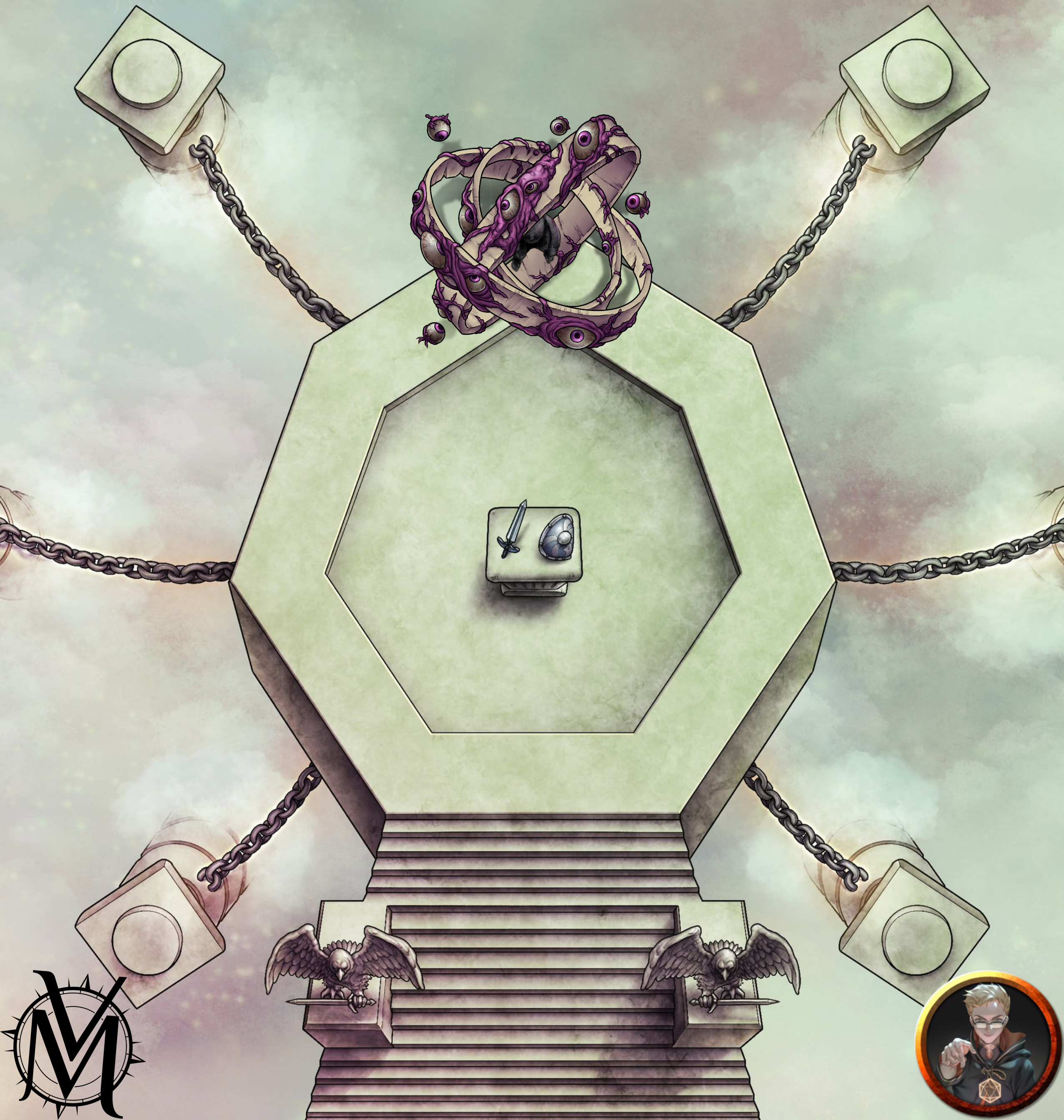


The Shattered Shrine

An Angelic Encounter for 7th-8th level

From NevernotDM and Venatus Maps



THE SHATTERED SHRINE

WRITTEN BY NEVERNOTDM

Encounter Level: 7th-9th

Encounter Type: Combat, Exploration

Encounter Overview: The party explores a shrine dedicated to dead angel, but a corrupted ophanim lies in wait to exact its vengeance on trespassers.

