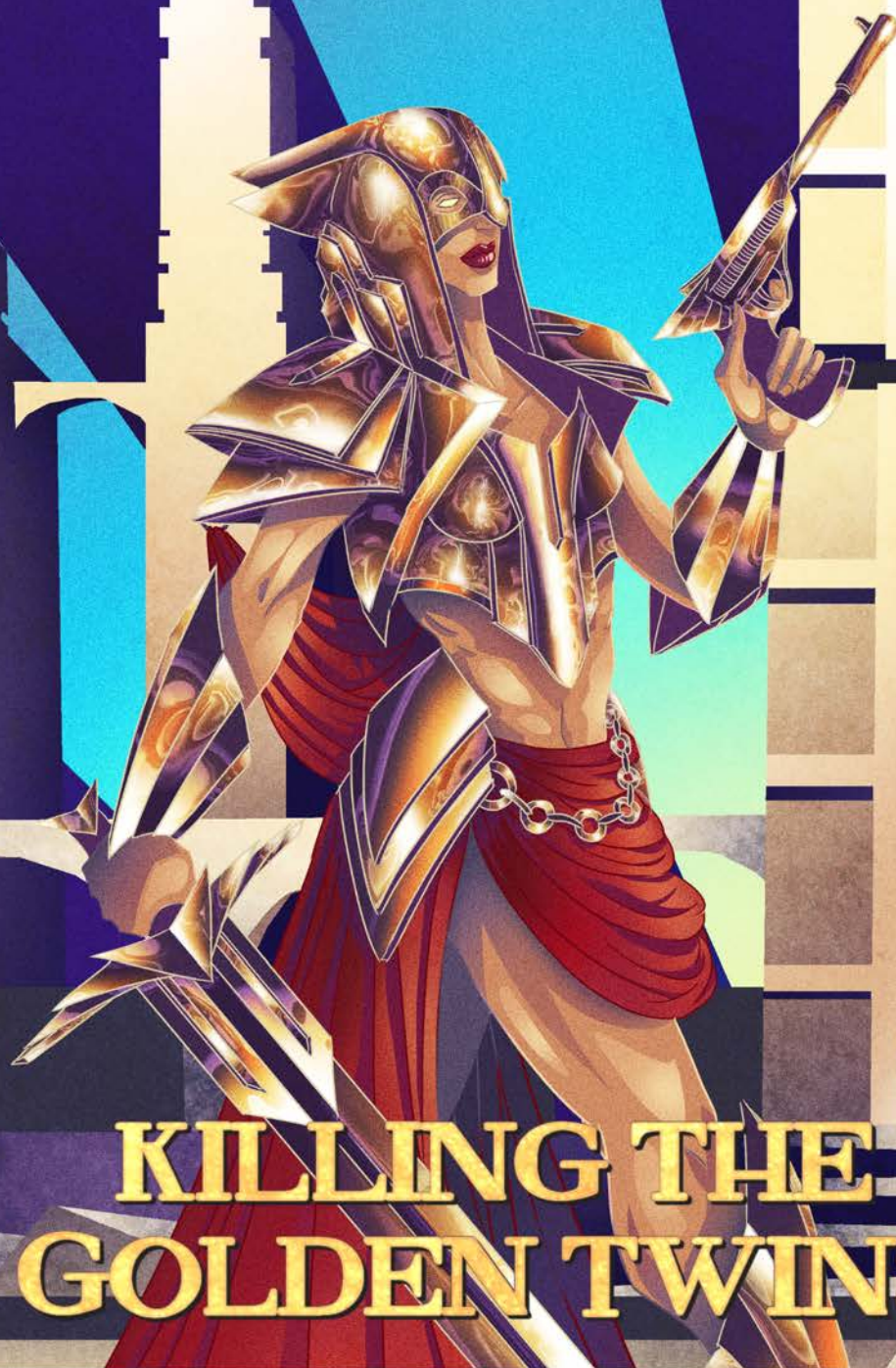


BOOK OF EXALTED DARKNESS

Mike H.



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KILLING THE GOLDEN TWINS



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BOOK OF EXALTED DARKNESS

KILLING THE GOLDEN TWINS

A 5TH EDITION OGL ADVENTURE FOR
FOUR TO FIVE EVIL PCS OF 2ND LEVEL.

This module is set in Askis (a holy decopunk fantasy world similar to the 1920s-1950s of Earth) and uses rules from the (free) Book of Exalted Darkness: Evil Primer.

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The mad scientist Gespadioux has foreseen that the death of the distant offspring of the Paladin of Samovi (Lellwyn Fethyrwal) will cause great discord among her retinue, allowing for a great evil to fester among the countless spirits she governs. The youths—a boy named Kristoph and a girl named Deardra, each just 13 years of age—are currently at their most vulnerable, the defenses provided by the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning feeble compared to those in the confines of their great-great-great-great-great-grand-mother's homes. Gespadioux has waited for this moment for more than a decade, carefully acting through stooges and fools to prepare agents in Ourianos positioned to assassinate these youngling angel-touched and therein wound the Celestial Hero Lellwyn Fethyrwal herself.

In order to succeed the adventurers must bribe, cheat, lie, and sneak to where they can commit a truly heinous act (which they'll find is not as easy as it might at first seem to be). If they are able to stomach the murder of innocents and escape with their own lives the mad scientist Gespadioux knows the value of competent servants and will reward the PCs with forbidden knowledge, evil power, and wealth aplenty. After the murder the party are bound to become fugitives but with their new gifts and coin staying ahead of authorities should be no problem—it will be the vengeance of an immortal Celestial Hero that might be a problem down the line. Of course by completely embracing darkness and the rapid paths to power that can grant, their situation may not be so dire...

FEEDBACK

When the Kickstarter ends all backers that pledged for a PDF of the *Book of Exalted Darkness* will receive access to the full playtest rules. That doesn't mean we don't want to hear from you about this product though! Please leave feedback in a review or e-mail your thoughts to bookofexalteddarkness@gmail.com! If you enjoy this module, take a look at the project and consider pledging but either way thank you for checking out this PDF!

CONSENT

This is an adventure for parties that are interested in roleplaying evil characters and is not ideal for all groups. This module is intended for mature readers and contains content which may cause discomfort. **GMs should not surprise players with the nature of this module**—everyone at the table should participate in a discussion of consent before play begins, confirming that they are on board to explore the adult-oriented themes in *Killing the Golden Twins*. In addition to making sure that no players are ostracized, this also helps set the tone for the game to encourage a more serious approach than what some groups might be accustomed to.

Ambiance is important whenever evil plays a palpable central role that goes beyond simplistic motivations for NPCs and for this reason alone a GM should seek the consent of everyone in a gaming group. Jokes and quips are a frequent part of most games but if the content of a campaign is about candle-lit rituals and gruesome acts, the tone of a session will fall apart quickly due to inappropriate commentary (even if it might be quite humorous).

Consent should also be a concern for GMs as not every player is necessarily prepared for a graphic description of someone having their legs slowly torn off by a monstrous demon. What if a player has witnessed an industrial accident where someone lost their legs? While that certainly has the capacity to be an extremely memorable and horrifying experience for that player, they (understandably) may not want to be reminded of the memory. Here are a few bullet points you can list off when seeking consent: Decapitation, Disembowelment, Dismemberment,

Extreme Violence, Religious Violence, Torture

With a baseline for what is or is not acceptable territory for the game to traverse, the GM can craft narratives and plot arcs that explore the darker sides of roleplaying games. These should create ample opportunities for players to be despicable and vile, pushing the boundaries of morality and encouraging them to walk ever darker paths. In situations like this a common problem tends to arise very quickly: teamwork. After all, why should the cutthroat mercenary suffer the prattling of a mage that takes coin that could be hers, and why should a power-hungry dark priest tolerate anyone other than themselves benefiting from his sacrifice? In short, avarice and greed can be damning to an evil game.

CIRCUMSTANCES AND PACTS

Evil PCs are naturally disposed to being, well, evil, and that doesn't exactly encourage equality and teamwork. While this can be great in the context of a narrative toolset it makes for a difficult experience in a tabletop gaming environment and to address this issue, GMs have a few different tacks that can keep a group of diabolical adventurers from tearing one another's throats out. This module only discusses the narrative route but in the final *Book of Exalted Darkness* we'll consider mechanical benefits, tertiary benefits, and other ways to keep wicked villains from indulging their murderous impulses on one another.

Plot. The first and foremost route that a GM should use to unify evil PCs is the narrative one. Intertwined by fate, the adventurers need one another in order to enact a ritual that will empower them all, keep a common foe at bay, or otherwise serve everyone in a manner that attempting alone would be impossible. There is strength in numbers as well—if the world around the PCs is predicated to unveil their dark deeds, united fronts last much longer.

THE CITY OF LEGIO

During the times before evil was routed from Askis the village of Legio was widely known for the quality of its weapons but with the peace that came after the ascension of the Celestial Heroes, the need for tools of murder subsided and the arts flourished in their place. Craftspeople and sculptors flocked to the settlement, growing it into a beautiful city filled with holy carvings, mosaics, and statues dotting streets dwarfed by buildings built in the sleek style emulating the works of the deific beings that have blessed the world with inaequa. Given the many forges already there the manufacture of items powered by the unique substance became a staple of Legio, the weaponeers turning their crafting expertise to the mass production of automobiles, blimps, items of convenience, trains, and anything else powered by the divine fuel. What was once a humble collection of homes and shops has expanded into an artistic urban paradise built upon the backs of the thousands of workers that fill its many factories.

EVAGANTEM RAILROAD

All across Ouranious is an inaequa-driven railroad run by the nationalized Evagantem Railroad Service. In the city of Legio it has rails that run through all three factory districts, the Caelestibus Commons, and the Profor District.

Labos Factory District. The northwesternmost area of Legio is devoted to factories that produce parts for vehicles—whether they be automobiles, locomotives, or meant to take to the air. These facilities are the largest in the city, though there are far fewer of them than in its sister districts.

