it hits, also exposes the target to Yabin's white serpent venom. If the Strike misses, the venom evaporates off immediately.

Speed 25 feet, burrow 20 feet, swim 60 feet

Melee fangs +33 (finesse, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d10+11 piercing plus white serpent venom

Ranged venom +33 (range 20 feet), **Damage** 4d8+8 poison plus white serpent venom

Arcane Spontaneous Spells DC 40, attack +32;

9th (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *magic missile*, *polar ray*; **8th** (4 slots) *disappearance*, *horrid wilting*, *prismatic wall*, *scintillating pattern*; **7th** (4 slots) *disintegrate*, *eclipse burst*, *mask of terror*, *true seeing*; **6th** (4 slots) *chain lightning*, *feeblemind*, *fireball*, *spellwrack*; **5th** (4 slots) *chromatic wall*, *cloak of colors*, *freedom of movement*, *haste*;

Cantrips (9th) *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *light*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

White Serpent Venom (poison, virulent) **Saving Throw** DC 36

Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds;

Stage 1 3d6 poison (1 round); **Stage 2** 5d6 poison and dazzled (1 round); **Stage 3** 5d6 poison and blinded (1 round)

Rattling Magic Yabin substitutes all spellcasting components when Casting a Spell with rattling of his tail. This has the concentrate trait.

The Finalists' Procession: Once Tino's Toughest have been defeated, the now-finalists of the tournament can easily proceed through the watery trench to the *Glass Lighthouse*. They can carry their old friendly rivals to shore or deposit any surviving members of the Toughest at safe locations such as with the yokai or the Spirit Tortoise, but the trauma to their souls means they will not regain consciousness for some time.

XP Award: If the party manages to free the trapped spirits of Tino's Toughest, award each player character a 120 XP story award.

Some Last-Minute Training

After defeating Tino's Toughest, the party should have enough XP to reach 20th level, so this is a good time to level up. At this point, provide your players with the option to take the relevant capstone class feats starting on page 75. These class feats reflect the myriad techniques they've encountered thus far in the Fists of the Ruby Phoenix Adventure Path. If they need to retrain, the Night Market (area G3) is a safe place to do so, as is Syndara's dojo (H5) in the upcoming chapter.



Takatorra (Daitengu Form)



CHAPTER 3: UNMAKING THE SCULPTOR

CURSE OF THE LIGHTHOUSE

Though Hao Jin intended to seal Syndara away forever, she didn't realize that by locking him within his own demiplane, she had unwittingly given him the key to finally defeat her. Though Syndara was trapped within the *Glass Lighthouse* for millennia of subjective time due to the layering of multiple planar effects, this also gave him millennia to develop his powers. Each day, he trained his body, and each day, he became ever so slightly more skilled in the creation of worlds.

Though most who dabble in demiplanes know that certain properties can be tuned—lands created, space warped, and so on—Syndara's immense time to experiment meant he found ways to personalize the effects further than ever thought possible. He spent eons inscribing two laws across every inch of the *Glass Lighthouse's* foundational reality. The first: Syndara is strong. In this, Syndara made it so that the very fabric of the Lighthouse would constructively resonate with his own nature, ensuring that he, and he alone, would

become more powerful each day that he spent within it. The second law followed naturally: Hao Jin is weak. With this, the Lighthouse would dampen Hao Jin's power, evening the playing field between Syndara and his former friend.

When Hao Jin spent much of her magic to force her way onto Syndara's Island and then into the *Glass Lighthouse*, she expected it to return quickly from the deep wellspring within her, as it always had. She was shocked to discover, however, that the time-dilating effect of the Lighthouse also slowed her recovery. Thus, when she found herself face to face with Syndara, she did so with almost none of the overwhelming power she's so known for, and the axiomite ultimately defeated her.

Thankfully for the heroes, even with all his preparations Syndara was similarly injured and drained by his titanic clash with Hao Jin. While he created the Hungry Ghost Tournament as much for his own amusement as for the perfect way to spit on



Hao Jin's legacy, it also served as a means through which he could recover from his battle while he waited for Hao Jin to try to resurrect.

Because of the dramatic time dilation within the *Glass Lighthouse*, the Ruby Phoenix's resurrection will take quite some time. Syndara knows that the Ruby Phoenix will be vulnerable in the moment her soul returns to her remains, but before she has fully resurrected. He plans to absorb her magic then and there, becoming a tyrant of realities and putting an end to Hao Jin once and for all.

SHOWDOWN IN THE GRAND DOJO

EXTREME 20

The Lighthouse's front door opens into an impossible sight—not a single room, but a series of impossible vistas: a sandy desert under a yellow sky, transitioning to an icy midnight lake, then a verdant jungle of impossibly tall trees, a remote snowy mountaintop, a bustling city street, and more.

The *Glass Lighthouse* opens directly into Syndara's main dojo, a magical space where he could conjure a simulation of any environment he wanted in order to train in any number of situations and circumstances. Here, the player characters' team is confronted for the last time by their wicked rivals, the Lightkeepers.

Maps: Powerful transmutation magic transforms this dojo into a totally different biome every 1d4+1 rounds. The magic is intrinsically linked to Syndara's demiplane and cannot be dispelled, nor can it be disbelieved since it's not an illusion. To represent each of the many different forms the dojo takes, use a variety of encounter maps from previous volumes, perhaps hand-selecting ones that your players found particularly enjoyable or challenging. Fighting sites from "Despair on Danger Island", different forms of the grand arena from "Ready? Fight!", and any of the maps in this volume would all work. When the battlefield changes biomes, lay the new map directly on top of the previous one, keeping each creature in the same spot on the table. In this way, characters might go from standing on stable ground one moment to wading precariously in deep water the next.

Creatures: The Lightkeepers await in the center of the room, eager for their long-delayed final match with the heroes. They've waited a long time for this showdown and, depending on how you've portrayed them thus far, might take their time to deliver scathing pre-fight monologues and taunts or coldly launch into cruel battle with little preamble.

A Fitting Stage: The party has faced the Lightkeepers before, but never somewhere the villains could exhibit their full power. When Syndara chose these four fighters as his champions, he granted each a limited sovereignty over the planar laws of the *Glass Lighthouse*. Syu Tak-nwa received control over space, Hakusa over life, Ran-to over gravity, and Blue Viper over time. The Lightkeepers trained to integrate these planar abilities into their unique fighting styles, and now that they're fighting in the Lighthouse itself, they can use the fullest extent of their power. Each of their members can use a Certain Kill Art as long as they are within the *Glass Lighthouse*—these abilities, which have the certain kill trait, cause obvious distortions in the Lighthouse's fabric as the user calls upon their technique. However, as each technique requires one of the Lightkeepers to temporarily take command of the demiplane from the rest of their team, only one Certain Kill Art can be used by any of the Lightkeepers in a given round.

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

The finalists have fought their way through Syndara's mockery of a tournament and defeated their twisted former allies, Tino's Toughest. Now, they find themselves at the entrance to Syndara's final arena, the *Glass Lighthouse* itself. Can they defeat their longtime rivals, Syndara's champions, the Lightkeepers? And even if they do, what more does the tournament's grandmaster have in store?

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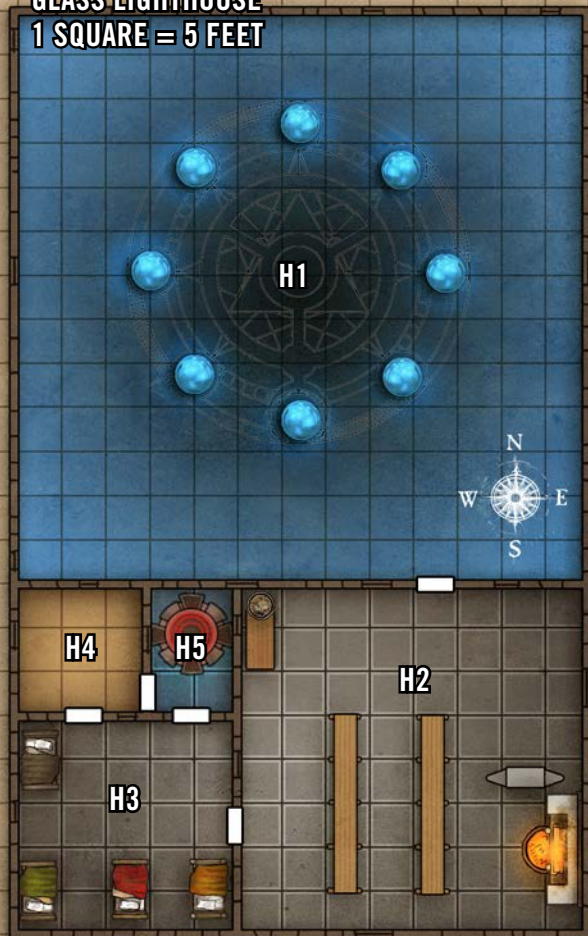
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GLASS LIGHTHOUSE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



SYU TAK-NWA

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female Tian-Hwan white-haired witch

Perception +33; tremorsense (precise) 60 feet

Languages Goblin, Taldane, Tien, Ysoki

Skills Acrobatics +32, Arcana +34, Deception +34, Medicine +32, Nature +34, Occultism +38, Religion +34, Society +32, Thievery +29

Str +3, **Dex** +6, **Con** +2, **Int** +7, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

AC 42; **Fort** +31, **Ref** +32, **Will** +36; +3 status to all saves vs. conjuration

HP 360; **Immunities** trip

Dragline Trip **Trigger** A creature within 20 feet uses a move action or leaves a square during a move action it's using; **Effect** Syu Tak-nwa surreptitiously sends a strand of hair through a portal to emerge near the creature's feet, wings, or other ambulatory limbs. She attempts to Trip the creature.

Spiraling Web **Trigger** Syu Tak-nwa is the target of a ranged Strike or ranged spell attack roll; **Requirements** Syu Tak-nwa is aware of the attack and not flat-footed against it; **Effect** Hairs erupt from portals around the

missile and attempt to wrap around it. Syu Tak-nwa gains a +4 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack. If this would cause the attack to miss, the missile remains tangled and suspended in midair.

Speed 35 feet, ignores difficult terrain

Melee **hair** +35 (agile, finesse, grapple, reach 15 feet, trip, unarmed, versatile S), **Damage** 6d4+20 bludgeoning

Melee **braid** +35 (forceful, reach 10 feet, shove, unarmed), **Damage** 6d6+20 bludgeoning

Occult Prepared Spells DC 45, attack +37; **10th** *dispel magic*, *vampiric exsanguination*, *visions of danger*; **9th** *soothe*, *unfathomable song*, *weird*; **8th** *collective transposition*, *haste*, *slow*; **7th** *soothe*, *spider sting*, *warp mind*; **6th** *feblemind*, *repulsion*, *true seeing*; **5th** *black tentacles*, *chilling darkness*, *synaptic pulse*; **4th** *blink*, *remove fear*, *remove paralysis*; **Cantrips** (10th) *daze*, *forbidding ward*, *guidance*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Witch Hexes (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 237) 3 Focus Points, DC 42; **10th** *cackle*, *curse of death*, *malicious shadow*, *needle of vengeance*; **Hex Cantrip** (10th) *evil eye*

Empowered Hair Tak-nwa's mastery over her prehensile hair while in the *Glass Lighthouse* is so powerful that she can walk on thick strands like giant spider legs. This makes her immune to tripping, and she ignores the effects of difficult terrain (but not greater difficult terrain). She can use her living hair to perform precise tasks such as picking up objects and performing simple Interact actions. She can also deliver hexes through her hair. Whenever Tak-nwa successfully casts a hex focus spell that requires 2 or more actions to cast and that doesn't require a spell attack roll, if her target is within reach, as part of the spellcasting activity she can make a hair Strike against the foe before applying any effects of the hex. If this Strike misses, the hex has no effect.

Familiar Tak-nwa's familiar is an elephant hawk moth named Yon-so. Yon-so has a fly Speed of 40 feet, darkvision, and scent as an imprecise sense to a range of 30 feet. Yon-so can speak Tien, and when Yon-so rolls a success on a Reflex or Fortitude save it takes no damage against the effect.

Silkworm's Basket **Trigger** (certain kill, conjuration) Syu Tak-nwa tears thousands of minute portals into space, sending a single hair through each. The hairs emerge at a space within 30 feet, braiding and twining together to create a cube 20 feet to each side. This has the effects of a 10th-level *force cage*, except that Syu Tak-nwa does not need to sustain the basket; it has a duration of 1 minute. While the Silkworm's Basket persists, Syu Tak-nwa is quickened and can use the extra action only to make a hair or braid Strike against any target within the basket, regardless of her distance to them. She can't create more than one basket at a time.



SHINO HAKUSA

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female Tian-Min ninja

Perception +34; lifesense

Languages Goblin, Taldane, Tien, Ysoki

Skills Acrobatics +38, Athletics +35, Deception +33, Medicine +35, Occultism +35, Thievery +33

Str +6, **Dex** +7, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items +3 major striking greater shock handwraps of mighty blows, *potion of flying*, *potion of haste*

AC 45; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +36, **Will** +30; +3 status to all saves vs. necromancy

HP 360

Nimble Dodge ➤ **Trigger** Hakusa is targeted with a melee or ranged attack by an attacker she can see; **Effect** Hakusa gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ *fingers* +38 (agile, finesse, magical, unarmed),

Damage 4d6+14 piercing plus ki absorption

Melee ♦ *palm* +37 (forceful, magical, shove, unarmed),

Damage 6d6+14 bludgeoning plus ki absorption

Ranged ♦ *vitality blast* +38 (magical, negative, range 60 feet, unarmed, versatile positive), **Damage** 4d8+8 negative

Ki Absorption (necromancy) Hakusa absorbs vitality with each blow. She gains fast healing 10 for 1 round whenever she successfully Strikes with a melee unarmed attack.

Pressure Point Attack ♦♦ Hakusa rapidly strikes at pressure points to debilitate a foe. She makes a fingers Strike. On a hit, the target takes damage as normal and must attempt a DC 43 Fortitude save. Regardless of the result of the save, the target is then temporarily immune to Pressure Point Attack for 1 minute.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target's muscles become temporarily weaker. For 1 round, the target is enfeebled 2, and any time it attempts to take an action with the manipulate trait, the action is disrupted unless it succeeds at a flat check with a DC equal to 5 + its enfeebled value.

Failure As success, but the duration is 1 minute.

Critical Failure As success, but the duration is 1 minute, the flat check is DC 11, and the target takes a -10-foot status penalty to all Speeds for the duration.

Sneak Attack Hakusa's Strikes deal an extra 5d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Swallows in Flight ♦♦ (certain kill, necromancy, negative) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Hakusa strikes a series of pressure points on

her target's body that redirects its ki to the heart, before following up with a palm strike to the sternum. She makes a fingers Strike and a palm Strike, dealing damage as normal. If both hit, the target takes 8d10 negative damage as its life energy escapes from its body in a shower of bird-shaped sparks. The target attempts a DC 43 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes half the negative damage.



SYU Tak-nwa (LIGHTHOUSE FORM)

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Failure The target takes full damage, its life energy exploding violently from its back in a 30-foot cone originating from the target. All of Hakusa's other enemies in the cone also take the negative damage (DC 43 basic Fortitude save).

Critical Failure As failure, but the target takes double negative damage.

RAN-TO

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM GOBLIN HUMANOID

Male frost goblin wrestler

Perception +33; darkvision

Languages Goblin, Taldane, Tien, Ysoki

Skills Acrobatics +32, Athletics +41, Intimidation +34, Survival +32, Warfare Lore +32

Str +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items +3 major striking gauntlet, +3 major striking halfling sling staff (20 bullets and 5 greater explosive bullets), +3 greater resilient studded leather

AC 44; **Fort** +36, **Ref** +33, **Will** +30; +3 status to all saves vs. evocation

HP 460

Attack of Opportunity ↻ When a creature triggers Ran-to's Attack of Opportunity, he can attempt an Athletics check to Grapple the triggering creature instead of making a melee Strike. He can still disrupt a triggering manipulate action if he critically succeeds at his attempt.

Speed 25 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee ♦ gauntlet +40 (agile, free-hand, magical), **Damage** 4d4+21 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Body Slam ♦ **Requirements** Ran-to is grabbing a creature; **Effect** Ran-to throws his foe against the ground. The grabbed creature takes 12d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 43 basic Fortitude save) and is knocked prone. The creature is no longer grabbed.

Constrict ♦ 7d4+5 bludgeoning, DC 43

Major Leaping Catch ♦♦ Ran-to leaps from the ground and attempts to grab a foe while he soars. He makes a Leap, High Jump, or Long Jump. His maximum distance is 100 feet. He must succeed at an Athletics check to perform the leap as usual, but regardless of the type of leap the DC is equal to half the number of feet he moves in the air. Ran-to can attempt an Athletics check to Grapple at any point during the jump. Immediately after the attempt, he (and the creature, if the Grapple was successful) falls to the ground. Ran-to takes no falling damage when using this ability, but the grabbed creature takes the appropriate amount of falling damage as if it had fallen the distance moved. Ran-to can spend three actions to use this ability instead of two; if he does, he can use Plummeting Fall to add 12d6 bludgeoning damage to the falling damage dealt to the grabbed creature, and the creature is knocked prone.