Encounter Location: An abandoned shrine atop a lonely mountain

BACKGROUND

Over a thousand years ago, a powerful seraph, Augustus, was killed by an ancient red shadow dragon, Alagoth. Augustus's death threw the heavens into turmoil and his angelic siblings martialled their forces for battle against Alagoth. While seraphs eventually defeated Alagoth, the heavenly legions were greatly weakened and eventually fractured, weakening angelic influence in the martial realm. Many angels from Augustus's former court abandoned the heavenly legions and scattered across the planes. One such angel, an **ophanim** named Myradin, took Augustus's shield, *Beacon*, and his sword, the *Falling Star*, and built a great shrine to Augustus.

At first, many mortals traveled to pay their respects to the great seraph. But as the memory of the great angel faded, so did his believers. The shrine has fallen into disrepair and Myradin has become corrupted by grief and despair. The **ophanim** no longer believes mortals are worthy to gaze upon the vestiges of its former master. It destroyed most of its temple and raised the remnants above the clouds and out of the reach of most mortals.

ENCOUNTER HOOKS

While traveling through the mountains or exploring ancient sites, the party could find their way to the entrance of the Shattered Shrine. Other plot hooks are provided below.

TOMB RAIDERS

The party is hired to retrieve *Beacon* and the *Falling Star* by a religious order, museum, or noble collector of angelic artifacts. They are offered 1000 gp to investigate the tomb and bring back the items.

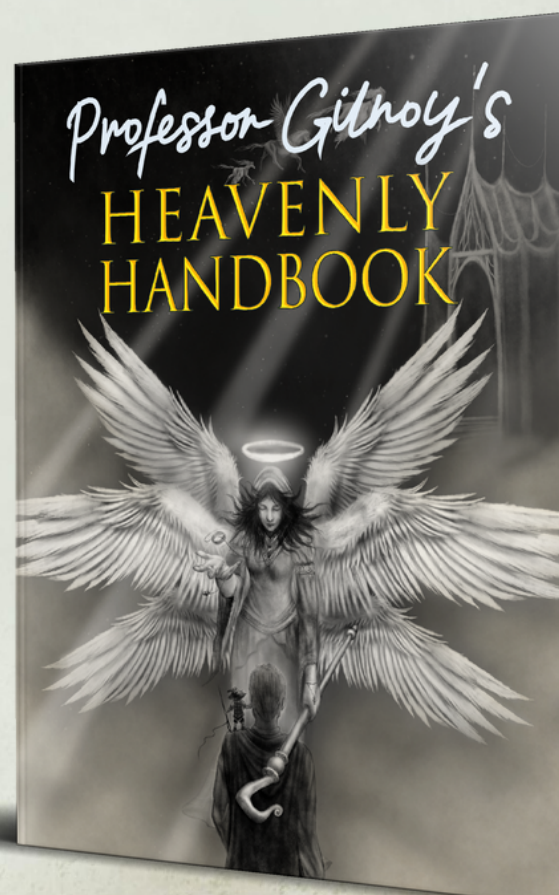
DREAMS OF JUSTICE

While Augustus might be dead, portions of his spirit still lingers. A cleric, paladin, or other character who embodies Augustus's ideals of justice could receive visions or dreams calling them to the Shattered Shrine.

Alternatively, warlock patrons might entreat their pact bearers to retrieve the sword and shield of the legendary Seraph for the patrons' own, nefarious ends.

HEAVEN'S FOLD

While researching legends of ancient celestials, angelic weapons, or forgotten holy sites, one of the party members finds an old worn tome: Heaven's Fold. This ancient book, once full of golden pigment and beautiful images, has faded but includes the account of a former priest who abandoned the Shattered Shrine because its angelic guardian was going insane. The priest describes two powerful magic items, a shield that summons a beacon of holy light and a sword made of meteorite metal, as well as the location of the shrine.



THE SHRINE

The Shattered Shrine is located at the top of an ancient peak shrouded by clouds. Feel free to add in random encounters if your party is spoiling for a fight as they travel up the mountain.

Once your party reaches the top of the mountain, read:

Light trickles in through the dense, gray clouds as you push yourselves up the final steps of the old, faded trail. You see the ruins of an old grand temple. A great tree has begun to grow into the side of the weather-worn floor. The walls have been shattered and broken, as if they were pulled from their foundations and carried away, leaving only the floor behind.

The only piece of splendor that remains is a great marble statue of an owl. The statue's wings are spread out, as if it could take flight at any moment.

