

C12

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Dungeon Module C12

The Forgotten Library of Raanet

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AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 5-7



Not far from the yawning mouth of Bleak Gate, Keoughish miners have discovered a great interdicted cyst within the belly of the world. Excavated from the flesh of the planet by Xuloise refugees from their doomed Imperium, ancient knowledge and fabulous treasures aplenty lie in this forgotten place – for those that can survive its hungry guardians.

This module was originally used for tournament play at GameHole Con VII. It contains a challenging scenario and eight pre-rolled, playtested tournament characters. C12 is a complete adventure in and of itself and it may thus be used for competition among players (or groups of players) or as a non-scored adventure included in the context of an ongoing game. Also included are referee's maps, notes, encounter descriptions for players, and a background scenario allowing the module to be easily placed within a pre-existing campaign.



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Dungeon Module C12

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Introduction

Know ye this, if ye would have wisdom:

Long ago, in a vast basin of ash far beyond the western mountains, stood an empire of a like the world had never seen before. This was a place of endless rolling fields of verdance, blessed by each of the four winds in turn and gently kissed by the sun's warming radiance. The majestic bloom of its springtimes and the fragile beauty of its winters each graced its lands in turn, making its hills and plains the subjects of the dreams of poets. This was a place of miracles and magic; an empire of marvel and wonder. It was a place upon which its gods looked down from their respective places in the heavens and smiled.

One of these gods was called Raanet. In a time when the world was still a young place, it was she that took pity upon the first men and women dwelling in the land where that mighty empire would one day grow. She saw the way they huddled together in the darkness, shivering in the cold of the night, and shed a fiery tear in their midst. Where this sole incandescent droplet landed, it roared into a mighty flame, and the first men and women huddled about it for warmth. Grateful for their good fortune, they began to give glory to the goddess, telling tale of the beauty of the fire and singing songs about its nurturing radiance. This was the birth of the first poets, the first bards; this is why even now they gather about fires all over the world to weave their magic in word and sound.

Yet the great empire in which this folk dwelt was not destined to last forever. Fools and worse aspired to become its leaders and rotted its heart, corroding it from within. So it was that the wise within the basin gathered together and fled the land of their birth to the west, the greatest of their magi employing the Invisible Art to weave a masterpiece that might never be approached: To burrow beneath the flesh of the world and its imposing mountains and provide them a path by which to put their home at their backs forevermore.

Raanet watched their departure with fiery tears

in her eyes. This was because she understood that their flight was prescient. In but days, colorless fire wrought by the empire's ancient enemies would see the whole of the land of miracles and magic, marvel and wonder, burned to aught but a sea of dust. Those children that she once pitied so would be scattered by lonely winds across a vast plain of ash, the glories to which they once aspired largely forgotten by history's constant encroach. But, the goddess remembered the delight that once existed in that place, remembered the tales and the songs offered her in gratitude. She resolved to forever protect those that yet remained, that would one day emerge to the east of the silent and staid mountains. They would be cold and frightened, she knew, and longed for the day upon which she might spark forth another flame for them to huddle about.

But such a day would never come. While she waited, a visitor came to Raanet's home. She knew this one: A sinister god whose soul was as dark and the night her flames kept at bay. Still, she met his face with a kindly smile and an offer to warm himself by her fire. This was forever her way. But the visitor betrayed her hospitality, poisoning her cup. Before leaving her for dead, the terrible god stole her flame, so that it would never warm and comfort again - but instead burn and scar all those that dared cross his purpose.

When the refugees from the dead empire took their first steps from beneath the mountains, it was as Raanet had foreseen. They were cold and frightened. So it was that they called her name into the heavens for succor...but were met by aught but silence. No few of these folk venerated the goddess deeply and were heartbroken at the way she had seemingly turned her back upon them. They wondered what sin they might have committed against her and considered that perhaps she had wanted them to remain in their doomed land, to give themselves to fire and meet her at her eternal hearth. They asked for answers of the gods and were met with none.

Most of the refugees pushed forward. Their lives depended upon their flight and could not stop to ponder the matter. Yet some of them so loved their goddess that they remained behind. Within a hollow place in the mountains, not far from where they emerged, using the arts of their fallen home and powerful magic, they built a temple dedicated to her glory: A great library full of Raanet's holy texts taken from the great empire, describing the beauty of flame and the mysteries hidden within its tongues. Within

it, they continued to pray to blessed Raanet.

The goddess never answered.

The flames within her temple flickered with malice.

Module History:

The Forgotten Library of Raanet was designed as an official convention module for *GameHole Con VII*, held in Madison, Wisconsin in October and November, 2019. The module has been designed in such a way that it can be placed in any published or homebrewed Campaign Setting with little difficulty. It has been written so as to be usable with the **OSRIC™ Role-Playing System**. While the module was developed for the purpose of convention play, it can easily be adapted for use as either a one-shot adventure or worked into an ongoing Campaign with little in the way of alteration on the part of the Game Master.

Adventure Location:

This adventure takes place within *The Forgotten Library of Raanet*: A great athenium-temple dedicated to the Xuel goddess of Fire. Although this location can be placed wherever it fits best within the fabric of a Game Master's Campaign, in the context of Convention play, it is located beneath the Hellforge Mountains, nearly 30 miles north of Bleak Gate. It was once accessed from the surface by a passage in the form of a thin stairway, but geological instability within the region buried this entrance hundreds of years ago. Only recently, the eruption of the volcanic Mount Xavi (or whatever geological event you choose) has uncovered this interdicted corridor, leading to this most mysterious and deadly location.

Once Player Characters find their way down the slender stairwell from the surface, they will find that *The Forgotten Library of Raanet* has two main components: *The Hearth-Halls*, in which many of those Xuel that once made the place their homes dwelt, and *The Athenium*, which served as both a great library and a worship place for the followers of Raanet. While the first place actually occupies a physical location beneath the mountains, the second is actually a separate demi-plane that can be accessed from the Hearth-Halls by way of a special magical device found there. As time and events that have

come with it have not been especially-kind to Raanet and her devout, both places are exceedingly dangerous – yet the prizes that can be won within their bounds are likewise both wondrous and potent.

Background:

The Forgotten Library of Raanet is, at its heart, a classic dungeon crawl. It has been specifically designed in such a way as to get right to the heart of the action when used in the context of a Convention game or to allow a prospective Game Master to insert it seamlessly into a pre-existing Campaign experience. Some recommended ways in which this can be done follow:

- Player Characters with an interest in the ancient Xuloise or archaeology in general may hear rumors or receive information pointing to the existence of a rift in the world opened by geological activity not far from Bleak Gate. Consider that mysterious locale's historic significance, this would surely draw the attention of such individuals to investigate the site.
- Local authorities within the Freehold may alert Player Characters with some standing in the region to the appearance of the tunnel leading downward into the belly of the world. Given the presence of dangerous monsters within the Hellforges, they will request the aid of such worthies in investigating the corridor – and pacifying its confines, if possible.
- Player Characters of an arcane or religious bent may receive visions of the general locale surrounding the rift leading to the *Library*. These strange reveries will be accompanied by whispers of flames that soothe, rather than burn, and sensations of both profound melancholy and yearning. They will then hear tale of the discovery of the rift near the Hellforges. Such individuals will know the two events cannot be mere coincidence.

Notes for the Player Characters:

If *The Forgotten Library of Raanet* is being played as a Convention game, the scenario put forth in the **Background** section implies that the Players are

using the pre-generated characters included with this module (see **Appendix C** for details). That said, should the Players wish to use their own characters (as one might expect, if this module were used within the context of an ongoing Campaign), the **Background** section can be easily ignored. In such a case, it falls to the Game Master to adjust the text of the module so that it fits seamlessly into the fabric of their individual game.

In the Convention scenario, the Player Characters are taking the roles of a group of scholars and venerates of the Church of Wee Saj, rounded out by tough mercenaries and skilled specialists hand-picked from within the Freehold (the nation abutting the Hellforge Mountains, beneath which *The Forgotten Library of Raanet* lies). The Sajians will be completely invested in seeing a thorough investigation of the site through to the end, a conviction born of their deep devotion to their goddess and their interest in the culture from which they hail. The mercenaries can be expected to be just as steadfast in their desire to see the place's mysteries uncovered – though for different reasons. Each of these professionals is well-regarded within the region in their various fields and has a personal reputation that they will not to see sullied with the stain of failure. Likewise, the monetary enticement offered them by the Church of Wee Saj will be too great to let slip through their collective grasps. All of this is to say that though many of the characters involved in the adventure might be strangers – they all have very real reasons for working together and seeing to the safety of one another.

Particularly smart and well-prepared Player Characters may attempt to do some due diligence regarding the area in which they have been asked to investigate by the Church of Wee Saj. Such searches for information will yield **no** results. No written information exists about the area and anecdotal accounts (provided by local farmers and shepherds) will only characterize it as lonely and quiet, unless the “mountains are especially restless”. Likewise, magical attempts to gain insight into the mystery at the bottom of the slender staircase into the Oerth will glean nothing. Even *commune* spells – which have already been cast by the Witch-Matriarch of Wee Saj at the Ruby Cathedral at Wickloft – will yield aught but silence (for reasons that will become clear within *The Athenium*, if the adventurers manage to reach that level of the ancient place). Whatever will be discovered beneath the Hellforges must be found by the Player Characters themselves.

Notes for the Game Master:

This module was designed for convention-style play, and is intended for characters from 5th to 7th level. It is **strongly** advised that a Game Master preparing to run this module closely read **all** parts of the module thoroughly. If the module is being used as part of an ongoing Campaign, the Game Master will want to take notes, making changes in its text to fit its particulars into the Campaign. In this way, they can be prepared to adjudicate the results of any of these powers or abilities as they might relate specifically to the environs in which the Players will be operating.

During the course of the adventure, the Player Characters are welcome to use followers, henchmen, and hirelings to supply needed skills on their behalf. The exception to this is in the context of Convention play, in which no such Non-Player Characters may accompany them on their adventure. Should the GM choose to substitute the pre-generated characters supplied with this module with their own (such as is the likely case if this adventure is used in the context of a Campaign setting, rather than a Convention), they should compare Campaign characters and their magic items with the characters and items included in the module, in order to assemble an appropriate party.

Information presented in the key is divided into two sections. The boxed script is material which should be read to the players unless special circumstances prevent their knowing the information given there, such as no light to see by. The information not boxed is material for the GM only, and provides game details about the encounter. Characters may discover this information as play continues, but they will not know it from the start of the encounter.

Convention Notes:

The Forgotten Library of Raanet was designed to be used as a single-event session, featuring 6 players and lasting 3 hours. Timing begins when the character sheets are distributed, and participating Players should be periodically reminded of the time limit. The goal to which the Player Characters must aspire (and which constitutes a successful completion of their mission) is to enter *The Forgotten Library of Raanet*, plunder it of its secrets and ample treasures, and somehow survive to tell the tale.

Since the adventure was designed to be played several times over the course of GameHole Con VII, certain rules were followed in Convention play to insure that many situations were handled in the same way:

1. The Players are presented with pre-generated characters. All their characteristics have been listed, along with equipment, spells, and magic items. Players may not add to or alter this list. This will guarantee that all Players start with the same chances. Players would be allowed the use of the sections of the **OSRIC™ Reference Manual** meant for Player use (those sections reserved for Game Master use are forbidden), although all magic items they possess will be known and understood by the owner completely.
2. Monsters will fight intelligently and to the best of their abilities. They show no mercy or quarter to invaders. Monsters encountered in convention play need never check morale and will fight to the death, unless otherwise noted in the text. Monsters will be fully aware of the powers and limitations of their weapons, magic items, and spells and will use them to their best advantage. In many cases, specific tactics have been listed for monsters to use in melee. If these plans are frustrated by the Players' actions, the Game Master must find an alternative. If the Players are unusually inventive and find something that is not covered in the adventure, a few minutes may be taken to establish some sort of defense for the monsters - possibly having them regroup and counterattack if necessary. In convention play, monsters will not pursue fleeing adventurers out of an encounter area unless otherwise noted. Players will not know this, however. Monsters will make a lot of noise and will make feint attacks to give the impression of pursuit.
3. Players will never know the function of special treasures they acquire unless they should happen to discover their powers by examination or experimentation.

Campaign Notes:

The Freehold exists in what is basically an immense box canyon formed by the Jötunn Mountains and

Little Hills to the north and the Hellforge Mountains to the west and south. Within these towering monoliths, the land is an expanse of rolling grassland plains, verdant and fertile. The climate here is hot and dry and the weather unpredictable, characterized by powerful winds that swirl about the region, brewing up storms that often seem to be conjured from clear skies in mere moments.

The folk of the land have been influenced by two primary factors: Their powerful neighbors to the east in great Oekland and the Xuel Migration that saw refugees flood into the land from that doomed empire six centuries ago. With regard to the latter influence, the Freehold has one of the highest population of pure Xuel within its borders and echoes of that folk's customs and traditions can still be found within the nation's culture.

The Freehold has a strong martial tradition and an army whose strength greatly belies the nation's relatively small size. Born in the region's formative days, this has proven a boon as the Freehold is often plagued by evil giants and humanoids descending from the Jötunn and Hellforges, along with occasional schemes from the Crimson Brotherhood-controlled Hold of the Sea Barons, to the east, across the Looch River.

Perhaps the most famous - and fearsome - locale within the Freehold is the fell place known as Bleak Gate. When the Xuel fleeing their doomed empire fled their lands to the east, they did so through a massive tunnel ripped through and beneath the substance of the Hellforge Mountains by the greatest wizard in Xuloise history: The great Nitorels, last of that folk's Mages of Power. This immense subterranean corridor became known as the Passage of Nitorels and its mouth opening into the Freehold, Dark Gate. The yawning maw of the cavern is more than 200' tall and is known to belch forth all manner of monstrosities strange and unspeakable with the setting of the sun, hungry for the flesh of the common folk of the land until they slink back into the darkness in avoidance of Sól's revealing kiss.

The rift in the world that leads to Raanet's ancient temple exists almost 60 miles northwest of Bleak Gate, in a forlorn and uninhabited portion of the Freehold. The area has never been settled largely because the mountains that meet the land there are known to hold the lairs of many aggressive, evil giants and humanoids, and it is difficult to find a guide willing to conduct the passage of a group

through this portion of the country. Because of this, as the party travels to this destination, it is expected that they will be following a map provided them by the Church of Wee Saj. Should they follow this document, they have a 5% chance per day of becoming lost along the way. A lost party or individual member of that group may backtrack to the point where they got lost and try again, provided they have the map as a means of navigation. If they do not, then such backtracking is impossible and they are considered lost. Random encounters are checked three times each day and the chance for an encounter is 1 in 12. The normal encounter distance is 6" - 24" (6d4). If a random encounter is determined to have taken place, check the following table to resolve exactly what is encountered.

Random Encounter Table (Freehold Foothills)		
Die Roll	Encounter	Number Appearing
01-10	Dwarves	2d10
11-15	Giants	1d6
16-20	Giants, Fire	1d6
21-23	Goblins	3d10
24-25	Hell Hounds	1d4
26-30	Kobolds	3d10
31-32	Men, Cavemen	1d10
33-37	Ogres	1d8
38-47	Orcs	3d10
48-50	Trolls	1d6
51-00	Use Standard Encounter Tables	*

Background for the Game Master

As Raanet's worshipers became increasingly concerned about their mistress, they plied mighty magics in search of the reason behind her silence. Initially, these took the place of divinitory spells whispered into naked flames that would always go unanswered. When these methods bore no fruit, her faithful expended much of their power in summoning creatures from the Elemental Plane of Fire and Gladsheim to whom they might pose their questions. When at last this strategy failed, they used what precious magic was left at their disposal – fading swiftly, in the wake of their goddess' death – to *gate* one of Raanet's most powerful servitors from the Outer Planes: The pyroclastic sphinx, Avraasha.

Avraasha was away from the Welcoming Hearth when her mistress was murdered, tending to an

important matter on her behalf. Her *gating* came while she was on her way to return to Raanet's side. Therefore, when questioned by the goddess' faithful as to her silence, the sphinx could not answer. She offered to return to the Welcoming Hearth and try to persuade Raanet to send them a sign of her favor or disfavor, but when she attempted to use her divine power to thin the barriers between worlds to make the traverse...she found that it had fled her. The same fear and doubt that filled the heart's of the goddess' worshipers gripped her, as well.

Yet, bereft of her most powerful magic, Avraasha was still a sphinx, mighty and wise. She gathered the goddess' faithful to the flame issuing forth from her winged form and whispered to them of Raanet's divine majesty and the secret mysteries of fire, bidding them capture her every utterance upon the blank skin of parchment. Together, they gathered about the burning sphinx and recited prayers into her flames, whispered hymns into the crackling tongues, that somehow, their beloved mistress might hear them. She bade them patience with a kindly and knowing smile. *Patience, and faith in Raanet.* And the Xuloise faithful smiled too, filled with confidence in Avraasha's presence. She, first servitor of the goddess, would surely see them through this most terrible of trials. And all the while as they waited, the books, filled with the wisdom of fire, began to stack high around her, making of themselves a vast library.

Silence.

And all the while, one by one, Avraasha watched the faithful of her goddess grow old, wither, and die, before her eyes. And all the while, asking to their very end, the same question: *Why?*

Once again, the wise sphinx had no answers.

Soon enough, the great temple become a library, was empty but for her smoldering form. She was alone and trapped within its bounds. Surrounded by knowledge, yet parched with a thirst for answers.

Silence.

For age upon age, in that abject solitude, surrounded by the ancient and dried bones of those who had placed their faith in her so long ago – the sphinx prayed the goddess she so loved, hoping, pleading for some sort of response.

Silence.

Eventually, the silence drove her mad.

Avraasha yet remains within the quiet and empty temple, long since torn free from the bounds of the Prime Material Plane by her repeated attempts to escape to the Welcoming Hearth and the endless summoning magics employed within its confines. Her mistress' flames have long since quelled to embers and become lifeless cinders. The sphinx's have only burned hotter. Mad with pain and fear and rage.

Now, they threaten to consume the world around her.

*

Chapter One: The Temple Incandescent

Special Properties of the Dungeon

In their search for answers regarding their silent patron deity, the faithful of Raanet responsible for the creation of the Forgotten Library summoned many creatures from the Elemental Plane of Fire and Gladshheim's layer of Muspelheim to whom they might pose questions they hoped would lead them to the truth. In this, they were aided by an unusual property of the peculiar variety of marble from which they constructed their temple. This stone (a nonesuch substance quarried from beneath the Hellforges) disrupts magical and psionic travel by such means as *dimension door*, *plane shift*, *probability travel*, *teleport* and all spells and effects replicating such forms of travel - for the notable exception of the *monster summoning* spell. This property nullifies these dweomers and abilities, making it completely impossible to enter or leave the Forgotten Library by any means but walking the slender staircase leading into its confines.

The Temple Incandescent (as its denizens once referred to it) represents to portion of the dungeon in which those Xuel who built the place dwelt and conducted their daily affairs. It forms the vague shape of a rectangle, which once surrounded The Burning Athenium: The great temple and library that served as the heart of the subterranean excavation, where worship and efforts at determining Raanet's fate by her faithful were conducted.

This property is also ultimately responsible for tearing its Athenium level from the Prime Material

Plane and rendering it its own *demi-plane* (described in detail in **Chapter Two: The Burning Athenium**) amidst a mighty earthquake that sealed the slender staircase leading to what would eventually become the Freehold above. Raanet's worshipers worked feverishly on a means of reestablishing its placement on the Prime Material, but sadly were never able to complete their work before the last of them died. So it is that the place in the center of the Temple Incandescent is occupied by the solid stone of Hellforges (unless the Player Characters are able to return it to its rightful place by the actions within the context of the adventure).