Plummeting Fall ♦ (certain kill) **Frequency** once per round; **Requirements** Ran-to has a creature grabbed and the creature is airborne; **Effect** Ran-to spins and increases the force of gravity, sending him and the creature to the ground. The target takes 12d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall and is knocked prone; Ran-to is unharmed.

Titan Wrestler Ran-to can attempt to Disarm, Grapple, Shove, or Trip creatures, regardless of their size.

Whirlwind Toss ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Requirements** Ran-to has a creature grabbed; **Effect** Ran-to spins the creature he's holding, smashing it against any creatures within his reach, then throws the creature aside. Ran-to attempts an Athletics check against the grabbed creature's Fortitude DC. Regardless of the result, the creature is no longer grabbed after this activity.

Critical Success Ran-to tosses his foe mightily. The grabbed creature is thrown into a space within 20 feet, takes 16d6 bludgeoning damage, and falls prone. All creatures adjacent to Ran-to take the same amount of bludgeoning damage (DC 43 basic Reflex save).

Success As critical success, except the grabbed creature is thrown into a space within 10 feet, and creatures take 12d6 bludgeoning damage.

Failure Ran-to tosses his foe aside. The grabbed creature falls prone.

Critical Failure Ran-to loses hold of his foe.

BLUE VIPER

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE NE SMALL HUMANOID RATFOLK

Male ysoki poisoner

Perception +33; low-light vision

Languages Goblin, Taldane, Tien, Ysoki

Skills Acrobatics +35, Athletics +29, Deception +28, Diplomacy +26, Stealth +35, Thievery +33

Str +3, **Dex** +7, **Con** +4, **Int** +5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items dragon bile (applied to body), hidden cheek needles (20), +3 major striking shortsword

Infused Items Blue Viper carries the following infused items: 3 major acid flasks, 5 black lotus extracts, 3 major bottled lightnings, 4 true elixirs of life, 3 major frost vials, 2 mindfog mists, 3 oblivion essences (*Adventure Path* #149 79), 3 major tanglefoot bags, 5 tears of death, and 2 major thunderstones. These items last for 24 hours, or until the next time Blue Viper makes his daily preparations.

AC 44; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +36, **Will** +33; +3 status to all saves vs. transmutation

HP 366; **Immunities** poison

Poisoned Coat ↻ **Trigger** A creature adjacent to Blue Viper hits him with a melee unarmed Strike; **Effect**



The triggering creature is exposed to dragon bile. This consumes the poison, and Blue Viper can't use Poisoned Coat again until he takes 10 minutes and uses one dose of contact or injury poison to apply to his clothing.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *shortsword* +38 (agile, finesse, versatile S),
Damage 4d6+11 piercing

Ranged ♦ *alchemical bomb* +38 (range increment 20 feet, splash), **Damage** varies by bomb

Ranged ♦ *hidden cheek needles* +35 (concealable, range increment 10 feet), **Damage** 9 piercing plus tears of death or black lotus extract

Plum Rain Deluge ♦♦♦ (certain kill, transmutation)

Frequency once per round; **Effect** Blue Viper accelerates the flow of time so his poisons run their course faster. He Interacts to draw a contact poison and throws it in the air, where it showers down in a 20-foot burst within 60 feet. All creatures in the burst are automatically exposed to the poison, bypassing any onset time, and each creature must attempt a saving throw against that poison. If a creature fails, the duration of any beneficial spells or effects affecting the creature are reduced by 3 rounds (or by 6 rounds on a critical failure).

Pinpoint Poisoner When Blue Viper successfully Strikes a flat-footed creature with a poisoned weapon or exposes a flat-footed creature to an inhaled poison, the creature takes a -2 circumstance penalty to its initial save against that poison.

Poison Spray ♦ **Requirements** Blue Viper is holding a contact or injury poison; **Effect** Blue Viper swigs the poison and sprays it out of his mouth, affecting a 15-foot cone. Blue Viper is not exposed to the poison. All creatures in the cone are immediately exposed to the poison, bypassing any onset time, and each creature must attempt a Fortitude save against the poison.

Potent Poisoner Blue Viper's infused poisons have a DC of 47.

Quick Application ♦ Blue Viper Interacts to draw an injury poison and applies it to a weapon he is holding.

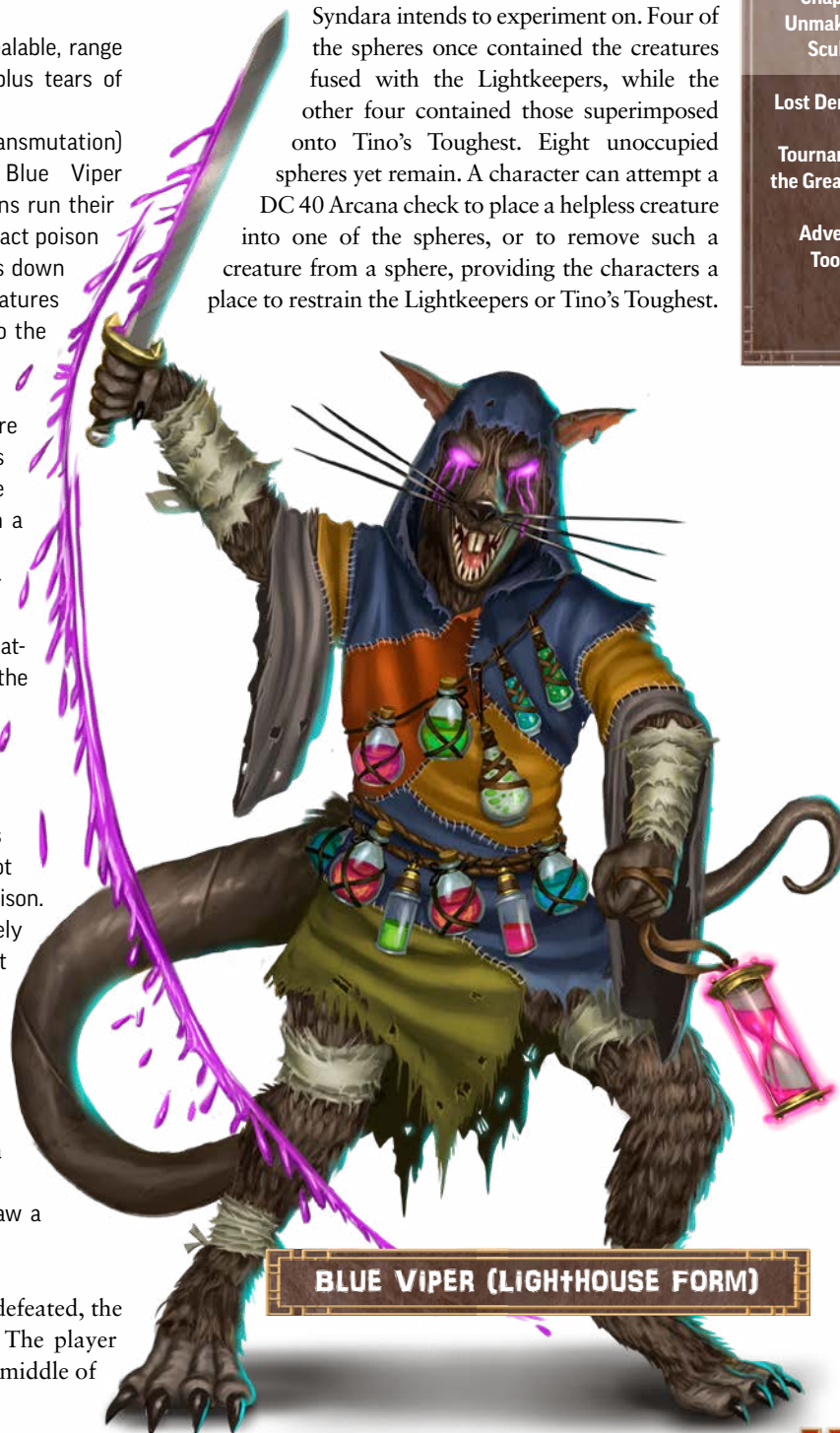
Quick Bomber ♦ Blue Viper Interacts to draw a bomb, then Strikes with it.

Aftermath: Once the Lightkeepers are defeated, the impossible vistas of the dojo fade away. The player characters find themselves standing in the middle of Syndara's creature prison, below.

H1. CREATURE PRISON

This room contains sixteen one-foot-diameter spheres along the perimeter of a stone disc in the center of the room. Eight of the spheres are shattered, while eight are whole and open, shining with a faint light.

This cold room serves as a storage area for the creatures Syndara intends to experiment on. Four of the spheres once contained the creatures fused with the Lightkeepers, while the other four contained those superimposed onto Tino's Toughest. Eight unoccupied spheres yet remain. A character can attempt a DC 40 Arcana check to place a helpless creature into one of the spheres, or to remove such a creature from a sphere, providing the characters a place to restrain the Lightkeepers or Tino's Toughest.



BLUE VIPER (LIGHTHOUSE FORM)



H2. THE SCULPTOR'S ATELIER

A forge, several workbenches, and other crafting accoutrements line this simply appointed workshop, each tool and instrument precisely labeled and in its proper place.

Syndara rarely escaped his demiplane but never lost his passion for the art of creation. He would sculpt sometimes in clay, sometimes in metal, but often made use of more esoteric materials such as flesh, sound, or even media beyond mortal reckoning, like life force and chaotic quintessence.

Here, Syndara most recently experimented with a study in time: four frozen moments enchant the workbenches, one at each end of each bench. The hazards are shaped like giant crystals that float ominously above the work surfaces. Once one frozen moment or workbench is touched, all four frozen moments are triggered and activate.

FROZEN MOMENTS (4)

Pathfinder Core Rulebook 525

Stealth DC 40 (master)

HAZARD 17

H3. MAKESHIFT BEDROOM

This room used to serve as a writing room of sorts for Syndara, where he attempted to catalog his thoughts and research, filling scrolls with his equations. Though Syndara has no need for sleep, when the Lightkeepers became his proxies in the Ruby Phoenix Tournament, he needed a location to house them while they trained, and so absentmindedly cleared this room for their use.

H4. MEDITATION CHAMBER

A luxurious sitting cushion is laid out in the exact center of this small, plain room. The walls ripple with scenes from around the multiverse, each scene either slowed to a crawl or unfurling in an instant.

This meditation room is where Syndara spent much time attempting to quiet his thoughts. Though he couldn't escape from the *Glass Lighthouse*, he found he could let light and sound in from a few randomly selected locations throughout the multiverse, though the difference in subjectivity meant that each scene appeared almost frozen in time. However, this still represented one of the few ways Syndara could experience the outside world, and he took to sitting here in contemplation, spending years watching a single flower open in Nirvana or counting each raindrop in a storm as it fell over the shores of Arcadia.

Last Minute Retraining: A character sitting on the cushion in the perfect center of this room experiences an entire month of time mentally while just 1 minute passes for anyone not on the cushion. Anyone who meditates like this can use the time to retrain or follow other mental pursuits. Once a character who has used the cushion leaves the chamber, they can't use the magic of the room again for 1 month.

H5. SILVER THREAD TO THE HEAVENS

A circular opening punctures the ceiling of this ten-foot-tall rectangular chamber. A single silver thread, as thin as a beam of light, hangs ominously and impossibly from the opening's center directly above a silver mandala painted on the floor. Beyond, high overhead and far away, a starry sky looms. The whole room is oddly still and silent, and the air is biting cold.

The silver thread hanging from the ceiling serves the function of a staircase or lift, and can be climbed easily without requiring a check. Characters who climb the thread experience the strange sensation of standing still, the rest of the plane moving around them with every pull.

THE SHATTERED SPIRAL

The end of the silver thread opens into a series of semitransparent platforms high above Syndara's Island. The structure forms a jagged spiral pattern, its platforms ragged and torn, with no sign of the meticulous detail or pristine precision of the lower level. Around the floating platforms yawns an endless starry expanse, each point of light a unique color, many utterly impossible to describe.

Where the lower level of the lighthouse reflected Syndara's perception as he wished to be viewed—perfect, precise, and in control—this upper level paints a truer picture. The formerly pristine rooms have been shattered, marked by ash, rubble, and gaping holes where parts of the planar fabric were simply annihilated in Syndara and Hao Jin's titanic final clash. At the far end of the platform stands a throne of sandstone, on which Syndara sits, perfectly poised, waiting to engage the finalists. On a pedestal to his right rests an hourglass containing a fine ash—all that currently remains of Hao Jin, the Ruby Phoenix. Try as they might to approach this pedestal, the player characters can never reach it, affected by the same travel-blocking extradimensional magic that Syndara used on his island demiplane in Chapter 1.

Map: The following two encounters take place in a location utterly unmappable by mortal hands. For these final fights, consider running the encounter strictly in the theater of the mind. If your group would rather play on



a grid map, you can adapt the Flying Volcano map on the rear inside cover to this purpose or simply use that map as is and adjust your descriptions of these areas accordingly.

King of the Mountain

Severe 20

Creatures: Syndara fights the heroes here alongside one of his reflections—a duplicate body created through temporal refraction, not unlike the past life incarnation used by Abbot Tsujon. Both bodies use the same statistics and are so alike that it doesn't matter which was Syndara's body originally—if the original is killed, his consciousness simply assumes control over the new one. In combat, Syndara attempts to isolate single targets using Planar Restructuring before teaming up on them with his reflection, and he uses Traverse the Spiral as often as possible to build power and keep tabs on multiple targets. Whenever possible, Syndara attempts to send enemies shooting through the worldsphere on the field to subject them to its effects.

SYNDARA, THE SCULPTOR

CREATURE 22

Page 88

Initiative Perception +39

SYNDARA'S REFLECTION

CREATURE 22

As Syndara, the Sculptor (page 88)

Initiative Perception +39

Hazards: Each of the stars above is a worldsphere—a complete demiplane created by Syndara during his long isolation. Each took no less than a year to finish, and there are as many in the firmament above as there are stars in a more conventional night sky. When combat begins, a worldsphere descends, filling a 15-foot-radius area on the map. Each round, Syndara either moves the worldsphere 30 feet in any direction he chooses or substitutes it with a different worldsphere; this requires no action.

- **Howling Wasteland:** The natural elements of a thousand harsh landscapes roil continuously through this worldsphere. Creatures passing through it take 10d8 fire, cold, acid, or electricity damage (DC 42 basic Reflex save).
- **Gravitational Morass:** The pull of gravity is amplified here, immobilizing any creature in its area for 1 round unless the creature succeeds at a DC 42 Fortitude save.
- **Congealed Time:** Time flows unusually in this realm. A creature entering it must succeed at a DC 42 Will save or be stunned 1 for 1 round as its perceptions outstrip its ability to react.

BONDED BY BLOWS

If the party gained access to the Affinity Ablaze ability when beseeching the Celestial Dragon in Chapter 1, they gain one final benefit (in addition to the effects described on page 33). During the final battle against Syndara (in either form), if any character is reduced to 0 Hit Points and begins dying, on their next turn that character receives a vision of one of the other Ruby Phoenix Tournament teams through their bond. This team reaches out across the dimensional divide to offer their energy to the downed fighter. If the character accepts the aid, that character immediately stabilizes, regains consciousness, and regains 40 Hit Points. Each character can benefit from this effect only once. This final push also exhausts the connection between that character and the other contestants, removing their ability to use Affinity Ablaze.

The Spinel Leviathan

Extreme 20

Immediately after Syndara is defeated, he calls upon his last stores of power to reach a monstrous and cataclysmic end. The terrain changes once more as Syndara reveals his final form. Read or paraphrase the following.

With a shattering sound, Syndara refracts into infinite tessellations of faces and arms. The walls of the *Glass Lighthouse* distort as the very space of the demiplane spirals inward to a central point, folding itself protectively around the writhing mass of limbs and bodies like the shell of some ancient sea creature, borne by sinewy, crustacean legs, with tentacles and vines that twist and bite and a large version of Syndara's torso that extends from the top of the carapace.

As the demiplane collapses, all that's left behind is the null space between planes, taking the form of an endless, starry void.

Creatures: In a last-ditch effort to defeat Hao Jin's champions and successors, Syndara subjects himself to dimensional superimposition; however, he fuses himself not with another creature, but with the fabric of the *Glass Lighthouse* itself. As the Lighthouse was created in part from Syndara's essence, this has an effect not unlike two mirrors facing each other, imposing Syndara upon himself manyfold. The resultant monstrosity will stop at nothing to prove its superiority to the tournament finalists.

In this form, Syndara systematically singles out a target to attack and uses his command over space to ensure they cannot escape.