Any player can recall that the owl was the symbol of an ancient seraph, Augustus, with a DC 13 Intelligence (History or Religion) check. If the players know the shrine was once dedicated to Augustus, you can give any information about the seraph from the Background section as you deem appropriate.

The grand owl statue is a stone golem with a flying speed of 50 feet, an Intelligence of 14 (+2), and speaks Common and Celestial. The statue was embedded with a piece of angelic magic in order to protect the Shattered Shrine and test believers. It can fly the characters to Myradin's lair in the clouds if they pass one of its two trials.

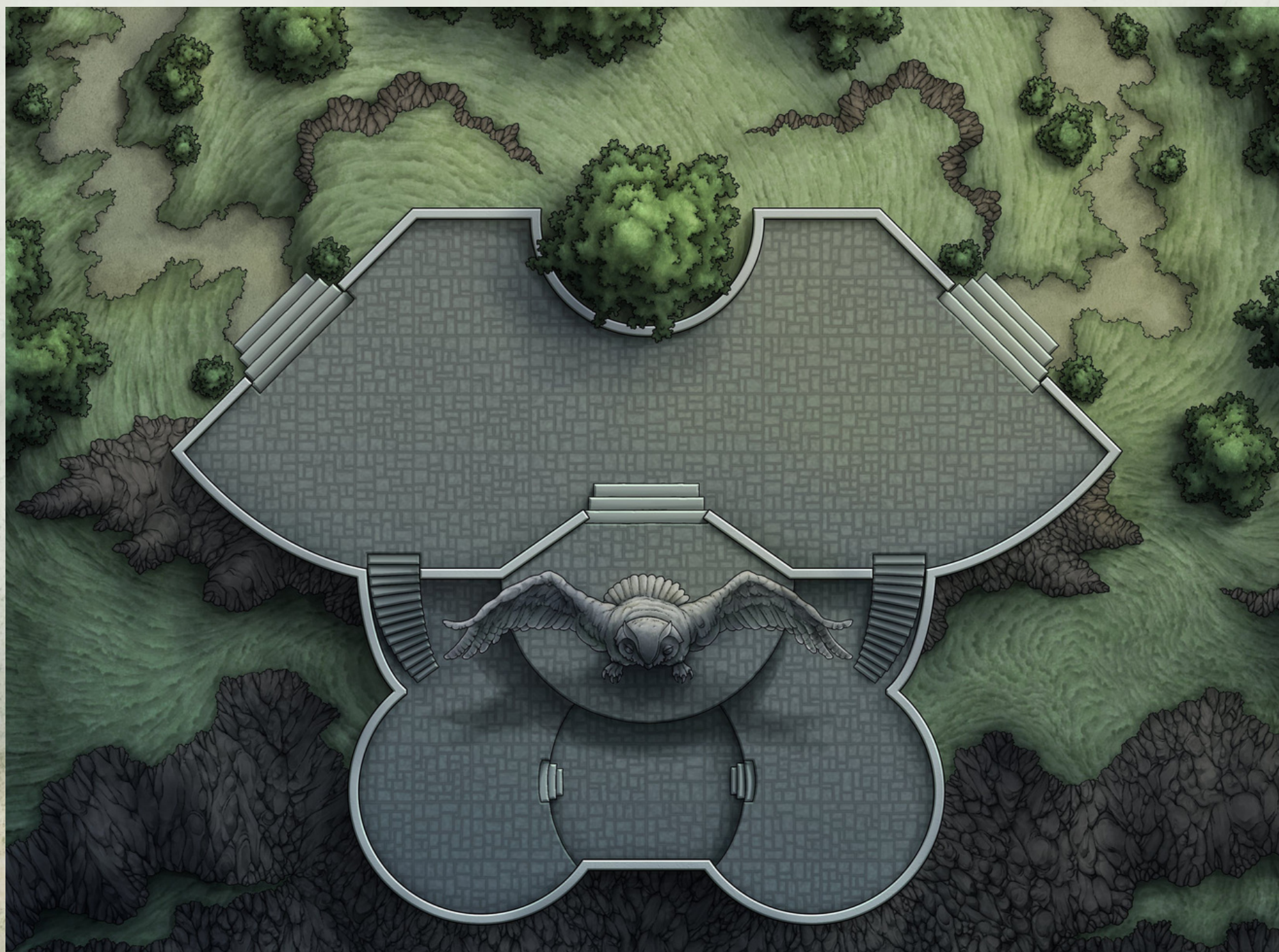
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Whenever one of the players walks onto the raised dais in front of the statue, read the following:

The instant you walk up the cracked stairs, the great stone owl's eyes begin to glow with radiant energy. Dust and debris burst from the statue as it flexes its wings.

