RICHARD MARGER WEBBER SAMPLES & CHEER CORPUS

Dwellings Quest Eldervale

The secret correspondence between ancient masters of Order is preserved and used for young acolytes as a training exercise. Whether they gain aptitude in secrecy or in the meaning of the letters locked within is of no concern to the masters of Order and their unfathomable strategies for dominance.



MASTER MACHINIST

RANGER ARCHETYPE

he centuries-old Machinists' Guild was founded in singleminded pursuit of an inspired goal: using alchemy and magic to craft a mystic machine to measure the endless passage of time. The Guild hoped to use this complex tool to help bound and define a reality they saw as unkempt and chaotic. As their pursuits fell fallow, the Machinists turned their eyes to another complex system in need of order: civilization.

A Master Machinist strides through a city content in the knowledge that they act as an agent of perfect order. The Guild acts quietly, seeking out threats both magical and mundane, and solving problems as they see fit. Secretive by nature, rangers of the Machinists' Guild find themselves called to be both spymasters and assassins, all for the perfection of their city.

GUILD TRAINING

3rd-level Master Machinist feature

You gain proficiency in Thieves' Tools if you are not already proficient. You also learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Master Machinist Spells table. These spells count as ranger spells for you, but don't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

Master Machinist Spells

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	comprehend languages
5th	invisibility
9th	speak with dead
13th	locate creature
17th	legend lore



KEY TO THE CITY

3rd-level Master Machinist feature

You learn to create and control a scrying lens, allowing you to spy on nearby targets. Your lens grants you the ability to both see and hear as if you were in its space.

You summon your scrying lens by choosing a direction and distance, up to a maximum of 10 feet per level. Your lens requires concentration and persists for 1 minute. You may cast *hunter's mark* at a target through your lens without breaking your concentration and you gain advantage on concentration checks to maintain your *hunter's mark* against any observed targets.

After using this ability, you must take a short or long rest before using it again.

IDENTIFY WEAKNESS

7th-level Master Machinist feature

Your continued use of the scrying lens grants you the ability to search for weaknesses in your targets. After casting *hunter's mark* through your lens, your weapon attacks against that target score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20, and your first successful weapon attack causes one level of exhaustion unless your target succeeds at a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC.

TIRELESS PROTECTOR

11th-level Master Machinist feature

Your mastery of order has granted you mastery over yourself. You no longer need to eat or sleep while within the boundaries of a city, though you still need rest to regain your abilities. While in an urban environment, you gain advantage on saving throws against sleep effects and you are immune to exhaustion.

BASTION OF SECRECY

15th-level Master Machinist feature

The final initiation of the Guild creates an impenetrable fortress in your mind. You gain the benefit of a constant *mind blank* spell, You may extend this protection to any allies within 30 feet as an action, though this requires concentration to maintain.

THE MACHINISTS' GUILD

The Machinists' Guild is a scattered collection of agents dedicated to creating cities of perfect order, devoid of chaos and evil. Members of this secret society act as they see fit, answering to no one but the Hidden Council—a network of alchemists, diviners, and philosophers endlessly attempting to influence the future.

Enclaves of three to four Machinists exist in any city of a reasonable size. Agents take on secret identities throughout the population, keeping their senses open for those who would take advantage of their position to further their own greed. Once corruption has been found, Guild members seek to reveal evidence of any misdeeds to the proper authorities. However, when those authorities have forgotten the rule of law, agents are trained to follow their beliefs and act swiftly and autonomously.

Motto. "Our solitary endeavor ensures an ideal society of perfect order."

Beliefs. The Machinists' Guild's beliefs can be summarized as follows:

- Crime stains the foundations of a city and must be cleansed at the source.
- Every aspect of society contains the potential for corruption and decay. No one is above suspicion.
- The pursuit of perfection is the truest and most noble goal.