Usus Factory District. Askis is a world with many conveniences similar to Earth of a century ago—the toasters, lamp posts, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, telephones, and radios made in Legio are built here. This area also houses the Quickfoot Worker's Bureau, a building always crowded by a large queue of laborers lining up for jobs organized by the government.

Exerceo Factory District. Though there isn't much need for them nowadays the military still maintains their armor and weapons. One of the few cities of the world to continue forging new armament parts and weapon components is Legio. Most of the factories here are sparsely staffed, their workers left to wander about the settlement performing mundane and largely useless tasks such as sweeping the streets, polishing lamppost lanterns, and the like.

Lysium Gardens. The natural environs of the original village of Legio have been preserved in the center of the city in a beautiful wooded park where many of its denizens lackadaisically live out their days with leisure aplenty provided by entertainers and food vendors.

Caelestibus Commons. Legio's wealthiest citizens live in the shadow of the Order of Law Monastery on the western side of the city. Its broad avenues are lined by luxurious mansions and some of the settlement's most beautiful artworks, proudly displayed in the yards of the rich patrons able to commission them.

Artis Quarter. Artists, merchants, restaurateurs, and scholars live and ply their trade in this area of the city just south of the Lysium Gardens. The Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning and Legio College of Inaequa Studies educate the settlement's youth, the former handling schooling for all of the populace until reaching maturity and either entering the workforce or attending the latter for learning more advanced knowledge.

Profor District. The most populated area of Legio is home to the majority of its laborers, its crowded streets filled with many-floored tenements and apartment buildings closely packed together. On its southwest border is the Fortress Legio, an ancient military structure used by the city's placid guard and kept as a museum of the settlement's past.

Salus Borough. Many of the city's laborers dwell in this area's pristine streets but only the most devout—those willing to pay the increased cost for living so close to the majority of Legio's churches and shrines. Of course numerous priests, acolytes, and holy clergy reside here as well, only the most zealous living in the Adominatio Precinct and the wealthiest with residences in Caelestibus Commons.

Adominatio Precinct.

Unlike Praeclarus and Alacer, the city of Legio is not known for the grandeur or profligation of its houses of worship but it is certainly not bereft of them. Every holy deity of Askis has at least one church in this area of the settlement and a few shrines devoted to them, all of them kept in immaculate condition by their legions of followers.



LEGIO



Labos
Factory District

Usus
Factory District

Quickfoot
Worker Bureau

Exerceo
Factory District

Monastic Order
of Law Monastery

Lysium Gardens

Legio Admiristad Institute
of Higher Learning

Legio College
of Inaequa Studies

Adominatio
Precinct

Caelestibus
Commons

Artis
Quarter

Fortress of Legio

Salus Borough

Profor District

PROLOGUE

All of the PCs are citizens (albeit perhaps disturbed or unhappy) of Legio, a small city on the contiguous continent of Ourianos, and each of them holds a job or position that grants regular access to the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning. Perhaps they deliver supplies, clean the rooms, teach, work as administrative staff, perform repairs to the building, prepare food, or are possibly even safety officers in the school. In addition to providing them all with a means for knowing one another, this makes each member of the party knowledgeable about the general layout of the grounds—secret entrances, places to hide, the schedule of guard patrols, and so on. One Sunday night as they lay sleeping, all of the adventurers share a dream. Read the following:

The sky above Legio is, as usual, a bright blue sporadically broken by drifting white clouds that cast faint shadows in the cascade of sunlight glinting off the city's precisely constructed geometric buildings. You walk beside companions, nearing the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning at the center of the settlement. Panicking screams of children draw your gaze toward the building's entrance and you see the defiled corpses of two youths on display, golden illumination pouring out of their eyes to become silver tears that pool on the ground. The metallic liquid rapidly spreads and as it seeps across the stonework it turns a vile purple before becoming the crimson color of blood.

Havoc spreads across the city as demons and devils swim up from out of the blood flooding Legio and you witness one of the Celestial Heroes, the paladin Lellwyn Fethyrwal, screech from out of the sky on angelic wings. As she sees the dead bodies liquify into the blasphemous slurry her shout intensifies and holy light erupts from around her, burning to ash dozens of fiends.

They are far too many in number for one warrior however and in seconds she is overwhelmed by monsters, her blood and body parts flung onto the ruins the creatures have made of the city.

At this point the GM should ask what the PCs do as chaos takes over Legio and all hell breaks loose, offering them an opportunity to cinematically describe their actions and make it clear to their companions what can be expected of each other when they are allowed to act with evil abandon. After the party has had some despicable fun, read the following:

With a fizzling hiss you stand atop the wreckage of Legio, a new figure climbing up toward you—half of his baldcranium is encased in black metal, one of his eyes has been replaced by a lensed clockwork contraption, and beneath his dark leather coat are limbs that bend in ways no humanoid's should. As he nears darkness claws its way closer until eventually there is nothing but you and this strangely familiar old man in the void.

"You may call me Gespadrieux. Though you may not know me, I have known you all your lives." He looks at each of you in turn and instinctively you know it to be true, hidden memories of this mysterious stranger swimming to the fore of your minds. "Your fates are the one true path to bringing balance back to Askis, to be pivotal agents in the casting down of the accursed immortals. Each of you is a herald of the Celestial Heroes' end, destined to sever the connection to

the divine that holds the world in their sway." He sweeps one arm outward and gestures with a skeletal metal hand, causing two figures you recognize to materialize in the air—two prized students at the school. He looks at you sternly, his countenance grim, "you must kill the twins Fethyrwal."

He eyes you all levelly, judging your reactions. "Mind you ultimately this serves to bring balance to the world, for there is no other chink in the grand paladin's armor and your necessary deed will be the first step to bringing this world's penance to pass. You will be rewarded as well, both in coin and power, but you must strike now!" The madman begins to fade away, his voice dwindling to a whisper as he shouts,

"Wait too long and the true defenders of Legio that I have lured away will return, closing the window of opportunity—perhaps forever!" With this last warning you are left to the void of a dreamless sleep...

Afterward the PCs simultaneously awaken and possess a shared telepathy for 30 minutes, reinforcing upon them the reality of their shared experience and the gravity of what they have been asked to do. They are also each imparted with the knowledge of heretical markings and that simple dead bodies won't do—in order to stop the twins from being resurrected their corpses need to be blasphemously scarred, making their quest all the more grisly.

GESPADRIEUX'S DISTRACTION

The whole of Legio's most powerful defenders have been lured away from the city by one of the mad scientists "failed" creations, an abomination of evil that has attacked the seafaring vessel of a well-to-do noble with large holdings throughout Ourianos. It isn't hard for the PCs to find out this information—newsies across the settlement are using it to sell a fair number of papers as usually events around the region are not particularly exciting.

ACT 1: AN UNTHINKABLE DEED

To truly begin the adventure the GM should describe the city of Legio before the PCs devolve into what is certain to be an intriguing discussion about what they have been tasked to do. Read the following:

You awake suddenly and are blinded by the stark golden radiance of the sun spilling onto your face, the cry of steam whistles sounding across the city of Legio as its factories begin operating. The urban settlement is already lively, its citizens bustling down the streets in cabled inaequa-trolleys as newsies on street corners call out the events of the past day, eager to sell their papers to passerby. Odors from food vendors permeate with the cloying-sweet scent of the divine fuel as the machines of industry lurch into action, the lives of the good people of Legio beginning like almost any other day—with one crucial exception, of course.

Before anything else the party should better familiarize themselves with each other and—after agreeing that (for whatever reasons) they will do as Gespadrieux has asked of them—quickly formulate either a good place to meet in secret or cobble together a plan for doing the foul deed while their telepathy persists.

THE DREADFUL MISSION

Their mad scientist benefactor has done much to pave the way for the adventurers but in order to succeed the PCs have several obstacles to overcome.

Isolating the Fethyrwal Twins. While a particularly bloodthirsty, chaotic, and reckless group might not care how much mayhem they cause, most parties will want to keep havoc to a minimum for as long as possible—which means getting their targets alone. Getting the twins by themselves will also make doing the deed (and the grisly work afterward) far easier as any adult that witnesses the atrocity intervenes in an attempt to stop it or at the very least

allow for the youths to escape. When they are not in a proper class, the Fethyrwals are taught side-by-side (and therefore accompanied) by at least one of the tutors from Act 2. If one of the PCs is part of the administrative staff or able to sneak into the offices to gather information, the adventurers can time it right so that only one NPC is with the twins (or if properly distracted, none at all) although that won't be easy as their orders regarding the beloved youths are very strict.

Preparing an Escape Route. It may be possible to kill their targets without being caught but making the markings of blasphemy on the bodies will require some time so simply fleeing immediately is not an option. Unless the PCs slay the twins quickly and quietly (a very unlikely event) they will trigger pandemonium and might have many childhood witnesses. It should be noted that killing all of these observers might make the situation worse (not that murdering two teenagers isn't bad, but *slaughtering many children* is going to paint a much more vibrant target on the adventurers' backs).

Timing is Everything. All of this planning must be done quickly—the school day begins 2 hours after sunrise and ends 3 hours after high noon, at which point the personal bodyguards of the twins will have returned along with the rest of Legio's more powerful defenders.

After the PCs have planned their foul mission and are prepared to murder the twins, read the following as the day begins at the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning:

A network of bells ring throughout the grounds of the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning and in response its student body becomes a bustling flurry of movement as hundreds of youths of all ages file into their classrooms throughout the monolithic building. In a matter of minutes only a few stragglers remain, sprinting quickly with sheafs of papers and bunches of pencils bundled into their hands.

The day is like any other in the school—the monotonous drone of dozens of scholarly youths being educated in history, mathematics, religion, and science. Depending on how much time the PCs spent planning, their opportunities to strike at the twins will wane.

The twins have also had premonitions that someone would attempt to attack them today and are wary, so they insist on wearing their full regalia (and their tutors are on guard as well).

MANIPULATING BUREAUCRACY

Another way the PCs might manipulate the protectors of the Fethyrwal twins is through the bureaucratic machinations of the school. While inserting a false meeting or other unexpected task is guaranteed to divert a teacher, any of the tutors are only delayed for a maximum of 1d4+1 minutes and are prepared for a fight when they arrive. In order to alter work schedules the adventurers need to either sneak into faculty offices—a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check up to 30 minutes before the first bell rings or a DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth) check afterward—or distract administrators with a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check while they make the change.

