

WARLOCK

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LEGENDS

WARLOCK

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FORSETI'S AXE

by Lou Anders & Jon Sawatsky

Where the waters of the Uttermost Sea flow across the Lost Arbonesse and enter the Nieder Straits, sailors' hushed whispers and scraps torn from ancient nautical maps hint at a mysterious island, an ephemeral landmass that is sometimes here, sometimes there, sometimes nowhere to be found.

Known as Forseti's Axe to those who know it at all, the isle is a lost realm unto itself, set adrift long ages past to flow across more than mere waters as it shifts between Midgard and the Shadow Realm.

This mystical island was once said to appear in times of dire need, manifesting out of the ocean fog to steer the destinies of those who are lost or in extreme peril. The isle is sacred to the northern god Forseti, the son of Baldur and god of justice and rightful retribution. Said by some to be a mask of the darker Hunter, Forseti in this aspect is a minor deity. Though he is the patron of many paladins, he is not venerated to the extent of such major gods as Volund or Thor. It has been foretold that this might change one day however, and the island that bears his name is said to play a part.

Legend has it that over five thousand years ago, before the fall of the first great dwarven kingdom, before the time of the Reaving when the Nieder Straits were shaped into

their current form, there was a dwarven hold by the name of Thul Garuhm, a small hold but a strategically important one that lay on the edges of the great kingdom of Nordheim. In Thul Garuhm there dwelt nine wise law-speakers, masters of the tongue Law Dwarvish, which is also called Anvil Dwarvish by some. There also was a great forge known as the Lægh Eldr, which means the "law fire," where the pronouncements of the law-speakers were held so that oaths might be forged and bound with enforcing magics.

But the hold of Thul Garuhm was an early casualty when the war between the elves and dwarves grew heated. It was taken in the war and claimed by the long-eared ones. Then it was that the nine law-speakers refused to bow to the authority of their new elven masters, standing intractable if not tall before their conquerors. And so they were given a choice: they could be put to swift death by the blade, or they could select to be set adrift at sea in a rudderless boat. One chose death and was summarily executed, but the other eight opted to be set adrift. The cruel elves summoned a magical wind that blew the law-speakers in their boat far from land. The law-speakers prayed to Volund and to Thor for deliverance, but neither god acknowledged their prayers.



They drifted on for nine times nine days and would soon have died from sun and lack of food and water.

But on the eighty-first day, a ninth dwarf appeared in their midst. Flaxen bearded and with features so hard as to be chiseled out of stone, this dwarf bore with him a great golden axe that he used as a rudder to steer the ship, and the ninth dwarf piloted the boat to an uninhabited island.

Leaping onto the shore, the dwarf took his golden axe and struck a great rock at the base of the island's single mountain, splitting the boulder in half. From this new-cloven rock issued a sweet spring to quell the thirst of the law-speakers. Then the dwarf identified himself as Forseti, son of Baldur. He praised the law-speakers for keeping true to their laws even unto the end. And then he vanished.

The island proved to be verdant and rich in resources. After they had recovered from their ordeal, the dwarves decided to remain,

naming it Forseti's Axe in honor of the god that saved them. They soon tunneled into its mountain and were delighted when it proved to be rich in precious metals. The law-speakers built a great hall of silver, named Glittrnhalla, and at its center was a great shrine to Forseti, at the heart of which they built a magnificent forge.

Over time, Glitrnhalla became a bastion of law and justice, a place where great warriors and even kings would seek mediation, and stories told that on more than one occasion the god Forseti manifested in order to broker reconciliation between bitter rivals and former foes.

Then the Reaving came, and the great kingdom of Nordheim fell. Waters of the Uttermost Sea broke across the land, and thousands upon thousands were lost beneath the waves.

By all accounts, Forseti's Axe should have been destroyed in that deluge. Most thought that it was. But instead, the island slipped away from Midgard and into the Shadow Realm. Whether a miracle from Forseti himself or an accomplishment of darker magics or simply a result of twisting ley lines in the upheaval of land and sea, the cause is unknown. But drift from the world it did. However, in the years since, reaving dwarves began to return from their voyages with stories of a mysterious island, appearing in waters where no land was known before.

Thus Forseti's Axe became a place akin to its divine namesake, appearing to those who were lost and adrift, steering them back onto the paths that fate had chosen for them. And thus it remained for centuries.

But the tales the mariners told grew dark some hundred years ago. These more recent stories tell of a fallen hall, inundated with monsters from the Shadow Realm. They speak of a land overrun with scheznyki (see *Tome of Beasts*), a hall haunted by shadow oozes and other denizens of dark planes, and a ghost dwarf, said to be the mournful spirit of the one law-speaker who chose death millennia ago, returned to the world to wreak bitter havoc upon any who set foot upon the isle.

Recently a renowned law-speaker named Breca the Brooding has claimed that she had a vision from the god Forseti. If his axe, the great golden weapon with which he

steered the rudderless boat five thousand years ago, can be found and brought to the shrine in Glitrnhalla, then the island will cease its aimless drifting and root itself permanently in the material world. Forseti himself will rise in importance in the northland pantheon, and Forseti's Axe will again become a place for the dispensing of justice and law. Breca believes she has been gifted with the knowledge of when and where the island will next appear, but as to the location of the golden axe, who can say? She seeks adventurers to find it and bring this place of justice and reconciliation back to Midgard once and for all.

In Search of the Island

While searching for the island, adventurers may encounter one or more of the following:

d6 PHENOMENA	
1	A 60-foot-diameter cloud of sparking fog that causes no damage but manifests visions of Thor on the deck of the ship.
2	Cries for help and panic in Dwarvish that have no discernable source.
3	A spectral barge that dissipates into a great warhammer of light when approached.
4	A lone voice, reciting the old dwarven laws in Dwarvish.
5	An unapproachable whirlpool from which fish from the Shadow Realm are ejected.
6	The solitary sound of an axe felling an unseen tree.

Sparks of the Lægh Eldr

Though the law-fire forge has been cold for an age, the products of its once majestic fires can still be found throughout Midgard. The law-weapons, also known as Sparks of the Lægh Eldr, uniformly have the following characteristics:

- A minor sound or visual effect occurs when the weapon damages a target.

- They must be attuned by a lawfully aligned creature.
- Attacks made with these weapons are considered magical for the purposes of overcoming resistances.
- Attacks made with these weapons do an additional 1d6 damage to chaotically aligned creatures.
- Each weapon is associated with one major law affecting its bearer. If the bearer of the weapon breaks the law that the weapon is associated with, they lose attunement and cannot attune to it again for one week. This effect is called a decree.

LONGBOW OF THE LÆGH ELDR

Weapon (longbow), rare (requires attunement by a lawful creature)

This bow is made of silvery-white wood and bound with polished bands of steel. Arrows fired from it make a quiet bell-ringing sound when they strike a target.

Attacks with this bow are magical for the purposes of overcoming resistances. Attacks made against chaotically aligned creatures do an additional 1d6 radiant damage.

Decree: Treason. If the bearer commits an act that is treacherous (GM's discretion), the bearer instantly loses attunement and cannot attune to it again for 1 week.

HAMMER OF DECREES

The law-fire forge was worked by many smiths over the centuries. Any blacksmith might petition the Law Fire Council for use of the forge, and most were given permission in time. The greatest limiter on the forge's use was the dearth of tools strong enough to handle the requirement of the fire. Though several such tools existed, only the Hammer of Decrees survived the reaving. The Lægh Eldr may be cold, but the hammer still contains some of its power.

