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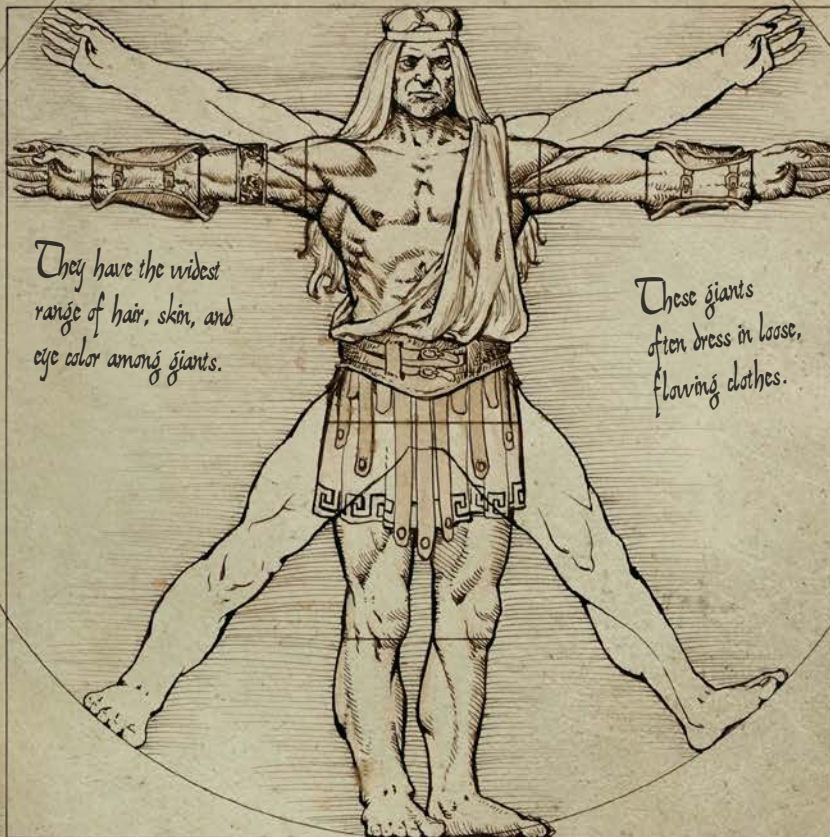


GIANTSLAYER[™]

SHADOW OF THE STORM TYRANT

by Tito Leati

Cloud giants resemble athletic humans on a massive scale.



They have the widest range of hair, skin, and eye color among giants.

These giants often dress in loose, flowing clothes.

2015
CERAN



Cloud Giants


Reclusive and whimsical, the cloud giant race is struck with a stark philosophical divide among their kind. Half of the race are benevolent, and sometimes even work alongside smaller humanoids to see to the well-being of all creatures. The other half are cruel and destructive. Evil cloud giants treat all smaller living things as theirs to control and dominate. Thankfully, most cloud giants keep to themselves.



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ADVENTURE PATH  PART 6 OF 6

**SHADOW OF THE
STORM TYRANT**

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CREDITS

Authors

Benjamin Bruck, Jim Groves, Steven T. Helt, Mikko Kallio, Tito Leati, and Patrick Renie

Cover Artist

Jesper Ejsing

Interior Artists

Dave Allsop, Aleksey Bayura, Milivoj Čeran, Shen Fei, Fabio Gorla, Johan Grenier, Miguel Regodón Harkness, Yigit Koroglu, Kate Pfeilschiefter, Roberto Pitturru, Maichol Quinto, Jason Rainville, Mac Smith, and Rodrigo Vega

Cartographer

Robert Lazzaretti

Creative Director • James Jacobs

Editor-in-Chief • F. Wesley Schneider

Executive Editor • James L. Sutter

Development Leads • Adam Daigle and Rob McCreary

Senior Developer • Rob McCreary

Developers • John Compton, Adam Daigle, Mark Moreland, and Owen K.C. Stephens

Assistant Developers • Crystal Frasier, Amanda Hamon Kunz, and Linda Zayas-Palmer

Senior Editors • Judy Bauer and Christopher Carey

Editors • Joe Homes and Jason Keeley

Lead Designer • Jason Bulmahn

Designers • Logan Bonner, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, and Mark Seifter

Managing Art Director • Sarah E. Robinson

Senior Art Director • Andrew Vallas

Art Director • Sonja Morris

Graphic Designer • Emily Crowell

Publisher • Erik Mona

Paizo CEO • Lisa Stevens

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Campaign Coordinator • Mike Brock

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Warehouse Team • Will Chase, Mika Hawkins, Heather Payne, Jeff Strand, and Kevin Underwood

Website Team • Christopher Anthony, Winslow Dalpe, Lissa Guillet, Julie Iaccarino, Erik Keith, and Scott Spalding

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7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120
Redmond, WA 98052-0577

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Printed in China. We are like dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants.



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CASTLE IN THE CLOUDS

The Giantslayer Adventure Path comes to a close with this month's volume, "Shadow of the Storm Tyrant," and I couldn't be more excited, because the campaign finally reaches the Storm Tyrant's flying cloud castle. Whether they're historical examples or fantasy ideals, I love castles—the architecture, the history, the innovation—and there's no better fantasy castle than one sitting on top of a cloud, flying through the air. Maybe it comes from old fantasy art I saw in my formative years of gaming, or maybe it goes back even further to "Jack and the Beanstalk" and similar tales, but for whatever the reason, I've always thought cloud castles were cool.

The first thing I knew I wanted to do with Giantslayer was to have a cloud castle at the end—and not just any cloud castle, but the best one that's ever appeared in a Paizo product. We've done cloud castles before, of course: there's

Zoarth's castle in *Pathfinder Module: Curse of the Riven Sky*, Skyborne Keep in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Castles of the Inner Sea*, and the Cloud Castle of the Storm King in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment*. For Giantslayer, though, I wanted something more. Something bigger. When I assigned "Shadow of the Storm Tyrant" to Tito Leati, I told him I wanted a cloud-castle version of Castle Scarwall from *Pathfinder Adventure Path #11: Skeletons of Scarwall*, matching it in scale, scope, and size. As you'll soon see in this adventure, Tito met the challenge and surpassed it beyond my hopes and dreams. I think Ironcloud Keep is by far the coolest cloud castle I've seen, and though it may not match Scarwall in square footage, it's definitely got more encounter locations—56, to be exact, to Scarwall's 47.

But it's not just about the physical castle itself. There's also its history, from the power struggle between the cloud engineer Renfal and the ambitious cloud giant witch

Nalbia, the betrayal of Zephyr Hall by Nalbia and her twin brother Nalbur, the Storm Tyrant's assault on the keep with the *black comet heart*, being trapped inside the caldera of Ashpeak, and who knows how many more untold tales in its storied past. In fact, Ironcloud Keep is almost as important a character in "Shadow of the Storm Tyrant" as are Volstus, Nalbia, Nalbur, Renfal, and other NPCs.

THE FALL OF IRONCLOUD KEEP

Of course, there's a chance that Ironcloud Keep, as impressive as it is, might meet a catastrophic end during this adventure, if Volstus's dead man's switch triggers the detonation of the alchemic bomb hidden beneath the castle's engine level. The adventure assumes that this doesn't happen, as the PCs have ample opportunity to disable the bomb before it goes off, and even if it does explode, they also have a chance to regain control of the castle before it falls to the ground (see the What If the Bomb Goes Off? sidebar on page 26 for details on what the PCs must accomplish to successfully prevent the castle's fall). Nevertheless, the possibility remains that the PCs might not take the necessary steps to save the castle, or might even fail in their attempt. If this is the case, the cloud castle plummets unchecked from the sky, and likely crashes—hard—into the ground below. So what does this mean for Ironcloud Keep's inhabitants and the cloud castle itself?

At minimum, anyone still inside the keep when it hits the ground should take 20d6 points of falling damage. Acrobatics checks will likely be of little use, as will *feather fall*, though spells such as *teleport* might allow the PCs to escape some of the destruction. GMs who are feeling generous can allow characters who succeed at a DC 25 Reflex save to take only half damage. Alternatively, GMs who are feeling less benevolent can use the optional massive damage rule (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 189) and require everyone in the castle to attempt DC 15 Fortitude saves. All characters who fail the save die, regardless of how many hit points they have.

As for the cloud castle itself, it sustains terrible damage. All of its towers (areas **F36**, **F39**, **F43**, and **F47–F56**) completely collapse, and each room on the second floor or higher has a 50% chance of collapsing as well. The castle's rocky base provides some protection to the engine level and first floor, but each room on those levels still has a 25% chance of a cave-in. Characters caught in a collapsing tower room take 20d6 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 20 half); characters in other collapsing rooms take 10d6 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 15 half). Any creatures that fail their saves are buried beneath the debris (see page 415 of the *Core Rulebook* for additional rules on cave-ins and collapses). Characters in open areas of the castle (such as areas **F13**, **F14**, and **F28–F30**) likely

ON THE COVER

Volstus the Storm Tyrant finally makes his appearance on this month's cover, and that *Orb of Red Dragonkind* in his hands is not just for show. Over the course of the Giantslayer Adventure Path, the PCs have battled their way through giants of all kinds, and the storm giant warlord is their most powerful foe yet. But to topple this would-be conqueror, they must defeat more than just Volstus—thanks to the orb, he's got an old red dragon in his thrall, and the heroes will have to take down both the giant and the dragon before Avistan is safe from the shadow of the Storm Tyrant!

avoid being buried alive, though they might still be hit by falling rubble from the castle's higher levels.

The impact also destroys the keep's engine in area **F12** and knocks the foundation block in area **F19** out of alignment, forever shifting the cloud castle's center of gravity and rendering it unstable and incapable of flight. If any of Ironcloud Keep's denizens survive the impact, they either flee the devastation, or, in the case of those most loyal to Volstus, seek out any PC survivors and attempt to exact revenge for the Storm Tyrant's defeat.

A NEW TOY

If the PCs manage to avoid such a disaster, they're likely to end up with a cloud castle of their very own. But though the adventure provides the means for keeping it out of their hands, I'd recommend letting them hang onto it, for at least a little while. Yes, Ironcloud Keep is a powerful artifact, but the PCs have just defeated the Storm Tyrant and merit a reward equal to their success. And come on! It's a cloud castle, and all players deserve at least one chance to play around with one at some point in their adventuring careers!

Whatever the ultimate fate of Ironcloud Keep, "Shadow of the Storm Tyrant" marks the end of the Giantslayer Adventure Path. But new adventures are just around the corner, as next month's volume takes us to the diabolic empire of Cheliox for a brand-new Adventure Path. The city of Kintargo chafes under the yoke of the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune, and awaits a new breed of heroes to fan the fires of the rebellion that kicks off the Hell's Rebels Adventure Path!

ROB

Rob McCreary
Senior Developer
rob.mccreary@paizo.com

GIANTSLAYER™



SHADOW OF THE STORM TYRANT

PART 1: AMONG THE ASHES

PAGE 9

In the caldera of a dormant volcano, the heroes must battle their way through the Storm Tyrant's first lines of defense to reach the cloud castle floating in the sky above.

PART 2: CASTLE IN THE CLOUDS

PAGE 19

After entering the cloud castle, the heroes explore its lowest levels in search of the Storm Tyrant's captains and an alchemical bomb that could wreak untold havoc if detonated.

PART 3: RAMPARTS OF THE SKY

PAGE 38

The heroes continue their explorations of Ironcloud Keep, facing some of the Storm Tyrant's most powerful allies, including a pair of evil cloud giant twins.

PART 4: HEIGHTS OF THE STORM

PAGE 50

Above the rooftops of Ironcloud Keep, the heroes must finally confront the Storm Tyrant and his dominated red dragon thrall to end the storm giant warlord's schemes of conquest once and for all.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Shadow of the Storm Tyrant" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

15 The PCs begin this adventure at 15th level.

16 The PCs should be 16th level by the time they exit Ironcloud Keep's engine level.

17 The PCs should be 17th level before they face the Storm Tyrant and the red dragon Akazerath among the heights of Ironcloud Keep.

The PCs should be 17th level by the time they complete the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

One of the most impressive achievements of the storm giant warlord Volstus during the course of his plan of conquest was the capture of a flying cloud giant castle over the Mindspin Mountains. But the Storm Tyrant's seizure of the cloud castle was not a simple undertaking. Cloud giant flying citadels are exceedingly rare—the stuff of myth and legend—and Volstus's first task was to find one.

To aid him in his mission, Volstus sought out a rocciding cloud giant of evil disposition named Nalbur, who supposedly knew many things about his brethren and their legendary floating holds. When the two giants met in the skies over the Mindspin Mountains—Volstus riding his dominated red dragon thrall Akazerath and Nalbur mounted on the back of his roc Galescream—they found out that their goals were compatible, for Nalbur, too, was seeking support for his own plan to conquer a cloud castle called Zephyr Hall.

Zephyr Hall was home to Nalbur's twin sister Nalbia, a cloud giant witch who shared her brother's opportunistic character. She was Nalbur's only family, and for many decades had been his traveling companion. Some 20 years ago, Nalbia left her brother to become a concubine of Azarth, the aging lord of Zephyr Hall, hoping to inherit the citadel upon Azarth's death and share it with Nalbur. Unfortunately for Nalbia, her scheme did not go as planned, for upon Azarth's passing, her claim of succession was opposed by the high priest of Zephyr Hall, a cloud giant cleric of Gozreh named Renfal. Wise and respected among the cloud giants, Renfal also led the cloud engineers who operated and maintained the magical engine that kept Zephyr Hall aloft. Mostly concerned about keeping peace within the keep, Renfal feared that Nalbia's succession would lead to a destructive struggle between her followers and the other inhabitants of the castle, so he vetoed her succession. With her bid to power put on hold, the scornful Nalbia began to scheme to overthrow Renfal. The last time Nalbur visited his sister, Nalbia asked him to seek external help for her cause, suggesting he look for the notorious, power-hungry storm giant warlord Volstus, who was already making a name for himself among giantkind.

Mighty and arrogant as only evil giants can be, Volstus and Nalbur did not reach an accord easily. They had hardly saluted each other and acknowledged the convergence of their aims before quarreling about which of them would lead their partnership. The row quickly escalated, and the two giants clashed in an aerial duel. After a titanic battle, Volstus gained the upper hand, and Nalbur submitted to the Storm Tyrant, pledging to follow him in exchange for a promise of wealth and status.

After obtaining as much information as possible from Nalbur, Volstus devised a plan to capture Zephyr Hall. He instructed Nalbur to return to the castle and inform his

sister and the giants loyal to her about their agreement. Volstus then flew to a dormant volcano in the Mindspin Mountains called Ashpeak, where the fire giant king Tytarian and his queen Quivixia had moved their clan after swearing allegiance to the Storm Tyrant. Nalbur had informed Volstus that Zephyr Hall would soon pass close by Ashpeak, so Volstus ordered the fire giants to prepare a trap for the cloud castle.

Not long after, when Zephyr Hall passed near the volcano, Volstus made an aerial assault against the castle using a powerful magic item called the *black comet heart*, a sky-fallen chunk of black diamond ore the size of a giant's throwing rock. Unleashing the offensive might of the *black comet heart*, Volstus assailed the castle's walls with a volley of extraplanar meteorites. The tremendous impact of the meteorites penetrated the castle's magical defenses and punched three holes in its enchanted stonework, impairing its magical engine and severely endangering the castle in flight. With this damage done, Volstus retreated, leaving the cloud castle in urgent need of repairs and forced to make an emergency descent. Inside Zephyr Hall, Nalbia and Nalbur used their influence among the castle's cloud giants to suggest they hide the fortress in the caldera of a nearby dormant volcano—Ashpeak. There, the twins said, the cloud castle would be safe while they made repairs, concealed by the crater walls and the smoke from the caldera's fumaroles.

Once Zephyr Hall had made its descent into the caldera, the Storm Tyrant's forces began their assault. To keep the cloud castle from simply flying away, a team of ash giant artilleryists led by an ash giant alchemist named Ulkraf used colossal cannons to fire massive iron chains at the castle's rocky base, grappling the flying fortress and anchoring it to the volcano. Volstus and Akazerath then flew up to the castle with a squad of fire giants equipped with *potions of fly*. The attackers joined up with Nalbia's followers, who revolted against Renfal and his supporters, and launched into a battle without quarter in the rooms and corridors of the castle. Stronger by far, Volstus and his allies slaughtered most of their enemies, and the Storm Tyrant finally claimed his prize, which he immediately renamed Ironcloud Keep.

But owning a cloud castle and successfully controlling it are two very different things, and none of the cloud giants who backed Nalbia and Volstus were cloud engineers who knew how to fly and steer the castle using the complex controls in the fortress's engine room. Fortunately, the head cloud engineer, Renfal, survived the battle, so Volstus ordered that the priest be kept alive and forced to continue his work. The Storm Tyrant desired to learn how to control the castle himself, but Renfal refused to cooperate and share his knowledge. Unable to coerce the cloud giant engineer into helping him, Volstus ordered his minions



to torture the cleric to pry information from him. After untold suffering, the delirious Renfal finally revealed that the late lord of Zephyr Hall, Azarth, had used a magical crown called the *cloud diadem* to telepathically steer the castle without any of the expert knowledge needed to use the manual controls in the engine room. Upon donning the *cloud diadem* and feeling its power, the Storm Tyrant believed he had found the key to control the castle. Renfal would be of little use to him now, so Volstus ordered his followers to kill the obstinate cloud giant and dispose of his corpse.

But even in death, Renfal refused to abandon his beloved Zephyr Hall, and his spirit clung to the castle, manifesting as a fiercely independent ghost. Renfal's ghost quickly began terrorizing the Storm Tyrant's minions and sabotaging his attempts to control the castle. Volstus destroyed the ghost several times, but Renfal always

returned a few days later, rejuvenating in the room where he had been tortured to death. Once Volstus realized that Renfal always rejuvenated within the torture chamber, he ordered a spirit naga sorceress named Liniratis to seal the room (at great expense) with several permanent *walls of force*. Although this served to trap Renfal's incorporeal form within the room, he still retains the ability to manifest in the castle with illusions and by creating haunting sounds from his ghostly harp.

Having dealt (for the most part) with Renfal's ghost, Volstus turned his attention to securing the cloud castle. While his minions labored to repair the flying fortress, the Storm Tyrant used the *black comet heart* to animate several of the dead cloud giants as giant mohrgs before opening a *gate* to summon a plethora of oversized cosmic horrors to his side, including a troop of gug savants and a pair of Leng spiders. As an additional precaution, born out of a paranoia sharpened by Renfal's manifestations, the Storm Tyrant asked Ulkraf to create a powerful alchemical bomb, which he then concealed in one of the castle's propulsion ducts. Ulkraf was able to attune the bomb to a gem set in the *cloud diadem*, creating a dead man's switch that would detonate the bomb if Volstus was incapacitated or killed. Ulkraf packed his bomb with enough alchemical explosives to damage the rocky base supporting the keep and disable its magical engine, potentially turning the cloud castle into an instrument of catastrophe.

Now, after training himself with repeated practice with the *cloud diadem*, and with the completion of the most urgent repairs to the castle, Volstus believes he has sufficiently mastered the operation of Ironcloud Keep to plan a sortie from the caldera, finally fulfilling his ambitions to rule from a mobile fortress that will enable him to strike at his enemies from the sky, like a storm raining down destruction on the weak. The Storm Tyrant has been increasingly worried by news of the exploits of a party of diminutive but dangerous enemies—the Player Characters—and though he wanted his cloud castle to be completely operational before taking off on his ambitious campaign of conquest, the destruction of his giant armies at Minderhal's Valley and Skirgaard, as well as the recent alarms raised in the training complex of the fire giants of Ashpeak just beneath his fortress, have prompted him to hurry. Even after his recent defeats, Volstus still has the *Orb of Red Dragonkind*, and with Ironcloud Keep and a handful of dominated dragons, he can still subjugate the orc tribes of Belkzen. And with an army of orcs behind him, all the nations of Avistan will tremble before the power of the Storm Tyrant!

PART 1: AMONG THE ASHES

This adventure begins immediately after the events of the previous adventure, “Anvil of Fire,” when the Player Characters exit the fire giant dungeon of Ashpeak into the caldera that crowns the dormant volcano. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs emerge from the fire giant tunnel (area A) and are confronted with the majestic and terrible spectacle of Ironcloud Keep overhead.

The caldera at the top of the mountain forms a natural arena surrounded by barren cliffs and jagged ridges. Roughly circular, the crater has a dusty floor covered with pumice gravel and strewn with loose boulders, interspersed with numerous tiny cracks and fissures that spew warm, acrid vapors. Overhead, an enormous bluish-gray castle floats atop a roughly spherical cloud just a few hundred feet above the caldera floor, casting a shadow across the mountaintop. The cloud almost touches the rocks beneath it, dripping a thin rain on the gravel below.

Five immense chains emerge from the depths of the cloud, connecting to great winches beside an equal number of colossal siege cannons arranged atop a ridge in a semicircle around the floating keep. Three of the chains appear to have been loosened or severed, dangling vertically out of the cloud. Two chains are still taut, seemingly anchoring the castle to the ground. A round tower stands on the caldera’s slope to the north. Two tunnel entrances delve into the mountain to the east and southeast.

Ashpeak’s mountaintop caldera is more than 2 miles in diameter, but the tunnel from the fire giant training facility below exits into a roughly circular inner crater about 1,200 yards in diameter. Rocky cliffs and ridges, averaging 30 feet high, form concentric arcs within and around the inner crater, which is ringed by a 30-foot-high cliff. Above this cliff, the walls of the caldera continue to slope upward for hundreds of feet. The floor of the crater slopes slightly outward and upward from the center, creating a gradual slope covered in loose pumice gravel. The DC of Acrobatics checks increases by 2 in these areas, and creatures gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls against foes downhill from them. The volcanic vapors and gases emerging from fissures in the rock create a thin haze over the crater, giving the air an acrid smell. This haze does not provide concealment. Climbing any of the cliffs in or surrounding the crater requires successful DC 15 Climb checks.

The floor of the inner crater sits at an elevation of about 7,000 feet, within the low peak/high pass altitude zone (see page 430 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). All of the creatures within the caldera and inside the cloud castle are acclimated to the elevation and suffer no negative effects from the thin air. The PCs, on the other hand, will need to deal with the environmental effects of the high altitude.

Various class abilities, spells like *life bubble* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player’s Guide* 230), or magic items such as a *bottle of air* or a *necklace of adaptation* can alleviate the need for hourly Fortitude saves.

The Storm Tyrant’s cloud castle, Ironcloud Keep, floats above the inner crater. The walls of the castle are nearly 500 feet high, but it sits atop a cloud approximately 600 feet in diameter. The bottom of this cloud comes within 200 feet of the crater floor. Ironcloud Keep is described in greater detail beginning on page 19.

BATTLE IN THE INNER CRATER

Shortly after the PCs arrive in the crater, a lightning bolt leaps with a tremendous thunderclap from the roof of Ironcloud Keep’s tallest tower into the sky, briefly illuminating what appears to be a nearly invisible force field encircling the entire structure. This discharge from the castle’s magical engine occurs at semi-regular intervals—every 1d4×10 minutes—and allows the PCs to learn about the energy field’s existence before attempting to board the castle. See pages 19–20 for details on the cloud castle and the energy field surrounding it.

Ironcloud Keep is the PCs’ goal, but they must win their way past the castle’s ground defenses in the caldera first. Following the events in “Anvil of Fire,” this adventure assumes that the Storm Tyrant and his minions are aware of the PCs’ presence in Ashpeak. Whether or not the fire giants of Ashpeak sounded an alarm, Volstus at least knows of the deaths of Queen Quivixia and King Tytarian through his *jailer’s dungeon ring*^{APG}, and he has likely learned of the deaths of his dominated dragons in Ashpeak’s rookery using his *Orb of Red Dragonkind* as well. As a result, Volstus is telepathically concentrating to make his first real (and dangerous) attempt to fly the cloud castle. Meanwhile, in the crater below, the Storm Tyrant’s minions are waiting for the PCs to show up at any moment and are keeping a close eye on the exit from the fire giant complex (area A).

The garrison of the inner crater consists primarily of a band of ash giants led by the alchemist Ulkraf, one of Volstus’s closest and most powerful allies, who oversees the defenses from the tower to the north (area E). The ash giants use two black scorpions as beasts of labor and war. The giants are currently using one of these colossal vermin to sever one of the two massive chains that still anchor the trapped castle to the caldera (see area B). The three chains that have already been loosened, and the feverish activity of the ash giants driving the scorpion make it obvious that the castle is being “released” from its moorings.

In this part of the adventure, the PCs face a large-scale battle involving several groups of monsters and giants, some of which possess long-range weapons to use against the PCs. The three main groups of enemies around and above the inner crater are briefly detailed below.

Ash Giants: Besides the artillerists posted at the defense tower (see below), two groups of ash giants are currently working in the caldera, both accompanied by a gigantic black scorpion. The first group is using their scorpion to free the cloud castle's anchoring chains (see area **B**). They are primarily focused on their work, but throw rocks at any enemies within range, or anyone who attempts to impede their activity. The second group consists of two ash giant scorpion handlers and a second black scorpion in the scorpion den (area **C**). These giants order their scorpion to attack any intruders in the inner crater.

Defense Tower: The ash giant alchemist Ulkraf and a crew of ash giant artillerists inhabit a tower (area **E**) to the northeast of the floating cloud castle. A pair of siege engines is mounted on the tower's roof, which the giants use to target anyone approaching the cloud castle.

Ironcloud Keep: As the Storm Tyrant prepares to launch the cloud castle, he has ordered most of his minions in the keep to hold their positions and not interfere with the battle below. Only a few cloud giant guards and two flying yaoguai (see area **F2**) remain on the engine level to keep an eye on the intruders, while the shadow giant inquisitor Krellan and some phase spiders protect Ulkraf's alchemic bomb (see area **F3**). The cloud giants shoot at invaders with the heavy ballistae placed on the castle's defense platforms, and thanks to the magical *scopes of stormsight* (see the sidebar on page 18) mounted on those siege engines, the giants can observe the crater from above and aim the siege engines through the concealing clouds that envelop the castle's base, though the range is such that they are unlikely to hit any targets until they are much closer to the castle.

In the open space of the caldera's inner crater, the PCs face a potentially dangerous encirclement, as deadly foes and missile fire can come at them from virtually every direction. The worst possible situation for the PCs would be to let most of the enemy gang up on them at the same time. While the PCs can do little to avoid the siege engine attacks from the defense tower and cloud castle, they should try to engage the two main ash giant groups (at areas **B** and **C**) one at a time before facing the giants in the defense tower or attempting to board the flying castle. Keep in mind the difficulty of the terrain in the caldera, which may have an adverse effect on the PCs' movement in and around the inner crater. Eventually, the PCs should make their way toward the cloud castle overhead and attempt to get inside. See *Boarding the Cloud Castle* on page 17 for details on reaching the floating fortress.

You can use the following timeline to assist you in running the events of the battle, though you should be prepared to adjust and modify the defenders' actions on the fly in response to the PCs' actions and tactics. Use the timeline as a guide, not a rigid plan, as it will likely alter considerably based on the realities of the battle.

| Round | Event |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Ulkraf (area E6) spots the PCs, likely as they first set foot in the caldera after exiting the tunnel from the fire giant complex (area A). Ulkraf sounds the tower's steam whistle to alert his forces in the inner crater to the presence of attackers. This also causes the carnivorous crystals in area D to emerge from their fumaroles in search of living prey. |
| 2 | Ulkraf and his crew begin firing at the PCs from the defense tower's artillery deck (area E6). If undisturbed, they can fire both of their siege engines once per round (see page 16 for details on their firing routine). The defense tower is approximately 900 feet from the fire giant tunnel (area A). |
| 6 | If the PCs have not engaged it in combat, the black scorpion in the scorpion den (area C) comes out to attack, followed by the ash giant scorpion handlers. |
| 10 | The ash giants and black scorpion at area B4 sever one of the two remaining anchor chains, then begin moving along the ridgeline to the south and west toward area B1 . At any time after this point, Volstus can opt for an emergency takeoff, breaking the final anchor chain with the tremendous pull of the ascending cloud castle. |
| 22 | The ash giants and black scorpion arrive at area B1 and begin working to free the last taut chain anchoring the cloud castle to the caldera. If not stopped beforehand, the ash giants eventually free the chain, and the cloud castle flies away without the need of an emergency takeoff. The PCs have one last chance to board the castle before the Storm Tyrant flies away. See <i>Into the Sky</i> on page 18 for more details. |

A. FIRE GIANT TUNNEL

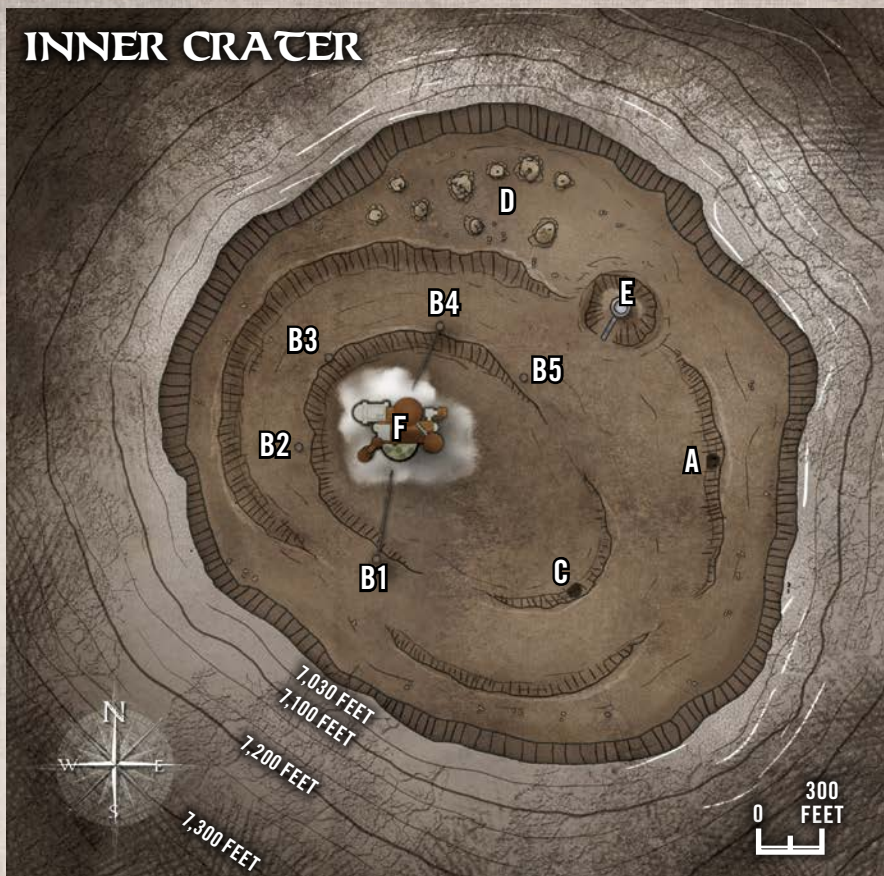
This 50-foot-wide cave mouth, dug into the face of a cliff on the eastern side of the inner crater, leads down into the fire giant training complex in the heart of the dormant volcano far below. The PCs likely enter the caldera from this location. The exit is not guarded, as the fire giants remain in their complex beneath the mountain, and the ash giants in the inner crater are either working to free the cloud castle (area **B**), waiting in the giant scorpions' den (area **C**), or operating the siege engines in the defense tower (area **E**).

Development: If the PCs did not defeat all of the enemies in the fire giants' training facility in the previous adventure, some of the survivors could appear here at some point during the fight to join the battle in the inner crater, at your discretion.

B. ANCHOR CANNONS (CR 17)

The ash giants built five immense siege cannons on top of a semicircular cliff near the center of the inner crater to trap Zephyr Hall during the Storm Tyrant's assault on the castle. Each of these giant siege weapons fired an

INNER CRATER



E. DEFENSE TOWER



ROOF

MIDDLE
LEVEL

BASEMENT

1 SQUARE = 15 FEET

alchemically enhanced cannonball attached to a massive chain at the cloud castle. The cannonballs released a tremendous wave of heat when they penetrated the castle's rocky base, melting the surrounding rock, which then cooled, anchoring the castle to the ground.

After firing one shot, the enormous wooden barrels of the cannons were destroyed, and the colossal siege engines have remained useless ever since. The giants tightened the chains with enormous winches powered by alchemical contraptions that melted down after operation, becoming inoperable. As a result, the giants must now use the monstrous strength of their black scorpions' pincers to cut the chains to free the castle (see Creatures below).

When the PCs first arrive in the caldera, the chains at areas **B2**, **B3**, and **B5** have already been freed, and now hang slack beneath the castle's base. The chains at areas **B1** and **B4** remain taut. The chains lead up to anchor points (area **F1**) just below the castle's defense platforms, currently 600 feet above the ground. See Boarding the Cloud Castle on page 17 if anyone tries climbing the chains to reach the castle.

Creatures: A team of four ash giants mounted on the back of a colossal black scorpion now labor to loosen the castle's remaining anchoring chains, though the work done thus far is almost sufficient to allow takeoff. They're currently working on the chain at area **B4**, and move to area **B1** when

finished (see Development below). One of the giants sits astride the scorpion's cephalothorax, using a set of hooked chains affixed to the scorpion's carapace to direct it and give it simple commands. The other three giants are riding in a wooden howdah strapped to the vermin's chitinous back. The three giants in the howdah have cover, but the more exposed driver only has partial cover. The howdah holds a reserve of 30 throwing rocks for the giants inside. The howdah does not interfere with the Colossal scorpion's sting.

The giants in the howdah throw rocks at anyone attempting to interfere, while the driver continues to direct the scorpion. If the scorpion is directly attacked, the driver must succeed at a DC 25 vermin empathy check to keep the giant vermin in check. If the check is successful, the scorpion continues with its work; if the check fails, or if the driver is incapacitated, the scorpion turns on its attackers. Both the giants and the scorpion fight to the death.

ASH GIANTS (4)**CR 11****XP 12,800 each****hp** 147 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 126)**BLACK SCORPION****CR 15****XP 51,200****hp** 228 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 240)

Development: Ten rounds after the PCs first enter the inner crater, the giants and their scorpion sever the anchor chain at area **B4**, provided the PCs have not interfered with their work. At this point, the cloud castle slowly shifts in the air until it arrives directly over area **B1**. If not interrupted, the giants move to area **B1**, arriving there 12 rounds later. See page 10 for the giants' timeline for releasing the castle's anchoring chains.

C. SCORPION DEN (CR 16)

A 50-foot-wide cave mouth opens into an enormous, roughly circular cavern where the ash giants house their two domesticated black scorpions.

Creatures: While the male black scorpion is working outside (see area **B**), the female black scorpion currently inhabits this cave with her brood of young, which cling to their mother's back. Most of the young are still immature noncombatants, but six of the baby scorpions are already Large, their statistics equivalent to a giant scorpion's. Two ash giant scorpion handlers wait near the entrance, ready to call out the female scorpion to attack any intruders.

If 5 rounds pass after the PCs enter the inner crater and they have not yet encountered the giants and scorpion, the giants order the scorpion out of the den on the sixth round. Once incited by the scorpion handlers, the female black scorpion frantically skitters out of the cave in search of fresh food for her young. The Large baby scorpions descend from their mother's back, at a rate of one per round, to join in any battle, along with the ash giants.

ASH GIANTS (2) **CR 11**
XP 12,800 each
hp 147 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 126)

BLACK SCORPION **CR 15**
XP 51,200
hp 228 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 240)

BABY BLACK SCORPIONS (6) **CR 3**
XP 800 each
 Giant scorpion (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 242*)
hp 37 each

D. FUMAROLE FIELD (CR 15)

Although fumaroles can be found almost everywhere in the crater, the biggest ones are found in this field near the crater's northern edge, where large amounts of heated underground vapor find their way to the surface through several deep fissures in the rock.

Creatures: Four carnivorous crystals inhabit the fissures of the fumarole field, feeding on the mineral deposits left behind by the escaping gases. They don't normally emerge

from the fumaroles unless they detect living prey in the area, and the ash giants give the fumarole field a wide berth, but the crystals are attracted by the sound of the steam whistle in the defense tower (area **E**), and issue forth to investigate if they hear its blast.

CARNIVOROUS CRYSTALS (4) **CR 11**
XP 12,800 each
hp 136 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 45)

Treasure: Only Medium or smaller creatures (or larger creatures able to assume *gaseous form*) can enter the fumaroles. Anyone searching the fissures who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds the crystallized skeleton of a halfling with an *instant fortress*, a *potion of enlarge person*, and 30 gp in a leather pouch.

E. DEFENSE TOWER

This squat, cyclopean tower stands on a massive base of layered stone. The only entrance is set in the middle of its cylindrical body, at the top of a great wooden ramp. A wooden turret sits on the roof of the tower. A tall metal chimney rises from the tower's roof, releasing dense puffs of white smoke.

Originally built as a lookout by the fire giants of Ashpeak, this round tower has been modified by its current master, the ash giant alchemist Ulkraf. The tower is 80 feet tall, topped with a 6-foot-high wooden parapet on its flat roof. The roof is 50 feet higher than the crater's ridges, allowing a panoramic observation of the entire caldera grounds. The lower half of the tower is a wide plinth of tightly packed stone blocks. A 20-foot-wide, 40-foot-high wooden ramp ascends the plinth to the tower's sole entrance, a wooden door that opens into the tower's middle level (areas **E1** and **E2**).

The strong wooden door has been refurbished by Ulkraf and is normally barred from the inside with an iron bar (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 30). Two huge arrow slits also open into the tower's barracks (area **E1**) and Ulkraf's quarters (area **E2**) at a height of 50 feet above the ground. Small creatures can easily fit through the embrasures, but a Medium creature must succeed at a DC 30 Escape Artist check to squeeze through. With the exception of the artillery deck (area **E6**), which is open to the sky, the vaulted ceilings inside the tower are 40 feet tall.

During the battle in the crater, the PCs might want to break into the defense tower to stop the ash giants' artillery fire. The tower can also be a safe haven from the black scorpions and other enemies, where the PCs can regroup or use magical healing.

Use the map on page 11 for the locations within the defense tower.

E1. Barracks (CR 14)

This room occupies three-quarters of the middle level of the tower and contains a dozen giant-sized pallets, a dining table, and several stools. To the northwest, a vertical brass pipe occupies a fireplace carved into the tower's stonework. Two archways exit the room to the northeast and southwest, leading to stairs that both ascend and descend. A door stands in the wall that blocks off a quarter of this level, and an arrow slit opens in the north wall.

The ash giants in Ulkraf's service share this area as a common room and barracks. The pipe in the fireplace connects the boiler in area E4 to the tower's roof. The pipe is hot, and provides pleasant warmth to the entire floor. If punctured (hardness 10, hp 20), the pipe releases a jet of superheated steam that deals 1d6 points of fire damage in a 15-foot cone and sickens living creatures in the area for 3 rounds (a DC 15 Reflex save halves the damage and negates the sickened effect). In addition, the steam quickly fills the room, dealing 2 points of fire damage per round to any creatures in the room and obscuring vision and providing concealment as *obscuring mist* for 10 rounds before the pressure subsides. Puncturing the pipe deactivates the steam-powered artillery emplacement on the roof (see area E6).

The stairway to the northeast climbs up to the roof (area E6); the stairs to the southwest descend to the basement laboratory (area E3). Both stairways are 8 feet wide, rather narrow for the ash giants, who prefer not to fight on them. The door in the wall leads to Ulkraf's private quarters (area E2) and is padlocked (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30).

Creatures: Two of Ulkraf's elite ash giant artilleryists guard the tower's entrance. They fight to the death to defend the tower against anyone who breaks down the door.

ASH GIANT ARTILLERISTS (2) CR 12

XP 19,200 each

Ash giant expert 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 126)

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 168 each (16d8+96)

Fort +15, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities rock catching; **Immune** disease, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee Huge heavy mace +21/+16/+11 (3d6+11 plus disease), slam +16 (1d8+5 plus disease) or 2 slams +21 (1d8+11 plus disease)

Ranged Huge heavy crossbow +12 (3d8/19-20) or rock +13 (1d8+16)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks disease (DC 23), rock throwing (120 ft.)

STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 14, **Con** 23, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 35

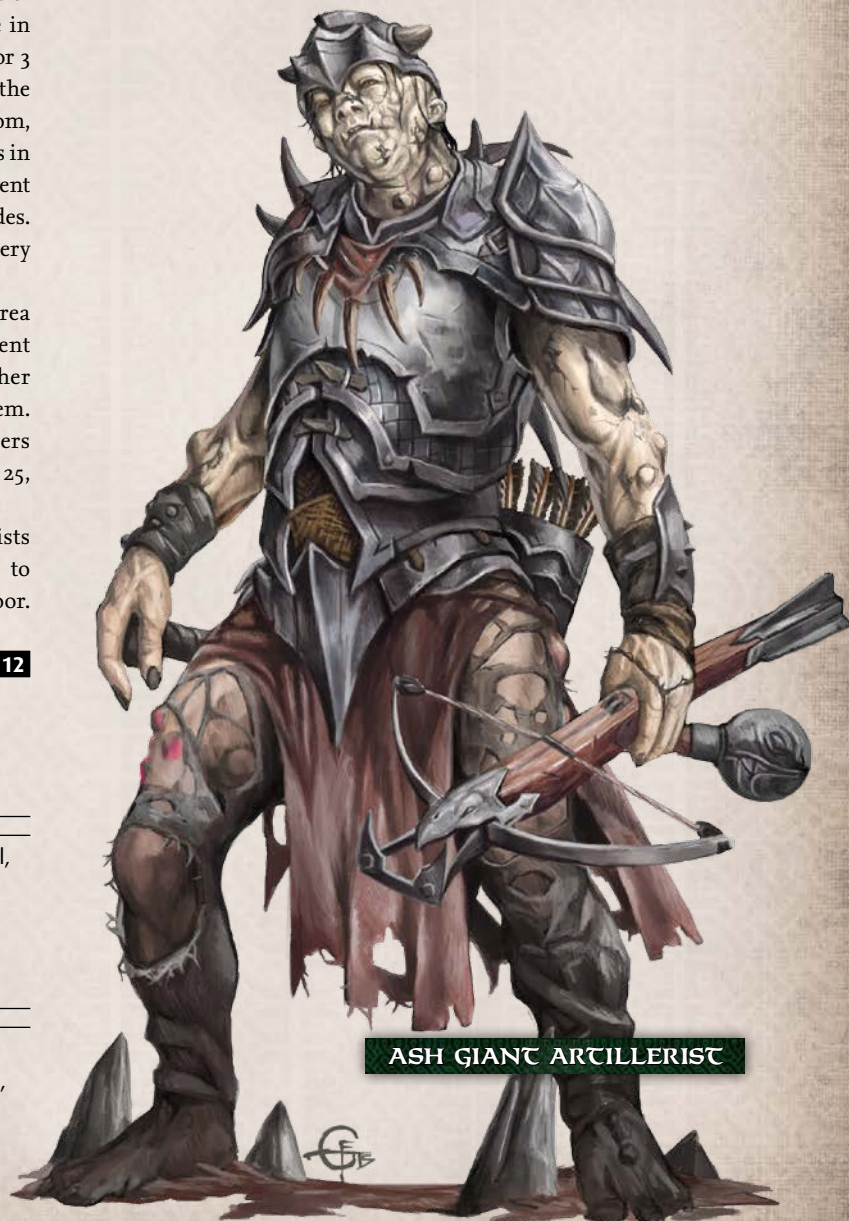
Feats Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy ballista), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy catapult), Great Cleave, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot

Skills Climb +11, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Perception +12

Languages Common, Giant

SQ oversized weapon, vermin empathy +16

Gear breastplate, Huge heavy crossbow with 15 bolts, Huge heavy mace, 500 gp



ASH GIANT ARTILLERIST

E2. Ulkraf's Quarters (CR 14)

This room is furnished with an armchair and wooden bed covered with mangy-looking, smelly bear furs. In the corner stands a floor lamp fitted with a spherical glass bulb that emits a cold light. A reinforced wooden chest sits near the bed.