Goals. Maintain order by identifying the corrupt and weakening their control over crime. Bring order to all cities, creating a web free from chaos and corruption. Secrecy is paramount and ensures our long term survival. Society can be perfected by those with the knowledge and vision to achieve progress.

Typical Quests. Find and reveal evidence of extortion or blackmail among the city's merchants. Remove the violent new leader of the local thieves' guild. Convince a reluctant noble to support your investigation into banditry along the Old Forest Road. Keep a witness safe without revealing your presence.

Machinists' Guild Renown

Renown	Title
1	Cog
3	Gear
10	Hand
25	Activator
50	Governor

FINDING WISDOM IN HERESY

What do I think about the War? Killing those aberrants without learning from their marks is no different than burning books. Instead, our flame will seek to preserve knowledge.

—The Archive, 217 YK

THE REKINDLERS

The War of the Mark is remembered as one of the only times the Twelve Dragonmarked Houses united with a single purpose. As they brutally purged those dragonmarks deemed aberrations throughout Khorvaire, the families of The Twelve solidified their own power, becoming the forces which would guide nations throughout the centuries. However, not everyone was content to destroy these mysterious marks without first understanding their place in the Draconic Prophecy.

In the aftermath of the War, three members of House Medani pledged themselves to the secret study of aberrants. Now remembered only by their distinct titles, the Watch, the Archive, and the End have become a myth among the Medani. The Three located bearers of these mysterious marks, studied their fascinating abilities, and tried to develop their own prophetic translations. If the aberrant became a threat to others, the Rekindlers chose covert assassination as an act of mercy.

Over the long years since, the Rekindlers have continued to act in complete secrecy. The heads of House Medani know only as much as needed to fund their work and to guide a few of their most devout intelligence agents into this unique fold.

Today, candidates are thoroughly tested by coded instruction long before they are ever allowed to meet with the Watch. Agents are often surprised to be given their assignments by Jonna d'Medani (female halfelf ranger 3/diviner 5), as the Watch is seen as simply a quiet, methodical bookkeeper for the Warning Guild. House leaders receive infrequent and mysterious

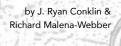
written reports from the Archive, Konnyl d'Medani (*male half-elf cleric 7*), known to most as a kindly yet powerful priest of Dol Arrah. Only members of the Three know the true identity of the End, though that role is always chosen for their skills in combat, planning, and assassination.

Throughout the centuries, the goals and successes of the Rekindlers have been kept secret to those outside the House. While the Three have made no public announcement as to whether aberrants are part of the Draconic Prophecy, it is likely that whenever a slain aberrant is found, a record of their powers and lineage has been added to the Rekindlers' Vault. To what purpose this serves, only the Three can know.

PLAYING A REKINDLER AGENT

As one of the chosen few who have knowledge of the Rekindlers, your view of the world narrows to a search for those with dangerous abilities who have been taught by necessity to keep them concealed. You are taught the *detect dragonmark* spell in order to assist you in rooting out these dangerous individuals. Your task is simply to search and report to the Watch, the only member of the Three you have likely encountered.

Like any member of House Medani, the pursuit of knowledge is always more important than removing a threat. However, when a threat reveals itself, the use of *ignite dragonmark* is a traditional first response.



REKINDLERS IN THE WORLD

The Rekindlers are a secret organization that can be added to any Eberron campaign. As they are masters of espionage, most other organizations in Khorvaire have never heard of the Rekindlers, and certainly would never recognize one of the Three in person.

Any organization who wishes to unlock the secrets of dragonmarks or the Draconic Prophecy may have crossed paths with the Rekindlers in the years since the War of the Mark. These include House Tharashk and the Finders Guild, Creation's Forge and the Church of the Traveler, the Cults of the Dragon Below, and the Seren Dragon Cults.