THE COWARD'S WEAPON

Poisoning a tutor is a route an evil party is likely to consider. Magiciar Gloria and Troubadour Angularis make use of the teacher's lounge whereas Master Prorsus and Sister Imbellum keep to the faculty room. Sneaking into either and poisoning the refreshments therein requires a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check but immediately after someone suffers from it the food and drink in each is thrown out. Any attempts to sneak into one of these rooms to further poison the tutors indirectly are made with disadvantage, though persistent PCs are welcome to try and deliver their fell concoctions personally (in which case each NPC has their own Perception scores, though they gain a +2 bonus if one of their peers has already been poisoned.)

TRICKING A TUTOR

Since they are already suspicious, lying to the teachers is not a simple matter. Any PC that is not a member of the school's faculty has disadvantage on Charisma (Deception) checks against the tutors. A sufficiently clever lie can negate this disadvantage however, provided the adventurers prey on the weaknesses of those they are deceiving.

Magiciar Gloria. The school's preeminent mage is susceptible to any tale about magical anomalies given sufficient evidence, something that requires a separate (secretly rolled) DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check. Any failed attempts to deceive her cause Gloria to cast *detect thoughts*, possibly alerting her to the PC's foul plan.

Master Prorsus. Little will trouble Master Prorsus save the need to slay a wild creature loose on the grounds and those are a rarity. A DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check along with a wound that dealt at least 2 hit points of damage is enough to back up a lie to that effect.

If the adventurers are cunning, lucky, and quick, they may manage to abduct the twins Fethyrwal from the school before enacting their foul deed. 2 rounds after they attack Deardra and Kristoph, a trio of faculty NPCs appear (led by Prorsus, tracking the party).

8AM-10AM	Liturgy with Sister Carnadine
10AM-11:30 AM	Science with Troubadour Angularis
11:30AM-12:30 PM	Sparring with Sister Carnadine
12:30PM-1PM	Lunch in the Cafeteria
1PM-2PM	Mathematics with Magiciar Moderatus
2PM-3PM	History with Master Silvestre

Sister Imbellum. Only a missive or summons from the Monastic Order of Law will divert Sister Imbellum from her duties and crafting a fake requires a DC 12 Forgery Kit check or DC 16 Intelligence check.

Troubadour Angularis. Having once been quite famous and notorious for his promiscuity, Lapisque is extremely fond of his more adoring followers and becomes more gullible if it seems that one of his most devoted fans (Jamie, Pat, or Tracy) is in desperate need of his immediate attention.

WAYLAYING THE FACULTY

When other tactics fail the adventurers are probably going to consider getting a teacher alone and knocking them unconscious (or possibly even dead). Any attacks in public are immediately responded to by the remainder of the faculty as the twins escape the school but if cornered and dealt with quickly, the PCs have a good chance of taking a teacher down. Once two tutors are missing the rest become extremely suspicious and cannot be drawn into isolation, each reacting differently when assaulted alone.

Magiciar Gloria casts *expeditious retreat* and if someone is blocking her way directly *blindness*, dashing at top speed to wherever the twins currently are to get them into safety at the Fortress Legio.

Master Prorsus runs for cover and then attempts to disappear, casting *cure wounds* on himself and then stalking after his attackers and striking when an ally is nearby and can offer him aid.

Sister Imbellum attempts to stun her attacker and then uses *ki* to increase her AC or movement for the round, immediately grabbing one of the twins and taking them to the Order of Law Monastery.

Troubadour Angularis casts *invisibility* on himself and attempts to slip away, warning another teacher of the attack and granting anyone else he can muster for a counterattack some of his Bardic Inspiration.



MURDER MOST FOUL

Once the PCs have isolated their targets (or if they have run out of time and have to attack in the middle of a lesson) and combat begins, read the following:

The angel-touched youths are surprised as you attack but their eyes tell you they are more disappointed than shocked, drawing their weapons with steely resolve. Kristof clasps his hands together and begins chanting to the gods above as Deadra edges forward, both of them looking towards the door and a quick escape. Despite being outnumbered there is no fear in their eyes, only determination.

Deadra Fethyrwal

Small humanoid (angel-touched) paladin 2, lawful good

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 22 (2d10+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +5

Skills Athletics +3, Perception +3, Religion +2

Damage Resistances radiant

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Celestial, Common

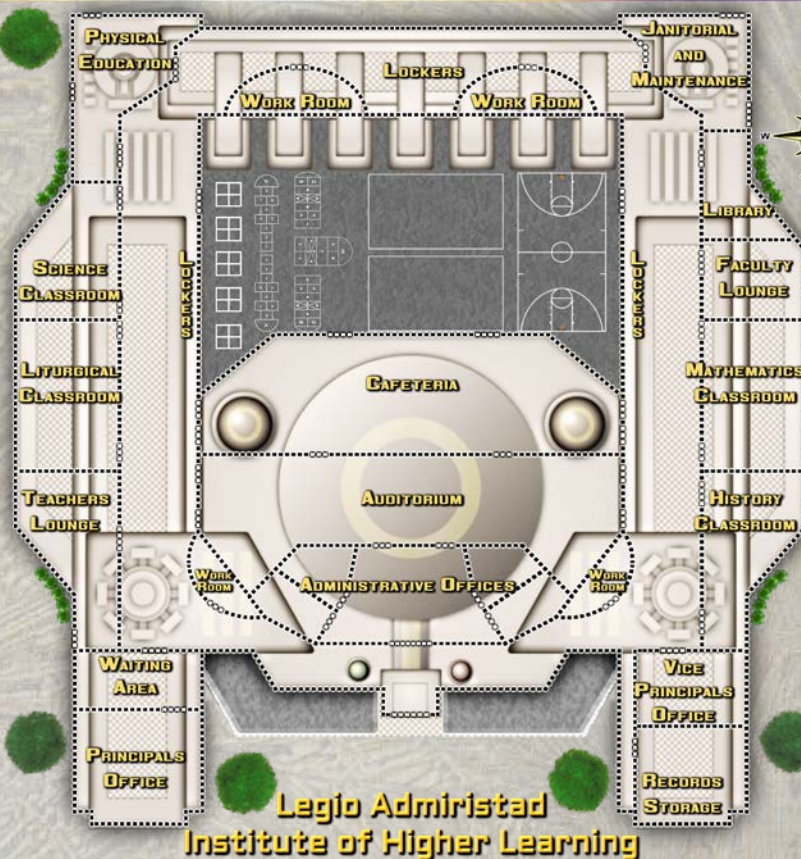
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Divine Sense. As an action, until the end of her next turn Deadra knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of her that is not behind total cover. She knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence she senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, she also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell. She can use this feature 4 times before requiring a long rest to regain all expended uses.

Divine Smite. When Deadra hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, she can expend one spell slot to deal 2d8 radiant damage to the target (3d8 if a fiend or undead), in addition to the weapon's damage.

Fighting Style: Dueling. When she is wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, Deadra gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

Lay on Hands (10 points). As an action, Deadra can touch a creature and restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in this pool. Alternatively, she can expend 5 hit points to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it.



Legio Admiristad
Institute of Higher Learning

Spellcasting. Deadra is a 2nd-level spellcaster that uses Charisma as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). Corbus has the following spells prepared from the paladin spell list:
1st-level (2 slots): *command*, *cure wounds*, *heroism*, *shield of faith*

ACTIONS

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Inaequa Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10+2) bludgeoning damage but unable to reduce a creature below 1 hit point.

Kristof Fethyrwal

Small humanoid (angel-touched) cleric 2, neutral good

Armor Class 16 (chainmail)

Hit Points 17 (2d8+4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +4

Skills Insight +5, Perception +5, Religion +2, Stealth +3

Damage Resistances radiant

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Celestial, Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Channel Divinity. Kristof can channel divine energy directly from his deity, using that energy to fuel magical effects. When Kristof uses Channel Divinity, he chooses which effect to create. He must then finish

a short or long rest to use his Channel Divinity again.

Preserve Life. As an action, Kristof presents his holy symbol and evokes healing energy that can restore 10 hit points. He chooses any creatures within 30 feet of him and divides those hit points among them. This feature can restore a creature to no more than half of its hit point maximum. Kristof can't use this feature on an undead or a construct.

Cast Off Corruption. Kristof has been taught secrets of divine power that allow him to ward away evil with tangible force. As an action, Kristof presents his holy symbol and whispers a sub rosa prayer condemning the wicked. All evil creatures within 30 feet must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 2d8 force damage and is pushed 10 feet away from him. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed.

Disciple of Life. Whenever Kristof uses a spell of 1st-level or higher to restore hit points to a creature, the creature regains additional hit points equal to 2 + the spell's level.

Spellcasting. Kristof is a 2nd-level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). Kristof has the following spells prepared from the cleric's spell list:

Cantrips: *guidance, resistance, sacred flame*

1st-level (3 slots): *bless, command, cure wounds, guiding bolt, healing word, sanctuary*

ACTIONS

Warhammer. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning damage or 8 (1d10+2) bludgeoning damage if wielded in two hands.

Inaequa Pistol. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80/320, one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d10+1) bludgeoning damage but unable to reduce a creature below 1 hit point.

Every round the PCs are in combat there is a cumulative 5% chance that a student of the school happens by and runs to alert a teacher, taking 1 round to reach them and then 2 rounds before a tutor responds (pulling the school's fire alarm before reaching the scene). Unless the party has maintained absolute stealth at least two faculty NPCs should join the battle before its end, preferably grouping together to delay the PCs after one twin has already fallen.