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SPINEL LEVIATHAN SYNDARA

CREATURE 24

UNIQUE LE GARGANTUAN AEON MONITOR

Syndara the Sculptor's final form



SPINEL LEVIATHAN SYNDARA

Perception +46; spatial sense

Languages Senzar, Taldane, Tien, Utopian

Skills Acrobatics +45, Athletics +48, Demiplane Lore +48, Intimidation +45

Str +12, **Dex** +9, **Con** +10, **Int** +8, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +7

Spatial Sense Syndara instinctively knows the position of all creatures and objects within the *Glass Lighthouse* as a precise sense. His senses do not extend into extraplanar spaces (such as a *bag of holding*), even if the entrance to these spaces is within the Lighthouse.

AC 51; **Fort** +46, **Ref** +38, **Will** +42; +1 status to all saves vs. magical, +4 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 550; **Immunities** death effects, disease, emotion, extradimensional, fear, keeper of the lighthouse; **Resistances** electricity 25, mental 25; **Weaknesses** chaotic 25

Attack of Opportunity

Center of the World (divine, teleportation)

Trigger A creature finishes moving, even if it moved using something other than a move action; **Effect** Syndara is the figurative and literal center of this world. As the triggering creature moves, space reasserts itself, teleporting Syndara to be in the same position relative to the creature as he was when the creature began its movement.

If the space he would teleport into is occupied, he displaces the obstructing creature or object into the nearest available space.

Extraplanar Immunity As Syndara, the Sculptor.

Keeper of the Lighthouse As Syndara, the Sculptor.

Portal Redirection (conjunction, divine, teleportation)

Trigger Syndara is targeted by a ranged Strike or spell attack roll; **Effect** Syndara opens a portal in front of the incoming missile, then opens another portal nearby that fires the missile at another creature within 60 feet of him. He takes no damage from the triggering attack and makes a ranged Strike with a +43 attack bonus. The Strike deals damage according to the triggering ability.

Speed 60 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee spatial pincers +43 (magical, reach 15 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 7d10+18 piercing

Melee tentacle +43 (agile, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 7d8+20 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Ranged warpspines +43 (agile, brutal, magical, propulsive range increment 120 feet, splash 4d6 piercing), **Damage** 4d6+12 piercing

Dimensional Flurry Syndara makes six Strikes. Any creature struck must succeed at a DC 46 Will save or be teleported to a location of Syndara's choice within 60 feet of him when the flurry is



complete. The teleportation has the conjuration, divine, and teleportation traits.

Dimensional Grasp (abjuration, divine) Syndara's grasp extends across dimensions. Creatures grabbed by Syndara can't benefit from teleportation, extradimensional effects, or effects that would move them to a different plane.

Mover of Worlds ♦♦ (conjuration, divine) With great regret, Syndara calls his masterpieces from the firmament to crash down upon his enemies. He flings four worldspheres to any four points within 500 feet. Each worldsphere deals 20d6 damage in a 40-foot burst (DC 48 basic Reflex save). Syndara chooses the type of damage for each worldsphere, which can be any type he chooses, though each worldsphere must deal a different type of damage. On a failed save, the target is pushed to the edge of the burst. No matter how many overlapping explosions it's caught in, a creature can take damage from only one worldsphere per round. Syndara is immune to the damage dealt by his worldspheres. Syndara can't use Mover of Worlds again for 1d4 rounds.

Rend ♦ spatial pincers

One Last Blow

When Spinel Leviathan Syndara is defeated, the shell of his alien form shatters in a haze of glowing dust. When it clears, Syndara, in his humanoid form, is left standing, breathless and panting, his clothes ragged, hair tousled, and flesh badly bruised, in the center of a plain stone room. Syndara assumes a fighting stance, but his form is sloppy and exhausted, causing all of his attacks to critically miss. His AC in this state is 15 and he has only 1 Hit Point, meaning that the next character to attack him likely hits and reduces him to 0 HP—even on a natural 1. If none attack Syndara, he expires at the end of the round regardless. As he collapses, the hourglass on the pedestal next to him falls to the ground and shatters, releasing the ashes of Hao Jin. His body dissolving into crystalline dust on the wind, Syndara turns one last time to the new winners of the Ruby Phoenix Tournament.

His final words: "You've won."

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Syndara placed himself as the keystone to each of his many worlds, reinforcing his power over them, but also making them reliant on his continued existence. When Syndara is defeated, the floor of the *Glass Lighthouse* shatters, and the victors fall through a kaleidoscopic void as each miniature world around them similarly cracks and explodes into golden crystalline dust. Once the last world has winked out, the *Glass Lighthouse* itself unravels, leaving the heroes high in the sky of the Material Plane. They—along with all of Syndara's Island—crash into the ocean off the Flying Mountains.

As the island plummets, Yoh brings the *Solar Jian II* around to its shoreline and, with a grin, catches the party out of the sky. From the deck of the ship, the team can see Rikanzo, the night apparitions, any surviving members of Tino's Toughest, and any other befriended inhabitants of Syndara's Island safely escape the falling landmass on the back of the Spirit Turtle, and not a moment too soon.

Mokku, the scion of the kaiju Mogaru, also manages to leap from the sinking island, and is caught by a hulking figure whose mass and height eclipse that of the crumbling *Glass Lighthouse*: the Final King himself, drawn to his child by some preternatural instinct, rising from the shallows of the ocean. The two saurian monstrosities nuzzle each other affectionately before Mogaru, with a bellow that shakes the airship even as it soars overhead, opens his maw and lays fiery waste to Syndara's crashing island demesne, wiping away the last works of the nefarious Sculptor, his employed demons, and any foul relics remaining on that ruined demiplane.

The flames of Mogaru—who, his revenge complete, returns to the ocean's depths with Mokku in tow—burn like the sun and shine just as bright, searing into the eyes of onlookers, before they rapidly whirl toward a central point, concentrating further and further until they reach the size of a human woman. With a flash, the flames burst back outwards, not as a column, but in the shape of a great bird, blazing wings stretched out over the horizon. Amid the chaos and conflagration of this cataclysmic scene, the Ruby Phoenix is reborn, her crimson hair shining like rose madder.

Taking flight and landing aboard the deck of the *Solar Jian II*, Hao Jin thanks the heroes for stopping Syndara (though she secretly believes that, given enough time to resurrect in Syndara's demiplane—say, a few thousand years—she could have taken control of the situation). With a casual wave of her hand, she tears open a rip in reality. On the far side of the portal, the lights of Goka shine invitingly, and with another flare of magic, Hao Jin moves the airship through the magical doorway. As they pass through the gate, Hao Jin idly notes that, as the heroes have defeated the Lightkeepers, she supposes that now is as good a time as any to name them the winners of the Ruby Phoenix Tournament. Flowers of fire bloom in the evening sky behind them as the passengers disembark from the airship at the Icefang Aerie in Goka. Thousands of onlookers cheer from below, and the Ruby Phoenix encourages her champions to soak in their victory. "Enjoy this moment," she says solemnly, "for it's the last before you make what may be the most important decision of your adventuring lives." She opens a *dimension door* before turning back and winking to this decade's Ruby Phoenix Champions. "Come with me when you're ready, winners. It's a big vault."

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LOST DEMIPLANES

Many spellcasters dream of remaking reality to suit their will. Demiplanes—small extraplanar realms not bound to the strictures or limitations of any other plane of existence—are a limited means of achieving this fantasy. Most demiplanes naturally emerge from the metaphysical froth where the Maelstrom borders the Astral Plane, or from within the Ethereal Plane, churned by the energies of the Positive and Negative Energy Planes. Many of these natural demiplanes eventually collapse. Powerful planar beings and skilled mortals can manipulate base reality in a controlled fashion to form their own demiplane, choosing both the physical and more fantastical properties of these small bubbles of existence.

Like natural demiplanes, spellcasters create their demiplanes from the fabric of the Astral or Ethereal Planes. Both the active design and the subconscious aspirations of a demiplane's architect filter into the fabric of its bottled reality. The chosen building blocks of a demiplane impact how a visitor or potential interloper can access it. As a result, creators often secure their demiplanes with wards to prevent intrusion and place restrictions on access, especially if they craft a permanent portal on the Material Plane. The Refuge of Nex and the *Hao Jin Tapestry* are two famous examples of created demiplanes, though most are not quite as elaborate.

A demiplane's genesis is a unique event. No two demiplanes are crafted the same way, each being a unique expression of its creator's will and desire. While the *create demiplane* ritual is the most common technique, many variations of it exist. Others have used divine miracles or multiple, elaborately layered wishes to craft new realities. Since demiplane creation methods vary, the time and costs required are unpredictable. Even after the initial creation, some spellcasters tinker with them for years or longer, while others form their demiplane in one great, singular moment of creation, often with the aid of artifacts, a planar patron, or the sacrifice of valuables or lives.

ARVALEK'S LAMENT

DEMIPLANE

NE FINITE METAMORPHIC

Category demiplane

Native Inhabitants unknown invisible beasts

The portal into this beautiful, poisoned prison manifests on multiple planes and actively presents itself to—or hunts—magically talented individuals. Visitors to Arvalek's Lament enter from an archway of weathered stone and emerge before a quaint wizard's tower surrounded by pastoral fields, foggy moors, and mountain vistas, though the precise surroundings change daily. The location of the demiplane's exit also changes daily, always within sight, but never quite reachable. Teleportation magic does not function here, and even *gate* only allows creatures to enter the demiplane, not leave.

Twenty-four hours after a visitor enters Arvalek's Lament, the hauntingly silent wilds teem with invisible beasts who devour those seeking the exit. From within the tower at the plane's center, one can hear the hoarse pleas of past victims at the door and windows.

This tower is fully stocked, as if its creator had just stepped out, and the welcoming central chamber includes a table laid with food and drink. The table also holds Arvalek's diary, missing its final pages. More worrying, however, are the books that line the tower's library, each embossed with the name of a visitor and containing a full chronicle of that victim's thoughts during their stay in the Lament. Virtually all of the entries in these diaries descend into panic, horror, and, ultimately, death.

The demiplane's mystery is only compounded by the source of its maker's lament: a final book in the library, an artifact called *Esengrit's Tome of Making*. The only clue to its nature is a repeating motif of a crowned fox. The tome presents complicated, incomplete formulas of unknown nature, with the looming suggestion that solving the puzzles within might provide escape, or perhaps something else altogether—something far more sinister.



DAMREK'S LIBRARY

DEMIPLANE

LN FINITE

Category demiplane

Native Inhabitants homunculi

Created by the Quantum-based Nexian arcanist Damrek Elemion, this demiplane is a repository of magical knowledge that Damrek originally designed as a training ground for his apprentices. Following Damrek's death, however, the demiplane fell into his students' collective possession. Since then, they and their descendants after them have continued this tradition.

Arranged as a nested series of circular tower libraries, each layer contains countless shelves of magical and mundane books, as well as kitchens, sleeping chambers, and smaller rooms for magical experimentation and storage of reagents and spell ingredients. The demiplane's native homunculi perch within the rafters or on the shelves when not tending to upkeep or acting as tutors. The demiplane generates specific homunculi to tutor new students, but each layer is run by a specific homunculus acting as a manager for the others. These director homunculi also serve to answer visitors' questions. The most frequently encountered homunculus is the manager Zevzerius on the first level, carved to resemble a cat with a crow's head, adorned with a monocle and wearing a wizard's cap popular in Nex some five centuries prior.

As a wizard progresses in skill and demonstrates a certain level of competence to the library's homunculi, they gain access to more layers of the demiplane, each with an increasingly advanced set of instructions. Up to a dozen wizards of varying skill may be studying in the demiplane at any given time. The library also holds a dark secret known only to a select few self-appointed graduates: not every apprentice studying in the library leaves.

Damrek's death was not a permanent affair, and he survives within the demiplane's heart, watching through the eyes of his homunculi. The arcanist exists as something less than a lich, trapped in an unstable state of undeath. While this has neither broken his will nor warped his morality to evil, it requires him to periodically feed on a creature's life force in order to sustain himself. He remains in this state, feeding upon those he deems unworthy, dangerous, and power hungry, rationalizing the act. He waits for one of the scholars to progress far enough to discover and solve the magical ritual that he failed to properly complete—which resulted in his cyclical slaughter for self-preservation instead of the eternal youth he'd hoped for.



AREELU'S GANGLION

AREELU'S GANGLION

DEMIPLANE

CE FINITE SUBJECTIVE GRAVITY

Category demiplane

Native Inhabitants qlipphoth

Though named for the half-fiend archmage Areelu Vorlesh, this demiplane holds no actual connection to her. It was so named out of a vain aspiration that it might represent some way to reopen or replicate the Worldwound, which closed with the death of the demon lord Deskari. Far from a standard demiplane, some believe it harbors a nascent Abyssal crack potentially capable of returning the Worldwound's horror to Golarion once more.

Areelu's Ganglion manifests temporary portals to Golarion in dozens of locations within the borders of the Worldwound's historical extent, and the portals attract demons as well as those with demonic heritage. Those affected feel the portal "call" or "sing" to them.

The demiplane's interior is relatively small, just shy of a thousand feet across. At the center is a roiling, gelatinous sphere of chaotic, planar energies, around which float nearly a dozen fiercely glowing qlipphoth runestones. Touching the sphere results in severe injury to most, though those with demonic heritage are instead lured in and devoured in a particularly gruesome fashion. After this feeding, the sphere generates a temporary portal to a layer of the Abyss that disgorges qlipphoths in number and strength that correlates to the relative strength of the fiendish creature consumed.



THE FROSTED LENS

DEMIPLANE

N FINITE STATIC

Category demiplane

Native Inhabitants animate dreams, hounds of Tindalos, sakhils, specters

Equal parts danger and fascinating utility, the Frosted Lens takes the form of a relatively small, one-acre hemisphere centered around a stone dais. Arranged atop the dais are a trio of bowl-topped stone platforms and a central statue. The statue depicts a robed humanoid figure that's severely damaged and scorched, either by magical accident or intentional destruction. Most of its upper body is missing, save for part of an outstretched arm and shoulder upon which perches a carved—though magically animated—house drake. The tiny greeter welcomes visitors in Draconic and invites them to “observe and learn, following the master’s protocols for selecting place and time.” This “master,” presumably the demiplane’s original creator, is unknown, though the styling of the Frosted Lens’ permanent fixtures display a clear Azlanti influence. Still, any attempts to guess at the master’s identity evoke only quizzical silence from the house drake.

The sphere of fog that perpetually surrounds the dais operates much like a crystal ball capable of viewing distant locations in both time and space. Phantasmagoric, translucent figures and landscape features from the selected location populate the fog. The details are ghostly and blurry, as if seen when wandering through the Ethereal Plane. Gazing upon the figures, one can listen to conversations, smell ambient smells, and view events as they happened. As spectacularly useful as this ability would be to either a spy or historian, the demiplane is seemingly broken and in a state of uncontrolled malfunction. There is presently no known way to control the time and location it displays, both of which change at irregular intervals to another seemingly random time or place. The only constant is that all the locations observed are on Golarion and they are primarily centered in regions within Azlant’s historical reach.

While the Frosted Lens is in operation and focused on a specific time and location, it is stable and visitors are safe from any danger. The misty copies of historical figures are just that: replicas without any real connection

to the original individuals, and thus posing no danger of alerting any still extant in the present day. This changes when the unstable and presently uncontrolled mechanism used to focus the demiplane changes to a new time and location without warning. At such times, individual or even packs of hounds of Tindalos attack the visitors, accompanied by horrific vermicular abominations that defy any known description but seem to attack in league with the hounds. With each sudden shift of the Frosted Lens, various creatures from the Ethereal Plane are also attracted to the demiplane, including specters and sakhils with unknown agendas. Scattered near the entrance of the Frosted Lens are the remains of the victims. This entrance moves often, manifesting upon the Ethereal Plane at locations that roughly correspond to the locales observed through the Lens itself.



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RIZINDRA'S GARDEN

DEMIPLANE

CN FINITE

Category demiplane

Native Inhabitants fey, petitioners, proteans

This demiplane was created by the early Thassilonian wizard Rizindra Ascilion, a resident of Runelord Xanderghul's capital city, Xin-Cyrusian. While never the most powerful practitioner, Rizindra was a politically adept social butterfly. Her demiplane regularly hosted elaborate, sprawling parties that included members of Cyrusian high society—including the Runelord of Pride himself—as well as an ever-rotating panoply of extraplanar guests or conversation pieces.

Despite Rizindra's explosive death at the hands of a rival in -6127 AR, the party never quite ended. Rizindra's bound servitors remained, still working under much the same direction as before. The Garden saw continued use in its original capacity by other Thassilonian wizards, and after Earthfall, by a subsequent succession of planar squatters. These later hosts have altered and expanded the demiplane extensively such that it now functions as part elaborate garden party and part death trap.

