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# WELL OF DEMONS



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## WELL OF DEMONS

There are whispers in quiet corners that *Sister Millicent*, of *Northgate's Order of the Anointed*, is seeking stalwart mercenaries to escort her into the *Sunstone Ranges*. She is hoping to locate an abandoned observatory.

### The Observatory

Forty years ago, *Nocratha*, *Steward of Northgate* and sole *Wizard of the King's Court*, commissioned a series of remote observatories across the *Argos Basin*. Dedicated to *Wodon* (deity of knowledge, justice and art), the monasteries were located at high vantage points to study the secrets of the night sky.

For three decades, a mix of *Wodon's* clergy and *Nocratha's Anointed* (the sorcerer's hand picked, most devoted disciples) controlled the temples, expanding their ken in astronomy by leaps and bounds. Then calamity struck, the facilities lost in an ongoing wave of disasters including deadly disease, fire, *skorn* invaders, and worse.

Of all the observatories, the *Tanat Celestium* nestled in the icy heights of the *Sunstone Ranges* suffered most. By accident, sabotage, or unbridled arrogance, the astronomers unleashed the demon *Uzr-Grom-Yrsha* into their midst. *Uzr* swiftly took control of the complex, transforming the residents into hapless *Gaunts* (the demons are bound to the facility and cannot leave). A handful of *anointed* escaped, but only one survived the trek to *Northgate* to report the horrors witnessed. He was swiftly put to death, the incident covered up, and the *Celestium* abandoned.

### Tanat Codex

A decade has since passed, and a relatively new *anointed*, *Sister Millicent*, chanced to hear about the deserted observatory whilst caring for the aging sorcerer during one of his fevered ramblings.

Investigating further, *Millicent* turned up records suggesting the *Tanat Celestium* was abandoned due to *skorn* invaders, and more importantly, that the observatory's prime codex was stored in a secret vault. *Millicent* has overheard her master muttering about the "*Tanat Codex*" during fits of troubled sleep, and is certain he will reward her if she retrieves it.

*Millicent's* first difficulty is that the *anointed* are prohibited from seeking out the observatory, care of a decade old decree from senior cabal members. As a result *Millicent's* mission must be a secret one.

Secondly, the journey is at least a month's duration (two weeks there and back), through monster infested wilds. The disciple would never survive alone, and she cannot risk taking any of her usual *anointed* warriors with her. Which is where the PCs come in.



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## Sister Millicent

*Sister Millicent* (late 20s, 6 ft, red robes, silver door signet ring, ambitious, paranoid) meets with the party away from the *anointed's* usual haunts to offer them 500 crowns to escort her to the *Tanat Celestium* in the *Sunstone Ranges*.

If queried about why others of the *Stargazer's* sect cannot assist, she explains her quest is secretive in nature and intended to bolster her status in the cabal; she doesn't want another disciple beating her to the prize. Her objective is to retrieve the astronomical codex in the observatory's vault and return to *Northgate* in one piece. *Millicent* is already on a short list to trial as one of the sorcerer's (coveted) apprentices next year; she hopes returning the codex will confirm her place.

**Sister Millicent** AC 12, HD 2, Spiked Mace 1d8+1, 19: as weapon, S9 D13 C14 I14 P10 W15 Ch14 L9, Mv 30 ft flying. *Millicent* is armed with 1 x *Purple Slime Pot* and 1 x *Blue Slime Pot*. Like all of *Nocratha's* disciples, *Millicent* has developed an unnatural loyalty to her master.

**Purple Slime** AC 11, HD 3+1, Pseudopod 1d6+1 up to 60 ft, 19: special, S12 D12 C15 I3 P8 W17 Ch1 L6, Mv 40 ft inc up walls, ceiling. On a Nat 19, the target's armour (50%) or held item (50%) is corroded (per the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, entry 9 or 10). When damaged, *purple slime* has a 50% chance of splitting into two *slimes* of half hp (no further splitting). The *slime* turns inert after 3d4 rounds, crumbling into flakes.