A DARK REWARD

Once the twins are dead the scarring of the corpses can begin. Correctly marking each body requires a weapon that deals piercing or slashing damage in a process that takes at least 2d6 rounds. As soon as the second corpse has been given the marks of blasphemy all of the PCs hear Gespadrieux's voice echo around them in a wicked, deep laugh as the nearest inaequa-powered objects explodes, dealing 1d4 force damage to each of the PCs but increasing their level to 3rd (instantaneously gaining new hit points, spell slots, prepared spells for new spell slots, and features), allowing for one session of healing as if they had taken a short rest (this still requires the spending of hit dice and does not recharge the use of abilities that restore on a short rest.) In addition, any members of the party that are dead or unconscious are restored 1d4 hit points and all of the adventurers increase their Sin ability score by 3.

Immediately afterward an alarm sounds around the school and all hell breaks loose throughout the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning.



ACT 2: A MURDEROUS ESCAPE

The first part of the despicable mission might be behind them but the PCs' fight against the establishment is done for if they can't escape Legio!

REVENGE OF THE FACULTY

Most adventurers will have engaged in a combat that brings them to the direct attention of the staff of the school (as well as the authorities) but even a party that manages a stealthy kill spurs onlookers when Gespadrieux grants them their dark blessing. The teachers with experience in a fight (those the PCs haven't already killed) make a go at stopping the party, sacrificing their lives to protect the remaining students and delay the adventurers long enough for the guards of Legio to arrive.

Magiciar Gloria Moderatus

Medium humanoid (half-elf) wizard 3, neutral

Armor Class 15 (*mage armor*)

Hit Points 20 (3d6+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +4, Science +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elvish

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Arcane Recovery. Gloria has learned to regain some of her magical energy by studying her spellbook. Once per day when she finishes a short rest, Gloria can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than 1.

Fey Ancestry. Gloria has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Sculpt Spells. When Gloria casts an evocation spell that affects other creatures that she can see, she can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. The chosen creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell and they take no damage if they would normally take half damage on a successful save.

Spellcasting. Gloria is a 3rd-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). Gloria has the following spells prepared from the wizard spell list:

Cantrips: *acid splash*, *shocking grasp*, *true strike*

1st-level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*

2nd-level (2 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *detect thoughts*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. (thrown 20/60), one target.

Hit: 2 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Inaequa Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320, one target.

Hit: 7 (1d10+2) bludgeoning damage but unable to reduce a creature below 1 hit point.

This section of the adventure is very lax in terms of how much effort is required for the adventurers to escape the city.

GMs should play to the party's interests—if they are keen to a car chase throughout the city then inaequachariots should get involved but if they are focused on continuing the story, their escape from Legio should be relatively quick. Regardless the only essential encounter in Act 2 after the PCs escape from the school is with Dame Mortalia.



Master Prorsus Silvestre

Medium humanoid (elf) ranger 3, neutral good

Armor Class 15 (hide, shield)

Hit Points 28 (3d10+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +3

Skills Athletics +5, Insight +4, Nature +4, Perception +4, Stealth +3, Survival +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Celestial, Common, Elvish

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Cantrip. Prorsus knows the *ray of frost* cantrip (+4 spell attack).

Favored Enemy. Prorsus has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track monstrosities, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Fey Ancestry. Prorsus has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic can't put him to sleep.

Fighting Style: Defense. While he is wearing armor, Prorsus gains a +1 bonus to AC.

Horde Breaker (1/turn). When Prorsus makes a weapon attack, he can make another attack with the same weapon against a different creature that is within 5 feet of the original target and within range of his weapon.

Natural Explorer. Prorsus is particularly familiar with the forests around Legio. When he makes a Wisdom or Intelligence check in forests, he gains a +2 bonus if he is using a skill that he's proficient in. While traveling for an hour or more in forests, he gains the following benefits:

- Difficult terrain doesn't slow his group's travel and they can't become lost except by magical means.
- Even when he is engaged in another activity while traveling he remains alert to danger.
- While alone he can travel stealthily at a normal pace.
- When he forages, he finds twice as much food as one normally would and while tracking other creatures, he learns their exact number, their sizes, and how long ago they passed through the area.

Primeval Awareness. Prorsus can use his action and expend one ranger spell slot to focus his awareness on the region around him. For 1 minute per level of the spell slot he expends, Prorsus can sense whether the following types of creatures are present within 1 mile of her (or within up to 6 miles if he is in his favored terrain): aberrations, celestials, dragons, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead. This feature doesn't reveal the creatures' location or number.

Spellcasting. Prorsus is a 3rd-level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12; +4 to hit with spell attacks). Prorsus has the following spells prepared from the ranger's spell list:

1st-level (3 slots): *cure wounds*,
jump, *longstrider*

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Inaequa Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10+1) bludgeoning damage but unable to reduce a creature below 1 hit point.

Sister Imbellem Carnadine

Medium humanoid (half-orc) monk 3, lawful good

Armor Class 15 (Wisdom)

Hit Points 27 (3d8+9)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +5

Skills Acrobatics +5, History +3, Insight +4, Intimidation +2, Perception +4, Religion +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Celestial, Common, Orc

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Ki (3 points). Imbellem harnesses the mystic energy of *ki* and can spend these points to fuel various *ki* features. When she spends a *ki* point, it is unavailable until she finishes a short or long rest, at the end of which she draws all of her expended *ki* back into herself. She must spend at least 30 minutes of the rest meditating to regain her *ki* points.

- **Flurry of Blows.** Immediately after Imbellem takes the Attack action on her turn, she can spend 1 *ki* point to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.
- **Patient Defense.** Imbellem can spend 1 *ki* point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on her turn.
- **Step of the Wind.** Imbellem can spend 1 *ki* point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on her turn, and her jump distance is doubled for the turn.
- **Stunning Attack.** Imbellem can spend 1 *ki* point to attempt to stun a creature she hits with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of her next turn.

Martial Arts. Imbellem can use Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of her unarmed strikes and monk weapons, and she rolls a 1d4 in place of the normal damage of her unarmed strike or monk weapons. In addition, when Imbellem uses the Attack action with an unarmed strike or a monk weapon on her turn, she can make one unarmed strike as a bonus action.

Open Hand Technique. Imbellem can manipulate her enemy's *ki* when she harness her own. Whenever she hits a creature with one of the attacks granted by her Flurry of Blows, she can impose one of the following effects on that target:

- It must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving

throw or be knocked prone.

- It must make a DC 12 Strength saving throw. If it fails, you can push it up to 15 feet away from you.
- It can't take reactions until the end of Imbellem's next turn.

Relentless Endurance. When Imbellem is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, she can drop to 1 hit point instead. Imbellem can't use this feature again until she finishes a long rest.

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

ACTIONS

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage.

Inaequa Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) bludgeoning damage but unable to reduce a creature below 1 hit point.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missile. Imbellem can spend her reaction to strike a missile when she is hit by a ranged weapon attack. When she does so, the damage she takes from the attack is reduced by 5 (1d4+3).

Troubador Lapisque Angularis

Medium humanoid (human) bard 3, neutral good

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 24 (3d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Cha +4

Skills Acrobatics +4, Arcana +3, Deception +4, Insight +5, Nature +3, Persuasion +4, Science +3, Stealth +6

Tools drum, lyre, viol

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Bardic Inspiration 1d6. As a bonus action on his turn, Lapisque can choose one creature other than himself within 60 feet of him who can hear him. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. Once the Bardic Inspiration die is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Bardic Inspiration die at a time. Lapisque can use this feature twice and regains any expended uses when he finishes a short or long rest.

Jack of All Trades. Lapisque adds +1 to any ability check he makes that doesn't already include his proficiency bonus.

Spellcasting. Lapisque is a 3rd-level spellcaster that uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12; +4 to hit with spell attacks).

Lapisque has the following spells prepared from the bard's spell list:

Cantrips: *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

1st-level (4 slots): *charm person*, *cure wounds*, *heroism*,
sleep, *thunderwave*

2nd-level (2 slots): *invisibility*

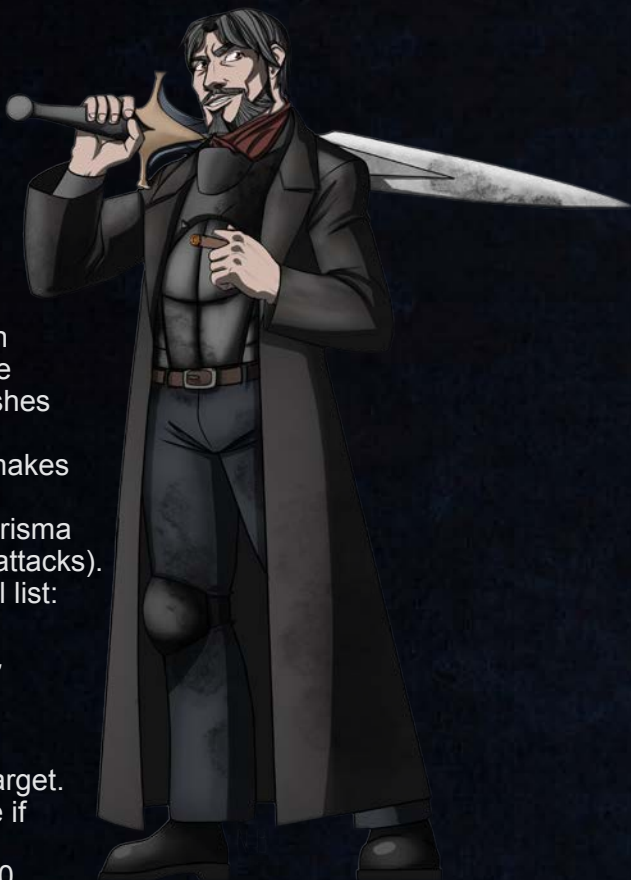
ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) slashing damage or 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Inaequa Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10+2) bludgeoning damage but unable to reduce a creature below 1 hit point.

REACTIONS

Cutting Words. When a creature that Lapisque can see within 60 feet of him makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a damage roll, he can use his reaction to expend one of his uses of Bardic Inspiration, rolling a Bardic Inspiration die and subtracting the number rolled from the creature's roll. He can choose to use this feature after the creature makes its roll, but before the GM determines whether the attack roll or ability check succeeds or fails, or before the creature deals its damage. The creature is immune if it can't hear Lapisque or if it's immune to being charmed.