The demiplane takes the form of a mile-wide palatial garden at dusk, festooned with colored lanterns and magical banquet tables. Populating the garden are dozens of sprawling tents furnished in the styles of other terrestrial cultures from Rizindra's era as well as fetishized notions of various Outer Planes, all staffed by planar beings either bound to service or simply stopping by. The demiplane ensnares a rotating guest list of petitioners during their transit through the Astral Plane, before discharging them back to the River of Souls after a week's revelry. This magic also impacts current guests: anyone who dies within the demiplane manifests as their own petitioner for the same period before moving on. During this time, most magic can't raise them from the dead.

At present, a variety of prank-loving fey who delight in imitating dinner party guests have taken over several tents. However, there's another group of more malevolent fey who hunt guests that stray too far into the garden's forested perimeter. The present ringleader—as much as one exists—of the ongoing party is an illureshi protean named Kandivissian, the Echo of Ancient Rumors. Notable for dressing in ostentatiously overdone Thassilonian style and carrying a *rod of wonder* disguised as a sapphire-tipped walking cane, the protean boasts an entourage of a dozen azuretzis who follow the illureshi like a miniature protean chorus. All the proteans amuse themselves by taking on the forms of current or past visitors and playing out the roles of dinner party guests or servitors.

VERINEA'S REFUGE

DEMIPLANE

NG FINITE

Category demiplane

Native Inhabitants genius loci

Demiplanes often serve as vaults, sanctums, or hiding places, but Verinea's Refuge was created out of a simple, poignant desire for the safety and nostalgia of its creator's lost childhood. While many of her personal details are lost to time, what is known for certain is that Verinea was a spiritual leader within the Sarkorian city-state of Storasta who saw her personal and family fortunes suffer in the years leading up to Storasta's abandonment 4644 AR. She created the Refuge a decade earlier as a nostalgic replica of the city of her youth, and she populated it with illusory copies of people and places long since changed or passed away. Retreating more and more into the demiplane, Verinea spent years expanding her vision of an idealized Sarkorian wilderness. As she grew old and dementia robbed her of the ability to differentiate reality from illusion, Verinea's creations grew ever more real and protective of her, and she eventually vanished into her demiplane's depths, her ultimate fate unknown.

Upon entering the Refuge, visitors see an idyllic vision of old Storasta and the surrounding wilds, a recreation populated not only by illusory animals and persons from Verinea's youth, but also a dozen powerful genius loci—sentient spirits of the land itself. These loci include three that manifest as Verinea at different stages of her life. The illusory beings—which call themselves things like “the soldier,” “the witch,” “the artist,” and “the god caller”—claim to be visitors who simply decided to stay. If pressed as to why they only possess a marginal knowledge of their history or why they have conflicting backstories, they grow confused. Despite this mystery, these spirits are friendly and welcoming. In fact, the longer visitors stay and interact with them, the more fiercely protective they become, treating their guest like a child or adolescent taking refuge against a confusing and confounding world. The spirits happily talk, play, teach, or help their visitors, so long as visitors are polite and kind in return.

While Verinea's fate is unknown, it is not the only mystery within the Refuge. Persistent rumors, compounded by curiously evasive answers from various resident spirits, claim that when Verinea vanished, she did so while in possession of a treasure trove of mundane wealth and unique magical items. Wherever she is, in whatever state she yet persists—if at all—she may await someone courageous enough to find her collection or one deemed worthy by the spirits she left behind.



THE MAKING OF A DEMIPLANE

2983 AR, 12 Calistril

Finally, everything is in place. Eight years of preparation to gather the requisite materials and years prior spent aspiring, planning, and grasping at something they said I was too young and inexperienced to achieve. When I craft a demiplane of my own, I will have not only proven my mastery, but I will have achieved something that the council deemed a pointless rabbit hole of experimentation. It should take less than a fortnight to finalize once I start; longer than most examples in the literature, but mine will be both larger and require far less expense, easily half of what a demiplane a quarter of its size requires.

The theory was mine, mostly. Esengrit's *Tome of Making* contains comprehensive instructions on demiplane construction, albeit from a radically different magical tradition that I do not recognize—neither does Idziviir. The formulas took years to master, but they shorten the process and eliminate the need for secondary casters: incomplete formulas that -I- solved and which I intend to put into practice.

2983 AR, 8 Pharast

My work progresses. It feels amazing to literally craft my own personal reality. My own tower, wrought of liquid ether and sculpted like clay, surrounded by the fields I remember from my youth, the mountains where I apprenticed, and other familiar places. I now tinker with the details.

2983 AR, 12 Pharast

The exit portal has moved... it should not have. Only a few feet, but clearly this technique has quirks that I still need to adjust. Idziviir tells me not to worry, but I can see her confusion. The imp is on edge, constantly looking over her shoulder. She swears that we're not alone, but while I'm still crafting this place, the barriers between here and the Ethereal Plane are in flux. This is what she feels.

2983 AR, 13 Pharast

The portal moved again, almost a mile away. This isn't possible, and it somehow resists my efforts to change it. I attempted to teleport there, but the spell failed. I spent hours testing other magic and every transportation-related spell fails or functions improperly. More worryingly, the book has changed. There are more pages and more incomplete formulas beyond those I'd solved. These new ones... they're incomprehensible. What is this?!

2983 AR, 14 Pharast

We... I am not alone and I am trapped. Idziviir bolted for the portal. She made it thirty yards before something tore her to pieces. I opened a gate—A GATE!—but it only functioned one way. I can summon but I cannot leave. It won't let me. Whoever, whatever the tome's author is, it wants me to finish the formulas. Will it then let me leave? I don't think it will. I don't even understand what will happen when I solve them all.

2983 AR, 17 Pharast

Those things whisper to me in Idziviir's voice from beyond the door and windows. I am no longer in control in any way. The magic swims with names, all of them screaming for release or promising, mockingly, that I will join them, and that the book's creator stares hungrily from beyond. I've tried undoing the magic I've spent my life aspiring to, and I can't. I tried to disjunct the anchor that holds it all in place, only to have the magic rebound and shatter my left arm. Casting is nearly impossible now. The portal is the only possible way out and it taunts me, visible but just out of reach. Yet it is my only hope. Song of the Spheres, what have I done?

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TOURNAMENTS OF THE GREAT BEYOND

Beyond the Material Plane, the multiverse throbs with conflict and chaos. To give shape to endless rivalries and create opportunities for catharsis in an eons-old cosmos, many extraplanar entities conduct competitions and tournaments to test mettle, might, and magic. The Ruby Phoenix Tournament may be the best-known fighting tournament on Golarion, but elsewhere in the Great Beyond there exist countless other opportunities to best rivals, prove one's mastery, and earn glory.

The following pages detail four tournaments that take place on various planes around the multiverse. Each entry includes a description of the tournament and hooks to inspire you as you create new adventures for your players.

DESIGNING A TOURNAMENT

When creating a fighting tournament for player characters to compete in, it's important to remember that the fights inside the ring are just one element of what makes a competition truly memorable. Whether you're designing a tournament that follows familiar rules and themes or a contest full of dizzying stakes and alien contenders, consider the following questions to decide what makes your tournament unique.

- How do contenders hear about the tournament? Who promotes the tournament, and who are its detractors? What kind of reputation does it have locally? Abroad?
- Who is "the face" of the tournament? Who pays for the costs of running it? Where does the prize money come from?
- Who built the arena? Who maintains it? What special dangers or features does it have? What does every competitor know about the arena? What does no one know about it?
- Aside from earning a prize and title, how are the tournament's winners treated? Do former champions typically retire afterward, compete again in subsequent years, or meet some other

OTHER EXTRAPLANAR TOURNAMENTS

In addition to the tournaments detailed in this article, here are some other opportunities to compete in extraplanar arenas.

Counterbounty: Extraplanar fugitives hiding out in the wispy wastelands of the Ethereal Plane compete in the millennial Counterbounty for a chance at continued refuge from the law-enforcing aeons of Axis. The goal of the event is simple: hunt down the most fellow fugitives in a week's time—without getting caught in the process, of course.

Recomptemplance: Contenders haunted by their past enter this protean-run Maelstrom challenge in which they must fight nine versions of themselves—one for each alignment. If they succeed (and few do), they earn a chance to turn back the hands of time and return to a critical moment in their life, in order to make a different decision. Naturally, enforcers from the Dimension of Time have been trying to dismantle the Recomptemplance for eons, and any who enter the contest inevitably draw their ire.

Strongrun: The demigod Kurgess hosts this simple contest in Nirvana for anyone who has lost their way in the multiverse. Contenders can compete any number of times, and when they finally win, Kurgess's azata servants guide the lost soul to anywhere in the multiverse they want to go.

- shared fate? How has the experience of winning the tournament changed them? What would a past winner have to say to a team of new contenders?
- What are the stakes of losing the tournament or putting on a poor performance? How do locals treat dirty fighters, cheaters, and losers?
- What ceremonies and traditions are associated with the competition? What rituals, superstitions, or customs do the showrunners and entrants take part in?



AMPHITHEATER OF THE PERFECT PATH

Location lei—village of velstracs on the Shadow Plane

Organizer High Judge Agrinyxia, the Gracious Scepter

Competitors Petitioners of ancient gladiators, Elysian titans, azatas, angels

Prizes Freedom, as well as unholy artifacts, shadow weapons, and vile spells

Stakes Everlasting torment

The velstrac residents of the Shadow Plane flock to the Amphitheater of the Perfect Path for its annual fighting



tournament of the same name. Here, prisoners stolen from the Material Plane fight for their ever-elusive freedom. Though the competition's hosts promise release to the increasingly flustered competitors, they rarely give it. Those who wish to escape the bindings of their shadowy patrons must do so outside the confines of the tournament's arena. When they do, most are emotionally broken when they discover that this "escape" was the true tournament all along.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The Amphitheater of the Perfect Path's contenders are never willing participants. Rather, velstracs kidnap the mightiest and most glorious warriors they can find on the Material Plane. The next thing the contenders know, they awaken in a massive and strange never-ending hall. Only after wading through the trap- and monster-filled hall several times do contestants realize that it is, in fact, a torus-shaped arena filled with magical sensors and viewports that transmit the contenders' travails to an audience of thousands of jeering Shadow Plane denizens. All the challenges up to this point were merely set dressing. Now begins the real tournament.

The velstracs stole the victims on each team from their homes and placed them in the Amphitheater to kill one another for the velstracs' pleasure. However, the tournament overseers take great pains to ensure the teams continue to distrust one another and view each other as adversaries rather than potential allies. To this end, the judges fill their city-sized arena with illusions and mind-altering substances, though they rarely resort to outright lies.

The objective is obvious once the game has been realized: escape. The team that does so in the most entertaining way (as judged by a panel of sadistic velstrac hegemonies) is deemed the winner—if one can even consider this harrowing event a "win."

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Because Pathfinder works best when players can trust their Game Master, you should design adventures that use this tournament in a way that prepares the players for the material. Make sure your players are comfortable with elements of horror before you take them to this corner of the Shadow Plane.

Shadow War: A previous Champion of the Perfect Path believes she can dismantle this year's tournament and save all those taking part. She needs to recruit a team in the know to sabotage the contest from within. But are the player characters brave enough to serve as ringers in this tournament of fiends?



FIELDS OF BATTLE

Location Outskirts of Hero's Heart in Elysium

Organizers Thais (the herald of Cayden Cailean) and others

Competitors Elysian petitioners, mortal guests, and occasionally celestials

Prizes Various artifacts or favors from empyreal lords, powerful azatas, and other celestials

Stakes Personal honor and glory

Elysium is a celestial plane of unbound love, unfettered compassion, and uncaged wonders—as well as souls whose hearts beat only for the thrill of glorious battle.

Anyone pure and passionate of heart might be sentenced to an afterlife braving the endless Elysian seas of the Boundless Azure Ocean. There they'll find themselves defending against or attempting an endless series of sieges amid the infinite castles and keeps of Clashing Shore or pursuing creative exploits that defy mortal comprehension in the unfathomably beautiful forest city of Elarian. And for those who never felt more alive than in the heat of battle, there can be no better suited afterlife than that within Hero's Heart, the wild and wondrous Elysian domain of the Drunken God, Cayden Cailean. Here, goodhearted revelers of all stripes boast of their deeds, challenge one another to contests of strength and wit, and all too often descend into chaotic but friendly barroom brawls.

Unsurprisingly, Hero's Heart is the final resting place for many pugilists and scrappers who forged their mortal legacies (and likely met their demises) within the arena as prizefighters. For these glory-seeking gladiators and gamblers, the real action takes place upon the Fields of Battle at the outskirts of Hero's Heart, where virtuous warriors compete in countless contests of martial strength, strategy, and skill. Win or lose, the participants of these mock skirmishes, chariot races, and hunting contests celebrate their glorious exploits and new friendships in all-night parties that fill the raucous feast halls of Reveler's Rest at the center of Hero's Heart. In the morning, the battered and bruised competitors rise from their slumbers fully restored and ready to compete once again.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The Fields of Battle isn't one particular tournament, but rather an endless series of bouts and events whose participants stake only their honor, time, and perhaps some celestial treasures. Residing over the contests are azatas, angels, and other holy hosts who devise ever more creative challenges for participants to overcome as well as increasingly enticing rewards for which to compete. Such contests might range from something as simple as retrieving a trinket from the far end of a

monster-riddled labyrinth to planning and executing a complex invasion into another team's fortress.

Sporty empyreal lords and even on occasion Cayden Cailean's personal servants take time to attract worthy mortal champions to join the fun in the Fields of Battle. Invitees from the Material Plane rarely pass up the opportunity to compete since the prize is often luxurious and all one must put at stake is their own ego.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Mortals of all skill levels might be invited to attend games at the Fields of Battle. The following are just some of the most noteworthy competitions held by empyreal lords and others in Elysium's recent history.

The Acclimation: Four teams of four contestants each race to be the first to summit the Bright-Burning Volcano, the Elysian mountain ruled by the empyreal lord Valani, the Fireshaker. Along the way, they must overcome Fireshaker's ill-tempered obstacles: giant animals made from magma, living landslides of roiling scree, downpours of hail-spewing water elementals, and more. Before the race starts, each team selects a different element—water, fire, earth, or air—and is then equipped with a bevy of such spells, weapons, and artifacts to aid their ascent, though the variety of obstacles ensures no one team has an unfair edge. Thais, Cayden Cailean's herald, adores this event, and she grants the winning team one of her black feathers. When burned, the feather summons the herald to the party's aid on any plane.

Mystery Mire: Ever-jocular Picoperi enlists his trickster minions to host this peculiar banquet in which one attendee is secretly playing a murderer, and the other diners must deduce the identity of the killer before the night's end. Although the empyreal lord sometimes forgets to tell all of the invitees what the game is upfront, the farcical nature of the event quickly becomes clear as guests are "murdered" in increasingly absurd ways. By night's end, the performers toast to a wonderful show and honor the best actors with a tremendous keg of euphoria-inducing ambrosial drink.

Songsearch: Jalaijatali, the empyreal lord of natural music and waterfalls, hosts Songsearch, a contest in which the most talented mortal bards compete to tell the most epic saga or melodramatic tragedy. The performance is just the first part of the tournament, though. After performing a song, the troupe must then reenact their tales of derring-do in a misty simulacrum before the assembled bards of Elysium. The troupe with the grandest performance (and who survives their self-prescribed travails) receives a set of sacred instruments crafted by Jalaijatali herself.

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MALETERNITUM

Location Hell

Organizer Various infernal dukes

Competitors Mortal advocates of the damned

Prizes Freedom for one soul of a good mortal wrongly imprisoned in Hell

Stakes Eternal damnation for the fighter and three of their loved ones

Once confined to Hell, few souls escape its shackles. The infernal tournament called the Maleternitum, however, offers one viable avenue toward freedom. Any living mortal can enter the Maleternitum and fight the opponents thrown their way, but entrants must first secure the patronage of an infernal sponsor.

If they win, then the fighters may retrieve the soul of a single loved one who was unjustly (though perhaps legally) sentenced to eternal damnation. If a fighter loses, however, then not only is their own soul committed to the infernal fires, but they must also consign three still-living friends or family members to the Pit as well.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The Maleternitum is held every nine years in the city of Dis, the second layer of Hell. Contestants are guided by representatives of their sponsor through the Oppidan Maze to their various one-on-one skirmishes, staged in strange arenas scattered throughout the eldritch sprawl of the Maze. Finally, when there are only three contestants left, the final bout is fought within the Iron Scepter at the heart of the fiendish city, with an agent of Dispatser overseeing the fight.

Every tenth Maleternitum—known as a Royal Maleternitum—the infernal dukes up the ante of their unholy game. For such an occasion, each duke personally oversees the recruitment of mortals to fight on their behalf, promising unfathomable riches and rewards if they win. The duke with the winning team wins the opportunity to pen a new edict of Hell to be followed until the next Royal Maleternitum, so few dukes pass up the chance to compete, and they spare no expense at locating willing mortals to take part on their behalf.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Contestants compete against increasingly powerful devils and monsters in the arenas of the Maleternitum, so only the hardest contenders need apply.