NEW SPELLS

DETECT DRAGONMARK

1st-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action Range: Self (60 feet) Components: V, S Duration: 10 minutes

For the duration, you can sense the presence of dragonmarks within 60 feet of you. If you sense a dragonmark in this way, you can spend your action to learn more information about one specific mark, including its location, type, and power. You also learn the mark's Intuition die type, as described in *Wayfinder's Guide to Eberron*.

You may spend a second action to learn the specific abilities associated with the dragonmark, but the target may make a Wisdom saving throw. If they succeed, they become aware of the detection, though they do not automatically notice the spellcaster.

The spell can penetrate most barriers, but it is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt.

IGNITE DRAGONMARK

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S (caster must be

dragonmarked)

Duration: Instantaneous

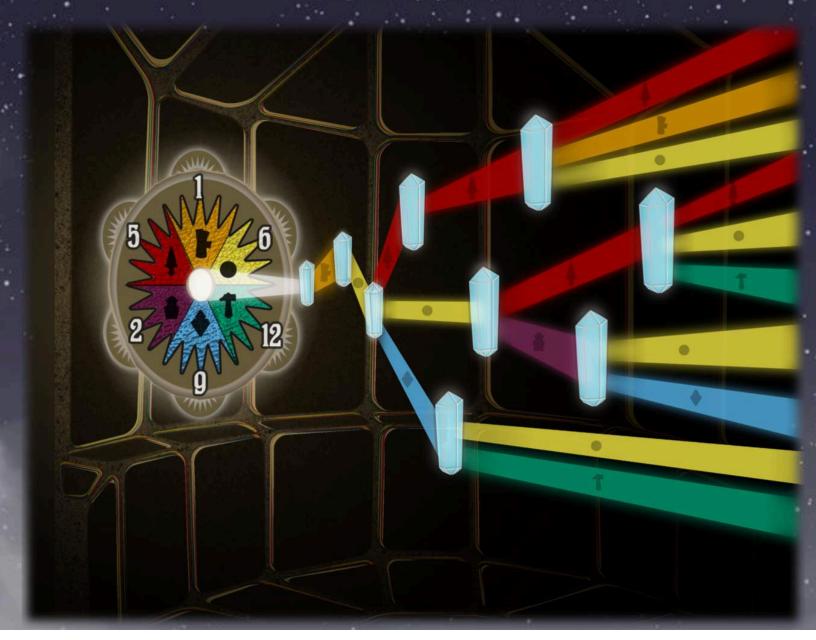
With a soft utterance and a sharp thrust of your hand, you cause the target's dragonmark to burst into flame. If your target fails a Charisma saving throw, the creature takes 3d8 fire damage and cannot use any of its dragonmark abilities for 3 rounds. On a successful save, reduce this to 1d8 fire damage and 1 round of dragonmark suppression. If you have the Greater Dragonmark feat, your target makes their saving throw with disadvantage.

At higher levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 per level and the suppression of dragonmarks increases by 1 round.

Dwellings Eldervale



The Masters of Light study how the mysterious rays refract and scatter as they pass through their revered prisms, assigning significance to every color escaping each crystal.



DEALING WITH DIVINATIONS

ne of the fundamental rules that makes investigations in fantasy role-playing games especially exciting is the ability to cast divination spells. This school of magic grants spellcasters a wide range of useful tools when it comes to finding the truth.

Many of these spells, like *augury* or *contact* other plane have specific guidance for interpreting results. However, spellcasters intending to cast the set of spells to speak with certain beings might wish to have some expectations during an investigation. The following are some useful guidelines to remember when casting these divinations.

SPEAK WITH PLANTS

Though seldom considered to have an active intelligence, plants are capable of holding specific memories which impact their growth. These impacts are easiest to categorize in terms of a plant's size.

Grasses and connective plants. The smallest plants are good for assessing where someone has walked or how many have passed through an area. They may also help direct spellcasters towards creatures or objects currently laying down in a nearby field. These plants understand time in terms of days.