INAEQUA PISTOLS

Legio's warriors are equipped with inaequa pistols that function like a light crossbow (simple ranged weapon, range 80/320) except that they do not have the ammunition or loading properties and operate differently depending on the alignment of the wielder.

- **In the hands of a good creature**, an inaequa pistol deals 1d10 bludgeoning damage but is unable to deal damage to creatures at 1 hit point or reduce a creature to less than 1 hit point.
- **In the hands of a neutral or unaligned creature**, attacks with an inaequa pistol are made at disadvantage and on a hit it only deals 1d8 bludgeoning damage.
- **In the hands of an evil creature**, an inaequa pistol does not function at all until the wielder spend a bonus action and makes a DC 12 Sanctity check to trick the device. A successful Sanctity check convinces the inaequa pistol that the wielder is of neutral alignment until the weapon leaves their possession.

Alternatively, an evil creature can spend a bonus action and 1 Sin point to pervert it. Once perverted, attacks with the inaequa pistol are made with advantage and on a successful hit deal 2d6 force damage. After 1 minute the wielder makes a Sin saving throw (DC 8 + 1 per minute of use) or the weapon explodes, dealing 2d6 force damage and 1d6 necrotic damage to all creatures and objects in a 10-foot radius (a Dexterity saving throw against the same DC halves this damage). A perverted inaequa pistol that is unattended after 1 minute explodes in the same manner.

WANDERING TROUBLE

The general defenders of Legio arrive in the school 3 minutes after the alarms begin to wail. Gespadrieux has manipulated events so that most of the town guard is not on duty and their greatest protectors are away, but the settlement is not completely undefended. Roll 1d20 each time the PCs enter a district or reach halfway across it and on a result of 6 or less, the party encounters a patrol squad of 5 [Guards](#) led by a [Scout](#), all of them wielding inaequa pistols in addition to their listed equipment. At the GM's discretion, if the adventurers dally too long there may be encounters with the city's guards.

Before escaping the grounds of the school however there is one last obstacle: Dame Mortalia Tavrossi, a Knight of the Chime wandering near the town. The heinous act they've just committed rang loudly to those of her order all across the land, alerting her to their cruelty and drawing the warrior to the PCs like a moth to the flame. She does not fight the adventurers to the death however and doesn't seek to stop them unless capture seems possible, only to unmask them and get a good look at every one of the scandalous murderers to produce wanted posters and turn all of society's protectors against the party.

Dame Mortalia Tavrossi

Small humanoid (halfling) fighter 6, lawful good

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 52 (6d10+12)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5

Skills Athletics +6, Insight +5, Perception +5, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Celestial, Common, Halfling

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Action Surge. On her turn, Mortalia can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action. Once she uses this feature, she must finish a short or long rest before she can use it again.

Brave. Mortalia has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Fighting Style: Dueling. When Mortalia is wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, she gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

Halfling Nimbleness. Mortalia can move through the space of any creature that is of Medium size or larger.

Improved Critical. Mortalia's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Lucky. When Mortalia rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, she can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Second Wind. On her turn, Mortalia can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+6 hit points. Once she uses this feature, she must finish a short or long rest before she can use it again.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Mortalia attacks twice.

Magic Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8+6) slashing damage or 9 (1d10+4) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Inaequa Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage but unable to reduce a creature below 1 hit point.

FLEEING THE CITY

As the PCs escape the city they hear Gepadrieux's voice in their minds, directing them on what streets to take to best avoid patrols and where to go once they flee from Legio. There are several routes the adventurers might take to escape the settlement quickly once they are off school grounds.

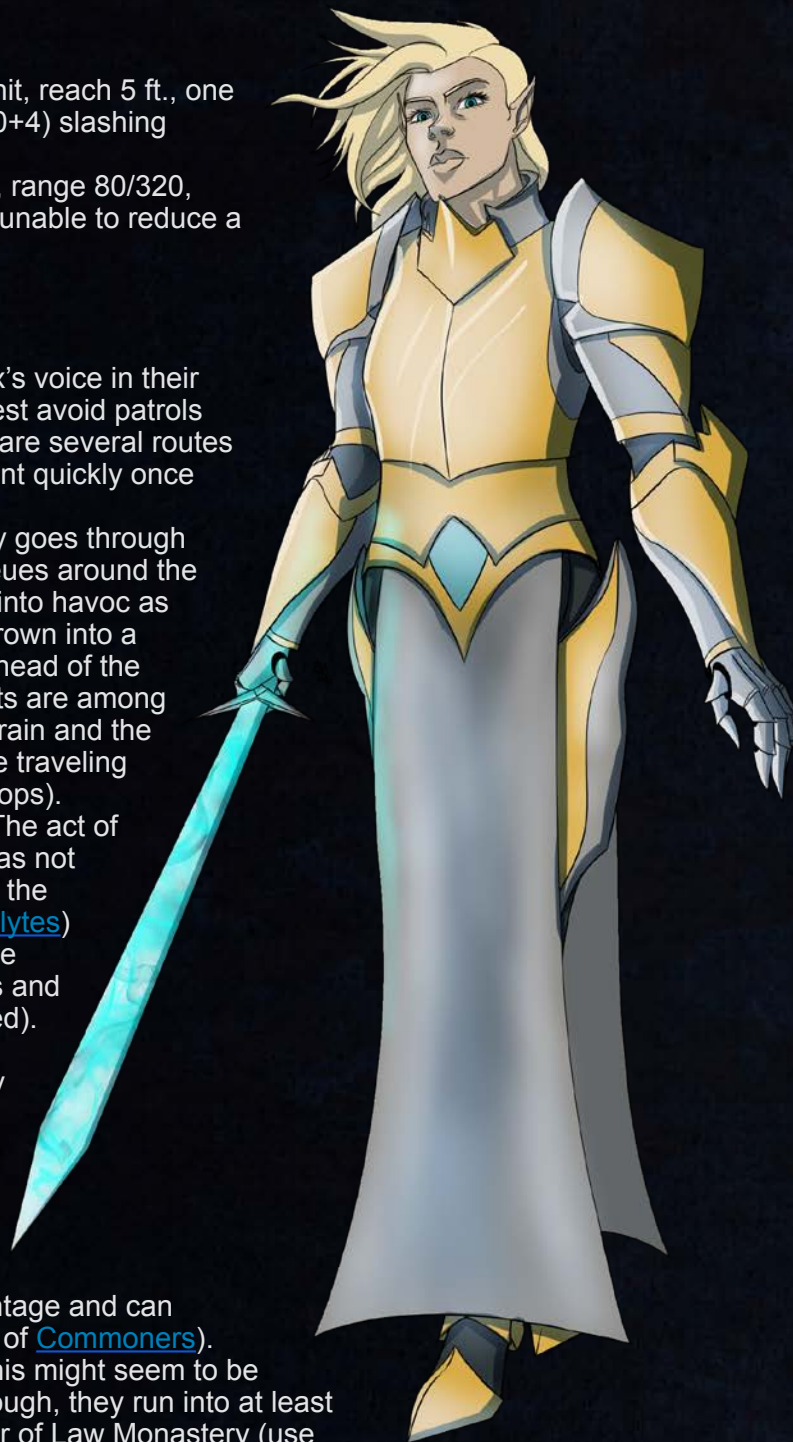
- **North to the Factory Districts.** If the party goes through this area they'll discover the excessive queues around the Quickfoot Workers Bureau have exploded into havoc as the parents of children at the school are thrown into a panic when word of the incident spreads ahead of the PCs. Any encounters in the Factory Districts are among crowds that turn the streets into difficult terrain and the adventurers overland speed is halved while traveling through them (unless they take to the rooftops).
- **East through the Adominatio Precinct.** The act of foul heresy the PCs have just committed has not gone unnoticed by the faithful of Legio and the priests of the city (use the statistics for [Acolytes](#)) hurl insults as well as stones if they spot the party (although the clergy are true cowards and immediately flee when chased or confronted).
- **South through the Profor District.** News of the terrible deed has spread to the many parents of the Profor District and the entire place is in a panic. This is Legio's least devout area and its denizens are largely Neutral-aligned rather than Good, making them far less polite or well-meaning—all Wisdom or Charisma checks made against them are at disadvantage and can quickly lead to hostilities (use the statistics of [Commoners](#)).
- **West by Caelestibus Commons.** While this might seem to be the area easiest for the PCs to escape through, they run into at least 1d4 trios of monks from the Monastic Order of Law Monastery (use the statistics for [Thugs](#), treating their maces as unarmed strikes) before reaching the woods.

Parkour. The heights of Legio's buildings vary greatly but the rooftops of any given city block generally vary only 5 or 10 feet from one another. Otherwise, scaling a city block requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check and climbing 1d4 x 10 ft. + 10 ft. (although rooftops make for great spaces to run). The buildings of the Adominatio Precinct and Caelestibus Commons are too widely spaced and far too unique for parkour.

Taking an Inaequa Chariot. The PCs might find a truck in the Factory Districts (particularly Labos), a leisure vehicle in the Caelestibus Commons or Adominatio Precinct, or an automobile in any region (although they are not terrifically common in the Profor District or Salus Borough).

Hijacking. Scaring someone driving a running inaequa chariot into giving up their vehicle requires a DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) check but immediately results in a chase (use the core rules for chases found in the guidebook for GMs).

Stealing. Breaking into a locked inaequa chariot requires a DC 15 Thieves' Tools check but any result of 20 or triggers an alarm and the vehicle becomes inoperable for 1 minute.



INAEQUA CHARIOTS

Inaequa Chariot. *The Book of Exalted Darkness* will have more involved vehicular rules but for the purposes of this module, treat an Inaequa Chariot as a mount (AC 16, 60 hit points) that grants a speed of 100 feet and half cover (+2 to AC and Dexterity saving throws). Unlike a typical mount it is not capable of acting independently and can carry as many as 5 Medium-sized creatures.

- **For a good creature** an inaequa chariot operates normally.
- **For a neutral or unaligned creature** an inaequa chariot drives with difficulty, causing the driver to make checks to control it with disadvantage.
- **For an evil creature** an inaequa chariot does not function at all until the driver spend a bonus action and makes a DC 15 Sanctity check to trick the device. A successful Sanctity check convinces the inaequa chariot that the driver is of neutral alignment until they exit the vehicle.