Wandering Monsters

In many cases, these creatures summoned to the Prime Material Plane by Raanet's worshipers were extremely dangerous to all those not in possession of some sovereign protection against fire. In most cases, once they discovered that these summoned creatures possessed no information regarding their goddess, her faithful dismissed them to their home planes, leaving them to their own devices. The exception to this policy was when they would occasionally summon some creature especially sympathetic to their concerns, who they allowed to remain and dwell alongside them to aid in their efforts. Such creatures were usually treated with utmost courtesy and respect, in deference to their fiery natures and origins.

However, many of these summoned creatures were not yet released by Raanet's faithful when The Burning Athenium tore free of the Prime Material and the slender staircase was sealed by the cataclysmic event. This effectively trapped these creatures within The Temple Incandescent - where most of them remain when the Player Characters enter their domain.

These creatures, in the form of Wandering Monsters, will only be encountered within The Temple Incandescent if this adventure is used in the context of Campaign game play *only*. Even then, such encounters will occur only in hallways, empty rooms, or areas cleared by the Player Characters. The Game Master should check for such Wandering Monsters each Turn, with a roll of 1 on d6 indicating an encounter. When an encounter is indicated, use the Temple Incandescent Encounter Table to determine what creature is met.

Temple Incandescent Encounter Table

Die Roll	Encounter	Number Appearing
01-05	Efreeti	1
06-25	Fire Bats	1d6
26-35	Air Elemental, Small	1
36-40	Fire Elemental, Small	1
41-55	Grue, Harginn	1d2
56-95	Magmen	1d12
96-00	Phantom Stalker	1d2

The entirety of The Temple Incandescent is composed of pure white marble. Close inspection will reveal that bright red veins run through its substance, like the lifeblood of the world itself. Occasionally, the marble surfaces within the place can be seen to have been marred by ancient ash or cinder smudges. There is no form of light within the subterranean structure, as Raanet's venerates were expected to bear torches with them at all times. This means that Player Characters who cannot naturally see in the darkness will be forced to bring some form of illumination with them into the dungeon.

The arched corridors that comprise the Temple Incandescent are 10' wide in all places and 20' tall. Doors within the holy place are made of thin iron, set into strong hinges. These entries are often covered in veneers of other substances for their beautification. In any case, they are extremely stout and heavy. Characters interested in opening one of these doors must have a Strength score of 9 or above to move them. Inflicting 36 hp of damage or more on such a door will be sufficient to sunder it.

The Summoning Sigil

Before the final fall of The Temple Incandescent, its Sovereign Magus – a brilliant woman and student of the great Nitorels named Mariana il-Xanna – was able to develop a device she believed capable of returning The Burning Athenium to its rightful place on the Prime Material Plane. She called this device *The Summoning Sigil*: A series of four thin lengths of pure ruby that, when touched to one another, magically bent and warped in such a way to created a complicated arcane configuration called a *Xuloise Matrix*. As Mariana was quite aged when she completed work on the device, she entrusted its empowerment to four parts to various members of

Raanet's faithful within the Temple. This task was quite simple: Exposure to a fire capable of inflicting 8HD or more damage or steeping it within the substance of a fire-based creature of 8HD or more would do the trick. The Sovereign Magus expected the last moments of her life to be filled with renewed hope as the blazing form of Avraasha returned to her sight.

However, the time spent in waiting for some sign of favor from their goddess was not kind to the minds of those entrusted with the care of *The Summoning Sigil*. Fear, tedium, and paranoia mixed with one another to drive each of them quite mad. While this was not enough to prevent three of the components of the Sigil from being empowered by their owners, one not only was left quiescent – by its trustee murdered the Sovereign Magus as she worked at her diary.

Thus, *The Summoning Sigil* remains incomplete. Its four pieces are scattered throughout The Temple Incandescent where they were kept by their owners. The device remains functional, however, and if it can be made whole and empowered by the Player Characters, it may represent the only way of returning The Burning Athenium and Avraasha to the Prime Material Plane.

But perhaps some things left sleeping are best never woken...

The Temple Incandescent Encounter Key

1. THE SLENDER STAIRWAY

The rift in the stone firmament of the mountain's feet reveals a thin corridor that descends into the belly of the world at a steep slope. Though this rough-hewn passage is only scarcely wide enough to admit your entrance, the footing is good, as the floor of the path has been cut into the form of stairs. The thin corridor winds sinuously downward like an airy serpent burrowing into the ground. It is an ancient place, something easily betrayed by the scent of the still air, stale and dry.

The way ahead is dark, making of it the yawning maw of the abyss.

When it was first constructed, the entrance to The Temple Incandescent was a humble place, a thin, winding stairway cut into the site of the Hellforge's foothills that led from the level grassland of what would one day become the Freehold into the belly of the world. When The Burning Athenium was torn free of the Prime Material Plane, however, the violent cataclysm shook the planet with such force that a massive rockslide tumbled down the mountainside, not only burying and hiding away the staircase entrance to the holy site – but trapping all those dwelling there within its bounds. Not long ago, however, the eruption of Mount Xavi disturbed the thousands of tons of rock covering the slender stairway entrance to The Temple Incandescent – allowing a place forgotten for centuries to once more allow visitors.

The slender stairway winds and curls through the roots of the world at nearly a 45° angle, cutting its way nearly 100' beneath the grasslands above. This precipitous drop, and the descent's rough appearance, were both deliberate features created by Raanet's faithful, who constructed it centuries ago. They were newcomers to the land who feared that which might dwell in the place beyond the mountains. Therefore, to dissuade intruders from entering their holy place uninvited, they ensured it might appear worthless and dangerous to descend.

In truth, however, the stairway – even in its great antiquity – it is quite easy and completely safe to walk. At one point, it was both trapped and alarmed by those who once dwelt beneath it, but the dweomers enabling both measures have long since faded. The only things particularly astute Player Characters might notice as they course its length are the subtle scents of something hot and stale smoke, wafting gently upward from below.

2. FOYER

This 30' x 30' chamber is composed completely of pure white marble. Its ceiling rises above you in a domed vault, perhaps another 30' over your head. Exits extend outward from the area to the north, east, west, and behind you, back in the direction of the slender stairway.

The chamber's walls have been carefully etched with writing in elegant, chiseled script. Iron sconces that hold long-dead torches jut forth from their faces, pairs bracketing each of the room's exits.

This area once served as the foyer for the Temple Incandescent and an atrium for the everyday lives of those who dwelt within it. Nearly everyone inhabiting it had cause to pass through its bounds at least once a day (more often than not, on their way to the Welcoming Hearth in **Area #3**). It is both unguarded and untrapped.

The script on the walls of the area is written in Ancient Xuloise. As Raanet was not only the Goddess of Fire in the culture of the Xuel, but also the Hospitality as well, the manner in which peaceful guests were received within her house was of paramount importance to her faithful. Thus, what is written upon the walls are the names of all those individuals who lived within The Temple Incandescent, along with a short welcoming phrase. Such a record of a group of the first Xuloise refugees to emerge beyond the Hellforges in the wake of the Twin Cataclysms would be of enormous interest to a scholar or sage with a specialty in Ancient or Xuloise history, of course, and worth up to 500gp to one such individual.

3. THE WELCOME HEARTH

This circular chamber is 50' diameter, made all the more immense by its domed ceiling, 30' above its floor, and its near-emptiness. Composed completely of white marble, the room's center features a 30' diameter depression, which is bounded by a 2' high polished iron barrier, cut with several oddly-shaped holes. Within this depression, a mighty fire crackles and roars, offering the sweet and pleasant scent of rare woods feeding its flames. The white walls of the chamber are carved from its domed top to its feet with an elegant, flowing script. Likewise, they flow and dance with all manner of shapes - those of animals floating amidst what seem like a sea of stars in the night sky - cast forth upon the marble by the fire's light as it passes through the iron barrier.

This chamber was once one of the most-frequented places in the Temple Incandescent: The Welcome Hearth, which in imitation of place in which the goddess Raanet greeted visitors to her home in Gladsheim, was a place in which the Xuel who built the holy place received guests or gathered to share one another's company and good cheer.

The design of the chamber is quite ingenious, being shaped and subsequently enchanted so as to enhance and enrich its acoustics. This, so that when the Xuel bards played within its bounds, all within the room and those nearby could enjoy their offerings to their fullest. In memory of some of the finest verse and song performed here, the chamber's walls have been decorated with the lyrics of thousands of Xuel songs and poems. These represent a treasure trove for those interested in the history and culture of the doomed Imperium, a great insight into their art and those who created it, worth no less than 2,500gp to a sage or scholar whose fields of study dovetail with such things.

The ancient Xuel were known to have charted the locations and paths of the stars as they

traversed through the heavens, ascribing different personalities to each in turn and understanding that their configurations might have momentous consequence upon the world. The iron barrier that casts shadows upon the way was created in such a way to reflect a slice of the night sky and relate these learnings through allegory. If it can be removed from its place (it can be rolled into a 2' thick cylinder weighing about 200lbs), it would be worth about 1,000gp to one with an interest in the Xuel, astronomy, or astrology.

Unfortunately, the area is protected by a fearsome guardian. The **Small Fire Elemental** known as **Keeper-of-the-Hearth** dwells within the pit, continuing to perform its duty of keeping the flames within the area lit for those who visit its bounds. Sadly, without companionship and prevented from returning to the Elemental Plane of Fire, it has long since gone insane and will immediately attack anyone entering the chamber with wild, reckless abandon.

Keeper-of-the-Hearth, Small Fire Elemental: AC 2, MV 12", HD 8, HP 44, THAC0 14 (reduced by insanity), #AT 1, Damage 3d8, SD Only harmed by +2 or better, Set fire to material on touch, AL N, XP: 3,510.

The Keeper-of-the-Hearth is one of the creatures within The Temple Incandescent capable of powering *The Summoning Sigil* (see above for details), which is able to return The Burning Athenium to its rightful place on the Prime Material Plane. The elemental possesses no type of wealth; the treasures within the room take the form of the historic writings and the iron barrier.

4. HISTORIUM WEST

This 30' x 30' white marble room features exits to the north and south, the latter barred by a door. To the west and north, you can see alcoves in which large statues stand. The ceiling looms 30' above the floor. The chamber's center is occupied by a white marble pedestal, like a short column. Atop it rests a book, old and dust-covered.

This area was known to the faithful of Raanet as one of the Temple's two Historiums: Places in which the details of the past could be recorded for perusal by guests visiting the location. The book resting upon the pedestal is the repository of this knowledge.

Characters capable of reading this book can gain an understanding that The Temple Incandescent was built by those Xuel refugees fleeing the Rain of Invisible Flame that were the faithful of Raanet: Goddess of Fire and Hospitality. They can also come to understand why these folk did not follow their fellows on their path deeper into the Flanaess, gaining insight to their fears that something terrible had happened to their patron deity. They will finally read that the strategy these folk took to determine the truth was by summoning many creatures from the Elemental Plane of Fire and Gladsheim as posing their questions to these extraplanar beings.

As one reads the book, though the initial tone recorded in its pages is upbeat and hopeful, the reader will gain a growing sense of frustration on behalf of the writer (who is unnamed) at the lack of progress made in the congregation's search for answers. The book ends in the following, cryptic passage:

"...and now, all hope must surely be gone. The First Servant - she who sat to the right hand of the Kindly Flame - has been lost, shaken from our very midst in a terrible cataclysm like ten thousand peals of thunder, ten thousand more flashes of lightning. Vathri and Kystera were killed in the event, crushed by falling pieces of the temple. Now, the entirety of the Athenium is gone. Hastra, Rondil, and Xarik have dug through the Temple wall - clearly, to a place, where it should have been - but have only been met by cold, unfeeling rock. The Hearthmistress believes that it is no more. Perhaps she has finally managed the feat - she is at the side of the Kindly Flame once more. Perhaps, such was her might, that she took the entirety of the Athenium with her.

I can only hope their meeting is joyful. And that some future yet lies ahead for those left behind."

Despite the nature of Raanet's faithful as wealful and hospitable, they feared intrusion into their Temple by the creatures inhabiting the strange land beyond the mountains. Therefore, this area has been **trapped** for the protection of those that once called the place their home. Those entering either one of the chamber's alcoves that are not wearing the robes of Raanet's faithful or are not accompanied by someone who is will bring into being a *wall of stone* (cast at 12th level of experience) that cuts off the short hallway from the remainder of the Historium. As the spell is activated, so too is the **Caryatid Column** that dwells within the alcove. These statues are shaped in the form of flawlessly beautiful Xuel women, each wearing flowing robes and bearing swords (which are cleverly concealed in the way of the automatons of their type). Their lovely appearance does nothing to make them any less deadly, of course; the keenness of the swords they bear make them the equivalent of +2 weapons (as they are a part of the statues, they will be useless if the golems are destroyed).

Caryatid Column (2): AC 5, MV 6", HD 5, HP 22, THAC0 13, #AT 1, Damage 2d4+2, SD Normal weapons only do half damage, Magical weapons do full damage but do not receive their bonus, Weapons striking have 25% chance of breaking, AL N, XP: 280.

These creatures possess no type of treasure.

5. HISTORIUM EAST

This is a 30' x 30' white marble chamber whose ceiling rises 30' from the level of the floor. To the north and south, you can see exits from its volume, the latter passage closed off by a stone door. To the east and north - the latter, running parallel to the exit - are deep alcoves in which great statues loom: White marble representations of beautiful women wearing flowing robes.

The center of the room features a white marble pedestal, perhaps as tall as a halfling. Atop it rests what appears to be an ancient, dust-covered tome.

This chamber is in most ways the twin of **Area #4**. Like that aforementioned place, the room is guarded by a pair of **Caryatid Columns** that stand at the back of each of its alcoves, ready to attack anyone that springs the wall of stone trap in their short corridors who is not wearing the garb of Raanet's faithful.

Caryatid Column (2): AC 5, MV 6", HD 5, HP 22, THAC0 13, #AT 1, Damage 2d4+2, SD Normal weapons only do half damage, Magical weapons do full damage but do not receive their bonus, Weapons striking have 25% chance of breaking, AL N, XP: 280. Like the guardians in Area #4, they possess no type of treasure.

The difference between the two Historiums lies in the books held on their pedestals. Whereas the west of the rooms holds a record of the Temple Incandescent itself, the second is the personal diary of its Sovereign Magus: Mariana il-Xanna, who was the most powerful of the wizards that called the place its dwelling. His personal account of the travel from the Xuel Imperium to the land beyond the Hellforges (including a vivid description of what it was like to watch Nitorels open his famous Passage through the Hellforges) would constitute a find of such historic importance that it could easily be sold for as much as 15,000gp to one interested in Ancient Xuel history with the largesse to afford such a document. More important, however, to the Player Characters are a series of passages near the end of the diary that read as follows:

[preceding text rendered illegible by a wide smear of blood] *"...complicated, yet effective. The device relies upon four pieces, which I have [rendered illegible again]. They will assemble themselves once touched to one another's substance.*

I have entrusted [rendered illegible] of lending each device its power, as I have grown old and frail in the process of waiting for some sign of favor from the Hearth-[rendered illegible]. I can only hope that my friends retain enough of their wits to activate its power. Time and tedium have frayed upon their sanities, I suspect. They have

become quite unprecid - [remainder of passage rendered illegible for the exception of the words] - in her forever warm embrace."

The passage, of course, refers to *The Summoning Sigil* (see above for details) and gives some hint as to its disposition. The blood, meanwhile, points to the author's macabre end.

6. A WATCHER, LONG GONE

This 30' x 30' chamber is largely undecorated, featuring only a single iron wall sconce jutting from its south wall, which holds aloft a dead torch. Beneath that rests a long, slender bench made of wood beached white by age and set with a moldering red velvet cushion. A pile of folded clothes rests upon this seat, and two pairs of boots lie underneath it. Distressingly, in the center of the room, the floor is marred by a circular ashen blotch, in the midst of which many cinders are strewn.

This chamber once served as a cloakroom for the faithful of Raanet on the few occasions they would leave The Temple Incandescent (when such was even possible for them). Its ceiling is lined with powdered quartz that, when struck by some form of illumination, twinkles and sparkles like the stars in the heavens. The blotch in the center of the floor is that which remains of one of the Temple's denizens, who in their despair at the absence of their goddess, gave themselves over to flame, immolating themselves to death on the spot.

More important to the Player Characters might be the clothes on the bench, as these are the robes worn by Raanet's faithful: Loose-fitting black and red items reminiscent of togas. By wearing them, neither the traps in **Area #4 & 5** (see above) will be triggered, nor will the Caryatid Columns behind them attack. Aside of these articles, there is no form of treasure to be found here.

7. ECHOES

The air within this 30' x 30' room seems preternaturally cold. Its expanse is unadorned but for an iron sconce in the wall, which holds a burned-out torch. Beneath that, a pale wooden bench that features an ancient red velvet cushion.

This room is the twin to that found in **Area #6**, including the decoration in its ceiling. The cold that can be found within its bounds is due to a restless spirit that resides within it (belonging to a man that was once a hunter, he used the chamber quite often). Player Characters entering the area will feel something amiss within its bounds, eerie and off-putting. Cleric and Paladin characters, in particular will sense the presence of some spirit, though not an evil one.

In game terms, this has no effect on the Player Characters, other than to unnerve them and remind them that they are in a place where the dead do not rest easily. The spirit, such that it is, will resist contact from spells such as *speak with dead*, preferring to leave the living in peace. There is no form of treasure to be found here.

8. OFFICE OF THE CASTELLAN

Opening the door reveals a 30' x 30' chamber of white marble. The north wall features the only other exit from the room in the form of a stone door. To the right of that is a large framed painting. On the east wall of the chamber is a wooden rack set with a short sword and a steel breastplate. Atop of the furnishing, someone has hung a steel helmet adorned with the feathers of some great raptor.

In the southwest corner of the room is a large desk, carved from a single piece of white marble, empty for the exception of some glass vessel, shattered atop it. Behind the desk is a chair, at which is seated the dried and bleached bones of a man or woman long dead, hanging limply from the seat.

As madness began to take hold within the Temple Incandescent, so too disorder and violence began to take the place of reason and friendship. So it was that the Child of Fire – first among the faithful of Raanet – was forced to create a holding place for those who would treat forcefully with another member of their small society. He called this place The Oubliette and put one of his most trusted aides in charge of the place. That man held the title of Castellan and his office is the room in which the Player Characters now stand.

What remains of The Castellan still sits within his chair. Brokenhearted by his goddess' silence, he drank from the shattered vial full of poison on the flat of his desk rather than endure another day without the warmth of her flame to comfort him.

If one searches within the Castellan's robes, they are able to find an iron key on a great ring. If touched to the south wall within this room, the *illusion* that covers the secret door leading to **Area #9** is dispelled, revealing it clearly. This also deactivates the trap that guards the door. In addition to this key, a small leather pouch – so old as to disintegrate at the touch – can be found. This holds ten strange coins: Gold pieces of a Xuloise mint. These would each be worth 50gp to a numismatist or a collector with an interest in Ancient Xuel history or culture.

Aside of this key, they only things of valuable within this room are the armor and weaponry that hang from the rack on its east side: The personal belongings of the Castellan, all of which are of remarkable power and quality. The breastplate protects as if *elfin chain mail +2*, and if the helm is worn in conjunction with it, it allows its wearer to see invisible 3/day at a range of 3". The weapon acts as a *short sword of sharpness* (note that this weapon is of sufficient power to strike the Fire Elemental in **Area #3**).