Ulkraf (see area E6) carries the only key to this chamber, his personal quarters. The bed is covered with yaoguai hides. The lamp bulb is filled with water and an alchemical fluorescent additive that illuminates the room as a sunrod.

Trap: The chest near the bed is locked (Disable Device DC 30; Ulkraf carries the key) and trapped with a devious alchemical device fixed inside the lid, consisting of a glass container that holds extraplanar substances from the infernal realm of Stygia in multiple compartments. If the chest is opened without engaging a hidden mechanical bypass switch, the glass container breaks open, allowing the extraplanar reagents to combine. The substances react with a small explosion 1 round later, filling the room with a cloud of choking black smoke mixed with nightmare vapor for 6 rounds. This smoke obscures vision, granting concealment to creatures within it (see page 444 of the *Core Rulebook* for additional rules on smoke effects). In addition, the smoke cloud contains the bodies of tens of thousands of hellwasps suspended in stasis within it. One round after the smoke fills the room, the hellwasps revive, forming two advanced hellwasp swarms. Bred to survive the effects of the trap, the hellwasps are immune to poison. The hellwasp swarms relentlessly attack any living creatures in sight, and even chase creatures out of the defense tower.

If a PC's Disable Device check result exceeds the trap's Disable Device DC by 10 or more, allowing the PC to bypass the trap without disarming it, the glass container can be removed from the chest without breaking. The intact container can be thrown as an improvised weapon, though carrying the container is rather dangerous due to the high probability of accidental breakage (hardness 1, hp 1).

STYGIAN MIST TRAP

CR 13

XP 25,600

Type mechanical; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Duration 6 rounds/13 rounds; Reset none;

Bypass hidden switch (Perception DC 25)

Effect poison gas (smoke plus nightmare vapor) plus two advanced hellwasp swarms; never miss; onset delay (1 round); multiple targets (all targets within a 45-ft. radius)

ADVANCED HELLWASP SWARMS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 114 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 290, 146)

Immune poison

Treasure: The chest contains Ulkraf's treasure, consisting of approximately 400 pounds of silverware, including some giant-sized alchemical instruments, worth 8,000 gp in total. The chest also contains four gallon-sized jars of wine and a dozen bottle-sized vials of liquor. Ulkraf alchemically distilled all of the spirits, which have a palatable, though bittersweet, taste. The wine, however, is contaminated with ash leprosy (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 126), and even a sip is enough to infect a creature. The bottles of liquor are uncontaminated and can be consumed without harmful effects (other than those normally posed by strong alcohol).

Development: If the PCs trigger the trap here, any ash giant still alive in the tower hears the noise and rushes to attack the party if they try to escape the smoke-filled room.

E3. Alchemical Laboratory

This room contains a large curved table equipped with crystal alembics, earthenware, and other alchemical paraphernalia. A pile of hastily stacked odds and ends sits on the northern end of the table. A long copper pipe crosses the room from east to west, originating from a hole in the east wall and running into the room's fireplace and up the chimney.

Ulkraf has converted half of the basement level, once used as a storage room, into an alchemical laboratory, where the ash giant designed and developed the cannons and winches used to trap the cloud castle and other contraptions. Cookware and cutlery clutter the space around the fireplace, and the northern part of the room is packed with a 20-foot-tall stack of firewood, a pile of hemp sacks full of very large white beans (about 200 pounds total), and a 7-foot-tall barrel half filled with water (the beans and water are all contaminated with ash leprosy [*Bestiary* 3 126]). The copper pipe connects the boiler in area E4 to the pipe in area E1 and upward to the roof. Puncturing the pipe here has the same effects as described in area E1. Besides the alchemical equipment, several bed-sheet-sized scrolls of vellum sit on the table. The scrolls are inscribed with Ulkraf's designs of the anchor cannons built in the caldera (see area B), blueprints of his artillery turret (see area E6), sketches of monstrous creatures (including the anatomical dissection of a giant spider), and a few vegetarian recipes written in Giant (mostly with beans).

Treasure: A sooty silver pot in the fireplace, sticky with the remains of a thick bean soup (contaminated with ash leprosy) is actually a *cauldron of flying* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 287). Volstus gave the cauldron—one of the few human-sized treasures found in Zephyr Hall—to Ulkraf as a curio. The ash giant alchemist, a vegetarian who scorns the meaty meals provided by the fire giants, has been using it to cook his personal food ever since.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check notices that the scroll containing the drawings of the giant spider also contains a portion written in good invisible ink (*Ultimate Equipment* 104). The triggering agent to reveal the secret message is the wine found in area **E2**, though the writing can also be revealed without the triggering agent with a successful DC 30 Craft (alchemy) check. Once revealed, the scroll's ink shows a schematic of the alchemic bomb built by Ulkraf—incorporating the exoskeleton of a giant spider—to mine the base of the cloud castle (see area **F3**). The schematic shows a trio of crystal globes connected by a rod inserted in the spider's exoskeleton. The three globes are labeled “charge,” “fuse,” and “primer” in Giant. Studying the schematic grants a +4 competence bonus on Craft (alchemy) and Disable Device checks to disable the alchemic bomb.

E4. Boiler Room

This room contains a huge copper barrel connected with pipes and tubes to the floor and the walls. The barrel hums and emanates powerful waves of heat into the surrounding air.

Once a storage room, this space now houses Ulkraf's alchemical boiler, a 25-foot-tall, barrel-shaped device that magically accumulates and magnifies the modest power of a subterranean hot spring to create a source of high-pressure steam. Ulkraf uses the steam to provide heat and power for the tower and his laboratory, and the motive power to drive the artillery emplacement on the tower's roof (see area **E6**).

The boiler's central barrel is hot to the touch, and the bubbling of water can be faintly heard from inside. Two large output pipes run between the barrel and the south and west walls, joining the boiler to the cistern in area **E5** and the rooftop artillery turret at area **E6**, through the connecting pipes in areas **E3** and **E1**. Puncturing the boiler or the output pipes (hardness 10, hp 20) has the same effects as described in area **E1**. Five intake pipes, connected to the hot spring deep underground, rise from the floor to join the main body of the boiler. The floor pipes are fitted with wheel-operated closure valves that control the flow of natural steam into the machine.

When the PCs arrive in the room, three out of the five floor valves are open, and two are closed. If the tower's steam plant is still under pressure (essentially, if no pipes have been punctured), closing one or more of the open valves reduces the intake of natural steam to the magical boiler and reduces its power, rendering the steam-powered mechanism of the rooftop artillery emplacement (see area **E6**) useless. On the other hand, opening one of the closed valves increases the pressure in the boiler, causing the steam whistle on the roof to blow a continuous warning signal. This has no further effect, but it does alert the giants on the roof that someone is tampering with the boiler.

Opening the second closed valve makes the pressure in the boiler excessive, and forces any ash giant artilleryist still on the roof to open the emergency exhaust vents, with effects as detailed in area **E6**.

E5. Cistern

Illuminated by two cold lamps mounted at floor level, this room smells of salt and essential oils. Part of the floor is sunken, forming a large stone basin full of steaming water. A large pipe capped with a faucet juts from the north wall. Numerous clay and stone urns of various colors and sizes sit on the floor near the basin.

Built by the fire giants as a cistern to collect rainwater, this room has been transformed by the crafty alchemist Ulkraf into a steam bath, an essential implement in his pursuit to cure the disfiguring sickness of his race with a vegetarian diet and therapeutic baths. The two lamps here are similar to the alchemical lamp in area **A2**, but smaller, illuminating the room as common lamps. One of the output pipes from the boiler in area **E4** runs to the faucet in this room, providing a continuous flow of hot water to the cistern. The water slowly trickles out through small drains at the bottom of the basin, keeping the cistern filled to the brim at all times.

The urns on the floor, covered by dish-shaped lids, contain different kinds of powdered algae, ash, borax, clay, salt, soap, soda, essential oils, and other alchemical substances of Ulkraf's devising, all used in the alchemist's ablutions. One of the smallest containers, a 3-foot-tall black alabaster urn, holds a coarse brown dust of organic origin. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Heal or Knowledge (religion) check identifies the dust as the dried innards of dead cloud giants milled to a powder—a by-product of the horrid ritual that transformed the good cloud giants of Zephyr Hall into undead mohrgs (see area **F10**).

If the PCs stay in this room for more than a few rounds, the ghost of the cloud giant cleric Renfal uses his frightener ability to manifest the following effects in the room using *minor image*, *ghost sound*, and *dancing lights* (see page 60 in the NPC Gallery for details on Renfal and this ability). As the light in the room dims and sounds become hushed, the PCs can catch a fleeting glimpse a huge, disembodied shadow among those cast by the room's lamps and hear the faint sound of harps, like the confused buzz of a distant ensemble tuning their instruments. At the same time, a Huge, vaguely humanoid form takes shape on the surface of the water, faintly glowing with a cold, misty light. The glowing figure lingers above the water for a short while, then slowly ascends toward the ceiling of the room, passing through it and the tower's walls to the caldera outside. If the PCs follow the figure outside, they can see it heading southwest in the direction of the cloud castle. As the glowing figure floats upward toward the floating keep, a distinct, gloomy melody

rises over the confused harp sounds. The melody is short and gloomy, and obsessively repeats itself, ending only when the figure disappears into the mist surrounding the castle's base. Moments later, Renfal uses *whispering wind* to send the following message to the PCs: "Tortured and caged behind invisible walls, I yearn for release. I cannot rest until the tyrant relinquishes his hold on Zephyr Hall. Free me!"

Development: During the remainder of the adventure, as the PCs explore Ironcloud Keep, Renfal's ghost can manifest in a similar manner in specific areas, in hopes of guiding the PCs to his prison (area F7). Until Renfal is freed, these manifestations repeat verbatim; the same effects occur, the same obsessive melody plays, the glowing *dancing lights* figure moves in the direction of area F7, and the same message reaches the PCs via *whispering wind*.

E6. Artillery Deck (CR 17)

A metal-shingled parapet fortifies the flat roof of the tower, which is fitted with a smoking copper chimney. Inside the parapet, a ballista and catapult are mounted on a rotating platform on circular rails, allowing clear fields of fire in all directions.

The ash giant alchemist Ulkraf has built an artillery emplacement on the roof of the tower that features two siege engines—a masterwork heavy ballista (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 160) taken from one of Ironcloud Keep's defense platforms (area F2c), and a heavy catapult (*Ultimate Combat* 163) built by the ash giants. The ballista—a sleek, metallic weapon outfitted with a magical sight called a *scope of stormsight* (see the sidebar on page 18)—makes a stark contrast with the squared, massive wood-and-iron bulk of the catapult, but Ulkraf has managed to merge the two for maximum efficiency. The ballista sits atop a 15-foot-tall wooden turret in the center of the tower's roof. The catapult is mounted on an elongated, wheeled platform that rolls along a pair of circular tracks on the roof. The wooden turret contains a mechanism powered by steam produced by the boiler in area E4. Although the entire mobile artillery emplacement weighs more than 15 tons, the steam-powered device allows a single giant to rotate the entire structure and aim the siege engines. The turret contains exhaust vents, allowing the giants to depressurize the system, as well as a steam whistle. If these exhaust vents are opened, a cloud of hot steam forms over the tower's roof. In the open air, this steam cloud does not obscure vision or provide concealment, and deals only 1 point of fire damage per round to any creatures on the roof. Smoke from the boiler is discharged through the copper chimney at the top of the tower.

A 6-foot-tall wooden parapet faced with iron shingles encircles the entire rooftop and provides creatures on the roof with cover against attacks from outside the tower. A doorway to the east provides the only exit from the roof,

opening onto a stairway that descends inside the tower's walls to area E1.

Creatures: The ash giant alchemist Ulkraf commands a team of four ash giant artilleryists on the tower's roof. Ulkraf looks considerably leaner and better groomed than his crew, thanks to his unusual diet (he's a vegetarian) and bathing habits (he actually bathes). Ulkraf acts as the crew leader for the entire artillery team and operates and fires the heavy ballista with the assistance of one artilleryist. Two artilleryists load and fire the catapult, while the last artilleryist aims the siege engines by turning the emplacement with the help of the steam-powered turret mechanism. The highly efficient and customized emplacement allows the fourth artilleryist to aim both the ballista and the catapult with a single move action each, and Ulkraf's Master Siege Engineer feat allows the giants to load the siege engines with move actions. With a full crew, the giants can load, aim, and fire each siege weapon once per round, as detailed below.

In a given round, the first artilleryist aims the ballista as a move action, and Ulkraf fires the ballista as a standard action. Ulkraf and the second artilleryist then reload the ballista (a move action for Ulkraf, two move actions for the artilleryist). Likewise, the first artilleryist uses his second move action to aim the catapult, which is then fired (as a standard action) by the third artilleryist. The third and fourth artilleryist then reload the catapult (a move action for the one who fired the weapon, two move actions for the fourth artilleryist). At the end of the round, both siege engines are ready to fire again. If necessary, a single giant can crew each of the siege engines, but it still takes three move actions to load one of the weapons, meaning that a single giant needs a minimum of 2 rounds to reload an engine by itself.

These tactics assume that the tower's steam plant is still operational; if the boiler in area E4 has been tampered with, or any of the steam pipes in areas E1, E3, or E4 have been punctured, there is not enough pressure to rotate the turret, and the giants will be forced to aim their siege engines manually.

With the siege engines at their disposal, the giants can launch deadly attacks against intruders in the caldera. The ballista is equipped with 15 +1 *shock thundering heavy ballista bolts* and 30 normal heavy ballista bolts, while the catapult is stocked with 12 heavy catapult stones, four bombs (*Ultimate Combat* 164), and eight plague bundles (*Ultimate Combat* 164) infected with ash leprosy (*Bestiary* 3 126). The catapult has a minimum range of 100 feet, however, and the positioning of the ballista also prevents it from firing on targets within 100 feet of the tower's base. As a result, the giants have a large pile of throwing rocks on the roof to use against close-range targets.

Ulkraf and his crew do not abandon their weapons if the PCs invade the lower levels of the tower, and gang up

near the door of the stairway to the east, waiting for the intruders to come at them. The giants consider going downstairs to engage the PCs only if the trap in area E2 is triggered or the boiler in area E4 is overloaded.

ASH GIANT ARTILLERISTS (4)**CR 12****XP 19,200 each****hp** 168 each (see page 13)**Ranged** heavy catapult^{UC} +21 (8d6 or by ammunition)**ULKRAF****CR 14****XP 38,400**

Male ash giant alchemist 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 126, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26)

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +20**DEFENSE****AC** 28, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)**hp** 210 (20d8+120)**Fort** +20, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11**Defensive Abilities** rock catching;**Immune** disease, poison**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** Huge shortspear +23/+18/+13 (2d6+10 plus poison), slam +18 (1d8+5) or 2 slams +23 (1d8+10)**Ranged** +1 *Huge javelin* +17/+12/+7 (2d6+11 plus poison) or bomb +17 (3d6+2 acid or fire) or rock +17 (1d8+15) or mwk heavy ballista^{UC} +17 (4d8/19-20)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** bomb 8/day (3d6+2 fire and catch fire, DC 15, 10-ft. radius), rock throwing (120 ft.)**Alchemist Extracts Prepared** (CL 6th)2nd—*alchemical allocation*^{APG}, *blur*, *darkvision*, *spider climb*
1st—*bomber's eye*^{APG} (2), *shield*, *true strike* (2)**TACTICS****Before Combat** Ulkraf has poisoned his javelins and shortspear with doses of Large scorpion venom. At night, Ulkraf drinks his extract of *darkvision*.**During Combat** Ulkraf directs the firing of the siege engine atop the tower for as long as possible, even firing at intruders who land on the tower's roof or break through the door from the lower floors with the heavy ballista at point-blank range. Ulkraf remains behind his artillery crew, supporting them with ranged attacks as much as possible, but if melee combat seems imminent, he drinks his extract of *blur* and his Strength mutagen.**Morale** Sworn to defend the Storm Tyrant, Ulkraf fights to the death to prevent intruders from reaching Ironcloud Keep.**STATISTICS****Str** 31, **Dex** 16, **Con** 23, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 38**Feats** Brew Potion, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy ballista), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Master Siege Engineer^{UC}, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Siege Engineer^{UC}, Throw Anything
Skills Climb +14, Craft (alchemy) +21, Craft (siege engines) +14, Disable Device +15, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (engineering) +17, Perception +20, Spellcraft +14, Use Magic Device +14**Languages** Auran, Common, Draconic, Giant**SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +6, identify potions), discoveries (acid bomb, dispelling bomb, explosive bomb), healthy, mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 60 minutes), oversized weapon, poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning, vermin empathy +21
Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potions of fly*, Large scorpion venom (10 doses); **Other Gear** +2 *chain shirt*, Huge shortspear, +1 *Huge javelins* (3), *boro bead*^{UE} (2nd level), *necklace of fireballs* (type VII), alchemy crafting kit^{UE}, formula book (contains formulae for all prepared extracts plus *barkskin*, *cure light wounds*, *cure moderate wounds*, and *levitate*), keys to door and chest in area E2**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Healthy (Ex)** Ulkraf leads a healthier lifestyle than the vast majority of ash giants. He is still immune to disease, but he does not transmit ash leprosy with his attacks.**Development:** If the PCs defeat Ulkraf and the ash giant artillerists and capture the ballista on top of the tower, they can use the siege engine's magical *scope of stormsight* to view Ironcloud Keep overhead, enabling them to see two of the entrances to the engine level (areas F2c and F2d) and the extent of the energy field surrounding the cloud castle (see page 20).**BOARDING THE CLOUD CASTLE**At some point, the PCs need to attempt to reach Ironcloud Keep itself before it floats away, either after defeating the garrison in the inner crater, or possibly even during the battle. The castle is still moored in place, but once its anchor chains are released, Volstus is free to fly the cloud castle away from the caldera (see *Into the Sky* on page 18). If the PCs want to defeat the Storm Tyrant, they'll need to board the castle before the ash giants release the keep (and before Volstus can make an emergency takeoff).**ULKRAF**

SCOPE OF STORMSIGHT

Created by cloud giants for use in their floating cloud castles, this brass tube with blue crystal lenses is designed to be mounted to a siege engine, allowing its crew to target unseen attackers.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| SCOPE OF STORMSIGHT | | PRICE 18,000 GP |
| SLOT none | CL 7th | WEIGHT 12 lbs. |
| AURA moderate divination | | |

This sight can be attached to a single direct-fire siege engine. When this is done, the sight becomes part of the siege engine, but can be removed from that siege engine with a full-round action. A character firing a siege engine that has this sight attached can look through the scope to see through magical and normal fog, mist, smoke, and similar obscurement, ignoring the miss chance for these obstructions. In addition, a character using this scope can choose to take a full-round action to either locate an invisible creature within line of sight or make a single shot that ignores the invisibility of a creature that she knows is in the area.

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS | COST 9,000 GP |
| Craft Wondrous Item, <i>hunter's eye</i> ^{APG} | |

The bottom of the cloud surrounding Ironcloud Keep's base is only 200 feet above the floor of the inner crater, but the castle's "ground floor" is 800 feet overhead. The energy field surrounding the castle makes getting inside the keep problematic at best, as it prevents any extradimensional travel into the citadel. Though it's possible to fly up to the fortress, the field's *repulsion* effect prevents most creatures from reaching the main body of the castle. The energy field does not encompass the rocky base of the castle, however (see page 20 for details on Ironcloud Keep's energy field).

Without flight or teleportation, the only way to board the castle is to climb one of the two massive chains fired by the ash giants' anchor cannons that are still affixed to the keep's rocky base (areas **B1** and **B4**). These chains are considerably larger than the ones used to moor even the biggest galleys of Golarion; each link is made out of foot-thick iron and is 5 feet in length. The chains stretch from the ground to the chain anchors (areas **F1a** and **F1d**) just below the engine level, nearly 600 feet up. Climbing a chain requires a series of DC 10 Climb checks for the first 200 feet. At that point, the chains enter the cloud surrounding the castle's base and become slippery with condensed moisture, increasing the Climb DC to 15.

Once the PCs reach the cloud castle, they must still find their way inside. They likely learned of the existence of

entrances in the rocky base beneath the keep (the defense platforms at area **F2**), as well as the castle's energy field, in the previous adventure, "Anvil of Fire." As a result, the PCs are most likely to enter the castle through its engine level, but this is by no means mandatory. There are three holes in the energy field, which lead to areas **F51**, **F54**, and **F56** on the castle's upper levels, but these are only visible if one can see the invisible energy field itself, and the Storm Tyrant's minions have trapped these entrances. As a result, the keep's lower entrances are the easiest access points, but these are concealed within the cloud surrounding the castle's base.

As the PCs delve into the cloud of mist, they have the following options to get into the engine level. The most obvious entrance is through one of the four defense platforms (areas **F2**). The PCs can also enter the propulsion duct network (area **F3**) through one of its 12 exhaust vents, spaced around the castle's base 20 feet under the floor of the engine level. Lastly, the PCs can enter through the castle's cargo lift shaft, which opens near the bottom of the base 400 feet above the ground and ascends about 200 feet to area **F8**. While the 30-foot-high archways of the defense platforms are readily visible to anyone able to see through the mist or approaching at a reasonable distance, a successful DC 25 Perception check is likely required to notice the propulsion ducts and lift shaft.

Development: The cloud giants on the castle's defense platforms (area **F2**) fire at any intruders approaching the castle, either with their heavy ballistae or thrown rocks. They also direct the two yaoguai in area **F2a** against the PCs at the most favorable moment. See area **F2** for more information on these defenders and their tactics.

INTO THE SKY

To initiate his plans of conquest, the Storm Tyrant had planned to complete the repairs to Ironcloud Keep, load the elite soldiers trained at Ashpeak into the cloud castle, then fly to the frost giant training village of Skirgaard and the training camps in Minderhal's Valley to swell his forces even more. He would then head north into Belkzen, where his giant army would subjugate an even larger horde of orcs that he would finally lead in battle against the nations of western Avistan. All of this has changed, however, with the PCs' repeated successes, and their sudden arrival in Ashpeak's caldera has forced Volstus to advance his plans considerably—to the extent that he tries to launch the flying cloud castle using the *cloud diadem* as soon as he can, while the PCs are battling his forces in the inner crater.

When the PCs first arrive in the inner crater, two chains still anchor Ironcloud Keep to the caldera, though the ash giants and black scorpion at area **B** are working hard to release the castle's moorings. It takes 10 rounds for the ash giants to sever the first chain, leaving just one chain still

holding the cloud keep in place. In fact, just one anchor is not enough to keep the castle moored, and Volstus can launch the castle into the air at any time after this point, tearing off the last chain with a surge of power, though he would prefer to wait until both chains have been released to avoid further damaging the castle.

The castle's liftoff does not follow a set schedule; it should occur at a proper dramatic moment, based on the PCs' actions and the narrative flow of the adventure. During the battle in the inner crater, it should be made clear to the players that the castle is preparing to launch into the sky, but you should be careful not to put the PCs on a timer or set the castle free too early and risk a premature end to the campaign.

For the most part, you can assume that the castle remains in place over the caldera until the ash giants free the last chain (an unlikely event, unless the party is defeated), or until the PCs finally approach Ironcloud Keep, at which point Volstus is likely to attempt an emergency takeoff, creating some additional excitement as the PCs fly into the cloud around the castle's base or even dangle from the massive anchor chains. Again, you should give the PCs every chance to reach the keep itself before it finally tears free of the caldera. If any of the PCs are still ascending the chains to the cloud castle, the climb becomes a bumpy and potentially terrifying experience as the floating fortress breaks free and begins to fly upward. The Climb DC increases to 20 (25 inside the cloud) as the chain wavers in the wind and the castle picks up speed and altitude.

PART 2: CASTLE IN THE CLOUDS

Once the PCs have successfully boarded Ironcloud Keep, they can begin their explorations of the cloud castle in search of the Storm Tyrant to finally put an end to his plans of conquest. With the intelligence they gained in the previous adventure, the PCs should be aware that three captains serve Volstus within Ironcloud Keep (the cloud giant twins Nalbia and Nalbur, and the taiga giant Cirdassa), and that their best chance of vanquishing the Storm Tyrant lies with first defeating these allies so they cannot aid Volstus in his battle against the PCs.

Part 2 of the adventure details the two lowest levels of the castle—the engine level (areas **F1–F12**) and the first floor (areas **F13–F27**), where Cirdassa currently resides, along with another ally the PCs are likely not yet aware of: the shadow giant inquisitor Krellan. The keep's second and third floors (areas **F28–F47**) are described in Part 3. The cloud giant witch Nalbia makes her home in this section of this castle. Ironcloud Keep's highest levels (areas **F48–F56**) are detailed in Part 4, where the PCs can find Nalbia's twin brother Nalbur and Volstus's dominated red dragon Akazerath, and finally face off against the Storm Tyrant himself.

F. IRONCLOUD KEEP

Ironcloud Keep, formerly Zephyr Hall, is a relatively compact citadel for giants, but the cloud castle is truly titanic from a human perspective. The keep is more than 500 feet tall, and weighs nearly 10 million tons together with its base—an immense body of crystalline rock more than 400 feet tall, shaped like a squat, inverted cone. Despite the castle's seemingly impossible size and weight, a magical engine within its base creates a powerful antigravity effect that is strong enough to lift the whole thing into the air.

The castle has seven distinct levels; the lowest floor, the engine level, is hewn into the keep's rocky base. Two spiral staircases connect the engine level to castle's first floor on the base's "ground level," approximately 200 feet above the engine level. Four more floors, each 60 feet high, are stacked on top of the castle's first floor. Lastly, a large, secret attic is located beneath the conical roof of the main tower at the very top of the castle. The crystalline base of the castle magically emits a shroud of thick mist, which increases in size due to condensation when the castle remains stationary. This mist blends perfectly with natural clouds in the atmosphere and hides the base of the castle from sight. It also provides concealment to anyone within the cloud. While the castle floats above the caldera, the cloud is about 600 feet in diameter.

The cloud castle's magical engine, located in the keep's engine room (area **F12**), is a powerful artifact that not only propels the floating citadel through the air, but also produces a levitation effect that ensures the lowest point of the castle's base comes no closer than 150 feet from any large mass of earth or expanse of water under it. The castle can reach a maximum altitude equal to that of the highest clouds (about 30,000 feet).

The phenomenon that creates the cloud around the castle's base produces a high level of humidity in the engine level. This moisture condenses into water on the floor, which constantly drains through a gutter system into the castle's propulsion ducts (area **F3**). In temperatures of severe cold, the water freezes into hoarfrost, but this has no adverse effect on the materials and structures of the engine level. When the castle is not moving, the condensation seeps through the porous rock of the base and precipitates as rain from the cloud beneath the keep.

The floating castle can be maneuvered manually with four sets of cumbersome controls in the engine room (as Renfal and the castle's original cloud engineers did) or telepathically with the *cloud diadem* (as Volstus is doing now). When the castle moves, the moisture in the propulsion ducts sublimates into jets of magical air that raise the temperature in the engine level and push the flying fortress much like a feather in the wind. When properly steered, the castle can ascend, descend, and fly

in any direction, reaching a maximum speed of more than 500 miles per hour, though the greatest speeds are possible only at higher altitudes or during stormy weather.

ENERGY FIELD

Ironcloud Keep's magical engine also powers a nearly invisible energy field that envelops the entirety of the castle, from its mist-shrouded foundations to the tops of its walls and roofs, maintaining comfortable levels of pressure and temperature up to a maximum altitude of 30,000 feet. As a result, creatures within the keep do not need to contend with the environmental effects of high altitudes. The energy field does not extend over the castle's rocky base, so the engine level remains exposed to the elements. Before Volstus's takeover, the cloud engineers relied on cold-weather clothing and spells such as *endure elements* and *air bubble* to resist the adverse conditions of high altitude. Now, only constructs, elemental creatures, and undead—which do not need to breathe and are not bothered by cold, altitude, or moisture—frequent the engine level.

The energy field forms a shell around the castle walls at a distance between 100 and 200 feet that hampers intruders with several permanent magical effects (all at CL 20th). First, the energy field blocks astral travel, causing any attempt to teleport into or out of the castle to fail outright (note that this has no effect on ethereal travel or extradimensional travel within the confines of the energy field or castle). In addition, anyone attempting to pass through the energy field is subject to the effects of *repulsion*, and can't get nearer to the castle without succeeding at a DC 24 Will save. Furthermore, any creature within 60 feet of the energy field is buffeted by hurricane-force winds (*Core Rulebook* 439) emanating from the energy field that check Large creatures and blow away Medium or smaller creatures, and has a 25% chance each round of being targeted by a *lightning bolt* (CL 20th, Reflex DC 19 half). If a creature has successfully crossed inside the energy field and then goes back outside it, that creature is once again subject to the energy field's effect if it attempts to approach the castle again.

The field can be temporarily nullified by means of a *roc rider badge* (see page 53): a magical damper formerly worn by Zephyr Hall's aerial riders (now worn only by Nalbur and Volstus), which neutralizes the energy field and its effects in a 200-foot-radius sphere around the wearer. These badges were employed to allow visiting creatures and flying mounts access to the castle's main landing platform (area F13) and roc stable (area F50). Without a *roc rider badge*, the energy field can be only temporarily neutralized. *Dispel magic* has no effect on the field, though *mage's disjunction* functions as a targeted *dispel magic* effect against a magic item, suppressing a 10-foot-square portion of the field for 1d4 rounds if successful. *Disintegrate*, a *rod of cancellation*, or a *sphere of annihilation* automatically destroys a 10-foot-square

portion of the field. The energy field can also be damaged with spells or weapons (hardness 30, hp 400 per 10-foot-square section), but it is immune to electricity damage.

The energy field is normally visible only via effects such as *see invisibility* or similar means, though it can also be spotted at night by any creature with low-light vision that succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check. The field also eerily flashes for an instant when hit by lightning, or when the castle's roof discharges bolts of electricity—an event that occurs quite often as part of the operation of the castle's engine. Any successful visual examination of the energy field also reveals three places where the field was pierced by the meteorites summoned by the *black comet heart* that hit the castle walls. This damage is still awaiting repairs, but even with these holes (or new breaches created by the PCs), the energy field still holds enough structural integrity to maintain atmospheric pressure and temperatures around the castle.

IRONCLOUD KEEP FEATURES

The walls of Ironcloud Keep are constructed of magically treated, 15-foot-thick, superior masonry (hardness 16, hp 2,700 per 10-foot-square section, break DC 55, save bonus +12). They are immune to electricity and resist the moisture of the atmosphere. Most of the enchanted materials with which the castle is built have a bluish-gray tinge that subtly changes to match the hues of the surrounding sky.

The castle's doors are made of an almost indestructible, magically treated wood as strong as iron, and can be barred from the inside (hardness 10, hp 180, break DC 35). The windows and arrow slits in the castle walls are giant-sized, and seem easily accessible to smaller creatures, but they are warded with powerful defensive magic effects. Most windows, such as the ones in areas F36, F42, F43, and F54, are 8 feet wide and are large enough for Large creatures to easily pass through. They are fitted with magical, multicolored stained glass that functions as a permanent, partial *prismatic wall* facing the outside (CL 20th; no blinding effect; blue, indigo, and violet colors only). Arrow slits, such as the ones in areas F39, F47, and F53, are 3 feet wide. Medium creatures can squeeze through, but these apertures are fitted with stained glass in various shades of gray that functions as a permanent *wall of force* (CL 20th). Opening the fixtures from the inside temporarily neutralizes these effects; permanently removing them requires either negating them with the proper spells (in the case of the *prismatic wall* windows) or destroying the *walls of force* (as normal for the spell).

Unless otherwise specified, and in absence of natural light from windows or arrow slits, all the rooms in Ironcloud Keep are lit by magical lamps that shed light as sunrods affixed high on the walls or to the ceiling. The lamps can be turned on and off with a command word in Giant, and are usually off if nobody is present in the room.



Other contraptions and magical effects in the keep (such as the magical kitchen utensils in area **F20**) function using similar command words in Giant. The PCs can learn how to operate these devices (as well as the lamps) with successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (local) checks to discover the command words (*detect magic* or similar spells automatically reveal the commands), or with successful DC 25 Use Magic Device checks to blindly activate them.

Zephyr Hall was built by cloud giants for cloud giants, so the castle's architecture was designed for Huge creatures. Unless otherwise noted, average ceiling height within the keep is about 50 feet. An average cloud giant is 18 feet tall and has the proportions of a lean human, so it can be assumed that structures and objects within the castle are about three times larger and weigh about 20 times as much as their Medium counterparts. Keep this scale in mind as the PCs explore the castle, as interacting with the oversized architecture and furniture might be problematic, especially in stressful or combat situations. Even simple actions such as opening a door or moving a

chair might call for a Strength check, while ascending a ladder, walking up a staircase, or reaching a shelf might require a successful Climb check.

F1. Chain Anchors

One of the giant anchoring chains has penetrated the castle's base here. Around the chain, the bluish crystalline rock seems to have melted and then solidified again, encasing the metal and creating an unbreakable weld.

Five anchoring chains once moored Ironcloud Keep to Ashpeak's caldera; only two of them (areas **F1a** and **F1d**) remain connected to the giant cannons 600 feet below. All of the anchoring chains hit the castle's base near the engine level, but at slightly different heights. Each chain is summarized below, along with its current status (loose or connected) and the climbing distances to the nearest defense platforms and propulsion vents. The inverted cone of the castle's base forms an overhang that is wet and

slippery, so any attempt to climb along the base requires successful DC 35 Climb checks.

Anchor F1a: Connected to area **B1**; 10 feet below area **F2a**; 30 feet to the nearest propulsion vent (area **F3**)

Anchor F1b: Loose; 20 feet below area **F2b**; 10 feet to the nearest propulsion vent (area **F3**)

Anchor F1c: Loose; 30 feet above engine level; about 110 feet from areas **F2b** and **F2c**; 60 feet to the nearest propulsion vent (area **F3**)

Anchor F1d: Connected to area **B4** (loose after 10 rounds); level with area **F2c**, 40 feet away; 20 feet to the nearest propulsion vent (area **F3**)

Anchor F1e: Loose; 40 feet above area **F2d**; 50 feet to the nearest propulsion vent (area **F3**)

Development: If a PC arrives near an anchor point while climbing the chains, there is a 50% chance that one of the cloud giants on the nearest defense platform (area **F2**) throws a rock at that character. There is also a (noncumulative) 50% chance that one of the phase spiders in the propulsion ducts (area **F3**) materializes on the chain and attempts a surprise attack before phasing out to avoid retaliation.

F2. Defense Platforms (CR 14 or 15)

A spacious platform extends from the base of the castle, overlooking the vertiginous heights below. An archway carved into the rock opens into a large tunnel with an ascending staircase that leads deeper into the immense structure.

Four platforms jut from the sides of Ironcloud Keep's base, aligned with the four cardinal directions. The 30-foot-high archways behind each platform that lead into the engine level are the easiest entry points into the castle as a whole. Three of the platforms (areas **F2a**, **F2b**, and **F2d**) hold masterwork heavy ballistae (*Ultimate Combat* 160) equipped with *scopes of stormsight* (see the sidebar on page 18). Area **F2c** is empty; the ballista once mounted here was disassembled and brought down to the defense tower in the inner crater below (area **E6**). Each ballista is equipped with a supply of six +1 *shock thundering heavy ballista bolts*, 12 normal heavy ballista bolts, and 12 throwing rocks.

Creatures: Three cloud giant sentries occupy each defense platform, crewing the ballistae and watching for intruders. In addition, two mutated creatures called yaoguai are posted in area **F2a** with the guards. The giants fire ballista bolts or throw rocks at anyone approaching the castle, whether flying or climbing up the anchor chains. The cloud giants have Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy ballista) instead of Great Cleave, and can fire their ballistae every other round, with two of the giants aiming the siege engine as full-round actions while the third giant fires the ballistae (all three giants take full-round actions on the second round to reload the

ballista). Although the ballistae have a maximum range of 1,200 feet, the giants are unlikely to fire them at such long range, and usually wait until targets are closer than 400 feet before opening fire.

Since the yaoguai can't see through the cloud surrounding the castle's base, they wait on platform **F2a** until ordered to attack by the giants with them, at which point they fly down to attack intruders climbing the chains or approaching any of the entrances to the engine level.

IRONCLOUD KEEP SENTRIES (3)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

NE cloud giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 147)

hp 168 each

Ranged mwk heavy ballista^{UC} +12 (4d8/19–20)

ADVANCED YAOGUAI (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 284

N Huge magical beast

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 20 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, –2 size)

hp 115 each (11d10+55); fast healing 5

Fort +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6; +4 vs. mind-affecting effects

Defensive Abilities fortification (50%); **DR** 5/–; **Immune** nauseated, sickened; **SR** 20

Weaknesses polymorph susceptibility

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +17 (2d6+8), claw +17 (1d8+8), tentacle +12 (1d8+4)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 12, **Con** 21, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 32

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Power Attack, Snatch

Skills Fly +0, Perception +7

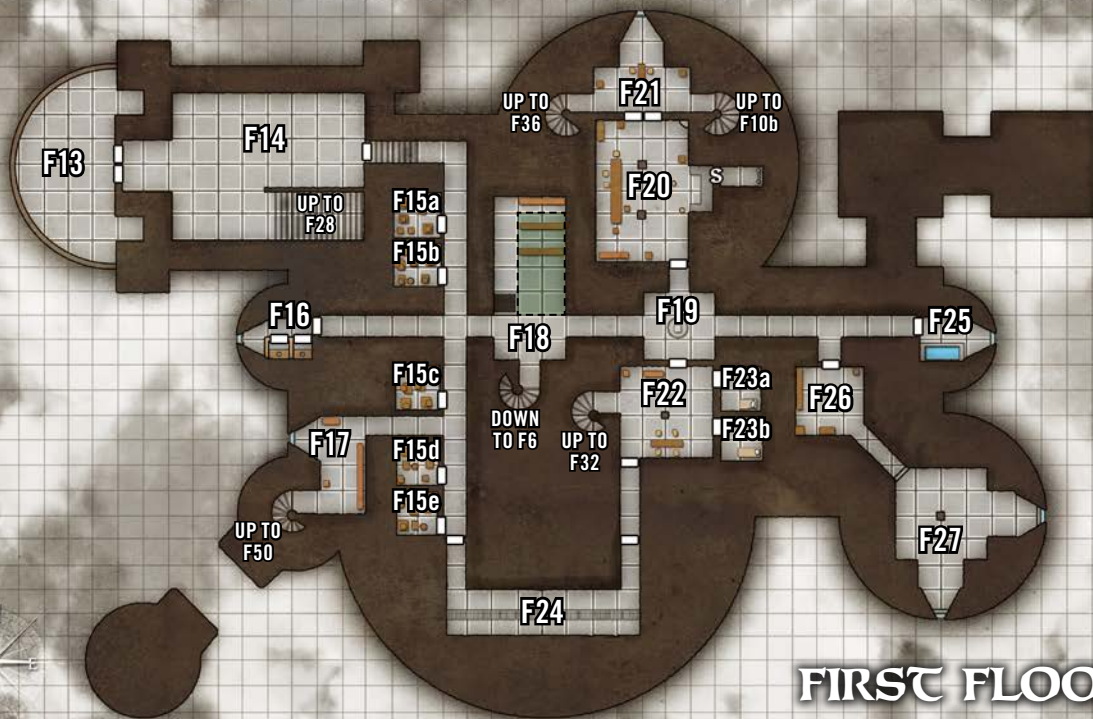
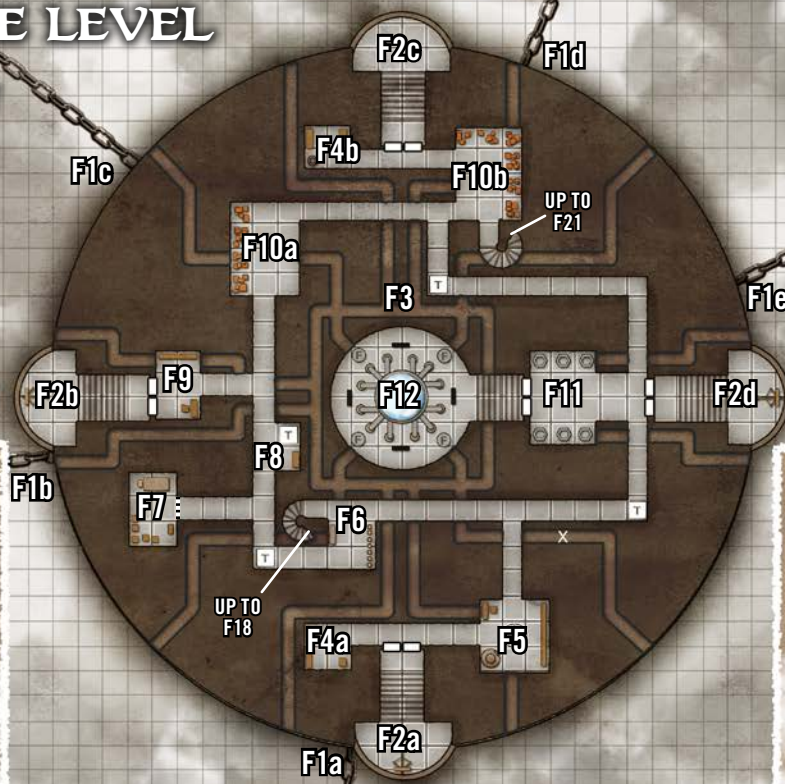
SQ maker's gift (flight)

F3. Propulsion Ducts (CR 17 and CR 15)

A network of conduits runs through the castle's rocky base approximately 20 feet beneath the engine level. These 9-foot-diameter circular ducts channel winds from the engine room (area **F12**) through 12 vents on the exterior of the base, providing propulsion for the entire cloud castle. Although the ducts are rather tight for Huge creatures, they are wide enough for Large creatures to move and fight inside them without penalty. A constant, cold breeze (equivalent to a moderate wind) flows through the ducts from the engine room to the exterior vents, but this increases to windstorm strength when the castle is moving at high speed, potentially making movement

IRONCLOUD KEEP ENGINE LEVEL

1 SQUARE = 15 FEET



FIRST FLOOR

1 SQUARE = 15 FEET

through the ducts difficult for creatures smaller than giants (see pages 439–440 of the *Core Rulebook* for rules on wind effects).

Inside the ducts, four ladders ascend to area **F12**. In addition, numerous grates connect the ducts to the gutter system throughout the engine level's corridors and rooms, though only Tiny creatures or those using effects such as *gaseous form* can pass through the narrow gratings.