It looks down at you and speaks in a loud, booming voice: "Those who desire to gaze among the vestiges of Augustus must prove themselves worthy. Will you prove yourself by swords or words?"

The golem will give the party members time to decide which test they will choose. It will not answer any questions about what either test entails but will let the party leave if they decide not to take on the challenge. If the party members destroy the golem, a golden orb at its heart allows them to teleport to the entrance of Myradin's lair from the shrine and vice-versa.



THE TEST OF SWORDS

If the party decides to take the test of swords, 3 (1d4 + 1) ghostly legion angels appear. Roll Initiative. The **legion angels** are spirits that disappear after one minute or if they are reduced to 0 hit points.

When the legion angels are defeated, the owl golem will take the party to Myradin's lair in the clouds.

THE TEST OF WORDS

If the party decides to take the test of the words, choose one character at random and then read the following:

The statue stares down at you with its great glowing eyes and says, "Your best friend lies dying before you and only you can save them. But to bring them back, two random souls must be sacrificed. You cannot give up your own soul, nor can you control the two whose souls will be exchanged. Why do you or do you not bring your friend back?"

The owl golem does not have a specific answer in mind. The goal of this test is to force the characters to decide what justice means to them. Is it just because most people in the world are bad, so it is more likely than not a bad person would die? Is it just because you are guaranteed to save one life? The owl golem cares more about the why than the answer. As long as the characters are not caught lying to the owl golem, it will take them to Myradin's lair.

DM's Note: The test of words is designed not to be a test in the traditional sense, but as a role playing exercise for the players. Encourage the players to think in the minds of characters and what their characters believe would be just.

MYRADIN'S LAIR

If the players pass either of the stone owl's tests, the owl will let the party climb atop its back and fly or lead them through the clouds to Myradin's lair. Read the following:

The wind roars through your ears as you ascend through the gradient of gray clouds and emerge high atop the mountain peak. In the distance, you can see the shattered remains of the shrine. Columns that once held up the second floor of the shrine float in the air.

The stone owl lands at the bottom of a set of cracked, broken stairs leading up to a raised platform.

The stone owl cannot help the players defeat Myradin, but will warn them the angel has gone bad from its isolation. When the players ascend the stairs, read the following:

You stand almost a thousand feet above the remains of the shrine below. The air is thin and cold. In the center of the marble platform is a gilded altar. A brilliant silver sword and golden shield rest atop it.

The rustling of the wind has faded, leaving you all in eerie silence.