Shrubs and bushes. Medium size plants can describe who has pushed past their branches and what direction they were headed. In some situations, they may even know what a creature carried or have a general sense of their emotional energy. These plants understand time in terms of seasons.

Trees. The plants of the canopy are careful nurturers of their forests, so they can often recall who killed another plant or animal under their care. Trees are keenly aware of death and watchful for fires and decaying things. These plants understand time in terms of years and decades.

SPEAK WITH ANIMALS

While animals are significantly more intelligent than plants, they share a focus on food and danger. However, this focus can change dramatically when speaking with predators or prey animals. Perception and memory can also be different when speaking with air and sea creatures.

Small prey animals (mice, squirrels).

Prey are constantly watchful for immediate threats and conscious of regular food sources. These animals can describe levels of threat in a nearby area, with a general description of the threat but few details. The memory of a small prey animal lasts for a day at most.

Small predators (cats, dogs). Predators are extremely mindful of territory violations, and the behavior of their prey. These animals can describe what walked past and disrupted their hunt but with no real details on their actions. The memory of a small predator is generally short, but cats can hold a grudge for years.

Large prey animals (bison, deer). Migratory herd animals have an intrinsic knowledge of large scale movements and disruptions to their environment. These animals can tell where camps or campsites are or where caravans have passed, but with only the barest detail about specific individuals. Members of these herds possess long memories that think in terms of seasonal cycles.

Large predators (wolves, bears, lions).

These predators are used to being masters of their domain, so they are always on watch for threats to their own supremacy, with little concern for the specific movements of weaker creatures. They are generally unsympathetic to requests for aid, and completely unthreatened by humanoids unless beaten in battle. Large predators have long memories, though mostly about themselves.

Aquatic animals. Fish have very little interest in the surface world, beyond the shadows cast by boats. On the other hand, aquatic creatures have strong community knowledge

of strange creatures passing from the surface to deeper regions.

Aerial animals. Avian creatures are aware of so much movement happening on land that they have trouble focusing on anything in particular. Sudden movements, bright lights, vivid colors, or shiny objects all might create a stronger memory among birds or flying creatures.

SPEAK WITH DEAD

The dead are an excellent source of information for any spellcasting investigator. However, those who speak to the deceased need to be mindful of the limitations of those who have passed on. Many have transitioned fully into the afterlife, and even though they are forever tied to their physical remains, they may find little connection to the prime material plane.

Above all, a detective should do their best to be courteous to the dead, as ghosts are always envious of those who still cling to life.

The recently deceased. Those who are newly dead may still be coming to grips with their new status, possibly even waiting in line to be settled in the proper plane as a petitioner in the afterlife. During this confusing time, ghosts may struggle to put together the story of their own death, though strong emotions may remain. Instead, investigators may wish to focus on specific sense memories, such as lingering scents or odd sounds, as these tend to fill the final thoughts during death.

The long interred. Once settled into their afterlife, the dead quickly begin to lose track of the details of the mortal existence. Emotions tend to fade over time, leaving more space to consider the story of their own lives. The long-dead are more likely to recall people and places, though individual details may have been forgotten.

The reborn. Some fortunate souls gain the opportunity to begin life anew, often in a new extra-planar form. Whether this is the result of a successful petition or simply because a deity is in need of more servitors, it means that they are unavailable for questioning. In such cases, spellcasters must use spells such as contact other plane in order to learn more about a case, though their contact is unlikely to remember much at all from their previous lives.



Rich explains: armor theory

One of the most important contributions to the game theory of armor came from a Hungarian statistician named Abraham Wald. During World War II, he was consulted on a project about protecting US aircraft from enemy fire. As one of the brilliant minds in the Statistical Research Group, Wald had access to reams of data from aircraft covered with bullet holes. The assignment was simple: given that gunfire usually hit these aircraft in similar places, but armor plating is heavy, what areas of the plane should receive a layer of reinforcement? Since the majority ran along the fuselage, this seems like an obvious spot to place some armor.