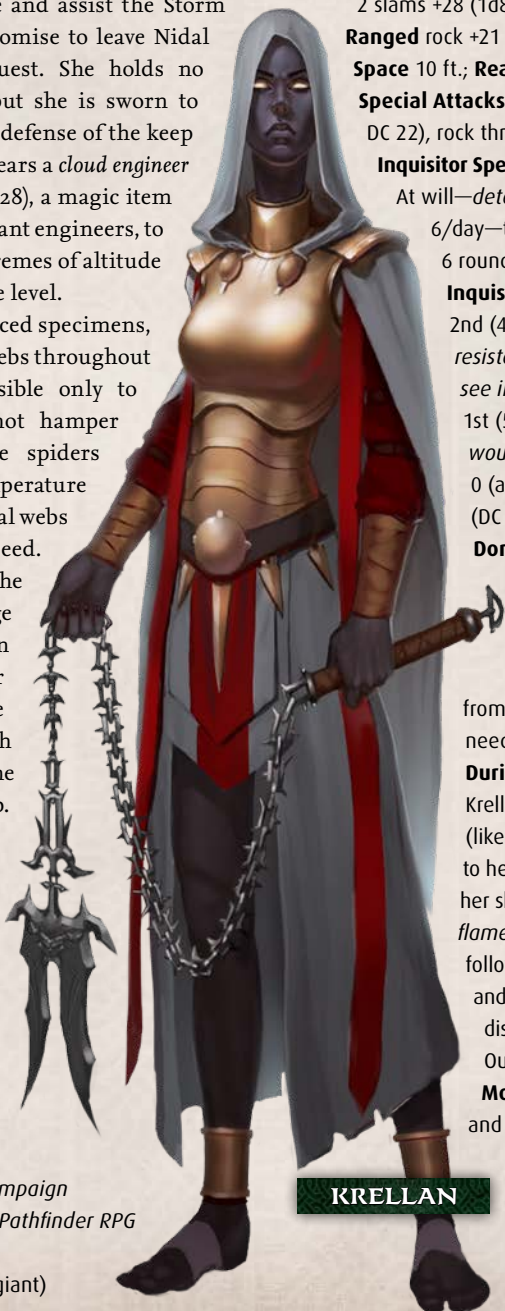
Creatures: A shadow giant inquisitor named Krellan currently watches over Ulkraf's alchemic bomb in the propulsion ducts (see Trap below), accompanied by four phase spiders. Krellan is an ambassador from Nidal, sent by the Umbral Court to bribe and assist the Storm Tyrant in exchange for his promise to leave Nidal alone in his push for conquest. She holds no personal loyalty to Volstus, but she is sworn to uphold her duty, and fights in defense of the keep to the best of her ability. She wears a *cloud engineer badge* (see the sidebar on page 28), a magic item originally worn by the cloud giant engineers, to protect herself against the extremes of altitude and temperature on the engine level.

The phase spiders are advanced specimens, and have spun their ethereal webs throughout the ducts. The webs are visible only to ethereal creatures and do not hamper movement in any way. The spiders remain ethereal when the temperature is low, and cling to their ethereal webs when the castle flies at high speed.

Once aware of intruders in the keep (likely when the PCs engage the cloud giants and yaoguai in area **F2**), Krellan activates her armor's special ability to become ethereal and prepare an ambush with the phase spiders in the ducts to defend Ulkraf's bomb. While ethereal, Krellan and the phase spiders surround the PCs, suddenly materializing around them to take them by surprise (preferably at a crossroads where four of them can gang up on opponents).

KRELLAN CR 16
XP 76,800

Female shadow giant inquisitor
of Zon-Kuthon 6 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* 15, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 38)
LE Large humanoid (extraplanar, giant)



Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +21 (+25 in dim light)

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 12, flat-footed 28 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 287 (25d8+175)

Fort +23, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities rock catching, shadow cloak 3/day

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee spiked chain +28/+23/+18/+13 (2d6+16/19–20 plus energy drain) or

2 slams +28 (1d8+11 plus energy drain)

Ranged rock +21 (1d8+16/19–20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks bane (6 rounds/day), energy drain (1 level, DC 22), rock throwing (180 ft.)

Inquisitor Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +9)

At will—*detect alignment*

6/day—touch of darkness (3 rounds)

6 rounds/day—*discern lies*

Inquisitor Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +9)

2nd (4/day)—*castigate*^{APG} (DC 15), *corruption resistance*^{APG}, *flames of the faithful*^{APG}, *see invisibility*

1st (5/day)—*command* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *true strike*, *wrath*^{APG}

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 13), *brand*^{APG} (DC 13), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*

Domain Darkness

TACTICS

Before Combat Krellan uses *detect alignment* to scan opponents, then casts *corruption resistance* to protect herself from the most likely alignment-based attacks. If needed, she casts *see invisibility* as well.

During Combat On the first round of combat, Krellan pronounces judgment as a swift action (likely destruction or justice, though she switches to healing or protection as needed), activates her shadow cloak as a move action, then casts *flames of the faithful* on her spiked chain. On the following round, she activates her bane ability and attacks, using her spiked chain to trip or disarm foes and taking advantage of her Outflank and Shake It Off feats.

Morale Krellan's true loyalties lie elsewhere, and she is not willing to lay down her life for the Storm Tyrant. If reduced to fewer than 70 hit points, she activates her shadow cloak and attempts to flee. If she escapes, she might reappear later in the adventure to further harass the PCs.

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 17, **Con** 24, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 17
Base Atk +18; **CMB** +30 (+32 bull rush, +32 disarm, +32 trip);
CMD 43 (45 vs. bull rush, 45 vs. disarm, 45 vs. trip)
Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (spiked chain), Improved Critical (rock), Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Outflank^{APG}, Power Attack, Shake It Off^{UC}, Vital Strike
Skills Bluff +16, Climb +21, Diplomacy +16, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +14, Knowledge (planes) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +21 (+25 in dim light), Sense Motive +19, Stealth +19 (+27 in dim light), Survival +16
Languages Aklo, Common, Giant, Shadowtongue
SQ cunning initiative, judgment 2/day, militant, monster lore +3, solo tactics, stern gaze, track +3
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 *etherealness breastplate*, spiked chain, *cloud engineer badge* (see page 28)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Militant (Ex) A shadow giant is proficient in all simple weapons, all martial weapons, and one exotic weapon of its choice; Krellan chose the spiked chain.
Shadow Cloak (Ex) Because of her connection with the Plane of Shadow, as a move action in any illumination other than direct sunlight, Krellan can cloak herself in moving shadows that act as the *blur* spell for 1d6+6 rounds. She can use this ability three times per day.

ADVANCED PHASE SPIDERS (4) CR 9

XP 6,400 each
Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 226
 N Large magical beast
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+5 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)
hp 114 each (12d10+48)
Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +8
Defensive Abilities ethereal jaunt

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee bite +18 (2d8+10 plus grab and poison)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Special Attacks ethereal ambush

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 21, **Con** 18, **Int** 7, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +12; **CMB** +20 (+24 grapple); **CMD** 35 (47 vs. trip)
Feats Ability Focus (poison), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Skill Focus (Stealth), Vital Strike
Skills Acrobatics +10 (+14 when jumping), Climb +20, Perception +9, Stealth +11
Languages Aklo

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 22; *frequency* 1/round for 8 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Con; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

Trap: Volstus has placed Ulkraf's alchemic bomb in one of the propulsion ducts (marked with an X on the map). The ash giant alchemist used the empty exoskeleton of a giant spider as the bomb's case and attached it to the ceiling of the duct with *sovereign glue*. The exoskeleton has been magically hardened and completely sealed (hardness 20, hp 55, break DC 43). The bomb inside consists of three elements: the fuse in the head of the exoskeleton, the primer in the thorax, and the charge in the abdomen, each contained inside a crystal globe connected by a metal rod. Only the fuse, a magical glass bead within a 6-inch-diameter globe, is externally visible as a faintly luminous point of light in one of the dull eyes of the dead spider. The primer consists of several reagents, including alchemist's fire and a powerful acid, which are stored in compartments in the second, 18-inch-diameter globe. The charge, contained in a 3-foot-diameter globe, consists of 200 pounds of explosive alchemical salt that is 100 times more powerful than standard black powder.

The glass bead of the fuse is telepathically connected to the *cloud diadem* worn by Volstus, creating a dead man's switch that triggers the bomb if Volstus is killed or incapacitated. The bomb is also set to detonate if the exoskeleton is damaged in any way, the reagents of the primer are exposed to light, or the bomb is handled without proper care (such as by attempting to rip it free of the *sovereign glue*, trying to forcibly break it open, or simply dropping it).

No Perception check is required to spot the bomb, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Craft (alchemy), Knowledge (engineering), or Perception check quickly realizes the potential of prematurely detonating the bomb through improper handling. In addition, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check recognizes the danger an explosion would pose to the foundations of the cloud castle (see Development below).

When the bomb is triggered, the fuse emits a *shatter* effect on the crystal globes, causing the primer to create a ball of fire that detonates the charge. The heat and concussive force of the blast deal 12d6 points of fire damage and 12d6 points of bludgeoning damage to all creatures in the duct that are within 90 feet of the bomb. The damage decreases to 8d6 points of fire damage and 8d6 points of bludgeoning damage between 91 feet and 180 feet from the bomb, as the explosion reaches the ducts under the engine and gushes out of the nearest propulsion vent. The explosion deals 4d6 points of fire damage and 4d6 points of bludgeoning damage to all creatures in the ducts farther than 180 feet from the bomb. On the engine level above, the blast erupts from the gutter drains, and

WHAT IF THE BOMB GOES OFF?

If the alchemic bomb in area **F3** explodes, it wreaks immense havoc on Ironcloud Keep's magical engine, causing the flying fortress to plummet toward the ground. Although the actual effects of the castle's descent are left to the GM to develop, the PCs may be able to arrest the keep's fall and gain some measure of control over the damaged cloud castle.

A *wish* spell or similar powerful magic might enable the PCs to secure the castle, at least temporarily, in a stationary position above a cloud. Alternatively, the PCs can try to reactivate the citadel's magical engine backup system. The first step in accomplishing this task is to stabilize the castle by realigning it to the cardinal points, as was done in the caldera, using the foundation block in area **F19**. To do so, a PC must touch the four faces of the block in the correct order (east, south, west, north) and pronounce the words inscribed on them in Giant. Renfal can inform the PCs of the method of activating the block, or they can figure it out themselves with a successful DC 35 Spellcraft check or DC 25 Use Magic Device check.

The second step is to engage the engine's magical backup system in the engine room (area **F12**), which they can achieve with four successful DC 25 Use Magic Device checks (one for each stela in the engine room), a successful DC 35 Spellcraft check, or a successful DC 30 Intelligence check. If the PCs stabilized the castle by aligning the foundation block in area **F19** with the cardinal points, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus on this check. If they have befriended the ghost of Renfal (see area **F7**), his assistance grants them an additional +4 competence bonus on the check.

If the PCs are successful, the castle stops its uncontrolled descent, but it has very little motive power. See Concluding the Adventure on page 59 for details on the final fate of Ironcloud Keep.

any creature in a corridor or within 15 feet of a wall in a room takes half of the fire damage and one-quarter of the bludgeoning damage based on that creature's distance from the bomb. All those affected can reduce the damage by half with a successful DC 23 Reflex save. In addition, the explosive force of the blast damages the castle's base as well (see Development below).

To disable the bomb, a PC must carefully disassemble its chitinous case and separate the primer from the charge, which requires a successful DC 40 Craft (alchemy) or Disable Device check. If this check fails by 4 or less, the bomb remains unexploded and the PC can try again. If the check fails by 5 or more, the bomb explodes. If the PCs found and deciphered the bomb schematic in area

E3, they gain a +4 competence bonus on checks to disarm the bomb.

ALCHEMIC BOMB

CR 15

XP 51,200

Type mechanical; Perception automatic; Disable Device special

EFFECTS

Trigger special; Reset none

Effect explosive blast (12d6 fire damage and 12d6 bludgeoning damage, decreasing damage with distance from explosion, Reflex DC 23 half); multiple targets (all targets within propulsion duct system)

Development: If the alchemic bomb detonates, the explosion breaks off an immense wedge of rock in the castle's base. The resulting debris, about 50,000 tons of shattered rock, rains down to a potentially disastrous effect on the landscape. The blast also causes the floors of area **F5** and the corridor connecting that room to area **F11** to collapse. All this destruction impairs the primary magical power source of the engine in area **F12**, making the castle completely ungovernable and causing it to begin an uncontrolled descent toward to the ground. What happens at this point is left up to the GM, and could well result in a cyclopean catastrophe—both within the castle and on the ground below. See the What If the Bomb Goes Off? sidebar for more information.

If the PCs have not entered the propulsion ducts before Ulkraf's bomb detonates, Krellan and the phase spiders are freed from their primary task of guarding the bomb and can then move to attack the PCs anywhere on the engine level or elsewhere in the keep.

Story Award: Award the PCs 51,200 XP for successfully disarming the alchemic bomb.

F4. Munitions Storage

This square room contains steel shelves laden with enormous boulders. A round stone table holding oversized stonemasonry tools sits in the corner across the entrance. A large metal tray like a palanquin lies on the floor in the opposite corner.

Each of these rooms (areas **F4a** and **F4b**) is stocked with a score of oversized rocks used by the cloud giants to bombard ground targets. Each rock is 50 times the weight of a standard cloud giant throwing rock, and two powerful Huge creatures are required to carry one. The cloud giants usually carry these rocks to the defense platforms and pile them up there before dropping them down on targets beneath the castle. The giants use the stonemasonry tools to smooth out the boulders for accuracy. The palanquin-like tray is used to carry the rocks to the defense platforms.

F5. Metal Workshop (CR 16)

This room contains a large steel table with a matching chair, a giant-sized smelting kiln, a massive anvil, and several metal boxes. A huge shelved cabinet with stained-glass doors stretches across one entire wall. In the middle of the floor, a circle formed from solidified molten steel reflects the soft light emanating from the kiln.

This room was a metal workshop for the castle's cloud engineers. The kiln is powered by the castle's engine, and is constantly heated at low temperature (less than 200° F). The temperature can be raised to that of white-hot steel with a command word in Giant. The anvil is ordinary, though exceptionally well made and of Huge size. The cabinet contains Huge masterwork artisan's tools for blacksmithing and silversmithing. Near it are six containers full of steel ingots. The steel circle on the floor is a summoning circle used to conjure the room's current occupant (see Creature below).

Creature: After Volstus's takeover, the spirit naga sorceress Liniratis (see area F47) used this room to summon Dyzelke, a crucidaemon who tortured and eventually slew the cloud giant Renfal in area F7. Dyzelke usually waits invisibly in or near this room, unwilling to confront the PCs directly without explicit orders to do so. Dyzelke attacks intruders if she is detected, or after they have triggered or disabled one of her traps (see Development below). Before attacking, Dyzelke first attempts to summon two piscodaemons to aid her in battle.

DYZELKE CR 15
XP 51,200
 Crucidaemon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 62)
 hp 212

Trap: Dyzelke has set a trap in the kiln, placing a bunch of her metallic hair inside. If the kiln's door is opened, the temperature in the kiln immediately rises to that of molten iron, causing the hair to erupt from the kiln in a spray of searing metal shards.

EXPLODING KILN TRAP CR 13
XP 25,600
Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none
Effect spray of molten metal shards (10d6 fire damage plus 4d6 slashing damage; Reflex DC 20 half); multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft. cone)

Treasure: Six dozen silver plaques are stacked atop the cabinet. The thick, rectangular plaques are

approximately 1 foot square, 1 inch thick, and weigh about 30 pounds each. Each one is engraved with astronomical symbols and numbers in Giant (from 1 to 72). The 72 plaques are identical to the ones currently mounted on the cylinder of the castle's magical engine (see area F12) and form a complete set of replacements for the engine. The plaques are worth 150 gp each in raw materials alone (or up to five times that to a collector of cloud giant curios). In addition, a chest under the table contains 20 bars of pure silver weighing 100 pounds each, worth a total of 10,000 gp.

Development: As soon as she is aware of the PCs' presence in the keep, Dyzelke moves throughout the engine level to set as many magical traps as possible. Given time, Dyzelke places a *symbol of pain* on the summoning circle in this room and casts three *greater spell glyphs of warding* in three L-junctions in the engine level's corridors (marked T on the map). These *spell glyphs* cover 15-foot-square areas and store the following spells: *blade barrier*, *cold ice strike*^{UM}, and *harm*. All of these magic traps include Dyzelke's +2 bonus to their Perception and Disable Device DCs.

GREATER GLYPHS OF WARDING (3) CR —
Type magic; **Perception** DC 33; **Disable Device** DC 33

EFFECTS

Trigger spell; **Reset** none
Effect spell effect (*greater spell glyph of warding* [*blade barrier*, Reflex DC 25 negates or half; *cold ice strike*^{UM}, Reflex DC 25 half; or *harm*, Will DC 25 half]); multiple targets (all targets in spells' areas of effect)

SYMBOL OF PAIN CR —
Type magic; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 32

EFFECTS

Trigger spell; **Duration** 160 minutes; **Reset** none
Effect spell effect (*symbol of pain*, DC 24 Fortitude negates); multiple targets (all targets within 60 feet)

F6. Warm Room

The eastern wall of this room is fitted with an array of three-foot-wide ceramic tubes that run from floor to ceiling. Several giant-sized cold weather outfits hang from pegs in an open wardrobe on the western wall.

The tubes on the east wall, powered by the castle's engine, become warmer as the temperature drops, keeping the room warm even at high altitudes and allowing visitors to don cold-weather clothing in comfort. An archway in the northwest corner leads to a spiral staircase that climbs up to area F18.

Treasure: Among the cold weather outfits is a *cloud engineer badge* (see the sidebar below).

CLOUD ENGINEER BADGE

The cloud engineers of Zephyr Hall developed these pins to ward themselves against the detrimental effects of altitude and temperature while working within the cloud castle's engine level.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| CLOUD ENGINEER BADGE | | PRICE 24,000 GP |
| SLOT neck | CL 10th | WEIGHT 5 lbs. |
| AURA moderate abjuration | | |

This giant-sized silver brooch, like that used to fasten a cloak or cape, is fashioned in the shape of a cloud inscribed inside a circle. The wearer of a *cloud engineer badge* can cast *life bubble* and *reduce person* once per day. In addition, the wearer gains a +2 competence bonus on Craft (alchemy) and Knowledge (engineering) checks. A *cloud engineer badge* occupies the neck slot on Large or Huge creatures, but a Medium creature can wear the badge as a pectoral in the chest slot.

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS | COST 12,000 GP |
| Craft Wondrous Item, <i>life bubble</i> ^{APG} , <i>reduce person</i> | |



Liniratis (see area F47) to seal off the room with six permanent *walls of force* (CL 14th) lining the walls, ceiling, and floor of the room. The next time Renfal rejuvenated, he found himself trapped here, as his incorporeal form could not pass through the force effect created by the walls.

One of the *walls of force* blocks the entrance to the chamber, and the PCs must break or dispel it (or somehow bypass the wall) to enter the room. Removing any one of the *walls of force* also allows Renfal's ghost (see Creature below) to escape the room and access the rest of the castle.

Creature: Renfal's ghost still inhabits this chamber where he died, trapped here by Liniratis's *walls of force*. Likewise, the *walls of force* block line of effect for Renfal's spells, though the ghost is able to interact with his surroundings to a limited extent through the use of his frightener ability, which does not require line of effect to use.

Renfal is afflicted by terrible sorrow and shame, and when the PCs first enter this room, he tries to remain unseen, though the *walls of force* prevent him from hiding within the room's walls. If the PCs pester him, he might try to scare them off or even use his abilities against them, but he can be reasoned with. Renfal's starting attitude is unfriendly, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Diplomacy check can at least get the ghost to listen. Declaring themselves as enemies of the Storm Tyrant is a quick way to earn Renfal's sympathy, if not his reliable help.

Once the PCs get Renfal talking, the ghost can tell them something of the events that transpired during Volstus's assault on the cloud castle. His posture is hunched, and he speaks with a raspy, slightly impaired voice, but his words often come out in a confused jumble. He begs the PCs to free him, saying that he cannot rest in peace as long as Ironcloud Keep remains in the hands of the Storm Tyrant. Via his illusions (or, if freed, his manifestations), Renfal will be a recurring presence as the PCs explore Ironcloud Keep.

Renfal is fully detailed in the NPC Gallery on pages 60–61, along with the possible aid he can give the party.

F7. Torture Chamber (CR 17)

Numerous buckets are stacked on steel shelves in the southwest part of this room. An overturned wooden crate in the southeast corner is being used as an impromptu table to hold several torture implements such as drills, razors, tongs, wire, and other ominous-looking tools. A giant-sized torture rack, fitted with a great winch as the main roller, stands near the north wall.

Used as an ice room by the cloud giants of Zephyr Hall, this area was turned into a torture chamber by the crucidaemon Dyzelke (see area F5), where she tortured and eventually killed the cloud giant engineer Renfal. The surface of the giant rack, and the manacles attached to it, are heavily stained with Renfal's blood, though his dead body has long been disposed of.

After his death, Renfal manifested as a ghost in this room, and struck out against the Storm Tyrant's minions while sabotaging Volstus's attempts to control the castle. The Storm Tyrant destroyed the ghost several times, but every time, Renfal rejuvenated here. Eventually, Volstus pinpointed the torture chamber as the site of Renfal's rejuvenation, so he ordered his spirit naga associate

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| RENFAL | CR 17 |
| XP 102,400 | |
| hp 236 (see page 60) | |

Story Award: If the PCs lay Renfal to rest by killing the Storm Tyrant, award them 102,400 XP, as if they had defeated the ghost in combat.

F8. Loading Bay (CR 15)

This room, little more than a giant-sized alcove off the main corridor, contains a square steel platform in the northeast corner, beneath a dark shaft in the ceiling above. A steel cupboard is mounted on the wall near the platform.

The steel platform in this loading bay is actually a lift that can normally ascend to the warehouse on the first floor (area **F18**), and descend up to 1,000 feet beneath the castle's base to the ground below. Its function can be determined with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) check, but the lift seems to not be connected to a hoist or any mundane lifting mechanism (the lift's controls are located in area **F18**). The lift platform is currently at this level, but it has been detached from the chains normally used to move it up or down, which have been pulled up into area **F18**. The platform, and the shafts above and below it, are 15 feet square. From the loading bay here on the engine level, the lift shafts extend about 200 feet up to area **F18** and 200 feet down to a drop vent near the bottom of the castle's base.

The steel cupboard near the platform contains four giant-sized smoke bombs that function as smoke shot siege ammunition (*Ultimate Combat* 164). These bombs can be dropped down the lift shaft to mark targets on the ground.

Trap: The brake of the lift platform has been sabotaged so that the left can bear no more than 200 pounds of weight. Anyone setting foot on the platform (marked **T** on the map) risks falling down hundreds of feet through the lift shaft to the ground below as the platform collapses into the dark shaft. If the castle has not yet launched, the ground is 400 feet beneath the castle's base, making it a 600-foot fall. If the castle is currently flying, the fall is probably much greater, though the maximum amount of falling damage is still 20d6 points.

COLLAPSING PLATFORM TRAP CR 15

XP 51,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset none

Effect 600-ft.-deep pit (20d6 falling damage); Reflex DC 23 negates; multiple targets (all targets in a 15-foot-square area)

F9. Guardroom

Off-duty guards for the defense platforms (area **F2**) sometimes rest in this room, which contains a table and a single chair.

Treasure: A large weapon rack along the north wall holds 10 Gargantuan masterwork longswords and a gigantic, 10-foot-long digging tool called a mattock, which none of Ironcloud Keep's current residents have recognized for what it truly is: a *mattock of the titans*.

F10. Materials Storage (CR 16)

Several stacks of spare building material—stone blocks, timber, ceramic tiles, and roof shingles—have been piled near the walls of this large chamber.

These two rooms are very similar to each other, and store additional building materials for the repair of the cloud castle. A spiral staircase just outside area **F10b** leads up to area **F21**.

Creatures: Four giant mohrgs guard these rooms, two each in area **F10a** and **F10b**. Created by the Storm Tyrant through the magic of the *black comet heart*, these mohrgs were once loyal cloud giants of Zephyr Hall. Although good and devoid of any wickedness in life, the Huge undead giants are



CLOUD GIANT MOHRG

now as evil and bloodthirsty as typical mohrgs. The mohrgs hide behind the stacks of building materials and attack any intruders. The oversized mohrgs can use their Acrobatics skill to jump over Medium opponents with relative ease.

CLOUD GIANT MOHRGS (4)

CR 14

XP 38,400 each

Advanced mohrg (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 208)

CE Huge undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 11, flat-footed 27 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, -2 size)

hp 187 each (22d8+88)

Fort +12, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.

Melee 2 slams +27 (4d8+13 plus grab), tongue +22 touch (paralysis)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks create spawn, paralysis (1d4 minutes, DC 26)

STATISTICS

Str 37, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +31 (+35 grapple); **CMD** 44

Feats Ability Focus (paralysis), Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Spring Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +20, Climb +22, Intimidate +20, Perception +23, Stealth +10, Swim +20

Languages Giant

Gear breastplate

Treasure: Buried under a pile of building materials in area **F10b** is a *lyre of building*, which may be found with a successful DC 15 Perception check.

Development: Once the PCs engage the mohrgs in one of these rooms, the other two mohrgs (either in area **F10a** or **F10b**) arrive as reinforcements in 1d4+1 rounds.

F11. Crew Room (CR 16)

Two rows of three metallic pedestals each stand along the north and south walls of this room. The pedestals consist of two giant-sized, concentric hexagonal steps. Six large humanoid statues carved of bluish, crystalline stone stand atop the pedestals with their eyes closed.

The hexagonal pedestals are limited teleportation devices, which the wearer of the *cloud diadem* (currently Volstus) can use to teleport the animated statues (see Creatures below) directly to his side.

Creatures: The six statues resemble stocky, powerfully built cloud giant laborers (though of Large size), and

can animate to perform chores in the castle and in the propulsion ducts. As the wearer of the *cloud diadem*, Volstus can link his senses to the statues and awaken and control them. When awakened, the animated statues are the equivalent of stone golems. The statues automatically animate to keep any intruders from entering the engine room (area **F12**). They fight with implacable determination against the enemies of the wearer of the *cloud diadem* or anyone who tries to tamper with the castle's engine.

ANIMATED STATUES (6)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

Stone golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 163)

hp 107 each

F12. Engine Room

In the middle of this room sits a huge, cylindrical, open-topped steel tank that exudes a luminous mist toward the ceiling. The tank is equipped with elbow-shaped pipes that connect it to the floor, and surrounded by four black stelae engraved with mystic symbols. A frieze-like array of rectangular silver plaques adorns the cylinder's outer surface.

This large room contains Ironcloud Keep's magical engine, a powerful artifact that draws upon the energy of the elemental planes to power the cloud castle. The engine core is an 18-foot-tall, 30-foot-diameter steel tank full of a gas the cloud engineers call "sidereal plasma," which placidly drifts upward from the tank toward the ceiling and casts a soft light in the room. Ten feet above the floor, 12 3-foot-thick elbow tubes emerge from the curved surface of the tank cylinder and disappear into vents in the floor, connecting the engine to the castle's propulsion ducts (area **F3**).

Between the ring of tubes and the rim of the vat, a circular array of 72 rectangular niches, each spaced 5 degrees apart, surrounds the entire surface of the cylinder. The niches hold a collection of 72 silver plaques, each approximately 1 foot square and 1 inch thick and weighing about 30 pounds, engraved with astronomical symbols and numbers in Giant (from 1 to 72). A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check or DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check can identify the symbols as related to the stars appearing in the skies of Golarion near the horizon.

The plaques are very hot, heated to different temperatures by the flow of mystical energy through the engine, which varies according to the current position of the stars above the horizon. Some of the plaques glow a dark red in color, while a few have assumed a dull-pink hue of incandescence. A creature touching one of the dark red plaques takes 1d6 points of fire damage, while the dull pink ones deal 2d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 15 half). Many of the

plaques are sooty and distorted, showing signs of wear due to repeated cycles of thermal expansion and contraction, but they are otherwise identical to the replacement plaques in area F5.

Although the walls of the tank are completely insulated, the luminous mist is superheated, and anyone climbing up to the rim who intentionally touches the mist takes 10d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 20 half). Half the damage is fire damage, but the other half is pure elemental energy and is therefore not subject to being reduced by resistance to fire-based attacks.

Around the central tank, the four upright, 10-foot-tall rectangular stelae at the cardinal points bear signs that are clearly related to the astronomical symbols on the hot silver plaques. The four stelae are the “control panels” once used by the cloud engineers to manually steer the castle, and are nearly unusable to unskilled users (at minimum, they require four simultaneous, successful DC 25 Use Magic Device checks to activate blindly each round). The controls can also be telepathically manipulated using the *cloud diadem* (see the sidebar)—which is precisely what the Storm Tyrant has been struggling to learn how to do up to this point.

Four circular hatches are positioned on the floor around the tank in the spaces between the stelae. Although unlocked, the giant-sized hatches require a bit of effort to open (Strength DC 25). Under each of the hatches, a steel ladder descends 20 feet to the propulsion ducts below (area F3).

There are no lights in this room, but the softly glowing gas issuing from the engine tank creates dim light in the chamber.

Treasure: If the silver plaques are somehow removed from the engine, they are worth 150 gp each in raw materials (or up to five times that amount to a collector).

Development: If the alchemic bomb in area F3 detonates, the PCs can attempt to use the controls here to regain control of the castle. See the What If the Bomb Goes Off? sidebar on page 26 for more information.

F13. Landing Platform

This large, semicircular platform is paved with marble tiles, its edge rising slightly over the mist that envelops the base of the castle. To the east, ornate columns on the castle’s battlements overlook the platform.

Before the Storm Tyrant’s takeover, the cloud giants of Zephyr Hall traditionally greeted their aerial guests on



CLOUD DIADEM

The late lord of Zephyr Hall, the cloud giant Azarth, wore this crown, which he used to control the flight of the cloud castle. Now Volstus the Storm Tyrant has claimed the *cloud diadem*, allowing him to pilot Ironcloud Keep without needing to rely on Renfal and the castle’s cloud engineers for manual control.

CLOUD DIADEM

MINOR ARTIFACT

| | | |
|-----------|---------|----------------|
| SLOT head | CL 20th | WEIGHT 30 lbs. |
|-----------|---------|----------------|

AURA strong transmutation

This giant-sized silver-and-steel crown allows its wearer to telepathically control Ironcloud Keep’s engine and direct the castle’s motion. In addition, the wearer of the *cloud diadem* can extend his perception through the castle’s constructs (such as the animated statues in area F11 and the mithral golem in area F48), allowing him to see and hear through the statues’ senses, as the *witness* spell (*Ultimate Magic* 249), and can telepathically control the statues remotely, in a manner similar to shield guardians (*Bestiary* 158). Lastly, as a full-round action, the wearer can concentrate to teleport one of the animated statues from its teleportation pedestal in area F11 to his side.

Most of *cloud diadem*’s gems are magically connected to the controls on the stelae in Ironcloud Keep’s engine room (area F12). The ash giant alchemist Ulkraf was able to connect one of the crown’s unused gems to his alchemic bomb in the castle’s propulsion ducts (area F3), creating the dead man’s switch that will detonate the bomb if Volstus is defeated.

The *cloud diadem* is sized for a Huge wearer, and does not magically adjust to wearers of different sizes, so the PCs will be unable to use the magical properties of the crown, but the precious materials used to create the diadem amount to 20 pounds of pure silver (worth 100 gp) and 150,000 gp worth of enormous gemstones.

DESTRUCTION

If Ironcloud Keep is destroyed, the *cloud diadem* loses all of its magic, becoming a mundane (though still valuable) crown.

this platform. It is now deserted and unremarkable. The massive double doors of the main gate are slightly ajar, allowing Medium creatures to easily slip into area F14 beyond, though Large or larger creatures need to open the doors manually.

F14. Courtyard

High walls surround this courtyard, decorated with bas-reliefs of creeping, crystalline plants on the stonework. A monumental stairway in the southeast corner leads to the battlements that run along the top of the walls.

This ceremonial courtyard, paved with immense flagstones, is now deserted and unremarkable. The staircase leads up to the battlements (area **F28**) atop the 60-foot-high walls.

When the PCs traverse the courtyard, they are within firing range of the cloud giants in area **F42**. The giants fire at intruders with their crossbows from the open windows as long as targets remain in sight.

Development: In addition to coming under attack from the giants in area **F42**, PCs passing through the courtyard are exposed to potential aerial attacks by the castle's flying creatures.

F15. Storeroom (CR 15)

This square room is furnished with shelves and open cupboards, and stacked with containers of all shapes and sizes, most of which have been overturned or smashed.

These five identical storerooms are locked with giant-sized padlocks (hardness 10, hp 180, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30)—the jotund troll Gunginnaar in area **F22** has the only keys. The fire giants of Ashpeak have plundered the storerooms, but they still contain considerable amounts of food, wine, cloth, fuel, and other materials useful for supplying and maintaining a small keep. All of the objects in the storerooms are giant-sized, likely making them less useful to the PCs. All of these rooms are dark.

Creatures: Volstus has placed two ropers called sigil crags in area **F15b**, where the Storm Tyrant plans to store a tribute from Nidal to be delivered by Krellan's masters at the Umbral Court. The sigil crags are a breed of roper that manifest crystalline runes on their rocky hides, enabling them to cast *symbol* spells. One of the sigil crags can cast *symbol of stunning* once per day, and the other can cast *symbol of weakness* once per day.

The sigil crags stand near the rear wall of the room, attempting to blend in with the stonework, and have cast their *symbols* on the wall opposite the door to the storeroom, so that anyone looking through the door or entering the room triggers the trap (the ropers have attuned one another to their *symbols* so that they are unaffected). Once the symbols have been activated, the sigil crags attacked stunned or weakened foes with their strands, choosing obvious spellcasters as preferred targets.

SIGIL CRAGS (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

Variant roper (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 237, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Dungeoneer Denizens Revisited* 50)

hp 162 each

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th, concentration +13)

1/day—*symbol of stunning* (DC 18) or *symbol of weakness* (DC 18)

Treasure: The sigil crags are guarding two black chests in area **F15b**. The chests bear a symbol of a skull with chained manacles hanging from its eye sockets (recognizable as the emblem of Nidal with a successful DC 10 Knowledge [local or nobility] check) and are empty. These chests originally contained Krellan's first payment to Volstus, which has already been distributed among the Storm Tyrant's minions in the Mindspin Mountains.

In addition, a giant-sized wooden casket is stored behind a loose stone in area **F15d**, which can be found with a successful DC 30 Perception check. The stone weighs over 5,000 pounds, requiring a combined Strength score of 28 to drag out of the way. The casket contains what looks like loot gained from a raid in the lands of smaller humanoids, consisting of the following Medium items: a suit of +3 *shadow studded leather*, a dozen +3 *flaming arrows*, a *feather token (tree)*, a *rod of wonder*, a *wand of obsidian flow* (41 charges; *Ultimate Combat* 238), assorted gems (worth a total of 7,650 gp), 35,725 sp, and 12,430 gp.

F16. Privy

This room, tiled with fine ceramic, is Ironcloud Keep's privy. It contains two separate wooden stalls with a giant-sized toilet seat in each, kept clean by a troupe of permanent *unseen servants* that can be detected only by magical means.

F17. Washroom (CR 14)

A giant-sized, stone washbasin with three silver faucets stands along the east wall of this room. An open cupboard contains folded sheets and rugs. A stone bowl holding giant-sized bars of soap and several scrub brushes sits on a square stool nearby.

The three silver faucets of the washbasin provide running water from the castle's magical water source in area **F48**. The water can be magically heated with a command word in Giant. A corridor leads southwest to the base of a spiral staircase that climbs through the castle's roost tower to the roc stable (area **F50**).

Creature: One of Volstus's mountain troll retainers guards this room. Called Jarpr, the troll fights anyone he perceives as an intruder, summoning an elder earth elemental in the first round of combat.

JARPR**CR 14****XP 38,400**

Male mountain troll (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lands of the Linnorm Kings* 62)

CN Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 9, flat-footed 28 (+1 Dex, +20 natural, -2 size)

hp 207 (18d8+126); regeneration 10 (acid or fire)

Fort +18, **Ref** +7, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities rock catching, stubborn

Weaknesses vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee bite +24 (2d10+13), 2 claws +24 (2d6+13)

Ranged rock +13/+8/+3 (2d8+19)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 2d6+13), rock throwing (120 ft.)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +13)

At will—*stone shape*

3/day—*spike stones* (DC 13), *stone tell*

1/day—*earthquake* (DC 17), *flesh to stone* (DC 15), *summon monster VIII* (earth elemental only)

STATISTICS

Str 36, **Dex** 13, **Con** 25, **Int** 7, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +28; **CMD** 39

Feats Awesome Blow, Deadly Aim, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +33, Perception +15

Languages Giant

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Stubborn (Ex) A mountain troll gains a +4 racial bonus on all Will saving throws. In addition, if the troll fails a saving throw against a charm or compulsion effect, it can immediately attempt a second saving throw against the same effect on the next round to end the duration of the effect early.

Development: Jarpr moves to team up with Cirdassa in area F18 if he hears the uproar of the toppling shelves in the warehouse.

F18. Warehouse (CR 17)

Freestanding, giant-sized shelves that almost touch the ceiling block off the northern section of this large storage area, leaving only a relatively narrow free passage along the west wall. To the west is a steel gantry and the base of a dismantled winch, next to the gaping, square mouth of a dark shaft in the floor. Archways exit the space to the east and west, and third passage to the south leads to a descending spiral staircase.

This warehouse contains the remains of the mechanism used to move the lift platform in area F8. This device, which includes a mighty gantry made of 1-foot-thick steel bars, sits at the top of the 15-foot-square, 400-foot-deep shaft that runs through the entire castle's base. The winch-and-pulley system used to lift the platform, which sat on the floor east of the shaft, was dismantled to build the torture rack in area F7, and the 1,400-foot-long lift chains lie coiled on the floor around the shaft.

The colossal shelves in the north part of the warehouse are 50 feet tall and made of steel and wood. On the shelves are large objects picked from the ground, like tree trunks of fine wood and raw chunks of valuable minerals, and several large, ironbound containers, now mostly empty.

To the south, a spiral staircase descends to area F6.

Creature: One of the Storm Tyrant's top captains, a skilled taiga giant hunter from the Kodar Mountains named Cirdassa, guards the warehouse. Volstus gave the depleted *black comet heart* to Cirdassa, who now uses the stone as a powerful throwing rock. Cirdassa oversees the defense of Ironcloud Keep's first floor. She enlisted Ulkraf's help to reproduce the peculiar color pattern of the rocky walls under the cloud castle in her camouflage body paint, which grants her a +2 bonus on her Stealth checks on this level. Cirdassa hides in ambush in the dark space between the two northernmost shelves (gaining cover from the shelves), waiting for the PCs to investigate the north part of the room or to trigger the daemonic chain trap (see Trap below). Cirdassa then topples the middle and southern shelves toward the PCs in a domino effect. The shelves crash to the floor with a tremendous boom, falling in the portion of the room between the middle shelf and the east-west corridor (marked with a dotted line on the map). Anyone in the area of the falling shelves takes 8d6 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 15 half). Any creature that fails its save is trapped under the wreckage of the shelves, and must succeed at a DC 25 Strength check or DC 30 Escape Artist check as a full-round action to free itself. After knocking over the shelves, Cirdassa attacks anyone not caught in the wreckage.

CIRDASSA**CR 17****XP 102,400**

Female taiga giant barbarian 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 131)

CE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 14, flat-footed 26 (+8 armor, +4 deflection, +4 Dex, +8 natural, -2 rage, -2 size)

hp 290 (20 HD; 15d8+5d12+185)

Fort +22, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, rock catching, trap sense +1; **Immune** enchantment and illusion spells

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.

Melee +2 spear +31/+26/+21/+16 (3d6+24/19-20/x3) or 2 slams +29 (1d8+15)

Ranged *black comet heart* +20 (2d6+22) or +2 spear +20 (3d6+17/19-20/x3)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks *black comet heart's* return, rage (19 rounds/day), rage powers (knockback, quick reflexes), rock throwing (140 ft.)

TACTICS

Before Combat Cirdassa performs her spirit summoning ritual every day, gaining the *black comet heart's* return ability.

During Combat Cirdassa stays hidden behind the shelves as long as possible, starting her attack by toppling the shelves

in the warehouse and activating her *belt of fallen heroes*. She rages on the first round of combat and throws the *black comet heart*, then charges into battle with her spear, trying to bull rush opponents down the lift shaft with her knockback ability. Cirdassa continues to throw the *black comet heart* with her *black comet heart's* return ability on subsequent rounds while continuing her melee attacks.

Morale Cirdassa is one of the Storm Tyrant's chief lieutenants, and she fights to the death in defense of his goals.

STATISTICS

Str 40, **Dex** 18, **Con** 28, **Int** 12, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +33; **CMD** 49

Feats Blinding Critical, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (spear), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Shot on the Run^B, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (rock)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Climb +21, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +23, Stealth +15 (+17 on first floor of Ironcloud Keep), Survival +17

Languages Common, Giant

SQ fast movement, spirit summoning

Other Gear +4 *hide armor*, +2 *spear*, *belt of fallen heroes*^{UE}, *black comet heart* (see Treasure below), *bracelet of second chances*^{UE}, *cloak of arachnida*, camouflage body paint (enough for 4 Medium creatures; grants +2 bonus on Stealth checks on first floor of Ironcloud Keep), jewelry worth 1,000 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Black Comet Heart's Return Although depleted of its original magic abilities, the *black comet heart* still retains some residual power, which Cirdassa can tap into with her spirit summoning ability. Cirdassa can throw the *black comet heart* as a Large throwing rock. After throwing the *black comet heart*, Cirdassa can telekinetically move the rock, "throwing" it from its current position as a swift action using her normal ranged attack bonus with the weapon.

Spirit Summoning (Su) In place of one of the standard spell effects of her spirit summoning ritual, Cirdassa can instead gain the *black comet heart's* return ability.

Trap: The crucidaemon Dyzelke (see area F5) attached a link of her own wrist chains to the lift chains coiled in this room, turning them into a magic trap. The trap uses a *greater spell glyph of warding* as a trigger to spring the trap when a living creature of Medium size or smaller comes within 10 feet of the lift shaft and animate the chain. The chain functions similar to a *chain of perdition* (*Ultimate Combat* 225), which lashes out and grabs a victim. On the next round, the chain drags the victim over to the lift shaft. If the victim has not yet freed itself, it receives a free attempt to break the grapple with a +4 bonus before being dropped down the 200-foot-deep shaft. The trap include Dyzelke's +2 bonus to its Perception and Disable Device DCs.

CIRDASSA



DAEMONIC CHAIN TRAP**CR 8****XP 4,800****Type** magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30**EFFECTS****Trigger** spell (*greater glyph of warding*); **Duration** 16 rounds;**Reset** none**Effect** spell effect (*chain of perdition*^{uc}, grab plus drag, CMB +25) plus 200-ft.-deep pit (20d6 falling damage)

Treasure: Cirdassa possesses the *black comet heart*, a large chunk of raw black diamond the size of a Medium throwing rock that was venerated as a sacred stone by a cult of taiga giants for centuries. Cirdassa delivered the stone to the Storm Tyrant, who recently used it to create tremendous magical effects, including the meteorite bombardment that crippled Zephyr Hall, the animation of the cloud giant mohrgs in area **F10**, and a *gate* to Leng in the main tower attic. When its power was depleted, Volstus returned the *black comet heart* to Cirdassa. The *black comet heart* weighs 70 pounds and has a strong transmutation aura, but is effectively useless to the PCs in its current form. However, shattering the stone produces three *ioun stones*—a *dark blue rhomboid*, a *pale green prism*, and a *vibrant purple prism*—and seven pieces of crystal, each of which can be worked into a black diamond worth 2,000 gp with a successful DC 30 Craft (gemcutting) check.