**Blue Slime** AC 12, HD 4+1, Crush 2d6, 19: special, S16 D10 C16 I3 P10 W14 Ch1 L7, Mv 40 ft inc up walls, ceiling. On a Nat 19, the target is engulfed by the *slime* and chokes, automatic 2d4 damage each round on the *slime's* turn. Target may spend an action to make an opposed Str check to escape. When damaged, there is a 50% chance *blue slime* disarms the attacker, absorbing its weapon (retrievable after the slime dies). Turns inert after 3d4 rounds, crumbling into flakes.

Every dawn, *Nocratha* vomits up a foul, bubbling mucus of varying coloration: the secret ingredient of his unique slime pots. After some alchemical tempering, the semi-sentient slime is bottled and distributed to disciples as a weapon/tool. When released to air, the slime balloons into a 4 ft glob of corrosive sludge that will follow basic instructions from the *anointed* (who have also, as part of their initiation rituals, ingested *Nocratha's* slime). Slime pots have a maximum shelf life of 1d2 months.


## Overland Trek

The journey to *Tanat Celestium* is approximately 160 miles northwest of *Northgate*, taking the most direct path through the *Wistwood* and *High Plains*, into the *Sunstone Ranges* beyond.

Subject to the GM's discretion, each day requires a roll on the *Overland Events* table (LFG p.131), or alternatively there is a 30% chance each day of a random encounter from the relevant table below (roll 1d6):

### High Plains

1. A flock of 2d6 *Griffons* are surveying the area from on high, far from their nest in distant hills. They are hungry and weary from the long flight. If possible they attempt to snatch up a small animal such as a dog, or if that is not possible, kill a horse (which they know the party will leave behind for them to feast on at their leisure). They attack humanoids as a last resort.
2. 2d4 *Ogres* are lying in wait in the long grass (by accident, they were sleeping, then happened to be downwind of the party as they approached). The PCs might hear their sniggering enthusiasm for the imminent ambush before they strike (Per check).

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3. 4d6 *barbarian* corpses of the *Half Crow* tribe are scattered about the area. The bodies are about a day old, many partially devoured or missing limbs (devoured by a *Skorn* warband or other scavengers). Any remaining weapons have been broken. Searching the bodies garners 1 x *Trinkets & Curios* hidden in a boot.
  4. A large grassfire breaks out on the horizon and is fanned by strong winds in the party's direction. A Party Challenge (difficult: 8 successes) focusing on Int, Perception, Con, Athletics, Wilderness Lore, Animal Lore and Leadership allows the PCs to avoid the fire. If failed, they are caught up in it (all PCs lose 1 Con due to smoke and exhaustion, and 50% chance of suffering 1d12 damage due to burns or related injuries).
  5. A riderless horse can be seen cropping grass near a copse of trees. If investigated further, *Kraago*, a lost 7 yr old barbarian child of the *Half Crow* clan (black tribal markings, adorned with feathers) is found sleeping with his back to a tree. *Kraago* speaks only his clan's thuel dialect (no common). He was separated from members of his tribe during a *skorn* raid. If returned to his mother *Drusa* she will be overjoyed (a day distant, but horse tracks lead the way; the tribe's search party is tracking him from the other direction). There is a 50% chance *Drusa* becomes Chieftain of the *Half Crows* in a few short years (otherwise she becomes an exile, and turns up as a mercenary in a nearby city).
  6. 3d4 *Centaurs* can be seen thundering across the plains, patrolling a sentry perimeter around a much larger tribe (4d10+30). The *centaurs* are armed with shortbows and spears, well aware that they can harry intruders at a distance until they

force them to leave. They might allow the PCs to pass if offered gold or other valuables.

### Wistwood

1. A wide pond thick with moss marks a break in the trees. 5d4 *Projectile Leeches* lurk beneath the surface, ready to spring at anyone investigating the water's edge.
2. Huge webs begin to entangle parts of the trees, growing thicker and more frequent as the party presses further into the forest. Closer inspection reveals the webs are old, with many patchy holes and broken strands. The venerable *Giant Spider* that spun them died a week ago of natural causes. Delving into the heart of a web funnel locates the corpse, as well as some cocooned barbarians and 1 x *Carry Loot*.
3. Flittering butterflies and moths dance a strange duet in this unusual clearing dappled with warm sunlight. A fey abjuration of ancient origin protects the area, granting advantage on any recovery checks made, and disadvantage on the chance of a random encounter.
4. In the middle of the night, a procession of distant torches can be seen moving through the trees. Investigating further reveals 5d6 *skorn* performing a turning ceremony (whereby an exulted warrior is infected with lycanthropy, in this case wolf strain). After being savaged by a large wolf (*werewolf*) the infected is stabbed with spears to induce his transformation (at which time she kills two of her tribemates in a bestial rage!). Once the turning is complete, there is a 50% chance one of the werewolves detects the party's scent.
5. A war party of 4d6 *White Jaw* barbarians (sporting white paint and fanged