Celestial Rescue Mission: A noble angel of Heaven named Parchasus was captured behind enemy lines in the swamps of Stygia. Sunlord Thalachos, herald of Sarenrae, personally beseeches the player characters to enter the next Maleternitum in order to win Parchasus's freedom. However, the mission becomes complicated when the party discovers that Parchasus's friend Shilyr, ignorant of Sarenrae's scheme, has also entered the tournament.

Unlikable Allies: For the upcoming Maleternitum, the sponsors are gathering teams of seven champions each to compete. Can the player characters cooperate with their bullheaded teammates long enough to make it to the final bout? If not, can they make it alone?





PARLAY OF THE MINDTIDE

Location The Mindtide—the nightmarish intersection of Abaddon and the Material Plane

Organizers Charon, Alazhra, and a servitor of Desna

Competitors Two teams of six mortals assembled on behalf of Alazhra and Desna

Prizes Safe passage through Abaddon until the next Parlay

Stakes Protection from or exploitation of the Material Plane for the night hag's extraplanar soul trade

What is a dream? For most, it is a nocturnal glimpse into one's own thoughts, feelings and desires, subconscious or otherwise. For others, a dream can be a respite of utmost freedom or a phantasmagoric prison. Regardless, each dream belongs to but one dreamer and that dreamer alone.

Alazhra, the Dream Eater, spits in the face of this ideal. The patron goddess of night hags trades the souls of those she and her followers have acquired in Abaddon, unchecked by the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse due to an ancient, unspoken agreement between the deities.

Throughout the wastelands of Abaddon, the shadows of ethereal trauma sometimes bleed beyond the plane's borders and into the nightmares of mortals on the Material Plane suffering the traumas of war, death, famine and pestilence. Such nightmares, if prolonged and of sufficient magnitude, can transform an affected dreamer's subconscious into a temporary extension of Abaddon. In theory, this phenomenon—called a Mindtide—presents a loophole for Alazhra and her night hag followers to prey upon vulnerable mortals for their soul trade without ever having to chance the River of Souls for their quarry.

This exploit is checked only by a parlay between Alazhra and a thyrien servitor of Desna, the goddess of dreams. The agreement, called the Parlay of the Mindtide, determines the sovereignty of any Mindtides that occur within the next 7 years.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The Parlay of the Mindtide states that every 7 years, a representative of Alazhra and a representative of Desna must each assemble a team of six warriors to fight in an artificially created Mindtide that serves as a neutral dreamscape arena. The winning team earns their patron unfettered authority to oversee (and exploit, in Alazhra's case) any Mindtides for the next 7 years.

In addition to the organizer, who selects the champions to participate, each team has three roles within it. Four of the participants are Divers: the combatants that dive into the shared dreamscape to do combat with the Divers of the opposite team. If all four Divers of a team

are eliminated from the dreamscape, the surviving team prevails, and the terms of the parlay reflect the wishes of the side they represent for the next 7 years.

Each team also has one Engineer, who stands on the outskirts of the fray and whose thoughts and sensations shape the shared dreamscape. An Engineer's goal is to maintain their cognitive composure in order to manipulate the dreamscape to best aid their team's Divers, all the while struggling for the upper hand in a contest of wills against the other team's Engineer. Complicating matters, when a Diver falls in the battle, that team's Engineer receives a rush of emotional energy from the now-dead Diver—cognitive juice that the Engineer can use to dramatically warp the dreamscape and turn the tide of battle. In this way, the match can ebb and flow unpredictably as each team loses fighters, their respective Engineers gaining a sudden surge of power with each fallen friend.

Finally, the Attendant of a team stays awake and outside of the dreamscape where they can tend to their team's physical bodies on the Material Plane. Divers' dreamscape wounds manifest upon their physical being, and a Diver who dies in either realm also dies in the other. The Attendant toils to preempt such calamities, mending broken bones, balancing humors, and even simply moistening the feverish brows of each dreamer with a cool sponge. At the same time, the Attendant makes sure their Engineer also stays asleep in spite of all the ambient psychonautic turbulence.

On the Material Plane, the scene of the dreamers' battle is arrestingly serene. Each team's Engineer and Divers lie asleep on simple beds arranged in a star shape in a secure location. To avoid foul play, neither team knows the physical location of the other. Yet all ten sleepers are linked together in the dreamscape through a magical apparatus that effortlessly connects everyone across time and space.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Adventurers both novice and veteran might be enlisted by recruiters for the Parlay of the Mindtide.

Collateral Damage: Alazhra's representative has tricked a team of goodhearted warriors to fight on her behalf. Can the player characters, fighting for Desna's side, win the Parlay of the Mindtide without killing the innocents on the other team?

Dream Guardians: Desna's agent has recruited several teams for the upcoming Parlay, but each has been systematically murdered in their dreams in the runup to the contest. To make sure Desna's latest team of champions makes it to the fight, her agent has hired the player characters to protect the fighters within a shared dreamscape not unlike the Mindtide.

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CAMPAIGN CONSEQUENCES

With the defeat of Syndara, the destruction of Syndara's Island, and the rescue of Hao Jin, the Ruby Phoenix Tournament can finally come to a close. Although each of the competition's teams took part in the rescue of Hao Jin to some extent, none of these epic deeds would have been possible without the heroism of the player characters. Moreover, because the heroes defeated their fellow finalists, the Lightkeepers, in the presence of the tournament's grand judge—even if she was just ashes encapsulated in an axiomite's hourglass—Hao Jin can rightly and fairly bestow upon the player characters the titles of Ruby Phoenix Champions.

A GRAND PRIZE

The specifics of Hao Jin's vault of treasures—one of which is now available for the party to claim—are left for you to decide. Consider working with your players outside the fiction of the game to determine a desirable prize. Hao Jin's collection is so enormous that it can reasonably contain just about anything you and your friends might imagine. Whatever they choose, the party's decision will doubtless have an enormous impact on the world of Golarion. Just as the release of the *Hao Jin Tapestry* 10 years ago made the events of this Adventure Path possible, your players' prize could easily prove the driving force for countless adventures—and even whole campaigns—to come.

PARTING WAYS

Whether the player characters choose to retire from adventuring or continue their escapades, the people they've encountered have also been changed by the events of this Ruby Phoenix Tournament.

After her near-fatal encounter with Syndara, Hao Jin takes a brief sabbatical to visit old friends in Axis and perhaps repair relationships with any other forgotten rivals from her storied lifetime. Lady Xhai Zhia beseeches the party to share their stories with her, and afterward she produces and directs a well-received

opera called *Wings of the Phoenix*, which recounts the heroes' exploits through the Flying Mountains and on Syndara's Island. General Kaso Hida leads construction of new sea walls and—in partnership with his old flame Lord Aldanar Unmar—a series of enormous magical fighting machines to protect Goka against any future kaiju attacks along the city's shoreline. Empress Nai Yan Fei, hoping the party will visit often, grants them lavish permanent quarters in the Gokan Palace, available whenever their travels lead them back to her city.

After several weeks of celebrations, most of the party's rival fighting teams depart Goka for their respective homelands. Some of these teams vow to train harder and return for the next Ruby Phoenix Tournament, while others simply go their separate ways in the wake of this decade's harrowing competition.

Tino's Toughest, if the players managed to rescue them, falls into this latter category. The Toughest's monstrous transformation in the *Glass Lighthouse* left Takatorra with yet more questions about purpose and sense of self, and the swordmaster decides to sojourn across Tian Xia in search of ever-elusive answers. Yabin the Just languishes over his missed opportunity to come face to face with the Celestial Dragon, and so he commits to studying the ancient being at the Rao Sho Monastery until their next emergence. Ji-yook finds the stimulation of Goka too enticing to leave behind and decides to hire out her skills to the city's highest bidders.

Finally, Tino Tung bids a personal goodbye to the player characters and explains that he has decided to return home to Quain for awhile. He wishes to see his family again and visit his brother's grave, though he promises to keep on training. He solemnly hopes to see the player characters once again someday. Tino's not sure if he'll be taking part in the next Ruby Phoenix Tournament—this one has given him enough excitement for a lifetime. "I can't explain it," he says with a laugh as he bids goodbye at the crossroads outside Goka, "but these past few weeks have felt like a thousand years."



PHOENIX BLOODLINE (UNCOMMON SORCERER BLOODLINE)

You have been blessed by a phoenix, perhaps via some magical interaction with a similarly blessed individual.

Grant this new sorcerer bloodline to players who finish the Fists of the Ruby Phoenix Adventure Path. Players can then choose this bloodline for any new sorcerer characters they create for future campaigns.

Spell List primal

Bloodline Skills Diplomacy, Nature



Granted Spells cantrip: *detect magic*; 1st: *burning hands*; 2nd: *see invisibility*; 3rd: *fireball*; 4th: *remove curse*; 5th: *breath of life*; 6th: *disintegrate*; 7th: *contingency*; 8th: *moment of renewal*; 9th: *meteor swarm*

Bloodline Spells initial: *rejuvenating flames*; advanced: *shroud of flame*; greater: *cleansing flames*

Blood Magic The primal fire of life and death flows through you or one target. Choose to have either you or a target of the spell gain temporary Hit Points equal to the spell's level for 1 round, or to have a target of the spell take fire damage equal to the spell's level (if the spell already deals initial fire damage, combine this with the spell's initial damage before determining weaknesses and resistances).

REJUVENATING FLAMES

FOCUS 1

UNCOMMON FIRE HEALING NECROMANCY SORCERER

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Area 15-foot cone

Saving Throw basic Reflex

You create a gout of flame that both heals and burns. You restore 1d4 HP to all allies in the area, and those allies gain a +1 status bonus to Fortitude saves for 1 minute. Enemies in the area take 1d4 fire damage with a basic Reflex save.

Heightened (+1) You restore an additional 1d4 HP to your allies and deal an additional 1d4 fire damage to enemies.

SHROUD OF FLAME

FOCUS 3

UNCOMMON EVOCATION FIRE SORCERER

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Area 10-foot emanation

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

You encircle yourself in an aura of protective flames. Each creature that hits you with an unarmed attack, Grapples you, or otherwise touches you takes 3 fire damage. When you Cast the Spell and the first time you sustain it each round, each creature in the area takes 3d6 fire damage (basic Reflex save).

Heightened (+1) The damage caused by touching you increases by 1, and the fire damage when you Cast the Spell or sustain it increases by 1d6.

CLEANSING FLAMES

FOCUS 5

UNCOMMON FIRE HEALING NECROMANCY SORCERER

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range touch; **Targets** 1 creature

You wrap the target in purifying flames. You can attempt to counteract a single poison or non-curse effect imparting the clumsy, dazzled, enfeebled, fatigued, frightened, paralyzed, sickened, or stupefied condition. The target can choose to empower the flames with their life force, becoming drained 1 (or increasing their drained value by 1, if already under the condition) to grant you a +1 circumstance bonus to your counteract check.



CAPSTONE FEATS

Player characters can select one of the following new class feats for their 20th-level class feat upon entering the *Glass Lighthouse* or by meditating on the cushion in area H4.

ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD ◆◆◆ FEAT 20

UNCOMMON INVESTIGATOR

Frequency once per hour

Your firsthand experience of the subjective nature of time and space has given you new observational insights. Your mind processes information so quickly that time appears to stop for all creatures but you. You can take up to 9 actions in 3 sets of up to 3 actions each. During this time, you can use purely mental and observational abilities such as Recall Knowledge, Seek, and Devise a Stratagem, and you can use an action to move a mental projection of yourself to a location within a 60-foot radius to observe objects more closely and from different angles, though you can't affect your surroundings in any way (for instance, you could move your mental projection more closely to a distant door to read a minute inscription on its handle, but you could not open it to observe the other side). When the duration elapses, time resumes its normal flow.

DANCE OF INTERCESSION ◆◆◆ FEAT 20

UNCOMMON CLERIC

Prerequisites expert in Performance

Frequency three times a day

You either performed in or stood witness to the dance used to invoke the Celestial Dragon and can harness a sliver of their power. You Stride in a dance up to half your Speed, attempting a DC 35 Performance check. You can perform this dance up to three times per day. The second time you do so in the same day, use the degree of success one worse than your actual roll on the Performance check. The third time in a day, use the degree of success two lower than your actual roll.

Critical Success You perform the movements of the Dance of Intercession so gracefully that you evoke a glimmer of the memory of the Celestial Dragon's awesome power. You cast the 3-action version of either 9th-level *harm* or *heal* at any point during your Stride. This does not use any spell slots.

Success As critical success, but the spell is 7th level instead of 9th as you stumble through the movements.

Failure As critical success, but the spell is 5th level instead of 9th as you stumble through the movements.

Critical Failure You fail to remember the steps of the dance. You gain no additional effect beyond Striding half your Speed, and you can't attempt the Dance of Intercession again until your next daily preparations.

DEMON'S HAIR FEAT 20

UNCOMMON WITCH

Prerequisites Living Hair

Your hair constantly wriggles and writhes like that of your

rival, Syu Tak-nwa. Your damage die of your hair unarmed Strike increases by one step and it gains the reach and versatile slashing traits. Your familiar assumes partial control over your hair; as long as your familiar is alive and within 30 feet, you are permanently quickened, and you can use the extra action only to make a hair Strike.

You can deliver hexes through your hair. When you successfully cast a non-cantrip hex that requires 2 or more actions to cast and that doesn't require a spell attack roll, if your target is within your reach, as part of the spellcasting activity you can make a hair Strike against them before applying any effects of the hex. If this Strike misses, the hex has no effect.

Special If your hair already has the reach trait, it instead gains the sweep trait.

EVERDISTANT DEFENSE ◀ FEAT 20

UNCOMMON ABJURATION CHAMPION DIVINE

Trigger A creature within your aura is targeted by a ranged attack or a creature moves through your aura.

Requirements You have at least one aura from a champion feat or feature.

The spatial barrier of Syndara's Island has taught you that distance can foil enemies better than any armor. You warp space, causing each square within your aura that the attack or creature would move through to count as triple the distance. If this reaction is used on a ranged attack, the attack takes range increment penalties based on the adjusted range and fails if this would cause it to exceed its maximum range.

EXTRADIMENSIONAL STASH FEAT 20

UNCOMMON EXTRADIMENSIONAL ROGUE

Prerequisites legendary in Thievery

When you perform sleight of hand, you fold space so that objects really do disappear. You create a small extradimensional space somewhere within in your clothing that can hold up to 5 Bulk worth of objects. The space functions as a *bag of holding*, but can hold only up to 5 Bulk, has no Bulk of its own, and can be Interacted with using only one hand.

In addition, when you Palm an Object, you can place it directly into this extradimensional space as long as the space has sufficient free space to hold the object.

HEAD OF THE NIGHT PARADE ◆◆◆ FEAT 20

UNCOMMON BARD

You remember the revelry of the Night Parade and call them to your aid in a riotous display. You Perform and cast 8th-level *mad monkeys* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 222) three times, except that the spell calls various apparitions such as dancing tsukumogami or drinking oni rather than monkeys. Each casting can produce a different kind of mischief. You can Sustain all three Spells each round using a single Perform action.



HEART OF THE KAIJU

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON DRUID

Prerequisites

 Monstrosity Shape

Witnessing the might of the kaiju King Mogaru, Alru, and Toraloe up close awoke a new ferocity within you. When you transform using Monstrosity Shape, you can take on a kaiju form. When you take this feat, choose acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic damage; this is the damage your breath weapon deals. You can't change this later. The battle form is Gargantuan size with the following specific abilities; the damage values already include the extra die from being a 9th-level spell.

- **Kaiju** Speed 40 feet; physical resistance 5; **Melee** ♦ jaws (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+20 piercing; **Melee** ♦ claws (agile, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+20 slashing;



Breath Weapon ♦♦ (evocation, primal) Each creature in a 60-foot cone takes 15d6 damage (of your chosen damage type), with a basic Reflex save against your spell DC. Once activated, your breath weapon can't be used again for 1d4 rounds.

PLUM DELUGE ♦♦♦

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON ALCHEMIST

Requirements You have at least three of the same contact poison.

You have learned to saturate an area with poison in imitation of the techniques of your rival, Blue Viper. As part of this ability, you Interact to draw three vials of the same contact poison and throw them in the air, where they shatter and spread a poisonous deluge affecting a 20-foot burst within 60 feet. All creatures in the burst are automatically exposed to the poison, immediately bypassing any onset time, and must attempt a saving throw against that poison. The three vials must be identical, even if the poison can come in multiple types or different levels.

RUBY RESURRECTION ↻

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON HEALING NECROMANCY SORCERER

Frequency once per day

Trigger You would be reduced to 0 Hit Points.

In a burst of flame, you return to health like a phoenix rising from the ashes. Change your current Hit Points to 30 and cast a 6th-level *fireball* centered on yourself. This *fireball* doesn't affect you. Your hair turns brilliant red for 1 hour.

If you haven't used Ruby Resurrection and you die, you stay in initiative order and Ruby Resurrection triggers automatically at the start of your next turn, bringing you back to life at 0 HP before having its normal effects. This happens only if there are some remains to resurrect; for instance, if you were killed by *disintegrate* you wouldn't return.