9. THE OUBLIETTE

The door leading to this chamber leads to a 10' wide marble shelf that completely surrounds a great pit, so deep that light quails to blackness before finding its bottom. Empty but for the chasm, the room is silent as the grave.

The door to this room is **trapped**. Unless the key found in the Castellan's robes (see **Area #8**) is used to open it, it discharges a burst of negative energy that does 3d8+3 damage to all those within 10' of its face.

The chamber was known to those within The Temple Incandescent as *The Oubliette*. A 40' deep pit-prison for those who would commit acts of violence against their brothers and sisters in the faith. As the faith of Raanet was based upon kindness, censure to the Oubliette was not a judgment arrived upon lightly (the Child of Fire had no heart for this, except in extreme circumstances). By the time the Temple actually fell, however, with its denizens in the grip of despair and madness, it was used regularly, the same.

When the Temple's Castellan took his own life, there were two individuals sequestered to the Oubliette, the precise nature of their crimes long lost to the mists of antiquity. They died of thirst and starvation within its depths, only shortly afterward. Their rage at their fate has allowed them to transcend death and live on in the form of **Wraiths**, who will attack the Player Characters as soon as they enter their demesne.

Wraith (2): AC 4, MV 12"/24", HD 5+3, HP 31, THAC0 15, #AT 1, Damage 1d6, SA Energy Drain, SD Silver or magic weapons to hit, Undead immunities, AL LE, XP: 761.

When the Wraiths are aware of the presence of Player Characters, they will slide up from the Oubliette through the shadows to some point above them, dropping down in such a way to cut off their avenue of escape. They will then make them fight along the edge of the pit, where sudden movements might send them tumbling into its depths.

If the Player Characters are able to defeat the Wraiths, they may find the personal belongings they owned in life at the bottom of the Oubliette. This amounts to two small leather bags: One holding 15 Xuel gold coins (each worth 50gp to a collector, as mentioned above) and the other holding 12 of the coins. Further search of the pit locates a very ornate but cursed silver *dagger -1*.

10. BROTHERS' SUITES

This 30' x 30' room is dominated by four pillar-like furnishings, one in each corner. These are great pieces of white marble, stacked like shelves, atop which rotting red velvet cushions lie, piled upon by tattered blankets and linens.

On the north wall, between two of these, the scorched remains of what looks to have been a dresser stands in a pile of cinders. On the west wall, between the marble arrangements, the wreckage of what was likely a desk lies in a pile of ash and half-consumed wood.

When the Temple was yet a living and vibrant place, this room served as the living quarters for many of its male members. Each of the stratified beds in the chamber was capable of comfortably accommodating three sleepers, while the desk and dresser served as a workspace and clothing receptacle, respectively. Of course, with the fall of the Temple, these days are long passed.

Now, the room serves as a playground for five **Magmen**: Creatures summoned to the Prime by the faithful of Raanet in the hopes of finding the whereabouts of their silent goddess. Bereft of their conjurers, the Magmen rampage about the fallen Temple, wreaking mayhem as a way of staving off boredom. This chamber is the main source of their malicious attention.

Magmen (5): AC 6, MV 9"/6", HD 2, HP 11, THAC0 16, #AT 1, Damage 3d8, SA Combustion touch, SD +1 or better to hit, Immune to fire, SQ Less than +2 weapons melt on contact, AL CN, XP: 119.

While normally quick to flee from a fight, these Magmen have been trapped within the Temple Incandescent for more than six centuries. They will fight to their end, either enjoying the entertainment that combat provides...or a swift release in death. Note that inordinate amounts of noise issuing forth from this room, such as those made by full-scale combat, will bring forth the creatures in **Area #11** (see below) to aid their fellows.

The Magmen have destroyed many valuable items within the room when burning the desk and dresser. However, they were unable to ruin two particular items of note: A pair of *bracers of defense AC5* and a *ring of protection +2*, both of which lie in the ruins of the dresser (atop a pile of gold slag worth 250gp; once, this was as many Xuel coins!).

11. SISTERS' SUITES

A 30' x 30' square chamber is revealed with the opening of the door. Its confines are a pristine white marble and feature four large, shelf-like assemblies of the same substance in each of its corners. Upon each of the three-tiered rises, the burned and ruined wreckage of what looks to have once been cushions and blankets lie. Pushed against the north and west walls, between these marble towers might have once been wooden furnishings, but these have been long since rendered piles of ash and cinder.

Scorch marks and angry black smudges mar every face of the room's walls. The air within them smells of terrifying heat.

This room is the twin of **Area #10**. It once served to house many of the female members of the Temple Incandescent. Since then, however, it has been overtaken by 4 **Magmen** once summoned to the place by Raanet's faithful to aid them in finding news regarding their silent goddess. These creatures treat the area like a playground, in order to stave off ennui, however since they have burned every flammable object within its confines to ash, they spend much of their time raging against its walls in a cold fury (this is the source of

the scorch marks mentioned in the room's description.

Magmen (4): AC 6, MV 9"/6", HD 2, HP 11, THAC0 16, #AT 1, Damage 3d8, SA Combustion touch, SD +1 or better to hit, Immune to fire, SQ Less than +2 weapons melt on contact, AL CN, XP: 119.

The Magmen are incredibly bored and furiously angry. So it is that when Player Characters visit the room, they will lash out at them, eager to vent their frustrations on their number. They will fight to the death, eager for either entertainment or release from their bondage. Note that the sound of combat within this chamber will surely bring for the Magmen from **Area #10** to investigate. They will subsequently aid their fellows in the destruction of the Player Characters.

In the wreckage of the room's desk can be found a *lyre of building* (with three broken strings, though it might yet be repaired). The precious metals that were once in the dresser are melted with various other substances into a single blackened piece of slag and are now worthless.

12. THE RETREAT

Beyond the door's threshold is a circular chamber 30' in diameter. It is difficult to judge these dimensions, however, as the walls are utterly dark. The only way to estimate their distance is by the tiny motes of brilliance that cling to them, dotting their surfaces like stars in the clear summer skies.

In the center of the room appears to be a circle of some kind, no more than 5' at its widest. Bordered by some black material, it rises no higher than 1' from the ground. Because of the gloom, it is difficult to discern what purpose it might have.

This chamber was referred to as *The Retreat* by those dwelling in the Temple Incandescent when it was at its zenith. It was constructed as a place where Raanet's faithful could go to meditate or withdraw to their own company

whenever they felt the need to do so. To facilitate this, small flecks of quartz were embedded into the black-painted marble walls of the room and a small fire pit was placed in its center, echoing the confines of The Welcome Hearth (see **Area #3** for details). When lit, the light of the flames in the circle reflect off of the quartz-motes, giving the illusion of camping on a pleasant summer evening.

The area is not unoccupied, however. In a place such as the Temple Incandescent - in which many fires burn and no ventilation exists - the faithful of Raanet were forced to find a way to ensure that the air within their room would be fresh and breathable. So it was that they summoned a **Small Air Elemental** and tasked it with roaming the breadth of the Temple, clinging to its ceilings and cleaning the air as it went. The solution worked well, which is why the Temple's air is breathable and does not reek terribly of smoke, despite the many sources of flame within it.

With the Temple's fall, however, the Air Elemental was trapped within its confines. Six centuries later, it continues to perform its duties, though it has become just as erratic and unpredictable as those other creatures trapped in the marble edifice. After it cleans the air within the Temple each night, it takes to the dark confines of this chamber, brooding over its fate. So it is that when the Player Characters enter the room, it will await them, lashing out at them in a state of barely-restrained madness.

Small Air Elemental: AC 2, MV 36", HD 8, HP 44, THAC0 14 (reduced by insanity), #AT 1, Damage 2d10, SA Whirlwind, AL N, XP: 3,510.

If Player Characters flee the room, the Air Elemental will not attempt to pursue them. If the Player Characters have remained within The Temple Incandescent for more than a full day and have not yet come upon the creature, the Game Master may assume that they have managed to avoid the Elemental as it roams its confines cleaning its air - and that it has discovered that they have entered its prison through the newly-uncovered slender

stairway (see **Area #1**). In such a case, it will escape out into the world and not be seen for the remainder of this adventure.

There is no form of treasure or wealth to be found within this chamber.

13. OFFICE OF THE BELLOWS

This is a 30' x 30' chamber composed of pure white marble. The rear of the room is dominated by the frame of a large white marble, though its cushions and linens have been burned to cinders that rest within its bounds. The remains of a likewise ruined desk lie in ashes along its east wall, only a few charred pieces of its frame remaining to hint as to what it once was. Across from that furnishing, a likewise ruined desk lie in ashes along its east wall, only a few charred pieces of its frame remaining to hint as to what it once was. Across from that furnishing, a ruined dresser and what appears to have once been a modesty screen stand, both burned almost beyond recognition. Finally, some kind of stand apparently once stood in the corner of the room, though this too is little more than a pile of burned refuse, now.

Within the room, amidst the wreckage, four creatures abide. They possess skeletal faces and torsos burned so badly that their flesh appears leathery. Their bodies from the waist down appear like blazing bonfires, somehow capable of supporting their weights. They leer at you with eyes possessed of a hellish glow. Immolated completely in flames, they shed such heat that their very presences bring tears to the eyes and sweat to the brow.

Of those abiding within the Temple Incandescent, the second in authority to the Child of Fire was known as The Bellows: A priest of Raanet whose responsibility it was to defend the faith through martial puissance and exhorting his fellows to acts of courage in the name of the Hearthmistress. This was once his living space and office. Of course,

that worthy is long since dead; in his absence, his abode has been claimed by four **Harginn Grues**. Like the other elemental creatures in the Temple, these horrors were summoned by Raanet's faithful as they investigated their goddess' silence. Of an evil bent long before their summoning, their rage and vileness is one of the few things hotter than the flames issuing from their bodies, wroth with fury at their inability to escape the place. They will waste little time venting this upon Player Characters entering this room, naturally.

Harginn Grues (4): AC 3, MV 15", HD 4+4, HP 26, THAC0 15, #AT 1, Damage 1d4+4, SD +1 or better to hit, Automatically dispels fire-based spells, Blinking, Immune to fire-based spells, AL NE, XP: 375.

If the Player Characters are able to overcome the Grues, an inspection of the room will reveal several items of interest. Amongst the ashes in the corner, which used to be a rack on which armor and weaponry was kept, a *footman's flail* +2 remains surprisingly untouched by fire. More importantly, beneath the pile of cinders that once was the room's desk is an iron strongbox. This container is both locked and **trapped** with a device that sprays forth a cloud of acidic gas that fills a 10' cube surrounding the box and does 3d4 damage initially and 1d4 for three rounds afterwards, unless it is somehow neutralized (a saving throw vs. breath weapon applies to yield half damage to the initial spray, but the damage on subsequent rounds cannot be mitigated). Dousing a victim in water or wine is sufficient to do this. Within the strongbox are 250 Xuel coins, each worth 50gp to the proper buyer, 5 small rubies, each worth 100gp, an ancient *wand of ice storms* (10 charges) worth double its standard amount for its historical value, and a *ring of warmth*.

At the bottom of the box is a strange, wand-length rod, apparently made from pure ruby. Glowing as if with some inner fire, this is a piece of *The Summoning Sigil* (see **Appendix B**), which is required to return The Burning Athenium to the Prime Material Plane. It was fully charged before the fall of the Temple Incandescent and retains its full potency, even six centuries later.

14. NIGHT GALLERY

Along the length of this hallway are a series of nine oil paintings. Each one, framed in white marble that seems to blend into the wall behind them, is the portrait of some individual. Dressed in robes, they are universally fair of hair with nearly snow-white flesh. The paintings are rendered with the skill of a master.

Since many bards were devoted to the worship of the Hearthmistress, it is perhaps no surprise to find that a renowned Xuel artist was amongst those dwelling in The Temple Incandescent. The paintings in this gallery (which are represent a leader in the faith of Raanet) were created by Karvik il-Xon: Perhaps one of the greatest painters of his age. At the end of the corridor, the final piece depicts a breathtaking Xuel woman with a gentle smile and dappling of dark freckles upon her cheeks and the bridge of her nose. This was Leathri il-Varzii: The Child of Fire and high priestess of Raanet at the time of the Temple's collapse into ruin.

No guardian exists to protect these pieces of art, each of which might range in value between 2,000gp and 5,000gp, depending on the market in which they are sold and the buyer that might evince interest in each. They represent yet another glimpse into the history of the Xuel, this one with respect to their art and aesthetic value.

15. ABODE OF THE CHILD OF FIRE

This chamber takes the form of a 30' diameter circle. The frame of a white marble bed stands along its east wall, but the linens and cushion that once covered it have been burned to ash and smeared all across its substance. Wall sconces holding burned-out torches flank the door and overlook a fire pit in the center of the room, bounded by a low iron barrier. To the north and south of its circumference, a desk and a dresser once stood, rendered little more than blackened and charred wreckage,

collapsed in upon themselves. The only furnishing in the room that does not seem to have been destroyed by the kiss of fire is an iron footlocker, at the foot of the bed.

The fire responsible for ruining the room is evident. It stands in the midst of the room, dancing upon the fire pit. It is vaguely human-shaped, but over eight feet tall: A conflagration of licking and crackling flames that stares out upon you without eyes, but somehow a palpable gravity, the same.

And a chilling sort of malice.

This room once belonged to the Child of Fire: Kaara ad-Karza, the high priestess of Raanet's faith and temporal leader of the Temple Incandescent. A kindly and gentle woman, she administered to her goddess' worshipers in the way a mother might protect her children. She was universally beloved by them, in turn. Therefore, they might be heartbroken to know of her final fate. Aged and despairing for the absence of her patron deity, rather than succumb to the weight of long years, she took the ultimate leap of fate. Baring herself of protections, she embraced her extraplanar companion - a **Small Fire Elemental** that she called Ranzaar - and burned herself alive, reasoning that her pain would be fleeting and that moments after it ended, she would be soothed by the warmth radiating from Raanet's hearth fire.

Of what became of ad-Karza's soul, nothing is known. What is certain, however, is that though she gave Ranzaar its release from her service, the elemental found itself unable to leave the Temple Incandescent, thanks to the strange properties inherent in its construction. Therefore, it remains within the fire pit in the Child of Fire's room, seething with rage, anguish, and confusion at the state of affairs in which it has found itself. This condition makes it so that the elemental will lash out at any Player Characters entering its mistress' chambers, doing its level best to send them to the Hearthmistress after her.

Ranzaar, Small Fire Elemental: AC 2, MV 12", HD 8, HP 44, THAC0 12 (reduced by insanity), #AT 1, Damage 3d8, SD Only harmed by +2 or better, Set fire to material on touch, AL N, XP: 3,510.

If the Player Characters find themselves able to overcome Ranzaar, they may investigate the Child of Fire's chambers, in which lie plentiful treasures and an important hint (if they haven't learned of it already) as to restoring The Burning Athenium. Within the iron footlocker at the foot of ad-Karza's ruined bed, which is both unlocked and untrapped (the Child of Fire did not believe in such vulgar protections), can be found 2,500 Xuel gold pieces, amidst which is strewn a *potion of extra-healing*, a *potion of levitation*, a *cloak of protection +2*, a set of *gauntlets of ogre power*, and a *robe of scintillating colors*. Mixed in with this treasure is a book entitled *Warmed by the Flame*: A compilation of prayers, stories, and songs specific to the faith of Raanet. The book might be worth 2,500gp on its own, but the Player Characters might be more interested in the note stuck between its pages as a bookmark, which reads:

Esteemed Child of Fire,

In your hands, you hold one part of the matrix of my creation. Again, it must be steeped within a great fire in order to empower it. Bathing it within Ranzaar's substance will be more than sufficient to see to this, but if your companion should blanch at the notion, any potent creature of elemental fire would do (perhaps the Keeper-of-the-Hearth might be more amenable?).

Once empowered, the matrix will assemble itself. It only need be touched to another portion of its divine geometry. When all four pieces are empowered and assembled, I firmly believe we shall be able to recall the Athenium and speak to Azraasha once more.

I look forward to the occasion with bated breath.

Forever, your friend,

--M.

Beneath the tome and its corresponding note, at the bottom of the container, is a single wand-like length of pure ruby that seems to glow as if possessed of some inner flame. This is the portion of *The Summoning Sigil* that the Sovereign Magus entrusted to the Child of Fire. Its appearance reflects the fact that she was able to charge the item as she was instructed. Note that Ranzaar is of sufficient Hit Dice to charge a quiescent portion of the *Sigil*, if it is steep within its burning body.

16. THE NEST

This white marble corridor becomes increasingly filled with a thick plume of smoke before finding its end. When it does, the top of the hall is packed with a dark substance like tar, which radiates with incredible heat. Like a an immense hornet's nest, 10' wide and 3' thick, hundreds of small holes are bored into the substance of the stuff, from which the smoke in the corridor issues forth. All around end of the hallway, tiny bats swoop and curl through the air, trailing grey clouds of smoke and short tongues of flame.

The end of this corridor has been claimed by a small colony of 12 **Fire Bats**, creatures summoned to the Temple Incandescent by its former denizens and subsequently trapped within its bounds. While they would normally be content to leave the Player Characters in peace, they are ravenously hungry and will therefore attack them on sight.

Fire Bats (12): AC 8, MV 6"/20", HD 2, HP 9, THAC0 16, #AT 1, Damage 2d4, SD Immune to fire, AL NE, XP: 46.

If the Player Characters defeat the Fire Bats, they may find treasure within their nest in the form of a 50gp value carnelian and a large 250gp value jacinth.

17. PANTRY

Opening the door reveals a white marble room in the form of a 30' diameter circle. From its ceiling hang a dozen chains upon swivels, their ends terminating in iron hooks. These dangle above a circular stone platform that rises 4' above the level of the ground. On its flat are several silver platters, atop which rest the old and dried bones of fowl and boar. A pair of iron goblets and cutlery sets sit next to these, as well as an elegant glass carafe and a pair of sealed wooden casks.

This chamber once served as the Temple's pantry, a place in which food and drink was kept. The stone slab in the room's center is enchanted with permanent versions of the *chill*, *flavor*, *freshen*, and *preserve* cantrips, so that any consumables left upon it could be kept for long periods of time without threat of spoiling. Of course, those who designed the device could not have predicted the fall of the Temple. That which the Player Characters see on the room's table has long since rotted despite its enchantments and rotted to dust.

This is not to say that the room has nothing of value within it, however. The goblets, cutlery, and platters collectively are worth 100gp as curios. The casks are substantially more valuable, containing ancient Xuel wine of excellent vintage. Each is worth 2,500gp if sold in a large city or to a private collector. Worth still more is the glass carafe, which is actually a *decanter of endless water*.

18. ROAD TO PERDITION

Along this white marble corridor, you are able to hear the sounds of footsteps, retreating quickly. Coming from about the corner, it reminds one of the sound made by someone trying desperately not to be heard.

This corridor is actually an elaborate magical **trap**, created by the faithful of Raanet to punish those who might attempt to infiltrate their holy place. Any creature passing

through the area 30' from the corner leading to this location simultaneously triggers an *audible glamor* and *spectral force* spell. The first of the spells makes the sound of footsteps described above, while the second creates the image of a door just being closed at the end of the hallway, using its temperature-emulating feature to make the corridor seem cool and comfortable.