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talismans) have been tracking the party and mean to make an example of them, stringing their corpses up in the trees as a warning to encroaching outland rangers (who have become more frequent of late).

6. A great and terrible *Dire Wolf*, the size of an elephant (10 HD, *Off Turn Attacks*, Bite 3d6, Str 19) is stalking the party. It will attempt to snatch one of the PCs during the night, and retire to its den to feast (the den includes the bones of past victims; 2 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables).

### Sunstone Ranges

1. 1d12 *Snow Trolls* (as *Troll*, but white, stony hides AC 15, and only a single Bite attack causing 2d8 damage) are loping through the higher mountain passes, trying to keep the party in sight as they descend towards them.
2. A drop in temperature is accompanied by constant rain (or snow, if high enough) and howling winds that lash the upper passes for the next 36 hours. Resting is more difficult, imposing disadvantage on recovery tests. If the party presses on in the abysmal weather, a Con (Athletics) check is required to stave off exhaustion (lose 1 Con).
3. On a distant mountain, poking out from low lying cloud cover, the ruined buildings of a forgotten civilization can be seen (the *Ruins of Ashabat*, Adventure Framework #28).
4. A terrible roar sounds from behind a nearby peak. In 1d4 rounds, 1d3 *Manticores* appear from their den, sniffing at the air as if searching for an unfamiliar scent.

5. An elderly *Rock Grinder* lays dying within a shallow tunnel off the mountain pass (collapsed). The monster's breathing is laboured and the creature obviously in terrible pain (it will die in 1d6 hours, magic cannot save it given the natural cause).

If a PC puts an end to the monster's suffering, a particularly bright infant *Rock Grinder* (Int 5, 2 ft, 1 HD, 4 x Claws 1d2) burrows out of the collapsed tunnel and makes clicking noises at the character. If treated well, the *grinder* will accompany the party for a time, coming and going as it pleases (a kind of on again, off again pet. It will hang around for longer periods if offered gold and other gems to eat).

6. 1d6+1 *Hill Giants* can be heard around a bend in the mountain pass, boasting and laughing about their good fortune. If investigated further, the giants are playing a game similar to *quirts*, throwing rotting *skorn* heads at ground spikes surrounding a trussed up *skorn* captive. Whoever lands the most heads on spikes gets to eat the prisoner. At the moment, *Blargt* (older, almost hairless, black tooth grin) is winning.



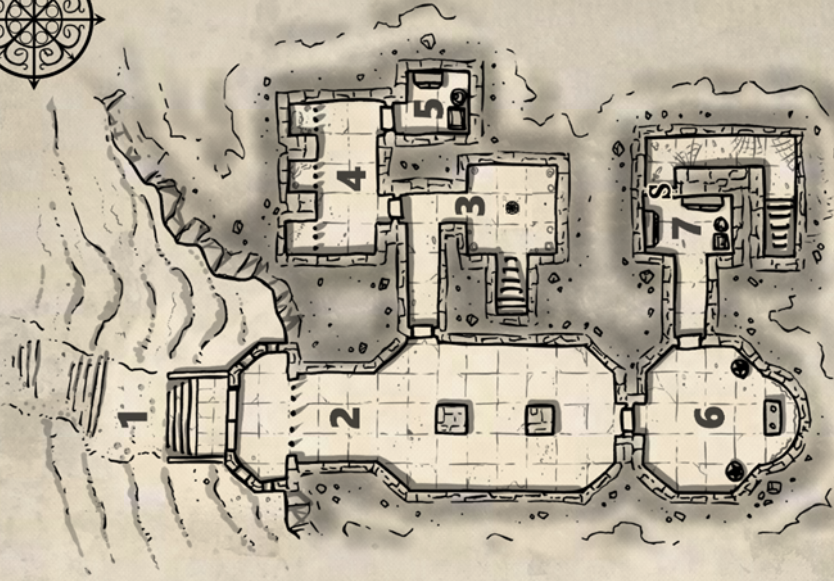
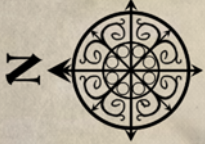
# TANAT CELESTIUM