HAMMER OF DECREES

Wondrous item (smith's tools), unique (requires attunement by a creature proficient in smith's tools)

This adamantine hammer is pitted and appears damaged. The oak handle is split and bound with cracking hide. While attuned to the *Hammer of Decrees*, creatures receive advantage on skill checks to perform smithing using this hammer. Additionally, the time to complete smithing projects is halved.



THE AXE OF FORSETI

The *Axe of Forseti* is the material manifestation of the god's principal weapon. It has two appearances: the first is a dull and damaged battleaxe with the old dwarven rune for "law" etched into its blade. It most commonly appears in this manner, especially when handled or seen by evil creatures. Its second appearance is that of glowing golden battleaxe with two heads. The shaft of the axe is riddled with glowing dwarven runes that dance and flash audaciously. The axe appears in this second form only when approached by lawfully aligned creatures (good or neutral) or when wielded by such a creature.

Split. Forseti and his axe were separated when the god’s followers waned. The deity drifted away from Midgard, and his axe took physical form in the roots of Yggdrasil before passing from bearer to bearer. The god and his axe wish to be reunited.

Light in the Dark. The axe wishes to be found and returned to Glitrnhalla and will shine brightly if it might be recovered by creatures without evil agendas.

THE AXE OF FORSETI

Weapon (battleaxe), unique (requires attunement by a lawful good or lawful neutral creature)

Attacks made with the *Axe of Forseti* receive a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

Justice. Whenever a chaotically aligned creature takes damage from this weapon, that creature must make a successful DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or take 1d10 radiant damage. Creatures who fail this saving throw take 1d10 radiant damage at the beginning of each of its turns for 1 minute. The creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on a successful save.

Retribution. You may use your reaction to target one creature that attacked you since the end of your last turn. The targeted creature receives disadvantage on its next attack made against you until the beginning of your next turn.

OATHROT WRAITH

The oathrot wraith appears as a normal wraith carrying a spectral tome attached to its waist by tendrils of shadow.

OATHROT WRAITH

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (–2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren’t silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aura of Oathbreaking. Any creature that begins its turn within 30 ft. of the oathrot wraith must make a DC 13 Charisma saving

throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes cursed. While cursed, the creature loses its resolve in important beliefs and oaths it has taken. To represent this, the creature loses any proficiency bonus it has to its saving throws. A creature that successfully saves against this ability is immune to the effects of this creature’s aura for 24 hours.

Incorporeal Movement. The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Oathseeker. The oathrot wraith automatically senses the presence and precise location of paladins and clerics within 100 ft.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the wraith has disadvantage on attack rolls as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 20 (4d8 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

THE NIEDER STRAITS & THE DROWNSTONE ROAD

by Lou Anders & Jon Sawatsky

Shielded from the boreal cold by the western edge of Thule, the waters of the Nieder Straits are warmer and calmer than those of the Uttermost Sea but still present a treacherous nautical challenge to those unfamiliar with its ways. At its northwestern end, waves threaten to smash ships against the rocky cliffs of Jotunheim or the ice-covered rocks of the Frozen Reach while the Trollbane Coast of Stannasgard is an area of active volcanoes, the surrounding waters rife with underwater vents that belch magma and sulfurous steam into the sea. Longships bearing reaver dwarves bent on pillage ply the waters while dangerous merfolk and stranger abominations occasionally rise up from the depths.

The straits formed over five thousand years ago in the Reaving where the waters of the Uttermost Sea came crashing in, some say at the behest of the god Thor, to bury a large portion of the once great dwarven kingdoms below the waves. Many are the island that dot the straits, ranging in size from Smuggler's Isle (nearly seventy miles from west to east) to tiny islands barely a mile across. Common wisdom holds

that many of these islands are actually the peaks of sunken mountains brought low by the god Thor when he raged against the dwarven folk for the offense they gave him, that of forsaking their warlike natures in favor of craftsmanship and the forge. Whatever the reason, these patches of land are all that is left of their once proud kingdom, and the dwarves still mourn their lost glory and drowned kinsfolk, aching in their hearts to brave the sunken ruins and claim ancestral treasures that surely must lie in watery chambers beneath the waves.

Notable among these myriad islands is the Rock of the Selkies, an arc of boulders worn round by the waves and shrouded by seaweed. Here, sea-folk gather once each summer for a great þing where matters of no concern to air-breathers are discussed and debated at length. The rest of the year, the rock serves as a platform from which the selkies and their ilk attempt to entice sailors to their doom, and indeed, the broken stones are littered with both the bones of butchered northerners and the glittering treasures and trinkets cast aside by the sea-folk as if without a care for their value.

The Isle of Swords is claimed by legend to be the location of the first hólmganga, the duel practiced by the northern folk as a legal alternative to the þing, where the seriousness of matters demands disputes be settled not in words but in blood. Small groves of pine dot the island while numerous barrow mounds mark the final resting place of countless a human, trollkin, and dwarf. Many of the moldering corpses therein date from ancient times, though some are more recent, for the Isle of Swords is still a site for holmgöngur, and many a dispute finds its end here. Wotan's shield maidens appear to ensure that those who set foot on the shingle beaches can fight without interference, and the one-eyed god himself is said to bestow his curse on any faint heart that attempts to leave the isle before their matter is settled in blood.

But perhaps most mysterious of the islands is the sunken peak that supports the darkened ruin known as Black Tooth Tower. Beneath the crashing waves that flood in and out of the gaps in its ancient stones, strange lights glimmer on and off below the waterline. These witch lights illuminate still-surviving glass windows, perhaps from submerged chambers shored up against the sea. When the moon is a sickle in the sky, strange shadows move across these windows and stranger chanting echoes up from the depths. Those who brave the dangerous landing and pick their way through the tumbled-down stone might find a path below to gods know what riches and horrors, perhaps maybe even a route into the Drownstone Road.

The Drownstone Road

None living know for sure what caused the fall of the great northern dwarven kingdom. Some say that the dwarves lost their way. Forged on the adamantine anvil by the smith god Volund and the thunder god Thor, they were created to be warriors in Wotan's battle against the wild elves of Thorn. As they cut down giants, fey, and elves alike, it is said that they became too proud, and this pride was their undoing. Others claim that the fire in their hearts burned less for battle and more for the forge, that as they laid down their axes and took up the crafting hammers, favoring Volund over Thor, and the thunder god became angry and punished them for forsaking their purpose and allowing their worship of him to fade.

Whatever the cause, know that more than five thousand years ago came the Reaving, and the great northern kingdom fell. Now the dwarves are split between the reavers in the north and the cantons in the south, and between them, the Nieder Straits. The great bulk of that once proud kingdom was buried in the deluge known as the Reaving, and the bottom of the straits are crisscrossed with a maze of sunken buildings, flooded holds, ancient palaces, and subterranean caverns—ruins enough to house the detritus and treasures of an entire civilization.

Describing the full extent of the Drownstone Road is beyond the humble limits of this discourse, but a portion merits elucidation here. Black Tooth Tower does indeed lead to the road, but the tower itself is the jutting prominence above a now sunken fortress, and the area has become the domain of a nihileth (see *Tome of Beasts*), returned from its eons-long journey across the golden heavens and nine hells to spread its void corruption on the world of Midgard. The nihileth dwells in the bottom reaches of the fortress, but its minions, nihilethic

zombies, roam the upper corridors. These ghoulish beings exist in a dual state, shifting between the material and the ethereal. They stay in their ethereal form most times, but when the moon is a sliver, it is they whose ghastly shadows are seen crossing the ghost lights in the water's depths. Any who would visit the Drownstone Road from here must find their way by stealth or strength past these unfortunate souls and their monstrous master.