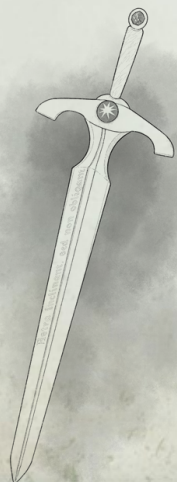
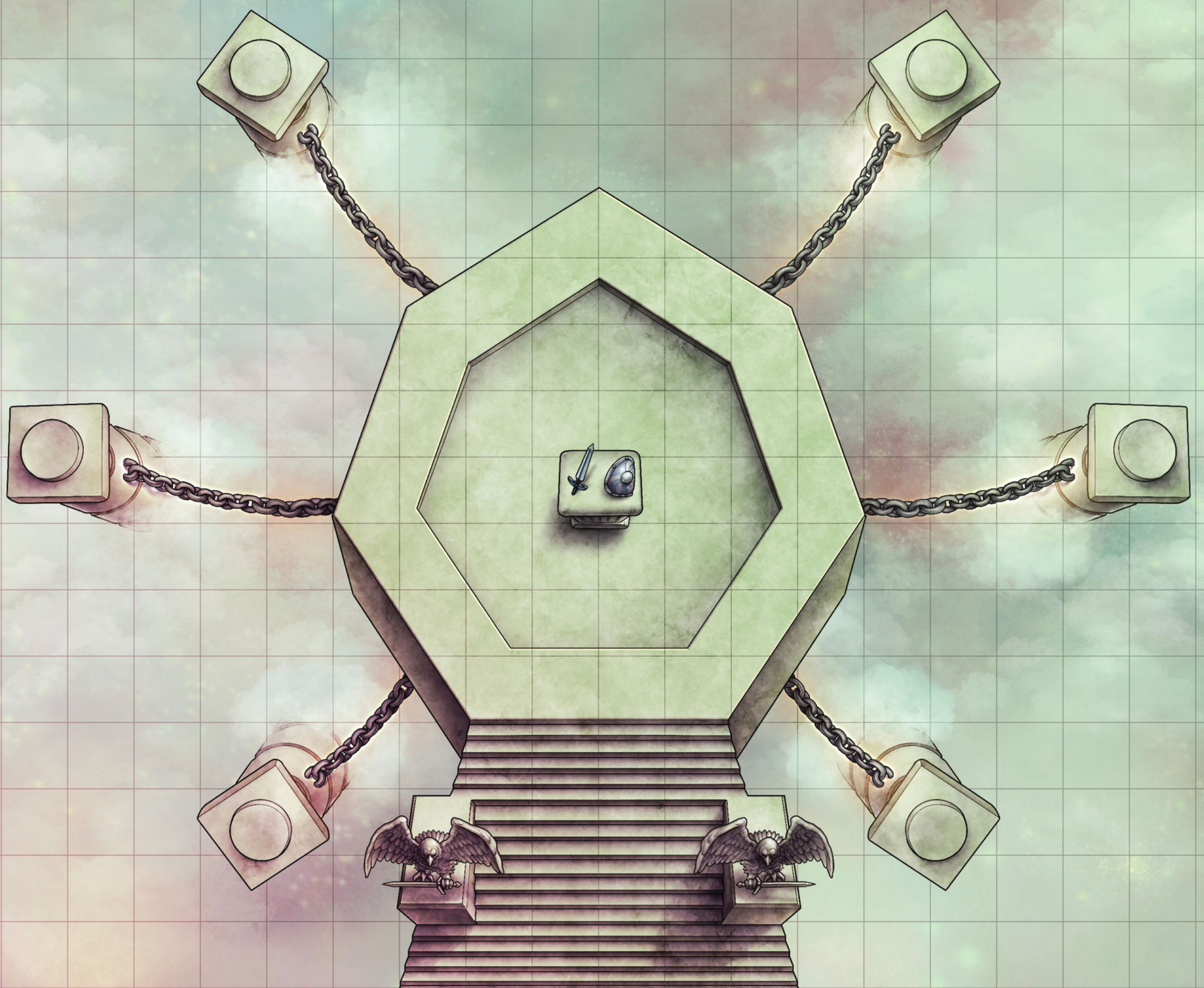
When the sword and shield are disturbed, Myradin appears in a flash of sickly purple light. Each creature that can see Myradin must make a saving throw against its Ring of Eyes.

Roll Initiative.

Myradin has been driven mad by grief. Its once golden rings are tarnished and a sickly purple growth has covered many of its eyes. Myradin's goal is to protect its former master's sword and shield at all costs. It will not pursue the players beyond the Shattered Shrine, but will not hesitate to kill the characters.

If the characters decide to spare Myradin or try to cure it, instead of killing it, the spirit of the Augustus grants them each a *Boon of Restoration* and Myradin is teleported to the celestial realm.





OUTCOMES

Some possible outcomes are:

- The players retrieve Beacon and the Falling Star. They can keep the items or if they were hired to retrieve them, bring them to their patron.
- The players spare Mydrain who is teleported by the spirit of Augustus to the celestial realm. They could encounter the ophanim, who would be grateful to players for helping free him from his endless watch.

REWARDS

- The party receives *Beacon* and the *Falling Star*, detailed below.
- The party receives a *Boon of Restoration* for sparing Myradin.
- If using XP, reward the players for a difficult encounter.

MAGIC ITEMS

BEACON

Armor (shield), rare (requires attunement)

This silver shield, emblazoned with the symbol of a lighthouse, is a powerful artifact once owned by the seraph, Augustus. The shield has 4 charges for the following properties. The shield regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn.