If any character enters the last 20' of the corridor, the trap is triggered. A *wall of stone* springs up 50' from the end of the hallway. Simultaneously, the entire floor within this area falls away into a 10' deep pit in which a permanent *wall of fire* rages (the heat radiating through the thin floor is the reason for the need of the *spectral force* spell to mask the actual temperature in the corridor). Tumbling into this trap without sovereign resistance against fire nearly assures death, as it inflicts 1d6 hp falling damage and 2d6+12 hp magical fire damage for each round an individual remains within it (no saving throw permitted).

19. WHERE WE CONSUME

This is a 30' x 30' white marble chamber. The center of the room is dominated by the remains of a long wooden table, charred to black and collapsed upon itself. Piles of ash, cinder, and burned wood surround it in such a manner that it is clear that they were once chairs. Black charcoal smears mar the walls where some kind of decor once hung, in between several wall sconces that hold aloft torches long since burned-out.

In the midst of the ash pile where the table once stood, something golden glitters like a distant star.

This room was once the Temple's dining hall. When the place was alive and vibrant, the room was rarely devoid of good cheer and laughter, largely thanks to Ersin ad-Dax: A bard amongst them who conveyed his creative spirit through the culinary arts. Such was the chef's legendary skill, the very Emperor of the Xuel himself considered him a treasure of the Imperium, giving him a

powerfully-enchanted golden medallion to see to his safety. This magical item bound three **Phantom Stalkers** to ad-Dax, who constantly performed a silent vigil, ready to spring to his defense, if necessary. It is said that the chef was able to actually teach these invisible guardians to aid him in the kitchen, performing menial tasks that made his creations ever more delectable.

When ad-Dax died, he did so in this room, succumbing at last to his advanced age. His loss drove the Phantom Stalkers tasked with guarding him insane - half in their inability to fulfill their duty and half with grief. In a violent frenzy, when the Player Characters enter the dining hall, they will waste little time attacking.

Phantom Stalkers (3): AC 3, MV 12"/24", HD 6, HP 33, THAC0 13, #AT 2, Damage 1d4 / 1d4, SA May detonate themselves as 6HD Fireball, SD Fire heals for 1 hp per die, SQ Polymorph, SV Vulnerable to cold, AL NE, XP: 573.

These Phantom Stalkers remain bound to the magic medallion ad-Dax once wore, which lies in the ashes where the table once stood, in the room's center. While wearing it will do no good (as it was personally attuned to the bard), destroying it will kill the three creatures instantly. This requires but 5 hp or more damage to be done to the item.

There is no form of treasure to be found within the room.

20. KITCHEN

The door leads into a 30' x 30' area composed of white marble. The center of the room is occupied by a circular fire pit, about as wide in diameter as an elf is tall. Iron rods rise up from points around its circumference until they fuse above it, forming a tripod from which a heavy, dark cauldron hangs.

Surrounding this, along the chamber's walls, are several white marble slabs. Metal cutlery, pots, and dishes lie

scattered upon them, making it clear that they were once used for the preparation of food. Along the far wall, several glass containers rest. To look through them, it seems as if they contain spices of some sort.

As it seems, this chamber once served as the kitchen for the Temple Incandescent. Of course, this made it the typical haunt of the famous bard Ersin ad-Dax, who within it did what he could with the meager resources available to him to make the lives of his fellow Xuel in the land beyond the Hellforges that much more bearable.

The room's cauldron was generally used to either boil water or cook soups and stews, while ingredients were prepared on the stone counters along the walls. Held in the glass containers are spices and seasonings of various kinds: Pepper, paprika, sugar, salt, and perhaps a dozen more. All of these are quite ancient and completely ruined.

A notable exception to this can be found in one of the containers, which holds a glittering silvery powder. This is actually *dust of disappearance* (5 applications), which ad-Dax kept around in case he ever had to defend himself from attackers. The container itself is quite special, too, being something akin to a *bag of holding* (500lb limit) in the form of a glass jar. Despite its seemingly solid substance, its mouth can easily be stretched, allowing much larger objects to be placed within it than would seem possible. At the bottom of this strange glass vessel is kept a *ring of protection +2* (currently invisible, as it is covered in the magical *dust*). The container bears the bard's personal rune on its bottom, hinting that it is far more than what it might appear to be.

21. THE BURNING SENTINEL

This floor of this 30' x 30' chamber appears to be an uneven bed of magma, glowing with menace. From its bubbling and smoking substance, great plumes of flame erupt high into the air,

falling back down in spatters of brilliant lava.

In the midst of this fiery landscape is an immense creature with the head and arms of a powerful, musclebound warrior with metallic crimson flesh and the body of a mighty red serpent. Its dark hair is like ash and eyes like burning spheres of charcoal. In its hands, it holds a great golden trident.

What purpose this chamber might have once had is a mystery, lost to the flames of Ixthasus, the **Greater Salamander** within its bounds. Summoned to the Prime Material Plane by the Sovereign Magus, it once dwelled within her chambers in **Area #22** as a friend and companion. Since the fall of the Temple and the death of that worthy, however, its sanity has grown precariously thin. Not long ago, it chose to leave its former dwelling in favor of this room, where it styles itself the king of its lesser brethren that remain in the Magus' old haunt. Of course, upon doing so, it decided to "redecorate" the place, in order to make it more comfortable and aesthetically-pleasing (to its sense of taste, at least). Player Characters entering its bounds may find it much less to their tastes, however: As long as a character without resistance to fire remains in the chamber, they act with a temporary Constitution penalty of -2 (this returns after 5 rounds are spent within the fresh, cool air) and for each round spent within its bounds, they suffer 1d6 hp fire damage.

Ixthasus considers the chambers of the Sovereign Magus to be something akin to holy ground. Therefore, it will not be willing to allow anyone but a creature of pure elemental fire to approach it under any circumstances. If it hears Player Characters in the hall outside its door or if they are so foolish as to enter its chambers, it will attack them immediately in an effort to either drive them off or destroy them. It's not too picky about which of the two eventuates.

Ixthasus, Greater Salamander: AC 3/1, MV 12", HD 9+9, HP 59, THAC0 10, #AT 2, Damage 1d6+4 (Trident) / 4d4 (Tail), SA Heat, Produce Lava, SD +1 or better to hit, Immune to fire, SV Vulnerable to cold, AL CE, XP: 2,090.

Bear in mind that especially violent battles within this room may (50% chance) alert the Salamanders in **Area #22** (see below) to the presence of danger nearby. If this occurs, at least half their number will speed to this location in order to reinforce their "king" against his enemies.

Defeating Ixthasus will allow the Player Characters the opportunity to investigate its lair - though they must do so very carefully! Doing so will reveal a small cache of red gemstones - bloodstones and carnelians, even a few jacinths and rubies! There are 22 of these in all, valued as follows: 6 are 50gp, 4 are 75gp, 3 are 100gp, 5 are 500gp, 3 are 1,000gp, and a single fist-sized ruby is worth 5,000gp.

22. THE CONFLAGRATION

Beyond this door is a maelstrom of whirling fire. Brobdingnagian plumes of flame waft upward from some source that might be miles below your position, so hot that the very air shimmers and ripples with startling violence. Tendrils of smoke curl and whip around the great tongues and black and grey gout, twisted and wrenched by the course of the flames and the way they displace the air with hurricane-force. Swimming through the whole of it, like dolphins within an ocean of fire, strange creatures with the heads and arms of men and the lower bodies of serpents ride the waves of incandescence. The scope of it all - stretching as far as the eye can see in any direction - is staggering. The heat is enough to instantly dry the tears from your eyes and parch the throat. Where it kisses exposed flesh becomes tender and painful to the touch.

Through the firestorm, extended from the doorway, is a slender white marble causeway. 5' wide, it dares the incredible heat and flame, reaching out to an island in its midst. Though the maelstrom obscures it, you are able to see what looks like a large white marble bed, a desk and bookshelves. An oasis within the conflagration.

Though looking at the room should inspire both awe and terror in equal measure within the hearts of the Player Characters, the truth is that all here is not what it seems. Its interior incorporates permanent versions of both *hallucinatory terrain* and *spectral force* in order to create the spectacular effects it features: Both created by the Sovereign Magus, Mariana il-Xanna, to decorate her personal chambers in such a way as to glorify her patron goddess.

In truth, her room is a simple 30' diameter circle of white marble. A bed pushed against its southwest wall is made of the same material and covered in ancient linens and cushions, ruined by the passage of centuries. A wooden desk and chair (intact, these are hints that all is not as it seems to be within the room) stand near the room's center, flanked by two marble bookshelves and a wooden dresser, pushed against opposite walls. Likewise real are the four **Salamanders** that make this room their home, former companions of the Sovereign Magus trapped within the Temple Incandescent since its fall. **Salamanders** (5): AC 5/3, MV 9", HD 7+7, HP 42, THAC0 12, #AT 2, Damage 1d6 (Spear) / 2d6 (Tail), SA Heat, SD +1 or better to hit, Immune to fire, SV Vulnerable to cold, AL CE, XP: 1,245.

When the Player Characters enter this room, the Salamanders will move to the attack, though they will avoid coming near the Sovereign Magus' bookcases and desk (such is their respect for her, even centuries after her passing). Note that Player Characters that do not disbelieve the illusory aspects of the room will be susceptible to damage from its fiery effects (taking 1d6 damage for each round in which they remain within its bounds).

If the Player Characters are able to survive the many dangers within this room, they may avail themselves of the Sovereign Magus' many treasures. Atop her desk are an alabaster *wand of fire* (5 charges remain) and a *scroll* scribed with the spells *comprehend languages*, *contact other plane*, *monster summoning iv*, *slow*, and *wall of stone*. In her dresser is a *dagger +2* and a *hat of disguise*, shaped like a black hair ribbon. In her bookcase are a vast array of books on the nature of fire, as researched by Xuel magi. These rare tomes would be worth 2,500gp in total, if sold to an individual with an interest in fire magic or Xuel history. Finally, on a shelf of its own is a rodlike length of pure ruby that seems to burn with an inner fire. This is another portion of *The Summoning Sigil*, which was fully empowered by its creator before her untimely death.

23. INCINERATOR

About 20' before the end of this length of white marble corridor, you are able to see that the floor cuts away, dropping down into what appears to be a large pit. Even from where you stand, you are able to see great shoots of flame pluming up from the bottom of the descent, some tongues occasionally rising high enough to lick and crackle at the ceiling. Bits of ash, churned by the fire's motion dance suspended in the air within its consuming substance.

This fire pit was created by the builders of The Temple Incandescent as a place where they could discard waste and refuse. The flames that burn within it are a magical construction and equivalent in intensity to a *wall of fire*. The place served its purpose quite well; there is nothing of value to be found within its expanse, should overly-inquisitive Player Characters manage to find a way to explore its depths.

The extreme heat within the pit, however, made it a perfect place for five **Magmen**, summoned by the Xuel to the Prime Material Plane, to make a lair. The malicious spirit in these creatures shows through in the way that, if Player Characters approach nearer

than 20' from the edge of the pit, they will climb forth from its bounds and attack.

Magmen (5): AC 6, MV 9"/6", HD 2, HP 11, THAC0 16, #AT 1, Damage 3d8, SA Combustion touch, SD +1 or better to hit, Immune to fire, SQ Less than +2 weapons melt on contact, AL CN, XP: 119.

These creatures possess nothing of value.

24. HEART OF FIRE

This is a 30' x 30' area composed of pure white marble. A door is set upon its north wall, while on its south a corridor issues forth. Upon the floor is a mosaic composed of many pieces of multi-colored stone. It forms the visage of a woman that wears loose red robes. She seems gentle and peaceful, with pale skin, snowy hair, and pale blue eyes. At her feet, in the depiction, a campfire roars next to what appears to be a lute, leaned against a log of wood.

Upon all the walls in this area is an elegant script, carved into their white surfaces by a careful hand.

Much like **Area #2** (see above for details), this area served as an atrium that allowed the denizens of The Temple Incandescent access to both its catacombs and – when it yet existed on the Prime Material Plane – its Athenium. It was thus one of the most commonly well-used portions of the Temple and so beautified accordingly.

The mosaic on the ground is an artistic depiction of the goddess Raanet, standing next to her divine Hearth in Gladsheim (hers is perhaps the only isle of respite to be found on the burning plane of Muspelheim – a place that even Surtur and his fire giants never dared despoil with their approach). The walls, meanwhile, are decorated with the various prophecies whispered to the Child of Fire through her commune with flame. Those capable of reading the language of the Ancient Xuel may be distressed to peruse this text; as it slowly progresses towards the floor, it becomes more and more dire and bleak,

confusing and panicked. By the time it reaches its end, it is simply a rambling string of scarcely-intelligible allegory. This, of course, is the physical manifestation of the slow encroach of madness that would eventually overcome all those within the doomed Temple.

To those with an interest in Xuel history, these would be of immense interest, though the nature of the script would make it perhaps only worth 500gp to a sage or scholar if it were somehow copied.

The door leading from this room to the north is **trapped**. If opened by anyone without a Xuel heritage (at least half), it explodes as if covered by explosive runes, doing 6d4+6 hp damage without the benefit of a saving throw.

25. IN MEMORIAM

This white marble chamber is immense, stretching nearly 90' in length and 50 in breadth. On each of its sides, four alcoves are set into the walls, with a final two appointing its north side. In each of these, a 4' tall stone pillar rises from the substance of the floor. An earthen vessel stands atop each of these.

The entirety of the floor is a great mosaic, made of thousands of colored pieces of stone. Together, they make of it a carpet of roaring flames: A masterpiece of ancient artwork. Superimposed upon the stones that comprise the picture is graven writing, chiseled into the floor in an elegant script.

This chamber serves as the Temple's catacombs: A burial chamber for those of Raanet's faith. As the custom of these folk was to see their bodies burned after death (the act being symbolic of lending themselves to their goddess' flames), the remains of those interred here are kept within the earthen vessels that adorn the pillars in the chamber's alcoves. Each one is decorated in such a way as to recall those kept within them.

Of course, such a hallowed place is not unguarded. Should any of the room's vessels be touched by those without Xuel heritage (again, at least half satisfies this), the stones forming the floor's mosaic begin to rapidly leap forth from the ground, assembling themselves into a powerful construct called a **Stone Guardian**. This protector of the catacombs will immediately attack the Player Characters until either all are dead or flee the chamber.

Stone Guardian: AC 2, MV 10", HD 4+4, HP 30, THAC0 15, #AT 2, Damage 1d8+1 (Fist) / 1d8+1 (Fist), SD 1/4 damage from edged weapons, Immune to normal missiles, Many spell resistances, SQ Sees invisible, AL CN, XP: 790.

The precise contents of the chamber are listed as follows:

- a. A brilliant orange vessel painted with repeating butterfly patterns, in reference to the familiar possessed by the mage whose remains fill it. Along with his ashes can be found his silver and emerald *ring of human influence*. Behind the pedestal on which the vessel stands is a small switch, hidden upon the wall. Flipping it unlocks and opens the door to **Area #26**. Because of its small size, it requires a successful concealed doors check to locate this switch.
- b. The painting of a crossed hammer and saw adorn the vessel in which the remains of a carpenter lie. With his ashes are a length of string and leaden weight he used in the course of his occupation.
- c. This dark blue vessel is brightly painted and features a silver lyre upon its face. If it is opened, among the ashes within it is a small, smooth rock that acts as a *stone of good luck* when possessed by any worshiper of the gods of the Xuel Pantheon (for anyone else, it acts as a *stone of weight*). At the back of the alcove, an unlocked and untrapped secret door leading to **Areas #27 & 29** can be found.

- d. This vessel is painted dark blue and is spotted with white pinpricks, so as to make it appear like a slice of the night sky. This, and the miniature spyglass at the bottom of the container, make it obvious that the remains here belonged to an astronomer.
- e. This vessel is the only one made from glass, revealing a gold and a lead piece atop the ashes at its bottom. These belonged to an alchemist who never was able to quite finish the grand transmutation that would change one element to another. At the rear of the alcove in which the vessel stands is an unlocked and untrapped secret door leading to **Area #28**.
- f. A man and woman's entwined fingers painted upon it tell the story of the married couple who wished their ashes to be mixed within this vessel. Along with them are the golden wedding rings they wore, both worth 100gp.
- g. Upon this vessel is painted a sword superimposed upon a shield: The tools employed by the soldier whose remains are contained here. A miniature sword can be found at the bottom of the vessel that magically expands into a *broadsword* +2 in the hands of Fighter (or subclass of that profession). At the rear of this alcove is a secret door that is unlocked but **trapped**, discharging a powerful electrical shock (3d6+6 damage, save for half) unless it is disarmed before being touched. This leads to **Area #33** and beyond.
- h. A lone painted flame adorns the vessel in which the remains of a priestess of Raanet can be found. Her holy symbol is also in there, which acts as a *ring of protection* +2 (which is able to stack its bonus even atop other protective devices magical armor and shields) when worn by an individual devoted to Raanet.
- i. This vessel, holding the ashes of a tailor, is decorated with the same golden needle that rests with his remains at its bottom. The needle is worth a single gold piece.
- j. Within this vessel are the remains of a favored servant, elevated to the rank of citizen after his escape from the doomed Imperium. This is evident by the image of the sundered chain on the front of the container and the single iron link laying with his ashes, inside. At the back of the alcove in which the vessel stands is a locked but untrapped secret door that leads to the dangerous **Area #26** (see below).

Consequences for good-aligned Player Characters that choose to loot the vessels within the catacombs are left to the Dungeon Master to determine.

26. CREMATORIUM

Opening this door brings forth a near-deafening sound like air, rushing with hurricane force from the alcove to which it opens, in towards its center. It is impossible to tell what might lie within this room aside of white-hot flames.

When one of the worshipers of Raanet died, they were usually taken to this room - the Temple's crematorium - to prepare them for interment within one of the vessels in its catacombs (**Area #25**, above). This was typically accomplished simply by resting the corpse in the alcove in front of its door, then retreating to the safety of the alcove directly across from it, where a switch is located. This switch unlocks and opens the door, allowing the chamber within to perform its duty.

The crematorium uses a mix of elemental vacuum and fire elements, employing the first to suck a body into its expanse, then using the second to render it ash. The power of the vacuum is sufficient to see that the remains are packed into a tidy pile. Those destroying the body in such a manner would then collect the ash-pile and place it within a proper receptacle

If this door is opened by Player Characters, they will not have the luxury of being distant when the room's function is activated. They will be forced to struggle against the force of the vacuum to avoid being pulled into the

room and incinerated (double each character's chance to bend bars/lift gates; rolling beneath this number on percentile dice means that they have managed to hold onto some surface and avoid being dawn within the chamber). Those who are drawn into the crematorium while it is functioning suffer 10d6 hp damage for each round they remain within its bounds (no save permitted).

If the door is opened and the Player Characters need to turn off the crematorium, this can be done by way of the switch in the alcove opposite its door. Otherwise, it continues to pull and burn without end.

27. EMPTY VESSELS

Along this corridor, the white marble walls support several wooden shelves. These begin about 20' from the end of the hall until they conclude at its back wall. Atop these shelves rest dozens of glass vessels, along several sealed earthen pots. Beneath their wooden flats, a score of stout marble pillars, about 4' in height have been stored.

This is where the supplies for the Temple's catacombs are kept. The vessels are meant to hold the ashes of the fallen amongst Raanet's faithful. The pots, meanwhile, contain paints reserved for the artists amongst the Temple's surviving denizens to decorate them. Lastly, the pillars were meant to support these containers in **Area #25**, when finished.

Neither the vessels nor the pillars beneath them are especially valuable. Neither are the paints contained in the sealed pots, for the most part, as they are almost all dried to ruin. The sole exception is a single pot – adorned on its face by an elegantly-written letter “A” in graceful silver loops – which contains 3 applications of *Marvelous pigments*. How it arrived here or the purpose for which it was intended are mysteries.