But the fortress itself sits at a nexus on the Long Road, the subterranean passage between two vast holds. Partially flooded, home to abominations and deadly sea creatures trapped in pools of water between pockets of air, the road connects Mótsognir's Hall and Glámr Hall. Once proud dwarven holds, now they are the domain of undead vættir. Both great kings in life, Glámr is a wrathful, miserable creature, jealously guarding the cursed treasure in his hoard against any who disturb his unquiet rest. But Mótsognir is a rare, bone-white vættir, full of regret for the lost honor of the dwarves, who reserves his fury for those of a faithless and deceitful character. Stern and unyielding, if Mótsognir can be enticed into dialogue, it is said that he knows many secrets and sagas from the days of the fallen kingdom. But whether he would share such knowledge depends on his estimation of the character of the seeker, and should he suspect



dishonorable motives, woe betide any that come into his hall.

Recently, Jorunn of Skaldhome went into a trance and sang a ballad not in his repertoire. In it, he appeared to suggest that Mótsognir or Glámr, one or the other, possesses a rare weapon, a soul-forged hammer that contains a remnant of the soul of an ancient dwarven law-speaker. This hammer, should it be claimed, is said to know the present-day location of the golden *Axe of Forseti*. But anyone brave or

fool-hearted enough to seek such a treasure would have to brave the nihileth fortress, the horrors of the Long Road, and the two vættir halls.

Hazards of the Nieder Straits

The following hazards may present themselves when navigating the Straits.

SULFURIC STEAM

A geyser of steam rises violently out of the water nearby. Your nose and eyes sting instantly as the caustic vapors threaten to blind and suffocate you.

A 10-foot-radius cloud of persistent and spreading sulfuric steam rises from the water within 30 feet of the party. Each creature requiring air must immediately make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1d4 minutes.

The radius of the cloud grows by 10 feet each round until it reaches 60 feet in diameter at which point it disperses. Creatures requiring air to breathe who begin their turn in the area of the steam take 11 (2d10) acid damage. Additionally, the creature must succeed a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of their next turn.

The cloud is not magical and can be dispersed and affected by spells that can move air.

LAVA GOUT

From below the water, a sudden spewing of lava rises high into the air nearby. The lava cools almost instantly, and large chunks of volcanic rock threaten to pummel you.

The lava gout appears 100 feet from the party. The flash of heat requires all creatures within 200 feet of the gout to succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) fire damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

For 1 minute, large pieces of cooling lava rock fall from the sky within 200 ft. of the

lava gout. A creature that begins its turn within this range must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. Objects in range may also take this damage (GM's discretion).

BOILING WHIRLPOOL

Ahead, the water churns menacingly. Steam rises from a great whirlpool, and you spy the boiled bones of animals and fish caught in its current.

A 10-foot-radius whirlpool appears 60 feet from the party. Any creature that begins its turn in the water within 90 feet of the whirlpool must succeed a DC 11 Strength (Athletics) check or be drawn 20 feet toward it. Creatures swim at half speed while within 90 feet of the whirlpool. Objects such as boats or similar craft move 20 feet toward the whirlpool at the beginning of each round unless its operator succeeds a DC 11 skill check (GM's discretion)

Creatures who end their turn inside the whirlpool take 11 (2d10) fire damage.

WOTAN'S SNEER

Creatures who flee a sacred duel (hólmanga) on the Isle of Swords soon regret their choice. Wotan has little mercy for cowards, and the ancient practice of settling disputes with blood is beloved to him. Eleven hours after the creature flees the duel, it is cursed by the one-eyed god, whose divine sneer robs the creature of any future bravery.

Curse: Wotan's Sneer. This curse imparts the following effects upon its bearer:

- After each long rest, the cursed creature rolls 1d4 and subtracts that amount from its proficiency bonus until the end of its next long rest.
- In the first round of any combat, the cursed creature may only use the Dodge action.

NIHILETHIC DOMINATOR

The nihilethic dominator is large, slimy-fleshed zombie whose fish-like head is ensorcelled with currents of void magic.

NIHILETHIC DOMINATOR

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons (only when in ethereal form)

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands Void Speech and the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 5
(1,800 XP)

Dual State.

Like its nihileth creator, a nihilethic zombie can assume either a material or ethereal form. When in its material form, it has resistance to nonmagical weapons. In its ethereal form, it is immune to nonmagical weapons. Its ethereal form appears as a dark purple outline of its material form with a blackish-purple haze within.

Zombie Nature. Unless noted otherwise, a nihilethic zombie has the same traits as a zombie, including their Undead Fortitude.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The nihilethic dominator makes two tentacle slam attacks or two tendrils of the void attacks.

Tentacle Slam (Material Form Only). *Melee*

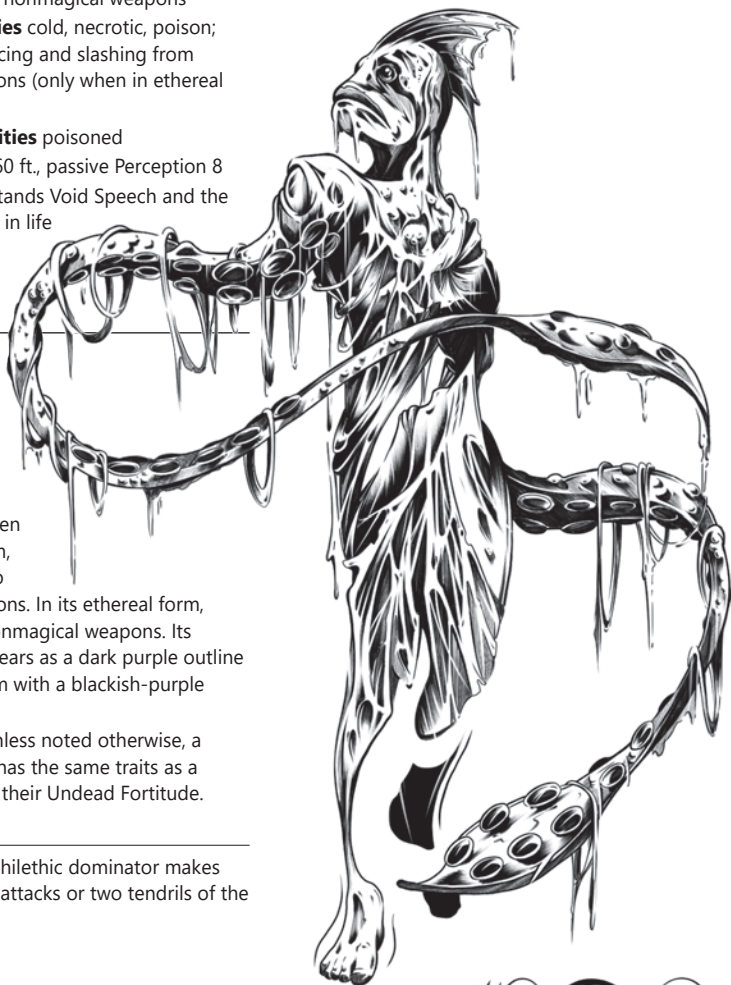
Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the creature must succeed a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Tendrils of the Void (Ethereal Form Only).

Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d12) cold damage and 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Form Swap. As a bonus action, the nihilethic zombie can alter itself, shifting between its material and ethereal forms at will.

Void Body. As a reaction, the nihilethic zombie can reduce the damage it takes from a single source by 1d12 points. This reduction cannot be applied to divine damage.