Development: If still alive, the mountain troll Jarpr in area **F17** moves to support Cirdassa when he hears the boom of the falling shelves. The troll sends a summoned elder earth elemental into the warehouse ahead of him, which arrives from the western corridor after 4 rounds. Jarpr himself arrives 1 round thereafter.

If the PCs have not defeated Cirdassa before facing the Storm Tyrant, she joins Volstus for his final battle with the PCs, likely increasing the difficulty of that encounter.

F19. Foundation Room

This square room is bare, with the exception of a low, circular dais in the middle. A stone building block with inscriptions etched on it sits atop the dais.

The stone block on the dais is similar to the stones used to build the walls of the castle's first floor—in fact, it's the first one ever created and it commemorates the creation of Zephyr Hall. An inscription in Giant is engraved on each of the block's four vertical faces: "Like the fire of a star's birth" on the eastern side, "Like the air, water, or earth" on the southern face, "Like a rock by magic hurled" on the western side, and "Like a mountain or the world" on the northern face. The inscriptions are words of good omen pronounced by the first cloud engineers millennia ago.

The block has an overwhelming abjuration and transmutation aura, and cannot be overturned, physically moved, or damaged in any way. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana, engineering, or religion) check can infer that the block is the magical center of gravity for the entire cloud castle. Any destructive spell aimed at the block is reflected by a *spell turning* effect (CL 20th).

Development: If the bomb in area **F3** detonates, the PCs can use the foundation block to help them regain control of the castle. See the What If the Bomb Goes Off? sidebar on page 26 for more information.

F20. Kitchen

This room, featuring a large fireplace in the east wall, is a marvelous giant-sized kitchen, shining with precious objects of porcelain, silver, steel, and polished wood.

The furniture and utensils of the castle's kitchen create a fabulous display, with all kinds of silverware and china beautifully stored in glazed cupboards and on hanging shelves. A massive marble table surrounded by wooden stools holds several magical gadgets that can duplicate the manual work of a skilled cook (such as slicing, mixing, cooking, and similar tasks). A triangular washbasin with a silver faucet sits in the northeast corner of the room. A group of permanent *unseen servants*, similar to the ones in area **F16**, keeps the kitchen clean and the utensils in order.

A secret door in the back wall of the fireplace can be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check. The door leads to a shaft with a giant-sized steel ladder that ascends through the entire main tower of the castle to the tower's attic (area **F56**). Climbing the ladder requires a successful DC 10 Climb check.

Treasure: Although they lose their magic if removed from the room, the magical devices and utensils in the kitchen can be salvaged to obtain about 200 pounds of silver (worth a total of 1,000 gp). The silverware here, large enough to be unusable as such by Medium creatures, amounts to 800 pounds of silver (worth 4,000 gp in total), but could command a much higher selling price from a collector of giant curios. The porcelain items are exceedingly cumbersome and unusable by humans, but might be valuable if only for their extravagant origin.

F21. Servants' Mess (CR 15)

This room contains a rectangular, giant-sized table with chairs beneath a stained-glass window and two wooden cabinets. Opposing archways lead to spiral staircases on either side.

Besides serving as a landing for two staircases, the cloud giant cooks and servants of Zephyr Hall ate their meals in this chamber. The eastern staircase leads down to area **F10b**; the western stairway climbs up to area **F36**. The two cabinets here are full of crockery, tableware, and tablecloths.

Creature: A young wood giant crouches in the space near the window, looking apprehensively over the table. The giant is actually a three-headed dragon called a gorynych that is loyal to the Storm Tyrant. Named Tsvetanka, the gorynych is using *alter self* to assume the form of a young, Medium wood giant scullion who works in the castle's kitchen. Tsvetanka has used *limited wish* to cast *undetectable alignment* on herself, and if alerted to the party's presence, she also uses *mislead* to hide her true position.

The scullion appears visibly sad and worried, and she introduces herself as Cirola, a daughter of a distant wood giant chieftain who sent her to the castle as an apprentice to the cloud giants. Cirola goes on to say that the Storm Tyrant has enslaved her and is currently holding her for ransom.

A very intelligent creature, Tsvetanka is quite knowledgeable about the castle and recent events, and is not easily fooled by questions. She is happy to tell the PCs about the orcs in area **F36** (calling them the Storm Tyrant's "monkeys"), and will even reveal the secret passage in area **F20**, claiming that it leads "right to Volstus's bedroom" (a lie), but she does not disclose the locations of the Storm Tyrant's top lieutenants, including Cirdassa, Nalbia, and Nalbur.

Eventually, Tsvetanka tries to lure the PCs into the relatively tight space of the secret passage in area **F20** in order to catch the entire party with her breath weapon. She also assumes her true form and attacks if the PCs uncover her deception.

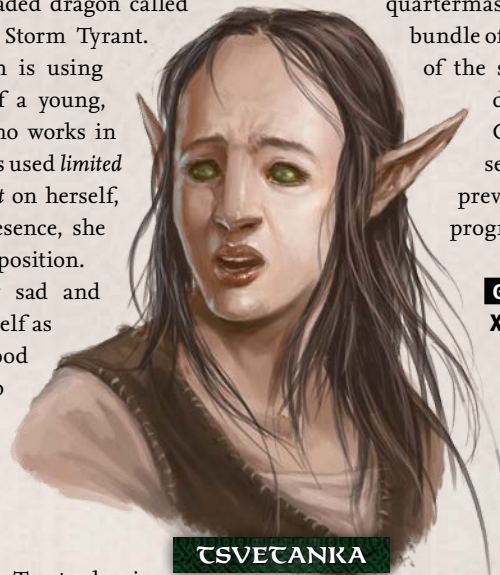
TSVETANKA **CR 15**
XP 51,200
 Female gorynych (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 137)
hp 212

F22. Guardroom (CR 15)

This room contains a large, rectangular table with chairs to the south, a weapon rack on the north wall, and an ornate side table in the northwest corner. The stench of decay, badly covered by strong spices, comes from the smaller table, which bears a giant platter holding the cooked remains of many animals, humanoids, and other less identifiable creatures.

To the west of this room, a passageway leads to a spiral staircase that climbs up to area **F32**.

Creature: Once a guardroom for the cloud giants of Zephyr Hall, this room now houses one of Volstus's deadliest minions, a jotund troll from the Algid Wastes named Gunginnaar. An ordinary specimen of his horrible, multi-headed race, Gunginnaar acts as jailer and quartermaster of the castle's first floor, and has a bundle of seven huge keys that open the padlocks of the storerooms (areas **F15a–F15e**) and the dungeon cells (areas **F23a** and **F23b**). Gunginnaar takes his assignment very seriously and fights to the death to prevent the PCs from making any further progress into the castle.



TSVETANKA

GUNGINNAAR **CR 15**
XP 51,200
 Male jotund troll (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 272)
hp 216

Treasure: A Gargantuan +3 scimitar, three Gargantuan morningstars, and a Large masterwork longsword sit on the weapon rack. On the table in the northwest corner, beside the horrid

finger food platter suited to the jotund troll's cannibalistic and necrophagic tastes, are a tall pewter pitcher and three matching goblets. The pitcher contains several gallons of wine from the ash giants in the caldera, and is contaminated with ash leprosy (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 126).

F23. Cells

This detention cell, expansive by human standards, is furnished with a giant-sized wooden pallet, stool, and bucket.

These two identical rooms are dungeon cells for prisoners. Their doors are heavily reinforced and closed with giant-sized padlocks (hardness 10, hp 180, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30), but shuttered peepholes 15 feet above the floor allow visible inspection of the cells. The jotund troll Gunginnaar (see area **F22**) has the only keys to the cells. Both cells seem empty, but the air in area **F23b** smells strongly of raw meat and blood. The wall above the pallet has the word "Hide" scrawled upon it in Common in blood.

The ecorche Nothavar (see page 83) was imprisoned in area **F23b** until freed by the Storm Tyrant. If the PCs enter the cell and investigate the pallet, they find the freshly flayed skin of a dead human man (worn by the ecorche during his espionage missions) under the pallet's woolen blanket. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Knowledge

(religion) check recognizes the flayed skin as that worn by an ecorche; if the PCs have already encountered Nothavar, the same check can likely tie the skin to him.

F24. Wet Vault (CR 15)

This long, vaulted hall, almost completely draped in fungus, moss, and vines, is permeated by a powerful, musty smell of herbs and spores. Rivulets of water flow from holes in the walls and ceiling to a row of drainage grates set in the middle of the floor.

This elongated stone vault supports the loose earth of the hanging garden above (area F30), collecting its abundant drainage water thanks to a network of converging pipes. The vault is extremely damp, and water constantly drips from the ceiling and flows from many 3-foot-wide openings in the walls, converging toward a row of seven collection grates set along the axis of the floor. Used by the cloud giants to relieve water stagnation in the hanging garden, this place is also a subterranean fungus farm. The stonework here is completely covered with plant matter, including many giant-sized, edible puffballs sprouting here and there, and several varieties of rarer fungi.

Creatures: The vault is inhabited by four greater verdurous oozes—creatures of living greenish muck that look like thick tangles of mossy roots and twisted vegetation and exude dangerous chemicals. The oozes are part of the vault’s magical ecosystem, filtering the water to facilitate growth of different fungal species, and they attack any Medium or smaller creatures that enter the vault.

GREATER VERDUROUS OOZES (4) CR 11 XP 12,800 each

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N Large ooze

Init -5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** -5
Aura sleep (60 ft., DC 25)

DEFENSE

AC 6, touch 4, flat-footed 6 (-5 Dex, +2 natural armor, -1 size)

hp 175 each (15d8+54)

Fort +13, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities split (piercing and slashing, 10 hp);

Immune acid, fire, mind-affecting effects, ooze traits, piercing and slashing damage

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +17 (1d8+10 plus 1d8 acid and grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks acid, constrict (1d8+10 plus 1d8 acid), enliven

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 1, **Con** 26, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +19 (+23 grapple); **CMD** 24 (can’t be tripped)

Skills Stealth -8 (+12 in forest and plains areas)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acid (Ex) A verdurous ooze secretes a digestive acid that dissolves flesh and metal quickly. Each time a creature takes damage from the ooze’s acid, its metal equipment and armor take the same amount of damage from the acid. A successful DC 25 Reflex save prevents damage to such items. A metal or natural weapon that strikes a greater verdurous ooze takes 1d8 points of acid damage unless the weapon’s wielder succeeds at a DC 25 Reflex save. If a greater verdurous ooze remains in contact with a metal object for 1 full round, it deals 25 points of acid damage (no save) to the object. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Enliven (Sp) The chemicals emitted by a verdurous ooze cause nearby plants to twitch into life. While the ooze is in areas covered in natural growth, all squares within 15 feet of the verdurous ooze are affected as if by the *entangle* spell. The verdurous ooze has no control over this effect, and if dispelled, the effect renews after 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Sleep Aura (Su) The chemicals emitted by a verdurous ooze have a stronger and opposite effect on living, non-plant creatures that come within a 30-foot radius. All living creatures within the area must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or fall asleep for 15 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same verdurous ooze’s sleep aura for 24 hours. This is a nonmagical sleep and poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

F25. Shower

This room, tiled with fine ceramic, contains a large showering area, with an enlarged porcelain shower basin equipped with two silver faucets. The faucets can dispense hot water with a command word in Giant.

F26. Practice Room

A weapon rack stands against the western wall of this room, along with a table to the south and a pair of stools in the corners.

Before Volstus’s takeover, the cloud giants used this room to practice combat with blunt weapons. The weapon rack holds a dozen Gargantuan wooden practice morningstars and an equal number of Huge wooden tower shields. The rack also holds a few more elaborate wooden practice weapons, such as a dire flail, a greataxe, and a guisarme, all Gargantuan in size. Each morningstar has the name of a cloud giant engraved on the handle, and one bears the name “Renfal.”

Development: If the PCs examine Renfal’s morningstar, they witness a manifestation of the cloud giant cleric’s ghost similar to the one in the defense tower’s cistern (area E5).

F27. Gug Pit (CR 15)

The corridor leading to this room from area **F26** has been walled up with building material from area **F10**, creating a 3-foot-thick, magically treated masonry wall (hardness 16, hp 540 per 10-foot-square section, break DC 35, save bonus +12). If the PCs break through or bypass the wall, read or paraphrase the following.

This dark room appears to have been almost completely sealed shut for some time. The stale air smells heavily of wine and manure, and the floor is littered with the wreckage, splinters, and shards of numerous destroyed wooden barrels and glass demijohns.

This chamber in the bottom of the castle's observatory tower was used as a wine cellar before the fire giants of Ashpeak pillaged it. Like the corridor leading into the room, the windows here have been walled shut to contain the chamber's occupants (see *Creatures* below). Anyone teleported by the dimensional web traps of the Leng spiders in areas **F51**, **F54**, and **F56** ends up here.

Creatures: Four gug savants, summoned by Volstus using the *black comet heart*, are imprisoned here. The wine barrels and demijohns here were smashed by the furious gugs, who have tried in vain to squeeze through the two tiny ventilation gaps left in the walled-up windows, as the magically treated stone walls of the castle are immune to the gugs' *transmute rock to mud* ability. The spirit naga Liniratis (see area **F47**) occasionally feeds the gugs (using *phase door* to enter and exit the room), but the creatures are kept hungry to ensure they immediately attack any intruders that magically appear in the room.

GUG SAVANTS (4)**CR 11****XP 12,800 each****hp** 127 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 151)**OFFENSE****Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th, concentration +14)

1/day—*invisibility*, *spike stones* (DC 18), *transmute rock to mud*, *unholy blight* (DC 18)

STATISTICS**Cha** 18**TACTICS**

Before Combat If the PCs enter this room by breaking through the wall from area **F26**, the gugs cast *invisibility* to ambush the intruders.

During Combat The gugs cast *spike stones* and *unholy blight* to hinder their opponents, then try to tear foes limb from limb.

Morale If still trapped in this room, the gugs fight to the death, hoping to please their new master, the Storm Tyrant, and end their miserable captivity. If the wall blocking the way to area **F26** has been breached, the gugs attempt to flee this chamber if reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, or if two or more of them have been slain.

PART 3: RAMPARTS OF THE SKY

This part of the adventure details Ironcloud Keep's second and third floors—the two middle levels of the castle (areas **F28–F47**). The stonework of these levels appears clearer in color and less coarse than that in lower levels, and is suitable for plastering and decoration. Instead of being made of stone, the ceilings of the middle levels are built with massive wooden beams and planks.

As the PCs explore these levels of the castle, they may come under attack by the spirit naga sorceress Liniratis (see area **F47**). See the Liniratis's *Spells* sidebar on page 49 for her potential actions and tactics.

F28. Entrance Battlements

Surrounded by a balustrade, open battlements overlook the keep's entrance courtyard. Five ornamental white marble columns stand atop the ramparts, and a wide stairway descends to the courtyard below.

The walls are 60 feet high; the stairway leads to area **F14**. Past the stairs, steel gates to the terrace (area **F29**) stand ajar. The decorative columns on the battlements are 50 feet tall. Spiraling bands of bas-reliefs wind around the columns from plinth to capital. Each frieze depicts important events in the history of Zephyr Hall, which appears in shallow relief in the background of many scenes. The protagonist of the various episodes is usually a prominent cloud giant (the lord or lady of the castle at the time), sculpted as the largest and most defined figure. The scenes include battles on the ground and in the air, the bombardment of ancient cities, fights with formidable monsters, important weddings, and the like. The column in the northeast corner (the most recent) bears only a few images. The latest scene is the funeral of Zephyr Hall's last lord, Azarth, attended by a severely beautiful cloud giant woman (Nalbia) and an aged, plainly dressed cloud giant harpist (Renfal).

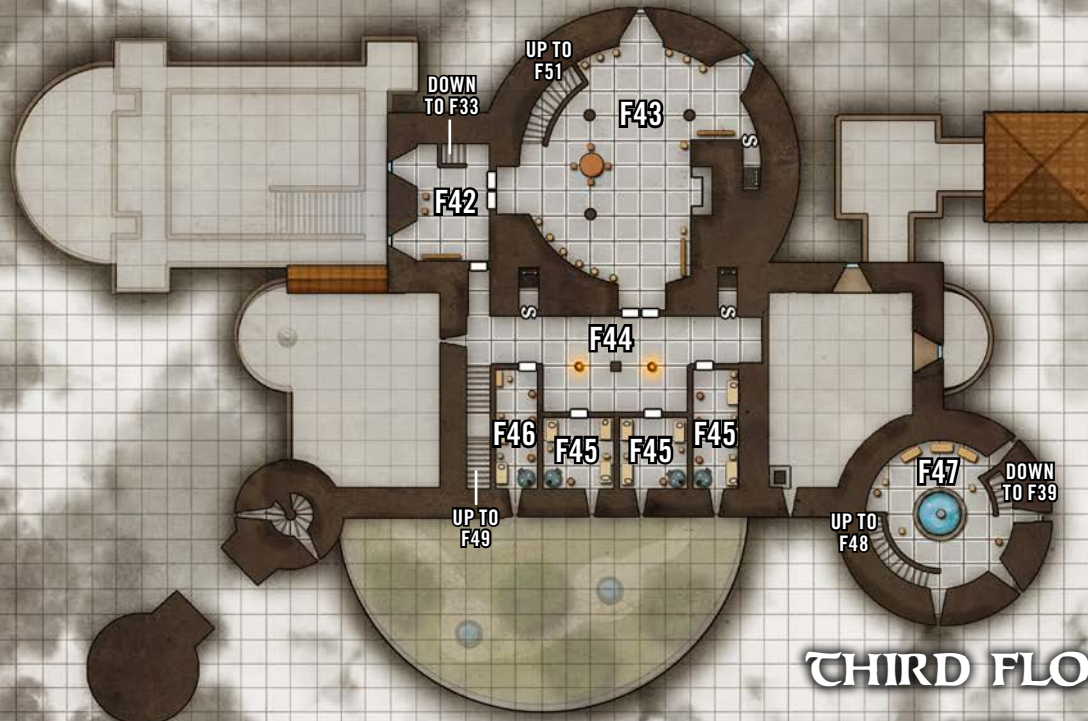
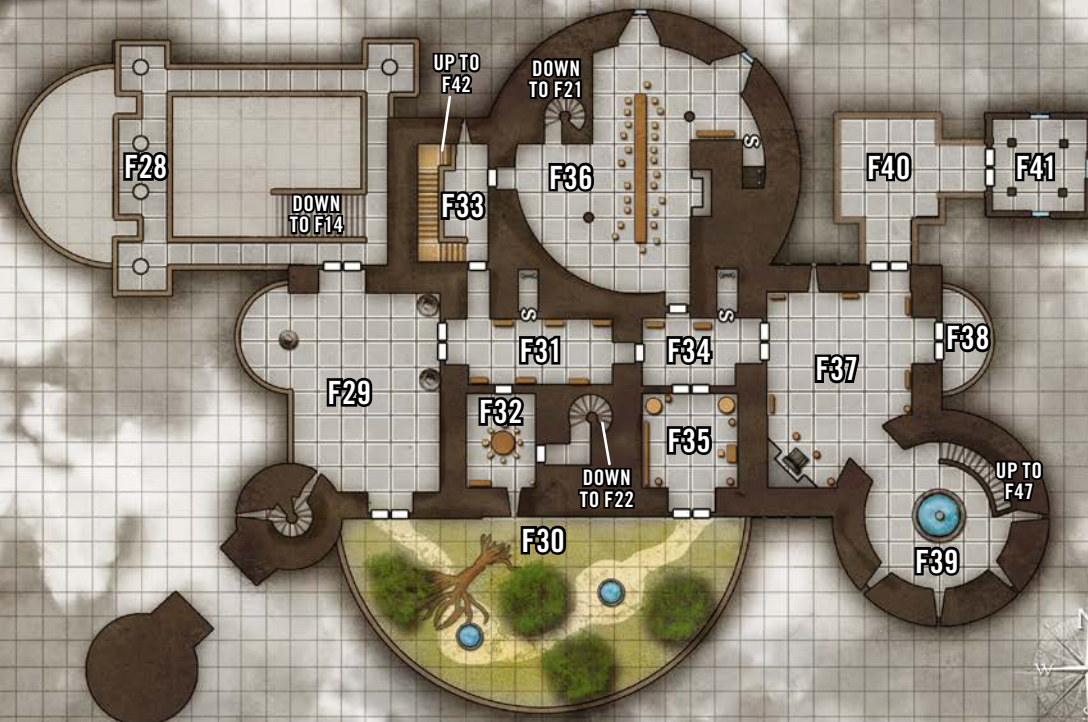
F29. Terrace

This expansive terrace area lies in front of the castle's main doors. The castle's main doors, flanked by two caryatid columns depicting life-sized cloud giant guards, stand in an ornate marble facade to the east. An imposing white marble statue of a dragon overlooks a semicircular balustrade to the west. Gates exit the terrace to the north and south.

Used by the inhabitants of the castle for open-air ceremonies and weapon practices, the terrace is deserted, watched over only by a 20-foot-tall statue of a four-horned dragon (recognizable as a cloud dragon with a successful DC 23 Knowledge [arcana] check) mounted on a 20-foot-tall

SECOND FLOOR

1 SQUARE = 15 FEET



THIRD FLOOR

1 SQUARE = 15 FEET

pedestal. The castle's main doors are equipped with peepholes and heavy knockers, and are barred shut from the inside.

Development: The cloud giant veterans in area **F31** keep an eye on the terrace from the peepholes in the double doors, and may attack the PCs here. The giants split in two groups, two of them remaining in area **F31** while the other one moves through areas **F34** and **F35** to attack from the hanging garden (area **F30**). After unbarring the doors, the giants in area **F31** simply kick them open as a move action and throw rocks before charging into melee with their morningstars the following round. In addition, any of the castle's flying creatures might attack the PCs if they linger in this area.

F30. Hanging Garden (CR 19)

Four fabulous hybrid trees bearing numerous varieties of ripening, delicious-looking fruits grow in this marvelous outdoor garden. On the ground, herbs and flowers are arranged in well-groomed beds among ornamental bushes. A path winds its way through the garden, leading to two plazas encircling a pair of ornate fountains. A fallen tree lies uprooted across the path.

This garden is irrigated by the cloud castle's magical water source in area **F48**. The water flows through a channel atop the castle's southern wall and out through decorative spouts in the wall to water the soil. The water also spurts from the two fountains near the middle of the garden. The garden consists of many separate flowerbeds and cultivated bushes, containing giant-sized plant species that closely resemble their normal counterparts (mostly marigolds, periwinkles, roses, violets, and medicinal herbs). The four trees in the garden are magical hybrids, capable of bearing over a dozen different kinds of enormous fruit (apples, lemons, oranges, pears, and the like).

Creature: The fallen tree, seemingly knocked down during the Storm Tyrant's attack on the castle, is noticeably different

from the other trees in the garden. In fact, the tree is a sard in Volstus's service. One of the legendary creatures known as the Tane, the sard is an intelligent plant infused with electrical energy that uses *tree shape* to appear as a Colossal dead tree. The sard attacks any intruders that traverse the garden, using quickened *lightning bolts* and mauling its opponents with its branches. Given the opportunity, the sard attempts to bull rush foes over the garden's balustrade, potentially causing a fall from a great height.

SARD **CR 19**

XP 204,800

hp 333 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 237*)

Development: As in other open areas of the castle, any creatures capable of flying or prowling the walls can attack the PCs here.

F31. Hall of Sunset (CR 16)

Bas-reliefs, carved wood panels, and tapestries, all with the dark themes and colors of sunset, decorate this hall, which is furnished with ornate wooden benches.

This room is used as a mustering area for the cloud giant guards in Nalbia's service. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check can notice a secret door in the north wall that leads to a shaft with a giant-sized steel ladder (DC 10 Climb check) that climbs up to the Hall of the Skies above (area **F44**).

Creatures: Three evil cloud giant veterans are always here, keeping an eye on the castle's terrace and main doors. The giants keep a watch over area **F29** through peepholes in the doors, and are likely to make a sortie to attack the PCs there (see Development for area **F29**).

CLOUD GIANT VETERANS (3) **CR 13**

XP 25,600 each

Fighter cloud giant (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex 247, Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 147*)

NE Huge humanoid (giant)

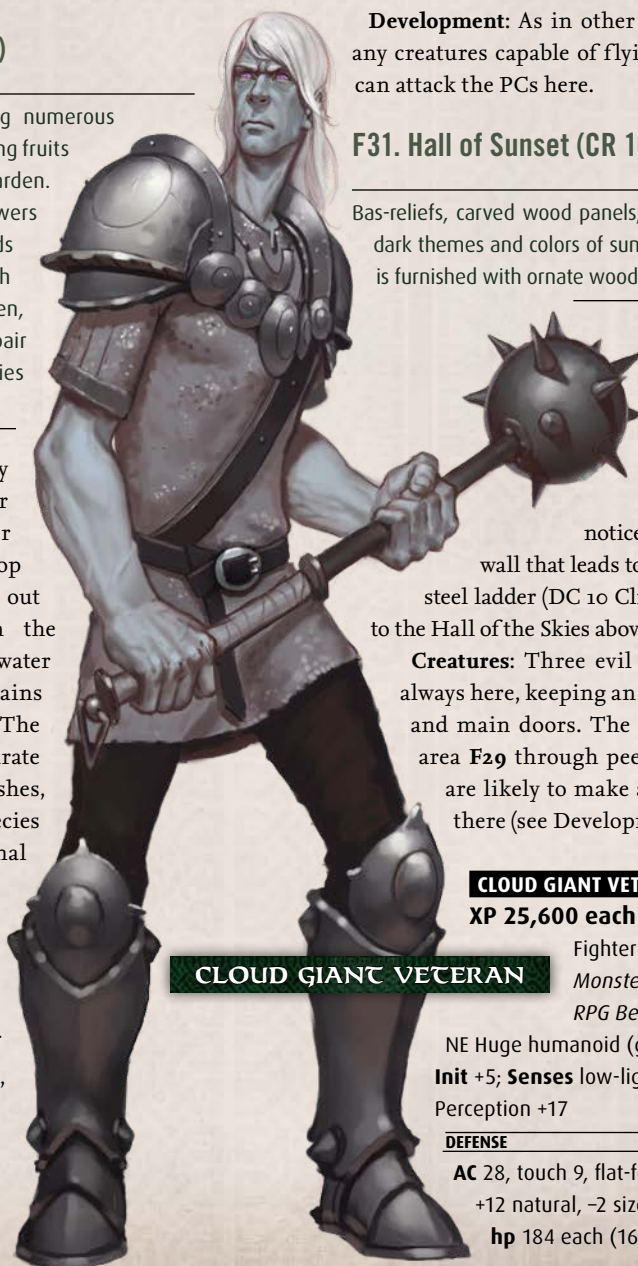
Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent;

Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 9, flat-footed 27 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

hp 184 each (16d8+112)



CLOUD GIANT VETERAN

Fort +16, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities rock catching

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee morningstar +27/+22/+17 (4d6+24/19–20) or
2 slams +24 (2d6+14)

Ranged rock +12 (2d6+21)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks rock throwing (140 ft.), weapon training (flails +3)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +17)

At will—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 lbs.), *obscuring mist*
1/day—*fog cloud*

STATISTICS

Str 39, **Dex** 13, **Con** 23, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +28 (+30 bull rush, +30 overrun); **CMD** 39
(41 vs. bull rush, 41 vs. overrun)

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (morningstar), Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Climb +23, Craft (weapons) +10, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +28, Perception +17, Perform (string) +8

Languages Common, Giant

SQ armor training 4, oversized weapon

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +3
chain shirt, Gargantuan morningstar, *boulder bag* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #91 73), *cap of the free thinker*^{UE}, 200 gp

F32. Meeting Room

The walls of this room are lined with decorative wooden panels that enhance the acoustics. The chamber is furnished with a large round table surrounded by eight padded, high-backed chairs. A faintly luminous glass globe sits in the middle of the table.

The cloud giants of Zephyr Hall held meetings with their guests in this chamber. A door in the eastern wall leads to a spiral staircase that descends to area F22.

The glass globe is over 5 feet in diameter, weighs nearly 100 pounds, and has an aura of strong divination. By touching the globe and concentrating, a cloud giant can telepathically contact any other cloud giant in Ironcloud Keep, as *telepathic bond*. A non-cloud-giant user that succeeds at DC 25 Use Magic Device check can use the globe to emulate a cloud giant. Rather than communicate with cloud giants in the castle, however, such a creature can use the globe only for the following two purposes.

- The user can learn how many cloud giants are alive within the castle, as well as approximate distance and direction of each. Note that the globe does not detect undead cloud giants, such as the mohrgs in area F10

and Renfal's ghost in area F7, or creatures magically disguised as giants, like the gorynych in area F21.

- The user can sense the telepathic impulses of the *cloud diadem*, which radiate from Volstus to the castle's engine room (area F12), and learn the approximate location of the Storm Tyrant as a result. More importantly, the user can also detect the abnormal telepathic impulses from the dead man's switch connecting the *cloud diadem* to Ulkraf's alchemic bomb in area F3, thereby potentially learning of the bomb's existence somewhere in the propulsion ducts under the engine level.

While Huge creatures can easily touch and concentrate on the globe while sitting on the chairs, Medium or smaller creatures must climb on top of the table to do so. The globe loses its magical properties if removed from the table.

Development: If the PCs spend some time in the room, they witness a manifestation of Renfal's ghost similar to the one in the defense tower's cistern (area E5).

F33. Staircase

A massive wooden stairway occupies most of the western half of this room, leading to area F42 and the upper levels of the main tower.

F34. Hall of Sunrise

This hall, sparsely furnished but densely decorated with bas-reliefs, carved wood panels, and tapestries, shows the bright colors and themes of sunrise.

Other than the difference in decorative theme, this chamber is similar to area F31. As in that room, a secret door in the north wall (Perception DC 25) opens into the bottom of a shaft with a giant steel ladder (Climb DC 10) that leads up to the Hall of the Skies (area F44).

F35. Greenhouse (CR 16)

Bright sunlight shines down from the barrel-vaulted ceiling of this room, flooding the area with natural light. Giant-sized potted plants and flowers in vases sit upon shelves along the east and west wall.

The ceiling of this chamber is enchanted with a powerful magical effect that creates natural sunlight for 12 hours each day, allowing the room to be used as a greenhouse. The shelves on the walls hold various, well-groomed pots of various sizes and shapes, containing many plants that the cloud giants cultivated here.

Creature: A gigantic, dragonlike creature made of plants called a zomok has made its lair in the greenhouse. In service to the Storm Tyrant, the zomok often patrols the hanging garden outside (area F30), and attacks any non-giants it encounters.

ZOMOK**CR 16****XP 76,800****hp** 246 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 287)**F36. Feast Hall (CR 17)**

A grandiose feast hall fills this level of the castle's main tower, decorated with luxurious curtains and huge frescoes depicting impossibly high mountains, vast stormy seas, and other awe-inspiring landscapes. An exceptionally long, tall table with more than twenty high-backed chairs stretches across the chamber from north to south. The table seems in a strange state of disarray—its voluminous, fine tablecloths, painted with odd inscriptions, hang down to the floor but also rise up above the table in tentlike points, with giant-sized cups, dishes, and other utensils hanging from the edges. A massive fireplace faces the table from the eastern wall, and two large, stained-glass windows allow natural light from outside to shine in.

**GENERAL NUMARAK**

The massive banquet table has been turned into a vast “tent” by the room’s occupants, who have painted menacing symbols on the tablecloths, fashioned interior compartments with planks, and adapted other giant-sized accessories as furnishings (such as giant pewter platters as ornamental shields, cutting boards as swinging doors, bundled curtains as beds, and the like), creating what looks like a ramshackle, twisted dollhouse in the giant hall. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check recognizes the symbols painted on the “tent” as orc emblems.

To the northwest, a short passage leads to a spiral staircase that descends to area **F21**. A secret door in the northeast corner of the room can be detected with a successful DC 20 Perception check, leading to the shaft that connects area **F20** below to area **F43** and the tower’s attic high above (area **F56**). The giant-sized steel ladder inside the shaft can be climbed with a successful DC 10 Climb check.

Creatures: This bizarre encampment is currently inhabited by a diplomatic contingent of orcs from Belkzen, led by the scarred warlord General Numarak. The general has grudgingly agreed to represent a coalition of tribes in negotiations with the Storm Tyrant, who seeks to recruit the orc tribes into his armies. Two lesser orc chieftains serving as ambassadors accompany Numarak, along with a dozen orc servants. Officially, Volstus is entertaining

these dignitaries, though in reality, the orcs are more or less hostages to ensure the loyalties of their tribes once the Storm Tyrant begins his conquest of Belkzen. Nevertheless, Volstus has granted the orcs the use of this room and its contents during their stay in Ironcloud Keep, and has even gifted them with a powerful pet, a giant horned boarlike beast called an ypotryll.

If provoked, the orcs fight without question, and release the ypotryll from its pen under the table to charge foes, though the orcs have little control over the beast. Although trained in war, the orc servants pose little more than a nuisance in a fight, and are likely to flee after but a single round of combat with high-level opponents such as the PCs (assuming they even survive that long).

However, as the orcs are ambassadors, opening a negotiation with them is not as difficult as it might seem, and they are willing to parley if given the chance. General Numarak is not especially loyal to the Storm Tyrant, and if the PCs manage to defeat Volstus, or make known their intention to do so, Numarak might decide to broker a truce with the PCs in order to save himself and his aides. Initially,

Numarak offers his neutrality only in exchange for payment (at least 50,000 gp), but if skillfully persuaded or awed by a demonstration of power and/or cunning, he may accept his life and freedom as payment to stand aside.

GENERAL NUMARAK**CR 14****XP 38,400**Male orc fighter 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 222*)

CE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3**DEFENSE****AC** 30, touch 12, flat-footed 28 (+11 armor, +2 Dex, +7 shield); +2 vs. critical hit confirmation rolls**hp** 177 (15d10+90)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3 (+7 vs. fear)**Defensive Abilities** bravery +4, ferocity**Weaknesses** light sensitivity**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +2 *vicious heavy pick* +28/+23/+18 (1d6+15/19-20/x4 plus 2d6)**Ranged** mwk throwing axe +21 (1d6+9)**Special Attacks** weapon training (axes +3, thrown +2, heavy blades +1)**TACTICS****During Combat** Numarak wades into battle with his pick,

using Power Attack and his Impaling Critical feat. He targets obvious spellcasters to take advantage of his Disruptive and Spellbreaker feats. In the heat of battle, the orc general incites his band with shouted curses. Numarak is a focused and disciplined fighter, but can be maddened by the cowardice of his servants, and he might temporarily turn away from a powerful foe in order to cut down a fleeing orc with one of his throwing axes.

Morale If the orc ambassadors have been slain and Numarak has been reduced to fewer than 45 hit points, the general tries to negotiate a truce as outlined above. If talks have already proved fruitless, however, he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 6, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 37

Feats Critical Focus, Disruptive, Greater Shield Focus, Greater Weapon Focus (heavy pick), Greater Weapon Specialization (heavy pick), Impaling Critical^{UC}, Improved Critical (heavy pick), Improved Impaling Critical^{UC}, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Shield Specialization^{APG} (heavy shield), Spellbreaker, Toughness, Weapon Focus (heavy pick), Weapon Specialization (heavy pick)

Skills Bluff +2, Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +8, Linguistics +0, Perception +3, Sense Motive +1

Languages Common, Giant, Orc

SQ armor training 4, weapon familiarity

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +3 half-plate, +3 heavy steel shield, +2 vicious heavy pick, mwk throwing axes (3), *belt of physical might* +4 (Str, Con), pouch with coins and gems (worth 1,350 gp total)

BELKZEN AMBASSADORS (2)
CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Orc chieftain (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 170)

hp 99 each

SERVANTS (12)
CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Orc (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 222)

hp 6 each

YPOTRYLL
CR 15

XP 51,200

hp 253 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 285)

Treasure: In various coffers inside their encampment, the orcs possess assorted mundane treasure from both Belkzen and Volstus's donations, worth a total of 5,000 gp.

F37. Great Salon (CR 16)

This two-story hall, almost impossibly tall by human standards, exhibits a breathtaking and truly gigantic display of magnificence.

The plastered walls, illuminated by two high windows in the northeast corner and by magical, wall-mounted lamps, are frescoed with the colorful, life-sized images of the protagonists of some cloud giant mythological cycle, in which regal lords, heroic roc riders, elegant sorcerers, and serene harpists fight a grandiose battle for the triumph of beauty and civilization in a celestial realm. A great angular fireplace, carved out of a single chunk of marble in a shape vaguely resembling an upside-down morningstar, dominates the southwest corner, its exposed chimney solemnly rising toward the massive paneled ceiling.

The ceiling in this chamber is over 100 feet high. The fireplace has an overwhelming conjuration aura and is the focus of a powerful summoning ritual (see *Creatures* below).

Creatures: Using this room's fireplace as a focus, Liniratis (see area **F47**) and Nalbia (see area **F46**) performed a powerful conjuration ritual to summon an Abyss gigas named Gatar-Nom to spearhead the Storm Tyrant's army of conquest. The mountain troll Jarpr (see area **F17**) then used *stone shape* to fashion the fireplace's hearth into a special throne, on which the gigas must rest to prolong her presence on the Material Plane. Gatar-Nom is waiting here for the Storm Tyrant to call her to battle, but she cannot leave her enchanted throne for more than an hour at a time, lest she be forced to return to the Abyss. The gigas is accompanied by two fire mephit pets, which she thinks of as her "crows"; the mephits either perch birdlike on her shoulders or roost on the sills of the salon's high windows.

Gatar-Nom and her mephits attack any non-giants who enter the salon. The gigas first tries to dominate one of her opponents with a terrifying glare before charging to crush her enemies with her massive adamantite warhammer. Meanwhile, the mephits flap around, making as much of a nuisance of themselves as possible.

Destroying Gatar-Nom's throne (hardness 8, hp 300) immediately sends Gatar-Nom back to the Abyss. The fireplace and throne lose their magic when Gatar-Nom is killed.

GATAR-NOM
CR 16

XP 76,800

Female Abyss gigas (*Pathfinder Module: The Witchwar Legacy* 27)

CE Gargantuan humanoid (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, giant)

Init +5; **Senses** blindsight 100 ft.; Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 7, flat-footed 30 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +15 natural, -4 size)

hp 283 (21d8+189)

Fort +21, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities rock catching; **DR** 3/—, 10/lawful;

Immune electricity; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10, sonic 10

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft. (50 ft. in armor)

Melee mwk adamantite warhammer +25/+20/+15 (4d6+19/19–20/×3), bite +19 (2d8+6 plus wrenching spasms)

Ranged rock +13 (4d6+19)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks rock throwing (160 ft.)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +18)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *fear* (DC 15), *mirror image*

3/day—*dispel magic*, *dominate person* (DC 17), *telekinesis* (DC 17), *true seeing*

STATISTICS

Str 37, **Dex** 12, **Con** 28, **Int** 20, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +32 (+34 bull rush, +36 sunder); **CMD** 43 (45 vs. bull rush and sunder)

Feats Awesome Blow, Catch Off-Guard, Combat Reflexes, Greater Sunder, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical

(warhammer), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Stand Still, Throw Anything

Skills Climb +32, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (planes) +26, Perception +27, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +5, Survival +27

Languages Abyssal, Common, Giant

Gear adamantite full plate, adamantite warhammer

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Wrenching Spasms (Su) When an Abyss gigas hits an opponent with its bite attack, the opponent must succeed at a DC 29 Fortitude save or be overcome by wrenching spasms that wrack its body. These spasms cause the victim to be nauseated, dealing 1d6 points of damage to its Strength and Dexterity due to the painful contortion of bones, muscles, and limbs. The spasms continue for 1d6 hours, or until the victim is healed with *heal*, *regenerate*, or *greater restoration*. The effects of this ability do not stack with multiple hits, but once a creature has recovered from or been cured of the effect, it can be affected again. Once a creature has succeeded at a saving throw against this effect, it cannot be affected by the wrenching spasms from that particular gigas for 24 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

GATAR-NOM'S CROWS (2) CR 3

XP 800 each

Fire mephit (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 202)

hp 19 each

F38. Balcony

This semicircular balcony is relatively small in comparison to the rest of the structure. Devoid of any particular decoration or purpose, the balcony overlooks the bank of mist that envelops the castle's base. Since this is an open area, Nalbur, Volstus, or any other creatures capable of flying or prowling the walls can attack the PCs here during the adventure.

F39. Lower Pool Room

A circular basin of water fills the center of this round room, fed by several fish-head spouts mounted on a pillar that stretches from the center of the pool to the ceiling. An ascending stone staircase curves along the northeast wall of the room, while arrow slits look out to the east and south.

Originating from the castle's magical water source (see area **F48**), water flows through a pipe in the room's central column and out of the spouts to fill the basin. The spouts can be opened and closed, and can dispense warm water with a command word in Giant.

Development: Thanks to its fluid form ability, the mithral golem in area **F48** can enter this room to attack



GATAR-NOM

the PCs by flowing down into the pool from above, which it does if Volstus becomes aware of the PCs' presence here and orders the golem to do so. The spirit naga Liniratis (see area F47) can also send summoned water elementals down the pipe to attack the PCs here (see the Liniratis's Spells sidebar on page 49).

F40. Open Deck

This open-air plaza connects the main body of the castle to a small satellite tower.

Development: The giants in area F41 keep a close eye on this platform, and emerge to attack any intruders. In addition, any of the castle's flying creatures might attack the PCs if they linger in this area.

F41. Musical Shrine (CR 16)

A stained-glass door leads into this small tower. Inside, an elegant room is lined with wooden paneling and furnished with an ornate marble bench that runs along its entire perimeter. The four marble pillars that support the roof are carved to resemble slender tree trunks, and a lattice of faux marble branches decorates the ceiling. The stained-glass window opposite the door bears a bright image of the rising sun, while the others, on the north and south walls, display the likenesses of two identical cloud giant women of great beauty with magical harps in their hands.

The stained-glass door is decorated with the holy symbols of Gozreh and Shelyn, recognizable with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check. Renfal and the other cloud giant harpists used this place for study, rehearsal, and worship.

Creatures: Three evil cloud giant veterans use the shrine as a guard post, after the unsettling presence of the Abyss gigas Gatar-Nom made the nearby Great Salon an uncomfortable post. The giants can keep an eye on area F40 through the stained-glass door, and are likely to attack the PCs there.

CLOUD GIANT VETERANS (3)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 184 each (see page 40)

Treasure: A successful DC 30 Perception check allows a character to notice a secret compartment in the room's base column, which contains four *potions of cure serious wounds*, a *potion of neutralize poison*, a *potion of remove blindness/deafness*, a *potion of remove curse*, a *potion of remove disease*, and a *musical staff* (*Ultimate Equipment* 194).

Development: If the PCs spend some time in the room, they witness a manifestation of Renfal's ghost similar to the one in the defense tower's cistern (area E5).

F42. Upper Vestibule (CR 15)

This room contains a weapon rack and a large wooden cupboard with hooks and a high shelf. Stained-glass windows overlook the castle's battlements and courtyard to the west, and a descending staircase exits the room to the north.

This foyer sits on the castle's third floor. The stairs descend to area F33; the windows' stained glass function as *prismatic walls* (see page 20) and overlook areas F14 and F28.

