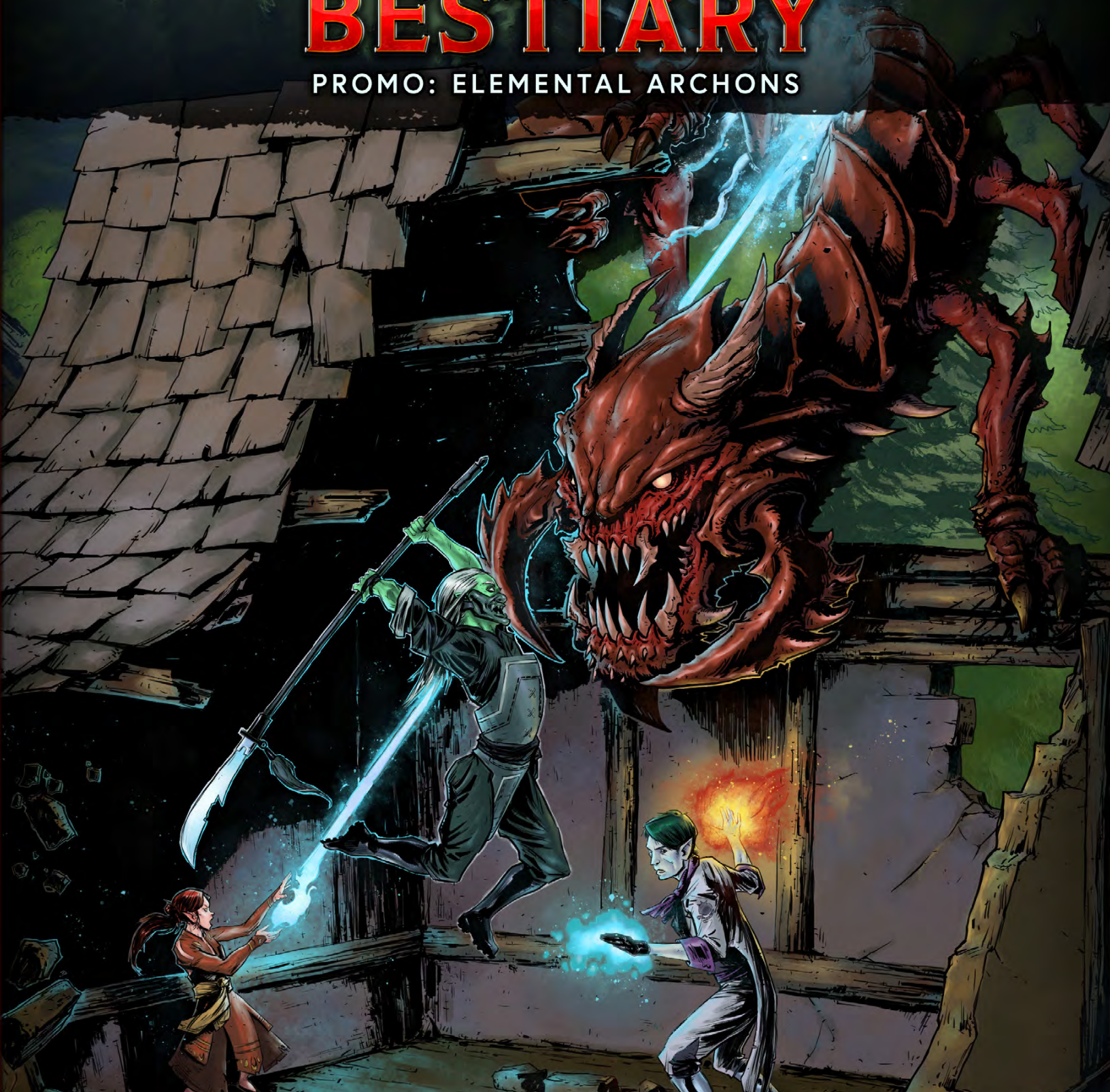


Total Party Kill

BESTIARY

PROMO: ELEMENTAL ARCHONS



PRODUCED BY
2CGaming

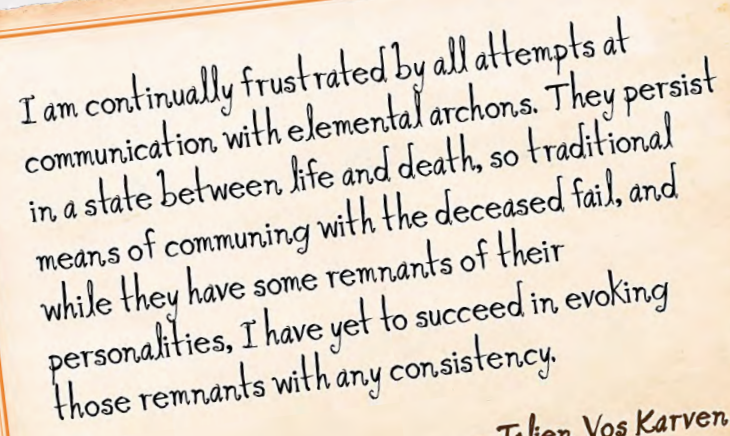
5E COMPATIBLE

AMBROSE III

Elemental Archons

Elemental archons are extraordinary beings that arise when the soul of a powerful mortal travels to one of the elemental planes by accident, lack of faith, or deed of foe who thinks doing so is a fate worse than death. Most souls sent to the elemental planes are lost, destroyed, or otherwise suffer the aforementioned fate worse than death, but when a mortal of great ability passes to these planes, they become its master, at least for a time.