MEGINGRIMMR

Megingrimmr is a sentient warhammer, containing the essence of a dwarven law-speaker. Its head is made from the metal of a defeated golem guardian, reforged in the fires of the law-fire forge. Seven rare gems are set in the shaft and pommel of this axe, each etched in dwarven with the name of its seven previous bearers.

Personality. *Megingrimmr* is happiest when wielded against those who have committed crimes or defiled sacred sites. The hammer was forged to assist a law-speaker in enforcing the sacred laws of the old dwarven ways, and when used to bring criminals to justice, the hammer sings ancient battle songs in the head of its bearer. The hammer telepathically resists being used for mundane purposes and exhibits disdain if used in this way (smashing open a door or chest for example).

Secret. *Megingrimmr* knows where the Axe of Forseti is hidden. If the bearer of this hammer develops a positive relationship with it, the hammer will reveal this location as a gesture of appreciation and goodwill.

MEGINGRIMMR

Lawful neutral weapon (warhammer), sentient, unique (requires attunement)

Attacks made with this magical weapon receive a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

Sentient. This hammer has the following ability scores.

INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Telepathic. *Megingrimmr* communicates by sending its emotions telepathically toward its bearer. It has the capacity to play music in the mind of its bearer, which it uses to further communicate its feelings about any given circumstance.

Senses. *Megingrimmr* has normal vision and hearing out to 30 feet.

Crushing Blow (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If an attack with this weapon would damage a creature, you may choose to reduce that damage to 0; if you do, the target's armor class is reduced by 10 (to a minimum of 1) until the end of your next turn.

Disrupting Blows. Creatures damaged by your attacks with this weapon automatically fail checks to maintain concentration on spells.

THE STROSS LIBRARY

by Lou Anders & Mike Welham

Many things were gained in the Great Revolt, but so too was much lost when the slaves and workers of Zobeck threw off their devil-trucking masters and proclaimed their once-feudal city “free.” Ninety-two years ago when Abelard the silversmith and Marcenzo the journeyman wizard rallied an angry mob to storm the barracks of the Stross guards, then subsequently struck a bargain with those same guards in a battle against the Order of the Undying Light, there began a massive sacking of Stross holdings, from their warehouses to their counting houses to their ships and barges, even to the city palace in Crown Square. More was pillaged or burned when the battle spread to Strossheim, the family seat in the Margreve. But one asset that was never satisfactorily accounted for was the Stross Library. It was always supposed to have been a part of Castle Stross, but the burnout and rather small chamber on the second level of Brander’s Keep fell far short of expectations of what should comprise the athenaeum of a family charged over a thousand years ago by the Moonlit King to govern the Crossroads. Surely, the Stross Library of such renowned

infamy would hold a collection of priceless tomes, magical scrolls, and ancient artifacts, should be a veritable treasure trove of infernal knowledge brimming with the promise of great and terrible power. Thus, rumors persisted that the demolished study in Strossheim was not in fact the *true* library, which somehow remained shrouded from the world, its secrets still intact and waiting to be uncovered by the clever, the bold, and the foolhardy.

In point of fact, though many are the exaggerated rumors and fabricated legends attributed to the Family Stross, this one contains more than a kernel of truth. The Stross Family Library was indeed the academic jewel in that dreadful family’s crown, an archive of everything: personal chronicles and genealogies, historical treatises on major world events and distant realms, arcane treasures and ancient artifacts hard-won or skillfully pillaged from across the world. It was the domain of Gorman Stross, an elder of the once-proud noble family that delighted with a miserly lust in the acquisition of rare disquisitions and forbidden volumes, objects arcane and execrated artifacts. And Gorman’s

bibliotheca was not in Strossheim. No, that small archive in Brander's Keep was home only to a few historical records and annals of note, along with the expected dark tome or two of not inconsiderable power, suitably damning to the unwary. But the bulk of the Stross collection was housed elsewhere. The true Stross Library was kept in a building unto itself, originally positioned on a street in Zobeck's Market District. The building was not inconsiderable in size and was architecturally equal to its task but not so opulent as to be conspicuous alongside its neighbors. Furthermore, Gorman Stross took great pains to reinforce and expand certain peculiar wards cast by those bibliognosts who preceded him. These obscure magics lowered the library's prominence in the observations of passersby and onlookers such that the building was hard to affix in the attention, and the eye tended not to dwell on its doors and windows. Thus, only those with business at the library would seek it out, and others would for the most part pay it little to no heed. Furthermore, there were, as might be expected, several thaumaturgic portals to other places inside the library, and one of these was a passage from the Stross Library in Zobeck to the smaller study in Castle Stross. Doubtless it was Gorman's frequent use of same, his comings and goings between the city and the castle, coupled with these obfuscating wards, that exacerbated the confusion as to the true library's location.

But when the Great Revolt commenced, Gorman Stross was taking no chances and deigned not to rely solely on these wards to protect his priceless collection. Calling upon the powers of a mysterious shadow fey music box—the *Black Nightingale*—Gorman strove to shift the Stross Library wholly into the Shadow Realm where he thought it would be a welcome and protected refuge to the Stross Family's shadow fey allies.

Instead, his inept fumbling with matters beyond his skill resulted in the library becoming uncoupled from reality, and the Stross Library and all within was set adrift to wander the mystical currents between Midgard and the other planes, ever shifting between darkness and light. Worse, his inept handling of the music box resulted in a calamity that rent his very soul, splintering it into two damaged shards. One of these became his intellect and reason, a ghost haunting his precious stacks, while the other was a chattering embodiment of his fallen pride, the summation of his madness, passion, assumed privilege, and entitlement. Those unfortunate beings in the library with Gorman at the time were transformed and bound forever to the library's perambulations through the planes.

Over the years, the memories of the Stross Library were supplanted by legends of the Wandering Bibliothe, a haunted library that appears and disappears at random, carrying away curious interlopers and taunting would-be treasure hunters with the promise of occult secrets and transmundane lore. Then, fifteen years ago, Zora von Zeerghast, eldest daughter of one of Zobeck's last remaining noble families, herself expelled from the Arcane Collegium for her unhealthy fascination with these rumors, crafted an incantation that she believed would summon the Wandering Bibliothe under a lunar eclipse, calling it to manifest in its original location. But when she put her theories to the test, von Zeerghast vanished, taking whatever esoteric knowledge she had gleaned with her. Still, should the Stross Library reappear, manifesting either in its original location in the Market District or in some other locale in Midgard, it would present quite an opportunity for the brave adventurer. Furthermore, there may be other ways to access the Bibliothe. Stories claim that a splinter aspect of the Stross Library has

become attached to the Great Library of Friula, a portal to the library is known to exist in Fandorin Keep, and though it has never been found, logic suggests there may still be yet another portal in the wrecked study in Brandor's Keep in Strossheim. The library itself has a magical connection to the Vaults of Ruddermere, that great storehouse of Stross wealth. A portion of the vast vaults, already magically connected to the library, was torn free of the larger complex in Gorman's failed enchantment and affixed itself to the Bibliotheque, meaning that whoever found the library might find their way to the famed vaults as well.

But prospective bibliophiles take warning: the library is now home to doomed and trapped shadow fey, transmogrified servants, gargoyles, golems, haunts, and the twinned shade of Gorman Stross himself. If it is true that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, this great trove of arcane erudition must be deadly in the extreme.

Magic from the Stross Library

Some secrets of the Stross Library have made their way to the world at large.