Creatures: Two evil cloud giant veterans in Nalbia's service watch over the entrance courtyard of the castle below, and pick up crossbows to shoot any intruders in areas F14 or F28. The giants open the windows (deactivating their *prismatic wall* effects), and shoot until their targets are out of sight or try to fly through the windows. They close the windows, reactivating the *prismatic walls*, if intruders get away or try to close in by magical means.

CLOUD GIANT VETERANS (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 184 each (see page 40)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +12 (4d6/19-20) or
rock +12 (2d6+21)

Gear Gargantuan mwk light crossbow with 10 bolts

Treasure: In addition to the crossbows wielded by the giants, the weapon rack holds two more Gargantuan masterwork light crossbows and four cases of 10 Gargantuan crossbow bolts each. The cupboard contains several high-quality giant cloaks in fur, silk, and wool, one of which is a *wyvern cloak* (*Ultimate Equipment* 269).

Development: The giants rush to Nalbia's side in area F46 if she calls them or if the witch activates the magical lanterns in area F44.

F43. Lord's Court (CR 15)

Both double doors leading into this room from areas F42 and F44 have been barred shut from inside (hardness 10, hp 180, break DC 35). Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the room.

This large hall is richly embellished with tapestries and gilded mosaics, and furnished with benches, stools, and a round table near the center of the room. A massive marble throne raised on a high dais beneath a stained-glass window to the north overlooks the room. A wide staircase curves along the wall to the northwest, and a huge fireplace stands in the eastern wall.

Zephyr Hall's last cloud giant lord, Azarth, used this chamber as an audience and council room. The stairs climb up to the dragon's den above (area F51). In the northeast corner of the room, a secret door (Perception DC 20) leads

to the shaft that runs between areas **F20**, **F36**, and **F56**. A successful DC 10 Climb check is required to scale the giant-sized steel ladder inside.

Creatures: Two fire giant guards, brought up from the subterranean complex inside Ashpeak, now occupy this room. Considered little more than dull thugs by the cloud giant veterans of Ironcloud Keep, the fire giants are, among other things, charged with surveillance of the sleeping dragon in area **F51**. The giants keep everyone out of this room and the dragon's lair above because they are paranoid about someone betraying Volstus or freeing Akazerath and the blame falling on them. For this reason, they do not help Nalbia (see area **F46**), who deeply despises them, or any of the evil cloud giants in the castle.

ASHPEAK GUARDS (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

Fire giant strongarm (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 58)

hp 158 each

F44. Hall of the Skies

This room appears to have no walls or ceiling, just an open space surrounded by sky on five sides. Two cloud-shaped lanterns hang in the middle of the space, casting a soft azure-and-violet light.

The lanterns are magical and have a strong divination and illusion aura. They actually hang from the ceiling, and use an effect similar to *clairaudience/clairvoyance* and *mirage arcana* (CL 20th) to project a dynamic real-time image of the skies around Ironcloud Keep on to the white plaster walls and ceiling of the room, making it appear as if the room stands alone beneath the open sky. Cloud giants can also use the lanterns to create illusory weather on the walls and ceiling by concentrating on the lanterns.

West of this room, a long staircase with a landing in the middle ascends to a high turret (area **F49**). In addition, the north wall of the room contains two secret doors, each of which can be found with a successful DC 30 Perception check (DC 25 if the lanterns are no longer projecting their illusions on the walls). Each door leads to a shaft with a giant-sized steel ladder (DC 10 Climb check) that climbs down to the Hall of Sunset (area **F31**) and Hall of Sunrise (area **F34**) below.

Development: The cloud giant witch Nalbia (see area **F46**) performed a lengthy ritual on the lanterns, twisting their innocuous magic and making them the focus of a lethal combination of illusions. If Nalbia (or her familiar Myralka) detects the presence of intruders in this area, the witch concentrates and activates the lanterns, triggering a sequence of magical effects. In the first round, the image of the sky in the room becomes eerily dark and cloudy (no further effect). In the second round,

a *ventriloquism* effect causes Nalbia's mocking laughter to echo throughout the area, creating a *fear* effect in the hall (Will DC 18 partial). In the third round, the stormy clouds seem to form into the silhouette of a colossal, nebulous dragon, giving creatures in the room the bone-chilling sensation of floating helplessly in a dark abyss at the mercy of a colossal carnivore. This powerful image creates a *phantasmal killer* effect on anyone left in the hall (DC 18).

The magical lanterns are made of steel and thick glass (hardness 4, hp 90 each). Destroying one of them, with either magic or physical attacks, is enough to end the sequence of deleterious effects. Otherwise, the 3-round routine (no effect, *fear*, and *phantasmal killer*) repeats indefinitely as long as the PCs remain in the hall or until they attack Nalbia in her room (area **F46**).

F45. Guest Room

This clean and spacious room is furnished with finely crafted giant-sized beds, cabinets, and stools. High-quality woolen blankets, quilts, and sheets cover the beds. A narrow arrow slit pierces the south wall, and a polished steel stove sits in one corner.

Previously used to accommodate Zephyr Hall's occasional guests, these three rooms are now occupied by the evil cloud giants serving the Storm Tyrant, since the dominated red dragon Akazerath now inhabits the castle's traditional sleeping quarters (area **F51**). The metal stove in each room magically heats up with a command word in Giant, and permanent *unseen servants* keep the rooms clean.

Treasure: The cabinets hold a slew of giant-sized personal effects, including many ornaments and fine items worth a total of 1,000 gp per room.

F46. Private Room (CR 15)

This bedroom contains two giant-sized beds, cabinets, and stools. A large desk and chair sit in one corner, while an ornate polished steel stove sits in the opposite corner.

Another former guest room, this chamber now houses the private quarters of the cloud giant twins Nalbia and Nalbur. It is otherwise similar to the other guest rooms (area **F45**).

Creatures: The cloud giant witch Nalbia waits in this room with her familiar, Myralka, an air elemental that looks like a bird formed of clouds and swirling winds. The former concubine of Azarth, the late lord of Zephyr Hall, Nalbia is now one of Volstus's greatest allies, and was instrumental in his seizure of the flying castle. Most of the evil cloud giants in Ironcloud Keep serve the Storm Tyrant because of their

loyalty to Nalbia. She hopes to assume a similar position with Volstus (if not a more eminent rank as his queen), but the Storm Tyrant's plans of conquest have thus far occupied all of his energy, so Nalbia is patiently biding her time until Volstus is more receptive to her affections.

Nalbia keeps a close watch on the Hall of the Skies (area F44) outside, and if intruders enter the hall, Nalbia stays inside this room and tries to weaken attackers with the magical effects of the lanterns there, whose activation also summons the cloud giant veterans from area F42, if they are still alive. Myralka guards the door of this room to keep attackers from engaging Nalbia in melee combat. If prevented from activating the magical lanterns in area F44, Nalbia still calls for the aid of the giants in area F42, who rush to her side, arriving on the second round of combat.

NALBIA CR 15

XP 51,200

Female cloud giant witch 8
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 147,
*Pathfinder RPG Advanced
Player's Guide* 65)

NE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision, scent;
Perception +34

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 14, flat-footed 27 (+4 armor,
+3 deflection, +3 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

hp 268 (24 HD; 16d8+8d6+168)

Fort +19, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16

Defensive Abilities rock catching

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee +1 sickle +26/+21/+16/+11
(3d6+12) or

2 slams +25 (2d6+11)

Ranged rock +18 (2d6+16)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks hexes
(cackle, charm [2 steps,
4 rounds], flight [*feather
fall* at will, *levitate* 1/
day, *fly* 8 minutes/day],
misfortune [2 rounds],
slumber [8 rounds]),
rock throwing (140 ft.)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th;
concentration +18)
At will—*levitate* (self plus
2,000 lbs.), *obscuring mist*
1/day—*fog cloud*

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +12)

4th—*confusion* (DC 20), *dimension door*, *wandering star
motes*^{APG} (DC 18)

3rd—*blink*, *screech*^{APG} (DC 17), *strangling hair*^{UM}, *suggestion*
(DC 19)

2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 18), *invisibility*,
unnatural lust^{UM} (DC 18)

1st—*charm person* (DC 17), *command* (DC 17), *ill omen*^{APG},
mage armor, *reduce person* (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *message*, *read magic*, *touch of
fatigue* (DC 14)

Patron Deception

TACTICS

Before Combat

Nalbia casts *mage
armor* on her familiar
Myralka every day.

During Combat

Nalbia casts *blink* on the first round of combat. As much as possible, she tries to remain in a position that does not expose her to close combat, letting her familiar Myralka and the cloud giant veterans from area F42 keep melee opponents occupied while she uses her enchantment spells, hexes, and *wand of lightning bolt* to target foes at range. Once the cloud giants are in melee, Nalbia casts *screech* to give them an advantage. If cornered, the witch gives as good as she gets, wielding her oversized sickle with cruel glee.

Morale Although faithful to Volstus,

Nalbia's first and foremost loyalty is to herself.

As a result, when reduced to 65 hit points or fewer, Nalbia attempts to flee, likely casting *dimension door* to join her brother Nalbur in area F49.

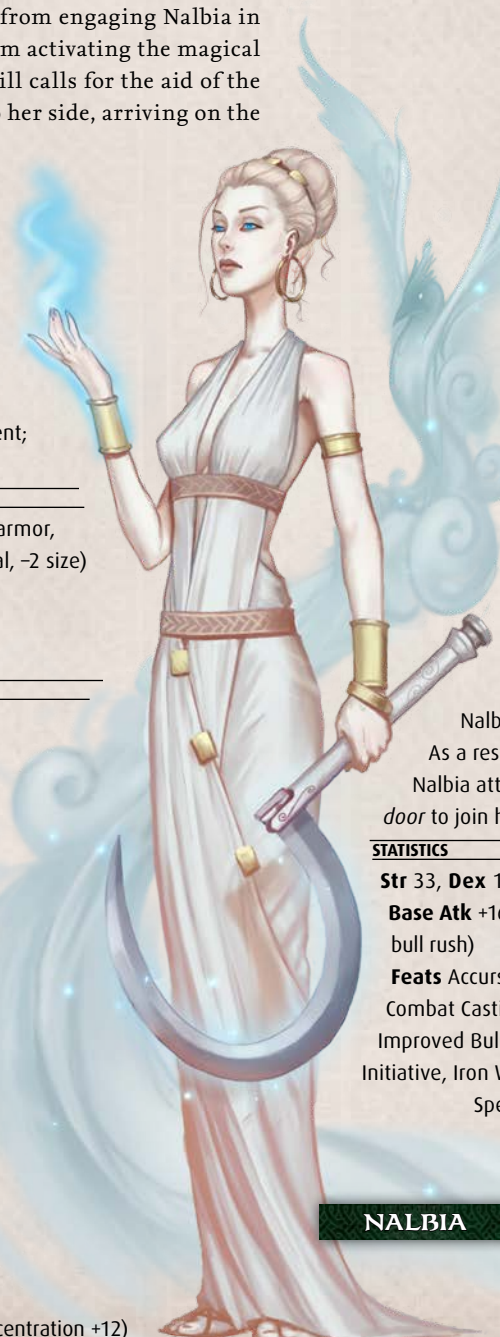
STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 17, **Con** 25, **Int** 18, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +29 (+31 bull rush); **CMD** 45 (47 vs. bull rush)

Feats Accursed Hex^{UM}, Alertness^B, Awesome Blow, Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Familiar, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Spell Focus (enchantment), Will of Giants (see below)

Skills Climb +15, Craft (alchemy) +19, Diplomacy +14, Fly +12 (+20 when using flight hex), Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (nature) +18,



NALBIA

Knowledge (nobility) +15, Knowledge (planes) +18, Perception +34, Perform (string) +10, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +18, Swim +15, Use Magic Device +15

Languages Abyssal, Auran, Common, Draconic, Giant

SQ oversized weapon, witch's familiar (Small air elemental named Myralka)

Combat Gear *scrolls of cure serious wounds* (2), *scroll of ice storm*, *scroll of solid fog*, *wand of lightning bolt* (24 charges);

Other Gear Gargantuan +1 sickle, bracers of armor +4, ring of protection +3, spell component pouch, various jewelry and ornaments (worth 1,500 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Will of Giants Nalbia is immune to enchantment effects that target only humanoids, such as *charm person* and *hold person*. This feat originally appeared on page 70 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #91: Battle of Bloodmarch Hill*.

MYRALKA

CR —

Small air elemental familiar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 120)
N Small outsider (air, elemental, extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +7 natural, +1 size)

hp 134 (8 HD)

Fort +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities air mastery, improved evasion; **Immune** elemental traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 100 ft. (perfect)

Melee slam +20 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks deliver touch spells, whirlwind (3/day, DC 15)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 9, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29

Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative⁸, Weapon Finesse⁸

Skills Acrobatics +7, Diplomacy +12, Escape Artist +7, Fly +26, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +27, Perform (string) +8, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +11, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Auran

SQ alertness, empathic link, share spells, speak with master, store spells

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Stored Spells All of Nalbia's cantrips and prepared spells plus all 1st- through 4th-level *cure* spells, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *fear*, *ice storm*, *lightning bolt*, *phantasmal killer*, *solid fog*, *unseen servant*, *ventriloquism*, and additional spells at the GM's option.

Treasure: A cabinet in the room holds Nalbia's personal effects, including a pair of gem-encrusted silk gloves (worth 1,000 gp), a carved wooden staff topped with a hawk's-head knob (worth 500 gp), a darkwood comb (worth 1,500 gp), a darkwood perfume vial (worth 1,700 gp), an ermine vest inlaid with platinum (worth 5,000 gp), a golden diadem (worth 4,000 gp), and a silken robe (worth 800 gp), all sized for a Huge creature.

Development: If the PCs have not defeated Nalbia before facing the Storm Tyrant, the cloud giant witch joins Volstus for his final battle with the PCs, likely increasing the difficulty of that encounter significantly.



LINIRACIS

F47. Upper Pool Room (CR 16)

A large stone fountain sits in the middle of this round room, which is furnished with three ornate cupboards painted with delicate cloudlike patterns, a set of matching chairs, and six huge wicker baskets. A stone staircase descends out of sight along the northeast wall, while another stairway climbs up in a curve along the southwest wall.

This tower room, traditionally used as a dormitory for unmarried cloud giant girls and serving maids, is similar to the lower pool room (area **F39**), but richer in furniture and trappings. The cupboards contain woolen blankets, linen sheets, and thin, folded mattresses. The wicker baskets were used to collect and transport laundry throughout the cloud castle. The fountain here functions identically to the one in the lower pool room.

Creature: Liniratis, a spirit naga originally from Katapesh, liked the ambience of this room and has taken residence here. She met Volstus during his travels through Avistan, and she gained considerable power as a sorceress during their adventures together. The naga's lengthy rituals are the origin of many of the creatures and effects related to the Outer Planes currently present in the castle. One such ritual enabled Liniratis to enchant the Large wicker baskets in this room as defensive devices. When Liniratis is inside one of the baskets, she can instantly teleport to another unoccupied basket, as if using *dimension door*, as an immediate action. Destroying a basket (hardness 2, hp 40) prevents Liniratis from using it in this way. Liniratis is loyal to the Storm Tyrant, but she is also afraid of being killed, so she waits for intruders in this room, where she can use the magical baskets to advantage.

LINIRATIS

CR 16
XP 76,800

 Female spirit naga sorcerer 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 213)

CE Large aberration

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 20, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +4 deflection, +7 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

hp 227 (17 HD; 10d8+7d6+158)

Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18; +2 vs. poison

DR 10/adamantine (140 points); **Resist** electricity 5

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +14 (2d6+7 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks charming gaze (DC 22)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 14th; concentration +21)

 7th (4/day)—*phase door*, *prismatic spray* (DC 24)

LINIRATIS'S SPELLS

Throughout the adventure, Liniratis can use her spells to deceive and harass the PCs in different areas of Ironcloud Keep as follows.

- Liniratis casts *prying eyes* to spy upon intruders anywhere in the castle. As a result, you can assume that Liniratis quickly obtains a working knowledge of the appearance and general behavior of all of the PCs. There is also a 50% chance that the naga is informed of the party's precise position in the castle at a given time.
- Liniratis can cast *wall of force* to block passages between various areas in the castle.
- Liniratis can cast *phase door* to open a vertical passage through the floor of area **F39**, allowing two of the gug savants trapped in area **F27** to escape their prison. Although the gugs are Large, they can squeeze through the ethereal passage with their compression ability.
- Liniratis can cast *sending* on any PC she has seen with *prying eyes* to lead them toward other denizens of the castle. In these messages, the naga speaks with a suave, feminine voice, pretending to be a "spirit of the castle" supposedly held captive somewhere by Volstus and begging for her freedom.
- Liniratis uses her *summon monster* spells liberally, often directing the summoned creatures to other areas to distract the PCs. With *summon monster VI*, she can conjure a Huge water elemental and send it to one of the pools in the observatory tower (areas **F39**, **F47**, or **F48**) or she might summon an invisible stalker to attack the PCs from behind as they're fighting another monster (such as the Abyss gigas in area **F37**). She may also pack a staircase full of fiendish giant centipedes, spiders, or Small elementals with *summon monster IV* to delay the party while she casts her defensive spells.

 6th (6/day)—*disintegrate* (DC 23), *summon monster VI*

 5th (7/day)—*acidic spray*^{UM} (DC 22), *permanency*, *prying eyes*, *wall of force*

 4th (7/day)—*acid pit*^{APG} (DC 21), *cure critical wounds*, *sending*, *stoneskin*, *summon monster IV*

 3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fireball* (DC 20), *force punch*^{UM} (DC 20), *rage*

 2nd (8/day)—*accelerate poison*^{APG} (DC 19), *bull's strength*, *false life*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray*, *silence* (DC 19)

 1st (8/day)—*cause fear* (DC 18), *cure light wounds*, *grease* (DC 18), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield of faith*

 0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*
Bloodline Abyssal

TACTICS

Before Combat Liniratis casts *false life* and *mage armor* every day, and *bull's strength*, *shield of faith*, and *stoneskin* before going into battle.

During Combat Liniratis tries to avoid direct confrontation as much as possible, preferring to use her spells to harass opponents from a safe distance. She casts *displacement* on the first round of combat, then uses her scroll of *summon monster VII* to summon a vroock to assist her in combat. Liniratis attempts to use her charming gaze, mostly out of personal vanity, before casting her most destructive spells, using *Maximize Spell* and *Quicken Spell* as needed. During the fight, Liniratis uses her magical baskets to keep her enemies off their guard and to evade devastating magical attacks at the last moment.

Morale Liniratis is afraid of death, so if reduced to fewer than 60 hit points, the naga attempts to flee, likely to hide elsewhere in the castle.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 24, **Con** 24, **Int** 16, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 37 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Expanded Arcana^{APG} (2), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, *Maximize Spell*, *Quicken Spell*, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +20, Bluff +20, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (planes) +23, Linguistics +5, Perception +24, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +20, Swim +13, Use Magic Device +27

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common, Giant

SQ bloodline arcana (summoned creatures gain DR 3/good)

Combat Gear *scroll of acid fog*, *scroll of cone of cold*, *scroll of summon monster VII*; **Other Gear** *headband of mental prowess* +4 (Int, Cha; Knowledge [planes], Use Magic Device), diamond dust (worth 500 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 22; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Con; *cure* 1 save.

Spells Liniratis's sorcerer levels stack with her innate spellcasting ability, and she can cast spells from the cleric list (which are considered arcane spells for her) as well as from the sorcerer list.

Treasure: Liniratis's personal treasure, hidden in one of the room's cupboards, includes a *portable hole*, a *ring of shooting stars*, a pouch of diamond dust (for *permanency* and *stoneskin* spells, worth 13,500 gp), 4,000 gp, and 50,000 sp.

Development: During the adventure, Liniratis can use her magic to harass the PCs in different encounter areas throughout the cloud castle (see the Liniratis's Spells sidebar on page 49).

PART 4: HEIGHTS OF THE STORM

This portion of the adventure describes Ironcloud Keep's tallest structures—the highest levels of the castle's main

tower, observatory tower, and roost tower (areas F48–F56). These areas are similar to the castle's middle levels, but the PCs will face their most powerful opponents here.

F48. Study (CR 16)

The paneled ceiling of this round room is painted with an image of the night sky with countless stars shining among a few dark clouds. Mounted above a fountain in the center of the room is a huge sculpted sphere of azure stone that streams a continuous flow of pure water in the basin below. A curved bookshelf almost as high as the ceiling runs along the southeastern wall. A large candle illuminates a writing desk sitting opposite the bookshelf.

The image on the ceiling, magically enhanced by permanent *light* spells, shows the skies over Avistan at some high latitude, recognizable as such with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (nature) check.

The stone sphere above the fountain has an overwhelming aura of conjuration, and is as indestructible and immovable as the castle's foundation block (see area F19). The sphere is the castle's permanent, magical water source that provides water to the hanging garden and various appliances in the keep as needed.

The writing desk in the northwest portion of the room holds several rolls of blank parchment and a wide variety of writing and drawing implements. The giant-sized candle illuminates the room with a *continual flame*.

Creature: A mithral golem sits on top of the water sphere, seemingly just a shiny silver statue of a meditating cloud giant. Like the animated statues in area F11, the golem is subject to control by the wearer of the *cloud diadem* (Volstus). The golem defends the room against any intruders, and responds to simple telepathic orders from Volstus.

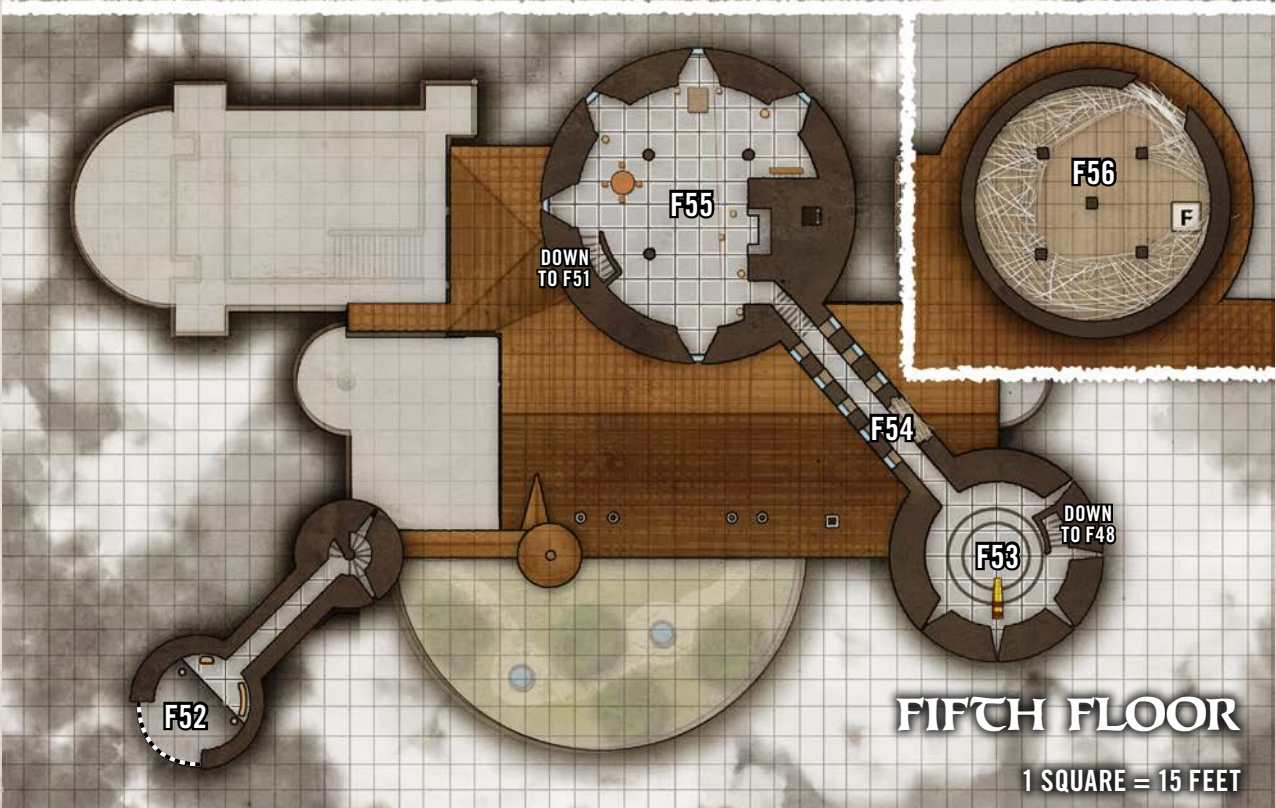
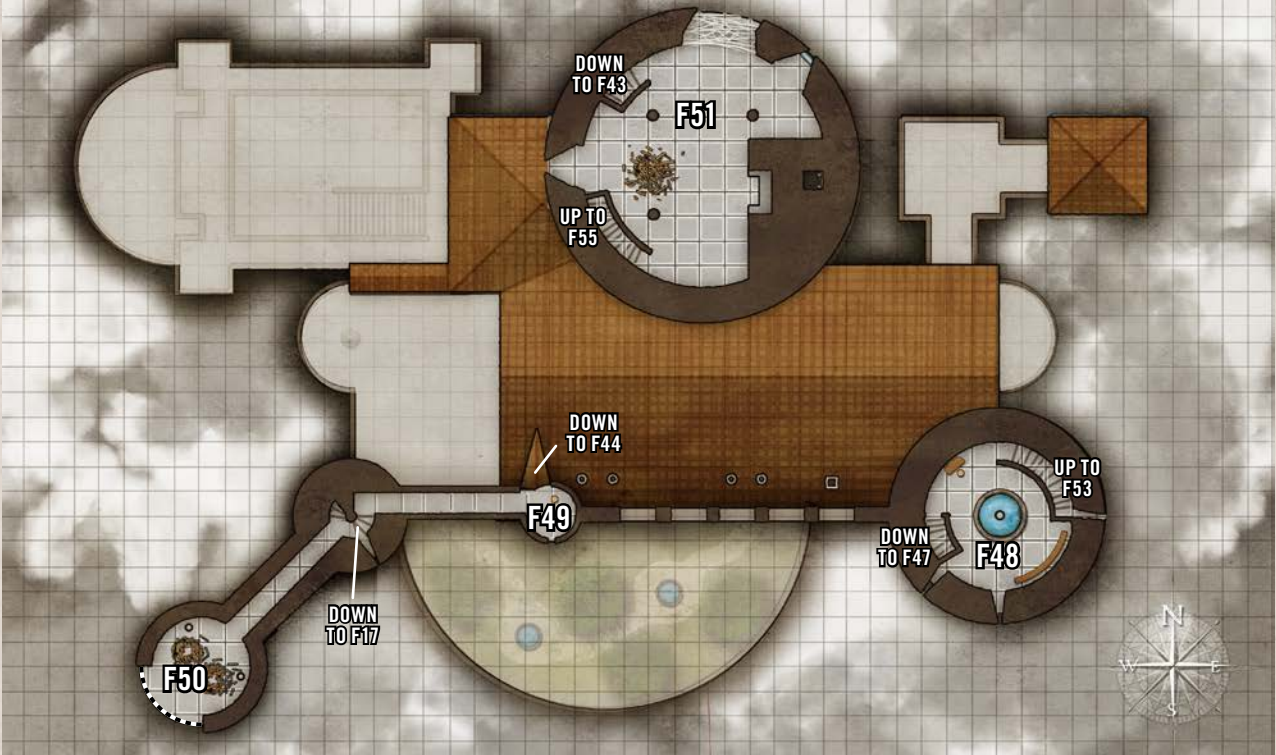
MITHRAL GOLEM**CR 16****XP 76,800****hp** 172 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 139)

Treasure: The 50-foot-wide, 30-foot-high curved bookshelf holds hundreds of huge tomes written in Giant, which amount to one of the most accurate and complete existing records of Golarion's history since the Age of Anguish, and an equally impressive archive detailing the Great Beyond. Removing the hundreds of books from this room would be a monumental task, but this collection is of inestimable value to the right buyer, and could command a price of up to 500,000 gp from a powerful church, school of magic, or the Pathfinder Society.

Development: Using its fluid form ability, the mithral golem can flow through the pipes of the castle's plumbing

FOURTH FLOOR

1 SQUARE = 15 FEET



system, reaching areas **F39** or **F47** in a single round, or, at the GM's discretion, emerge from any water appliance in the castle in a similar fashion.

F49. Sentry Turret (CR 15)

This turret rises high above the castle's roof and hanging garden. Inside are a giant-sized stool and a silver bell hanging from a hook in the ceiling. A single arrow loop provides a view of the sky outside.

Used as a sentry box by the castle's roc riders, this turret stands at the top of the ascending stairway from

area **F44** and provides access to the castle's roc stable (area **F50**).

Creature: The cloud giant Nalbur, twin brother of Nalbia, uses the turret as an observation point. The third of the Storm Tyrant's captains in the castle, Nalbur strongly prefers to fight intruders such as the PCs in the open from the back of his roc mount Galescream, who is stabled in area **F50**. For this reason, if Nalbur catches sight of the PCs in any exterior areas of the castle (such as the hanging garden [area **F30**]), hears the noise of Nalbia's illusory attacks in area **F44**, or flees threatened in any way, the cloud giant mounts his roc and flies outside to attack the PCs in the open. Nalbur can reach area **F50** and jump on Galescream's back in just 3 rounds. Nalbur and Galescream then fly around the castle, waiting for the PCs to show up in one of its open areas (such as areas **F14**, **F29**, **F30**, **F38**, or **F40**). Nalbur does not join forces with other creatures in the castle easily, as he still holds an ill-concealed grudge against the Storm Tyrant for his previous defeat, and is unwilling to aid Volstus's other minions as a result.



NALBUR

NALBUR CR 15

XP 51,200 Male cloud giant ranger 1/rogue (sniper) 6
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 147, Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide 134*)

NE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 12, flat-footed 26 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

hp 225 (23 HD; 16d8+1d10+6d8+121)

Fort +19, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities evasion, rock catching, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee mwk battleaxe +29/+24/+19/+14 (4d6+13/x3) or 2 slams +28 (2d6+13)

Ranged +4 composite longbow +24/+19/+14/+9 (4d6+17/x3) or rock +20 (2d6+13)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks deadly range^{APG} (50 ft.), favored enemy (humans +2), rock throwing (140 ft.), sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +18)

At will—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 lbs.), *obscuring mist* 1/day—*fog cloud*

TACTICS

During Combat When riding his roc in battle, Nalbur prefers hit-and-run tactics, and tries to use up all his arrows and rocks to soften the enemy before joining melee.

Morale Nalbur is more arrogant than brave, and tries to disengage and fly away if Galescream is killed or if he is

reduced to fewer than 100 hit points in what looks like a desperate combat situation.

STATISTICS

Str 37, **Dex** 18, **Con** 21, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14
Base Atk +17; **CMB** +32 (+34 bull rush); **CMD** 46 (48 vs. bull rush)
Feats Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Will of Giants (see page 48)
Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +25, Climb +20, Craft (bows) +15, Handle Animal +23 (+25 with aerial mounts), Intimidate +30, Knowledge (nature) +15, Perception +25, Perform (string) +10, Ride +23 (+25 with aerial mounts), Stealth +18, Survival +18
Languages Auran, Common, Draconic, Giant
SQ accuracy^{APG}, oversized weapon, rogue talents (combat trick, sniper's eye^{APG}, weapon training), track +1, wild empathy +3 (+8 vs. birds)
Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), throwing rocks (3); **Other Gear** +2 *chain shirt*, Gargantuan mwk battleaxe, Gargantuan +4 *composite longbow* (+13 Str) with 20 arrows, *ring of animal friendship*, *roc rider badge* (see the sidebar), key to chest in area **F52**



Development: If the PCs have not defeated Nalbur by the time they face the Storm Tyrant, the cloud giant and his roc Galescream join Volstus for his final battle with the PCs, likely increasing the difficulty of that encounter significantly.

F50. Roc Stable (CR 13)

An enormous archway opens this circular room to the sky. The floor here is almost completely occupied by two huge bird nests made of tree trunks and twisted, interwoven branches.

This room was a stable for the castle's riding rocs, and could accommodate up to four of the Gargantuan birds. Half of the ceiling is open to the mezzanine above (area **F52**) and two steel poles extend upward to the overhanging ledge. The archway is sealed with a permanent *wall of force* (CL 20th), which can be raised or lowered with a command word in Giant or by a creature wearing a *roc rider badge* (see the sidebar).

Creature: Although the roc stable can accommodate up to four of the Gargantuan birds, only Nalbur's roc mount Galescream now rests in one of the two nests. In times

ROC RIDER BADGE

The roc riders of Zephyr Hall wore these pins to bypass the energy field surrounding the cloud castle and give them a closer connection with their aerial mounts.

| ROC RIDER BADGE | | PRICE |
|--------------------------|---------|---------------|
| | | 17,000 GP |
| SLOT neck | CL 11th | WEIGHT 5 lbs. |
| AURA moderate abjuration | | |

This giant-sized silver brooch is fashioned in the shape of a roc's head inscribed inside a circle. A *roc rider badge* automatically neutralizes the energy field around Ironcloud Keep (see page 20) in a 200-foot-radius sphere around the wearer, allowing the wearer and his mount (if any) to freely move through the field. In addition, the wearer gains a +2 competence bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks dealing with aerial mounts. A *roc rider badge* also allows its wearer to improve the initial attitude of birds of all kinds, as if the wearer had the wild empathy ranger class feature. If the wearer already has the wild empathy class feature, the *roc rider badge* grants the wearer a +5 competence bonus on wild empathy checks against birds. A *roc rider badge* occupies the neck slot on Large or Huge creatures, but a Medium creature can wear the badge as a pectoral in the chest slot.

| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS | COST 8,500 GP |
|--|---------------|
| Craft Wondrous Item, antimagic field, charm animal | |

of crisis, like now, Galescream is in a constant state of readiness, and wears Nalbur's saddle strapped to her back at all times, waiting for the cloud giant (see area **F49**).

GALESCREAM **CR 13**
XP 25,600

Female advanced roc (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 236)
 N Gargantuan animal

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 9, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +20 natural, -4 size)

hp 170 (20d8+80)

Fort +16, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

Melee bite +24 (2d8+13), 2 talons +25 (2d6+13/19-20 plus grab)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 36, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +32 (+36 grapple); **CMD** 45

Feats Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (talons), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (talons), Wingover

Skills Fly +10, Perception +15

Gear *amulet of natural armor* +2, Huge exotic military saddle

F51. Dragon's Den (CR 17)

This level of the castle's main tower has been devastated and partially burned by some cataclysmic force that opened a huge crack in the tower's outer wall. The frescoes on the walls are obscured with soot, and the floor is strewn with fragments of stone and the broken and burnt remains of furniture. Some of the debris has been piled up in an ominous and prodigious heap near the middle of the hall.

This area was once a sumptuous dormitory for most of the cloud giants of Zephyr Hall until it was hit by one of Volstus's meteors and ravaged by an internal explosion. The debris covering the floor creates difficult terrain for Medium or smaller creatures throughout the room, but the big pile of rubble can provide cover for creatures of that size.

Creature: This chamber is now the lair of the old red dragon Akazerath, dominated by the Storm Tyrant's *Orb of Red Dragonkind*. Scion of a powerful clan of dragons, Akazerath inherited a streak of self-complacency and laziness that caused him to underestimate Volstus when the storm giant invaded and looted his lair. Akazerath barely had the chance to defend himself before Volstus subjugated the dragon with the *Orb of Red Dragonkind*. Since then, Akazerath has been the thrall and flying mount of the Storm Tyrant. Volstus regularly renews his domination of Akazerath, and takes great care to avoid risking the dragon's rebellion or escape, for obvious reasons.

As an old red dragon, Akazerath is a truly terrible creature, though his captivity has made him considerably less bold and aggressive than a free specimen of his kind, and he slithers about submissively on his belly. In his enslaved state, Akazerath acts almost like an automaton, and his great intellect has been somewhat dimmed by the frustration of forced servitude and by the constant fear of upsetting his master. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Sense Motive check can infer that

the dragon is under some kind of mental control. When carrying Volstus in battle, however, Akazerath quickly stirs into action, blindly following the Storm Tyrant's orders with all his might.

The humiliation of wearing a saddle has eroded Akazerath's ego and unbalanced his mind, to the point that he spends most of his time in an apathetic slumber, waiting for the next call of his master.

The dragon has made his nest atop the pile of rubble and debris in this room, where he sleeps until disturbed or called by Volstus, resting on his belly and enduring the harness of the Huge military saddle strapped to his back.

During the PCs' assault on Ironcloud Keep, Volstus regularly checks in on Akazerath through his mental link with the dragon. If the PCs attack Akazerath, wake him, or even try to engage him in conversation, Volstus senses it within a few rounds and orders Akazerath to break off and join him in area F54 without delay. See *Battling the Storm Tyrant* on page 58 for details of the PCs' final battle with Akazerath and the Storm Tyrant.



AKAZERATH

AKAZERATH

CR 17

XP 102,400

Male old red dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 98)

CE Gargantuan dragon (fire)

Init +3; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, *see invisibility*, smoke vision; Perception +28

Aura fire (10 ft., 1d6 fire), frightful presence (240 ft., DC 24)

DEFENSE

AC 36, touch 5, flat-footed 36 (-1 Dex, +27 natural, +4 shield, -4 size)

hp 283 (21d12+147)

Fort +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +16

DR 10/adamantine (110 points), 10/magic; **Immune** fire, paralysis, sleep; **Resist** cold 20, electricity 20; **SR** 28

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +29 (4d6+18/19-20), 2 claws +29 (2d8+12), 2 wings +27 (2d6+6), tail slap +27 (2d8+18)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. cone, 16d10 fire damage, Reflex DC 27 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), crush (4d6+18, DC 27), manipulate flames, tail sweep (2d6+18, DC 27)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 21st; concentration +25)

At will—*detect magic, pyrotechnics* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 17), *wall of fire*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 11st; concentration +15)

5th (4/day)—*hold monster* (DC 19), *waves of fatigue*

4th (7/day)—*fire shield, solid fog, stonewall*

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic, displacement, haste, ray of exhaustion* (DC 17)

2nd (7/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 16), *invisibility, mirror image*, see *invisibility, touch of idiocy*

1st (7/day)—*grease* (DC 15), *magic missile, ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15), *shield, unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*acid splash, dancing lights, flare* (DC 14), *ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand, message, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Akazerath casts *mirror image*, see *invisibility, shield*, and *stonewall* on himself before battle.

During Combat Akazerath casts *displacement* and *haste* on himself and Volstus at the beginning of combat, and *fire shield* (warm shield) on himself. The dragon uses his breath weapon at range while the Storm Tyrant uses his spell-like abilities.

Once they enter melee combat, Akazerath makes Flyby Attacks with his bite while Volstus make Ride-By Attacks.

Morale Dominated by Volstus, Akazerath is bound to unquestioningly obey his master in combat, fighting to the death if so ordered. If freed from the influence of the *Orb of Red Dragonkind*, however, the demoralized dragon is likely to flee any opponent that has even the slightest chance of defeating him.

STATISTICS

Str 35, **Dex** 8, **Con** 25, **Int** 18, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +21; **CMB** +37; **CMD** 46 (50 vs. trip)

Feats Critical Focus, Flyby Attack, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Multiattack, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Appraise +22, Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Fly +9, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (local) +18, Perception +28, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +28, Stealth +11

Languages Auran, Common, Draconic, Giant, Ignan, Orc

Gear *major ring of energy resistance* (cold), *major ring of energy resistance* (electricity), Huge exotic military saddle, diamond dust (worth 500 gp)

Trap: The huge gap opened in the outer wall has been trapped with a dimensional web trap by the Leng spiders in area **F56**. The webs are invisible (requiring a successful DC 40 Perception check to notice), and entrap creatures as the Leng spiders' web ability (DC 25, 15 hp). In addition, the webs are warded with both a permanent *teleport trap* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea World Guide* 296) and a permanent *teleportation circle*. Anyone attempting

to teleport into or out of area **F51** must attempt a DC 28 Will save—on a failure, the creature is instead teleported to area **F27**; on a success, the creature does not teleport at all (though the use of the teleport effect is still consumed). Likewise, anyone caught in the web is affected by the *teleportation circle* and is also teleported to area **F27** on the following round. Volstus (see area **F54**) and Akazerath know passwords that enable them to pass through the webs unhampered.

DIMENSIONAL WEB TRAP

CR 12

XP 19,200

Type magical; **Perception** DC 34; **Disable Device** DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger special; **Reset** automatic

Effect web (entangled, Reflex DC 25 negates) plus spell effect (*teleport trap*^{SWG}, redirects teleportation to area **F27**, Will DC 28 negates; or *teleportation circle*, teleports any creatures entangled in web to area **F27**); multiple targets (all targets caught in web)

Hazard: The damage wrought to the tower by the *black comet heart*, not yet repaired at the time of the PCs' arrival in the castle, has produced an enormous crack in the outer wall's stonework, making the entire structure unstable. The crack has not produced any disastrous effects thus far, though Volstus fears (with good reason) that the stress of high-speed maneuvers in the air or other vibrations (such as those produced by an *earthquake* spell or similar large area effects) might trigger a major collapse of the tower. See *Battling the Storm Tyrant* on page 58 for the effects of such an event.

Development: Understandably, Akazerath longs for the destruction of his enslaver with every ounce of his being, but he has no hope of turning against Volstus so long as the storm giant possesses the *Orb of Dragonkind*. The PCs can free Akazerath from his domination if they manage to wrest the orb from the of the Storm Tyrant's grasp, or somehow destroy the orb. In fact, killing Volstus before Akazerath is a good strategy, for the Storm Tyrant's death is the fastest and surest way to set the dragon free. After years of enforced servitude, Akazerath prizes his life and freedom more than anything else, and almost surely flees, unless the PCs appear badly injured from the battle.

If the PCs have not yet freed Renfal's ghost from area **F7**, they witness another manifestation in this chamber similar to the one in the defense tower's cistern (area **E5**).

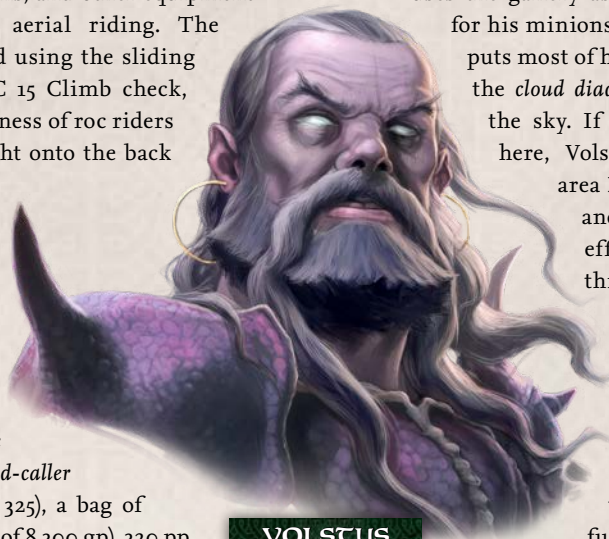
F52. Roost Tower Mezzanine

The floor of this chamber is little more than a ledge that leaves half of the room open to the roc stable below. On the ledge are four hooks for giant saddles, a weapon rack, and a

padlocked chest. Two steel poles extend down from the ledge to room below.

This mezzanine was a ready room for the castle's roc riders. The huge *wall of force* archway in the roc stable (area F50) extends to this level as well. The weapon rack holds four Gargantuan spears, several Gargantuan javelins, a few throwing rocks, and other equipment and supplies needed for aerial riding. The stable below can be reached using the sliding poles with a successful DC 15 Climb check, though the traditional boldness of roc riders requires jumping down right onto the back of the mount.