OBSERVATORY



UPPER FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



HIDDEN BASEMENT

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## Tanat Celestium

The observatory is set on a small plateau on the western side of one of the larger mountain faces, about 5,000 ft above sea level. Snow covers the ground here, stringy grass still grows beneath, but the tree line is 2,000 feet below.

Stone steps lead up to iron entry doors (locked), marked with the lion heraldry of *Northgate*. A steel plaque indicates "*Tanat Celestium*". 40 ft above is a wide balcony, and to the west, 50 ft from the ground, is a gigantic telescope (pointing northwest). The facility looks fully intact, no prints disturb nearby snow. A Perc check at disadvantage detects a very faint buzzing from above (Area 24). An Int (Wilderness Lore) check notices heavy snow gathering higher up the peak (see Area 8, Encounter 3).

Unless noted otherwise, the interior is made of finely cut stone, decorated with stylized astronomical glyphs on the floor. Ceilings are approx 10 ft high, and the interior doors made of wood (all doors are open, unless noted). Sconced torches and candles occupy most rooms and hallways, but are unlit (without a light source the inside is completely dark).

### Observatory Trinkets

When searching rooms for random gear, the GM might like to substitute a 1d12 roll on the following table instead of the usual Carry Loot/Trinkets & Curios tables:

- (i) An ornate spherical astrolabe fashioned of steel and electrum (130 gp).
- (ii) A brittle prayer book dedicated to *Wodon* (icon of a dual headed bust).
- (iii) An astroscope (octant) of heavy iron, decorated with silver star iconography (35 gp).

- (iv) A small coin purse containing 3d6 gold crowns and 4d10 silver florins.
- (v) A scroll case containing rare musings of *Nocratha* in his early years (primarily ideas regarding the flow of time, the Veil, abjurations against demons and spell research). A Magic User studying the scrolls for one month learns a new spell.
- (vi) A handful of quills contained in a leather wrap.
- (vii) A small armillary sphere made of wood, with metal rings. The metal is black, laced with veins of dark green (not of this earth). Carrying the armillary (secretly) increases the character's DDM tally by 1 point (if studied, an Int (Arcane Lore) check confirms the effect).
- (viii) A heavy wooden case (locked) contains six bottles (three ink, one blood, one bile, and one random poison).
- (ix) A series of star charts focusing on different celestial quadrants. A stargazer might notice a major constellation missing from one quadrant, replaced with another (unfamiliar) set of stars.
- (x) A well thumbed book entitled "*The Truth about Turnips*". Contains essays on the secret sentience of turnips, and their ancient nemeses; cabbages. Also some tasty recipes.
- (xi) A silver signet ring with the silver door motif of *Nocratha the Stargazer* (20 gp, only the *anointed* may legally possess one).

- (xii) A steel censer on a long chain, complete with unburnt incense (myrrh). Lighting it produces an earthy, black liquorice like smoke.

### Area 1 - Main Entry

Entry is via the iron doors, or scaling the mountain to reach the balcony (Area 12) or study (Area 24). Climbing the mountain is automatic with appropriate gear, otherwise a Str (Athletics) check is required (if failed, the climber falls at the midway point).

Picking the iron doors requires a Dex (Traps & Locks) test, or they may be breached with a crowbar, pickaxe or other similar tool and sufficient time. Making a noisy entrance in this way however awakens the *Gaunts* within, who will swarm the party after they pass Area 3 and the demons think they can trap them inside.