EXCHANGED KNOWLEDGE

3rd-level divination (bard, cleric, wizard)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a book containing lore about any subject, which the spell consumes)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

When you cast this spell, you open a conduit to the Stross Library, granting access to difficult-to-obtain information. For the spell's duration, you double your proficiency bonus whenever you make an Intelligence check to recall information about any subject.

Additionally, you can gain advantage on an Intelligence check to recall information. To do so, you must either sacrifice another lore-filled book or succeed on a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the spell ends, and you have disadvantage on all Intelligence checks to recall information for 1 week. A *remove curse*, *greater restoration*, or *wish* spell ends this effect.

INCONSPICUOUS FACADE

4th-level illusion (sorcerer, wizard)

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 100 feet

Components: V, S, M (2 pounds of granite, shale, or other unassuming rock)

Duration: Until dispelled

By means of this spell, you make a target building seem much less important or ostentatious than it is. You can give the target an unremarkable appearance or one that blends in with nearby buildings. By its nature, this spell does not allow you to specify features that would make the building stand out. You also cannot make a building look more opulent to match surrounding buildings. You can make the building appear smaller or larger than its actual size to better fit into its environs. However, these size changes are noticeable with cursory physical inspection as an object will pass through extra illusory space or bump into a seemingly smaller section of the building.

A creature can use its action to inspect the building and make an Intelligence (Investigation) check against your spell save DC. If it succeeds, it becomes aware the building has been disguised.

In addition to you dispelling *inconspicuous facade*, the spell ends if the target building is destroyed.

CATALOGUING BOOK

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

The Wandering Bibliothe contains several copies of *cataloguing books*, allowing visitors to readily find a book within its stacks.

While holding the book, you can take an action to touch the book to an object you wish to catalog. The book inscribes the object's name, provided by you, on one of its pages and sketches a rough illustration to accompany the object's name. If the object is a magic item or otherwise magic-imbued, the book also inscribes the object's properties. The book becomes attuned to the object and denotes its location within its pages and tracks its location, provided the object is not protected by *nondetection* or other magic that thwarts divination magic.

If you and a catalogued object are on the same plane, you can teleport to the object's location as if you cast teleport with a familiarity of "very familiar." You can't use this property again until 7 days have elapsed.

You can also take an action to speak a command word that encrypts the book's entries, which you and up to ten designated creatures can understand without difficulty. With another action and command word, you can return the entries to readable text (typically Common, but you can choose the language).

When you become attuned to the book, all catalogued items disappear from the book.

NIGHTINGALE'S SHADE

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

The *Black Nightingale* deposits shadowy copies of itself wherever the Wandering Bibliothe travels. The birdcage portion of the music box is absent at least one bar.

While holding the music box, you can take an action to wind it, allowing it to play for 1 minute, cumulatively up to a total of 5 minutes. All creatures within 30



feet of the music box playing its tune have disadvantage on saving throws against enchantment and illusion magic.

Curse. This item is cursed. Attuning to it curses you until you are targeted by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the box, keeping it within reach at all times.

In addition, while the music box is on your person, you must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw at the beginning of combat or other tense situations. On a failed save, you take an action to wind the music box and let it play.

Finally, at dawn, you must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become affected by the *geas* spell, which compels you to locate the *Black Nightingale*. You must be targeted by an additional *remove curse* spell or similar magic to end this effect.

WANDERING BIBLIOLETHE GATEWAYS

Beyond its propensity to sweep up victims in its travels, the Wandering Bibliothe leaves invitations to curious folk in the form of a mysterious book containing a ritual to summon the library during a lunar eclipse. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals the next lunar eclipse.

The Bibliothe also creates hidden gateways in buildings with which it temporarily shares space. Either way, the library expects intentional visitors to put forth effort to gain access to it, even if it never intends to release such visitors.

A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check learns of an existing gateway to the Bibliothe. Additionally, a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check while within a building containing a gateway uncovers the gateway's presence. Since gateways to the library are hidden, a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check

is required to find the gateway. Other than the building inhabitants, which may provide obstacles to entering the gateway, a dangerous or deadly magic trap guards the gateway. The gateway's final hazard is its one-way access. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check realizes this aspect as well as the 2d20 month duration before the library's return to its current plane. Time within the Bibliothe flows at the same rate as time in the Material Plane.

Regardless of how one becomes trapped within the Wandering Bibliothe, a *plane shift* or *gate* spell allows a creature to escape the library.

CALL BIBLIOLETHE

6th-level conjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: 500 feet

Components: V, S, M (a cornerstone belonging to a library, academy, or other place of learning)

Duration: 10 minutes

If you cast this spell during a lunar eclipse, you bring the Wandering Bibliothe to a location you designate within range. Creatures entering the library (including you) must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature remains within the library for the duration. When the spell ends, each creature within the Bibliothe must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or remain trapped within the library while it travels to its next destination. A creature that previously failed its Wisdom saving throw has disadvantage on its Dexterity saving throw.

If the spell's duration overlaps with another creature's casting of call Bibliothe, make a Charisma check contested by the other creature's Charisma check. If you win the contest, the Bibliothe remains in place for the entirety of the spell's duration.

TERMINUS ISLAND

by Lou Anders & Jon Sawatsky

At the far reaches of Midgard where the waters of the Western Ocean spill in a colossal cataract over the lip of the world to plunge for mile upon mile until they splash on the lower coils of the World Serpent, there looms a miles-high menhir, a marker that is the last piece of solid land before the atmosphere gives way to the surrounding ether and the eternal void.

This is Terminus Island. A standing stone one mile tall with a flat-topped peak a third of a mile in width. Few have glimpsed this colossal structure, and fewer still have successfully navigated the powerful currents at the world's edge to moor a boat and explore. But those who do find a staircase cut into a groove in the stone on the opposite side and a five-mile descent to a second landmass. This is World Descent Island, a massive shelf that juts from the side of Midgard like a gargantuan barnacle.

Those who know of Terminus Island and its hidden sister would think that no such place could arise from nature alone, and they would be correct in their suppositions. For Terminus Island and World Descent Island are artificial, conjured by magics and pacts long ago.

Before the creatures known as the aboleths taught the basics of civilization and magic to the early humans of Midgard, there ruled the Green Coven, protectors of sacred fruit-bearing trees called the Verdant Vessels, the fruit of which was said to have many wondrous properties: the ability to restore the dead, to transform the undead back into true life, to grant immortality and luck, to reveal impossible secrets and long-buried knowledge.

Rightly fearing and mistrusting the seemingly benevolent aboleths, the Green Coven retreated from the world, taking the Verdant Vessels into hiding with them. But they were betrayed and hunted down until only a handful of their members and a few paltry examples of the magical trees remained. These remnant coven members survived by infiltrating the bureaucracy of the Ankeshel, that great and misguided ur-civilization founded under the direction of the aboleths. When the Ankeshelians eventually rose up against their otherworldly masters and cast them out, the bureaucracy was cursed and became the first of the merfolk. Those in the Green Coven endured this curse as well, and taking the

last pits of a single Verdant Vessel, they left the other merfolk behind and fled in their new state to the edge of the world.

Eventually, they came to an island at the world's edge where they planted the pits and from them grew the Ruby Plum Tree. Worried though that they would be discovered by either human or inhuman foes, these Green Coven merfolk invoked a great and terrible ritual. They called upon the World Serpent, and Veles, the Father of Serpents who encircles all Midgard, answered. Summoning this eternal power, they pushed the island over the edge of the world, so it clung to the side on a colossal shelf. Their last druid caused the bedrock of Midgard to rise up, forming the menhir that is Terminus Island and the staircase on its western flank. Unfortunately, the pact with Veles mutated the merfolk (now called adaro), who took on a shark-like appearance and forgot their own history, living only to hunt, to kill and feed, lingering as mostly mindless guardians of the tree whose importance they no longer understood.