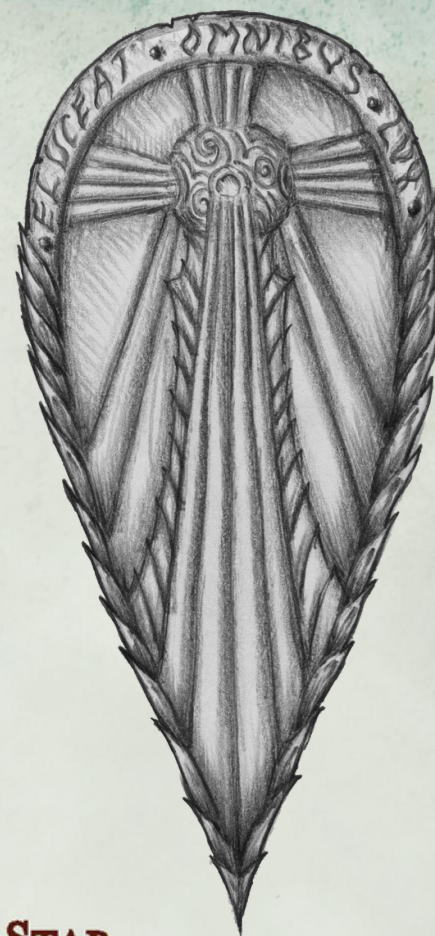
Signal Flare. As an action while you hold the shield, you can expend 1 of its charges and aim Beacon up to the sky, unleashing a beam of brilliant golden light in a line that is 500 feet long and 5 feet wide. The beam can be seen from up to 5 miles away. You can use your action on subsequent turns to maintain the beam, which lasts up to 1 minute. The beam ends early if you use your action to do anything else, you leave your space, or you are knocked prone.

Blinding Beam. While you hold the shield, you can expend 2 of its charges as a bonus action to send a targeted beam of light towards a creature that you can see within 60 feet of you. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 radiant damage and becomes blinded for 1 minute. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't blinded. The blinded target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Light of the Dawn. While you hold the shield, you can use your action to raise it aloft and expend 3 of its charges to release a burst of light in a 30-foot-radius around you that spreads around corners. Each allied creature within the area that can see the light gains 10 temporary hit points.

Additionally, if any of this area overlaps with an area of darkness created by a spell or magical effect, that spell or magical effect is suppressed for 1 hour.

“May this shield shine as brightly as your soul.” — Seraph Aurelia to her new Dawn Knight



THE FALLING STAR

Weapon (any sword), rare (requires attunement)

This sword made of meteorite metal with a silver sigil of a nine pointed star in its handle was originally created by a seraph. You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Additionally, the sword has 3 charges for the following properties. The sword regains 1d2 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn.

Comet Dash. Whenever you take the Dash action while holding the sword, you can expend 1 of its charges to gain the following benefits until the end of the current turn:

- Opportunity attacks are made against you with disadvantage.
- You can use a bonus action to make a weapon attack with the sword.
- Whenever you hit a creature with an attack made with the sword, it glows with starlight and deals an extra 1d8 radiant damage to the target.

Meteor Strike. Whenever you would take falling damage while holding the sword, you can expend 2 of its charges to smash into the ground with the strength of a shooting star, releasing a shockwave of radiant energy in a 15-foot-radius around you. Each creature caught in the area must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. Roll a number of d6s equal to your proficiency bonus. On a failure, a creature takes radiant damage equal to the result and if it's Large or smaller, it's knocked prone. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and is not knocked prone. Additionally, your falling damage is then reduced by an amount equal to the result and you can land on your feet.

“The soldier leaped from their pegasus’s back, hurtling towards the ground like a shooting star. On impact, there was a pulse of radiant light, and all that remained was the soldier, standing tall before the smoking remains of a dozen demons.” — Excerpt from *Handbook of Heroes* by Professor Gilroy.



THRONES

“A hundred eyes stared into my depths of soul, judging if I was worthy to live. I fell to my knees and prayed to any god who would listen... and the Ophanim passed me by.”

– Battle of Heaven’s Fall, survivor’s account

Thrones are powerful angels that resemble a series of concentric spinning wheels. Their forms are both beautiful and terrible, driving those who look upon them blind, insane, or both.

Angels of this choir often serve as the eyes and bodyguards of cherubim or seraphs. Each throne is bound to another, greater angel, and often serve as their master’s personal representatives when overseeing lesser angels. When a seraph or cherubim wants reliable information about the mortal realm, they will send their thrones to investigate and report back to them. Thrones who have lost connection to their master can go mad, attempting to fulfill their final orders over and over, for all eternity.

Loyalty Above All. Thrones are incredibly loyal to their angelic masters, and the betrayal of a throne is a rare and terrible tragedy. However, thrones can and generally will act of their own accord, doing anything they believe to be in their master’s best interest, so long as it does not disobey a direct order. Thrones will often compete amongst themselves for their master’s favor, usually through gifts such as magic items, important information, and even mortal champions. That was how I met the Seraph Aurelia, but that, dear reader, is a story for another time.