Special This feat has the trait corresponding to the tradition of spells you cast.

SCAPEGOAT PARALLEL SELF ↻

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON DIVINE NECROMANCY ORACLE

Frequency once per day

Trigger Your turn starts or your oracular curse would advance.

Seeing Syndara superimpose creatures with similar metaphysical properties, you've realized a way to manipulate the effects of your oracular curse.

You immediately change your curse to its minor, moderate, or major stage, or back to its mild form, exchanging the curse effect with that of a parallel version of yourself in another reality.

SEVER SPACE

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON CONJURATION FIGHTER FLOURISH TELEPORTATION

Requirements You are wielding a weapon that deals slashing damage or have an unarmed Strike that deals slashing damage.

You destroy the space between you and your targets, allowing you to strike with your melee weapons at great range. Make a melee Strike with the required weapon or unarmed attack. The attack gains an 80-foot reach for this Strike.

After the Strike, regardless of whether it succeeded, the world rushes to fill the space you destroyed, bringing you and the target adjacent to each other. You can choose to teleport to the closest space adjacent to the target or to attempt to teleport the target adjacent to you. If you choose the target, they can negate the teleportation if they succeed at a Fortitude save against your class DC.

TIME DILATION CASCADE

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON FLOURISH RANGER

You borrow a bit of time from the future to act now. Make six Strikes. Your multiple attack penalty applies normally to these Strikes. If you successfully hit a creature with multiple Strikes, combine those Strikes' damage for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses. On your next turn, you regain 1 action instead of 3. This is before any alteration in your actions due to the quickened, slowed, and stunned conditions.

VITALITY-MANIPULATING STANCE

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON MONK STANCE

Prerequisites Stunning Fist

You have learned to attack meridians and pressure points like your rival Shino Hakusa. You gain a vitality blast ranged unarmed Strike that deals 1d4 negative damage, has a range of 30 feet, and has the unarmed and versatile positive traits.

Additionally, when you use Stunning Fist, instead of saving against being stunned, you can choose to have the target make a Fortitude save against your class DC with the following results. You must choose to do this before the target rolls its save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target's muscles become temporarily weaker.

For 1 round, the target is enfeebled 2, and any time it attempts to take an action with the manipulate trait, the action is disrupted unless it succeeds at a flat check with a DC equal to 5 + its enfeebled value.

Failure As success, but the duration is 1 minute.

Critical Failure As success, but the duration is 1 minute, the flat check is DC 11, and the target takes -10-foot status penalty to all Speeds for the duration.

VIVACIOUS AFTERIMAGE

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON ILLUSION OCCULT SWASHBUCKLER VISUAL

Prerequisites vivacious speed

Requirements You have panache.

You move so quickly that you create a short-lived afterimage, looks exactly like you, in front of you or behind you. You Stride. At any point along your movement, you leave an afterimage of yourself behind. Alternatively, you can stop moving and send your afterimage forward instead, up to the remainder of your Speed. A creature that spends actions to engage with your afterimage can attempt to disbelieve it with a Will save against your class DC. Once an enemy has disbelieved any of your afterimages, they are temporarily immune to all of your Vivacious Afterimages for 10 minutes. As long as a creature has not disbelieved the afterimage, the afterimage counts as a creature for flanking. The afterimage lasts until the beginning of your next turn or until you use Vivacious Afterimage again, whichever comes first.

WHIRLWIND TOSS

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON BARBARIAN RAGE

Prerequisites Collateral Thrash

Requirements You have a foe grabbed.

You whirl a foe to smash into all nearby creatures before throwing them far away in imitation of the techniques of your rival, Ran-To. You Thrash. During this Thrash, your Collateral Thrash feat applies to all foes adjacent to you. You can then throw the grabbed creature 10 feet, where they fall prone.

If the foe you choose for Collateral Thrash is also adjacent to you, they attempt only one save and take the damage only once.

WORLDSPHERE GRAVITY

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON METAMAGIC WIZARD

Frequency once per hour

Though creating demiplanes usually requires lengthy rituals, you know how to establish minor planar effects in imitation of Syndara's masterpieces. If your next action is to Cast a Spell of at least 5th level from your spell slots that affects an area, you can apply one of the following planar effects to a 20-foot burst centered within the spell's area. The effect persists for 1 minute.

- **Gravitational Morass** The pull of gravity is amplified here, creating greater difficult terrain. Flying creatures that pass through the area must succeed at a Reflex save against your spell DC or fall to the ground, taking bludgeoning damage equal to half the distance fallen.
- **Flowing Time** Erratic timestreams aid you within this space. A creature that starts its turn in the burst is affected by *haste* on that turn.

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CANOPY ELDER ALLIES

Epiphytes, hallucinogenic mushrooms, carnivorous orchids, and stinging insects all call a canopy elder home, as might larger creatures such as primates, big cats, birds, bats, and snakes. Many of these residents will take great pains to defend their home from threats.

ARBOREAL, CANOPY ELDER

In the densest and oldest jungles, arboreals can reach heights of 200 feet or more. Given thousands of undisturbed years, these massive creatures enter into a symbiotic relationship with a myriad of plants, fungi, and animals to achieve the esteemed status of canopy elder. They provide a safe home for the creatures they host and develop a variety of powers that help them defend their forest realms.

CANOPY ELDER

CREATURE 19

RARE N GARGANTUAN PLANT

Perception +32; low-light vision, tremorsense (imprecise) 120 feet

Languages Arboreal, Common, Sylvan; *speaks with animals, speaks with plants*

Skills Athletics +37, Diplomacy +35, Forest Lore +35, Intimidation +35, Nature +40, Stealth +31 (+39 in forests)

Str +10, **Dex** +4, **Con** +9, **Int** +6, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +5

AC 42; **Fort** +36, **Ref** +28, **Will** +33

HP 445; **Weaknesses** axe vulnerability 15, fire 15; **Resistances** bludgeoning 15, piercing 15

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Speed 40 feet

Melee ⬥ branch +37 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d12+18 bludgeoning and Improved Push 20 feet

Melee ⬥ root +37 (reach 30 feet), **Damage** 4d8+18 bludgeoning plus Trip

Melee ⬥ vine +37 (agile, reach 40 feet), **Damage** 4d6+18 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Primal Innate Spells DC 38; **9th** *nature's enmity* (×4);

Constant (9th) *speaks with animals, speaks with plants*

Fungal Web ⬥ The canopy elder launches a rapidly growing net of fungus from the mushrooms growing on its body at a single creature within 80 feet. The target must attempt a DC 39 Reflex save or become restrained by the fungal web (Escape DC 39).

While restrained, the creature takes 4d6 poison damage at the end of each of their turns.

Pollen Cloud ⬥⬥ The canopy elder releases a dense cloud of pollen from the epiphytes living in its branches. The cloud emanates from the canopy elder in a 40-foot emanation. The cloud doesn't move with the canopy elder and remains in place for 1d6 rounds before dissipating. Creatures inside the cloud become concealed, and all creatures outside the cloud become concealed

to creatures within it. Non-plant and non-fungus creatures within the cloud must attempt a DC 38 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 3, and on a critical failure the creature is also blinded for 1 minute. Regardless of the result, a creature is then temporarily immune to the sickening and blinding effects of the canopy elder's pollen for 24 hours.

Vine Splint ⬥ (healing) The canopy elder grows a mesh of vines around its broken branches, repairing the damage and restoring 40 HP to itself. The canopy elder can't use Vine Splint again for 1d4 rounds.





BUL-GAE

Bul-gaes are manifestations of the eclipsed sun and moon. They resemble large canines, though their coloration and features change as they exercise their powers over heat and cold. Depending on whether they have most recently unleashed their lunar or solar powers, a bul-gae resembles either a crimson hound wreathed in flames or a cerulean, frostbitten fox, respectively.

Legends say that the first bul-gae attempted to steal the sun from the sky. As they bit down on the burning sphere, though, the bul-gae was badly burned. Having failed, they then tried to retrieve the moon, but when they touched the moon the bul-gae froze solid and fell to the ground. The descendants of that bul-gae forever hone their powers of flame and ice so that they may one day succeed where their ancestor failed.

BUL-GAE

CREATURE 14

UNCOMMON LN MEDIUM BEAST COLD FIRE

Perception +26; greater darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +28, Intimidation +23, Stealth +23, Survival +25

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +7, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

AC 33; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +22, **Will** +25

HP 255; **Resistances** cold 15, fire 15

Eclipse Aura (aura, darkness, occult) 100 feet. Light and shadows morph strangely around the bul-gae. A creature attempting to create a light effect within the aura must attempt a DC 5 flat check. On a failure, the attempt fails, the effect is lost, and the DC to counteract darkness effects within the aura is increased by 1.

Solar Flare (evocation, fire, occult) **Trigger** The bul-gae takes damage; **Effect** The bul-gae releases a solar flare in a 30-foot emanation. Each creature in the area takes 6d8 fire damage (DC 34 basic Reflex save). On a critical failure, a creature also takes 2d10 persistent fire damage. After using this ability, the bul-gae's flames cool and they can't use Solar Flare again until after they have used Lunar Burst.

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +27 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+12 piercing plus 2d6 cold or fire and Knockdown

Lunar Burst ♦♦ (cold, evocation, occult) The bul-gae releases a blast of otherworldly frost that deals 6d8 cold damage to each creature in a 10-foot emanation (DC 34 basic Reflex save). On a critical failure, a creature also becomes slowed 2. After using this ability, the bul-gae's flames heat up and they can't use Lunar Burst again until after they have used Solar Flare.

Shadow Leap ♦ (conjuration, occult, shadow, teleportation)

Requirement The bul-gae is in dim light or darkness; **Effect**

The bul-gae dives into a shadow and reappears from a shadow within 40 feet.

Thermal Mastery The bul-gae has total control over the powers of cold and fire. Each time it attacks with its jaws, it can choose to have the additional damage be either cold damage or fire damage.



ECLIPSED LIGHT

Bul-gae bring with them the distorted light of an eclipse wherever they go. This distorted light favors blue hues and skews the spectrum of visible colors, giving the world an eerie, muted ambiance. Tales say that bul-gae serve as faithful companions to the ancient, shadowy master of the first bul-gae. These tales purport that the shadow master can see through the distorted light of all bul-gae and uses the hounds as a means to watch the Material Plane for unknown purposes.



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DESECRATED TEMPLES

Many of the temples that dot the peaks of the Wall of Heaven lay abandoned or in complete ruin. The magic in some of these places lives on, corrupted by time, decay, and the nightmarish extraplanar powers of Leng often found at Golarion's highest altitudes. There are dark tales of adventurers seeking refuge within a lone temple along the Wall of Heaven only to meet a terrible death at the hands of the temple's desecrated guardian. Although granting hospitality to strangers is a tenet of many Wall of Heaven temples, stories of monstrosities in disguise give some climbers pause as they approach a potential sanctuary.

DESECRATED GUARDIAN

Countless temples across Golarion, dedicated to deities both living and forgotten, have risen and fallen through the ages. Many find themselves buried under sand, snow, or vine never to be found. In such places, the spirits of the faithful can bind with their ruined temple to form a guardian construct, though with nothing left to guard, these spirits often become hollow, resentful, and filled with malice. These "desecrated guardians" lie in wait, sometimes for centuries, and destroy any adventurers who happen upon them. The most powerful desecrated guardians, such as the one presented here, incorporate the structures of multiple temples into their massive serpentine forms.

DESECRATED GUARDIAN

CREATURE 18

RARE NE GARGANTUAN CONSTRUCT

Perception +30; **lifesense** 60 feet

Skills Athletics +35, Stealth +31 (+35 in ruins)

Str +10, **Dex** +6, **Con** +9, **Int** -5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** -5

AC 42; **Fort** +36, **Ref** +31, **Will** +25

HP 360; **Immunities** cold, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, fire, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Weaknesses** good 15; **Resistances** physical 15 (except adamantine)

Desecration Aura (aura, abjuration, divine, evil) 40 feet. Desecrated guardians exude a palpable malice that nauseates all but the most wicked passersby. Non-evil creatures that enter the aura must attempt a DC 37 Will save. On a failure, the creature becomes sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). In addition, any non-evil creatures that attempt to Cast a Spell within the aura must succeed at a DC 5 flat check or the spell is lost.

Attack of Opportunity Tail only.

Speed 40 feet, climb 40 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +35 (deadly 3d12, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d10+22 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Melee ♦ tail +35 (magical, reach 30 feet), **Damage** 3d8+20 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Avalanche ♦♦ The desecrated guardian thrashes its body about, causing the nearby terrain to crumble and crash down on creatures in a 60-foot cone, dealing 12d10 bludgeoning damage (DC 42 basic Reflex save). It can't use Avalanche again for 1d4 rounds.

Coiled Rockslide If the desecrated guardian started its turn hidden, it can Trample and remain hidden until after its attacks.

Constrict ♦ 2d8+18 bludgeoning, DC 39

Rebuild ♦♦ (divine, earth, healing transmutation) The desecrated guardian draws in rubble from the surrounding area to rebuild its damaged body. It recovers 8d6 Hit Points. It can only use this ability if it is near suitable rock or rubble.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Huge, 3d8+20 bludgeoning, Rupture 45

Trample ♦♦♦ Huge or smaller, tail, DC 37





GUMIHO

Gumihoes are legendary nine-tailed fox creatures who, when disguised in humanoid form, use charm and guile to lure prey deep into the forest before revealing their true form and striking. The green-eyed canids use brutally sharp fangs to tear out their victim's throat and feast on their liver. Those few who survive a gumiho's trap recall the canid's eerie green eyes as well as a strange marble amulet worn around the monster's neck.

Old stories claim that a fox transforms into a gumiho once it has lived for a thousand years, quadrupling in size, growing eight additional tails, and gaining the power to change shape. Terrifyingly, it also gains an insatiable hunger for the livers of people. This hunger is so closely connected to a gumiho's power that if it abstains from eating liver for one thousand days, the gumiho loses its magic and permanently takes on its humanoid guise—also losing its evil nature in the process.

GUMIHO

CREATURE 17

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM FEY

Perception +29; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet**Languages** Common, Sylvan**Skills** Acrobatics +30, Diplomacy +33, Deception +33, Society +28, Stealth +30**Str** +4, **Dex** +8, **Con** +5, **Int** +6, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +9**Items** *fox marble***Guileful Charm** (emotion, enchantment, incapacitation, mental, occult) Any creature that converses with a gumiho must attempt a DC 35 Will save. The creature then becomes temporarily immune for 24 hours.**Critical Success** The target is unaffected but knows the gumiho tried to charm it.**Success** The target is unaffected.**Failure** The target is affected by the failure effects of 4th-level *charm*.**Critical Failure** The target is affected by the failure effects of *dominate*.**AC** 39; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +32, **Will** +29**HP** 310; **Immunities** charm; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15**Speed** 40 feet**Melee** ♦ claw +31 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d8+18 slashing**Melee** ♦ jaws +31 (finesse), **Damage** 3d12+18 piercing**Occult Spontaneous Spells** DC 38, attack +30; **9th** (1 slot) *power word kill*; **8th** (2 slots) *disappearance*, *power word stun*; **7th** (2 slots) *project image*, *warp mind*; **6th** (3 slots) *dominate*, *repulsion*; **5th** (3 slots) *subconscious suggestion*; **4th** (4 slots) *charm*, *invisibility*, *sleep*; **3rd** (3 slots) *enthrall*; **Cantrips** (9th) *dancing lights*, *daze***Change Shape** ♦ (concentrate, polymorph, occult, transmutation) The gumiho changes into humanoid or fox shape. Their humanoid shape has a specific, persistent appearance but their true form is their fox shape. In humanoid shape, the gumiho uses their original size, loses their jaws strike but retains their claws strike, and their Speed is reduced to 25 feet. A gumiho is never able to completely conceal one of their nine tails through this transformation.**Sapping Critical** ♦ **Trigger** The gumiho critically hits with a claw or jaws Strike; **Effect** The gumiho uses its *fox marble* to channel the life force lost by the target and heal for half the amount of damage dealt.

FOX MARBLE

A gumiho wears a strange green amulet around its neck. This *fox marble* stores all of the gumiho's knowledge. By focusing on the marble, a gumiho can perfectly recall anything it has experienced in its lifetime. A creature who manages to steal a gumiho's *fox marble* is lucky indeed, for they can also use it to access the gumiho's memories. However, if the gumiho still lives, the vengeful fox will stop at nothing to recover its marble.

Whoever wears a *fox marble* gains a +2 item bonus to all checks to Recall Knowledge.

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MATERIAL REINCARNATION

When an inmyeonjo dies, their body rapidly decomposes to dust, but their black headpiece remains. The headpiece magically fits itself to any size head. A creature that dons the headpiece becomes immune to disease and stops aging, but cannot remove it by nonmagical means (DC 37 check to counteract). Over the course of 100 years, the creature grows feathers and their neck elongates until they eventually become an inmyeonjo.