Those who brave the difficult landing and the arduous journey find Terminus Island and its sister isle, World Descent Island, to be a daunting and inhospitable place, full of wild creatures and mad elementals.

At the top of the menhir, smaller menhirs and trilithons form a henge, laid out in the shape of an ancient glyph. Those who can decipher ancient Ankeshel might read something of the history of the Green Coven, though they may take warning from the vague references to a terrible guardian on the path to World Descent Island in the other glyphs and symbols carved into these rocks. Those who chance to set foot upon Terminus Island on the night of any full moon might glimpse the twisted remains of the coven dancing and singing in sluggish ritual around the henge. But provided they journey on, they will come to a great grove some fifty feet deep and one hundred feet

wide that contains the staircase over the edge of the world.

Just before the staircase begins, there is a sunken area, some four hundred feet square, where a gargantuan catoblepas is chained. This is the fearsome guardian alluded to in the ancient writings on the henge above. Provided explorers make it past this beast, they will find the staircase difficult going. Wet rocks and high winds make for a treacherous climb as the staircase descends over the world's edge in a series of switchbacks. Fortunately, a series of small ledges offer temporary rest or even a precarious campsite before the stairs finally terminate at World Descent Pier. Here, a moored raft can be used to cross the roughly one mile of water to World Descent Island.

But the island itself is no safe haven. It is rather the domain of prehistoric megafauna and megafauna, cut off from Midgard and from time and not glimpsed by mortal eye in eons. These strange gargantuan plants and creatures are not all that have been severed from the rest of the world. Geomancers and other sensitives will discover no ley lines here as the ritual that moved and reshaped this island cut it permanently from the world's energy.

A great river originates from the pool at the staircase's base, splitting in twain and flowing slowly toward the edge of the island. Between them lies Sweet Clover Glade, hidden in swirling brine mists. But at the center of the glade, the Ruby Plum Tree stands tall. To brave the glade in search of it means facing wild elementals, horrendous megafauna, and the twisted remnants of the Green Coven. Lastly, at the very edge of World Descent Island stands Kongamato Peak, named for the sole creature that lives at its summit. It is said that somewhere in the bowels of this lone half-mountain is a series of hidden chambers, lost and sealed from the world for millennia. None know for sure what treasures reside in these

chambers, but the Ankeshelian scholar known only as Po, who claims to be nine hundred eighty-six years old, has said that it might contain the golden *Axe of Forseti*, rescued from an empty longship, spilling over the edge of the world, by the Green Coven before their degeneration.

There are those who claim one final wonder among this realm of wonders. It is said by certain astrologers, thought wise by some and mad by others, that a silver bridge stretches from the very edge of World Descent Island. This bridge, these fantastical claims purport, can take one to the moon!

Awakened Verdant Vessel

The ancient guardians of the Ruby Plum Tree watch with infinite patience. These awakened verdant vessels are awakened trees with an AC of 16, 85 (10d12 + 20) hit points, and a challenge rating of 5 (1,100 XP). Additionally, the trees gain the following:

- ***Succor of the Ruby Plum.***

The awakened verdant vessel heals itself for 26 (4d12) hit points. Attacks against the tree are made with disadvantage until the end of its next turn.

- ***Multiattack.***

The awakened verdant vessel makes three slam attacks.

- ***Slam.*** Melee Weapon

Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Fruit of the Ruby Plum Tree

The tree bears three distinct types of fruit, each with its own beneficial effects. The fruit grows randomly, and it is not uncommon for the tree to bear all three at once.

Smoldering Plum. This plum is hot to the touch and emits visible waves of heat. A creature that picks the smoldering plum must succeed a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be lanced by the red-hot branches nearby, taking 9 (2d8) fire damage on a failed save. The plum may be eaten as an action, conferring immunity to fire damage for 1d4 minutes.

Glittering Plum. This plum glitters and shines in even the dimmest of light. Its skin reflects light to produce deep violet and green hues. Picking the plum presents no challenge, but its charming appearance makes it difficult to eat. A creature may use an action to try to eat the glittering plum and must succeed on a DC 11 Charisma



saving throw to do so. The creature's action is wasted on a failed save. Creatures who eat the glittering plum gain truesight to a range of 120 feet for 1d4 hours.

Singing Plum. The purple-grey singing plum hums a quiet melody while growing on the tree. When plucked, the plum emits a captivating atonal song that can be heard within 60 feet. The plum continues to sing indefinitely, ending its song only when eaten. A creature may use its action to eat the singing plum. Provided they can cast 1st-level spells, the creature gains the ability to cast *silence* (DC 13) at will for 1d4 minutes.

Adaro

The twisted adaro function as merfolk with an AC of 14, 33 (6d8 + 6) hit points, and a challenge rating of 1 (200 XP). It loses its spear attack and gains the following:

- **Primal Rake (3/Day).** The adaro uses its reaction to empower a successful claw attack. In addition to the normal damage, the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 5 slashing damage on a failed save.
- **Multiattack.** The adaro makes two claw attacks.
- **Claw.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Thok-Wrottos, Guardian of the Stair

The slumbering guardian is chained to the center of a great stony pit. Thok-Wrottos appears as a massive catoblepas whose tail has split and grown into three distinct lengths. The creature's matted black hide emits a powerful stench, filling the air with toxic fumes. Its yellowed tusks are broken and splintered from countless battles, and a dreadful snore rises from its snout as it sleeps.

THOK-WROTTOS

Large monstrosity (catoblepas), unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 144 (17d10 + 51)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +6, Wis +6

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages none

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Immortal. Thok-Wrottos reappears in good health chained to its place each morning at dawn, regardless of what happened to it the previous day. Only a *wish* spell has the power to end the catoblepas's eternal guardianship.

Keen Smell. Thok-Wrottos has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Thok-Wrottos fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Stench. Any creature other than a catoblepas that starts its turn within 10 feet of Thok-Wrottos must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the creature's next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the stench of any catoblepas for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Thok-Wrottos makes two tail attacks.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 22 (5d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of Thok-Wrottos's next turn.

Ray of Primordial Magic (Recharge 5–6).

Thok-Wrottos targets up to two creatures that it can see within 30 feet of it. Each target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) force damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is immediately affected by a *banishment* spell. The duration of the banishment is 1 minute and requires no concentration to maintain.

Creatures banished by this ability may choose to repeat the saving throw at the beginning of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success and appearing in an unoccupied square within 10 feet of Thok-Wrottos.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Thok-Wrottos can take three legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Spent legendary actions are regained at the start of each round.

- **Ray of Primordial Magic.** Thok-Wrottos uses its Ray of Primordial Magic ability, provided it is available.
- **Stampede.** Thok-Wrottos moves its speed toward an enemy.
- **Stench Cloud.** Thok-Wrottos expels a cloud of toxic gas from its moldering hide in a 20-ft.-radius sphere. Creatures caught in the cloud must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 13 (2d12) poison damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.



of Midgard. Here, magical winds blow across the land, imbuing the giant ferns and primordial fauna with raw magic. Casting spells in this place is a dangerous and unpredictable endeavor. Each time a spell is cast, roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the effect.