### Area 2 - Entrance Hall

A raised iron portcullis looms ominously above the entrance to this 130 ft by 50 ft hall. Seven heavy crossbows (with 1d10 bolts each) hang from the walls, and a further five are scattered on the floor with broken bolts. Decade old blood stains mark parts of the floor and wall, but no flesh or bones are evident. Large droppings can be seen here and there (*Flue Beetles* have made parts of the complex their home, see Areas 6 - 11).

### Area 3 - Demon Well

A deep, dark well occupies the centre of this 30 ft chamber. Stairs to the upper floor are situated to the west. The well is 3 ft wide and descends 80 ft to draw from an underground stream that branches off from Area 9 (winch and bucket still intact). Hidden in the well are 2d6+10 hibernating *Gaunts* (possessed residents). If the party makes any loud noises on the ground level, a Perc check determines whether the demons awake.

**Gaunt** AC 12, HD 2+2, Touch 1d6, 19: special, S9 D13 C9 I5 P13 W13 Ch7 L5, Mv 30 ft inc climbing. *Gaunts* have the usual *Demon* traits (but

do breathe and sleep) and 20% magic resistance. On a Nat 19+ the *Gaunt* inhales part of the target's soul, causing 1d4 Will loss (*Luck* (Will) save for half).

*Gaunts* are unwilling half demons; humans forcibly possessed by demonic spirits. Within a short time they develop blue skin, an elongated physique, and a repulsive toothless maw. *Gaunts* cannot speak but do emit awful groaning, muttering and shrieking noises consistent with hunger. Pouring holy water down a *Gaunt's* throat exorcises the demon, permanently banishing it (the host suffers 2d6 damage in the process, enough to kill most people). *Purge the Accursed* also frees the host (same damage).



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### Area 4 – Cells

This 50 ft by 30 ft room includes three barred cells to the north (all locked, keys lost). Two of the cells are empty, but one contains a sleeping *Gaunt* (an unfortunate barbarian captive, possessed like everyone else). The *Gaunt* has been trapped in the cell for ten years. If woken it alternates between boundless, impotent rage (sucking at the bars) and mewling misery (either way, it might alert others).

### Area 5 – Materials Storage

This 20 ft square storage room includes shelves of candles, rope, 3d6 torches, a barrel of oil, spare robes and so on.

### Area 6 – Minor Chapel

This 50 ft diameter chapel has a stone altar to *Wodon* (a stacked tomes symbol marks the top), and statues to the east and west (one is a female *Wodon*, the other a fallen male; robed with a book in one hand and a sword in the other). The walls are inscribed with prayers of knowledge, insight and justice.

2d6 *Flue Beetles* have dug a shallow nest here (part of the basement colony). They will defend their territory against humanoids, but will flee from demons (if woken, the demons will seek out humanoids first, but will kill the beetles if no other victims are available).

**Flue Beetle** AC 14, HD 3, Mandibles 1d8+1, 19: special, S14 D11 C13 I2 P13 W10 Ch8 L5, Mv 30 ft inc swim, or 10 ft burrow. On a Nat 19, the beetle's skull spines emit a sickly yellow gas causing 1 Str, Dex or Con loss to the target (determine randomly, no save).

*Flue Beetles* are 3 ft omnivores with flexible, pipe organ like spines. When *Staggered*, their spines rise upwards and emit a haunting drone, causing creatures within 40 ft to fall asleep for 1d4 hours (*Luck* (Will) save resists, after the first save, target immune for the rest of the combat). They are accomplished swimmers, able to hold their breath

for two hours and propel themselves with their spines.

### Area 7 – Writing Supplies

This 20 ft by 30 ft storage area includes shelves of paper, blank journals and charts, ink, quills, and so on. The “secret” door to the east has a large hole burrowed through it (care of the *Flue Beetles*).