Wald, a statistical juggernaut, disagreed. His recommendation was to reinforce the engines, the area of the planes with the fewest bullet holes. And he was right.

What Wald realized is that the obvious answer was based on **survivor bias**, a fallacy where data is drawn only from those who survive to be sampled. A plane shot in the fuselage could still come home! Engine shots weren't rarer than fuselage shots in general, just in the surviving planes. Any aircraft shot in the engine was significantly less likely to ever make it home to be part of this study. With Wald's advice, Allied aircraft became that much stronger throughout the rest of the war.

Not only does armor provide protection, it also makes it possible to determine where successful attacks will fall. If a castle is heavily defended, except for the front gate, then it only stands to reason that most attacks will come through that front gate. Studying these weaknesses grants attackers an edge and also gives defenders a very specific strategy during combat.

If you're interested in a quick research project, look at the differences in glove types and hand injuries between boxers and MMA fighters.

LVL 4

"Listen chum, ain't nothing gonna stop me from seeing what's over that horizon!"

CLERIC (DISCOVERY DOMAIN) LVL 4

Medium humanoid (half-orc), neutral good

Armor Class 16 (scale mail and shield)
Hit Points 27 (4d8 + 4)
Initiative +1
Speed 30 ft.

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA 16(+3) 9(-1) 12(+1) 10(+0) 16(+3) 13(+1)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +3
Skills History +2, Insight +5, Investigation +3,
Perception +5, Religion +2

Proficiency Bonus +2

Senses darkvision, passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Orc, Dwarven
Equipment warhammer, shield, scale mail,
explorer's pack, holy symbol, prayer book,
incense, vestments, 15 gp

Discovery Domain. You are proficient in Initiative, Investigation, and alchemy kits.

Relentless Endurance. When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

Savage Attacks. When you score a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, you can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the damage of the critical hit.

Background (Acolyte)

Shelter of the Faithful. You can perform religious ceremonies on behalf of your deity, and you can expect to receive healing and care at any temple of your faith.

Actions

Warhammer. +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1d8 + 3 bludgeoning damage.



Sacred Flame. Range 60 ft., one target. The target must succeed at a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d8 radiant damage.

Options

Channel Divinity. When you channel, choose one of the following effects. You must finish a long or short rest before channeling again.

- Inspired Vision. You spend five minutes studying an object and see a vision of its past owners, purpose, and history.
- Turn Undead. Each undead within 30 feet must make a Wisdom saving throw or flee for one minute or until it takes damage.

Spellcasting. You are a 4th level spellcaster. Your spell casting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). You have the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): guidance, light, sacred flame, spare the dying

1st level (4 slots): bless, blood draw, detect magic, guiding bolt, healing word 2nd level (3 slots): aid, augury, knock, prayer of healing, silence

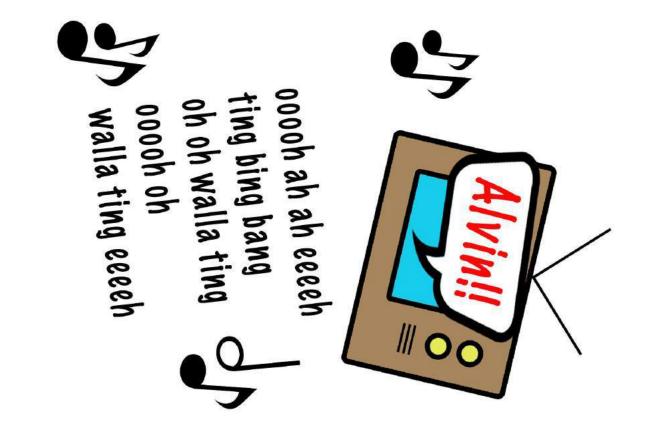
3: Saturday Morning Cartoons

When I was a kid, I was up every single Saturday morning as early as I could for my weekly dose of cartoons. G.I. Joe, The Jetsons, Transformers... but my favorite cartoon was The Chipmunks. I loved those three rodent child stars and their constantly frustrated caretaker/manager/father figure. Why? Possibly because they were a musical force to be reckoned with.