28. PLAYING WITH FIRE

This chamber is a 30' x 30' square of white marble. Its floor is notable both for its place, a foot beneath the level of the passage leading into its confines, and its composition, which appears to be made completely of roiling magma. Smoke wisps upwards into the air above this pool of the world's lifeblood, which bubbles and pops with barely-contained menace.

Within this burning flow, five squat creatures regard you. Each one, crimson and bronze-skinned, they are relatively featureless but for eyes that burn like the coals from a fireplace and the flames that issue forth from their blazing bodies, occasionally. The way they leer at you is only slightly less malicious than the lava in which they play.

This chamber was empty, cut into the substance of the immense marble beneath the Hellforges in which the Xuel worshipers of Raanet built their great Temple, but never used. This made it quite inviting for the four **Magmen** that currently inhabit it to ruin its floor to their liking and claim it as their lair.

Magmen (4): AC 6, MV 9"/6", HD 2, HP 11, THAC0 16, #AT 1, Damage 3d8, SA Combustion touch, SD +1 or better to hit, Immune to fire, SQ Less than +2 weapons melt on contact, AL CN, XP: 119.

Just as bored and angry as any of their fellows within the Temple Incandescent, these creatures will attack the Player Characters the moment they become aware of their presence. They have no type of treasure.

Note that Player Characters that locate the secret door leading to this area from **Area #25** (see above for details) have a good chance of tumbling headlong into the magma pool within this room, if they're being pursued and are incautious. If this happens, such characters suffer 10d10 hp damage (save vs. breath weapons for half) until they manage to leave its bounds (and they then suffer another 3d6 hp damage until they somehow scrape the molten lava from their bodies). Between

the heat, flames, and Magmen, however, it is unlikely that they will survive long enough to do so.

29. PRAYERS FOR FLAME

This is a circular white marble chamber, 30' in diameter. An iron sconce juts forth from its west wall, holding a dead torch in its grip as a raptor clutches prey. The center of the room is occupied by a large, circular fire pit, cold and unlit. From its edges, iron rods rise up in three places, joining 2' above it in the form of a tripod. At that union, the metal is shaped in a tight "U" pattern.

Once a body was prepared for placement in the catacombs, the faithful of Raanet would bring it to this place, performing a small ceremony as a means of wishing the soul that once inhabited the remains well on their journey to the Hearthmistress. The neck of the vessel containing their ashes would be placed in the "U" shaped slot, allowing the fire within the pit below it to wash over its substance while prayers, songs, or verse were offered, as appropriate. This was thought to please both Raanet and Wee Saj and was considered an important part of the culture within the Temple Incandescent.

Now, quiet and cold, the place would seem to have little value to the Player Characters. However an investigation of the fire pit will reveal a priceless (considering the monsters that surround them) *ring of fire resistance*, allowed to fall into the flames by a careless priestess and never retrieved. If acquired, such a magical item may well prove instrumental to the Player Characters' survival.

30. CREATIO EX NIHILO

This is a 30' x 30' white marble room. Where once it appeared that its south wall held many wooden shelves, atop which scores of earthen bowls and jugs were placed, these seem to have

collapsed. The shelves lie in ruins along the bottom of the wall and the crockery that rest upon it lies atop it, shattered into countless shards. At the rear of the room, a 4' tall pillar of white marble likewise seems to have once stood, but this too has been knocked on its side and lies shattered along the west wall.

This disaster is nothing compared to that which lies in the center of the room, however. There, the chamber's floor is strewn with gore, spattered with blood and hunks of flesh and bone that have long since dried and rotted. Still, it lends the room the awful, overpowering scent of ancient death.

Huddled in the center of the room are five figures. Wearing little more than stained and tattered rags, they look impossibly emaciated. A closer inspect of them reveals that many of them are missing limbs that seem to have been eaten from their bodies.

In this chamber, the faithful of Raanet kept one of their most prized possessions – indeed, one that saw to their very survival. This was a small ceramic figurine in the shape of a cornucopia that they brought with them during their flight from the doomed Xuel Imperium. The statuette was able to replicate the effects of a *create food* spell, thrice per day, randomly summoning various kinds of meats, cheeses and vegetables – all of fresh and delicious quality – before its user. In deference to its shape, it was referred to as the *Bountiful Cornucopia*. It was kept in this room at all times, for without it, the denizens of the Temple would surely starve.

In the last days of the Temple, when the summoned allies of Raanet's faithful were becoming ever more erratic and unpredictable, five of the Temple's denizens shut themselves within this room, thinking to survive using the *Bountiful Cornucopia*. It was an ill-conceived plan, fueled by paranoia and madness. In the end, the group turned upon one another and ate of each other's flesh. This abomination saw the bunch of them live on eternally as **Wights**. They now

huddle about the *Cornucopia*, nearly mindless but for rage and an implacable hunger...the latter of which they will try and sate the moment they see the Player Characters.

Wights (5): AC 5, MV 12", HD 4+3, HP 24, THAC0 15, #AT 1, Damage 1d4, SA Energy drain, SD Silver or magic weapons to hit, Undead immunities, AL LE, XP: 660.

If the Player Characters manage to put these poor wretches out of their collective miseries, they will have done them a great service. As a reward, they will be able to claim the *Bountiful Cornucopia* from the chamber – a great prize indeed, for their victory.

There are no other valuables within the room.

31. VARIOUS & SUNDRY

Stacked against the west wall of this 30' x 30' chamber are several bundles, bound in some odd type of grey wrapping. Along the south wall are long pieces of timber and iron, held together by stout lengths of rope. Opposite these are a thick wooden bench, upon which all manner of tools are scattered.

This room was set aside as general storage by Raanet's lost worshipers: A place in which necessary building and construction supplies and tools were kept. As their trip beneath the Hellforges saw most of these types of items ruined or lost on this epic trek, most of what can be found here was actually made after the Xuel emerged from the Passage of Nitorels and are thus not nearly as valuable as pre-Cataclysm examples of the same.

One of the exceptions to this can be found in the bundles along the south edge of the wall. On their subterranean journey, the Xuel managed to discover a massive type of fungus that they referred to as *Xar'bik* (AS: "Grey Beauty"). These giant mushrooms featured tough skins from which a sweet and nutritious meat could be taken. These outer shells were subsequently used to make cloaks, containers, and even armor. The

bundles against the wall are Xar'bik skins that once contained reserves of their gathered edible interiors.

Sadly, this delicacy spoiled long ago, giving way to a **Yellow Mold** infestation. Worse, the ancient Xar'bik skins that contain the deadly fungus has become extremely brittle with age. If the bundles are disturbed in any way, they are 75% likely to burst, filling a 10' radius around them with Yellow Mold spores.

Yellow Mold: AC 9, MV 0", HD Nil, HP Nil, THAC0 Nil, #AT 1, Damage 1d8, SA Poison spores, SD Only affected by fire, AL N, XP: Nil.

If collected, the tools within this room are worth 100gp, if sold as curios. Aside of the potential utility of the iron and wood to Player Characters, the room contains no other valuables.

32. THE FALLEN CHAMPIONS

This is a 30' x 30' chamber of white marble. Within it, a large bed frame made of stone is pushed against its south wall, the cushions and blankets that once covered it rotten and decayed with age. Handsome marble end tables flank the bed, both bearing silver candle holders. The tapers once contained in both have melted down their sides, gathering and hardening in pools beneath them. The room's east wall bears a door and to the left of that, a great empty wooden rack, upon which one might hang weapons and armor. On the west wall, to the left of the entrance into the chamber, is a wooden desk and chair. To the right of the passage's mouth, a wooden dresser. Both are laden with a thick coating of dust, but are made of fine, dark timber.

In the room's center, two figures stand. Both are tall and proud, wearing ancient white robes that reveal gleaming armor beneath them. A man and a woman, they both bear swords and shields and regard the world intensely, their eyes

glowing in the gloom of shadows cast by their helms appointed with the plumage of raptors. Their flesh seems grey and almost insubstantial.

This chamber is the residence of Naskin and Yrsi ad-Laar: Mighty warriors sworn to protect the devout of Raanet with their lives. The two of them were among the last of those within the Temple Incandescent to die, cursed to watch their charges go mad with despair and die before their very eyes. Failing in their duty, the two powerful Fighters do not enjoy the peace of a restful death. Instead, their fate was to live on eternally as the potent form of undead known as **Swordwraiths**.

Naskin and Yrsi ad-Laar, Swordwraiths: AC 3, MV 9", HD 7, HP 40, THAC0 10, #AT 3/2, Damage 1d10, SA Strength drain, SD +2 or better weapons to hit, Undead immunities, AL LE, XP: 1,200.

Now mad themselves, Naskin and Yrsi will immediately attack the Player Characters as soon as they enter the room. If they have advance warning that enemies will soon be upon them (such as a fight taking place in **Area #25** with the Stone Guardian placed there), they will push their dresser on its side in the center of the room and fire bowshots at them from behind its cover (which will give them an Armor Class bonus of -2). Otherwise, they will move to melee with them, attacking with their swords. The two Swordwraiths will not parley with their foes; they have left their humanity too far behind for that, now. Note that sounds of combat in this location are 25% likely to rouse the attention of Yox, in **Area #33** (see below for details).

If the Player Characters manage to overcome the two Swordwraiths, they may collect their treasures, which come in the form of the magic items they wield and that which is kept in their dresser. Both Naskin and Yrsi hold *bastard swords* +2. The former additionally wears a *chain shirt* +1, while the latter holds a small metal *shield* +2. Each of these items was made in the Xuel Imperium and because of their great historical value is worth double their usual amount. Meanwhile, their

dressers hold their personal treasures: 120 Xuel gold coins and a small leather bag containing three tiny, flawed diamonds each worth 25gp, and a pair of adamantite rings, both worth 250gp.

33. DEATH'S COMPANION

Beyond the door lies a 30' x 30' chamber of pure white marble. The skeletal remnants of a stone bed is pushed up against its west wall, a great black scorch mark marring the place where its cushioning might be. A wooden dresser and full-length standing mirror once rest in the chamber's northeast corner, but these have been burned and only their wreckage and shattered glass remains to hint at their presence. On the south wall, a large desk and chair have likewise been reduced to little more than blackened cinders, its frame looking like it might collapse at the barest touch. Next to it, the stone bookcase is intact, but any tomes that might have once appointed it are gone, burned to dark smudges upon its white shelves.

The whole of the room is aflame, portions of the floor leaping and dancing with brilliant, angry tongues. Amidst this inferno stands an immense creature. Nearly 8' tall, its bare, crimson skin is smooth and musclebound. Wearing only what seems to be a loincloth spun from gold fabric, its eyes are burning embers and its two short horns imply a demonic kind of malice.

The only individual who was not of Raanet's faithful dwelling within the Temple Incandescent once lived within this chamber. This was Anras il-Fruztii: A powerful priestess of Wee Saj, who chose to remain amongst the Hearthmistress' faithful to see to the protection of their spirits, in accordance with the law of the Xuel.

As the Temple neared its fall, the priestess was called upon with increasing regularity to lead the ceremonies dedicated to each of its denizens who perished. For convenience's

sake (and because she never truly fit in with the the culture of the Raanet worshipers), she chose to make her abode in this chamber, far away from their number, yet close to the catacombs and crematorium.

Despite her relative removal from their society, the priestess was one of those entrusted to hold and empower one of the pieces of *The Summoning Sigil* by the Temple's Sovereign Magus. As a devout student of the Invisible Art (as many followers of Wee Saj are), however, she did not immediately stoke her portion of the potent magical device to life, preferring to study its aspect, instead. This innocent act saw to the final doom of the Temple, as when Mariana il-Xanna was murdered, the Sigil was still quiescent, separated, and unprepared for its ultimate use.

After the murder, the priestess realized her culpability in the Temple's ruin. With no judge or jury about to punish her, she chose to take her own life, drinking a vial of poison within her chambers. Thus did the final Xuel denizen within the Temple Incandescent die. Before she did this, however, she opened the stopper on her magic bottle and let loose Yox: Her **Efreeti** companion. Though she knew the creature could not return to the fabled City of Brass, she deigned allow it some modicum of freedom, the same.

Yox yet remains within the chamber, wroth with fury at its inability to escape the Temple. It is angry, irritable, and violent - and it will almost certainly attack the Player Characters the moment they enter its demesne.

Yox, Efreeti: AC 2, MV 9"/24", HD 10, HP 55, THAC0 10, #AT 1, Damage 3d8, SD Immune to fire, SQ Many spell-like abilities, AL LE, XP: 2,720.

If Yox has warning of their approach, it will become *invisible*, hide in a corner of the room, then wait until its enemies have entered its bounds. When they do, it will place a *wall of fire* in the center of the room, blocking off the exit and attempting to split their number in half. It will then attempt to murder them, beginning with obvious spellcasters.

If Yox is reduced to less than 50% of its total hit points, the Efreet will surrender. Having listened to its mistress carefully during the final days of the Temple, it is fully aware of *The Summoning Sigil*, how it functions, and the purpose for which it is created. It also knows where the piece of the device is located within this chamber. It will attempt to barter this information in return for the Player Characters' sworn oath that they will let it depart the Temple and return to the City of Brass (once they explain how they entered to begin with, of course). It only knows where one piece of the device is (the one within this room), but in all ways, it will be fully truthful if the Player Characters agree to this proposal. It should be noted that Yox is powerful enough to empower the quiescent piece of the *Sigil*, should the Player Characters choose to decline his offer.

No matter how they deal with Yox, his mistress former chambers contain precious little of the fabulous treasures they once held. The Efreet has a bad temper and, sadly, many of these valuables were consumed by fire in once his rages over the course of the last six centuries. The priestess *footman's flail +2* can be found amidst the wreckage of her dresser, however, just as her *brooch of shielding* (77 charges remaining) can be found in the ashes of her desk. Much more importantly, however, the wand-thin piece of ruby that is a portion of *The Summoning Sigil* still remains upon the priestess' bookshelves, though as it is currently not empowered, it lacks the inner glow possessed by the other pieces of the magical device.

34. THE PRECIPICE

At the end of the corridor lies a circular area, 30' in diameter. Its walls - in which some ancient text is carved in an elegant, flowing script - rise 30' above its floor before ending in a great dome.

In the room's center is a pedestal, like a short column that seems to rise out of the very substance of the floor. A set of sort iron prongs jut forth from the top of this pedestal, like those from a priest's

pulpit, in which their holy books are meant to rest.

There are no exits leading from the area in any direction, aside of that which leads to its expanse.

Previously, the south wall of this area was occupied by an arched, open doorway. When the Temple was first built, six centuries ago, this led to the place's Athenium: The repository of all knowledge possessed by the Xuel worshipers of Raanet. It was a place commonly-frequented by all within the Temple Incandescent, as each member of its small society did their part to learn the ultimate fate of their patron goddess.

When those of the faith summoned to the Prime Material Plane the Hearthmistress' First Servant – the pyroclastic sphinx known as Avraasha – a great bed of burning coals was created in the center of the library. This place was afforded to the sphinx as a personal domain, as a token of esteem, deference, and respect. From that place, Avraasha worked with the Xuel to learn what had become of their goddess gone silent, working powerful magicks that eventually weakened the barriers between worlds (already made tenuous in that place, thanks to the properties of the strange marble from which the Temple was constructed). Eventually, such was the power that Avraasha brought to bear that the Athenium in which she dwelt was ripped from the firmament of the Prime Material Plane, leaving it to exist as a demi-plane unto its own. As the library disappeared from its reality, the Temple's walls healed themselves, becoming smooth and featureless.

The episode prompted the Xuel's Sovereign Magi to create a magical matrix capable of locating the Athenium and subsequently rejoining it to the Temple's continuum, as it once was. This was *The Summoning Sigil* and upon the small stand atop the pedestal in this area is where it was meant to rest when empowered and joined. The script adorning the walls were later placed here: Aphorisms of the faith that reflect the hope that, one day, The Athenium and its legendary occupant might be returned to the world.

The room will remain quiet and staid until the completed and empowered *Summoning Sigil* is placed upon the stand topping the pedestal. At that point, the Game Master may continue this module with **Chapter Two** of the adventure (see below for details). Unless that occurs, the secret of *The Forgotten Temple of Raanet* and Avraasha may well never be discovered.

Chapter Two: The Burning Athenium

If the Player Characters are able to empower and assemble *The Summoning Sigil*, then place it upon its stand in **Area #34**, they do not have to wait long at all to see the results of their labors. The inner glow within its ruby substance begins to glow brilliantly, pulsing gently as the device levitates into midair. Once about a foot above the podium, it bursts into flame and begins to spin, shedding flickering radiance all about the walls of the circular area. It goes faster and faster, bringing with it a shrill, keening wail that seems to come from the empty air. Reality itself begins to shudder as the potent magical device brings back into the Prime what was lost over six centuries earlier.

Dust and debris begins to rain down from above. The earth trembles and quakes. The *Sigil* is a blinding blur of flame now – and for a moment, it seems as if the device is bent upon bringing about the end of all that is. But when the matrix reaches its crescendo of sound and motion – it stops suddenly in its place. The plain face of the south wall yawns wide, as if a mouth, screaming.

Then, nothing at all. The matrix is still. The air, silent. The passage ahead remains.

Somewhere, near its end, a flickering fire-light.

Special Properties of the Dungeon

When The Athenium is returned to the Prime, its distinction as a Demi-Plane unto itself ends. The great library has been returned to reality, just as it was when it was loosed from the firmament of existence. As such, it possesses the same properties as The Temple Incandescent in all tangible ways (most notably, in the way it nullifies all manner of summoning and most transportative spells and abilities).

Within The Athenium, there are no Wandering Monsters for the Player Characters to fear. There is but a single creature inhabiting its bounds, which they will encounter shortly after they dare the passage from **Area #34** southward.

And she should stoke their terror quite enough.

35. THE BURNING ATHENIUM

At the conclusion of the newly-born corridor lies an immense area of white marble. In its midst, two rows of great columns support a roof that hangs over 100' above the floor. Outside of these pillars, sections of walls exist, forming outer corridors that ring the central area twice. These walls are abbreviated in such a way that from the passage's threshold, many entrances and exits can be seen from these outer halls.

In the center of the chamber, the floor rises upon into a massive dais. Atop this, the floor has been lowered and filled with what seems to be burning stones, glowing with incredible heat. Upon this burning bed is a creature that looks like a gigantic lion with the wings of an eagle upon her back. Her head is that of a beautiful woman's. Wisps of grey smoke – shot through with angry, blazing sparks – rises from her body, which seems made completely of smooth volcanic glass.

Her form is utterly dark but for the menacing glow of molten magma, shining through what seems like thousands of fractures on her obsidian flesh. That, and her gaze, like the eyes of active volcanoes, which penetrate the gloom as her stare falls upon the corridor, seeming to burn the darkness itself.

The air is a violent blur for the heat radiating from her body. She is silent, but her stare speaks with the voice of the world's blood, boiling beneath its skin.

The Player Characters have entered The Burning Athenium – the repository of all knowledge possessed by the Xuloise worshipers of Raanet – and in doing so, have come upon Avraasha: Pyroclastic Sphinx and First Servant of the Hearthmistress.

Avraasha was an ancient creature even before Raanet gave the Xuloise the gift of warming and comforting fire. The sphinx served as an emissary for the goddess, performing important duties in the Hearthmistress name all across the planes. It is for this that she became known as The First Servant, and it is said that of all creatures born of flame, it she she that the goddess loved most. In the course of her duties, Avraasha treated with gods and devils, angels and demons. Yet the sphinx was said to be as kindly of heart as Raanet herself, gentle, courteous and welcoming. Yet the power at her command was as terrifying as the eruption of a thousand volcanoes – and to those that would harm the favored folk of her mistress, she was unimaginably fearsome.