### Area 8 – River Dock

This 20 ft by 40 ft landing has barrels and crates of fishing lines, hooks, knives, spare oars, etc. The two canoes that once sat at the dock are long gone. Roll 1d6 to determine what happens when the PCs arrive here (the GM might also use this table for random encounters within the facility, if desired):

1. 1d4 *Argosan Stranglers* emerge from the slow moving river. They attempt to grab hold of a PC and drag them underneath (if the PCs are elsewhere in the complex, their sodden forms appear in a doorway).
2. 2d4 infant *Flue Beetles* (1 ft long, 3 hp, 1d2 dmg) are scrummaging about the area, practicing their digging techniques. Some are attached to the ceiling, dropping stones onto the floor with a clatter.
3. A violent tremor seizes the building, shaking the foundations as an avalanche occurs outside. The entry doors are completely blocked with tonnes of snow. The PCs will have to exit via Areas 9, 12, or 24. Anyone in Areas 1, 12 or the exposed top of Area 25 are killed (*Luck* (Dex) save or Int (Wilderness Lore) check to scamper out of the way in time).
4. A *Gaunt* from Area 13 has awoken by coincidence, and is wandering nearby. Have both parties make a Perc check to see if they detect each other.

5. Fifty or so *Shock Wasps* from Area 24 are investigating the complex. If they detect the party, they emit a loud warning buzz, but do not attack unless threatened. More of their kind are drawn every round until after 2d6 rounds enough have gathered to form a *Swarm*, at which point they attack. They intend to kill the PCs and lay eggs in them.
6. Cracking noises foreshadow 1d3+2 *Flue Beetles* burrowing through the ceiling into the PC's chamber. One of them pokes its head out of the ceiling/wall/floor and makes a strange clacking noise.

### Area 9 - Underground River

This slow winding river is 20 ft wide and about 8 ft deep. It flows eastward, reappearing at the surface two miles distant below the tree line in a series of winding inlets. The ceiling throughout is high enough to accommodate a canoe and passengers (or fit swimmers, about 2 - 3 hours with moderate gear, helped along by the current).

### Area 10 - Beetle Queen

This dug out warren is occupied by the *Flue Beetle Queen* (10 ft wide, with a darker orange colouration, and high flues). A score of eggs lay piled in one corner, bound with a light, stringy mucus mesh. The *Queen* will not tolerate interlopers, blaring her horn like flues to summon any remaining beetles from Areas 6 or 11 to aid her.

**Flue Beetle Queen** AC 20, HD 10, Mandibles 3d8, 19: special, S19 D8 C16 I2 P14 W17 Ch9 L11, Mv 40 ft inc swim, or 15 ft burrow. The queen has *Major Exploit Protection* and *Off Turn Attacks*. On a Nat 19, the *queen's* skull spines emit a sickly yellow gas causing 2 Str, Dex or Con loss in a 10 ft radius (determine randomly, no save).

There is no treasure here, but the *queen's* ancient carapace may be made into an exceptionally

strong, light and flexible suit of armour or shield (GM determines special properties, if any).



### Area 11 - Flue Beetle Nest

This 30 ft by 20 ft chamber has two bookshelves filled with various tomes (cooking, astronomical works, treaties on the Veil, magic, the gods, etc).

3d6 *Flue Beetles* have made a dug out a nest here, which they have laid with some of the *Queen's* eggs (Area 10), covered in a stringy mucus. They will defend the nest against all comers.

### Area 12 - Balcony

This 50 ft by 20 ft balcony is open to the cold mountain air, the tiled floor dusted with snow. Steps lead down to a locked door (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it). The balcony is 40 ft above the ground floor entry.

### Area 13 - Sleeping Quarters

This 50 ft chamber contains eight large beds, each containing the hibernating form of a *Gaunt*, covered in thick dust. Traces of long dried blood stains spatter the beds and floor. There are exits to the north, east and west, and a partially collapsed tunnel to the south (requires some digging to allow

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a human through, but a halfling might just squeeze through as is).

#### **Area 14 - Library**

This large library contains the bulk of the observatory's astronomy records, as well as numerous books, scrolls and charts on a wide variety of topics (botany, climate, herbalism, poisons, history, etc).

On a high shelf, behind a locked *cold iron* cage, is an ivory covered tome (no other markings). A Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens the cage. The *White Book of Belemôn* details the history of the *Belemôn* before their transformation into the bestial *cyclopes* of today, and contains 2 x random Scrolls within its brittle pages.

#### **Area 15 - Reading Room**

This 30 ft reading chamber includes a number of small desks and chairs. A series of old blood stains mar the area. If the area is searched, 1 x Trinkets & Curios is located.