Treasure: Nalbur (see area F49) has the only key to the padlocked chest (break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30), which holds his personal treasure. Inside is a Medium *+1 improved energy resistance (fire) heavy steel shield*, a *wind-caller compass* (*Ultimate Equipment* 325), a bag of assorted gems (worth a total of 8,300 gp), 320 pp, and 7,430 gp.



VOLSTUS

This gallery connects the observatory (area F53) to the lord's lodgings (area F55). The hole in the eastern wall is the result of one of Volstus's meteors during his attack on Zephyr Hall.

Creature: The storm giant warlord Volstus, the self-proclaimed Storm Tyrant, takes position here once he is aware of the presence of intruders in the castle. He uses the gallery as an observation point, waiting for his minions to crush his enemies, while he puts most of his energy into concentrating on the *cloud diadem* to steer the castle through the sky. If the PCs threaten his position here, Volstus calls for Akazerath from area F51, using his thunderous voice and Perform (sing) skill to great effect, before exiting the gallery through the hole in the wall and jumping roc-rider style onto the dragon's back after the latter has landed on the roof. See *Battling the Storm Tyrant* on page 58 for details of the PCs' final confrontation with Volstus. Volstus himself is fully detailed in the NPC Gallery on pages 62–63.

F53. Observatory

A stained-glass dome covers this round room, filtering the outside light in a dazzling display of colors, while a series of arrow slits pierce the walls. A huge silver telescope stands beneath the dome, mounted on a massive wheeled trolley on tracks that run a full circle around the room.

The apex of the dome is 100 feet above the floor. The stained glass of the dome possesses the same partial *prismatic wall* effect as the castle's windows (see page 20). Any of the eight wedges of the stained-glass dome can be made completely transparent with a command word in Giant. The telescope is magical, with a strong divination aura, and its lens allows perfect observation of the heavens under any light or weather conditions.

Treasure: The telescope is massive and weighs over a ton, but if somehow transported out of this room, it could be worth upward of 50,000 gp.

F54. Suspended Gallery (CR 19)

This gallery, naturally illuminated by a row of circular stained-glass windows on each side, is suspended over the castle's roof. A huge gap has been blasted open by a tremendous impact on the eastern wall.

VOLSTUS CR 19
XP 204,800
hp 343 (see page 62)

Trap: The hole in the eastern wall of the gallery is now trapped with a dimensional web trap created by the Leng spiders in area F56. It functions identically to the one in area F51.

DIMENSIONAL WEB TRAP CR 12
XP 19,200
Type magical; **Perception** DC 34; **Disable Device** DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger special; **Reset** automatic
Effect web (entangled, Reflex DC 25 negates) plus spell effect (*teleport trap*^{ISWG}, redirects teleportation to area F27, Will DC 28 negates; or *teleportation circle*, teleports any creatures entangled in web to area F27); multiple targets (all targets caught in web)

Development: When the Storm Tyrant calls for Akazerath, his shout can be heard throughout Ironcloud Keep. At your discretion, any of the surviving creatures in the castle can mobilize and begin actively hunting for the PCs, creating a situation in which the party can encounter several groups of wandering monsters

in rapid succession. The monsters most likely to move from their starting positions in this way are the ecorche Nothavar (see page 83), the mountain troll Jarpr in area F17, the gorynych Tsvetanka in area F21, the jotund troll Gunginnaar in area F22, the Abyss gigas Gatar-Nom in area F37, and all of the Ironcloud Keep sentries and cloud giant veterans. Of course, if they still live, Cirdassa (area F18), Nalbia (area F46), and Nalbur (area F49) come to Volstus's aid as well.

F55. Lord's Chamber (CR 16)

This huge apartment is furnished with a plethora of precious carpets, pillows, and tapestries. A multitude of life-sized, polished silver statues of all kinds of giant birds are perched on the walls or suspended from the ceiling, which is decorated with mosaics of beautiful cloud giantesses resting on misty beds or riding rocs among the clouds. An array of shiny silver braziers stands along the walls. A huge bed lies under the northern stained-glass window, next to a chest of drawers. A large round table sits near the middle of the room, and a cupboard stands against a wall to the east.

Once the private apartment of Zephyr Hall's late cloud giant lord Azarth, this room is now home to the Storm Tyrant. Volstus has made himself comfortable on the king-sized bed of his predecessor, and has been planning his conquest on large maps of Avistan laid on the table in the middle of the room. The cupboard to the east contains precious blankets and quilts. The furniture here is kept polished and clean by a large group of permanent *unseen servants* that roam the room invisibly and respond to simple commands in Giant.

Trap: The chest of drawers, a beautiful piece of furniture inlaid with mica and lapis lazuli, is unlocked, but is trapped with a *chain lightning* trap. Only the Storm Tyrant can bypass the trap, with a command word in Giant.

CHAIN LIGHTNING TRAP

CR 16

XP 76,800

Type magic; Perception DC 33; Disable Device DC 33

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset manual; Bypass command word (see above)

Effect spell effect (empowered *chain lightning*, 15d6 electricity damage plus 50%, Reflex DC 27 half); multiple targets (up to 15 secondary targets within 30 ft. of primary target, Reflex DC 25 half)

Treasure: The Storm Tyrant's precious avian statues form a practically unlimited source of pure, finely crafted silver (worth up to 100,000 gp, with the possibility of even more value by selling the sculptures individually for their artistic value). The trapped chest of drawers contains the

following magic items: a Huge suit of *mistmail* (*Ultimate Equipment* 127), a Huge +2 *greatsword*, a Medium +2 *short sword*, two *potions of cure serious wounds*, a *potion of haste*, a *potion of heroism*, a *potion of neutralize poison*, a *potion of protection from energy* (fire), a *potion of remove curse*, a *scroll of chain lightning*, a *scroll of dimensional anchor*, a *scroll of giant form II*, a *scroll of prismatic sphere*, a *scroll of scintillating pattern*, a *scroll of word of recall*, a *staff of electricity* (*Ultimate Equipment* 196), a *stormlord's helm* (*Ultimate Equipment* 247), and a *wand of air walk* (25 charges). The chest also contains 1,580 pp, 13,290 gp, 20,900 sp, and a fortune in gems (amethysts, aquamarines, black pearls, deep blue spinels, and smoky quartzes) worth a total of 40,250 gp.

F56. Tower Attic (CR 16)

A forest of massive, sloping wooden beams supports the conical roof of this vast, dark attic, lit only by a few round dormers and a huge gash opened in the roof slightly above floor level. The weirdly woven, horrid webs of some titanic spider are strung along most of the supporting beams and walls.

This space under the roof of the main tower is 200 feet high. It was once accessible only from the lower levels of the castle via a secret shaft, but one of Volstus's meteors punched through the roof, opening a huge hole. A trap door in the eastern portion of the room leads to the shaft and giant-sized ladder (Climb DC 10) that descends through areas F20, F36, and F43. The areas on the map marked with webs are covered with huge sheets of webbing at floor level, creating difficult terrain in those areas.

Creatures: Two Leng spiders, called by Volstus through a *gate* created using the *black comet heart*, now occupy the attic. The Leng spiders offered their help to the Storm Tyrant in exchange for promises of power and sacrifices on the Material Plane. They are not particularly loyal to Volstus, however, and if just one of them is killed, the other one attempts to retreat or bargain for its life.

LENG SPIDERS (2)

CR 14

XP 38,400 each

hp 202 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 176)

Trap: The Leng spiders have trapped the hole in the roof with another of their dimensional web traps. It functions identically to the one in area F51.

DIMENSIONAL WEB TRAP

CR 12

XP 19,200

Type magical; Perception DC 34; Disable Device DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger special; Reset automatic

NAXIMARRA'S RETURN

If the PCs allied themselves with the red dragon Naximarra in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #94: Ice Tomb of the Giant Queen*, that relationship can finally pay off during their final battle against the Storm Tyrant. As a descendant of Baelgoroth, the ancient red dragon whose essence is trapped inside Volstus's *Orb of Red Dragonkind*, Naximarra has the unique ability to destroy the orb with her breath weapon.

Getting her to the battle is a difficult proposition, however. Naximarra is unwilling to approach within 100 miles of Ironcloud Keep, as the Storm Tyrant can sense her presence at that distance, and as soon as she gets within 500 feet, she is subject to being dominated by Volstus, as Akazerath was. Once battle is joined, it would still take Naximarra 5 hours to fly 100 miles. As a result, the adventure doesn't assume Naximarra's participation in the battle, unless the PCs have made other arrangements, such as teleporting her there with a spell or magic item. Even this is exceedingly risky, however, for as soon as Naximarra appears, Volstus can attempt to dominate her, and the PCs might end up having to fight another red dragon.

Without such plans in place, Naximarra waits until the Storm Tyrant is defeated before coming to Ironcloud Keep. If she trusts the PCs to not use the orb to dominate her, her entrance is a friendly one; if not, her arrival may be considerably more hostile, as she seeks to keep the orb out of non-dragon hands at all costs. See *Continuing the Campaign* on page 68 for more details on Naximarra's interactions with the PCs at this point.

Effect web (entangled, Reflex DC 25 negates) plus spell effect (*teleport trap*^{SWG}, redirects teleportation to area **F27**, Will DC 28 negates; or *teleportation circle*, teleports any creatures entangled in web to area **F27**); multiple targets (all targets caught in web)

Treasure: The spiders' webs conceal an *eye of the void* (*Ultimate Equipment* 296), which can be discovered with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

Development: Although they prefer to wait for intruders here, the Leng spiders sometimes crawl out from the attic and prowl the castle's exterior, climbing the walls or using *air walk*, and can be encountered virtually everywhere in the open areas of the castle. When in the open, the spiders do not attack frontally, preferring to use their more powerful mind-affecting abilities to confound the party and facilitate the attacks of other creatures in the castle.

BATTLING THE STORM TYRANT (CR 20)

The PCs' final confrontation with Volstus and Akazerath can happen at any time, but should likely occur only after the PCs have explored most of Ironcloud Keep and defeated his most powerful captains and other allies within the castle. If the PCs try to face the Storm Tyrant earlier, you should do your best to discourage them from such a tactic. Together, the storm giant warlord and his dragon mount are a CR 20 encounter; if his captains are still alive at the time the PCs confront him, they join him for the final battle, possibly creating a virtually undefeatable encounter for the PCs. These captains include Cirdassa (area **F18**), Nalbia (area **F46**), and Nalbur (area **F49**). In addition, Volstus can use the *cloud diadem* to summon any of the animated statues in area **F11**, if any remain, to join the battle at the rate of one per round.

The battle with the Storm Tyrant most likely takes place around the exterior of the cloud castle, either above the roofs and highest levels of the keep, or over any of the castle's other open areas. Mounted on Akazerath, Volstus prefers to fight outside where he can take advantage of the dragon's flight and maneuverability. If he has time (at least 10 minutes) between leaving area **F54** and when the PCs finally challenge him, the Storm Tyrant uses *control weather* to call up a storm matching his titanic fury.

Once battle begins, Volstus finds it difficult to maintain concentration on the *cloud diadem*, which causes the cloud castle to shake and list in the air. When this happens, the damage caused by Volstus's meteors and other destructive acts is likely to provoke a major collapse of the castle's main tower. This occurrence causes the entire attic (area **F56**), the northern portions of areas **F55**, **F51**, **F43**, and the ceiling of area **F36** to fall apart with a terrible, thundering boom and a lethal cascade of rubble that deals 20d6 points of bludgeoning damage to anyone in those areas (Reflex DC 20 half). Any creatures that fail their saves are buried beneath the debris (see page 415 of the *Core Rulebook*). After the collapse, all of the aforementioned areas remain exposed to Volstus's aerial attacks, and the mounted Storm Tyrant can easily gain access to areas **F42** and **F44**. If the PCs take refuge in the lower levels of the castle, the Storm Tyrant taunts them with his booming voice, threatening to fly the castle into the ground if the PCs do not come out to fight him (this is a bluff, though a distinct possibility if Volstus loses control of the castle or if his dead man's switch is activated).

If the PCs freed Renfal from area **F7**, the cloud giant ghost reappears for the final battle with Volstus, using his obsessive melody to distract the Storm Tyrant (see page 61 for details). In addition, if the PCs are allied with the red dragon Naximarra, she can also make an appearance at this point (see the Naximarra's Return sidebar).



Development: If Volstus is killed or knocked unconscious, the dead man's switch in the *cloud diadem* causes the alchemic bomb in area **F3**, if still functional, to detonate, creating additional dangers for the PCs and anyone else in the castle (see the What If the Bomb Goes Off? sidebar on page 26 for details if this occurs).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the defeat of Volstus, and (hopefully) the successful prevention of the cloud castle's catastrophic fall to the ground, the menace of the Storm Tyrant is finally at an end. However damaged it may be, Ironcloud Keep is one of the most marvelous artifacts a mortal can imagine. Renfal, however, knows that the harm done to the castle is extensive, and that it is only a matter of time before its magical engine fails with no hope of reprieve. For this reason, the ghost begs the PCs to abandon the flying fortress, and to allow him to take the necessary steps to avoid further misfortunes. If the PCs agree to relinquish their claim on the cloud castle and descend to the ground, Renfal embarks on his final

task. Directed by the commands of its last cloud engineer, Zephyr Hall begins drifting toward the highest clouds, soaring slowly and majestically as the celestial music of harps plays for the final time in the deserted halls of the cloud castle. The citadel takes on a more misty form as it rises, eventually transforming into nothing more than a castle-shaped cloud as Renfal's soul finally begins its journey to the afterlife.

Alternatively, the PCs might decide to keep the castle for themselves in hopes of repairing it and returning it to the skies above Golarion. Renfal will likely take some convincing to agree, but he eventually acquiesces. See *Continuing the Campaign* on page 66 for details on what challenges the PCs will face in their quest to restore the cloud castle to full working order.

Whatever their choice regarding the fate of Ironcloud Keep, the PCs are now heroes of legendary stature who have saved the civilized nations of Avistan from subjugation and conquest at the hands of the Storm Tyrant and his army of giants and orcs.

RENFAL

Renfal was chief cloud engineer of Zephyr Hall. Now a ghost, he appears as cloud giant of imposing stature dressed in the plain, white robes of his order and playing a spectral harp.

RENFAL**CR 17****XP 102,400**

Male ghost cloud giant cleric of Gozreh 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144, 147)

N Huge undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+5 deflection, +2 Dex, -2 size)

hp 236 (24 HD; 16d8+8d8+128)

Fort +21, **Ref** +9, **Will** +19

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** electricity 10

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +18 touch (17d6, Fort DC 27 half)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks channel positive energy 8/day (DC 19, 4d6), frightful moan (DC 27), telekinesis, vehemence (DC 27), wind blast 9/day

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +21)

At will—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 lbs.), *obscuring mist* 3/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *minor image* (DC 17), *soften earth and stone*, *whispering wind* 1/day—*fog cloud*

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +14)

At will—lightning lord (8 bolts/day)
9/day—storm burst (1d6+4 nonlethal)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +14)

4th—*sending*, *sleet storm*^o, *spell immunity*, *spiritual ally*^{APG}
3rd—*call lightning*^o (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *helping hand*,
prayer, *protection from energy*
2nd—*aid*, *eagle's splendor*, *hold person* (DC 18), *silence* (DC 18), *spiritual weapon*, *wind wall*^o
1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 17), *deathwatch*, *endure elements*,
entropic shield, *sanctuary* (DC 17), *whispering wind*^o
0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*
D domain spell; **Domains** Air (Wind^{APG} subdomain), Weather

TACTICS

During Combat Renfal avoids combat as much as possible. If forced to fight, he relies almost exclusively on the massive damage his corrupting touch can inflict on the living, coupled with any spells that might be of use.

Morale Tied to Ironcloud Keep as long as it remains under the control of the Storm Tyrant, Renfal rejuvenates in 2d4 days if destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 37

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering]), Skill Focus (Perform [string instruments])

Skills Craft (alchemy) +15, Diplomacy +18, Fly +6, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (engineering) +20, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +28, Perform (string instruments) +22, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +7

Languages Auran, Common, Giant

SQ frightener, oversized weapon

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Frightener (Su) Renfal's unique personality manifests even in death. He gains the use of the following spell-like abilities three times per day: *dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, *minor image*, *soften earth and stone*, and *whispering wind*. He can manifest these effects in areas related to his emotions throughout Ironcloud Keep and Ashpeak's caldera (including areas **E5**, **F26**, **F32**, **F41**, and **F51**), even if he doesn't have line of effect. This ability originally appeared on page 25 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Classic Horrors Revisited*.

Rejuvenation (Su) Renfal can't be permanently laid to rest or destroyed until Ironcloud Keep is out of the hands of the Storm Tyrant. If Volstus is killed and control of the cloud castle is returned to Renfal, the cloud giant is finally free to pass on to the afterlife.

Vehemence (Su) Renfal's connection to Ironcloud Keep is so powerful that he possesses a measure of mastery over objects in the cloud castle. Once per round, Renfal can possess a Large or smaller object, giving it life as an animated object with a CR no higher than 15. If the target object is being held by a creature, the object can attempt a DC 27 Will save using its bearer's saving throw bonus to resist possession. If the animated object is destroyed, Renfal reappears in its space and cannot possess another object for 1d4 rounds. This ability originally appeared on page 26 of *Classic Horrors Revisited*.

In life, Renfal was the high priest of Gozreh and the chief cloud engineer of Zephyr Hall, one of the few keepers of the alchemical secrets of these legendary, star-powered artifacts. A thoughtful soul, Renfal divided almost all of his time between his job and his passion for the harp, taking pride only in his excellent performance as both engineer and musician. In his relationship with other cloud giants, his philosophical views led him to often mediate between parties of good and evil dispositions, with varying degrees of success.

Renfal's last attempt to work out a peaceful solution between these two factions within the castle, however, ended in disaster. When Azarth, the lord of Zephyr Hall, passed away, his concubine Nalbia attempted to claim Zephyr Hall for herself. Renfal opposed her claim, but hoped to find a solution or compromise that would be acceptable to all sides. However, his opposition drove Nalbia to seek the aid of the storm giant warlord Volstus, whose attack on the cloud castle eventually caused the destruction of all of the keep's cloud giant inhabitants, save those evil ones who followed Nalbia and now serve the Storm Tyrant.

Renfal survived the battle, but was captured. The Storm Tyrant offered to spare his life in exchange for his servitude and expertise in controlling the cloud castle, but Renfal refused, so Volstus ordered his minions to torture the cloud giant. Under duress, Renfal eventually revealed the powers of the *cloud diadem* to Volstus. With no further use for the cloud engineer, Volstus had him tortured to death by the crucidaemon Dyzelke.

Even in death, Renfal was unwilling to leave his beloved cloud castle in the hands of the Storm Tyrant, and the cloud giant returned as a ghost, haunting its halls and tormenting its occupiers. Renfal's repeated spectral sabotage eventually spurred Volstus to create a prison for the ghost in the torture chamber where he died and now rejuvenates, using *walls of force* that the incorporeal Renfal cannot pass through. There he remains trapped, unless the PCs can free him and earn his trust.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Renfal's primary role in the adventure is to provide the PCs with knowledge of the Storm Tyrant's dead man's switch and the threat it poses to Ironcloud Keep, and possibly help them regain control of the cloud castle if Volstus's alchemic bomb detonates. Although coordinating any action with the tormented ghost is virtually impossible, once freed, Renfal can occasionally aid the PCs in the following ways. In some cases, a PC might need to succeed at a DC 25 Diplomacy check to obtain the ghost's assistance.

- Renfal can reveal the presence of secret doors using *helping hand*, *sending*, or *whispering wind*.

- Renfal can manifest to fight alongside the PCs with his corrupting touch, spells, or special attacks, or aid them outside of combat with helpful spells.
- Renfal can help stabilize and regain control of the cloud castle if the alchemic bomb disables the keep's engine (see the *What If the Bomb Goes Off?* sidebar on page 26).
- Renfal can distract Volstus in the final battle against the PCs with his obsessive melody, which resonates powerfully in the air. As long as Renfal's song persists, the Storm Tyrant takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls. In addition, Volstus must succeed at a DC 27 Will save every round or be considered flat-footed for 1 round.



VOLSTUS THE STORM TYRANT

The storm giant warlord Volstus sees himself as a storm's destruction incarnate. Now that he possesses both the *Orb of Red Dragonkind* and Ironcloud Keep, the Storm Tyrant has all he needs to embark on a campaign of conquest throughout western Avistan.

VOLSTUS

CR 19

XP 204,800

Male storm giant fighter 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 152)

NE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +30

DEFENSE

AC 38, touch 5, flat-footed 38 (+9 armor, -1 Dex, +33 natural, -4 size); +2 deflection vs. good**hp** 343 (25 HD; 19d8+6d10+225)**Fort** +22, **Ref** +13, **Will** +21 (+2 vs. fear); +2 vs. good**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2, rock catching; **Immune** electricity, red dragon breath weapon

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft., swim 30 ft.**Melee** +2 *thundering falcata* +38/+33/+28/+23
(3d6+21/17-20/×3) or
2 slams +34 (2d6+16)**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +22/+17/+12/+7 (3d6+16/×3)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** breath weapon (3/day, 60-ft. cone, 20d10 fire damage, Reflex DC 30 half), weapon training (heavy blades +1)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +16)Constant—*freedom of movement*2/day—*control weather*, *levitate*1/day—*call lightning* (DC 14), *chain lightning* (DC 17)**Orb of Dragonkind Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th;

concentration +11)

At will—*wall of fire*

TACTICS

Before Combat Volstus drinks his *potion of protection from good* and always calls Akazerath to his side before a battle, knowing that teaming up with the dragon makes him almost invincible.**During Combat** When battle begins, the Storm Tyrant uses his *orb of storms* to conjure a *storm of vengeance*, then uses *call lightning*, *chain lightning*, *wall of fire*, and his breath weapon while Akazerath uses his own breath weapon. When these magical attacks are exhausted, Volstus makes swooping ride-by attacks with his *falcata* while Akazerath makes flyby attacks.**Morale** All of the Storm Tyrant's plans of conquest hinge on the outcome of his battle with the PCs. As a result, he gives no quarter and asks for none, fighting to the death. IfVolstus is killed or incapacitated, the dead man's switch in his *cloud diadem* detonates the alchemic bomb in area F3, if it has not yet been disabled.**Base Statistics** If Volstus is divested of the *Orb of Red Dragonkind*, his statistics are **AC** 31, touch 10, flat-footed 29 (+9 armor, +2 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size); **Fort** +25, **Ref** +11, **Will** +16.

STATISTICS

Str 43, **Dex** 16, **Con** 28, **Int** 16, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +38 (+40 bull rush, +40 sunder); **CMD** 51 (53 vs. bull rush, 53 vs. sunder)**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (falcata), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (falcata), Improved Sunder, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (falcata), Weapon Specialization (falcata), Will of Giants**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Climb +16, Craft (weapons) +12, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (engineering) +25, Perception +30, Perform (sing) +11, Ride +20 (+22 with aerial mounts), Sense Motive +20, Swim +20**Languages** Auran, Common, Draconic, Giant**SQ** armor training 1, militant, water breathing**Combat Gear** *potion of barkskin*, *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *potion of protection from good*; **Other Gear** +2 *red dragonhide banded mail*, +2 *thundering falcata*^{UE}, mwk composite longbow (+16 Str) with 20 arrows, *boots of the cat*^{UE}, *cloud diadem* (see page 31), *jailer's dungeon ring*^{UE}, *Orb of Red Dragonkind*, *orb of storms*, *roc rider badge* (see page 53), *steelhand circle*^{UE}, signet ring (worth 150 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Will of Giants Volstus is immune to enchantment effects that target only humanoids, such as *charm person* and *hold person*. This feat originally appeared on page 70 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #91: Battle of Bloodmarch Hill*.

Volstus is a storm giant of noble origin, born to a prominent storm giant family living high atop a mountain in the Ironbound Archipelago more than 4 centuries ago. His deep violet skin, a mark of distinction for his race, created great expectations in his clan. The elders' hopes for him fueled the young Volstus's desire to excel in everything he did, and he grew to possess all the traits of a born leader.

But though raised by good and honorable parents, Volstus was always jealous and covetous, and he never learned to be gentle with smaller creatures.

As he matured, Volstus's unusual ambition turned into scorn for those giants who, in his opinion, diminished their role in the world through their kindness toward lesser creatures. To Volstus, nothing was more shameful for a giant than being considered a "benevolent colossus" by smaller humanoids eager to pilfer from his treasury or occupy his land, when they should be worshipping the clearly more powerful giants almost as gods.

An uneasy friendship with a barbarous taiga giant named Cirdassa, whom he met during a hunt in the Algid Wastes, persuaded Volstus that the different giant races needed to unite in order to gain absolute dominance over all creatures, including the most powerful of dragons. With this vision in mind, and the desire to become the supreme leader of a future empire of giants, Volstus persuaded Cirdassa's people to give him the *black comet heart*, a meteorite venerated as a sacred stone by the taiga giants that was also a powerful artifact.

In the following decades, with Cirdassa always at his side, Volstus embarked upon many successful adventures, which increased not only his confidence and power, but also his arrogance, selfishness, and ruthlessness. During this time, he also met the spirit naga sorceress Liniratis, who joined his growing band.

As he considered possible strategies for claiming power, Volstus soon came to realize that a cloud castle, such as those traditionally kept by cloud giants, could be the key to conquering lands of his own. It could serve as a roving keep from which he could launch attacks and subjugate lesser humanoids. Venturing deep into the Kodar Mountains, Volstus eventually discovered an *Orb of Dragonkind*. Using the artifact, Volstus dominated an old red dragon named Akazerath and claimed the dominated dragon as his mount and companion. From Akazerath's back, Volstus could now soar above the mountains searching for a cloud castle.

Eager to unite hundreds of evil giants under his rule and create an invincible army of conquest, Volstus claimed the title of Storm Tyrant and began gathering allies, including the stone giant inquisitor Urathash, the undead frost giant Skirkatla, and the fire giant monarchs Tytarian and Quivixia. He also began his search for a cloud castle in earnest, and soon had the good fortune to encounter the cloud giant twins Nalbia and Nalbur, who told him of a perfect candidate: Zephyr Hall. Unleashing the power of the *black comet heart*, he attacked this flying keep over the Mindspin Mountains, and once he'd claimed it, he secured in the caldera of the dormant volcano Ashpeak.

Volstus is a lordly storm giant with a truly titanic physique, tempered by years of fighting and hardships. He has deep violet skin, blue-black hair, and silver eyes that

sparkle with arcs of electrical energy when he has a fit of anger, focuses on a demanding task, or seeks to intimidate those who question his orders. The Storm Tyrant's voice varies from a cavernous rumble to a powerful, blaring yell.

Although bound to appear only at the end of the Adventure Path as the final villain, Volstus can be introduced earlier in the campaign to great effect, as long as you keep in mind that the storm giant warlord could easily overwhelm a lower-level party that (foolishly) seeks an untimely confrontation with him. However, an early glimpse of the Storm Tyrant can give the PCs a dramatic opportunity to learn something about the powers and offensive capabilities of their ultimate foe.





CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

What our counterparts, the Decemvirate, often appear to overlook is that the world is as much defined by what is unknown as it is by history and uncovered secrets. Once a flying fortress ceases to be legend and enters the common person's paradigm of what is possible, it becomes a form of technology. What was once a fairy tale transforms into a method to move goods across the Inner Sea regardless of distance or intervening terrain. Just ponder what it means to transport military assets to protect those goods and, of course, any other interests abroad. The expansive distribution of merchandise, the exchange of cultures and ideas, a radical shift in trade markets, different perspectives on the tactical use of magic—these things change societies permanently. They are the consequences of the reckless pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.”

—A. X. Adrius to the Aspis Consortium board of patrons

The Giantslayer Adventure Path concludes with “Shadow of the Storm Tyrant,” but there are more adventures to be had following this campaign. At the end of the Giantslayer Adventure Path, the PCs may have stopped a giant warlord from unleashing his fury on western Avistan while collecting a number of priceless artifacts, but the giant threat isn’t the only thing to worry about.

Best of Intentions: The PCs may elect to pilot the cloud castle back to Trunau in order to better secure the town from the orc hordes of Belkzen. While this makes sense in theory, without an actual army to defend it, the castle attracts powerful orc champions to the Conquered Lands from throughout the territory, such as the thrill-seeking, wyvern-riding Wingripper orc tribe. Other threats, such as King Orynox of the fire giant kingdom of Kragmaroth, may be drawn towards Trunau as well. The cloud castle is a powerful resource, but it doesn’t replace sheer numbers on its own. The heroes may find they need to protect Trunau from a threat they created themselves. See *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Belkzen, Hold of the Orc Hordes* for more information and ideas.

Culture Clash: Artifacts found in this campaign represent historical and usually spiritual significance to the races that created them. The heroes have saved Avistan, but that doesn’t mean the giants are content to let the PCs keep their artifacts. Cloud giants may arrive on the backs of rocs to negotiate the return of Zephyr Hall, or take it back by force if necessary. Worse, a wind yai may decide the castle is fit to serve as her new demesne and brook no discussion. Stone giants are staunch traditionalists and may demand the return of *Agrimmosh, the Hammer of Unmaking*. The leader of another fire giant clan may seek Tytarian’s *hammer of thunderbolts* in order to proclaim himself their new and undisputed king.

Dreams of Conquest: The Storm Tyrant was unaware of a sympathizer from beyond Golarion. Nithramone the Frightener is a gigas originally from the plane of Nirvana, where he and his kin fashioned wondrous dreams. Nithramone believes that fear and nightmares are necessary for the proper evolution of the soul, since bad experiences are instructive. His colleagues sensed Nithramone taking far too much personal pleasure in researching his theories and so exiled him to the Maelstrom for what they viewed as heresy. There the Frightener rules a floating island of reality held together by his indomitable will. Nithramone peered into the Storm Tyrant’s dreams and foresaw a new age of giants reasserted as a preeminent archetypal fear in the collective unconscious of mortal folk—displacing evil outsiders and dragons. Unfortunately, these metaphysical ambitions were soured with Volstus’s defeat, so the Frightener has decided to intervene directly. Nithramone travels to Golarion to take up where the Tyrant left off.

He brings psychic powers, moon beasts, void dragons, and even stranger occult allies to the fight.

Evil Is Patient: Describing Skirkatla as resilient is an understatement. The giant graveknight concludes that the failure of her machinations can be attributed to the inherent weakness of the living. She may seek allies from Ustalav, or may try to unite the mad, undead warlords of Xin-Gastash. A very dire possibility is an alliance with Marrowgarth, the ravener protector of Gallowspire. Skirkatla reckons the ravener is immune to the *Orb of Red Dragonkind*’s power by virtue of her undead immunities, but would still covet it as a former red dragon. The graveknight would gift the orb willingly to the ravener in exchange for her loyalty. Mounted upon Marrowgarth, Skirkatla has the means to reach the castle. Alternatively, at some point, the cunning frost giant queen may have planted a link of her armor on the cloud castle’s grounds, either when she first allied herself with Volstus or during her pursuit of the PCs after they destroyed her training camp. She could then destroy her physical form and be rejuvenated like a secret cancer in an easily overlooked chamber somewhere on the castle grounds. Once reborn, Skirkatla attempts to seize control of the castle or lower its defenses from within.

Fix It First: Even with the dead man’s switch deactivated, the castle is running on borrowed time, as its engines are destined to fail. A straightforward (but hardly simple) continuation of the story revolves around its complete restoration, which requires a cloud giant engineer. See page 66 for more details.

Too Hot to Handle: As long as a single dragon of any alignment knows they possess the *Orb of Red Dragonkind*, the PCs will never know peace for long. This is the fundamental drawback that exists with all the orbs. For more information, see page 68.

What If the PCs Lose? If the PCs fail to stop Volstus, the Storm Tyrant realizes he needs to start his war, if only to deflect attention off himself personally. He first orders the orc hordes to overrun Lastwall. This leaves Gallowspire unprotected (which is significant if Skirkatla survives). Volstus next shifts his attention to Nirmathas, and then Molthune. During each conquest, the Tyrant recruits aquatic giants to seize control of the waterways. Volstus has seen how the Worldwound crusades are supplied by river traffic, and so forces the smaller races to march overland to oppose him. Emissaries invite stone giants from the Storval Plains to join the Tyrant’s budding giant empire. Left unchecked, Volstus conquers Avistan and holds his new domain until a threat beyond the Storm Tyrant’s means to combat or control is loosed. This threat may be an awakened runelord, or even a returned Tar-Baphon. With Volstus still too depleted of resources to combat such a foe, the continent’s yoke passes from one tyrant to a far worse one.

CITADEL IN THE SKY

A pressing issue in the campaign's continuation is whether the heroes can keep the castle aloft—and what happens if they don't. If Volstus is killed without the deactivation of the dead man's switch, the castle is destined to crash, but where and when is left to the GM to decide. The Storm Tyrant's last course was heading north. While the castle could simply crash into the mountains, a more dramatic choice is to have it crash into an occupied settlement. In Nirmathas, the settlements of Glimmerhold and Skelt are on the castle's trajectory, and the destruction of either town could cost thousands of lives, or dash hopes of expanding a trade route through the Bloodsworn Vale. Farther north, the castle could crash into Trunau. The PCs may have to devise a means to force the keep's descent or risk bringing the campaign full circle in the most tragic of ironies.

If the PCs circumvent the switch and prevent the crash, they temporarily have an unusual opportunity—a mobile fortress at their command. This opens the door to exploration of Golarion unhindered by terrain, assuming the PCs have the means to come and go from the ground to the castle. Remote locations become more accessible, and many environmental concerns are easily mitigated.

Possession of the flying castle can also transform the PCs into a potent political or paramilitary force. The heroes could champion nations of their choice or rent their services out as mercenaries. The PCs are at a high-enough level that the transportation of troops and siege engines is merely a matter of ingenuity, and even the castle's visible presence has a potent psychological impact upon enemies. This requires voluntarily disclosing the keep's existence, which may create even more opportunities and problems. Expecting allies (or enemies) not to spread stories about the castle is unrealistic. Certain groups, such as the Pathfinder Society, may wish to tour and study it. Others, such as the Aspis Consortium, may wish to buy it—or more likely, steal it and justify its acquisition later.

If the PCs pilot the castle too low or fly it over populated areas, keeping the secret of the citadel becomes a real challenge. It doesn't require a high-level druid or ranger to notice the only cloud in another otherwise cloudless sky is moving against the wind. Eventually, someone, somewhere, will figure it out.

Cloud giants in particular are very likely to contest the castle's ownership, regardless of the PCs' heroics or the giants' alignments. The giants may respect the power of human individuals but still view themselves as racially superior. Believing that smaller humanoids are unfit to inhabit one of the crowning jewels of their culture, they demand the castle's return. Good-aligned cloud giants offer some compensation for the castle's recovery, but realistically nothing equal to its value as an almost-unique

magical creation. If the PCs refuse, they can expect retaliation. Evil cloud giants attack with little warning, less mercy, and no interference from their good counterparts.

Lastly, the ghost Renfal, the castle's previous chief cloud engineer, warns the PCs that the castle's engines are going to fail eventually without proper repairs by a true expert. Renfal had a mentor in life who, if still alive, would be qualified to do what is necessary. He directs the PCs far to the southwest, across the Arcadian Ocean. The master cloud engineer, Jorifah, lives on a remote mountaintop that juts above the crashing waves that batter the remnants of Old Azlant.

On the PCs' way to meet with Jorifah, any number of flying creatures can attack the PCs in the castle. Dragons would be the most likely threat as they have the size and means to assault the castle, and wouldn't be frightened away. Piloting the castle all the way to Jorifah's home taxes the engines; over the course of the journey, the castle loses altitude until its foundation hovers just above the water. Once the castle is this low in the air, the PCs risk attacks from all manner of aquatic dangers, including sea monsters, krakens, aboleths, aquatic humanoids, and crews of completely baffled (but keenly curious) pirates.

Jorifah makes her permanent appointment as the castle's cloud engineer a condition before she agrees to help. This becomes her life's last great adventure and may mitigate future encounters with other cloud giants. The long-term maintenance of the castle requires a special primal element found only on the Plane of Air. Jorifah can send the PCs to retrieve it while she remains behind to keep the castle afloat and moored to her mountain home. The primal air Jorifah seeks is pervasive in the floating ice masses upon which the djinni build their cities, but not in concentrated quantities—and time is a factor before the castle sinks. Investigation or negotiation with local inhabitants reveals that Hshurha the evil elemental lord has ordered the painstaking gathering of minute quantities of the stuff over the centuries, and now possesses a useful concentrated quantity, using it to barter with evil cloud giants. The PCs must perform a covert raid upon the invisible Verglas Processional and steal the element from the vaults of the Unseen Whirlwind. A direct confrontation with the evil elemental lord should not be necessary and is far too dangerous; this is a matter of expert burglary.

An alternative idea is to require the PCs to locate the artifact in which the good elemental lord, Ranginori, Duke of Thunder, is imprisoned. This unidentified artifact is alluded to on page 31 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Artifacts and Legends*. Liberating the Duke is beyond the PCs' power, but the artifact in which he's imprisoned should have the power to re-energize the castle's engines.

JORIFAH**CR 20****XP 307,200**

Female old cloud giant

oracle 15 (*Pathfinder**RPG Bestiary* 147,*Pathfinder RPG**Advanced Player's**Guide* 42)

NG Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense

30 ft., blindsight 15 ft.,

darkvision 60 ft., low-light

vision, scent; Perception +23

DEFENSE**AC** 33, touch 10, flat-footed 33

(+8 armor, +2 deflection,

+15 natural, -2 size)

hp 371 (31 HD; 16d8+15d8+232)**Fort** +22, **Ref** +12, **Will** +21**Defensive Abilities** rock catching;**Immune** electricity**OFFENSE****Speed** 35 ft.**Melee** +2 *dispelling morningstar*

+33/+28/+23/+18 (4d6+12 plus 1d6 electricity)

Ranged rock +21 (2d6+10)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** rock throwing (140 ft.)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th; concentration +17)At will—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 lbs.),*obscuring mist*1/day—*fog cloud***Oracle Spells Known** (CL 15th; concentration +20)7th (4/day)—*control weather*, *ethereal jaunt*,*mass cure serious wounds*, *memory of**function*^{UG} (DC 22)6th (6/day)—*animate objects*, *mass**cure moderate wounds*, *mass planar**adaptation*, *planar ally*, *sirocco*^{APG}

(DC 21)

5th (7/day)—*communal air walk*^{UC},*control winds* (DC 20), *fickle winds*^{UM},*mass cure light wounds*, *plane shift*(DC 20), *rapid repair*^{UM}4th (7/day)—*cure critical wounds*, *debilitating**portent*^{UC}, *dismissal* (DC 19), *divine power*,*freedom of movement*, *river of wind*^{APG}

(DC 19)

3rd (7/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *cloak of**winds*^{APG}, *cure serious wounds*, *dispel**magic*, *locate object*, *wind wall*2nd (7/day)—*cure moderate**wounds*, *gust of wind* (DC 17),*lesser restoration*, *make whole*, *pilfering hand*^{UC}, *sound**burst* (DC 17), *spiritual weapon*1st (8/day)—*air bubble*^{UC}, *alter winds*^{APG} (DC 16), *bless*,*command* (DC 16), *cure light wounds*, *detect evil*,*endure elements*0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*,*mending*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*, *resistance*,*spark*^{APG}, *stabilize***Mystery** wind**STATISTICS****Str** 30, **Dex** 11, **Con** 24, **Int** 16, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +23; **CMB** +35 (+37 bull rush, +37 overrun); **CMD** 47

(49 vs. bull rush, 49 vs. overrun)

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Overrun, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Storm Soul, Storm Warrior, Will of Giants**Skills** Climb +27, Craft (armor) +16, Craft

(mechanical) +21, Craft (weapons) +16,

Diplomacy +23, Intimidate +28, Knowledge

(arcana) +13, Knowledge (engineering) +18,

Knowledge (nature) +13, Knowledge

(planes) +21, Knowledge (religion) +16,

Perception +23, Sense Motive +18,

Spellcraft +21, Survival +18

Languages Common, Giant**SQ** oracle's curse (clouded vision),

oversized weapon, revelations (air

barrier, thunderburst, vortex spells,

wind sight, wings of air)

Combat Gear *animate staff*^{UE}(10 charges); **Other Gear** +2 *mithral**breastplate*, +2 *dispelling*^{UE}*morningstar*, *amulet of natural**armor* +2, *ring of protection* +2**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Storm Soul** Jorifah is immune to electricity.

This feat originally appeared on page 70 of

*Pathfinder Adventure Path #91: Battle of**Bloodmarch Hill*.**Storm Warrior** Any metal weapon Jorifah

wields deals an additional 1d6 points of

electricity damage. This feat originally

appeared on page 70 of *Pathfinder**Adventure Path #91*.**Will of Giants** Jorifah is immune to

enchantment effects that target only

humanoids, such as *charm person*and *hold person*. This feat originally

appeared on page 70 of

Pathfinder Adventure Path #91.

DESTINY OF DRAGONS

Great power comes at a heavy price, and there are few objects of power greater than the *Orb of Red Dragonkind*. The *Orbs of Dragonkind* represent a special problem. If a single dragon of any breed knows the heroes possess an orb, the PCs are in peril; the draconic hatred inspired by the orbs makes this a certainty. Naximarra has told another dragon that an orb is loose in the world, if only to serve as a contingency if she fails to recover it. She won't risk her kind by permitting them to be enslaved by surprise.

Naximarra's attitude toward the PCs is critical in this instance. If relations were amicable, Naximarra arrives to respectfully demand the orb. She would rather confiscate it, but if the PCs insist upon its destruction, she is prepared to take that action. If the PCs demand compensation for the orb's return, the dragon's response hinges on the details of the demands. Naximarra doesn't wish to pay the PCs for returning her ancestor, but if they're willing to surrender the orb, she concedes that it has value. If the PCs' requests are reasonable, Naximarra can override her chaotic evil instincts and keep her promises for the sake of a swift and easy resolution. Suggestions on what she can offer include her pardon for every dragon killed thus far or a valuable item from her hoard. She can even provide directions to the deceased dragons' lairs if the PCs wish to loot them, though Naximarra makes no guarantees of the PCs' safety. Finally, she's amicable towards performing a fiery, aerial suppression of hostile orcs near Trunau. She might even offer some combination of all of the above.

Naximarra's reason for wanting to keep the orb is her desire to release Baelgoroth, an ancient red dragon of great power who is also her ancestor. No contemporary draconic scholar knows for certain, however, what the destruction of an orb means for the soul trapped inside. Naximarra assumes it results in Baelgoroth's final death, which is why acquiring the orb is preferable to her. She is prepared nevertheless to take decisive action, so great is the draconic hatred of enslavement.

Naximarra's motives are initially benign, but her agenda could evolve, especially if she succumbs to the temptation to use the orb on other dragons. She could easily pick up where Volstus left off and create an empire with herself as queen. This can be a continuation of this campaign or used as a spin-off to create a future campaign. The PCs and their descendants know a few generations of peace and security. But during that time, Naximarra spawns a future court of her own children. The dragon forges the Confederation of Flame, and uses the orb to control over her children and consorts. Future adventurers must take the *Orb of Red Dragonkind* back or persuade one of Naximarra's own children to finally destroy it. This creates disorder and civil war within the draconic empire, allowing humanity to regain a foothold on the continent once more.