INMYEONJO

Mountain guides whisper stories of giant white birds that stretch towards the sky, singing with human voices. While these stories are often dismissed as tall tales, the truth is much stranger, for the bird they've encountered not only has a human voice, but one a human face as well. Inmyeonjos are enormous white birds with flowing tails, abnormally long necks, and mask-like human faces. They wear an elongated black headpiece that serves as a vessel for their life energy, enabling their reincarnation through any living creature.

Inmyeonjos often serve as gatekeepers or guardians of the tombs of great sages and leaders who brought peace to their lands and people. They can also be found atop on high mountains where the border between earth and sky is thinnest. Ultimately, inmyeonjos strive for balance and peace among all mortals. A person who has encountered an inmyeonjo often has trouble remembering if the strange creature was beautiful or terrifying.

INMYEONJO

CREATURE 16

RARE LN HUGE AIR BEAST

Perception +30; darkvision

Languages Auran, Common; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +30, Athletics +28, Diplomacy +32, Medicine +32, Nature +32, Occultism +27

Str +6, **Dex** +9, **Con** +7, **Int** +7, **Wis** +9, **Cha** +5

Blurred Countenance Creatures farther than 60 feet from an inmyeonjo see it only as the generic form of a huge bird. An inmyeonjo has concealment against attacks originating farther than 60 feet away.

AC 38; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +28, **Will** +30

HP 300; **Immunities** disease

Limited Immortality Though an inmyeonjo still needs to eat, drink, and sleep, they don't age and can't die of old age.

Terrifying Beauty (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet. Any creature within 60 feet of an inmyeonjo that the inmyeonjo can see must attempt a DC 32 Will save. The effects last for 1 day while it is within the area of blurred countenance.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and is immune to the inmyeonjo's Terrifying Beauty for 1 day.

Success The creature finds the inmyeonjo beguiling and becomes stupefied 1.

Failure The creature finds the inmyeonjo terrifying and becomes frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature finds the inmyeonjo dreadful, becoming frightened 2. They can't willingly move closer to the inmyeonjo.

Speed 40 feet, fly 100 feet

Melee ♦ talon + 30 (agile, finesse, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+18 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ tail +30 (agile, finesse, reach 25 feet), **Damage** 3d8+18 bludgeoning

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 34, attack +26; **8th** (1 slot) *discern location, unrelenting observation*; **7th** (2 slots) *ethereal jaunt, mask of terror*; **6th** (2 slots) *phantasmal calamity, vibrant pattern*; **5th** (2 slots) *hallucination, synaptic pulse*; **4th** (3 slots) *discern lies, read omens*; **3rd** (3 slots) *mind reading, zone of truth*; **2nd** (3 slots) *mirror image*; **Cantrips** (8th) *telekinetic projectile, message*





LOPHIITHU

Lophiithus dwell in the deepest ocean trenches, places untouched by light, hope, or mortal comprehension. They appear to be gaping maws with distended jaws, vestigial flaps of putrefying flesh, and filamentous tentacles tipped with glowing light. Their extraplanar mouths take up most of their bodies, leaving no room for other organs, and any prey they swallow is transported to the Maelstrom for digestion.

LOPHIITHU

CREATURE 21

UNCOMMON NE GARGANTUAN ABERRATION AQUATIC

Perception +38; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Alghollthu, Aquan, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet, *tongues*

Skills Athletics +36, Deception +40, Occultism +43, Stealth +40, Survival +36

Str +6, **Dex** +10, **Con** +7, **Int** +10, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +7

AC 43; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +36, **Will** +38

HP 400; **Resistances** mental 20, precision 15

Speed 10 feet, swim 80 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +39 (agile, deadly 3d10, finesse, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d12+18 piercing plus Improved Grab

Melee ♦ lure +37 (agile, finesse, magical, reach 40 feet), **Damage** 4d6+18 bludgeoning plus 2d6 mental and beguiling lure

Occult Innate Spells DC 41; **10th** *fabricated truth*, *gate* (at will); **9th** *telepathic demand* (×2), *unfathomable song* (×2); **8th** *illusory creature* (×2), *phantasmal killer* (×2); **Cantrips (9th)** *dancing lights*, *daze*; **Constant (9th)** *tongues*

Beguiling Lure (illusion, mental, occult, visual) A creature hit by a lophiithu's lure must succeed at a DC 41 Will save or be fascinated with the lophiithu's lures for 1 minute. On a critical failure, it can't use reactions while it remains fascinated. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune for 1 hour.

Dimensional Swallow The lophiithu's digestive organs exist in the Maelstrom, regardless of the location of their external form.

The lophiithu can swallow any number of creatures of any size. Creatures that Escape the lophiithu's stomach do so normally. Creatures that cut themselves free instead find themselves in the Maelstrom near nothing but one of the lophiithu's disembodied stomachs. When the lophiithu dies, their stomach becomes a rift connecting to their mouth, allowing a creature to return to their plane. This rift disappears after 1 minute.

Lure Whip ♦♦ The lophiithu makes a lure Strike against each creature within reach. These attacks count toward the lophiithu's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after these attacks.

Swallow Whole ♦ Gargantuan, 3d12+10 bludgeoning, Rupture 44 and dimensional swallow



PLANAR DIGESTION

A lophiithu's stomachs are scattered across islands in the Maelstrom. Extraplanar scholars remain unclear as to how these stomachs grow independently of a lophiithu, but are unsurprised by the planar abilities of the stomachs. Expeditions into the Maelstrom have turned up stomachs ranging from as small as a human fist to as large as mountains, suggesting the existence of enormous lophiithus.

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SPOILS OF THE OROCHI

Legends state that a warrior able to slay an orochi in single combat will find a blade deep within the creature's flesh. Such blades are said to have a mastery over flames and to be able to cut entire fields of grass in a single stroke.

OROCHI

An orochi is an enormous serpent with eight heads and eight tails that lives among large waterways. Orochi are vile, amoral creatures kept at bay only with yearly sacrifices. Most settlements unable to satisfy an orochi with a sacrifice soon meet their destruction.

CREATURE 18

OROCHI

RARE **CE** **GARGANTUAN** **AMPHIBIOUS** **BEAST**

Perception +33; darkvision, low-light vision

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic

Skills Acrobatics +30, Athletics +36, Intimidation +31, Survival +29

Str +10, **Dex** +6, **Con** +10, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

AC 42, all-around vision; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +30, **Will** +27

HP (body) 400; **Resistances** poison 15

HP (head) 60, multiple heads; **Immunities** area damage; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15; **Resistances** poison 15

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 37

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Multiple Heads A creature can attempt to sever one of the orochi's eight heads by specifically targeting it and dealing damage equal to the head's HP. A head not completely severed returns to full HP at the end of the attacking creature's turn.

An orochi that loses all of their heads immediately dies.

Multiple Opportunities The orochi gains an extra reaction per round for each of their heads that remains beyond the first, which it can use only to make Attacks of Opportunity. They can't use more than 1 reaction on the same triggering action, and the orochi must use a different head for each Attack of Opportunity.

Speed 30 feet, swim 60 feet

Melee ⚔ jaws +35 (reach 40 feet), **Damage** 3d12+18 piercing plus Improved Grab

Melee ⚔ tail +35 (agile, magical, reach 50 feet), **Damage** 3d10+18 bludgeoning plus Improved Knockdown

Ranged ⚔ rock +34 (brutal, range increment 100 feet), **Damage** 3d8+18 bludgeoning

Orochi Flurry ⚔⚔ The orochi makes a number of jaws Strikes equal to the number of their remaining heads, each against a different target. The orochi's multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after the orochi makes all of their attacks.

Swallow Whole ⚔ (attack) Huge, 2d12+18 bludgeoning, Rupture 40





SANZUWU

Those who feast on the sun are said to carry its power within them. Sanzuwus are small crows with red plumage and dark throats. According to legend, they stole their burning power from the sun and now fly across the sky as blinding streaks of fire. When they land on the earth, it ignites around them, causing unbound destruction. A handful of people worship these radiant birds and inscribe their three-legged visage on coins, items, and weapons.

SANZUWU

CREATURE 15

UNCOMMON N TINY BEAST FIRE

Perception +26; greater darkvision

Languages Common; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +30, Athletics +27, Diplomacy +25

Str +4, **Dex** +8, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

AC 36; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +29, **Will** +23

HP 295; **Immunities** fire, light; **Weaknesses** cold 15

Golden Sun (abjuration, aura, primal) 10 feet. A golden aura envelopes the sanzuwu, protecting them from weak magic. Any non-cold spells of 3rd level or lower burn away and are ineffective. A sanzuwu can deactivate or activate the golden aura as a free action with the concentrate trait.

Scorching Gaze (evocation, fire, primal) **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet targets the sanzuwu or one of their allies with a weapon attack; **Effect** The sanzuwu focuses their gaze on the triggering creature's weapon, heating it to a burning temperature for an instant. The creature takes 4d8 fire damage unless the creature Releases the weapon as a free action.

Speed 25 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee ♦ beak +30 (finesse, fire, magical), **Damage** 3d6+14 piercing plus 3d6 fire

Melee ♦ talon +30 (agile, finesse, fire, magical), **Damage** 3d4+14 piercing plus 3d6 fire

Fiery Transformation ♦♦ (concentrate, fire, polymorph, primal, transmutation)

The sanzuwu transforms into an enormous bird made of flame. As the sanzuwu begins their transformation, creatures within a 10-foot emanation take 6d8 fire damage (DC 33 basic Reflex save). While in their flame form, the sanzuwu gains the effects of 4th-level *enlarge*. They can use Fiery Transformation again to revert back to their standard form.

Radiant Blast ♦♦ (evocation, fire, primal) The sanzuwu opens their mouth to produce a bead of burning energy, hurling it a point within 200 feet. The bead detonates, dealing 7d8 fire damage and 4d10 sonic damage to all creatures in a 30-foot burst (DC 33 basic Reflex save). Creatures that critically fail become blinded for 1 round. The sanzuwu can't use Radiant Blast again for 1d4 rounds.

Scorch Earth ♦♦ **Requirements** The sanzuwu is standing on the ground; **Effect** The sanzuwu Strides. A 6th-level *wall of fire* appears in all the spaces the sanzuwu left during this movement, lasting for 1 round. The sanzuwu can't use Scorch Earth again for 1d4 rounds.

Transfixing Sunbeam ♦♦ (evocation, incapacitation, light, primal)

Requirements The sanzuwu is in their fiery form; **Effect** The sanzuwu spreads their wings, emitting a bright cascade of light in a 30-foot cone. Creatures in the cone must attempt a DC 33 Fortitude save.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature is stunned 1.

Critical Failure The creature is stunned 2.



A FIERY MURDER

When several sanzuwus are together the immense heat radiating from them can cause an inferno of devastation. Legends tell of sanzuwus gathered together as the ground rends into volcanic rifts and uncontrollable blazes. Though they bring destruction in their wake, some stories claim that a brave individual who can follow these cataclysmic rifts for 10 days will reach the sun and earn its blessing.

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SPIRITUAL TASKS

Most spirit turtles grant an extended lifetime as gift for completing an important task. The requirements of a task vary from turtle to turtle, but they are always massive undertakings. In one part of the saga of Artimos the Tailor, Artimos met with a spirit turtle and earned their favor by sewing a quilt as massive as the lake in which the turtle slept. The quilt required cloth from the robes of each ruler in Tian Xia, but Artimos's efforts eventually earned him a golden needle to aid him on his journeys.

SPIRIT TURTLE

Spirit turtles are benevolent fey known to heal those in need and confer other powerful gifts. These gentle giants resemble enormous turtles and often bear entire ecosystems on their shells.

In ancient times, so the legend goes, spirit turtles used to grant wishes to many mortals. After millennia of such encounters, the giant creatures grew tired and went into hiding or returned to their home plane, the First World. Those few spirit turtles who remain on Golarion now grant their favors only to the purest and worthiest mortal petitioners.

SPIRIT TURTLE

CREATURE 21

RARE CG GARGANTUAN FEY

Perception +35

Languages Common, Sylvan; *tongues*

Skills Diplomacy +36, Lore (all subcategories) +34, Medicine +40, Nature +36, Occultism +34, Survival +40

Str +8, **Dex** +6, **Con** +11, **Int** +6, **Wis** +10, **Cha** +7

AC 45; **Fort** +40, **Ref** +32, **Will** +38

HP 320, regeneration 25 (deactivated by cold iron or evil); **Weaknesses** cold iron 20; **Resistances** fire 20, physical 15

Pacifying Aura (emotion, enchantment, primal) 100 feet. A spirit turtle exudes a constant feeling of calm. Creatures within the aura are subjected to a 10th-level *calm emotions* spell (DC 44 Will save). The effects persist up to 1 hour, even if the creature leaves the aura. Regardless of the result of the saving throw, the creature is temporarily immune for 1 hour.

Speed 30 feet, swim 40 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +37 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 4d12+14 piercing plus 2d6 energy and Improved Grab

Melee ♦ foot +37 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d10+14 bludgeoning plus 2d6 energy and Improved Knockdown

Primal Innate Spells DC 44; **10th** *primal phenomenon, revival*; **9th** *field of life* (×2); **8th** *moment of renewal* (×2); **7th** *plane shift* (self only), *regenerate* (×2); **6th** *restoration* (×2); **5th** *breath of life* (×3); **4th** *heal* (at will), *vital beacon* (at will); **Constant (10th)** *tongues*

Constrict ♦ 4d12+7 bludgeoning, DC 41

Environmental Balance ♦ (evocation, primal) **Trigger** The spirit turtle begins their turn; **Effect** The spirit turtle harnesses their connection with the world around them to augment their attacks. They choose acid, cold, electricity, or fire. The energy damage dealt by their Strikes and Unbalancing Stomp changes to the selected energy type.

Unbalancing Stomp ♦♦ The spirit turtle makes a foot Strike. Whether or not the Strike hits, the stomp creates a shockwave on the ground in a 15-foot burst centered on the target. All creatures in the area other than the spirit turtle take 10d10 bludgeoning and 4d8 energy damage and are knocked prone (DC 41 basic Reflex save). Creatures that critically succeed at their Reflex save are not knocked prone. The spirit turtle can't use Unbalancing Stomp again for 1d4 rounds.





STHIRA

The Wall of Heaven claims many intrepid climbers. Some such travelers come seeking fortune. Others seek enlightenment. Many, however, find only an icy death. With no means for a proper burial, many of these unfortunate souls remain abandoned to the ice, their bodies becoming macabre guideposts along mountain trails.

Through means unknown, the most willful of these frozen travelers reanimate to seek vengeance upon the living for their denied burial. Such creatures, called sthiras, are composed of multiple bodies or body parts frozen together into one horrific monstrosity.

STHIRA

CREATURE 20

UNCOMMON NE LARGE COLD UNDEAD

Perception +33; darkvision

Languages Common (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +39

Str +9, **Dex** +2, **Con** +10, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2

Items +3 *greater striking greatsword*

AC 45; **Fort** +39, **Ref** +27, **Will** +33

HP 475, negative healing; **Immunities** cold, death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** fire 20

Freezing Death (aura, cold, evocation, primal) 20 feet. A creature that starts its turn in the aura takes 6d6 cold damage (DC 42 basic Fortitude). If the creature is grabbed or restrained by the sthira, it takes one degree of success worse than it rolled.

Attack of Opportunity

Frozen to the Touch (cold) A creature that damages the sthira with an unarmed attack, tries to Grapple it, or otherwise touches it takes 6d6 cold damage (DC 42 basic Fortitude).

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *greatsword* +38 (magical, versatile P, reach 10 feet),

Damage 3d12+15 slashing plus 2d6 cold and frostbite

Melee ♦ *fist* +38 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d8+15

bludgeoning plus 2d6 cold, frostbite, and Improved Grab

Primal Innate Spells DC 39, attack +31; **10th** *massacre*; **9th** *polar ray* (×2), *storm of vengeance* (hail only each round), *wall of ice*; **Cantrips** (10th) *ray of frost*

Frostbite A creature that takes cold damage from a sthira's Strikes or aura must attempt a DC 42 Fortitude save. A creature that already has persistent cold damage from frostbite ignores this effect.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected, and is temporarily immune to this ability for 1 hour.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature takes 3d6 persistent cold damage.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature is also drained 1.

Create Sthira (primal, necromancy) When a creature dies while it has persistent cold damage from the sthira's frostbite, the creature rises as a sthira in 24 hours. If the creature is grappled by the sthira when it dies, the dying creature becomes permanently fused with the sthira instead. In this case, the sthira immediately recovers a number of Hit Points equal to the half the dead creature's maximum Hit Points.



OTHER STHIRAS

Mountaineer stories warn of sthiras that have incorporated the bodies of powerful non-humanoids and have even more terrifying abilities as a result, ranging from the capacity to cast spells, exhale gouts of ice, or even fly.