Avraasha, the First Servant, Pyroclastic Sphinx: AC -5, MV 18"/30", HD 24, HP 168, THAC0 10 (reduced due to insanity), #AT 2, Damage 3d8 (Claw) / 3d8 (Claw), SA Heat, SD Immune to fire, Regeneration, SQ Many spell-like abilities, MR 50%, AL CG (but see below), XP: 11,076.

When the Xuel summoned Avraasha to determine why their patron deity had gone silent, the sphinx intended on delivering them an answer herself. She attempted to *plane shift* from the Temple Incandescent to Raanet's hearth in Muspelheim to personally assess the situation...but found that many of her most potent spell-like abilities no longer functioned (this is because she was bereft of Raanet's power in the wake of her murder, though she had now way of knowing this). Extremely concerned at this revelation, she worked with her mistress worshipers as best she could in search for revelation.

As time went on, the kind-hearted sphinx became ever more desperate. All attempts at divining the truth of her mistress fate met with abject silence. In the meantime, the immortal creature saw the way Raanet's

absence tore at her followers. She watched them, one by one, age and eventually die, their thoughts filled with fear and doubt as they did. Avraasha could not even say for certain if their souls arrived at the Hearthmistress' fire. The passage of years, watching this all the while, broke the sphinx's heart. Her desperation became manic, and she struggled against the invisible boundaries that separate the planes, hoping to break forth from her prison with her sheer might alone. Not only did constant attempts such as these avail her nothing – but they ended up tearing the whole of the great library in which she stayed as a guest of Raanet's worshipers from the skein of reality itself.

Alone now, and just as terrified as the mortals she sought to help, Avraasha prayed her mistress for deliverance from her fate. She was met with silence. So she continued to pray, surrounded by aught but the licking sound of crackling fire. She did this for six centuries, begging...pleading....

At some point, her sanity snapped like kindling wood.

Now proud and mighty Avraasha is little more than a feral beast, motivated by rage and pain. As soon as the Player Characters enter her demesne, she will silently regard them for some time before asking who they are and why they have come to her. No matter their answer, she is incapable of rational behavior. She will attack them immediately, making her fear and heartbreak manifest by reducing all the Player Characters to ash. Given the incredible power at her disposal, it is likely that she will succeed at this in short order, indeed.

Avraasha will remain within the central portion of The Burning Athenium, even should the Player Characters think to flee her presence. The corridors surrounding this place are lined on both sides with all manner of books – tomes of all sizes and shapes, literally thousands in number – held in white marble shelves, built into the walls. This will not protect the Player Characters from the sphinx's magics, of course. She favors uttering a *power word: stun* to begin combat, immolating those rendered helpless by the

attack with *fireballs*, *walls of fire* and *incendiary clouds* (which she will move with *telekinesis*, to chase down those who might run from her).

In the end, the Player Characters likely have but one chance at survival.

Surviving the Fire

The Player Characters have little chance of defeating Avraasha in direct combat. However, they may be able to coax reason back to the sphinx's mind from the shadows of her fear, if they are shrewd. By appealing to Avraasha's better nature, they have a 10% chance of persuading her to break off her attack. This percentage is adjusted as follows:

- **+15%** if the speaker mentions that there are Xuel among their number;
- **+10%** if the speaker addresses Avraasha by her name.
- **+10%** if the speaker directly invokes the name of Raanet;
- **+10%** if the speaker quotes from Raanet's scripture (which they may have learned by studying some of the many writings in the Temple);
- **+5%** for every point of Charisma over 15 possessed by the Player Character addressing her.

Within The Burning Athenium can be found written knowledge on the nature of fire that can only be described as awesome in depth. If Player Characters think to sell it, it will fall to the Game Master to adjudicate the price that might be fetched by the library's contents, as to compare its worth to mere gold would be the most vulgar of insults to its majesty. It is quite likely that no more complete a collection of information on the subject exists on all the world – and there can be no doubt that no few magi would be willing to commit unspeakable deeds indeed for the opportunity to peruse it even briefly. In game terms, any Magic-User creating a magic item or doing spell research with access to this collection in its entirety saves 50% in total cost and time over what their labors would typically require, provided the resultant item or spell is fire-based in nature. Additionally, access to the entire collection adds a

1d20+5% chance of success when a Magic-User devises an original fire-based spell. Likewise, study of the collection over the course of a year (diligent progress must be made, but time may be allowed for other short-term pursuits such as adventuring) by a Cleric or Paladin devoted to a Xuel deity gains 50,000 experience points. If this character actually worships Raanet herself, they are raised to the minimum number of experience points necessary to gain their next level – then they receive the bonus on top of **that!**

Of course, the entirety of the collection kept within The Burning Athenium consists of some 25,000 books, librams, and tomes and weighs nearly 500 tons. Clearly, some clever means of extracting this prize from its place will be required!

Epilogue

If the Player Characters manage to restore Avraasha's sanity, she collapses upon her bed of flames and begins to weep steaming tears of lava. She will attempt to explain her reaction to their appearance and beg their forgiveness for her actions. Of course, she will use her mighty magic to heal their wounds as best she is able.

Should the Player Characters forgive the sphinx, she will relate the whole of the tale that brought her to the Temple Incandescent, possibly giving those interested in the history of the Xuel a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to view their culture through the eyes of a creature intimately familiar with its ways. She will then ask the Player Characters again who they are and why they have come to her. In the end, both are immaterial. They have rescued Avraasha from an eternity of durance and have earned her earnest gratitude.

Understanding that their presence means that a breach in the Temple's impenetrable shell has developed, Avraasha will explain to the Player Characters that she must bid them farewell. She is loathe to remain in her prison for even a moment more and yearns to spread forth her wings of fire and ride the world's skies once more. She bids the Player Characters take what they will from what remains of The Athenium as a reward for their actions. However, after saying as much, she seems to think better of it. Such material possessions seem insufficient to convey the depths of her gratitude. Thus, she bestows upon each one of them a *wish* and pledges that, in their hour of greatest need, they have

but to speak her name aloud thrice – and she will come to their aid.

After making this pledge, the sphinx will leave the Temple, taking to the skies over the Hellforges. Avraasha seems to stab forth for the heart of the sun before disappearing from view. Soon enough, she will learn of the murder of her goddess and the fall of the folk she so loved – but these are tales for another day.

There are deeds to which she must attend.

And a dire revenge for her to plan.

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Appendix A: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The Bountiful Cornucopia

Created by some unknown Xuel mage, this magic item takes the form of a 2" long ceramic figurine. Expertly crafted and beautifully painted, the small icon is shaped like a cornucopia, in which all manner of cheeses, grains, fruits, meats, and vegetables can be seen.

The concentrating on their hunger, the possessor of the *Bountiful Cornucopia* can bring 12 cubic feet of food and drink into being, three times per day. Each use of the item is generally sufficient to provide sustenance for 36 human-sized creatures or 12 horse sized creatures for a full day.

The type of food conjured into being by the *Bountiful Cornucopia* is completely random, though each use of it will produce at least 1 type of food and 1 type of drink. For example, one use of the item might conjure mounds of fine cheese and excellent wine, while another might summon stuffed roast pork, potatoes and leeks, and fresh, cold water. Regardless of what kind of food is produced by the *Bountiful Cornucopia*, it will be of the finest quality, as if prepared by a master chef.

If the bearer of the *Bountiful Cornucopia* attempts to use the item more than three times a day, it will fail to produce anything. Its owner might that the food carved into the figurine has vanished. Their greed has ruined the item's magic and it will forevermore be but an ordinary ceramic icon.

XP Value: 2,000 **GP Value:** 30,000

The Summoning Sigil (Xuel Matrix)

The legendary Xuel Mages of Power were among the first of Oerth's practitioners of the Invisible Art to understand that certain geometric forms were inherently magical and their arcane symmetry could be utilized to contain or harness great magical power. Devices built at odd angles from esoteric materials meant to take advantage of this arcane phenomenon were known as *Xuel Matrices* and, while rare, were not unheard of within the land in which its doomed originators lived, before its fall.

An example of such a construction was created by Mariana il-Xanna, who was known to be a student of the legendary Last Mage of Power, Nitorels. This object was designed to locate those hidden realms of existence known as demi-planes, then weave the fabric of those strange places into that of the Prime Material Plane – essentially bringing them from their places in the cosmos onto the world.

il-Xanna's *Summoning Sigil* was designed to do this to a specific demi-plane: The Burning Athenium, which was violently torn from the Prime Material and rendered its own continuum. Composed of five separate wand-length rods of pure ruby, each was empowered by absorbing the essence of a creature of 8HD or more composed of elemental fire (such as an Efreeti, Fire Elemental, or Greater Salamander). By touching one to such a creature's body, their burning essences were absorbed into the rod's substance, which would glow as if possessed of an inner blaze. This act would destroy the touched creature without the benefit of a saving throw. Once the rod was empowered, it was not able to absorb or destroy a creature in this manner; it was considered to be completely charged.

When one end of the *Summoning Sigil* was touched to another, the ends would fuse, twisting about until it found its appointed position. When all five were put into place in this manner and it was seated in a place prepared for its activity, the device would be fully ready for operation.

The Summoning Sigil is incredibly durable, as difficult to damage as an artifact. As it is designed with a very specific purpose in mind, it is of limited utility to most Player Characters. However, a mage of significant power would give much to study such an item...as who knows what wonders could be created with such a *Matrix* as a template?

XP Value: 3,500 **GP Value:** 50,000

Appendix B: NEW MONSTERS

AVRAASHA, THE FIRST SERVANT (GREATER PYROCLASTIC SPHINX)

FREQUENCY:	<i>Unique</i>
NO. APPEARING:	<i>1</i>
ARMOR CLASS:	<i>-5</i>
MOVE:	<i>18" / 30" (MC: C)</i>
HIT DICE:	<i>24 (168 hit points)</i>
% IN LAIR:	<i>5%</i>
TREASURE TYPE:	<i>R, S, T, V</i>
NO. OF ATTACKS:	<i>2</i>
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	<i>3d8 (Claw) / 3d8 (Claw)</i>
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	<i>See below</i>
SPECIAL DEFENCES:	<i>See below</i>
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	<i>50%</i>
INTELLIGENCE:	<i>Supra-Genius</i>
ALIGNMENT:	<i>Chaotic Good</i>
SIZE:	<i>L (16' tall)</i>
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	<i>X / 11,076</i>

Avraasha is surely the greatest of all Pyroclastic Sphinxes: Magnificent and tremendously powerful elemental creatures born of fire and magma. Indeed, she is so ancient and magically potent that it may well be that she is the mother and progenitor of the entire race. Whether this is true or not, it is certain that Avraasha enjoys divine favor, thanks to her position as First Servant to Raanet, the Xuel goddess of Fire and Hospitality.

Avraasha is a breathtaking example of her kind, appearing as a gigantic lion with the wings of an eagle - made wholly of burning ash - upon her back. Her head is that of a beautiful woman's possessed of long dark hair made of cinders, flickering and gleaming like fiery stars in the night sky. She seems to be made of utterly black volcanic glass fractured in thousands of places across her form. Through these cracks, the menacing glow of molten magma shines through, seething with the primal power of the world's lifeblood. Wisps of grey smoke, hot ash, and sparking embers constantly rise from her body. Her eyes are like the cauldrons of active volcanoes and the air around her is made a constant, violent blur for the intense heat she perpetually sheds.

Although the pyroclastic sphinx is native specifically to the Elemental Plane of Magma, Avraasha was known to dwell near the Perpetual Hearth, located upon the place of Muspelheim in Gladsheim. Though she differs in her choice of abode from her kin and kind, the First Servant is said to be just as enigmatic and more powerful than any known creature of her type by several orders of magnitude.

Still, accounts regarding Avraasha characterize her as being kindly of heart and unfailingly polite and courteous - traits that served her well as the emissary of her patron goddess. Likewise, she is said to be profoundly knowledgeable and wise, ever-calm and above the common fray. Stories aplenty exist regarding those that would approach Avraasha in peace and offer her gems and other sorts of wealth resistant to fire and heat and be rewarded for their tribute with nonesuch and singular information the sphinx has managed to collect over the span of untold millennia. Likewise, Avraasha is known to bestow the same treasures in return for especially rare riddles, poetry, prose, or knowledge. She is said to be quite fond of bards and a skilled singer or performer can expect the best of her goodwill. For all this, however, the First Servant is a terrifying opponent in battle, a creature capable of laying waste to entire legions of powerful warriors in the service of her goddess or to protect those whom she favors.

Avraasha constantly *detects invisible* and *magic*, and may *read magic* at will. She may see through any kind of fog or smoke as if it were nonexistent. Five times a day, she is capable of hurling a 12 dice *fireball* or creating a *wall of fire*. She may use each of the following spells three times each day: *Locate object*, *dispel magic*, *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *remove curse*, *legend lore*, and any kind of *symbol*. Once per day, she may utter a *power word: stun* and summon an *incendiary cloud*. Avraasha is completely immune to fire, lava, and smoke. Touching her smoldering bodies brings with it peril; those that do so suffer 2-12 hp damage (save vs. dragon breath for half) for each round they remain in contact with her. Finally, Avraasha is able to draw nurturing subsistence from magma and fire and her body regenerates 2 hp each round, provided she is able to remain in direct contact with either.

As do all pyroclastic sphinxes, Avraasha has a particular gift for language, both spoken and written, and may read, speak, and write any language in existence with perfect fluency. Purportedly, it is hers to understand everything that has ever swum within the burning blood of the world - from the first moments of the world's birth to the complete histories of everything consumed in its most recent volcanic eruption. If these tales are even close to true, then her knowledge is a profound treasure, indeed.

SALAMANDER, GREATER

FREQUENCY:	<i>Unique</i>
NO. APPEARING:	<i>1</i>
ARMOR CLASS:	<i>3/1</i>
MOVE:	<i>12"</i>
HIT DICE:	<i>9+9</i>
% IN LAIR:	<i>85%</i>
TREASURE TYPE:	<i>F (x2)</i>
NO. OF ATTACKS:	<i>2</i>
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	<i>1d6+4 (Trident) / 4d4 (Tail)</i>
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	<i>Heat, Produce Lava</i>
SPECIAL DEFENCES:	<i>+1 or better weapon to hit</i>
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	<i>Standard</i>
INTELLIGENCE:	<i>Exceptional</i>
ALIGNMENT:	<i>Chaotic Evil</i>
SIZE:	<i>L (10' tall)</i>
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	<i>X / 11,076</i>

Greater Salamanders act as kings and queens, lording above the rank and file of their more common and less powerful kin. Their great power allows them to wield such authority, with some rare examples holding great domains on the Elemental Plane of Fire in which they command thousands of typical Salamanders. Such armies are feared across the whole of that burning continuum and not even the mighty Efreeth of the fabled City of Brass are willing to tread in those places in which they hold sway unless their need is dire indeed.

Greater Salamanders are 10' tall creatures with crimson serpentine bodies that constantly shed hot tongues of fire. They have the head and torso of a man or a woman, however, possessed of powerful features and feral beauty. Their hair is like ash and cinder and their eyes glow like coals in a furnace. As do their brethren, Greater Salamanders hate cold, preferring temperatures above 300°. Unlike their lesser kin, however, they are capable of existing in cooler conditions indefinitely. The lairs of these creatures are like the heart of a blast furnace, easily above 500°. Whatever treasure might be found within such places is, of course, of a nature to withstand such extreme heat.

The human-like upper body of a Greater Salamander has an armor class of 3, while its lower body is Armor Class 1. These creatures universally carry mighty magical tridents that are forged of nearly-unbreakable metal on the Elemental Plane of

Fire, honed to a razor keenness. These weapons act as +3 weapons in all ways and inflict 1d6+4 hp damage, plus an additional 1d6 for the heat and flames that constantly lick and writhe about them. At the same time it strikes with its trident, it can lash out and coil around an opponent with its snake-like tail, constricting for 4d4 hp of damage, likewise inflicting and additional 1d6 points of damage from the heat of its body. While fire resistant creatures will not suffer this additional heat damage, they will be subject to normal attack damage.

A Greater Salamander has the ability to magically produce lava. While they usually utilize this ability to shape their lairs to their liking, they may also use it as an attack form. When doing so, they are able to spray forth the molten substance in an area originating at their bodies and extending outwards in a cone whose maximum range is 9". This magma spray inflicts 9d4+9 hp damage to all those caught within its area of effect, though such victims may make a saving throw vs. breath weapons for half damage.

Greater Salamanders can be affected only by magical weaponry or by creatures of a magical nature or with great strength. They are impervious to all fire-based attacks. *Sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells are ineffective against them. *Cold*-based attacks, however, cause an additional 1 point of damage per die of attack value.

Appendix C: PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

Witch-Priestess Adria il-Xandra

Race / Gender: Human Female
 Level / Class: 5th level Cleric (Wee Saj)
 Alignment: Lawful Neutral



Strength: 7 TH Bonus: -1 Dam. Bonus: ±0 Op. Doors: On 1 B. Bars: 0%
Intelligence: 15 4 Additional Languages Known
Wisdom: 17 Magical Attack Adjustment: +3
Dexterity: 14 Reaction / Attack Adjust.: ±0 Defensive Adjust.: ±0
Constitution: 12 Hit Point Adjustment: ±0 System Shock: 80%
Charisma: 16 Reaction Adjustment: +25%

Armor Class: 5 (Elfin Chain Mail Gown)

Hit Points: 25

Movement Base: 12"

Weapon in Hand: Footman's Flail

Adjusted To-Hit Armor Class 0: [Footman's Flail] 19
 [Dagger, Wielded] 19
 [Dagger, Thrown] 19

Adjusted Weapon Damage: [Footman's Flail] 1d6+3 (S/M), 2d4+2 (L)
 [Dagger, Wielded] 1d6 (S/M), 1d6 (L)
 [Dagger, Thrown] 1d4 (S/M), 1d3 (L)

Attacks Per Round: 1

Weapon Proficiencies: Footman's Flail, Mace, Dagger

Non-Proficiency Penalty: -3

Languages Known: Common, Ancient Xuloise, Dwarven, Elven, Orcish

Adjusted Saving Throws	
Paralyzation:	9
Petrification:	12
Rods/Staves/Wands:	13
Breath Weapon:	15
Spells:	14

* Save vs. Mind-Affecting Spells: 11

Magic Weapon Descriptions	Special Racial Abilities
None.	None.
Other Magic Items	Spells & Special Class Abilities
<i>Horn of Acheron</i> (as a <i>Horn of Valhalla</i> , though it can be blown three times each day to summon 2d6 skeletons or 1d6 zombies (the blower's choice) that will unfailingly serve its blower, who must worship Wee Saj), <i>Ruby Skull</i> (may cast <i>Augury</i> 1/day; 10% of the time, this is upgraded to <i>Commune</i>), <i>Potion of Healing</i> .	Cleric Abilities: Turn Undead (<i>Skeleton: C, Zombie: C, Ghoul: T, Shadow: 4, Wight: 7, Ghast: 10, Wraith: 13, Mummy: 16, Spectre: 20</i>) Cleric Spells Prepared (5/5/2): 1 st : <i>Cure Light Wounds</i> (x3), <i>Invisibility to Undead</i> , <i>Protection from Evil</i> , 2 nd : <i>Augury</i> , <i>Chant</i> , <i>Hold Person</i> , <i>Silence 15' Radius</i> , <i>Spiritual Hammer</i> , 3: <i>Animate Dead</i> , <i>Speak with Dead</i> .