Their high-speed music was captivating. I felt like there had to be some kind of message hidden within their strange freestyle chipmunk sounds. "Ooh eeh, ooh, ah ah, ting tang, walla walla bing bang?" We'd sing along, but I never quite figured it out. Later, I learned that the image inside a television was somehow reversed, so I think Simon and I were forever trapped in mirrored worlds. Alas.

But maybe you can figure it out. Was Alvin telling me that I was a chipmunk or a...?

Solution:





In which the Champions find something most unexpected...

In Part Three, the Champions find the secrets of the cave as well as locate their missing cow. The River of Slime provides some explorative options, while the Ritual Chamber leads to the toughest challenge the Champions have ever faced.

Scene 1: Exploring the Cavern

Beneath the valley floor waits a series of iron rungs leading down into a cold, dark cave. When the Champions reach the cave floor, read or paraphrase the following:

Strange sounds echo throughout the underground chamber: rattling metal, the croak of frogs, and strangest of all, a terrified moo. As you wonder how

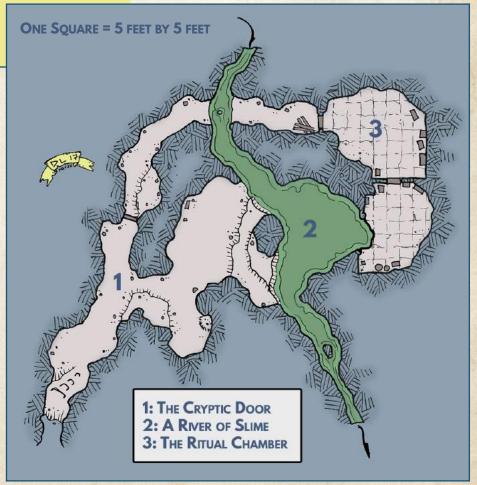
in the world a prized milk cow got down here in the first place, the sound cuts off suddenly and ominously.

The moo sounds distant, and the Champions must first make their way through the cave before they can save Bessie.

To the north, a metal gate has been built into the stone. The iron bars are wide, and the entire door rattles loudly from a strong wind. Peering closer, a Champion can see that the metal surface has been completely covered in strange runic letters, completely unlike anything seen in Crown City. If a character takes a record of these runes.

they may learn more once they travel to the Royal Library in Book Two. Even using comprehend languages cannot decipher the strange symbols.

The door is both locked and trapped, and seems more suited to humanoids than goblins. Opening the lock requires a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check, while bypassing the trap requires a separate DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The trap triggers a rockslide in the room, dealing 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage to anyone within 15 feet of the door and making the tunnel impassible. Failing to pick the lock means that the Champions are forced to face the River of Slime.



To the east, an underground stream bubbles near the floor of the cave and disappears under a nearby wall. The slime river flows slowly to the north, and the riverbank is covered in goblin footprints coming in and out of the muck. The Champions can attempt to swim underneath the rock wall and emerge near the Ritual Chamber. The current is quite slow, allowing characters to move up and downstream with relative ease.

A Champion who wishes to swim the slime river requires a **DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check**, and even Champions who are pulled along by a rope must succeed at a requires a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw**. Any Champion who attempts either test makes it to the northern hallway, but those who fail get a little bit of the stagnant water in their mouths and are infected with *Slurry*.

Slurry is a disease that can be found in still waters containing an abundance of iron and stone. Infected characters take a -1 on Strength and Constitution checks. Fortunately, unless a character continues to drink the polluted waters, a case of Slurry naturally clears out within one week.

However the Champions reach the northern hallway, read or paraphrase the following:

The smell of fresh blood emanates through an open doorway, overpowering even the stench of the nearby river. You can hear a soft chanting in a high-pitched, sing-song voice from the darkness ahead.