Alternatively, an evil creature can spend a bonus action and 2 Sin points to pervert the inaequa chariot. Once perverted, the vehicle's speed doubles for 1 minute and the driver has advantage on checks made to control the vehicle, after which it burns out and ceases to function at all.

Trainhopping on the Evagantem. Once the PCs reach at least the middle point of a region with access to the railroad, they may attempt to hop into a train car to make their escape. The GM should caution against hiding inside an inert train, warning the party that all of the city's authorities are fervently hunting them and once the mad scientist's distraction has ended they will quickly be located by magical means. When the adventures reach a rail line roll 1d20, and on a result of 10 or less there's nothing on the move. Otherwise they find a locomotive picking up speed and can hop on with a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) or DC 11 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Any creature with a speed less than 30 feet or carrying more than half their carrying capacity has disadvantage on this check.

TUNNELS BENEATH OURIANOS

Once the party make it to the edge of the city of Legio they can escape into the woods, dashing into the cover of the trees. The mad scientist's voice grows louder, urging them to head down twisting paths and around the base of valleys until finally leading the PCs into horrifying caves beneath Ourianos. Read the following:

The mad scientist's voice leads you through winding valleys and groves that grow increasingly denser though with ever less foliage. Suddenly you feel a slight tremor shake the ground and hear a dense cracking that reminds you of snapping bones but Gespadioux encourages you to continue, softly saying in your minds, "you are near, yes, very close. Right around the bend." Rounding a hill you see a horrifying sight—a large stone wall stretches itself open, the very rock crawling away in a sea of the damned, their mewling corpses spreading apart to reveal a balefully lit passage descending beneath the surface.

After traveling a few hundred feet below ground a portion of the passageway slides open at the adventurers' approach, revealing a strange chamber with tunnels filled by strong winds and a curious spherical contraption of metal. Read the following:



After walking for what feels like miles a section of the wall suddenly slides away at your approach. At the end of a small tunnel hidden behind the facade are strange spherical contraptions made from brass fittings, steel rails, and numerous triangular patches of flayed skin carved with unfamiliar runes, each set upon a hook connected to a chain machine that disappears into the cavern's roof. When you near one of them a coughing sputter echoes from above and the device jutters to life, bringing one of the pods toward you. "Get in the harness," Gespadioux's voice calls out from somewhere in the chamber, though now he sounds distant and tinny, "all of you. I don't have all night."

The GM should thoroughly enjoy any arguments that arise should the PCs bicker about who goes first. Read the following once someone has boarded an incitacio pod.

As soon as you fasten the harness around your shoulders the pod drops with a sickening lurch and it sounds as though Hell itself has opened its doors, intense heat cascading into the cavern alongside an unnatural shriek. Before you can react a massive gale of wind gusts upward from below and pushes you from a fall into a rapid hurtle into a tunnel, carrying you through the passageway at an insane speed as the skins flap in the tempest and the air echoes with keening screams.

Within a few moments all you can manage to do is grip the pod's handles and try to hold onto your sanity. Just when it feels as if your mind will break a blast of wind slams into you, knocking the air from your lungs as your vessel rapidly decelerates before landing on a hook spattered with dried blood. After shaking your head for a moment you take in your surroundings and truly see your mysterious benefactor for the first time.

Gespadioux is an unassuming balding man of middle-age, though half of his skull has been replaced by a metal plate and thick steel cables run from the top and sides of his head. He wears a suit more common to a banker than a scientist and in one hand he constantly scribbles out notes onto a scroll that feeds out of his sleeve, absentmindedly gesturing towards various devices in the laboratory around him as he walks from one experiment to the next. He pays you only mild attention, mumbling to himself and looking up into the air when not peering at a mysterious prenatal organism in a glowing cylinder of purplish fluids or the tracking eyes of a grisly human skull, half of the abomination's skin and muscles removed. The facility around you looks more like a torture chamber than a place of science, the bodies of countless creatures arrayed beside metallic machines belching noxious gas into the air or playing lightning between antennae.

"Finally," Gespadioux says, sparing an unimpressed glance in your direction for the briefest of moments before returning to more important matters. "Craft, gold, or graft?"

GESPADRIOUX'S GIFTS

The mad scientist has brought the PCs to one of his ancillary laboratories and offers each a gift—craft, gold, or graft. Gespadioux does not explain what each offering might be, ignoring any questions the party has and keeping to his tasks of calculation and tabulation. When an adventurer declares what they want he waves a small technological rod that spits out lightning, the lashes of electricity it emits smacking into hidden switches that cause the desired effect.

CRAFT

The PC suddenly feels an incredible pain as a strange ray strikes them, transforming organs and parts of their body into more efficient mechanical components. The adventurer receives the following bonuses, depending on their class (multiclassing PCs may choose which class they wish to count as for the purposes of this reward but are not given the knowledge of what it grants before choosing).

Barbarian: Iecur Liver. The barbarian's Constitution increases by 1 and they gain immunity to the poisoned condition as well as non-vile diseases.

Bard: Synthetic Vocal Cords. The bard can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful Wisdom (Insight) check (DC 8 + the bard's proficiency bonus + the bard's Charisma modifier).

Cleric: Vocivus Actuators. The cleric can use their Channel Divinity to conjure a wave of dark energy that roils forth and drains the life of creatures. As an action, the cleric twists their hands in an unnatural fashion before clenching them into fists that explode with stuff of the void, dealing 1d8 necrotic damage per point of proficiency bonus they possess. The cleric can choose to direct this energy at one creature within 60 feet or a number of creatures equal to their Wisdom modifier that are within 30 feet. A Wisdom saving throw against the cleric's spell save DC reduces this damage by half. A single creature targeted by this effect makes its saving throw with disadvantage and takes double damage if it fails its saving throw. This feature has no effect on undead or constructs.

Druid: Abeo Biologis. While the druid uses wild shape, they can spend a bonus action to activate or deactivate a viral infection tied to their soul. When active the druid's wild shape form is covered by an aura of dark red and purple energies, granting them 1d4 additional damage with natural attacks and increasing their AC by 2.

Fighter: Offensionibus Spine. The fighter's Strength and Constitution increase by 1. In addition, they gain

resistance to falling damage.

Mad Scientist: *Adapertio Ocular Nerve*. The mad scientist is able to cast the *detect magic* spell without components or concentration. By spending a bonus action, they can alter their ocular nerve to instead emulate the effects of *detect evil and good* or *detect poison and disease*.

Monk: *Tenibrus Talons*. The monk's *ki* pool increases by 1 and by spending a bonus action, they can deploy or retract talons that change their unarmed strikes damage to slashing.

Paladin: *Osseus Skeleton*. The paladin's bones are seared with the ancient language of Vile speech, the runes making it impossible to detect their true alignment. When a creature or effect would detect the paladin's alignment, they see an alignment of the paladin's choice.

Ranger: *Argentum Eyes*. The ranger's eyes become featureless silver orbs. They can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, to a distance of 60 feet (if they already have darkvision, its range increases by 60 feet).

Rogue: *Curax Nerves*. The rogue's Dexterity increase by 1 and their speed increases by 10.

Sorcerer: *Devoco Glands*. The sorcerer gains 1 sorcery point (if they do not yet have sorcery points, they gain an additional sorcery point when they acquire the class feature) and learns a cantrip. In addition, by spending a bonus action the sorcerer can convert 2 Sin points into 1 sorcery point.

Warlock: *Festino Charge*. The warlock's soul is imparted with dark energy that allows them to gain a second pact boon. Once chosen, this second pact boon cannot be changed.

Wizard: *Prolixo Ganglia*. The wizard's Intelligence increases by 1, they learn a cantrip, and they gain advantage on saving throws when resisting the charmed and stunned conditions.

GOLD

A bag of 1,500 gold coins materializes on the ground in front of the adventurer.

GRAFT

The adventurer disappears and is transported into one of Gepadrieux's horrifying mobile stations, a macabre laboratory filled with terrifying equipment that straps them down and modifies their body to incorporate one of these feats (roll 1d4 to determine which) in an excruciatingly painful process that takes 2 minutes. Afterward the PC is fully healed and re-materializes inside the chamber beside their allies.

Abyssal Experiment

Your body is now able to incorporate parts from the maddened creatures that hail from the chaotic realms of the Abyss: demons. You may spend a reaction to gain advantage on an ability check. You may use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency



bonus before requiring a long rest to recharge it. You may also recharge this feature by taking a short rest after committing a chaotic and heinous act.

Holy Gear

Your body has a celestial cog inside of it and now the great machinations of benign entities influencing existence resonate within your being, driving you onward with unflinching resolve. Any attempts made to compel you to act in a manner contrary to your nature or the orders of a quest you are undertaking automatically fail.

Infernal Experiment

Your form is now perfectly suited to adopt body parts ripped from the blasphemous entities of Hell: devils. You may spend a reaction to gain advantage on a saving throw. You may use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus before requiring a long rest to recharge it. You may also recharge this feature by taking a short rest after committing a duplicitous or evil act.