Primordial Winds

World Descent Island is cut off from the ley lines that govern the magic in the rest

d6 RESULT

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The spell fails and both spell slot and action are wasted. |
| 2 | The spell warps into a different spell from the druid spell list, cast at the same level (GM's discretion). |
| 3 | The spell fails and instead summons an earth elemental that appears in an unoccupied space next to the caster. The caster may use their reaction to take control of the elemental with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) or Charisma (Persuasion/Intimidation) skill check. On a successful check, the elemental follows the caster's commands until it dies or returns to its plane after 1 minute. A failed skill check results in the elemental attacking the nearest creature until it dissipates. |
| 4 | The spell is cast normally but uses an additional spell slot of equal or lesser level, if available. Otherwise, roll again. |
| 5 | The spell fails, and the caster is affected by the <i>enlarge</i> spell for 1 minute. |
| 6 | The spell is cast normally. |

THE WILD OZKU HILLS

by Lou Anders & Jon Sawatsky

Five thousand years ago, when the Reaving reshaped the face of Midgard, drowning mountains, burying civilizations, and carving out new valleys in a great deluge, it likewise fashioned the oddly shaped peninsula that is today the northern half of Courlandia, that small realm ruled over by the ancient and idiosyncratic flame dragon Zennalastra, the Red Queen.

Along the topmost edge of her realm, surrounded by the waters of the Nieder Straits on three sides, lay the Wild Ozku Hills, a forbidden range populated with monsters and dark-willed, unfortunate folk banished from the civilized places of Courlandia. But the hills are home to more than these, for scattered across their slopes and summits are the godstones.

Thought to be surviving relics of lost Nordheim or some other fallen dwarven civilization, these stones were torn from their original stations, tossed in the tumultuous waters, and eventually scattered upon the hills to stand or lie in their present positions. The stones are varied in both size and shape. Some sit visible in the grass and copses of trees that grow on the hills. Others are lost in the tunnels and caves that thread through the region like the roots of a tree. The stones are said by priests and seers to be connected to some of the northern gods of Midgard, each to a different deity,

and they both grant boons and affect the land around them in ways that conjure the respective god's essential character. However, perhaps due to the intensity of the divine aura in the hills, the area around the stones have attracted strange elementals whose purpose there is unknown. But those who brave the godstone elementals as well as the more mundane monstrosities and outcasts who call the Wild Ozku home, may find health, healing, fame, and fortune among these scattered menhirs and monoliths. Here then are some of the major godstones and their attributes, though the list is by no means complete.

Stone of Loki

The vocalizations of wolves are often heard around this lone menhir, though no beasts are present—or at least none that you can see. Those who hear the animals' howls often experience a sudden uptick in their fortunes, though misfortune is said to swiftly befall those who hear the wolves growl. Lesser told tales speak of individuals transformed by the Stone of Loki. Reportedly, when the moon shines full on a Moonday at midnight, one who touches the stone with three, and only three fingers, of the left hand may experience a change of genders, a gift of the god of cunning who is no stranger to such transformations himself.

In addition to any unique boons, Deception skill checks made within 100 feet of the stone are made with advantage. Creatures capable of casting 1st-level spells that touch the stone learn *disguise self*. The creature may cast the spell even if it is not on their class list. The creature loses the ability to cast this spell after 24 hours.

The stone lies within the territory of a large pack of **wolves** and their **winter wolf** leader.

Stone of Forseti

Standing alone in a cavern under the Ozku Hills, this stone to the son of Baldur is unmarred except for the image of an axe inlaid in gold. Attempts to steal the precious metal have all failed as the golden sigil can neither be pried loose from the stone nor melted by mundane or magical means. At the base of the stone, a small spring issues from the rock of the cavern floor. Its waters are sweet, and some have claimed that those who drink of it can tell no lies for a fortnight afterward. Occasionally, those who spend the night in the cavern with the stone avow to have received visions from the god, though it is ill advised to attempt this on moonless nights when they say he comes not as Forseti but in his mask as the Hunter and as such never leaves without claiming prey.

In addition to any unique boons, creatures that drink the spring water found in the cave come under the effects of a *zone of truth* spell that lasts for 1 hour. The magic affects only the imbiber. The imbiber is aware they have been affected.

The cave containing the stone serves as the lair to an old polar bear that can be befriended with a large quantity of meat or berries from the hills.

Stone of Sif

This tall stone, carved with braces of arrows on three-quarters of its circumference but only runes on its remaining portion,

is sacred to the mistress of the valkyries. Young couples who marry here are often blessed with multiple children while female archers who pray at the Stone of Sif find that the next arrow they loose invariably flies true. Beer quaffed in the afternoon shade cast by the stone is said to restore lost vigor or at times exhibit other healing properties.

Recently, someone has been leaving bouquets of snowdrops at the foot of the stone, doubtless in honor of Saint Adelind of Yarosbirg, but offerings of libations are more traditional.

In addition to any unique boons, for one day in mid-Winter and mid-Summer, at a rate of one each hour, the arrows etched into the stone manifest as +2 *arrows*. Any creature that takes damage from one of these divine missiles must make a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or become charmed by the creature who fired the arrow for 1d4 rounds. Competition to claim the arrows is fierce.

The stone is regularly attended by would-be archers who live in a permanent camp in the region. The archers in training (**scouts**) clean the stone and the ground around it and make offerings of adorned arrows and small game.

Stone of Thor

This stone stands upon the very edge of a cliff, facing the waters of the Nieder Straits. In earlier times, goats, sheep, and occasionally people were said to be cast off the hills to be dashed on the rocks below in sacrifice to the Thunderer. These days, dwarves often bring warhammers and greataxes to be blessed by the Slayer of Monsters, and those of dwarvenkind who favor Volund over the son of Wotan are said to feel frightened and even grow ill in the stone's presence.

An oft-disputed tale claims this stone arrived on the hills separately from the rest. Not cast up by the tumultuous seas of the

Reaving at all, it is instead said to be a *Thorstan*, a thunderbolt cast by the god of lightning himself, that petrified when it struck the earth and split the hill. Indeed, a powerful current can often be felt by those who touch the rock, a tingling of the flesh that make the hairs on the hand and arms stand erect.

In addition to any unique boons, during storms, the stone acts as a lightning rod, and any creature that touches it at this time must succeed a DC 14 Charisma saving throw. Creatures who succeed the save are blessed by the stone, and their weapon attacks do an additional 1d4 lightning damage for 3 days. A failed save results in a judgement of unworthiness, causing 10 (2d8 + 3) lightning damage.

Approaching the stone is dangerous. Any creature wishing to touch the stone must succeed a DC 14 Dexterity ability check or plunge 60 feet onto the rocks below.

Stone of Wotan

The Wotan Stone stands highest of any stone upon the hills. It is uncarved, without markings of any kind, though a perfectly circular hole bisects the stone midway up its height. Those under the age of thirty-three who thrust their head through the hole are said to receive immunity to certain diseases, and newborn infants who are passed through the hole often develop the gift of prophecy in later life. Legend tells of a farmer who walked on her knees nine times round the stone at midnight on a full moon



and opened a portal to a hitherto unknown shadow road. But as the farmer was never seen again, this feat has yet to be attempted by anyone else. Or perhaps it has, and those unknown unfortunates vanished as well.

In addition to any unique boons, divination spells cast within 30 feet of the stone resolve at the casting level plus two. If an offering of valuables (at least 50 gp) is left at the stone, the offerer is automatically cured of all diseases after completing their next long rest. Duels (to the death or otherwise) fought within 30 feet of the stone are witnessed by the god, and the duelists receive advantage on all melee attacks during this combat.

The stone is often visited by a clan of wild-touched humans (**berserkers**) who tend to the site and consider it within their territory.