Scene 2: The Ritual Chamber

As the Champions enter the Ritual Chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

Blood and viscera cover the floor of this stone chamber, flowing from the altar near the back of the room. A goblin in short, red robes holds aloft a stone glowing an otherworldly purplish black while it chants in an unfamiliar, alien language. Bessie's head rests on the altar, as does her exposed ribcage, turned upright like a plant built from gristle and bone. A shimmering curtain of stars hovers in the background. The grinning goblin turns to face you, its eyes wide and bright with arcane fire. Dark red blood drips from its chin.

The goblin shaman, filled with strange, cosmic energies, is at the verge of completing a strange ritual to summon a beast with the same frame and features as Bessie. What the shaman fails to realize is that another death is required to finish the ritual—it's own. The shaman attacks the Champions, unwilling to let them stop the ritual, and oblivious to the fact that the Champions will likely complete the ritual themselves.

Tactics: At the start of combat, the shaman immediately launches a lightning bolt at the closest target. Afterwards, it will switch between group and single attacks, depending on how many Champions are within range.

Due to the cosmic ritual, the shaman gains a pool of temporary hit points, which refresh at the start of each round of combat. The shaman can also keep focused on its spells, breaking the normal rules for Concentration.

Rewards: The goblin shaman wears a golden necklace worth 50gp as well as a pair of gloves of swimming and climbing.

On the round following the shaman's death, read or paraphrase the following:

Even though poor Bessie is torn apart on the altar, it becomes immediately clear that the goblin shaman was the true sacrifice. A lance of dark energy, the same purplish black as the strange stone he was holding, launches from the shaman's chest and strikes the rippling curtain of stars. A deep thrum echoes through the room. The thing that strides through on four massive legs is like nothing you've ever seen. Shadows cling to the beast's face and a long row of tentacles erupt from along the spine, gyrating with malice. Your heart seizes up as the the thrum blares out once more from the beast's shrouded face, spraying the room with shards of ice.

Before the Champions have a chance to respond to the creature, it activates its Thrum of Fear ability during the surprise round. Afterwards, roll initiative and run combat as normal.

Tactics: The Creature attacks with its tentacles, hoping to harm two targets at once. If only one Champion is within range, the Creature will use its Frozen Breath against as many Champions as possible.

Describing a Cosmic Horror

The disgusting creature is purposefully unnamed to allow players the opportunity to be part of the lore of the campaign. Nothing like this has ever been seen before by the people of Crown City. Give the Champions as many details as possible, but call the creature a "thing" or a "horror" until the players decide what they want to call it. By the time the party reports to the Queen, they are expected to have their own name for the foul beast. Ability tests cannot gain any additional information about these creatures.

Information: The Creature is wholly incommunicative.

Morale: The Creature fights to the bitter end.

Resolution: The Champions can collect the Ritual Totem anytime during of after the encounter, and should bring this back to the Queen. If the Creature is defeated, the Champions receive the Unending Chill boon. If the Champions are forced to flee, the Creature remains in the Ritual Chamber for some time, though it will eventually learn how to move throughout the cave complex. However, it cannot escape the caves and will remain contained.

Reward—Ritual Totem: Resting near the outstretched hand of the dead shaman is a strange piece of carved stone. The totem has odd symbols on it that certainly don't look like goblin writing, or any other kind of writing the Champions have ever seen. Anyone who carries this totem sees a different sky than everyone else. No matter if it is day or night, the wielder sees a wide expanse of stars above a sunless horizon. Without darkvision, the wielder will need a torch to see the natural world around them.

Reward—Unending Chill: An endless cold streams from the melee weapon which dealt the last blow to the Cosmic Horror. This permanent effect make the weapon even more deadly, causing it to deal one extra point of damage. When held, the weapon may be used as a bonus action to put out any small, natural fire within five feet.