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SYNDARA THE SCULPTOR

Unrivalled Builder of Demiplanes

From the moment of his creation, Syndara was drawn to patterns. Though all axiomites strive to bring order in a chaotic world—many through acts of creation—Syndara took this a step further than his fellow inhabitants of Axis, not by crafting clever artifices, but by creating entire pocket realities of mathematically precise shapes and spirals. For many years, Syndara was the premier artist of Axis, until one day a ruby-haired sorcerer arrived at the city's gates.

The two were immediate kindred spirits. But time passed and Syndara grew jealous of Hao Jin's innate gifts. His creations grew crueler and more depraved, his "art" seeking to shock as if to make up for a self-perceived deficit in ability. Hao Jin realized that while Syndara had always desired to cultivate order from chaos, he also wished to impose his own idea of how the world should be on others—by force if necessary. After a great struggle, Hao Jin defeated her old friend. She could not bear to destroy him, though, and instead imprisoned him within his own demiplane-in-progress, the *Glass Lighthouse*. She further secured him by placing the *Glass Lighthouse* in her own demiplane, the *Hao Jin Tapestry*, which amplified the effects and duration of his imprisonment. Syndara spent eons trapped in a flow of turbulent time, consumed with thoughts of revenge. Now that he is free from his cage, Syndara seeks to humiliate and kill Hao Jin then claim her magic for himself.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Syndara is the ultimate villain of this Adventure Path and has been manipulating events behind the scenes since before the start of this decade's Ruby Phoenix Tournament. He recruited the Lightkeepers to enter the tournament and gather information on the other teams, and he also orchestrated Mogaru's attack on Goka to force a direct confrontation with Hao Jin on his own demiplane, the one place he stood a chance of defeating her. He orchestrates his Hungry Ghost Tournament on his demiplane island both as an insult to Hao Jin and to delay the party so he has time to recover from his duel with the Ruby Phoenix. Once the player characters reach the *Glass Lighthouse*, Syndara begins to see them as Hao Jin's successors and will stop at nothing to utterly destroy them.

SYNDARA THE SCULPTOR

CREATURE 22

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM AEON MONITOR

Male axiomite grandmaster

Perception +39; spatial sense

Languages Senzar, Taldane, Tien, Utopian

Skills Acrobatics +41, Arcana +37, Athletics +39, Deception +34, Demiplane Lore +45, Intimidation +39, Occultism +37

Str +10, **Dex** +11, **Con** +8, **Int** +8, **Wis** +11, **Cha** +7

Spatial Sense Syndara instinctively knows the position of all creatures and objects within the *Glass Lighthouse* as a precise sense. His senses do not extend into extraplanar spaces, even if the entrance to these spaces is within the Lighthouse (such as a creature within a *bag of holding*).

AC 48; **Fort** +39, **Ref** +39, **Will** +36; +2 status to all saves vs. chaotic

HP 380, fast healing 20; **Immunities** extradimensional, keeper of the lighthouse

Attack of Opportunity ⤵

Essence Reflection Syndara and his reflection (page 57) are two linked existences. If one of them is affected by a harmful effect, they can shift the harmful effect to the other as a free action, even if they can't act.

Extradimensional Immunity Syndara can foil any attempts to use planar powers against him. He is immune to all extradimensional effects, such as *maze*, but can choose to be affected by such effects normally.

Keeper of the Lighthouse Syndara can choose whether he is affected by his worldspheres (page 57).

Portal Redirection ⤵ (conjunction, divine, teleportation)

Trigger Syndara is targeted by a ranged Strike or spell attack roll; **Effect** Syndara opens a portal in front of the incoming missile, then opens another portal nearby that fires the missile at another creature within 60 feet of him. He takes no damage from the triggering attack and makes a ranged Strike with a +43 bonus. The Strike deals damage according to the triggering ability.

Speed 40 feet, *air walk*

Melee ♦ palm +41 (agile, finesse, reach 10 feet, unarmed),

Damage 6d6+18 bludgeoning plus vicious impact

Melee ♦ knifehand +41 (deadly d10, finesse, reach 10 feet, unarmed, versatile P), **Damage** 7d8+18 slashing plus vicious impact



Ranged ♦ elemental gateway +39 (cold, range 120 feet),

Damage 4d10+19 acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic

Gateway Onslaught ♦♦ (conjunction, teleportation)

Requirements Syndara is in the *Glass Lighthouse*; **Effect** Syndara folds the fabric of the *Glass Lighthouse* before opening several gateways from which dangerous elements spew forth. He teleports to his throne, regardless of distance, then makes three elemental gateway Strikes. Each Strike must target a different creature. He can't use Gateway Onslaught again for 1d4 rounds.

Planar Restructuring ♦ (concentrate) **Requirements**

Syndara is in the *Glass Lighthouse*; **Effect** Syndara exerts his will over the *Glass Lighthouse* to cause one of several effects. The effect is magical, but Syndara isn't using magic when he takes this action—just triggering a magical effect he already set up. The level for each of these effects is 10, and any save is DC 45. Syndara or Syndara's Reflection can't use Planar Restructuring for 1d4 rounds.

- **Accelerate/Decelerate** Syndara affects the flow of time around a target within 60 feet, affecting them with either *haste* or *slow*.
- **Deny** Syndara rejects the existence of a power other than his own, affecting an object with *disjunction*.
- **Rewind** Syndara rewinds time to undo harm. He or his reflection are affected by the two-action version of *heal* or by *restoration*.
- **Rise** Syndara creates a gravitational nexus of *reverse gravity*.
- **Sequester** Syndara folds space to affect a creature with *resilient sphere*.

Temporal Flurry ♦♦ **Frequency** once per round;

Effect Syndara bends time to make multiple attacks. He makes three unarmed Strikes. If multiple attacks hit the same creature, combine their damage for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses.

Vicious Impact Syndara has had an eternity to reflect on his own weaknesses and the weakness of others. If he critically hits with a melee Strike, he can target the eyes, joints, or other weak points to add one of the following effects of his choice unless the target succeeds on a DC 46 Fortitude save.

- The target becomes clumsy 1 for 1 minute.
- The target becomes enfeebled 1 for 1 minute.
- The target takes 3d6 persistent bleed damage.
- The target can't Step for 1 minute.

Walk the Spiral ♦ **Requirements** Syndara is in the *Glass Lighthouse*; **Trigger** Syndara Strikes a creature on his own turn; **Effect** Syndara rotates the space of the *Glass Lighthouse* around himself to carry him to a distant

location in an instant. He Strides twice. This movement doesn't trigger reactions. If his next action is to attack a different target than the triggering creature, he gains a +1 circumstance bonus to that attack; each time he Walks the Spiral in a turn, this bonus increases by 1, to a maximum of +3.





YOH SOURAN

Ruby Phoenix Fan, Ace Pilot

Yoh Souran first traveled from his hometown in Minkai when he was five years old, when his family's ferry company sailed wealthy tourists to Goka to see the Ruby Phoenix Tournament. There, sitting between his parents, eating a steamed black sugar bun and waving a white and orange pennant to support the one Minkaian team that had made it through the qualifiers (The Four Bright Carp), Yoh fell in love with the spectacle of blurring fists, flashing blades, and impossible feats of martial arts prowess.

Though the Four Bright Carp were soundly defeated in the quarterfinals, this did nothing to dull Yoh's love of the sport, and as he grew up, Yoh avidly collected fight memorabilia and devoured tales of tournaments past and present from woodblock-printed picture books. Though he was never the best with numbers, often miscalculating ticket prices for his family's ferries, he was nevertheless able to recall win rates and other fight statistics with little effort and took great joy in theorizing matchups between fighters of different generations. Ironically, whatever team he roots for tends to get knocked out of the competition relatively early.

Between tournaments, Yoh operates the transport business he inherited from his family, sailing cargo and passengers across Tian Xia and relishing the opportunity it grants him to see the world and experience new sights. On one such trip to Hwanggot, he butted heads with the harbormaster, a human woman named Kyoung-Yoo. This led to a number of squabbles between the two of them over several years (at least one of which involved a shipment of fireworks "accidentally" being set alight in port) before Kyoung-Yoo asked Yoh to marry her. The two now operate the ferry business out of Haseong, with Yoh in the field and Kyoung-Yoo keeping the operations afloat from shore. Though Yoh's skills as a captain are exceptional, economic pressure from shipping guilds looking to buy out the competition and carve out a monopoly in the region have caused business to dry up, and he worries for the future of his livelihood, especially now that he and Kyoung-Yoo have had their first child, a baby boy named Soahiko (whom Yoh never tires of regaling his crew about).

Though as far as he can remember, his family was always on the sea, Yoh remembered sometimes hearing his grandfather talk of a family legend. Several generations ago, his ancestor crafted a pair of beautiful ships that sailed not on the waves, but through the air itself. Yoh always thought it a tall tale, best told in a tavern over strong drink and good company, but when an ancient sorcerer with ruby hair appeared in front of his family's modest home to pull a sleek, winged airship from a tear in space, Yoh realized the stories had been true. He began practicing with the airship and found he was even more skilled at cutting across the skies than through the waves, and in doing so, he had an idea to save his livelihood: by transporting not across the tortuous sea routes, but in a straight line through the air.

Naturally, when Lady Nai Yan Fei asked him to pilot the *Solar Jian II* at the finalists' processional, Yoh was overjoyed, not just as a lifelong fan who tends to divide the periods of his life by tournament cycles—4701 was the first tournament he attended presenting as male, 4711 was his first as a full-fledged captain operating the family business, and the current 4721 tournament is his first as a new father—but also because piloting on the world stage will let him show off his skills and airship for all of Tian Xia. He looks forward to coming home from the tournament with enough fame and exposure to live a comfortable life, and he looks forward to taking Soahiko to the tournament one day in the future, just like his parents did with him.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Yoh serves as the team's pilot for much of this adventure as the team scours the Flying Mountains in Chapter 1. While he's a fan of fighters, he's not one himself and will stay with the ship rather than disembark to face the legendary monsters he grew up hearing cautionary stories about. His lifetime of tournament fandom means he's likely to push the PCs to interact with the other finalist teams they come into contact with, if only so he can find time to ask for their autographs. Yoh sees Hao Jin as something closer to a demigod than a person, but he nevertheless feels a deep debt to the sorceress for the return of his



family heirlooms, making him as invested as the PCs in tracking her down.

For encounters involving piloting, Yoh Souran faces these as if he were 18th-level.

YOH SOURAN

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE CG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human pilot

Perception +25

Languages Taldane, Tien

Skills Acrobatics +28, Athletics +24, Piloting Lore +38, Ruby Phoenix Tournament Lore +38, Society +28

Str +3, **Dex** +7, **Con** +3, **Int** +5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +3

Items heavy crossbow

Ancestral Airship Link The *Solar Jian II* recognizes Yoh as a descendent of its creator, and the magical ship extends him protections beyond those that would be given to most other pilots. If Yoh is piloting the *Solar Jian II*, his AC and saves are increased by 4.

AC 38 (42 while piloting *Solar Jian II*); **Fort** +26, **Ref** +28, **Will** +23; +4 to all saves while piloting *Solar Jian II*

HP 265

Shake 'Em! (manipulate) **Requirements** Yoh is piloting an airborne vessel; **Trigger** One or more creatures aboard Yoh's vessel are the target of an attack or attempt a Reflex save and the attacker is not aboard the ship; **Effect** Yoh attempts evasive maneuvers. All creatures aboard the vessel gain a +2 status bonus to their AC and saves against the triggering effect.

Speed 25 feet

Ranged (heavy crossbow +30 [range increment 120 feet, reload 2], **Damage** 4d10+6 piercing

Deploy Countermeasures (manipulate) **Frequency** once per hour; **Requirements** Yoh is piloting the *Solar Jian II*; **Effect** While the *Solar Jian II* is not a combat vessel, it does have a magically renewing supply of fireworks for victory parades and the like. Yoh fires them at a 20-foot burst within 60 feet. Creatures in the area take 3d6 fire damage and 3d6 sonic damage with a Fortitude save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes half damage and is dazzled for 1 round.

Failure The target takes full damage and is dazzled for 3 rounds.

Critical Failure The target takes double damage, takes 3d4 persistent fire damage, and is dazzled for 1 minute.

I'll Get You into Position! (manipulate) **Requirements** Yoh is piloting an airborne vessel; **Effect** Yoh pumps the brakes, banks quickly, or performs some other aerial maneuver to get the drop on an enemy. He attempts a Piloting Lore check against the enemy's Perception DC. If he succeeds, that enemy is flat-footed to the next

attack from a creature onboard as long as it is made before Yoh's next turn. All enemies who witnessed the maneuver are then temporarily immune for 1 day.

Punch It (manipulate) **Frequency** once per hour; **Requirements** Yoh is piloting an airborne vessel; **Effect** Yoh pushes the ship, tripling its speed for 1 round. After this point, the ship stalls—though it Hovers in place, it can't move under its own power for 1 round.



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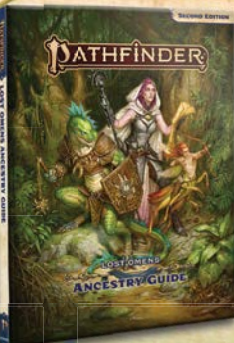
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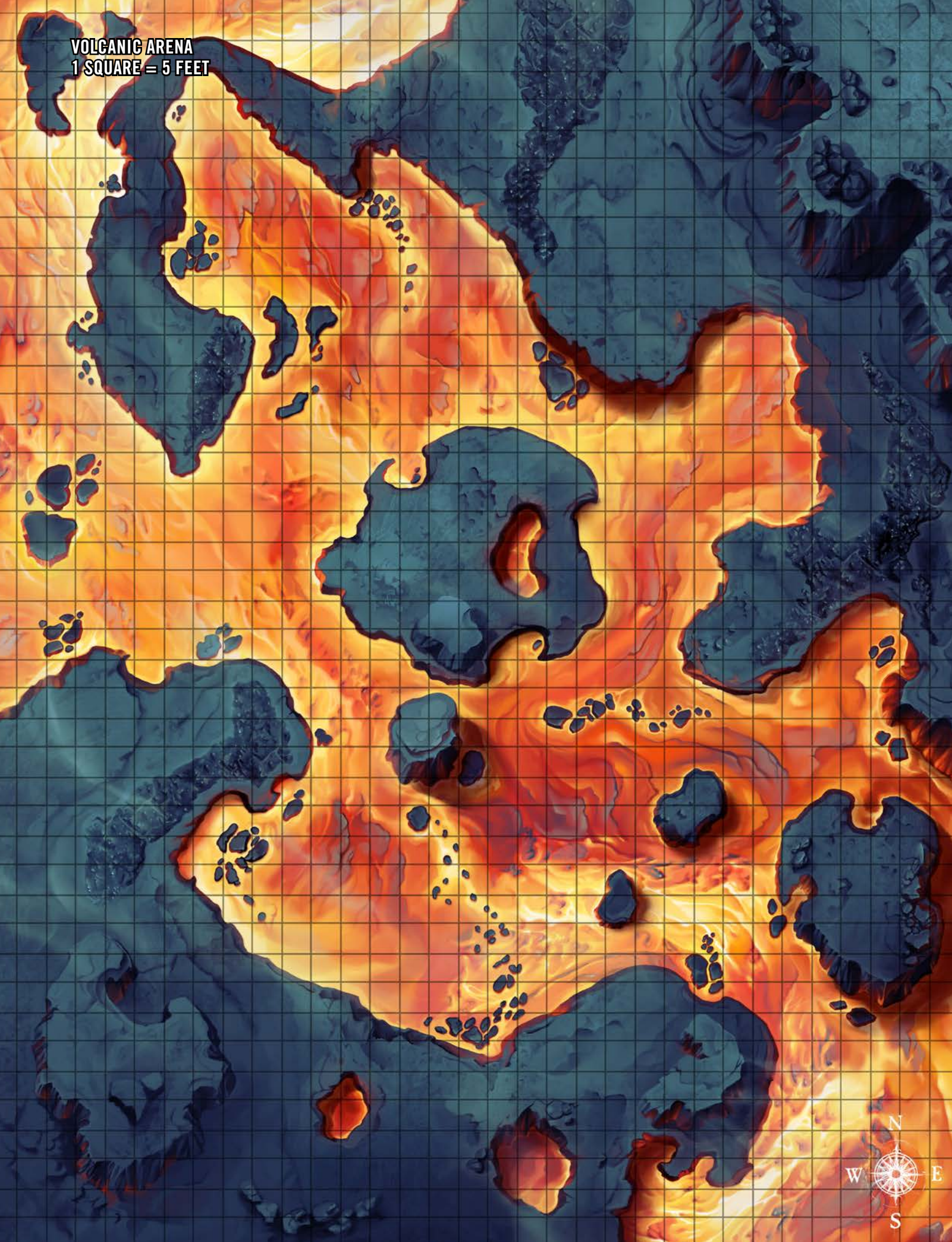
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