Naximarra does have contingencies if negotiations with the PCs fail or she is slain. Prior to her confrontation with the PCs, she contacts Glarataxus, another red dragon who resides in nearby southeastern Varisia, near Korvosa. Glarataxus has been deaf for years, but given the gravity of the situation, Naximarra sees that his hearing is restored. The Varisian dragon waits for Naximarra to report back, but if she doesn't, he initiates a plan the two arranged. The dragons have commissioned a rune giant wizard named Kuenathorn to act as their proxy. Kuenathorn commands a small army of giants bent to his will. Unlike Volstus, he is a dedicated and personal threat to the heroes. His resources are not spread thin with global ambitions but narrowly focused upon defeating the PCs and reclaiming the orb for his draconic allies. Glarataxus, a long-time native of Varisia, possesses a Thassilonian secret that he has promised Kuenathorn in return for the giant's services, and this secret is much more valuable to the rune giant than the orb itself.

If Kuenathorn fails, the budding draconic war against the PCs doesn't end—it escalates. Glarataxus's age is undefined, but a reasonable guess describes him as a mature adult or old dragon. He may well risk direct confrontation, hoping to fend off the orb's power long enough to obliterate the PCs. He lures the party to him with a series of challenges near Korvosa. Every unanswered demand results in a surgical strike on one of Korvosa's holdings. If he fails and is defeated, word spreads across the Inner Sea region. Traders and pirates eventually carry word to the Shackles. It may require years, but stories reach the ears of the cultists who worship Aashaq the Annihilator. Given time, her outrage erupts and she comes to rain misery upon humanity. With so many dragons defeated, she punishes the innocent and unsuspecting wherever the PCs are not. Just enough survivors are left to attribute responsibility to the heroes, unless they unconditionally surrender the orb. If the PCs fail to capitulate, there is further escalation: Aashaq flies to the Five Kings Mountain to try to awaken the great wyrm, Daralathyx.

While such projections are intentionally grimmer than exploring the world in a flying castle, they represent the gravitas that befits the *Orbs of Dragonkind*. These artifacts are inhuman, crafted by ancient powers and never intended for humanity's use, and no long-term good can come from trafficking in them. See *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Dragons Unleashed* for additional information on dragons of the Inner Sea.

KUENATHORN

CR 22

XP 614,400

Male rune giant evoker 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 130,
Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic 17)

LE Gargantuan humanoid (giant)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 35, touch 10, flat-footed 33 (+8 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +17 natural, -4 size)

hp 435 (30 HD; 20d8+10d6+310)

Fort +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +26

Immune cold, electricity, fire

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.; *air walk*

Melee +2 *longsword* +33/+28/+23/+18 (4d6+17/17-20) or 2 slams +31 (2d6+15)

Ranged mwk spear +19/+14/+9/+4 (4d6+15/×3)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks command giant, intense spells (+5 damage), runes (DC 25), spark shower (30-ft. cone; 10d6 fire and 10d6 electricity damage; Reflex DC 30 half; usable once every 1d4 rounds)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +25)

Constant—*air walk*

At will—*charm person* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 18)

3/day—*dominate person* (DC 20), *mass charm monster* (DC 23)

1/day—*demand* (DC 23), *true seeing*

Arcane School Spell-Like

Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +15)

At will—*elemental wall* (10 rounds/day)

8/day—*force missile* (1d4+5)

Evoker Spells Prepared (CL 10th; concentration +15)

5th—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *dazing frigid touch*^{UM} (DC 20), *wall of force* (2), *waves of fatigue*

4th—*ball lightning*^{APG} (DC 21), *detonate*^{APG} (DC 21), *greater invisibility*, *ice storm* (2)

3rd—*fireball* (DC 20), *haste*, *lightning bolt* (2, DC 20), *slow* (DC 18), *wind wall*

2nd—*darkvision*, *frigid touch*^{UM} (2), *intensified shocking grasp*, *locate object*, *pilfering hand*^{UC}, *see invisibility*

1st—*anticipate peril*^{UM} (DC 16), *burning hands* (2, DC 16), *ear-piercing scream*^{UM} (DC 16), *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *silent image* (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*

Thassilonian Specialization evocation; **Opposition Schools** abjuration, conjuration

STATISTICS

Str 41, **Dex** 15, **Con** 30, **Int** 20, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +39 (+41 bull rush); **CMD** 53 (55 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Combat Casting, Critical Focus, Dazing Spell^{APG}, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Intensified Spell^{APG}, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Power Attack, Quick Draw, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +17 (+25 when jumping), Bluff +15, Craft (weapons) +28, Diplomacy +15, Knowledge (arcana) +38, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (history) +18, Knowledge (local) +28, Knowledge (nobility) +18, Perception +28, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +38, Survival +28

Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Terran, Thassilonian

SQ arcane bond (*ring of protection* +2)

Other Gear +2 *longsword*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *bracers of armor* +8, *lesser quicken metamagic rod* (3/day), *ring of protection* +2





ECOLOGY OF THE GIGAS

Their titanic forebears granted the gigas their immense strength and stature, but it was the planes themselves that imbued these mighty beings with mythical powers and otherworldly appearances. The quintessence that makes up the planes themselves fills these gigantic creatures. Just as one must understand the battlefield of war to win a skirmish, so too must we understand realms beyond in order to vanquish the primal forces that come from them. And though we fight extraplanar invaders on our own doorsteps far too often, we must take care to prepare for the dire alternative as well—for may the gods help us if our battles against the gigas take us to these ancient monsters' homes."

—Ranqual the White Warden,
speaking to a group of New Riftwardens

The grandchildren of gods and parents to various mortal races, gigas are the awkward and unquiet middle children of divinity. The gods formed their progenitors—the titans—from the raw substance of creation while the cosmos still cooled on Torag's forge. They bade these servants to help them flesh out the still-infant multiverse, showering them with power and wealth to complete their tasks. But the titans, for reasons still fiercely debated, cast aside their masters and pronounced themselves the true rulers of eternity. The resulting war rocked every sphere of creation and shattered entire planes, but by its end, the gods stood victorious and banished the usurpers—the Thanatotic titans—to the darkest corners of Abaddon. Those titans who sought peace with the gods—the Elysian titans—were richly rewarded, both with comfortable domains of their own and free passage across the infinite planes of creation.

The titans—still molten-hot with the fires of creation—trode across every plane, and in their footsteps arose new life: the gigas. Spawned from the stuff of the planes themselves and their titan parents' divine spark, the gigas exhibit only the tiniest splinters of godly power—outmatched sometimes even by mortal magic-users—but share their progenitors' immense size and strength as well as supreme adaptations to the lands that bore them. In time, the gigas themselves bred with all variety of mortal creatures, spawning young of incredible size and, like their parents, uniquely adapted to their environments. Legends ascribe gigas contributions to any number of colossal beasts, from rocs to enormous vermin, but realistically the gigas's true scions are the myriad races of giants.

Invested as they are with titanic energy and urges, gigas bear legendary hatred toward or love for the gods. The vile among them scour their home planes for servants and minions to press-gang into their impossibly far-reaching plans for conquest, personal glory, or deific vengeance. The kindly among them, however, ply the multiverse as divine servants, guardians, and messengers, thinking nothing of millennia of service when weighed against their natural immortality.

Regardless of their plane of origin and personal dispositions, gigas embody power and survival. Many scholars theorize it was the titans' quest to determine their own destiny that stirred the primal sparks they left in their wakes, causing gigas to rise up as well—rebellious from the structure of creation just as titans rebelled from the beings that built creation. That willfulness defines them, and is one of the few traits shared across their breed. A gigas may bow to the gods or wish for their destruction, but will always mind their own needs and safety first.

ECOLOGY

When the titans, envious of the gods' divine powers, rebelled against their deific creators, the gods punished them by scattering their ilk across the multiverse. While most were banished to the Abyss (or Elysium, in the case of those who sided with the gods rather than rebel), some titans fled to other corners of the Great Beyond, seeking refuge among the other evil planes of the Outer Sphere or unleashing their madness among the realms of the Inner Sphere. Separated from their kind, these planar refugees eked out their relatively meager existences quietly and carefully, so as not to attract the attention of the deities that ruled over these realms. They eventually conceived children to carry on their legacies as the age of titans waned. These children were the gigas.

Whether they came into being among brimstone and unholy fire in the nine layers of Hell or manifested among the life-giving waters and celestial aeries of soaring Heaven, gigas are imbued with the magic and properties of their planes of birth. For this reason, gigas are varied and unpredictable even among their own kind—even two gigas born on the same plane may have vastly different strengths and weaknesses, depending on the circumstances of their genesis and the nature of the titan (or titans) who bore them.

The gigas are ancient beings, predating even some of Golarion's deities. Gigas have immortal life spans, and live forever unless slain. Such longevity is proportionate to the far-reaching nature of their desires and plans. Because gigas live through countless millennia and were born among planar strife, it comes as no surprise that their goals are often related to guarding their planes of origin or waging wars upon other planes around the Great Beyond.

Most gigas share the humanoid shape of their parents, but are built as much from planar detritus as titan flesh. They are invariably inhuman, either glorious to behold—such as the scintillating eclystrogens of Heaven—or else repulsive—such as the bone-and-brimstone forms of Hell's phyrphlegeians. Beings of true flesh rather than an outsider's quintessence, they must feed and rest as mortals do—an embarrassing condition their parents do not share, and which most gigas detest. Their bodies act as cosmic furnaces, burning the substance of their home planes for fuel. This allows a gigas to feed on anything from beasts and plants or even stones and soil, so long as it hails from its own plane. Away from their native environments, gigas must feed as any humanoid would, on animals, fruits, and vegetables—none of which taste right to their extraplanar palates. The gigas's immense size makes sating their appetites on foreign worlds nearly impossible in the long term. Without food or drink, gigas slow and eventually fall comatose, sometimes remaining still long enough to be covered under the local landscape until they're called home or some planar conjunction reinvigorates them.

AN OVERVIEW OF GIANTKIND

Though different cultures ascribe a variety of mythologies to giantkind and posit the existence of other types of these beings, the words titan, gigas, giant, and giantkin are the most widely accepted terms for members of this towering family.

Titans: The gods formed the first titans at the beginning of time, when the stars were young and before mortals existed. When the titans rebelled against their deific creators in an eons-long war, the gods banished titankind from their sight. Now, the only titans left are those who betrayed their kin during this struggle and those who managed to flee the gods' wrath.

Gigas: The gigas are the progeny of titans, and roam the planes wherever titans once trod. Many claim that gigas are the forebears of other, lesser giants, and gigas do little to dissuade such theories.

Giants: Encompassing many oni as well as the traditionally accepted variations of giants (such as hill giants, fire giants, and so on), this term encapsulates most of what people mean when they refer to "giantkind." Though giants' origin stories are as varied as the towering beings themselves, most scholars believe the giants that walk Golarion are the distant descendants of titans or gigas.

Giantkin: Those creatures who are related to giants but who don't fit the neatly defined model described above—such as ogres, ogrekin, trolls, and ettins—are often called giantkin. These creatures lack the immensity of true giants, but still possess a measure of their hulking power and pose significant risk to smaller beings.

SOCIETY

The gigas have never been a prominent species. They were nearly hunted to extinction by deific agents after the titans' rebellion. In the time since the gods brought down the titans and scattered them to the farthest reaches of the multiverse, gigas have only become rarer.

Gigas aren't born in the same fashion as humans and other animals; the conception of a gigas doesn't necessarily involve two titans. Scholars catalog a wide array of gigas lore and origins, though no two accounts tell the same story. From Egervar the Gray's manifestation among the blessed tide pools of Nirvana's Sea of No Shadows, to Ildtur Uskubur's supposed emergence from his mortal mother's womb during an elemental lightning storm on the Plane of Air, the tales of gigas's beginnings grow as tall as the gigas themselves.

Though born of titans or titanic forces, gigas don't typically associate with their near-deific parents. Because they come into existence with the same incredible power

that guides them through their immortal lives, gigas have no need for mentors or guardians, even in their "infancy." Exceptions exist, of course (among the unusually social gigas and titans from Elysium, for example), but in general, destiny condemns gigas to lead lonely lives.

Gigas rarely interact or even come into contact with one another. When they do, it's typically by accident, and the encounter often leads to strife. Woe betide those who bear witness to a confrontation between gigas, for the battle could take decades to resolve, and the collateral damage caused by these beings may tear entire worlds apart. Scholars speculate what circumstances might inspire two gigas to ally with one another and what havoc such a pair might wreak, though most disregard the unnerving proposition in favor of more optimistic discussion.

Gigas care little for the affairs of mortals on the Material Plane, except when the massacre or recruitment of such tiny beings benefits their extraplanar struggles in some way. When they are cowed by greater beings such as titans or gods, gigas carry out tasks on the Material Plane, but they loathe doing so. When serving as such agents, goodly gigas act as protectors of overwhelmed innocents by guarding cities or wading into battle against vile forces, while evil gigas spread their masters' agenda by laying waste to civilizations and shrouding once-peaceful lands in the haze of war.

On occasion, desperate mortals and monsters of crude intellect worship gigas, mistaking them for gods. Such reverence typically takes place after a gigas infiltrates the Material Plane and impresses its significant might upon a local population. While clerics, inquisitors, and scholars of religion know that gigas lack the divine spark of true gods and therefore can't grant spells or answer prayers, many cults and fringe religions—from small-town preachers to isolated tribal shamans to secret societies of nobles—claim to glean great power and insight from gigas.

A COSMOLOGY OF GIGAS

Gigas are as varied as they are immense. In addition to the qualities of its parental titans, a gigas's plane of birth greatly influences its powers and general makeup.

Abaddon Gigas: Vile beyond comprehension, miserable to behold, and rotten to the core, the gigas of Abaddon share much in common with the most populous of the twisted denizens of this foul plane—the daemons. Lore says much of these gigas. One chronicler wrote that upon witnessing an Abaddon gigas, he initially mistook the immense being for a corrupt, fetid mountain. The divs of Thuvia have begged their master, Ahriman, to summon them a gigas from their home plane of Abaddon, but even the Lord of All Divs is hesitant to bring such a horror to the Material Plane. And when the dreaded Oinodaemon was shackled to his eternal prison at the heart of Abaddon, it is said that

the air filled with the mournful cries of all Abaddon gigas, who felt and expressed the ache of the Fifth Horseman's imprisonment in a collective, plane-shaking moan. For more information on Abaddon gigas, see page 86.

Abyss Gigas: These ashen behemoths are feared forces, even among the mindless monsters of the Abyss. These unholy sons and daughters of the titans enslave demons and weak qliphoth to serve as minions in their twisted armies. But even Abyss gigas too must bow before stronger forces, including demon lords with an interest in giants, such as Kostchtchie. More information on the Abyss gigas, including full statistics, can be found in *Pathfinder Module: The Witchwar Legacy*.

Axis Gigas: Long ago, in the early eons of the multiverse, the titans laid siege to Axis, the Eternal City. The city's defenders managed to repel the titans, and left the massive carcasses to rot in the wastelands just beyond Axis's borders as a warning to others of their kind. While the axiomites worked tirelessly to create the first inevitables to repel the encroaching proteans, the formians of Axis called upon their own only semi-predictable allies: gigas. These metal-clad gigas were channeled into devastating battles against the invaders and ultimately turned the tide against the Maelstrom's hordes. In the conflict's aftermath, though, they simply vanished. Rumors say that now the gigas of Axis lurk just beneath the cobblestone streets and grassy hillocks of the Eternal City, waiting for the day when they are called upon to combat chaotic forces beyond even the inevitables' strength.

Boneyard Gigas: Behemoths of preserved flesh and smoldering red ash, the gigas of Pharamasma's Boneyard are mysterious beings whose very existence proves the inscrutability of Pharamasma's far-reaching goals. Where these gigas came from and why the Lady of Graves allows them to stay within her planar home remain questions without answers.

Elemental Gigas: The gigas of the Elemental Planes of Air, Earth, Fire, and Water are beings of elemental fury, as simple-minded as true elementals and as violent as the elemental lords. On the Plane of Air, hulking, alabaster-skinned brutes enshrouded in whirling winds launch lightning bolts with just a gaze. Earth gigas look like rotting things caked with ever-crumbling mud and earth, their

labored breaths choked with elemental dust. Among Ymeri's burning kingdoms, many gigas of elemental fire serve as the Queen of the Inferno's immortal sentries. Their charcoal-black skin looks like scars on the sky as they vigilantly stand watch on the soaring towers at the gates of the Blistering Labyrinth. The eeriest of their elemental kin, the gigas of the Plane of Water drift in a semiconscious haze, floating silently amid the ancient waters of the Boundless Sea. They only awaken to perform inscrutable tasks when the elemental oceans carry them word of dangers and strange imbalances in seas far away.

Elysium Gigas: While good gigas are rare, they are not unheard of, and Elysium is the place to find most of them. The immortal spawn of the Elysian titans are as benevolent and headstrong as their elders, performing miracles for the denizens of this wild realm and protecting its borders from extraplanar invaders. Unlike most gigas, Elysium gigas maintain close ties with the titans, and many of these gigas even serve their forebears as interplanar messengers, agents, and emissaries.



BONEYARD GIGAS

Energy Gigas: Even the fierce, obliterating light of the Plane of Positive Energy and the life-draining darkness of the Plane of Negative Energy couldn't stop the titans from setting foot on these epic domains. In recent memory, however, only the native gigas of the Negative Energy Plane—called necrophysicians by their neighboring sceaduin—have been sighted. Whether the behemoths of the Plane of Positive Energy—referred to as lumigens in ancient texts—died out in some long-forgotten struggle or hid themselves away until the jyoti need them, no one knows for sure.

Heaven Gigas: The term “gigas” carries a negative connotation among the rulers of Heaven, and so the celestial hosts refer to their titanic vassals as eclystrogens.



NIRVANA GIGAS

Titans have not dwelled on Heaven's mountain for many eons, so the eclystrogens are widely thought to be the descendants of visiting Elysian titans who sowed their kin among the lower levels of the plane. The most well-known eclystrogen, Tryanas, stands 70 feet tall and serves the empyreal lord Arqueros. Clad in armor of molten gold but bearing no weapons, Tryanas stands proudly beside its demigod master, and protects the gates to Heaven whenever Arqueros must tend to other matters. Eclystrogens are known to be weaker than almost all other forms of gigas, but few would guess as much upon meeting one.

Hell Gigas: Creatures of war and destruction on a planar scale, the Hell gigas are composed of infernal heat, twisted bone, and bloodstained iron. They avoid devils and stray toward the borderlands of Avernus, Dis, and Phlegethon, where they live out their lonely existences in hopes of being summoned to the Material Plane. More information on the Hell gigas, including full statistics, can be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #30: The Twice-Damned Prince*.

Maelstrom Gigas: The chaotic, swirling energies of the Maelstrom provide perfect stalking grounds for the equally unbridled gigas. Here, powerful and inscrutable demigods command gigas servants to patrol scraps of hotly contested territory. The most ancient protean lords have also dominated gigas in this realm. Such twisted monstrosities said to resemble both giant and protean, and have names such as Intessurek the Guardian, Buiaroth Gored, and Omranu of Imperfect Veils. Each bears ill will toward any who would tread on their masters' domains without permission.

Nirvana Gigas: Also known as the Eternal Sleepers or the Lucid Ones, the black-eyed gigas of Nirvana have slept for untold eons, and they exist in a hazy, never-ending somnambulistic state. They trundle through the mountains and meadows of Nirvana without apparent objective. As they walk, Nirvana gigas create and control phantasmagorical landscapes and even entire worlds based on a reality they have seen only in their dreams and nightmares. Entire populations are born and destroyed in the minds of these gigas, and some say that those who wake these beings from their endless slumber secure their eternal allegiance.

Shadow Gigas: Though loyal and obedient to the members of the Umbral Court, the shadow giants of Nidal are not without their own secrets, and if questioned about the possibility of gigas on the Shadow Plane, they exhibit a silence that is eerily ominous, even for their kind. Even shadow giants puzzle over the fate of their ancestors, who supposedly once walked the gray lands of the unearthly Plane of Shadow. Some whisper that the shadow gigas died out in a war against the kyttons when

those refugees from Hell settled in the Shadow Plane, but the shadow giants refuse to respond to such claims, lending credence to the idea that some gigas still stalk that gloomy realm.

Other Gigas: The titans claim they ruled the Great Beyond for many eons, and if so, then their gigas kin certainly dot the entire planar cosmos. The Ethereal Plane and the First World are mysterious realms and even the gods would balk at trying to find a gigas amid these near-infinite expanses. Gigas rule more than a few of the countless demiplanes and other extraplanar realms scattered throughout the multiverse. These strange pocket universes offer sanctuary to the gigas and their favored giant disciples, but prove inhospitable to any other creatures. While grand fortunes and impossible treasures surely rest within gigas's various demiplanes, the deadly cost of even stepping foot in such a place is more than most mortal adventurers bargain for.

Some scholars speculate that the giants of Golarion are descended from gigas who once ruled the Material Plane and vanished or fell at the hands of their children. Others—mostly eccentric researchers and mad dreamers—claim that a few of these primal gigas still yet remain, locked in immense vaults beneath Golarion's surface. Lying dormant in ancient temples that have been lost to the ages, these ages-old beings await the time when they and their gigantic kin can once again walk the path of power and glory in the mortal realm.

GIGAS ON GOLARION

While the history of giants and their immensely powerful ancestors on Golarion is a long one, the list of encounters with gigas in mortal memory is thankfully short. The following instances of gigas meddling on the Material Plane can be used as plot hooks for adventures or quests to challenge high-level PCs who have completed the Giantslayer Adventure Path and are looking for more giant-felling action.

Blackrift Gigas: The conjurers and summoners of the Blackfire Adepts are known for their destructive tendencies and extraplanar minions, but even these power-hungry nihilists abide by a certain code. A renegade cadre of Blackfire Adepts calling itself the Order of the Blackrift has been stirring up trouble in the northlands between the Realm of the Mammoth Lords and the Crown of the World, summoning uncontrollable spirits to plague the long polar nights and besiege Erutaki tribes. Leaders among the Blackfire Adepts learned that the Order of the Blackrift has summoned its most devastating monster yet—a Maelstrom gigas—to lay waste to the scant settlements left in the region and lead the group's charge into southern Avistan. Now the Blackfire Adepts have sent out missive for bold (or

suicidal) giant hunters to destroy the gigas and disband the outlaw mages before it's too late.

Kell the Denier: Born in the wretched, fiery forges of Hell, Kell the Denier willingly serves the infernal duke Uruskreil, and in so doing has earned the eternal hatred of his own kind. A merciless warrior and eager torturer with legendary appetites his infernal master is all too eager to sate, Kell subdues his fellow gigas and twists their bodies and minds to serve Hell's will. Uruskreil regularly sends the gigas to crush those who offend him upon the Material Plane. This arrangement leaves the infernal duke more time to indulge himself at his diabolical forge, while the Denier works for him without question or error. The gigas regularly disappears for a short period when he journeys to the world of mortals, though—an idiosyncrasy that has not gone unnoticed.

The Planebreaker: Not simply rulers, gigas also pursue professions with the same gusto that gods display when crafting worlds, and few smiths stand as prominently in legend as Atognachrius the Planebreaker. A fire gigas born of uncommon will, even among gigas, Atognachrius crafted a legendary hammer capable of shattering the very walls of reality in order to escape his enslavement at the hands of Ymeri, Elemental Lord of Fire. For untold eons the gigas has fled from one plane to another, always with agents of the Queen of the Inferno at his heels. He pauses from time to time, dredging up magma vents to serve as his forge, but inevitably, powerful efreet and fire elementals find his newest lair. Such results in incredible battles and blazing maelstroms before the towering smith smashes his way through reality to flee once more, leaving volcanic ridges and burnt wastelands in his wake.

Quesamian Hill: Lost amid Isgar's foothills and rediscovered every few decades, Quesamian Hill haunts fables and tavern songs for hosting an ever-shifting structure within itself. Alternately a temple complex, treasure-laden tomb, or nightmarish prison depending on who tells the tale, this dungeon punishes the wicked and rewards the good. The true story of Quesamian Hill, however, begins in Nirvana. Eons ago, before humans ever claimed the rocky mountain valleys of the area, Qanar, a sleepwalking Nirvana gigas, dreamed herself a portal and passed onto the Material Plane. An avalanche knocked the somnambulistic giant prone, burying her and eventually creating Quesamian Hill. Qanar remains there still today, her dreams weaving an ever-changing complex filled with fantastic treasures, illogical puzzles, and a cavalcade of fantastic beasts. Though the dungeon is filled with unique treasures, the greatest reward within is Qanar herself. This near-divine being would be endlessly grateful toward any mortals who wakened her and help her return to the endless bliss of Nirvana.

FEARS IN THE FROZEN PINES

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The dying campfire cracked loudly, as if to punctuate the end of Frem's story. Raus had been staring at the waning flames for a long time now, his dark brown eyes reflecting the subtle heat of the smoldering coals. He was the only one of his companions not to have contributed to the tales this night beyond a few grumbles of approval and harrumphs of disbelief, and now all gathered turned their attention to him.

The old Ulfen hunter emptied the ash from his black walnut pipe, refilled it with pipeweed, and relit the intricately carved device with the last of his spare matches. With a ragged inhale of smoke and a deep sigh, Raus looked back at the embers and spoke through teeth clenched hard around his pipe. "The sun was setting," he began wearily, casting his gaze toward the dark sky. "I was trudging through some thick brush, already deep into a forest the locals called the Frozen Pines...."

And I was freezing my ass off. Irriseni winters will do that to you—and let me tell you, anyone who says Irrisen's winter is as cold in Erastus as it is in Abadius is a lying son of a hag. It was only a few hours past noon and already the sun was dipping below the trees, casting me in the twilight so common to the lands of the north.

It didn't help that my best furs had been ruined by some Sczarni bandits who thought they'd take them off my back along the Thundering River. The sharp end of Egrith, my

halberd, got the last laugh of that dispute, let me tell you, but my elk's pelt was so drenched in thugs' blood that it was nearly ruined. By Erastil, the way they screamed...

But maybe I should start at the beginning? That's right, the beginning.

I'd crossed over the border into the Linnorm Kingdoms and arrived in Losthome earlier that Wealday. The locals were getting ready for a celebration, and they wanted to make sure their troll problems were handled before the festivities began. A portly lumberer paid me half the bounty up-front, and promised the other half if I returned with the demon troll Yegrek's head by Sunday, before the festival was over. I counted the gold, which he'd handed to me in an oiled sealskin satchel, and told him I expected twice that much when I returned on Starday, a day early. He spat on the ground before scowling, but I didn't give the fat man the opportunity to bargain further. I set out from his backwater hovel and made my way south, reaching the eastern bank of the Thundering River just after noon.

I was making good time, so I decided to take a short break and admire the scenery. From the river's embankment near the edge of the woods, I could still see the smoke from Losthome's hearths and forges to the north. To the west, the Thundering River flowed with relative calm—it would be many more months before the glaciers in the Kodar Mountains melted and caused the spring deluge the river is named after—and beyond that the thick tangle of Grungir Forest. Eastward, more sprawling trees dominated my view, hiding the so-called Frozen Pines. The old lumber road I was following led south, along the river, and would allow me to get deep into the woods without having to wade through the pines themselves for too long.

Losthome reminds me of my own...
Well, I'd rather not think of it.



They say the frost never melts in the Frozen Pines, and I don't doubt it.

It had been a long while since I'd last been to that snow-blasted nation of fool warriors and savage kings. Something about the job drew me back to the land of my birth—a land I hadn't stepped foot on in nearly two decades. But that part, well, it's not so important.

As I picked up my things and got ready to finish the rest of the day's journey, I heard some twigs snap just beyond the tree line. I whipped my gaze toward the forest, halberd in hand.

"Pardon me," came a sweet voice from the trees. A young woman in plain winter clothing stepped from behind a tall pine. "I didn't mean to startle you."

She had flowing, raven hair held back in a green ribbon. Her olive skin reflected the light of the midday sun, and was in stark contrast to the pale complexions of most northerners.

Startled by the woman's beauty, I kept my halberd raised. "Are you lost?"

She nodded, an innocent young thing. But I could have seen her ruse coming all the way from Losthome. I ducked my head just in time to dodge the first arrow, and knocked away the second, headed for my neck, with Egrith's blade.

The girl's pretty face twisted with anger as she screamed to signal the attack. Half a dozen masked figures, clad in leather and armed with daggers, leapt out of the bushes and rushed toward me. My back to the river and my fist clutched tight around Egrith, I couldn't help but grin as I beckoned the thugs toward me.

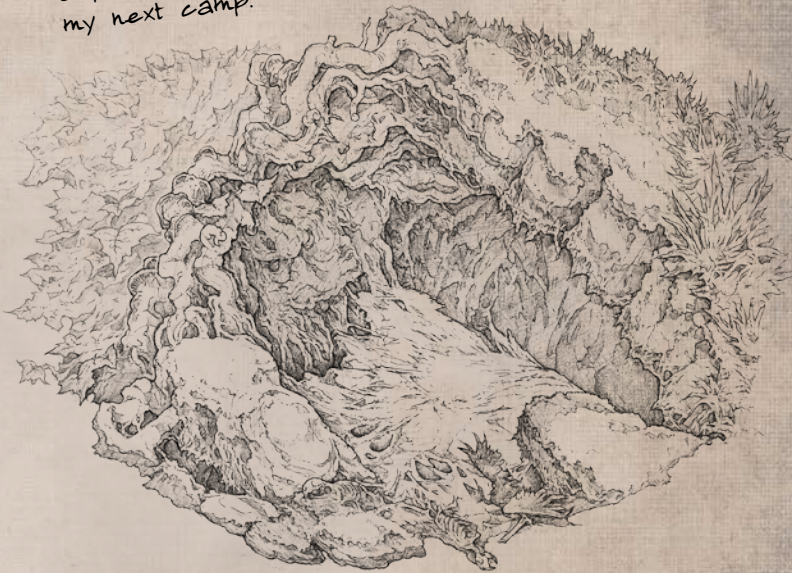
Bandits never change.

Like I said, the bandits ruined my best furs with their blood. That part's true. As for whether Egrith and I got the last laugh, well, that's more debatable. I had no problem cutting down the first six bandits—got enough Sczarni guts on me to scare a wendigo—but when a dozen more streamed out of the woods, I hightailed it straight into the Frozen Pines, trail be damned.

That was the shoddy start to what would become a dismal, fruitless first two days of the hunt. I never did find the trail again, but I figured I knew the lay of the land well enough to get by. I spent my days searching amid broken brush and snapped tree branches for clues, signs, anything that would lead me to this monster so I could kill it and get out of this wretched forest. I spent my nights huddled up in an old dire boar nest I'd converted into a makeshift hut.

Some Ulfen'll tell you that a tracker without a beast companion is no tracker at all, but I beg to differ. I've had animals in the past, mind you—you can hardly find a better companion than a loyal dog or tamed wolf by your side—but beasts are fragile. Beasts break and beasts die. Even the heartiest hound can't match the longevity of a human, assuming it doesn't meet its maker by other means. If you ask me—and I know you aren't, but if you did—I'd say that

That old boar's den was a palace compared to my next camp.



at the end of the day it's just too hard to justify the time and trouble that goes into rearing a beast just to serve as a hunting companion when you're bound to wind up alone again soon anyway. And there's the pain, of course. The pain of stitching her wounds when she's hurt on the hunt because she tried to protect you. The pain of losing sight of your only friend in this world amid a dark forest, when she stops responding to your whistles before you can track her down again. Of finding her motionless body hours later, her white fur stained with mud and worse...

It's better to go it alone, I say, and I mean that. But on cold nights when it's just you and your blade and the gods-forsaken Frozen Pines, it's easy to miss the warmth of a true companion by your side.

On my third day in the Frozen Pines, I made a mistake that should have cost me my life. The blasted forest was bad enough, given its inedible foliage and lack of wildlife, not to mention a chill that would have sent Baalzebul himself to seek a hearth. But the cold in that land is fickle. It lulls you into thinking you're safe, makes you think you know it right before it pulls one on you faster than a Sczarni card sharp. I knew the cruelty of winter well, but I learned the extent of its treachery on that Fireday.

I had traveled far from my boar den, following a trail I believed was Yegrek's—or at least something I could call Yegrek and kill to complete my fool's errand—and come upon a wide stream frozen solid. The blue ice peeked out of the thin white powder like sapphires on Katapeshi white-cloth. I stood on a hard, round boulder to survey the wide line of ice.

The stream was no more than ten paces across. I didn't dare to look for a narrower crossing upriver; the trail was so faint I knew I'd lose it if I took it out of my sights. The thin layer of powder coating the ice gave traction to what otherwise would have been as slick as wet glass. Tangled pines crowded the stream on the far side, but the gap was wide enough I'd have to cross unaided for at least several paces. I was eager to track my quarry before new snow covered the trail or a brief glimpse of sunlight melted the tracks into obscurity, and so I marched over the sapphire ice briskly.

Not briskly enough, though. I heard the crack of ice before I felt it, and I started running. Before I made it even five paces, the powder beneath me gave way to deep blue, and impossibly cold water gripped my left ankle. Shock and pain shot through my entire body, and I gritted my teeth like diamonds against stone as I fought against the bitter cold's sting and lunged forward. My right foot was suddenly two paces ahead of the left and then I was thigh-deep in the clearly not-frozen stream water. I heaved forward but had gained little distance before the water stole what little air was left in my lungs and I was wet to the chest.

I was furious. Not at myself for making such an amateur miscalculation, though I should have been. Not at Yegrek either, for crossing over the frozen stream in a single stride and avoiding it altogether. I was furious at the whole bloody forest, the gods-forsaken Frozen Pines and their bloody trolls and the bloody, fat lumberers who paid me to come out here in the first place.

But we Ulfen have a saying: getting pissed doesn't get you out of water. Thrashing around in that deceptively deep stream, my gear drenched and my body seizing with shock, I reached a hand toward the pines on the other side and wrapped my white knuckles around whatever was there. To my great surprise, something *was* there—a branch or something strong enough that with the last ounce of strength left in my jittering bones, I was able to haul myself out of the water and clamber onto the nearest flat rock.

I kept my eyes open and stared toward the cloudy sky as I caught my breath, knowing that if I shut them it would be the last thing I'd ever do. What saved me from those waters? I crooked my head and saw an odd, thick branch jutting from the other side of a tree like a wooden lever. That saved me.

My freezing joints groaned as I pushed myself onto my side and crawled on the rock toward the tree to examine the object—no branch at all, but a tool. A hatchet, lodged in the tree's bark long ago and left to the elements for who knew how long. I yanked the rusting thing from the tree with a hard jerk and flung it into a nearby bush in anger, cursing myself that dumb luck and a lumberer's litter were the reasons I'd survived.

I removed my sopping clothes as soon as I was able, hanging the hides on a tree branch. My only dry clothing was a thin wool undershirt and pair of wool pants I kept pocketed in a satchel waterproofed with blubber. I toweled myself as best I could with the wool pants, then hung them to dry, too. I put on the wool undershirt and set to work hastily assembling a makeshift camp amid the pine copse in which I found myself. I would have to keep moving to have any chance at all of warming my bare legs, and I needed fire.

I dug through the thin layer of snow on the ground to make a shallow basin in the hard earth. Using my halberd, I scraped the bark from some dead trees, leaning into the pole to pry off thick chunks. The insides were dry and flaky, perfect for tinder. I piled the flakes in the basin I'd dug and used my teeth to tear at the fibrous bark so it was thin and wiry. Once I had a small nest of the stuff, I tore the driest dead branches I could find from the nearby trees and made a cone in my fire pit.

A tin scroll case I'd bought on a whim in Whitethrone actually proved useful for once. I numbly pulled the dry paper from the tube—it had five versions of the same spell written on it, a cantrip I had found handy more than once. I held the parchment in one hand and placed my other on the tinder. I concentrated on the runes and breathed the arcane words through chattering teeth. After three tries, bright sparks of yellow-red heat burst from my palm into the tinder. It took all the energy I had left to keep the fire going with the bark tinder and barely dry branches, but when at last it was crackling and I knew it wouldn't go out, I sat down and warmed myself before continuing my work.

Wedging the handle of my polearm into a pile of rocks next to the fire pit, I hung my furs one at a time on the spike over the fire so they could dry. It was a slow process, and I had to rotate the furs every ten minutes or so to make sure they wouldn't burn, but after an hour I had enough relatively dry clothing to make sure I wouldn't soon freeze.

It had been a while since I'd fallen into the water—too long—and the daylight was quickly leaking away as the sun vanished over the horizon. I'd have to stay here tonight. I set up camp as well as I could, but I'd lost most of my tent in the river. I had to make do with my half-dried furs and a fallen tree I'd managed to fashion into a sleeping platform. The sleep came fast—too fast to be safe—but I hardly cared.

The cold brings out the worst in humans. Sure it makes us craven, makes us greedy, makes us kill one another for just a bit of shelter or a scrap of venison. But these are just base instincts of all animals. Who can be blamed for good survival instincts? Nah, the cold brings out something much worse than the stuff lying right under our skin—it brings out the rotten stuff beneath it all. The stuff that

takes a lifetime to bury deep inside but just one cold bath can heave up to the surface.

Where I'm from, they say the only thing more dangerous than a fool and his blade is a fool and his memories.

I grew up near this spot. Have I told you that part? That part's not important, but maybe it is. I'm no scribe and I don't claim to make highfalutin metaphors or weave poetic tales, but you can read whatever you want into the truth I'll tell you.

It was a small village near Grungir, on the border between the forest and Hage reach. Nice little place, nothing fancy. Lumbering—that was our trade. We shipped pinewood throughout the southeastern Linnorm Kingdoms. A lot like Losthome, when you get down to it. Maybe that's why I took the Yegrek job in the first place. Maybe I felt like an unhealthy dose of nostalgia.

Your memory's a funny thing. You can live in one place for a quarter of your life, but leave it for another quarter and you won't even be able to remember its name. As you go on with your life, it becomes hard to separate what you know and what you knew. You find meaning in connections, even if the connections are convenient lies you've been telling yourself.

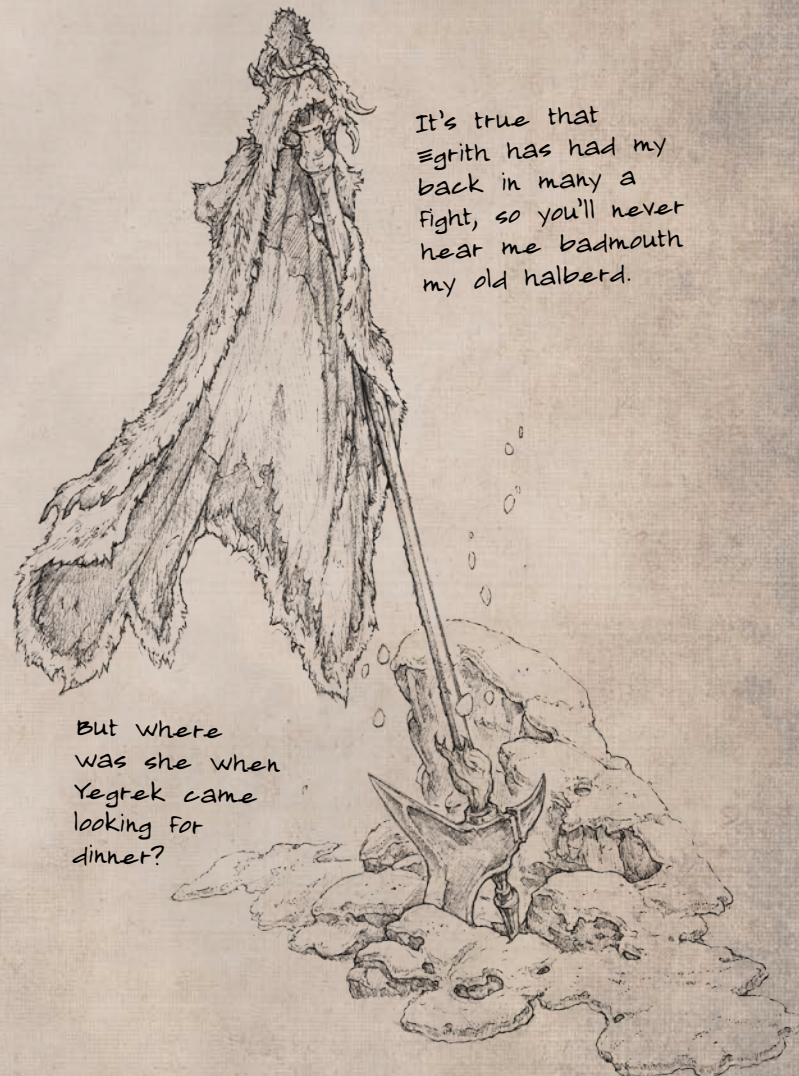
Losshome, Lasthome, Lesshome... What's the difference? It doesn't matter so much what it was called, since the entire village was obliterated when I was but a child. I was out in the forest, fetching firewood, even though we had plenty at the mill just downriver. When I got back, the houses were smashed to pieces. The folk were either mutilated beyond recognition or missing altogether. None were spared. Except me, that is.

I said falling in the water should have cost me my life, and that's true. Trekking over a swath of icy water without testing it first, that's foolish. But falling asleep in the pines when your furs are barely dry and your toes are already turning black—well, that's just idiotic. I was laying out the doormat for Pharamasma to come and take me. But it wasn't the Lady of Graves who woke me from my death slumber that night. She would have been far kinder.

A wet fist the size of a tree trunk grasped me by the leg, nearly snapping the limb in its grasp before flinging me from my furs. I sailed through the frigid air before my back slammed into the side of a pine and knocked the wind out of me. Eyes bleary, mouth gaping for air that wouldn't come, I lifted myself to my hands and knees before a blow to my chest sent me flying again. I landed on the hard, frozen earth in a heap, and I continued to struggle for air while trying to figure out what was laying me out. But suddenly I didn't need to see it to know what had violently catapulted me from the warm embrace of a death amid the Frozen Pines. I knew that I had at last found my quarry: Yegrek. Or rather, Yegrek had found me.

The stars in my eyes made it hard to see as I battled my concussion and crawled to safety in a nearby bramble bush. My skin was so cold I couldn't even feel the nettles scrape my bare face as I plunged headfirst into the undergrowth. Behind me, something issued a guttural roar that sounded like it came from both a single throat and many different throats at once, signaling that my assumptions were correct: it was a jotund troll.

When my eyes finally cleared and I could see into the bramble bush, I realized I had chosen wisely—the leaves and branches of the bush were so dense they swallowed my entire body. Before I could crawl much farther, a pillar of flesh came rippling down through the nettles in front of me as the beast pounded his thick, fatty fist into the bush and down into the frozen soil. Another arm blocked my way to the left as the first retreated from the bush, and I darted as nimbly as I could to the right, crawling on knees and elbows, heedless of the jagged brush tearing at my face and light furs.



It's true that Egrith has had my back in many a fight, so you'll never hear me badmouth my old halberd.

But where was she when Yegrek came looking for dinner?

Frustrated groans from above signaled that my assailant was tiring of our game of hide-and-peek. "Where's it?" I heard a voice mutter in the Giant tongue. Simultaneous, identically throaty voices mumbled or cried, "Yegrek doesn't like thorns" and "Smash its guts!" and "Eats it whole when Yegrek catches it." The troll's fingers—each the size of a human's forearm—continued to rummage around me in desperate rage.

I cursed myself for not having Egrith, my trusted halberd, by my side. Though if the polearm had been

strapped to my back like usual, then it might have likely just snapped in half when I slammed into the tree earlier. Perhaps it was a quiet blessing that I didn't have the weapon in that case, but the fact remained that I was left completely unarmed.