Unicorn Horn

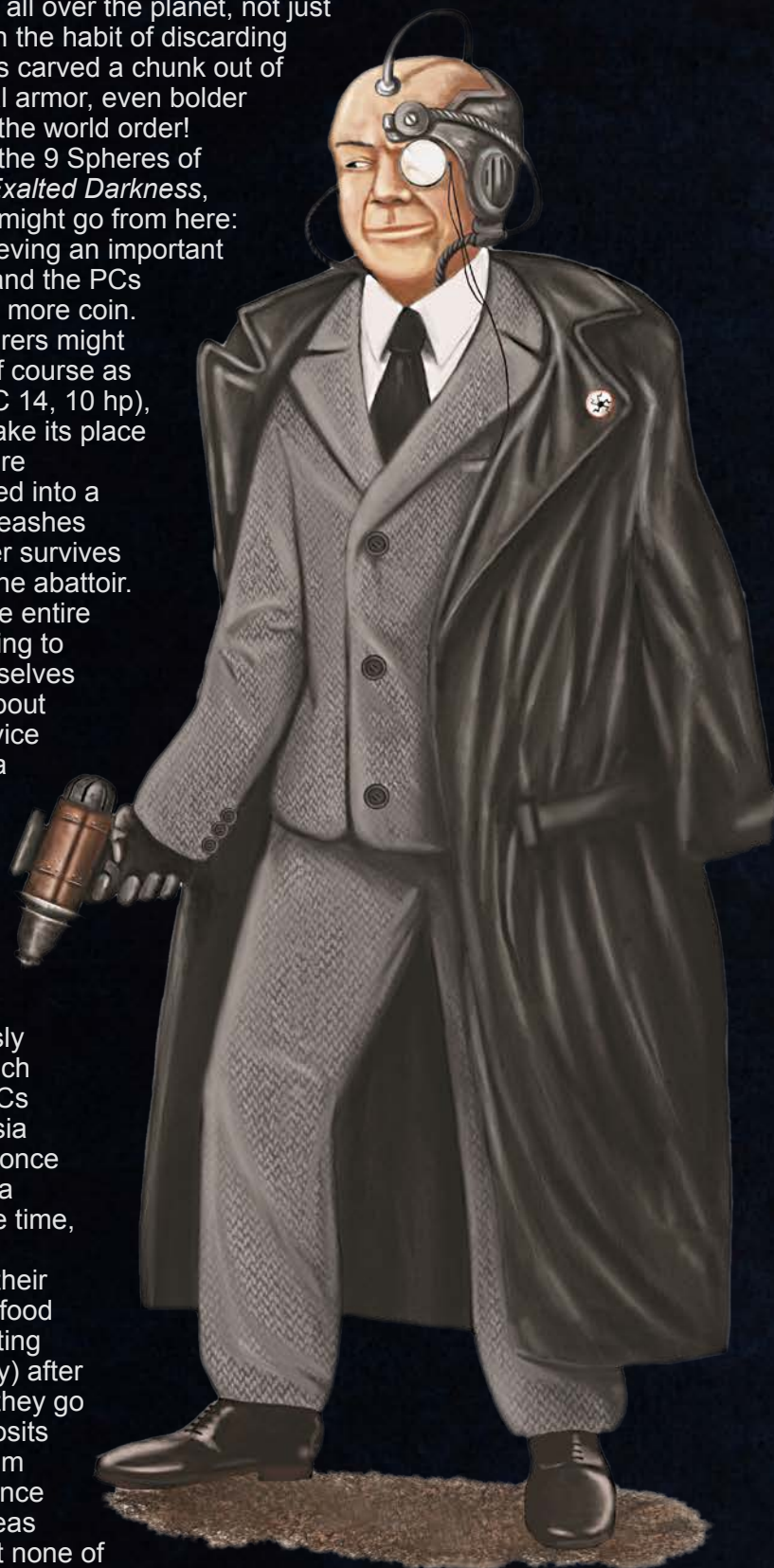
A horn is implanted in your forehead and you can attune to the energies of the higher planes, making you able to protect or heal living creatures. After taking this feat, whenever you finish a long rest you gain a number of charges equal to your proficiency bonus. You may spend a bonus action and 1 charge to create one of the following effects.

- **Celestial Restoration.** You or a living creature you touch regains hit points (2d8 + your proficiency bonus). By expending an action and 2 charges you may increase the regained hit points by 1d8.
- **Celestial Shield.** You create a shimmering, magical field around yourself or another living creature you can see within 60 feet. The target gains a +2 bonus to AC until the end of your next turn. By expending an action and 2 charges you may increase the bonus to AC to +4.

EPILOGUE

The PCs are fugitives and wanted by authorities all over the planet, not just the city of Legio. Of course Gespadiieux is not in the habit of discarding tools that still may be of use and now that he has carved a chunk out of the Celestial Hero Lellwyn Fethyrwal's proverbial armor, even bolder steps must be taken to begin the dismantling of the world order! While the function and means of destruction for the 9 Spheres of Askis are described in detail in the full *Book of Exalted Darkness*, here are a few suggestions for where the game might go from here:

- Gespadiieux is too busy to be bothered retrieving an important relic from an ancient underground complex and the PCs might do so in exchange for another boon or more coin.
- With so much evil in their hearts the adventurers might try to take Gespadiieux down. This will fail of course as he isn't actually there, only a simulacrum (AC 14, 10 hp), but after it is destroyed another appears to take its place—warning that to strike again would mean dire consequences. Parties that do are transported into a deadly dungeon where the mad scientist unleashes abominations, granting freedom to whomever survives long enough to find an escape from the insane abattoir.
- If the PCs are cooperative and have been the entire time, Gespadiieux offers an alliance, promising to provide them with a means to disguise themselves so that the adventurers might better move about Askis to sow insurrection. He activates a device that creates a *zone of truth* (DC 19 Charisma saving throw) but so long as the party does not try to deceive him he is good to his word, awarding each a watch that doubles as a holographic bracelet (able to cast *disguise self* at will, though it only functions for the first creature to wear the device). In addition, once per day the wearer can cast *nondetection*. After they have been treated to a long rest and deviously sumptuous meal (made from ingredients which are impossible to recognize) he sends the PCs to the devout city of Alacer to poison Hortensia Validaris, Arch-Bishop of the 3rd Paene and once a prized student of Lellwyn Fethyrwal—now a doddering old woman alive long past her due time, protected by a trio of loyal [Couatl](#)...
- Distrustful PCs may choose to strike out on their own in which case Gespadiieux offers them food and lodging (as above) before promptly ejecting them (through mechanized force if necessary) after the party has completed a long rest. Where they go from his underground laboratory (which deposits them on the surface about 10 miles away from Legio) is up to the adventurers but the presence of authorities should be avoided. The high seas offer some respite for the wicked of heart but none of Askis' continents (Ourianos, Samovi, and Zakuthombo) provide any kind of welcome—and the pirates populating the waters of the world offer very little kindness. Still, the PCs have either ample coin or potent new abilities that will give them an edge and should they delve back beneath the earth there are more laboratories (either populated by other mad scientists or abandoned to their monstrous creations), ancient tombs, and other sources of power awaiting those with the mettle to acquire them from their subterranean homes.



NEW ATTRIBUTES

Only those able to hide their true ways and despicable nature are able to survive for long on Askis, the nature of the technology that has raised the world to utopian heights sifting wicked souls from the good of heart. The substantial matter of evil within the *Book of Exalted Darkness* is lent mechanical power by two new ability scores—Sanctity and Sin—that every PC gains at character creation via their Inherent Heresy (page 6).

Alignment and Competing Auras. When a creature's alignment is detected, if they are good their Sanctity score determines the strength of their aura and if they are evil their Sin score defines potency instead. A neutral creature's highest score determines whether the aura they give off is good or evil.

When a creature successfully makes a Sanctity check to hide their evil alignment, the strength of their aura of good is determined by their Sanctity score—while they may not appear to be evil, they probably won't light up as being particularly righteous.

Features or spells that leave an evil aura are marked by an evil creature's blackened soul and have a potency determined by its Sin score.

SANCTITY

The state or quality of being holy, sacred, or saintly is not something that evil creatures are prone to but it can be emulated, the sheen on oily blackened souls enhanced to deceive those who look directly upon them.

A creature's Sanctity score is increased when it does a good deed and decreased when it is witnessed committing an evil act. The higher a creature's Sanctity score, the stronger its aura of good.

Sanctity can be used to fool inaequa-powered technology as well as the following ways:

- When attempting to hide its true nature via a disguise or the Deception skill, a creature may make a Sanctity ability check (instead of a Charisma check or tool kit check).
- When hit by a good creature with a weapon or spell attack, a creature can spend its reaction to prevent an amount of damage equal to double its Sanctity modifier. After this feature has been used a number of times equal to a creature's proficiency bonus, it cannot be used again until it has finished a long rest.
- When someone attempts to detect a creature's alignment, it may make an opposed Sanctimony check. On a success, the detected alignment is that of the creature's choosing.

SIN

Immoral acts and blasphemous transgressions against the ruling divine powers of Askis accrue, transforming the very souls of those who commit foul deeds. As one performs more evil their essence becomes more vile until eventually their bodies change as well, mutating into vilespawn.

A creature's Sin score is increased when it commits an evil act and decreased when it is witnessed doing good deeds. The higher a creature's Sin score, the stronger its aura of evil. When a creature's Sin ability score reaches 23, it transforms into a vilespawn.

Sin can be used to overcharge inaequa-powered technology as well as the following ways:

- When exercising power in a cruel way or using the Intimidation skill, a creature may make a Sin ability check (instead of a Charisma check or other check).
- When a creature successfully hits with a weapon or spell attack, it may spend its reaction to deal an extra amount of damage equal to its Sin modifier bonus. After this feature has been used a number of times equal to the creature's proficiency bonus, it cannot be used again until it has finished a long rest.
- Instead of making a regular saving throw, a creature may make a Sin saving throw to resist being influenced through deception or magic.

SIN POINTS

An evil adventurer begins play with a number of Sin points equal to half their proficiency bonus. Otherwise an evil adventurer gains a Sin point whenever it increases its Sin score (gaining a number of Sin points equal to the amount of increase). The maximum number of Sin points an evil adventurer can have is equal to its level. By spending a Sin point as a reaction, an evil adventurer can do any of the following:

- Change the damage of a spell or weapon attack to necrotic.
- Reroll a failed ability check or saving throw.
- Gain a +1d6 bonus to an ability check or attack roll so long as it is part of committing an evil act (desecrating a holy object or place, delivering a poison, preparing a murderous ambush, telling a hurtful lie, and so on). At 11th level this bonus increases to +2d6.
- When casting a spell, you may delay its effects for 1d4 hours per spell level. Cantrips count as 1st-level spells when sending Sin points in this way and can be delayed up to 1d6 hours per point of proficiency you possess.