Creation. Thrones are forged by seraphs using pure metal and liquid starlight. Delicate runes and hieroglyphics are carved into the metal rings. Orphaim are animated using a piece of dead angel’s soul, while Incendis are given life by placing a piece of living fire, such as from a phoenix or fire elemental in the center of the rings. While I’ve never met a Throne created by mortals, if one had the proper materials and arcane knowledge, I believe it would be possible, theoretically at least.

TACTICS

- **Enlarge.** Myradin will use its Expanding Rings to end a fight against weaker opponents or to push the characters off the ledge and into a thousand foot drop.
- **Front and Center.** Myradin will position itself so they are in view of as many creatures as possible, but above the ground so it is not vulnerable to melee attacks.
- **No Mercy.** Myradin has gone insane from centuries of isolation and has been corrupted by dark magic. They will not listen to reason.



OPHANIM

Large Celestial, Typically Lawful Good

Armor Class 18 (16 while Huge)

Hit Points 110 (17d10 + 17)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2 (-4) | 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 20 (+5) | 17 (+3) |

Saving Throws Con +4

Skills Insight +11, Intimidation +9, Perception +11

Damage Immunities psychic, radiant

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, petrified

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages all, telepathy 180 ft.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Heavenly Vision. The ophanim can’t be surprised, provided it isn’t blinded or incapacitated.

Rings of Eyes. The ophanim’s body is made of swirling golden rings covered with glowing eyes. Provided that the ophanim isn’t blinded or incapacitated, whenever a non-celestial creature starts its turn within 60 feet of the ophanim and can see the ophanim, the ophanim can magically force it to make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw.

On a failed save, the creature takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage and is frightened of the ophanim until the beginning of its next turn.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can’t see the ophanim until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the ophanim in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ophanim makes two Psionic Blast, or three if it’s under the effects of its Expanding Rings trait, and it uses Psionic Whirlwind.

Psionic Blast. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6) psychic damage plus 10 (2d6) radiant damage. If the target is frightened of the ophanim, it has advantage on this attack roll.

Psionic Whirlwind. If the ophanim has not moved yet this turn, its rings begin spinning rapidly, unleashing a wave of psychic malaise in a 120-foot-radius around it. Each hostile creature caught in the area that can see the ophanim must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the target’s speed is halved and whenever it makes an attack roll, it must roll a d6 and subtract the number rolled from its attack roll. These effects last until the start of the ophanim’s next turn. Once this ophanim has used this trait, its speed becomes 0 until the end of the current turn.

Expanding Rings (1/Day). The ophanim’s body expands as its platinum rings spread further from its center. Its size increases to Huge, then each creature within 10 feet of it must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage plus 14 (4d6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Regardless, each affected creature is pushed 5 feet away from the ophanim. Until the transformation ends, the ophanim suffers a -2 penalty to AC.

The transformation lasts for one minute, or until the ophanim uses an action on a subsequent turn to end its effects early.

Divine Messenger (1/Day). The ophanim is typically bound to another, more powerful celestial. If the ophanim is bound, it can use its action to communicate telepathically with the creature as if casting the sending spell. The ophanim can only have one celestial bound this way.

LEGION ANGEL TACTICS

- **Coordination.** Legion angels work together. They surround their targets, create defensive positions, and stick in groups of at least three.
- **Heroic Sacrifice.** Legion angels are not afraid to sacrifice themselves for the good of their squadron, or to protect their captains or archangels.
- **Fly Together.** Legion angels avoid fighting on the ground, as they know that they are vulnerable to being surrounded and prevented from retreating.

CREDITS

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LEGION ANGEL

Medium Celestial (Angel), Typically Any Good Alignment

Armor Class 17 (studded leather armor, shield; 19 with Heavenly Phalanx)

Hit Points 37 (5d8 + 15)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) |

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Celestial

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Angelic Weapons. The angel's weapon attacks are magical. When the angel hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 4 (1d8) radiant damage (included in the attack).

Heavenly Phalanx. As long as the angel is within 5 feet of another Angel and that creature isn't incapacitated, the angel gets a +2 bonus to AC.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The angel makes two weapon attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) if used with two hands, plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.

Spellcasting. The legion angel casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12):

At will: light, thaumaturgy, detect evil and good



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