#### **Area 16 - Chamber of Elders**

This 30 ft chamber is decorated with grey wall tiles and three ebony statues set into wall niches (one to the north, east and west). The northern statue depicts *Nocratha* (elderly, bald, frail, robes), the eastern idol *Magister Namurchan* (a saint of *Wodon*, naked, long beard, hunched with a staff) and the western *Canoness Rohir* (now deceased, a favoured *anointed*, hair in a bun, missing one arm below the elbow, armour, spiked mace, talisman with silver door icon).

Although this room appears undisturbed, the demons have tainted it, marking the idols with invisible malefice (*Pierce the Veil* radiates a cursed, evil aura). A living humanoid touching the statutes draws the attention of malignant forces beyond the Veil, invoking an immediate intercession (roll on the DDM table).

#### **Area 17 - Beetle Corpses**

The floor of this 70 ft by 30 ft hall is tiled with gigantic golden astronomical symbols, the walls decorated with murals of night sky constellations. Stairs descend to the northwest and southwest.

Scattered about the area are the shells of 3d6 *Flue Beetle* corpses, clustered around a shallow nest. The cause of the *beetles'* death is not obvious (*Word of Ending* via *Uzr-Grom-Yrsha*) but they appear to have died at the same time, some years earlier.

#### **Area 18 - Armillary Sphere**

This 50 ft by 20 ft hallway continues the murals of Area 17. A gigantic 9 ft armillary sphere fashioned of steel and copper dominates the centre (the ring framework and planets still rotate, etc, an iron footstool rests nearby to reach the top).

The sphere reflects contemporary theories of the planets and heavenly bodies, including the *Midland's* planet. Curiously, the model also includes a hinged silver sphere (hollow) formed of alienesque, geometric patterning. If the model is rearranged, it is possible to cause the hinged sphere to engulf the *Midland's* world.

A character skilled in Arcane Lore, Astronomy or Mathematics may study the formations to deduce that the conjunction will occur in the next 3 - 5 years (Int check at disadvantage). If *Millicent* is asked about this, she replies only that "*some believe the Silver Door is imminent*", shrugs non committedly, and moves away to study something else.

#### **Area 19 - Star Chart**

This 50 ft by 20 ft hallway continues the murals of Area 17. In the centre an 8 ft diameter star chart is set into the floor, representing the four celestial quadrants. The entire chart is encircled by a blood red corona (anyone skilled in Arcane or Divine Lore recognises it as the Veil).

## Area 20 – Master Study & Vault

The doors to this 50 ft by 40 ft chamber are locked (Dex (Traps & Locks) to open. Within is an expertly carved study, the walls lined with bookshelves (laden with rare tomes on astronomy, arcana, the divinities, philosophy, physics, alchemy, and so on). A large work desk occupies the centre.

Upon entering this room, candles on the desk light of their own accord, and a deep chill settles over the entire area (causing shivering, PCs' breath condenses, etc). Moving further inside summons *Uzr-Grom-Yrsha*.

*Uzr-Grom-Yrsha* (8 ft muscular humanoid with goat legs, spiked armour, tentacle beard and horns) is evil and corruption manifest. *Uzr's* fetish is for suffering, helplessness, and the enslavement of others. Wherever possible he infuses his victims with demonic spirits, transforming them into bestial *Gaunts*. Bound to the confines of the Areas 17 – 20, he wastes no time attempting to make thralls of the PCs.

**Uzr-Grom-Yrsha, Boss Monster** AC 18, HD 10 (88 hp), Polearm 3d6+2 or Horns 2d8 and *Demonic Gaze*, 19: disarm S19 D14 C20 I13 P16 W19 Ch10 L13, Mv 40 ft. *Boss Monster* and *Demon* will the usual benefits. 70% magic resistance. *Uzr's Demonic Gaze* attack affects one target up to 30 ft, transforming them into a *Gaunt* (*Luck* (Will) save negates, otherwise the PC becomes an NPC under the GM's control). May cast the following spells once per week: *Word of Ending* (a target bearing any *cold iron* is immune to this effect), *Veil of the Balor*, *Sight Beyond Sight*, *Besech the Ancient Ones*.