Apart from these major standing stones, countless smaller stones dot the hills, many stacked into cairns or arranged into rings. Fey are said to dance among them on moonlit nights, and sightings of ghosts and other spirits are claimed by those who walk the hills on darker evenings. Worth noting too is the *herrssteinakr*, a field of small, low stones in a valley between hills. The rocks are said to be the transformed remains of an army of lost Nordheim whose commander had a vision of the coming Reaving and sought to flee it before the god of War and Strength could take his vengeance. Whatever the truth of this, the stones here are strangely anthropomorphic, and the shadows they cast at dusk and dawn often look like the silhouettes of dwarven soldiers, all fleeing southward.

Finally, it must be said, there are those who believe the stones weren't cast upon and beneath the Ozku Hills by happenstance. These naysayers—defamed scholars, disgraced priests, and mad hermits for the most part—swear that the stones were arrayed in their odd positions by ancient design. They say each stone marks the location of a nexus point in the dormant energy of a buried creature of colossal size. The stones, taken together, form a net of arcane energy, trapping this unknown titan in a state of perpetual slumber. The disparate magical effects of each stone is not due to any inherent property of the individual menhir itself, nor to any god of Midgard, but are due to that stone's location above the body of this sleeping being, manifestations of the power it slowly leaches off its subterranean prisoner. Should a sufficient number of the stones be removed or destroyed, these naysayers warn, then whatever unknown entity lies beneath the Wild Ozku Hills will wake up, destroying the hills in the process and then undoubtably much of the wider world.

Godstone Elemental

The godstones scattered across and underneath the Wild Ozku Hills attract all manner of creatures and spirits. Most dangerous among these visitors are the strange elemental pilgrims that move from stone to stone, changing shape and nature to reflect the current mood of the god the stone is linked to. The godstone elemental is a chaotic and swirling mass of elemental energy that protects whatever stone it might be visiting.

GODSTONE ELEMENTAL

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 98 (13d10 + 26)

Speed 30 ft. (see Changing Aspect)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	6 (–2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages one primordial dialect (Aquan, Auran, Ignan, or Terran)

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Changing Aspect. The godstone elemental has one of the following traits depending on which godstone it is visiting (GM's discretion):

- **Aspect of the Cold Moon.** The elemental is made of pale glittering ice. It receives a +2 to its AC, and its slam attacks do cold damage. It is immune to cold damage and vulnerable to fire.
- **Aspect of Fire and Passion.** The elemental is made of flashing fire and light. Creatures that can see the elemental and begin their turn within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the end of their next turn. Its slam attacks do fire damage, and it is immune to fire and radiant damage.
- **Aspect of Gold and Silver.** The elemental is made of earth run through with veins of gold and silver. It receives a +3 to its AC, and

its slam attacks do bludgeoning damage. It gains a burrowing speed of 10 feet. When defeated, its remains release 500 gp worth of unworked gold and silver.

- **Aspect of Retribution.** The elemental is made of spiked stones and ice. It receives a +2 to its AC, and its slam attacks do bludgeoning damage. Its slam attacks do an additional 7 (2d8) cold damage.
- **Aspect of Storms.** The elemental appears as a humanoid made of lightning. It is immune to lightning damage, and its slam attacks do lightning damage. It gains a flying speed of 40 feet (hover).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The godstone elemental makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) damage (type of damage varies, see Changing Aspect).

Discharge (Storms

Aspect Only) (1/

Day). The elemental arcs lightning to all creatures touching the ground within 15 feet. Creatures in the area must succeed a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (2d12) lightning damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. Creatures that fail this save continue to arc lightning to all creatures touching the ground within 15 feet for 6 (1d12) lightning damage (DC 13).

Ice Lance (Cold Moon and Retribution Aspect Only) (3/Day). The elemental summons a sharp column of ice from the ground under one creature it can see within 30 feet. The creature must succeed a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (2d12) piercing damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

Ignition (Fire and Passion Aspect Only) (1/Day). The elemental explodes in a cloud of burning cinders, spreading out in a 30-foot cone. Creatures in the area must succeed a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (2d12) fire damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. Creatures that fail this save take 6 (1d12) fire damage at the beginning of each of its turns for 1 minute. A creature may use its action to end this effect.



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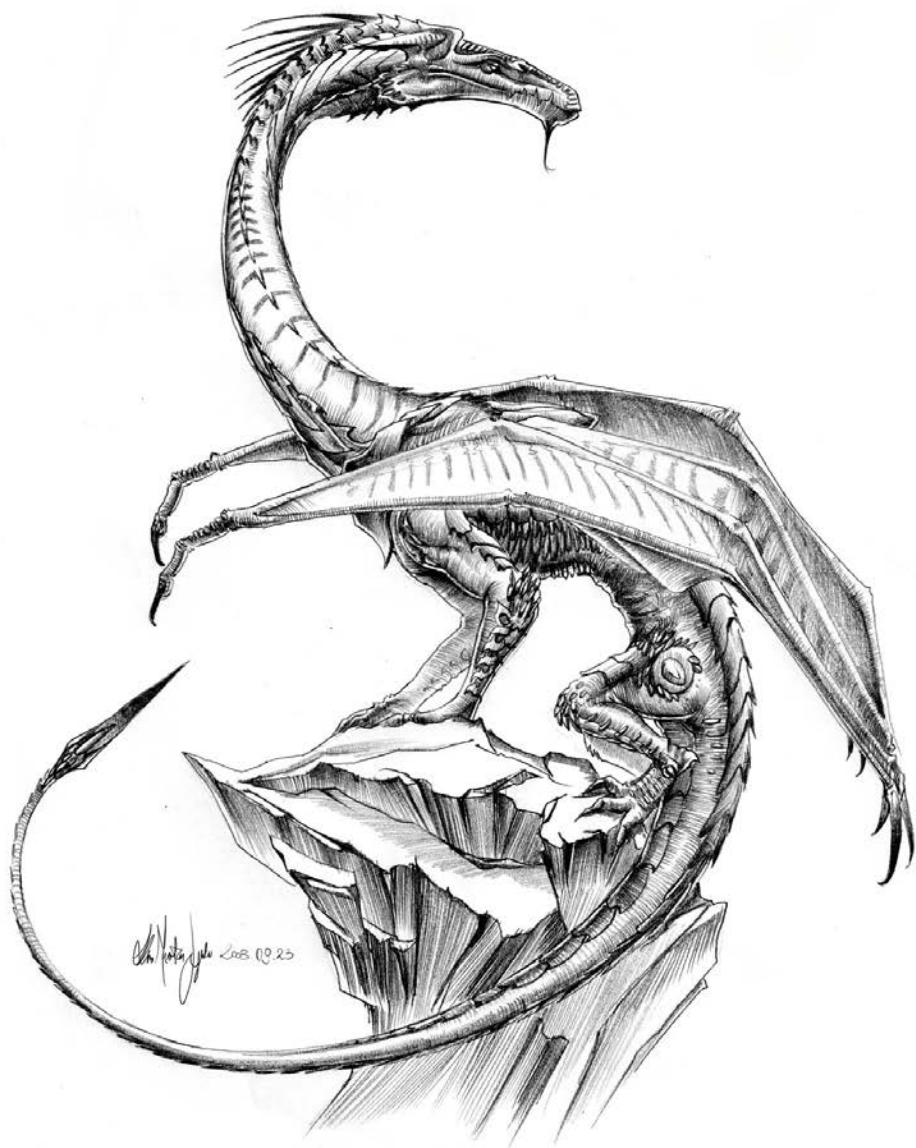
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