Distribution of All Items Carried					
Left Side		Center, Back, or Feet		Right Side	
Item	Location	Item	Location	Item	Location
Ruby Skull	Carried	Elfin Chain Mail Gown	Worn	Footman's Flail	Carried
Dagger	Sheathed on belt	Holy Symbol	Worn	Iron horn	On belt
Wineskin	On belt	Cloak	Worn	Leather rigging	On belt
Small haversack	On belt	High hard boots	Worn	Holy water vials (2)	In rigging
50' Silk rope	In haversack			Potion	In rigging
3 days Fine food	In haversack				

Gold & Wealth: 5gp 30pp A platinum and ruby necklace worth 1,000gp A ruby skull-ring worth 500gp	Experience Gained: 19,824xp.
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Special Notes: The Witch-Priestess has served the faith of Wee Saj all her life, being promised to its cathedral in the Freehold by her parents in lieu of a year's taxes. She has flourished within the church, however – so much so that some believe that she actually has the favor of her goddess herself (something given credence by the powerful magic items sacred to the Sajian faith that she has already recovered in her young life). Tall and beautiful, with long blonde hair, pale skin, and piercing blue eyes, Adria is incredibly vain...though within her church, this is accepted as something of a given. She is a rising star within her faith, so when the Witch-Matriarch ordered her – along with many others from her cathedral – to see to the task of exploring the strange cyst in the world near Bleak Gate, few were surprised at the choice. Armed with an unshakable belief in the Ruby Sorceress and her extraordinary powers – she expects nothing less than success in this endeavor.



Salok Swiftfare

Race / Gender: Surface Gnome Male

Level / Class: 5th level Fighter

Alignment: Neutral Good



Strength: 18 27% TH Bonus: +1 Dam. Bonus: +3 Op. Doors: On 1-3 B. Bars: 20%
Intelligence: 11 2 Additional Languages Known
Wisdom: 10 Magical Attack Adjustment: ±0
Dexterity: 10 Reaction / Attack Adjust.: ±0 Defensive Adjust.: ±0
Constitution: 16 Hit Point Adjustment: +2 System Shock: 95%
Charisma: 12 Reaction Adjustment: ±0%

Armor Class: 4 (*Chain Mail Armor +1*)

Hit Points: 42

Movement Base: 6"

Weapon in Hand: *Halberd +1*

Adjusted To-Hit Armor Class 0: [Halberd] 14
 [Short Bow] 16
 [Dagger] 15

Adjusted Weapon Damage: [Halberd] 1d10+4 (S/M), 2d6+4 (L)
 [Short Bow] 1d6 (S/M), 1d6 (L)
 [Dagger] 1d4+3 (S/M), 1d3+3 (L)

Attacks Per Round: [Halberd] 3/2
 [Short Bow] 2
 [Dagger] 1

Weapon Proficiencies: Halberd, Halberd Specialization, Short Bow, Short Sword, Dagger

Non-Proficiency Penalty: -2

Languages Known: Common, Gnomish, Burrowing Mammal, Dwarvish, Halfling, Goblin, Kobold, and Orcish

Adjusted Saving Throws	
Paralyzation:	11
Petrification:	12
Rods/Staves/Wands:	13
Breath Weapon:	13
Spells:	14

Magic Weapon Descriptions	Special Racial Abilities
<i>Halberd +1</i> : No special abilities.	<i>Infravision</i> : 60'; <i>Detect grade or slope in passage</i> : 80%; <i>Detect unsafe walls, ceilings, or floors</i> : 70%; <i>Determine approximate depth underground</i> : 60%; <i>Detect direction of travel underground</i> : 50%. <i>Attacks vs. Kobolds and Goblins are +1 To Hit. Attacks from Gnolls, Bugbears, Ogres, Trolls, Ogre Magi, Giants, or Titans are at -4 To Hit.</i>
Other Magic Items	
<i>Chain Mail +1, Potion of Rainbow Hues.</i>	Spells & Special Class Abilities
	<i>Weapon Specialization</i> : Salok specializes in the use of the Halberd. With this weapon, he has a +1 bonus "to hit" and a +2 bonus to damage. He attacks with the weapon 3 times every 2 rounds.

Distribution of All Items Carried					
Left Side		Center, Back, or Feet		Right Side	
Item	Location	Item	Location	Item	Location
Halberd	Carried	Chain Mail Armor	Worn	Halberd	Carried
Dagger	Sheathed on belt	Hooded Cloak	Worn	Wineskin	On belt
Quiver	On belt	High hard boots	Worn	Tinderbox, flint & steel	On belt
Arrows (20)	In quiver	Backpack	Worn	Leather rigging	On belt
		Short Bow	Across back	Oil flasks (2)	In rigging
		50' Rope	In backpack	Potion	In rigging
		Large leather sacks (2)	In backpack		
		2 weeks Iron Rations	In backpack		
		Iron Spikes (5)	In backpack		
		Mallet	In backpack		

Gold & Wealth: 40sp, 25gp. A pair of matched adamantite bracers worth 1,000gp, Silver beard ornamentation worth 250gp.	Experience Gained: 21,138xp.
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Special Notes: One of the most accomplished warriors ever to produced by the gnomish folk of the Little Hills, Salok is something of a folk legend thanks to his prodigious strength and the bravery he displayed in standing against a band of undead giants that descended from the Jötunn Mountains to plague the small folk of the land. His name known to most in the Freehold, it is small wonder that the church of Wee Saj called upon him to accompany their faithful into a mysterious cyst in the Oerth discovered not far from the fell Bleak Gate. With an opportunity for riches and magic - and most importantly, to raise the standing of the region's gnomes in the eyes of the common people across the land - it proved a summons he could not refuse.



Lady Kiralee of Westburn

Race / Gender: Human Female
 Level / Class: 5th level Paladin (Wee Saj)
 Alignment: Lawful Good



Strength: 17 TH Bonus: +1 Dam. Bonus: +1 Op. Doors: On 1-3 B. Bars: 13%
Intelligence: 9 1 Additional Language Known
Wisdom: 13 Magical Attack Adjustment: ±0
Dexterity: 7 Reaction / Attack Adjust.: ±0 Defensive Adjust.: ±0
Constitution: 17 Hit Point Adjustment: +7 System Shock: 97%
Charisma: 17 Reaction Adjustment: +30%

Adjusted Saving Throws	
Paralyzation:	8
Petrification:	9
Rods/Staves/Wands:	10
Breath Weapon:	10
Spells:	11

Armor Class: 1 (Plate Mail Armor, *Cloak of Protection +1*, & Shield)

Hit Points: 55

Movement Base: 6"

Weapon in Hand: *Bastard Sword +1*

Adjusted To-Hit Armor Class 0: [Bastard Sword] 15
 [Javelin] 16
 [Short Sword] 16

Adjusted Weapon Damage: [Bastard Sword] 2d4+1 (S/M), 2d8+1 (L)
 [Javelin] 1d6 (S/M), 1d6 (L)
 [Short Sword] 1d6 (S/M), 1d8 (L)

Attacks Per Round: 1

Weapon Proficiencies: Bastard Sword, Javelin, Short Sword, Footman's Flail, Dagger

Non-Proficiency Penalty: -2

Languages Known: Common, Dwarven

Magic Weapon Descriptions	Special Racial Abilities
<i>Bastard Sword +1, "The Sorceress' Gaze": May Detect Invisible and Detect Illusion 1/day (each).</i>	None.
Other Magic Items	Spells & Special Class Abilities
<i>Cloak of Protection +1.</i>	Cleric Abilities: Turn Undead (<i>Skeleton: 4, Zombie: 7, Ghoul: 10, Shadow: 13, Wight: 16, Ghast: 19, Wraith: 20</i>) Paladin Abilities: <i>Detect evil, 60'</i> (when concentrating); <i>Immune to disease</i> ; <i>Lay on hands</i> heals 10 hit points of damage per day; <i>Cure disease</i> 1/week; <i>Emanates Protection from evil aura, 1" radius</i> ; <i>Turn undead</i> as 1 st level Cleric.
Animal Companions, Familiars, & Mounts	
<p>Governess: A powerful jet-black Heavy Warhorse that serves as Lady Kiralee's <i>special mount</i>. It is thought that the destrier is inhabited by the spirit of Invincible: The warhorse that led the initial charge that marked the beginning of the Battle of Ydirme Meadows. Evidently, the slain steed has been returned to life by the Ruby Sorceress to serve her paladin faithfully. AC 6, MV 18", HD 4+4, HP 36, THAC0 12, #AT 3, Damage 1d8 (Kick) / 1d8 (Kick) / 1d3 (Bite), AL LG.</p>	

Distribution of All Items Carried					
Left Side		Center, Back, or Feet		Right Side	
Item	Location	Item	Location	Item	Location
Large Metal Shield	Carried	Plate Mail Armor	Worn	Bastard Sword	Carried
Short Sword	Sheathed on belt	Holy Symbol	Worn	Dagger	Sheathed on belt
Small leather sacks (2)	On belt	Cloak	Worn	Waterskin	On belt
2 weeks Iron Rations	In sack	Tabard	Worn	Leather rigging	On belt
Iron Spikes (5)	In sack	High hard boots	Worn	Holy water vials (3)	In rigging
Mallet	In sack	Backpack	Worn		
		50' Rope	In backpack		
		Quiver	On back		
		Javelin (5)	In quiver		

Gold & Wealth: 200 gold lions, A sapphire and silver ring, worth 250gp A matching sapphire and silver necklace worth 150gp.	Experience Gained: 31,228xp.
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Special Notes: Lady Kiralee is a paladin sworn to defend the faithful of Wee Saj at the City of Peaceful Repose, located in the foothills of the Jötunn Mountains in the Freehold. When a group of rampaging undead giants stormed from the peaks of that range to plague the good folk of Westburn, however, she was one of the first to charge forth from the Ruby Sorceress' temple to defend the common folk of that city. Her actions impressed the Freehold League sufficiently to see her knighted as a Lady of the Land.

Such titles are meaningless to Lady Kiralee, however. She lives for nothing more than to serve as the instrument of Wee Saj' will on the Prime Material Plane. So it is that when the priestesses of the faith were summoned to the mouth of the infamous Bleak Gate to explore the cyst in the world found close to that dire place, she needed no enticement to follow. Brave, strong, and proud, she will face whatever trials lie within emboldened by her faith and great puissance!



Xaran Raðavi

Race / Gender: Human Male
 Level / Class: 5th level Ranger
 Alignment: Chaotic Good



Strength: 14 TH Bonus: ±0 Dam. Bonus: ±0 Op. Doors: On 1-2 B. Bars: 7%
Intelligence: 14 4 Additional Languages Known
Wisdom: 14 Magical Attack Adjustment: ±0
Dexterity: 16 Reaction / Attack Adjust.: +1 Defensive Adjust.: -2
Constitution: 15 Hit Point Adjustment: +1 System Shock: 91%
Charisma: 8 Reaction Adjustment: ±0%

Adjusted Saving Throws	
Paralyzation:	11
Petrification:	12
Rods/Staves/Wands:	13
Breath Weapon:	13
Spells:	14

Armor Class: 7 (*Leather Armor +1*)

Hit Points: 35

Movement Base: 12"

Weapon in Hand: Long Sword

Adjusted To-Hit Armor Class 0: [Long Sword] 16
 [Hand Axe] 15

Adjusted Weapon Damage: [Long Sword] 1d8 (S/M), 1d12 (L)
 [Hand Axe, Wielded] 1d6+1 (S/M), 1d4+1 (L)
 [Hand Axe, Thrown] 2d6+1 (S/M), 2d4+1 (L)

Attacks Per Round: 1

Weapon Proficiencies: Long Sword, Hand Axe, Short Bow, Bastard Sword, Dagger

Non-Proficiency Penalty: -2

Languages Known: Common, Elvish, Gnoll, Halfling, Orcish

Magic Weapon Descriptions	Special Racial Abilities
<i>Hand Axe of Hurling +1:</i> No special abilities.	None.
Other Magic Items	
<i>Leather Armor +1, Horn of Fog, Potion of Diminution.</i>	Spells & Special Class Abilities
	Ranger Abilities: +5 <i>Damage bonus</i> against "giant-class" creatures; <i>Surprise</i> opponents 50% of the time; <i>Tracking</i> ability; <i>Identification</i> of tracks.

Animal Companions, Familiars, & Mounts

Umbra: Is a rare jet black Xuloise Umbrahound that serves as Xaran's animal companion. Said to have been one of the few animals brought to the land beyond the Hellforges by the Xuel fleeing the Rain of Invisible Flame, the dogs are renowned for their loyalty, intelligence, and ferocity. She is very devoted to Xaran, even putting herself in between an angry Owlbear and her master (which gave the wounded Ranger the moment he needed to kill the rampaging monster). AC 6, MV 15", HD 3+3, HP 21, THAC0 16, #AT 1, Damage 2d4 (Bite), AL N.

Distribution of All Items Carried					
Left Side		Center, Back, or Feet		Right Side	
Item	Location	Item	Location	Item	Location
Hand Axe	On belt	Leather Armor	Worn	Long Sword	Carried
Small bag	On belt	Hooded Cloak	Worn	Wineskin	On belt
Dog treats	In bag	High soft boots	Worn	Tinderbox, flint & steel	On belt
Large pouch	On belt	Backpack	Worn	Leather rigging	On belt
Iron Spikes (5)	In pouch	50' Rope	In backpack	Oil flasks (2)	In rigging
Mallet	In pouch	Large leather sacks (2)	In backpack	Potion	In rigging
		2 weeks Iron Rations	In backpack		

Gold & Wealth: 16sp, 28gp, Large piece of flawless alexandrite set on a chain, worth 225gp A turquoise and aboleth-lung wineskin, worth 750gp.	Experience Gained: 32,016xp
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Special Notes: Xaran hails from the dangerous reaches of the Doomwood, where that forest borders the Looch Marshes. A skilled hunter and tracker, he was hired by an expedition from Elrub looking for safe passage across the Javan River to Wickloft in the Freehold. The Ranger proved himself an excellent guide on the journey, saving the merchant train on more than one occasion from a large group of humanoids shadowing their every step. When they arrived at their destination, the expedition's leader was well-pleased by his performance and was sure to let his fellows know about it. Soon enough, his services as a guide were in high demand.

Recently, Xaran was hired by the church of Wee Saj to accompany several of their scholars in an investigation of a subterranean find of historic consequence, not far from the infamous Bleak Gate. Though he is hardly religious, the pay was excellent, so he readily agreed to act as their guide on the exploration. Xaran is a quiet man, thoughtful and introspective, and he has no friends to speak of - other than his loyal dog, Umbra. So it is that he intends to conduct himself with the utmost professionalism during his job. And if danger rears its ugly head - he'll look after the Sajians, just like he did the merchants.



Aliza ad-Xeai

Race / Gender: Human Female
 Level / Class: 5th level Magic-User
 Alignment: Lawful Neutral



Strength: 6 TH Bonus: -1 Dam. Bonus: ±0 Op. Doors: On 1 B. Bars: ±0%
Intelligence: 18 7 Additional Languages Known
Wisdom: 10 Magical Attack Adjustment: ±0
Dexterity: 12 Reaction / Attack Adjust.: ±0 Defensive Adjust.: ±0
Constitution: 7 Hit Point Adjustment: ±0 System Shock: 55%
Charisma: 16 Reaction Adjustment: +25%

Adjusted Saving Throws	
Paralyzation:	14
Petrification:	13
Rods/Staves/Wands:	11
Breath Weapon:	15
Spells:	12

Armor Class: 6 (*Bracers of Defense AC7, Ring of Protection +1*)
Hit Points: 26
Movement Base: 12"
Weapon in Hand: Dagger
Adjusted To-Hit Armor Class 0: [Dagger] 20
Adjusted Weapon Damage: [Dagger] 1d4 (S/M), 1d3 (L)
Attacks Per Round: 1
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger
Non-Proficiency Penalty: -5
Languages Known: Common, Ancient Xuloise, Dwarven, Elven, Fire Giantish, Goblin, Orcish, Red Dragon

Magic Weapon Descriptions	Special Racial Abilities
None.	None.
Other Magic Items	Spells & Special Class Abilities
<i>Bracers of Defense AC7, Ring of Protection +1.</i>	Spells Memorized (4/2/1): 1 st : <i>Charm Person, Detect Magic, Magic Missile, Sleep</i> ; 2 nd : <i>Invisibility, Web</i> ; 3 rd : <i>Lightning Bolt</i> .
Animal Companions, Familiars, & Mounts	
Empress: A crimson pseudodragon that serves as Aliza's familiar. Identical in appearance to a miniature red dragon, she is haughty and regal, expecting to be pampered and treated with the respect to which she is entitled due to her draconic lineage. Still, she is loyal to Aliza, aiding, advising, and even fighting for the magi when she can. AC 2, MV 6"/24", HD 2, HP 11, THAC0 16, #AT 1, Damage 1d3 (Bite), SA Poison sting at +4 to hit, SD Chameleon power, SQ See invisible, MR 35%, AL LG.	

Distribution of All Items Carried					
Left Side		Center, Back, or Feet		Right Side	
Item	Location	Item	Location	Item	Location
Dagger	Carried	Circlet	Worn	Ring	Worn
Large Pouch	On belt	Robes	Worn	Dagger (3)	On belt
Empress' treasure	In large pouch	Velvet cloak	Worn	Wineskin	On belt
Familiar treats	In large pouch	High hard boots	Worn	Leather rigging	On belt
Small pouch	On belt	Backpack	Worn	Oil Flask (2)	In rigging
Tinderbox, Flint & Steel	In small pouch	50' Silk rope	In backpack	Potion	In rigging
		2 weeks Iron rations	In backpack		
		Torches (3)	In backpack		

<p>Gold & Wealth: 33gp, 2 50gp gemstones A platinum and ruby necklace worth 1,500gp. 57gp, 10 assorted gemstones, each worth 15gp (this is kept in her large pouch and serves as Empress' "hoard")</p>	<p>Experience Gained: 38,012xp.</p>
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Special Notes: Aliza was born in the wondrous Free City, though was transferred to the Ruby Cathedral – a holy site sacred to the faith of Wee Saj in the Freehold, at the feet of the Jötunn Mountains – but a few months ago. A faithful servant of the Grim Lady, she was meant to serve as a scholar and professor to the novices there, studying to be priestesses. Because of her brilliance and her incredible depth of knowledge regarding the Invisible Art and the intractable manner in which it intersects with the Sajian faith, she has become an indispensable asset to the church in her new home. Still, bookish and contemplative, she has had a difficult time there socially, integrating herself into the complex network of priestesses and magi there.

Recently, a great discovery has been made in the vicinity of the infamous Bleak Gate: A cyst within the world that may have been created by those first Xuloise refugees fleeing the Rain of Invisible Flame into the land beyond the Hellforages. Because of her expertise in the Imperium's history, she was chosen by the Witch-Matriarch of the Ruby Cathedral to accompany this group. Aliza is very excited at the possibility of discovering much about these mysterious first Xuel – and possibly showing the other Sajians from the Cathedral the sort of person she is, in the doing. With such things at hand, what could possibly go wrong?