If *Uzr* is defeated, *Millicent* knows the secret vault is in the study, but isn't sure where. Searching the bookcase on the eastern wall reveals a crescent moon bookend, that if twisted, causes a panel to slide away. Picking the lock requires a Dex (Traps & Locks) check great success (alternatively the key is in the desk drawer). Within is 1 x 5 HD Lair

Treasure and the *Tanat Codex* (bound in jet black felt, nonmagical, unique astronomical records, worth 800 gp to a collector).

## Area 21 – Reading Nook

This small reading and meditation nook contains a chair (bloodstained), desk and shelves. A half written thesis on the existence of the gods is on the desk. There is a 50% chance of rolling on the Area 8 encounter table when the PCs arrive here.

## Area 22 – Dining Hall

This large kitchen and dining area includes a stove and heavy oak dining table. Old blood splatters are scattered about the area. A small barrel of oil stands beside one wall.

## Area 23 – Wodon Temple

This 120 ft by 40 ft temple has a 30 ft ceiling decorated with divine hieroglyphs for knowledge, art and justice. 1d6+4 *Gaunts* stand motionless in the darkness at the base of the raised dais at the southern end, as if asleep on their feet (hibernating).

The dais includes an obsidian altar stained with old blood. A cloth covering with an owl and scales icon (one of *Wodon's* symbols) is discarded in the corner, torn and defiled with faeces. Shattered stone idols of *Wodon's* male and female forms flank the steps on either side.

A compartment under the altar contains 1d6 vials of holy water, and a *cold iron* holy symbol of *Wodon* (stack of tomes icon), consecrated before the observatory fell to catastrophe.

## Area 24 – Observatory Study

This 50 ft octagonal chamber includes writing desks, records, star charts, writing implements and so on. Small 1 ft windows look out onto the icy mountain. Encasing most of the ceiling is a massive wasp's nest.

A *Shock Wasp Swarm* have made their home here. They are highly territorial insects and

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will attempt to kill any intruders. Unless continuing to be attacked, they will not pursue opponents that approach Area 13. If the *wasps* are defeated, 1 x Trinkets & Curios and 1 x Potion is found here.

**Shock Wasp Swarm** AC 13, HD 4, Shocking Sting 1d8, 19: the target is overwhelmed (helpless for 1d3 rounds, *Luck* (Str or Dex) save negates), S3 D18 C5 I2 P10 W10 Ch4 L8, Mv 90 ft flying. *Swarms* suffer half damage from weapons, double damage from AoE, and split in two when *Staggered* (once only, same stats but half hp).

*Shock Wasp Swarms* are made of hundreds of angry, buzzing 16 inch wasps. They are particularly territorial and aggressive, chasing fleeing opponents for up to half a mile before breaking off their pursuit. If threatened with open fire (torches etc), the *wasps* might be held at bay for 1d6 rounds (Will check).



### Area 25 - Telescope

A huge steel telescope coated with snow and aimed towards the sky stands here (in working order, may be recalibrated using fine tuning rings and a turning rig).

Descending the stairs into Area 24 requires bypassing an iron trapdoor. The trapdoor is barred from below, requiring a crowbar (or similar) to break open, after about 10 minutes of loud, strenuous work (drawing the attention of the *Wasps* in Area 24 and perhaps the *Gaunts* in Area 13).

### Aftermath

If *Millicent* retrieves the codex, she pays the party their agreed fee, keeps them in mind for future work, and feels she “owes them” for keeping her alive throughout their ordeal. As hoped, she becomes one of the sorcerer’s rare apprentices, wielding great political clout within the sect.

If *Millicent* dies, but the party retrieves the codex, other *anointed* eventually learn of her plans and come asking questions. The PCs might be able to sell the book directly to *Nocratha* or his sect (or other interested collectors) at the GM’s option (*Nocratha* will gladly trade a permanent magical item for the tome).

If *Uzr-Grom-Yrsha* is not dealt with, some years later he manages to develop a spell that allows him to leave the complex. He heads for the closest barbarian village and begins transforming as many residents as possible into *Gaunts*, moving through the *High Plains* gathering an army of half demons to invade the *Argos* basin.



## CREDITS

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