Unarmed, that is, until my hand brushed against a jagged piece of steel amid the brush. It was the hatchet I had haphazardly discarded after falling in the river. It turned out I discovered it just in time, because no more than a second after I'd grabbed the splintered

A jotund troll's cacophonous roar will addle your brain every bit as quick as a flask of vjarik.

Despite its nine heads, a jotund troll's maws all lead to the same place in the end—so why all that bickering?

You'd think having multiple minds would be a weakness, but it's hard to befuddle them with magic.

It's a race to see whether you dissolve or drown first if you're swallowed whole.

A thirty-foot-tall jotund troll needs a lot of food to keep going—just make sure it's not you.



tool's handle, I felt the jotund's fist clench around my entire body. "Gotchoo!" a choir of beastly voices roared in unison as I was lifted through the brambles and high into the air.

Nine slobbering, grotesque troll heads greeted me in the early morning light, and my eyes struggled to adjust as the brute shook me vigorously. When it finally stopped shaking me in savage glee, I got a good look at the thing for the first time. The troll was fat, green, and huge beyond reckoning. It stood over thirty feet tall and held me to its centermost face. The other eight heads craned their necks and crowded one another to see what they had gotten their slimy fists on.

"Yegrek's gotchoo now, slipp'ry manlet," the ugly choir muttered. The troll's fist tightened around me, threatening to crush my bones or pop my head off, neither of which seemed particularly appealing. "Squishy manlet," the troll cooed sadistically.

"Wait!" I groaned. "Surely you know that Ulfen—the finest of all human meats—is best served whole? Squishing one completely ruins the flavor."

What can I say? I was desperate.

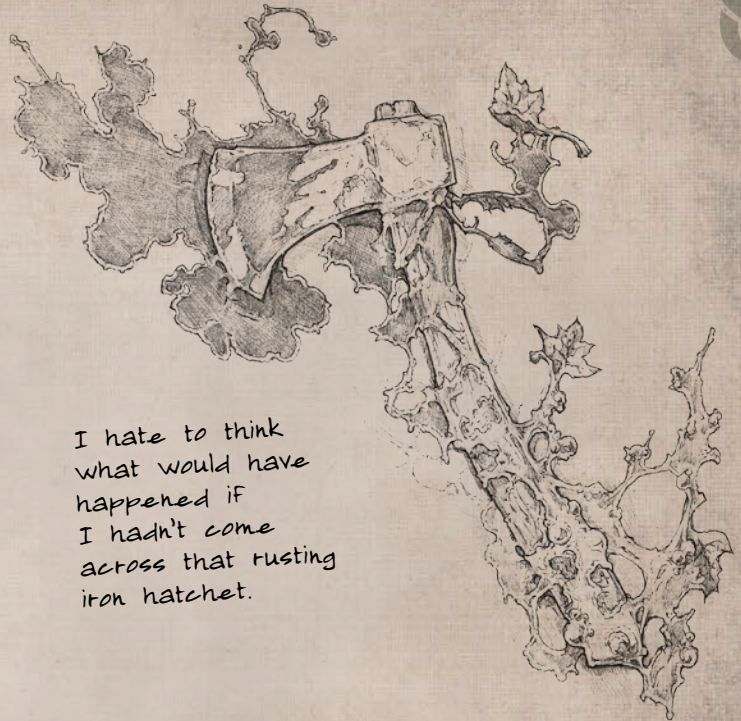
By now the jotund was already bored of me, but perhaps at least half of its heads agreed with my sentiment enough to entertain the idea. "Oolfen talks too much." The troll lifted me high, high into the air and held me above its ravenous maws. "Makes Yegrek hungry." The heads all opened their mouths wide, eager to catch me as the troll's fingers let go. I was happy to oblige as I soared down the centermost throat, hatchet in hand, and narrowly avoided getting caught in the thing's snapping teeth as its jaw shut behind me.

I'd like to tell you I found some wisdom in that troll's guts, swimming in its acrid digestive sac—that I had some epiphany or grand thought as I ground my teeth and struggled in my bilious grave. It seemed almost fitting that I would die so close to my old home. That I'd disintegrate there in the belly of a beast, so near where I had emerged into this world from the belly of my ma, those many years ago.

But that's where the metaphor—or whatever you call it—ends. Because my ma's womb didn't coat me in choleric acid that burned my face and hands, and I didn't use a rusty old hatchet I'd found in a tree to tear my way out of her, either.

I'll spare you the details. Suffice it to say, the midwife's steady scalpel is surely a blessing compared to my clumsy swing—Yegrek could have attested to that, had he lived through the operation.

"Cayden's mug!" I cried from the other side of the campfire. "You sure have a way of leaving out the best parts, don't you?"



*I hate to think
what would have
happened if
I hadn't come
across that rusting
iron hatchet.*

Raus smirked at me. He'd finished his pipe halfway through the story and tapped it on his heel to knock out the ash. "Now, Silas, what kind of storyteller would I be if I didn't let 'the best parts' speak for themselves? I'm here, aren't I? That alone is proof I escaped the troll's belly."

"I'll give you that," I said. "But am I supposed to believe you got all the way back to Losthome after being nearly drowning and getting swallowed whole? With a jotund troll's head in tow? And that whole hatchet bit? I've heard Taldan aristocrats spin better yarns."

"Like I said," the Ulfen murmured, standing up from his seat and reached behind his shoulder, "I let my stories speak for themselves." He drew his covered halberd from its leather collars on his back and slammed the butt of the polearm on the table in a single motion. The weapon's blade was wrapped in gray linen, tied off with thick twine where the head met the pole.

"A giantslayer," Raus growled heartily, "never lies about a kill." The hunter untied the twine around his polearm's blade and removed the linen, revealing no halberd or pike or guisarme, but the blade of an iron hatchet, the coloration of the metal mottled where it had been repaired and reforged. "So," the Ulfen said, "who's ready for tomorrow?"

As one, my companions and I rose to our feet, our brash grins caught in the light of the dying embers as darkness crawled in around us. And you know, perhaps Raus has rubbed off on me a little, for I'm not going to tell you how it all turned out except to say what every one of us knew in our hearts that night:

If anyone was going to take out that gigas, it was going to be us.



BESTIARY

The thunderstorm had been raging for days. The torrent of rain soaked the ground so much that our boots sank into it as we marched along, the clinging mud weighing down every step. The driving rain and frequent thunder made it hard to hear, but I scanned the rocky surroundings for any sign of trouble and listened as best I could. Despite my vigilance, an enormous blue-skinned beast erupted from a craggy rise just as a clap of thunder fell. In a flash, the thing reached out with twisted tentacles and snatched one of the porters. I fired at the thing, but my arrows failed to strike as deeply as I'd expected. Kuranti shouted that it was a fiend from Abaddon, and with a quickly cast spell, my arrows glowed with holy light.

—Vurak Trandidor, adventurer

This volume's Giantslayer Adventure Path bestiary contains a gigas from the depths of Abaddon, a titanic engine of destruction, a cruel daemon of toil, and a thundering sky beast.

DENIZENS OF IRONCLOUD KEEP

The random encounter table presented here features inhabitants of Ironcloud Keep that the PCs could encounter while exploring the cloud castle. With only a few exceptions, the entries on the table represent encounters from locations in the adventure. As a result, if the PCs face one of these monsters or groups as a random encounter, it is no longer encountered at its normal location in the adventure. Entries marked with an asterisk (*) represent groups that can be replenished or that aren't tied to a specific adventure location.

There is no set chance for a random encounter in Ironcloud Keep. Since the majority of these encounters are already present in the adventure, the GM should use them as needed to keep the flow of the adventure going if the pace slows or to ambush resting PCs.

The Skinless Assassin (CR 16): An ecorche (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 109) named Nothavar stealthily roams the halls of Ironcloud Keep in search of the PCs. Until a short time ago, Nothavar was imprisoned in the castle's cells (area F23) for failing the Storm Tyrant on an espionage mission during which he was disguised as a human man (whose stolen skin remains in area F23b). Just before the arrival of the PCs, Volstus freed Nothavar with a promise of clemency in exchange for the head of at least one of the PCs. The ecorche shed his stolen skin and set out to stalk his would-be victims through the castle.

Nothavar hopes to catch a lone PC or to single out a member of the party in a disadvantageous position. Given his individualism and rebellious nature, the ecorche isn't likely to team up with other creatures, preferring to wait for the right occasion to attack on his own. He knows of the existence of the three secret shafts that connect different levels of the keep (see areas F20, F31, and F34), and may hide in one of them to ambush the lead PC as she climbs one of the ladders.

Red Dragons (CR 16): Having heard that the Storm Tyrant possesses the *Orb of Red Dragonkind*, two adult red dragons came to Ironcloud Keep to kill Volstus, only to end up dominated by the orb. Now, the two dragons patrol the skies and open areas of the cloud castle in search of intruders.

Renfal (CR 17): The ghost of the castle's last cloud engineer, Renfal, can appear anywhere inside Ironcloud Keep. If the PCs freed him from his prison in area F7, Renfal appears in person; otherwise, this encounter is a manifestation similar to the one in the defense tower's cistern (area E5).

IRONCLOUD KEEP ENCOUNTERS

| d% | Result | CR | Source |
|--------|----------------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1-5 | 2 ash giant artilleryists* | 14 | Area E1 |
| 6-12 | 3 Ironcloud Keep sentries* | 14 | Area F2 |
| 13-17 | Jarpr | 14 | Area F17 |
| 18-22 | Dyzelke | 15 | Area F5 |
| 23-27 | Tsvetanka | 15 | Area F21 |
| 28-32 | Gunginnaar | 15 | Area F22 |
| 33-37 | 2 Ashpeak guards* | 15 | Area F43 |
| 38-42 | Nalbia | 15 | Area F46 |
| 43-49 | The Skinless Assassin* | 16 | See below |
| 50-54 | 6 animated statues | 16 | Area F11 |
| 55-61 | 3 cloud giant veterans* | 16 | Area F31 |
| 62-66 | Liniratis | 16 | Area F47 |
| 67-71 | Mithral golem | 16 | Area F48 |
| 72-76 | Nalbur and Galescream | 16 | Areas F49 and F50 |
| 77-81 | 2 Leng spiders | 16 | Area F56 |
| 82-88 | Red Dragons* | 16 | See below |
| 89-95 | Renfal | 17 | See below |
| 96-100 | Cirdassa | 17 | Area F18 |

CLOUD GIANT BAGS

The following list of random treasure provides a GM with flavorful suggestions for the types of things a cloud giant might have in its lair, among its equipment, or stowed in enormous bags. Whenever the PCs encounter a cloud giant, consider rolling on the following table instead of or in addition to awarding the treasure listed for the giant.

| d% | Result |
|--------|---|
| 1-6 | String of black pearls (worth 500 gp) |
| 7-10 | Silver cameo locket (worth 250 gp) |
| 11-16 | Two <i>javelins of lightning</i> |
| 17-21 | Framed watercolor of a lush mountain valley |
| 22-24 | Eight throwing rocks carved with avian themes |
| 25-29 | White, leather-bound book of cloud giant poetry |
| 30-33 | Silk drawstring bag of rare tea (worth 200 gp) |
| 34-36 | Collection of pressed dragonflies |
| 37-42 | Lock of pale blond hair |
| 43-49 | Steel vial filled with saffron (worth 150 gp) |
| 50-55 | Foldable silk kite shaped like an albatross |
| 56-59 | Platinum tuning fork (worth 450 gp) |
| 60-66 | <i>Ring of sustenance</i> on a delicate silver chain |
| 67-71 | Spool of iridescent ribbon |
| 72-77 | Glass sphere that houses a flickering blue flame |
| 78-83 | Tiny clay pot containing three dried beans |
| 84-89 | Sheet music for an opera titled <i>Breath of the Mountain</i> |
| 90-94 | Hand-drawn map of northern Arcadia |
| 95-100 | Crystal decanter of absinthe |

ABYSOGH

The footsteps of this pale titan cause the very earth to shudder. Each muscle in its body is pulled taut as if in perpetual convulsion.

ABYSOGH

CR 15

XP 51,200

CE Gargantuan humanoid (giant)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 10, flat-footed 25 (+4 Dex, +19 natural, -4 size)

hp 218 (19d8+133); regeneration 15 (electricity)

Fort +17, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities freedom of movement; **Immune** gaze attacks, mind-affecting effects, sonic, visual effects;

Resist cold 10, electricity 10

Weaknesses blind

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

Melee 2 slams +27 (4d6+17/19-20)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks cataclysmic roar (10d6 sonic plus deafen and stagger, DC 25), living ammunition (60 ft.), whirlwind strike

STATISTICS

Str 45, **Dex** 18, **Con** 22, **Int** 6, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +35 (+37 bull rush); **CMD** 52 (54 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Throw Anything, Toughness

Skills Climb +26, Intimidate +24, Perception +12

Languages Giant

SQ trembling earth

ECOLOGY

Environment any mountains

Organization solitary

Treasure half standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cataclysmic Roar (Ex) Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action, an abysogh can emit a terrible roar in a 60-foot cone. Creatures caught in this cone take 10d6 points of sonic damage and are deafened and staggered for 1d6 rounds. A successful DC 25 Fortitude save halves the damage and negates both conditions. This is a sonic effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Freedom of Movement (Ex) An abysogh is under the constant effect of *freedom of movement*, as the spell. This effect cannot be dispelled.

Living Ammunition (Ex) When an abysogh succeeds at a combat maneuver check to initiate or maintain a grapple against a creature two or more size categories smaller than itself, it can hurl the creature anywhere within 60 feet as a free action, though if it does so after maintaining a grapple, it can't perform any of the actions that can normally be taken as part of maintaining a grapple. Regardless of the

trajectory, the hurled creature takes 6d6 points of damage from the collision and falls prone. The creature can attempt a DC 25 Reflex save to halve the damage and avoid falling prone. The save DC is Constitution-based.

If the targeted square contains another creature, the abysogh makes a ranged attack against the target. A hurled Large creature deals 4d6 points of damage, a Medium creature deals 3d6 points of damage, and a Small creature deals 2d6 points of damage. The abysogh adds 1-1/2 its Strength bonus to this damage. Tiny or smaller creatures don't deal damage to the target. Whether the attack hits or not, the hurled creature lands in an empty space of the abysogh's choice adjacent to the target.

Trembling Earth (Ex) When an abysogh moves more than 5 feet in a round, its footsteps send seismic waves rippling across the ground. All creatures at least two size categories smaller than the abysogh that are standing on the ground within 20 feet of the giant at any point during its movement must succeed at a DC 25 Reflex save or fall prone. The save DC is Constitution-based. The vibrations also suppress tremorsense within the area for 1 round (no save).

Whirlwind Strike (Ex) An abysogh can send multiple opponents flying through the air with its sweeping slams. When an abysogh uses the full-attack action, instead of making its normal attacks, it can perform one awesome blow combat maneuver at its highest base attack bonus against each opponent within its reach. It must attempt a separate combat maneuver check against each opponent. When using this ability, the abysogh forfeits any bonuses and extra attacks granted by feats, spells, or abilities.

Rather than collecting rocks like ordinary giants, abysoghs enjoy collecting living creatures, and love nothing more than flinging a screaming human or horse at enemies.

Legends tell of a small cult of foolish storm giants who dug around the Pit of Gormuz in a misguided attempt to free lost Ranginori, and struck a flow of horrific blood from Rovagug or one of his spawn. Contaminated by the blood, the cultists emerged as horribly mutated creatures of hate and destruction. Nearly unstoppable in their mindless rage, they now live only to slaughter and destroy.

An abysogh stands at least 40 feet tall and weighs approximately 70 tons.

ECOLOGY

Though abysoghs are giants, their mutations have warped them into bigger, stronger, and more aggressive creatures than others of their kind. Centuries spent sleeping in lightless caverns have turned the giants' skin to a pallid, milky white. Although sunlight does not harm them, they instinctively hate the sun for its connection to Sarenrae.

The eyes of an abysogh resemble misshapen pools of liquid. Completely blind to light and colors, their

eyes instead perceive motion and shapes through low-frequency vibrations, which cause ripples across the surfaces of their eyes. Only in this sense can they “see” the world around them.

The blood of these giants is black from the taint of Rovagug. Their bulging veins stretch out in weblike patterns across their pale skin. The cursed blood of the abysoghs also fuels their perpetual, mindless rage, rendering them incapable of being destroyed. Only electricity can momentarily snap them out of their rage and remind them of what they lost so long ago, allowing them to recover enough of their mortality to die.

Although abysoghs are far more intelligent than animals, their intellect is purely instinctual. The natural state of mind for these giants is a tempest of constant turmoil, and as such, it is impossible to affect their minds with magic.

For all of an abysogh’s strength and fury, its body can sustain an active, destructive state for only a few weeks or months at a time. Toward the end of an abysogh’s rampage, the giant becomes sluggish and weary, and starts looking for a place to rest. Once it finds a suitable place, it may remain dormant for decades, or even centuries.

An abysogh’s metabolism slows down considerably during sleep. Although mortal, abysoghs can theoretically live for millennia for this reason. However, because of their violent lives and their lack of society or reproduction, their numbers decrease with every passing century.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

The lair of an abysogh is usually a vast cave in a mountainside or at the bottom of a deep, lightless chasm. The lair is bare of all decorations except for countless splintered bones and jagged rocks.

Much like Rovagug, abysoghs hate all creatures equally. They sometimes enslave lesser giants, but any such forced alliances are usually short-lived because of the abysoghs’ volatile temperaments. They cannot even stand the presence of others of their kind; such an encounter inevitably leads to an earth-shattering showdown between the two titans. This means that abysoghs never mate; all the abysoghs on Golarion today come from the original cult of corrupted storm giants. It is unknown whether the abysogh race is even fecund, and, if so, whether any potential offspring would possess abilities different from their forebears.

Because of their unquenchable desire to slaughter and destroy, abysoghs can’t coexist peacefully with any creatures save for the smallest and most unremarkable life forms. Tiny and smaller creatures are generally beneath an abysogh’s notice and can even live in its lair if they are careful enough to avoid disturbing the giant.

Sometimes, people unwittingly settle near a sleeping abysogh’s lair and may be completely oblivious to the giant’s presence for generations. The only telltale sign of a sleeping abysogh is that the region surrounding its lair is occasionally plagued by tremors caused by the creature’s restless slumber.

Rumors of a sleeping abysogh may attract followers of Rovagug to seek out its lair in order to awaken the giant. Such rumors may also attract giantslayers and followers of Sarenrae, who wish to thwart the cultists’ plans and slay the abysogh before it awakens.

When an abysogh awakens, it often attacks any creatures near its lair relentlessly, destroying or eating anything it can and saving only what it can use later to cause more destruction. An abysogh usually keeps a few of its victims for future use, either as ammunition or snacks. For this reason, the thunderous beat of an approaching abysogh’s footsteps is often accompanied by the lamentations of the giant’s battered victims as they’re carried along in its sack.



GIGAS, ABADDON

This lurching mass of spiked iron armor, rotting translucent flesh, and twisted black thorns resembles a dead giant with the head of an oversized boar.

ABADDON GIGAS

CR 17



XP 102,400

NE Gargantuan humanoid (evil, extraplanar, giant)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +30

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 9, flat-footed 30 (+11 armor, +3 Dex, +13 natural, -4 size)

hp 241 (21d8+147)

Fort +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities rock catching; **DR** 10/good; **Immune** acid, death effects; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, sonic 10

OFFENSE

Speed 45 ft. (60 ft. without armor)

Melee +3 wounding adamantine greatsword +30/+25/+20 (6d6+27 plus energy drain/19-20) or

+5 nullifying adamantine spiked gauntlet +32/+27/+22 (2d6+21 plus energy drain) or

+5 unholy adamantine quarterstaff +32/+27/+22 (3d6+29 plus energy drain) or

+3 cruel keen scythe +30/+25/+20 (4d6+27 plus energy drain/19-20/x4)

Ranged rock +15 (4d6+24)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks devour souls, energy drain (2 levels, DC 26), rock throwing (160 ft.), vile weapon

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th; concentration +23)

At will—*fear* (DC 20)

3/day—*chain lightning* (DC 22), *cone of cold* (DC 21),

dimensional anchor, *flame strike* (DC 21), *greater dispel magic*, *horrid wilting* (DC 24), *unholy blight* (DC 20)

1/day—*destruction* (DC 23), *energy drain* (DC 25)

STATISTICS

Str 42, **Dex** 19, **Con** 25, **Int** 15, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +35 (+37 bull rush, +39 overrun); **CMD** 49 (51 vs. bull rush and overrun)

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Greater Overrun, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Power Attack, Stand Still

Skills Climb +37, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +30, Sense Motive +17

Languages Abyssal, Giant, Infernal

SQ planar empowerment

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Abaddon)

Organization solitary

Treasure standard (+2 mithral full plate, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Devour Souls (Su) As a standard action once every 1d4 rounds, an Abaddon gigas can drain the souls from all living creatures within 60 feet that are not native to Abaddon. Such creatures must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save or gain 1d4 negative levels.



If even one creature is affected, the Abaddon gigas gains fast healing 15 for 15 rounds. If a creature dies from an Abaddon gigas's energy drain special attack, *energy drain* spell, or devour souls attack, the Abaddon gigas devours that creature's soul, gaining the benefits of *death knell* at a caster level equal to the dead creature's HD. Such a creature cannot be raised or resurrected by any means until the Abaddon gigas is slain. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Planar Empowerment (Su) While on the plane of Abaddon, an Abaddon gigas can cast each of the following as a spell-like ability once per day: *blasphemy* (DC 28), *earthquake* (DC 29), and *unholy aura* (DC 29). If the gigas ventures onto another plane, it can't use these abilities (though its other spell-like abilities remain available). The save DCs for these spell-like abilities are Charisma-based and include a +5 racial bonus.

Vile Weapon (Su) As a swift action, an Abaddon gigas can transform its weapon into a +3 *wounding adamantine greatsword*, a +5 *nullifying^{UE} adamantine spiked gauntlet*, a +5 *unholy adamantine quarterstaff*, a +3 *cruel^{UE} keen scythe*, or a +3 weapon of any other kind.

Abaddon gigas are megalithic extraplanar giants that roam Abaddon and embody the same vile energies that permeate that plane. Their cruel forms and unusual powers give them nefarious reputations, and few giant hunters—even among those who traverse the Great Beyond—would willingly seek out one of these monstrosities.

An Abaddon gigas stands over 50 feet tall and weighs 30 tons, not including the weight of its enormous armor.

ECOLOGY

The first known record of an Abaddon gigas dates back to Lamashtu's first struggles with the daemon race, when the Demon Queen captured and murdered two of the Four Horsemen. The putrid remains of the slain Horsemen oozed toward Abaddon's heart, where they merged with the body of a captured Thanatotic titan (and perhaps some of the energy of the fabled Oinodaemon) to create the first gigas on that plane. A hideous and gigantic being of size beyond reason and composed of some of the multiverse's most powerful souls, this mythic gigas soon tore itself into pieces while struggling against its uncompromising quaternary nature. In doing so, this first behemoth created countless "children," the beings known in present times as Abaddon gigas.

Abaddon gigas are asexual and incapable of reproducing; the Abaddon gigas in existence are all there ever will be. This fact is a small comfort, though, considering the terrible might of even a single Abaddon gigas. Worse still, whispered rumors among planar scholars say that, when an Abaddon gigas is slain, its power crawls back toward the heart of Abaddon, where the original mythic Abaddon gigas will one day reform once all its offspring have perished.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

While some Abaddon gigas serve the Four Horsemen—sensing in these demigods some missing piece of their original selves lost long ago—most instead wander the decrepit wastes of Abaddon in a never-ending search for something they cannot define. The daemons and divs believe that Abaddon gigas roam in search of souls to sate their enormous hunger for life. The rare interplanar scholars who travel to Abaddon claim that the gigas carry out nefarious deeds for fell beings such as olethrodaemons or akvans. Only Charon, the eldest of the current Four Horsemen, knows the true source of the Abaddon gigas' wanderlust: they yearn for the Oinodaemon. The Boatman keeps this secret to himself, and keeps a distant watch over the gigas of Abaddon, though it is unclear whether his surveillance is out of curiosity or some ulterior motive.

KNOWN GIGAS OF ABADDON

While all Abaddon gigas share a special level of infamy, several of these beings have gained reputations (and unusual powers) that extend beyond the fell lore surrounding their kind. Below are descriptions of two such legendary gigas.

Goros: Thought to be a twisted creation of Trelmarixian the Black, the gigas called Goros possesses even less control over its mental faculties than most Abaddon gigas. The monster resembles a towering naked man with dark red skin the texture of granite. The right half of its body has been mutilated beyond comprehension, revealing a mess of blue veins that intermingle with oozing alien organs and pulsing black guts.

Goros wears no armor (reducing its AC to 22 and its flat-footed AC to 19), and flies into a rage if reduced to half its hit points. While in a rage, Goros gains all the same benefits and penalties as a raging 20th-level barbarian (gaining a +8 morale bonus to Strength and Constitution, a –2 penalty to AC, and a +4 morale bonus on Will saves), though the gigas doesn't gain any rage powers.

Mephengitan: Mephengitan the Arch-Giant dwells among the icy wastes of Hoarspan, a borderland of polluted arctic waters and vicious icebergs where the fetid swamps of Plaguemere meet with Charon's Drowning Court. The gigas's eyes are the color of a clear winter sky, and on its frosty breath one can hear the whispers of a thousand souls whose lives were claimed by the Arch-Giant.

Mephengitan emits a 30-foot-radius aura of frigid cold. Any living creature that begins its turn in this area must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save or take 4d6 points of cold damage as its core body temperature plummets and its blood begins to freeze. Creatures that don't need water to live are immune to this effect. Creatures with the water subtype take twice as much as damage.

NIXUDAEMON

This four-armed fiend has blue-green skin covered in white scars. Its two upper arms end in long, barbed whips of calloused flesh.

NIXUDAEMON

CR 7



XP 3,200

NE Large outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)**hp** 95 (10d10+40); fast healing 2**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9**DR** 10/good or silver; **Immune** acid, daze, death effects, disease, exhaustion, fatigue, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stun; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +12 (1d8+3), 2 +1 *deadlymerciful vicious whip* arms +13 (1d8+4 plus grab)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with whip arms)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +13)Constant—*deathwatch*At Will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. only)3/day—*heroism*, *waves of fatigue* (DC 18)1/day—*temporary resurrection*^{UM}**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+4), damning scourge, dead tired, enslave (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 19, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +14 (+16 disarm, +16 trip, +18 grapple);**CMD** 25 (27 vs. disarm, 27 vs. trip)**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Bluff +16, Diplomacy +14, Heal +13, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +10**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Abaddon)**Organization** solitary, pair, or corps (3-5)**Treasure** standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Damning Scourge (Su) Each of a nixudaemon's upper arms functions as a Large +1 *deadly^{UE}merciful^{UE}vicious^{UE} whip*. Attacks with these whips count as natural attacks for the nixudaemon, have a reach of 20 feet, and don't provoke attacks of opportunity. The whips can't be disarmed or sundered, nor can they be dropped to allow the nixudaemon to avoid being tripped because of failing a combat maneuver check to trip. The nixudaemon decides before each attack roll whether to apply the weapon's *merciful* special ability, its *vicious* special ability, both, or neither.

Dead Tired (Su) A nixudaemon's attacks drain every bit of vitality from its victims when they die. Raising a creature killed by a nixudaemon (via *raise dead* or another effect that restores life) requires a successful DC 20 caster level check. The restored creature gains the exhausted condition, regardless of the spell used to raise it. The DC of this caster level check is Charisma-based, and includes a +2 racial bonus. A nixudaemon can use its *temporary resurrection* spell-like ability without attempting this check, even if another nixudaemon killed the subject.

Enslave (Su) If a nixudaemon successfully uses its grab ability to grapple a foe with its whip attack, its tendril wraps around the victim's throat. The daemon can forgo its constrict damage and instead attempt to dominate the subject, as the spell *dominate monster* (Will DC 18 negates). A creature dominated by a nixudaemon is immune to fatigue, exhaustion, and pain effects. At the beginning of its turn, a dominated slave automatically receives a new saving throw to end the effect. The nixudaemon can dominate only one creature at a time per whip arm it possesses (typically two). The save DC for this ability is Charisma-based.

Nixudaemons, or "toil daemons," epitomize death by exploitation and extreme exertion. These fiends savor the moment when a desperate scholar collapses while putting in long, unappreciated hours, or when a galley slave finally succumbs to the lash. They drive burdened subjects before them to great effect, even resurrecting fallen servants for a brief time to complete vital tasks. Their skill for squeezing the last bit of energy from those under their supervision makes them invaluable to slavers, who pay the daemons in coin, information, and souls for their aid.

Nixudaemons exemplify the cruelty and disdain all daemonkind display toward the living. They lash out at their subjects, whipping the life out of them slowly. If it serves the daemon's purposes, or if time allows for another game of torture, a nixudaemon will revive its subject for another day. Typically, a nixudaemon uses this ability to incite a band of slaves to work harder; it dominates the weakest members of the workers to temporarily bolster them, then saps their last ounce of strength before discarding them as spent husks.

Most nixudaemons stand 10 feet tall and weigh 600 pounds. Sages report that the fiends grow larger and stronger as they age, absorbing the weariness of their victims over centuries. The greatest toil daemons are said to tower over their younger cousins, growing additional whip-arms and learning powerful spells that exhaust or even kill those who dare offend them.

ECOLOGY

Nixudaemons roam the shores of the Styx. The daemons use their impressive reach to press new souls into service as soon as the doomed arrive on Abaddon, throwing the

ill-fated souls into enormous slave pens and hauling them to the realms of wealthy customers. Nixudaemons frequently visit the Material Plane, where greedy despots and desperate commandants pay high prices to the daemons in exchange for providing additional labor.

Rituals designed to call nixudaemons must be conducted while an intelligent, mortal creature labors physically, and the daemon's preferred sacrifice is working that creature to death as part of the ritual. One ancient story alleges that a mighty hero among an oppressed people worked for weeks, dragging great stone blocks to build a grand ziggurat. When he finally fell, the story claims, his death summoned a nixudaemon over 30 feet tall that lashed out with a dozen whips.

Nixudaemons despise laziness in both mortals and outsiders. They work their subjects past the point of exhaustion or death as suits their current needs. The nixudaemons view other creatures as weak or prone to sloth, challenging even other daemons they perceive as less than diligent.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Nixudaemons occupy the role of merchants in daemon society. They buy and sell the hunted, as Abaddon petitioners are known, when not outright capturing or stealing them. Powerful mortal slavers sometimes increase the value of their wares by hiring a summoned nixudaemon to drive slaves to maximum efficiency, but such arrangements still benefit Abaddon in the end. While summoned to the material world, nixudaemons obtain multiple forms of currency for the Four Horsemen's coffers. They engage in a dark form of proselytization, beating those who grow weary in their work and spreading the belief among the oppressed that there is no hope of recognition or rest. More discerning nixudaemons assail the mortal merchant classes, driving entire firms to adopt competitive climates until the stress of achievement reveals itself in the form of failing health, or pushing lone inventors to complete magical theories with their dying breaths. Because soft, wealthy mortals rarely succumb to the temptation to work themselves to death, some nixudaemons have been known to engineer the sale of wealthy scions into slavery, as their nightly sobbing and rapidly developing sores are music to the toil daemons' ears.

Nixudaemons understand the value of teamwork and work tirelessly together to great effect. In service to mortals and greater daemons, they have driven hordes

of slaves to erect legendary monuments. They revel in the misery they cause, and the crack of their whips against backs and around necks.

While their industrious natures and affinities for mortal business make them useful to each of the Four Horsemen, most of nixudaemons serve Szuriel, Trelmarixian, and the daemononic harbingers that scheme below them. The Horseman of War uses them as morale officers—a most effective paradox during the heat of battle. She also maintains special units of indentured prisoners under nixudaemon care, always breaking her promise to send her weary combatants home after a costly battle. The Horseman of Famine offers mere crumbs for sustenance to his legions of soldiers and slaves. He takes delight in using pet nixudaemons to drive his legions past their limits, accelerating their spiritual and physical starvation.



STORM AUROCHS

Lighting crackles in the eyes of this enormous bull, whose body seems composed of dark storm clouds.

STORM AUROCHS

CR 9



XP 6,400

CN Huge magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural, -2 size)

hp 126 (12d10+60)

Fort +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

DR 5/magic; **Immune** electricity, sonic; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee gore +20 (2d8+15)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks powerful charge (gore, 4d8+30 plus 3d6 electricity), stampede, storming charge, trample (3d8+15 plus 3d6 sonic, DC 26)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +11)
Constant—*air walk*

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 3, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +24 (+26 bull rush); **CMD** 37 (39 vs. bull rush, 41 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Power Attack, Wind Stance

Skills Perception +21

Languages Auran (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment any sky

Organization solitary, pair, or herd (3-30)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Stampede (Ex) A stampede occurs if three or more storm aurochs make a trample attack while remaining adjacent to each other. While stampeding, storm aurochs can trample foes of their size or smaller, and the trample's save DC increases by 2.

Storming Charge (Su) A storm aurochs steps grow thunderous as it charges toward its enemies. A storm aurochs' powerful charge deals an additional 3d6 points of electricity damage, and its trample deals an additional 3d6 points of sonic damage, which are already included in the above statistics. If the storm aurochs is outdoors and in a stormy area—one featuring a rain shower, clouds and wind, hot and cloudy conditions, or even a tornado (including a whirlwind formed by a djinni or an air elemental of at least Large size)—its powerful charge and trample instead deal 3d10 points of electricity or sonic damage respectively, rather than 3d6 points of damage.

Stampeding across the sky in booming herds, storm aurochs resemble nothing so much as vast and powerful thunderstorms bearing down across Golarion. Storm and cloud giants value these magnificent beasts not only for their meat and hides, but also as symbols of mystic power and divine strength. Though ostensibly domesticated centuries ago by storm giants, storm aurochs remain among the most fearsome and dangerous of the creatures that pass through Golarion's skies.

A storm aurochs is roughly twice the size of a normal aurochs, growing up to 20 feet long and standing 15 feet tall at the shoulder. Storm aurochs weigh on average anywhere from 5 to 7 tons, with females being noticeably smaller and slimmer than males. Both males and females bear prodigious horns atop their heads that crackle with electrical energy, though the female's horns are slightly smaller.



ECOLOGY

Storm aurochs behave much as their more mundane cousins do. They are gregarious, herbivorous creatures that travel in herds of up to several dozen extended family members. These untamed herds are nomadic, and their migratory patterns mirror Golarion's natural weather patterns. Herds are fiercely territorial, with weather fronts forming the natural boundary between two herds' territories. Territorial disputes are common, though rarely lethal, and are often accompanied by terrific natural and magical storms.

In addition to more traditional fodder, storm aurochs also graze on clouds. It is unclear whether or not this provides them any real nourishment, and it may be that they do so purely out of enjoyment. This can be a blessing and a curse for areas frequented by herds of storm aurochs; these areas soon become cloudless and sunny. Overgrazing can prevent much needed rain from reaching the ground, eventually leading to periods of drought and famine for those living nearby. For this reason, farmers often see herds of storm aurochs as pests. Aside from the dangers inherent in facing a storm aurochs, slaying one often comes with the added danger of drawing the ire of its storm giant owner, and so most communities prefer to relocate an aurochs herd as gently as possible, or perhaps even negotiate with the owner, rather than trying to slay the aurochs.

Domesticated storm aurochs tolerate the presence and activities of storm or cloud giants with little hostility. This doesn't always hold for other races, and how a storm aurochs reacts to the presence of an adventuring party often depends on the temperament of the individual aurochs and the circumstances of the meeting. Storm aurochs are canny enough to recognize weapons, however, and usually respond to the approach of armed individuals of any species with extreme aggression.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Storm aurochs are most commonly found in the possession of storm giants, where the animals spend their days grazing on the giants' expansive coastal estates. Storm giants keep aurochs for their meat, their hides, and their ability to influence the weather. The giants rarely use the creatures as beasts of burden, as unlike normal domesticated cattle or oxen, storm aurochs do not tolerate being placed in a yoke. A storm giant can use this fact to test the strength or patience of members of lesser races who come seeking the giant's aid. The giant first requires the petitioner to harness the giant's bull and plow his field. If the appellant accomplishes this task, either through cunning or brute strength, the giant is willing to hear her request. Those who give up the task or harm the aurochs in the effort, are banished from the giant's presence or slain outright.

Cloud giants also keep herds of storm aurochs, though less commonly than storm giants. Cloud giants particularly favor the taste of storm aurochs meat, which they serve at feasts and gatherings of great importance, or to honor particularly noteworthy guests. Cloud giants also make use of storm aurochs in one of their more idiosyncratic pastimes; bull-leaping. Young cloud giants, newly come of age, take turns leaping over a charging storm aurochs, sometimes even boosting themselves off the auroch's horns to gain extra height and momentum. Leapers perform feats of acrobatics as they pass over the bull, each seeking to impress her fellows with her daring and prowess. Bull-leaping has fallen out of favor among younger cloud giants, who increasingly turn their attentions toward more philosophical pursuits, but it's still commonly practiced by more traditional, rural cloud giant families.

Storm aurochs hold a deep spiritual significance for both storm and cloud giants. Cloud giants believe that the aurochs are gifts from Ioz'om, their version of Gozreh in his sky-father aspect, as a reward for their dutiful worship and piety. Storm giants also connect storm aurochs to Gozreh, through their sky-father incarnation, Hyjarth. Though most believe much as the cloud giants do, a few take their worship of the storm aurochs further. They claim that Hyjarth sacrificed the first storm aurochs to create the world itself, building the land from its bones and filling the seas with its blood. These storm giants gather in mystery cults across Golarion to reenact this ritual sacrifice, slaying a captive storm aurochs in order to honor Hyjarth and ensure that their lands and seas remain fruitful.

SKYSHAPING STAMPEDE

When storm aurochs gather in one place, they can have a profound impact on the weather. Such a gathering is known as a skyshaping stampede.

Whenever three storm aurochs are within 10 feet of one another, all three of them can work together to use any of the following spell-like abilities: *control weather*, *control winds* (DC 16), *fog cloud*, *sirocco*^{APG} (DC 17), or *sleet storm*.

To take part in a skyshaping stampede, all three storm aurochs must take a full-round action to move through the area to be affected, usually by circling the spell's point of origin or tracing the path they desire winds to take. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal. These spell-like abilities function at CL 12th (or at a caster level equal to the Hit Dice of the most powerful aurochs involved). The save DCs are Charisma-based, and function as if the herd has a Charisma score of 12, unless one of the aurochs has a higher Charisma score, in which case the spell-like ability DCs are adjusted by that aurochs's Charisma modifier.

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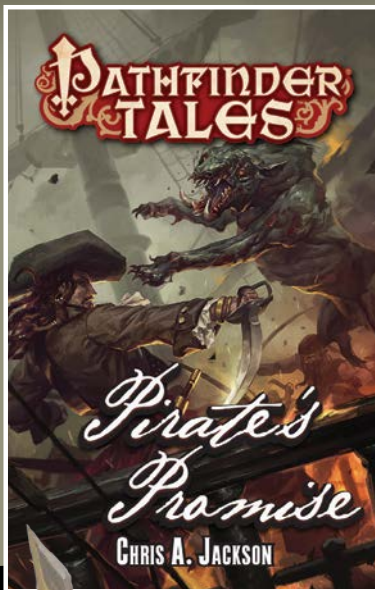
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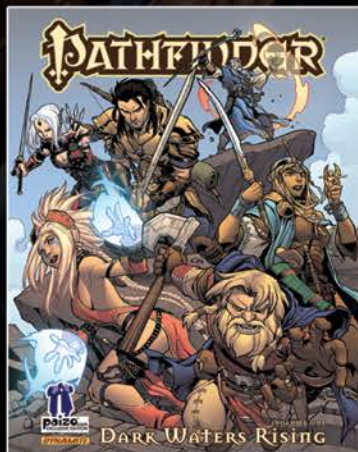


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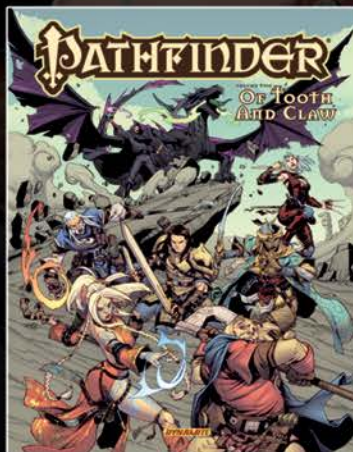
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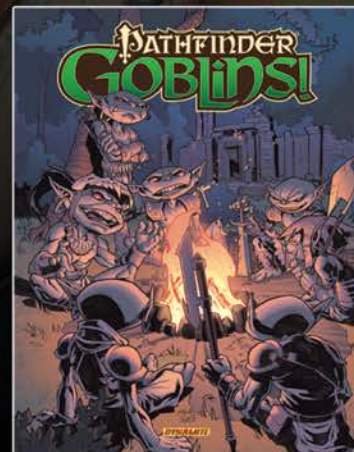
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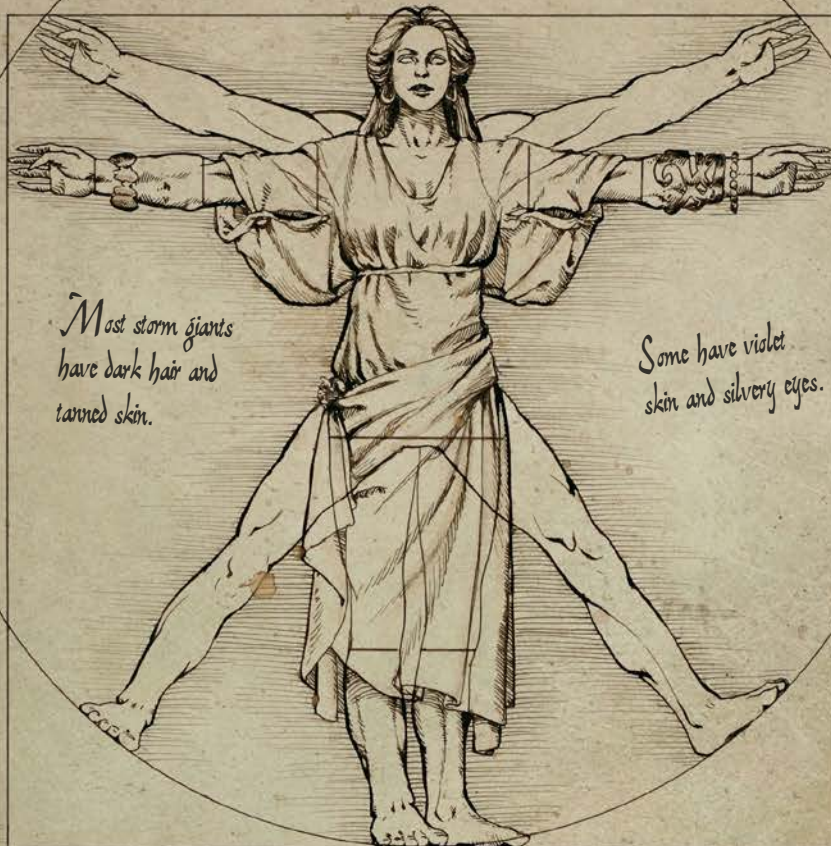
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of the storm and sea.*



*Most storm giants
have dark hair and
tanned skin.*

*Some have violet
skin and silvery eyes.*

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Storm Giants

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