Creek Hareburrow

Race / Gender: Hairfoot Halfling Male

Level / Class: 5th level Thief

Alignment: Chaotic Good



Strength: 10 TH Bonus: ±0 Dam. Bonus: ±0 Op. Doors: On 1-2 B. Bars: 2%
Intelligence: 9 1 Additional Language Known
Wisdom: 9 Magical Attack Adjustment: ±0
Dexterity: 17 Reaction / Attack Adjust.: +2 Defensive Adjust.: -3
Constitution: 15 Hit Point Adjustment: +1 System Shock: 91%
Charisma: 14 Reaction Adjustment: +10%

Adjusted Saving Throws	
Paralyzation:	12
Petrification:	11
Rods/Staves/Wands:	12
Breath Weapon:	15
Spells:	13

Armor Class: 4 (*Leather Armor +1* & Dexterity Bonus)

Hit Points: 20

Movement Base: 12"

Weapon in Hand: Short Sword

Adjusted To-Hit Armor Class 0: [Short Sword] 19
 [Short Bow] 15

Adjusted Weapon Damage: [Short Sword] 1d8 (S/M), 1d8 (L)
 [Short Bow] 1d6+2 (S/M), 1d6+2 (L)

Attacks Per Round: [Short Sword] 1
 [Short Bow] 2

Weapon Proficiencies: Short Sword, Short Bow, Dagger

Non-Proficiency Penalty: -3

Languages Known: Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Gnome, Halfling, Goblin, Orcish

Magic Weapon Descriptions	Special Racial Abilities
None.	<i>Infravision:</i> 60'; Detect sloping passage: 75%; Detect direction: 50%; If alone or ahead of party, <i>surprise monsters</i> on 1-4 (d6). Lowered to 1-2 if some sort of portal must be opened.
Other Magic Items	
<i>Leather Armor +1, Arrow +2 (12), Helm of Comprehending Languages & Reading Magic.</i>	Spells & Special Class Abilities
	Thieving Abilities: <i>Pick Pockets:</i> 60%; <i>Open Locks:</i> 57%; <i>Find/Remove Traps:</i> 40%; <i>Move Silently:</i> 55%; <i>Hide in Shadows:</i> 51%; <i>Hear Noise:</i> 25%; <i>Climb Walls:</i> 75%; <i>Read Languages:</i> 20%. <i>May backstab opponents for x3 damage.</i>

Distribution of All Items Carried					
Left Side		Center, Back, or Feet		Right Side	
Item	Location	Item	Location	Item	Location
Short Sword	Carried	Helm	Worn	Quiver	On Belt
Large Pouch	On belt	Leather Armor	Worn	Arrows (24)	In quiver
		Cloak	Worn	Wineskin	On belt
		High hard boots	Worn	Small pouch	On belt
		Short Bow	Across back	Tinderbox, Flint & Steel	In small pouch
		Backpack	Worn	Leather rigging	On belt
		50' Rope	In backpack	Oil Flask (3)	In rigging
		2 weeks Iron rations	In backpack		

Gold & Wealth: 26gp, 5pp. A mithril hand mirror, worth 500gp. Five tiny opals, each worth 10gp.	Experience Gained: 14,794xp.
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Special Notes: Creek is a halfling from the Little Hills in the eastern reaches of the Freehold. He is perhaps best-known for his role in putting down a large tribe of goblins dwelling in the so-called “Caves of Chaos” near those highlands. His actions in those adventures brought him no small bit of renown in the region, where he is known as a consummate treasure hunter and skillful adventurer.

The thief was mildly surprised when the church of Wee Saj reached out to gauge his interest in joining a group of their faithful exploring a newfound cyst deep beneath the Hellforge Mountains near the infamous Bleak Gate. The Sajians are not well-known for such outreaches, especially to the small folk of the hills. A pleasant and cheerful fellow with a good sense of humor, Creek quickly agreed to the offer. In addition to the impressive pay promised and the chance to find untold riches in the mysterious place - he understand that the adventure represents an excellent opportunity to show the Sajians what the folk of the Little Hills can do, if given a chance. It is a moment he does not intend to squander!



Elinthri Naskiri

Race / Gender: Human Male

Level / Class: 4th level Fighter / 4th level Magic-User

Alignment: True Neutral



Strength: 14 TH Bonus: ±0 Dam. Bonus: ±0 Op. Doors: On 1-2 B. Bars: 7%
Intelligence: 16 5 Additional Languages Known
Wisdom: 9 Magical Attack Adjustment: ±0
Dexterity: 11 Reaction / Attack Adjust.: ±0 Defensive Adjust.: ±0
Constitution: 16 Hit Point Adjustment: +2 System Shock: 95%
Charisma: 10 Reaction Adjustment: ±0%

Adjusted Saving Throws	
Paralyzation:	13
Petrification:	13
Rods/Staves/Wands:	11
Breath Weapon:	15
Spells:	12

Armor Class: 4 (*Chain Mail Armor +1*)

Hit Points: 24

Movement Base: 12"

Weapon in Hand: Long Sword

Adjusted To-Hit Armor Class 0: [Long Sword] 17
 [Short Bow] 18

Adjusted Weapon Damage: [Long Sword] 1d8+1 (S/M), 1d12+1 (L)
 [Short Bow] 1d6 (S/M), 1d6 (L)

Attacks Per Round: [Long Sword] 1
 [Short Bow] 2

Weapon Proficiencies: Long Sword, Short Bow, Horseman's Pick, Short Sword, Dagger

Non-Proficiency Penalty: -5

Languages Known: Common, Elvish, Gnome, Gnoll, Goblin, Halfling, Hobgoblin, Orcish

Magic Weapon Descriptions	Special Racial Abilities
<i>Long Sword +1</i> : No special abilities.	<i>Infravision</i> : 60'; <i>Resistance to Sleep & Charm</i> : 30%; <i>Detect Secret or Concealed Doors</i> 1 in 6 (if passing by), 2 in 6 (if actively searching), 3 in 6 (if door is concealed, not secret).
Other Magic Items	
<i>Chain Mail Armor +1</i> , <i>Potion of Fire Resistance</i> .	Spells & Special Class Abilities
	Spells Memorized (3/2): 1 st : <i>Charm Person</i> , <i>Magic Missile</i> , <i>Sleep</i> ; 2 nd : <i>Invisibility</i> , <i>Strength</i> .

Distribution of All Items Carried					
Left Side		Center, Back, or Feet		Right Side	
Item	Location	Item	Location	Item	Location
Long Sword	Carried	Chain Mail Armor	Worn	Quiver	On Belt
Large Pouch	On belt	Cloak	Worn	Arrows (24)	In quiver
		High hard boots	Worn	Wineskin	On belt
		Short Bow	Across back	Small pouch	On belt
		Backpack	Worn	Tinderbox, Flint & Steel	In small pouch
		50' Rope	In backpack	Leather rigging	On belt
		2 weeks Iron rations	In backpack	Oil Flask (2)	In rigging
				Potion	In rigging

Gold & Wealth: 47gp, 2 25gp gemstones A platinum and moonstone armband worth 250gp, A scabbard inlaid with mother of pearl, worth 300gp.	Experience Gained: 15,286xp (Fighter) 15,286 (Magic-User).
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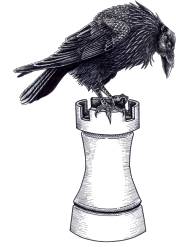
Special Notes: Elanthri was born in the hills known as The Spires, in the southern portion of the Freehold. The son of a Xuel human father (who could trace his lineage down to the Great Migration) and Elvish mother, he listened enrapt to the tales his parents told him of the days of the fallen Imperium across the mountains all throughout his boyhood. So it is little surprise that, as he grew older, he was always drawn to action and adventure, studying the paths of blade and tome with the fervor of a zealot, that he might one day follow in the footsteps of the heroes whose legends he idolized.

Elanthri joined a succession of adventuring companies once he was of age to do so, finding great success in his travels within the Hellforge Mountains. Gaining a reputation as a skilled and hard-nosed explorer, his skills became much in demand within the region when various travelers had need of an adventurer who they could count on to get their job done. So it is that he has been called upon again - this time, by the church of Wee Saj, far to the north. They had need of explorers of his ilk so that they might plumb the secrets of a recently-discovered cyst in the world, not far from the dreaded Bleak Gate. With the promise of riches and danger in equal measure to be found in such a fell place - how could he refuse such a summons?



Merah Coldiron

Race / Gender: Mountain Dwarf Female
Level / Class: 4th level Fighter / 4th level Thief
Alignment: Lawful Neutral



Strength: 16 TH Bonus: ±0 Dam. Bonus: +1 Op. Doors: On 1-3 B. Bars: 10%
Intelligence: 9 1 Additional Language Known
Wisdom: 9 Magical Attack Adjustment: ±0
Dexterity: 15 Reaction / Attack Adjust.: ±0 Defensive Adjust.: -1
Constitution: 16 Hit Point Adjustment: +2 System Shock: 95%
Charisma: 7 Reaction Adjustment: -5%

Adjusted Saving Throws	
Paralyzation:	13
Petrification:	12
Rods/Staves/Wands:	11
Breath Weapon:	16
Spells:	11

Armor Class: 5 (Leather Armor, *Small Metal Shield +1*, & Dexterity Bonus)

Hit Points: 28

Movement Base: 9"

Weapon in Hand: *Hand Axe +1*

Adjusted To-Hit Armor Class 0: [Hand Axe] 17
 [Light Crossbow] 18

Adjusted Weapon Damage: [Hand Axe] 1d6+2 (S/M), 1d4+2 (L)
 [Light Crossbow] 1d4 (S/M), 1d4 (L)

Attacks Per Round: [Hand Axe] 1
 [Light Crossbow] 2

Weapon Proficiencies: Hand Axe, Battle Axe, Light Crossbow, Short Sword, Dagger

Non-Proficiency Penalty: -2

Languages Known: Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Gnome, Halfling, Goblin, Kobold, Orcish

* Save vs Poison: 9

Magic Weapon Descriptions	Special Racial Abilities
<i>Hand Axe +1:</i> May shed an "invisible light" 1/day. This is a 30' diameter globe centered upon the weapon that only its wielder can perceive. Within this area, the axe's bearer can see as if beneath the full moon on a cloudless night. The effect is capable of piercing most forms of magical darkness.	<i>Infravision:</i> 60'; <i>Detect grade or slope</i> in passage: 75%; <i>Detect new construction:</i> 75%; <i>Detect sliding or shifting walls or rooms:</i> 66%; <i>Detect traps</i> involving pits, falling blocks or other stonework: 50%; <i>Determine approximate depth</i> underground: 50%. Attacks vs. Half-Orcs, Goblins, Hobgoblins, or Orcs are <i>+1 To Hit</i> . Attacks from Ogres, Trolls, Ogre Magi, Giants, or Titans are at <i>-4 To Hit</i> .
Other Magic Items	Spells & Special Class Abilities
<i>Small Metal Shield +1, Potion of Gaseous Form.</i>	Thieving Abilities: <i>Pick Pockets:</i> 45%; <i>Open Locks:</i> 47%; <i>Find/Remove Traps:</i> 50%; <i>Move Silently:</i> 33%; <i>Hide in Shadows:</i> 25%; <i>Hear Noise:</i> 15%; <i>Climb Walls:</i> 78%; <i>Read Languages:</i> 15%. <i>May backstab opponents for x2 damage.</i>

Distribution of All Items Carried					
Left Side		Center, Back, or Feet		Right Side	
Item	Location	Item	Location	Item	Location
Small metal shield	Worn	Leather Armor	Worn	Hand Axe	Carried
Light crossbow	Hanging from belt	Cloak	Worn	Drinking horn	On belt
Quiver	On Belt	High hard boots	Worn	Small pouch	On belt
Bolts (24)	In quiver	Backpack	Worn	Thief's tools	In pouch
Small sack	On belt	50' Rope	In backpack	Tinderbox, Flint & Steel	In small pouch
Iron Spikes (15)	In sack	2 weeks Iron rations	In backpack	Leather rigging	On belt
Mallet	In sack	Small keg of beer	On backpack	Oil Flask (2)	In rigging
				Potion	In rigging

Gold & Wealth: 57gp, 11pp. 5 small opals, each worth 25gp A belt with adamantite plates featuring inlaid scenes and symbols sacred to Dumathoin, worth 500gp.	Experience Gained: 7,452xp (Fighter) 7, 452xp (Thief).
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Special Notes: Young Merah would have certainly died at the hands of the Dark Elves, had an adventuring party not come across her family's clan-hold in the Hellforge Mountains just when it was in the midst of being attacked by the terrible dark elves. At her mother and father's behest, the group of human explorers took the dwarven girl from her home and helped her escape to their home above the world's surface - sacrificing themselves as a rearguard, so that she might live.

Merah had a difficult time adjusting to the land beneath the sky, yet among the patient adventurers that served as something like surrogate parents, she eventually was as comfortable with the sun warming her skin as she was ensconced in the world's bosom. Too, these adventurers taught her many of their skills, portions of their occupations that she took to as a duck takes to water. As her lifespan was far longer than theirs, she lived to see them grow old and grey even as she was just becoming an adult. Yet she acts as their legacy with every step and breath, as Merah has become an accomplished adventurer herself, helping save the weak from monsters in the night, just as she once was saved.

Recently, Merah was called to the Ruby Cathedral in the northern portion of the Freehold by the church of Wee Saj to aid in the exploration of a newly-discovered cyst within the world which they believe to be connected to the first Xuloise folk to have traveled from their doomed empire to the land beyond the Hellforges hundreds of years ago. With the possibility of perils aplenty - and great riches as well - to be found in this mysterious place, the offer was irresistible to Merah.



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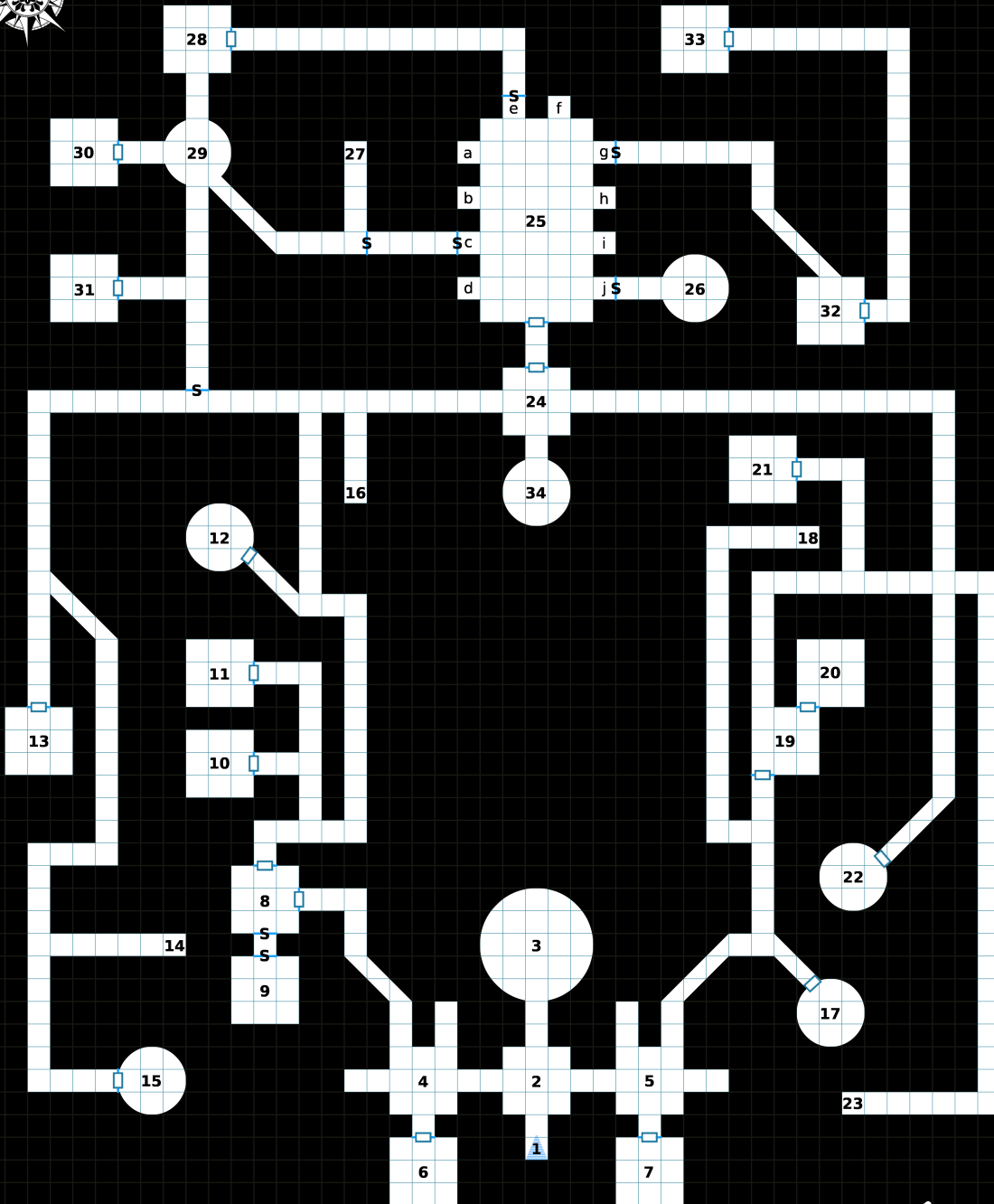
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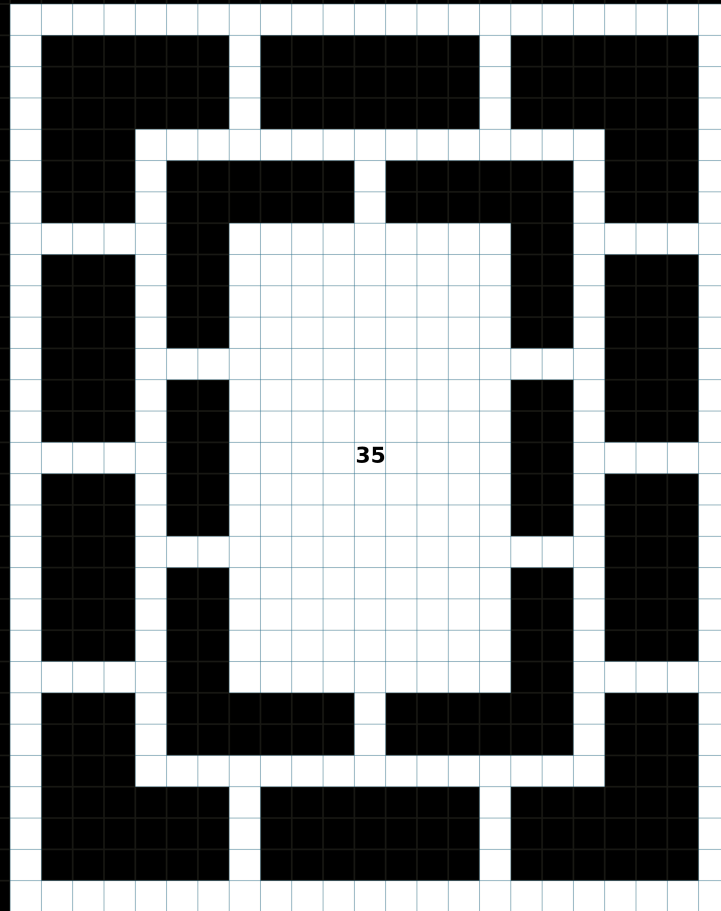
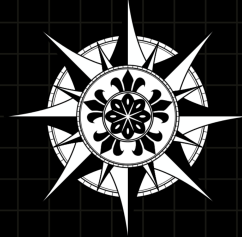


The Forgotten Library of Raanot

The Temple Incandescent

Scale: 1 square = 10'

North



The Forgotten Library of Raanet

Scale: 1 square = 10'

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