VILESPAWN TEMPLATE

Eventually the fallen souls that can't struggle back to redemption accrue too much evil, the despicable essence of what they have become rapidly overtaking even their natural biological functions. These cursed creatures transform into vilespawn, hideously mutated freaks that have changed to appear as they truly are within their blackened hearts. When a creature's Sin ability score reaches 23, after taking a long rest it awakens as a vilespawn.

GM'S NOTE: Vilespawn are specifically built to remain playable for PCs that have gone off the deep end—just because your evil mage has turned into a (more) freakish monster does not mean things can't get worse! While they may not be able to go about high society with great ease, any PC that gains this template should not stop being a character in the group.

DYSTOPER

Fearmonger Sorcerer Bloodline

Terror has great power for those willing to use it, turning horror itself into a weapon. Fearmongers are masters of their craft and able to strike dread in the hearts of even the bravest souls, manipulating their enemies to cowardice through dark magic that most mages are too afraid to seek out.

Frightful Gaze

Starting when you choose this bloodline at 1st level, when a creature that can see your eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of you, you can spend your bonus action or reaction to force it to make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC if you aren't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails, the creature is frightened for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw from this feature at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see you until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at you in the meantime, you may spend your reaction to force it to immediately make the save. You can use this feature a number of times equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier. When you finish a long rest, you regain all expended uses.

True Terror

Beginning at 6th level, your features and spells that cause the frightened condition are able to affect creatures that would otherwise not know fear. Targets that usually have advantage on saving throws against fear effects do not gain advantage against when making saving throws to avoid being frightened by you. In addition, by spending 1 sorcery point when a creature that is normally immune to fear is targeted by a feature or spell that would make it frightened of you, it loses its immunity but gains advantage on their saving throw.

Aura of Fear

At 14th level, each creature of your choice that is within 60 feet of you and aware of you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to your Aura of Fear for the next 24 hours.

Thing of Horror

Starting at 18th level, you do not need to expend a sorcery point to force a creature immune to fear to gain the frightened condition. Other creatures are at disadvantage when making saving throws against your fear (if it would normally have advantage, it rolls normally instead).

Masquerading Heretic Rogue

The most effective wounds to the bureaucracy of the Celestial Heroes that rule over the world will be dealt by those within the gargantuan establishment, agents of evil able to operate from the inside. Your talents are concentrated upon maintaining this deception, staying one step ahead of the zealots seeking out evil in the world as you sabotage the apparatuses that make it function.

Natural Liar

Beginning when you choose this rogue archetype at 3rd level, you may use your Cunning Action to draw upon dark inspiration that grants you advantage on a Deception or Persuasion check. You can use this feature a number of times equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier. When you finish a long rest, you regain all expended uses.

Obscured Nature

Also at 3rd level, you gain a primal understanding of the pliability of soul and you can shape your essence to slip past the senses of divine creatures and magic. By spending your reaction and 1 Sin point you may be treated by one known effect or spell (such as when first interacting with an inaequa-powered device) as though you were an unaligned creature. In addition, while your actual Sin and Sanctity scores do not change, to the perception of others and for the purposes of detection spells they appear to be switched (so your Sin score appears to have your Sanctity score's value and likewise).

Implacable Will

Starting at 9th level, your mind becomes a devious steel trap impossible to pry open. You are immune to the effects of *detect thoughts* and the charmed condition. In addition, when creatures attempt to charm you their spell or effect appears to function normally (making it seem as though you have been successfully charmed).

Undetectable

Beginning at 13th level, your soul becomes as stealthy as the void itself. You are under the constant effects of the [nondetection](#) spell. You may suppress or reactivate this feature as a free action even while incapacitated.

Despicable Strike

At 17th level, you can tap into the worst aspects of existence to deliver a horrendous strike able to sever your target's connection to arcana or divine power. When you hit a creature and deal sneak attack damage, you can spend 1 Sin point to force it to make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your Sin modifier + your proficiency bonus). On a failure the target loses all magical features and spellcasting it possesses for 6 rounds. Any arcane magic items or spells currently affecting the target function normally but divine-based magic dissipates.



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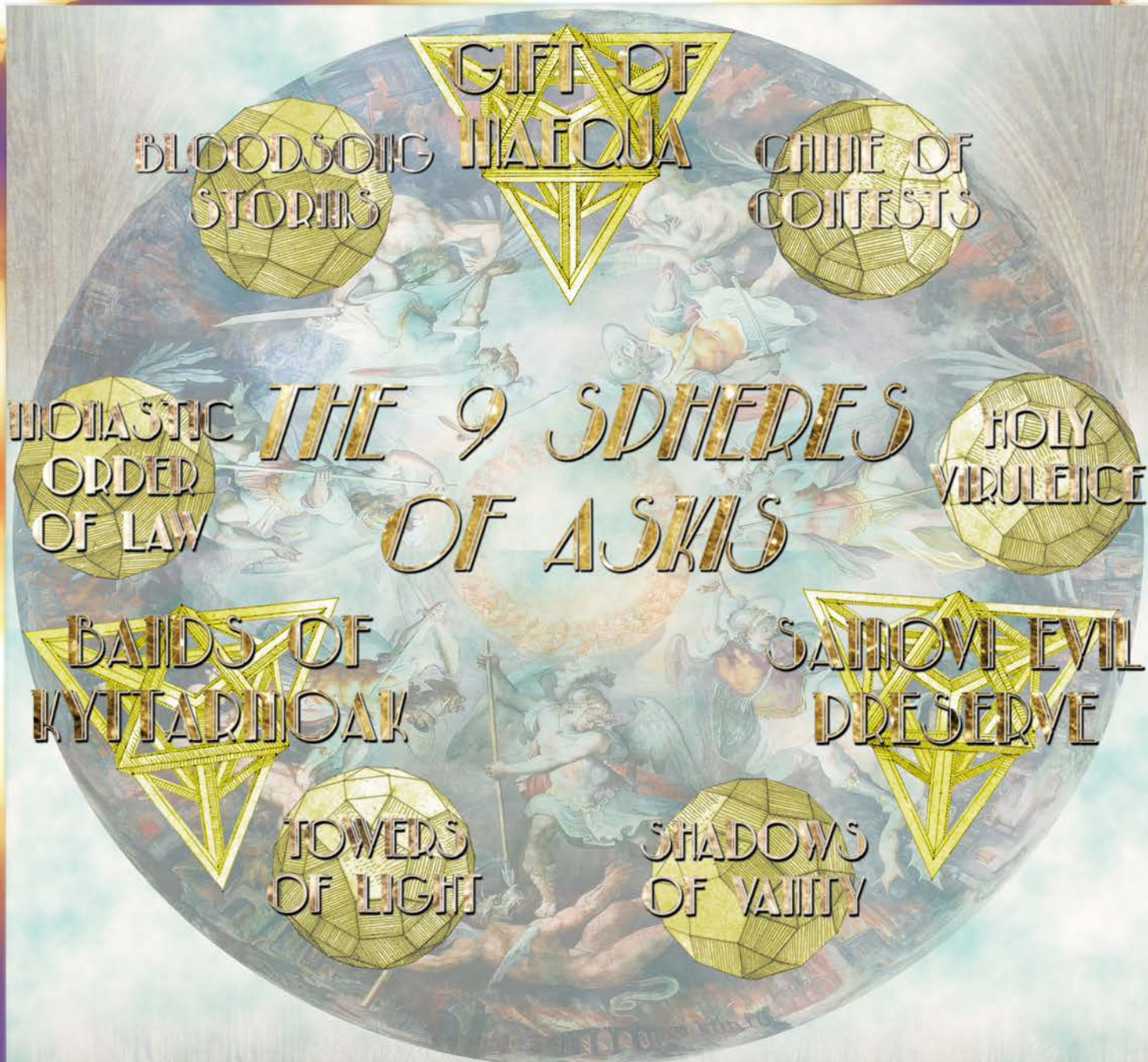
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THE DIVINE WORKS OF ASKIS' CELESTIAL HEROES HOLD THEIR RULE IN PLACE

When the Celestial Heroes shook evil from the world they knew that corruption would return without vigilance and so each crafted a great work to protect civilization. Adventurers in the *Book of Exalted Darkness* are devoted to shattering the Nine Spheres that grip society in thrall, every one of them holding back dark entities from beyond the veil. With each destruction the PCs grow closer to claiming complete victory over the mewling bureaucrats and sheepish fools that populate the world until they finally end the Celestial Heroes' reign and pervert or destroy the last of the divine legacies.

- **Bands of Kyttarmoak.** The wizard Rankir has crafted a powerful enchantment that bars potent evil entities from trodding upon Askis' soil.
 - **Monastic Order of Law.** Disciples of the monk Varrus stalk the world's caverns to purge the last vestiges of evil from the world.
 - **Towers of Light.** These towers built by the priest Gimli are arrayed along the coasts of Ouranios to ward off evil that lurks in the seas of the world.
- **Samovi Evil Preserve.** Tapper Underknoll and her fellow rangers watch over those that cannot be brought to the light, ensuring that their captives cannot bring suffering to others.
 - **Holy Virulence.** To punish those consumed with lust the sorcerer Damien has crafted sicknesses of sublime justice.
 - **Shadows of Vanity.** Some of the world's spirits remain to follow after the most beautiful of the world at the command of the paladin Lellwyn Fethyrwal.
- **Gift of Inaequa.** Tucker Quickfoot has negotiated the gift of inaequa from otherworldly powers and dutifully tends to the agreement, working to ensure that the resources never stops flowing.
 - **Bloodsong Storms.** The bard Mystral has created songs of such beauty and power that they ward the very seas, conjuring storms whenever blood spills between travelers on the water.
 - **Chime of Contests.** When dishonor enters a combat the knights led by Grukk answer the call, following the hum to bring justice to the scandalous.

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CHARACTER NAME

CLASS & LEVEL

PLAYER NAME

ALIGNMENT

RACE

INHERENT HERESY

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STRENGTH

SIN POINTS

ARMOR CLASS

=

+

+

+

DEXTERITY

DEXTERITY MODIFIER

ARMOR

SHIELD

MISC

CONSTITUTION

HIT POINT MAXIMUM

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