The soul wraps itself in the elements, animating them under its control. This exertion of will is poorly received by the plane, and while the plane is hardly sentient, it has a natural reaction to authority: a negative one. The soul is expelled, landing on another plane anywhere in existence as an elemental archon. What each archon does when it arrives depends on the soul that controls it: some seek battle as a means to die and travel to the proper afterlife, others pursue the same agenda as in life and track down old foes, while some simply roam the world, lost and confused.



I am continually frustrated by all attempts at communication with elemental archons. They persist in a state between life and death, so traditional means of communing with the deceased fail, and while they have some remnants of their personalities, I have yet to succeed in evoking those remnants with any consistency.

- Talien Vos Karven

FIRE ARCHONS

Fire archons have two possible alignments: chaotic good or chaotic evil, representing the diverse set of souls that form them. Fire archons rarely speak, but should they see someone pursuing a course of action they agree with, they may support them. Likewise, if they see a course of action they disapprove of, they will intervene. Of course, some of them are just warriors who love to fight and will take any opportunity to raise their pitchfork in battle. The tactics of each fire archon are slightly different. There are those that are aggressive and not afraid to detonate themselves in glorious battle, those that are cautious and quick to retreat if they are approaching critical mass, and a few are just interested in sharing their poetry and song and don't care for fighting at all.

Fire Archon

The fire archon shares little in common with the common fire elemental beyond its incendiary composition. It is armored with layers of igneous rock and wields a pitchfork made of the same, making it much more of a bruiser than the flighty fire elemental, but make no mistake – this archon is fleet of foot. Even my good friend Slate had trouble staying ahead of one.

In my experience, fire archons coalesce from the souls of violent warriors and the very passionate. If you meet one, it's as likely to be the remnants of a bloodthirsty warlord as it is to be a poet who over-drank of wine and courted the wrong princess.

– *Talien Vos Karven*

Classification: soldier

Favors: high saves (DEX), range

Foils: fire damage, low saves (DEX), melee, non-magical weapons, poison damage, rogues

DC INFORMATION

18 Archons are powerful elementals with potent abilities and powerful weapons. Fire archons, in particular, possess rudimentary sentience but are challenging to communicate with. Warm-blooded creatures cannot hide from them.

22 Fire archons are born of passionate souls and bloodthirsty warriors. They channel fire through their pitchfork, ensnaring their foes in battle, and can project a beam of intense heat that burns away any defenses.

27 Like their lesser cousins, engaging a fire archon in melee is a dangerous proposition. As the battle goes on, they only get hotter. Left unchecked, they will detonate in a supernova of destructive force.

Characters can recall information about a fire archon by making an Arcana or Religion ability check. Consult the table below for the results.

TACTICS

The fire archon is a tough melee brute that can move quickly around the battlefield. It is at its best in close combat with multiple foes, using its pitchfork to restrain as many foes as it can and staying just close enough to keep them in range of its Superheated Being trait. The longer the fight goes on, the more dangerous that trait becomes, both to the party and to any allies of the fire archon who aren't immune to fire damage.

You should use Beam of Incineration any time you can hit at least three targets with it. If the party has a lot of characters with resistance or immunity to fire damage, you should make using Beam of Incineration a priority to open them up to damage from the archon's other attacks. Finally, unless the archon has a good reason to fight to the death, it should try to retreat when its Superheated Being trait reaches a radius of 40 ft.

When building an encounter around a fire archon, take great care when selecting allied monsters, particularly if they are not at least resistant to fire damage. Creatures that are vulnerable to fire damage are likely to die much faster in the

company of a fire archon, but it can make for an interesting free-for-all fight.

Easier Tactics – Don't move into the middle of the party, instead keep the archon at the edge, engaging the tougher characters. Don't use Beam of Incineration until later in the fight, and even if it recharges, wait a few turns before using it a second time. Be willing to target characters with resistance to fire damage, but the archon should still avoid those that are immune until it can hit them with Beam of Incineration.

Harder Tactics – Start the fight with Beam of Incineration, especially if the archon has a good initiative result. Get up in the middle of the group as quickly as possible and try to restrain characters with the Pitchfork

to keep them in a tight group. Superheated Being rapidly becomes an amazing source of damage, and each time Beam of Incineration recharges, take the opportunity attacks to move into a good position to hit multiple targets. Remember that restrained characters have disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws and try to hit them with Beam of Incineration.

PLOT HOOKS

A great warrior dies in the line of duty, guarding something important. A week later, a fire archon shows up, ready to resume its post.

FIRE ARCHON

Large elemental, chaotic good (50%) or chaotic evil (50%)

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 252 (24d10 + 120)

Speed 60 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 22 (+6) **CON** 20 (+5) **INT** 16 (+3) **WIS** 20 (+5) **CHA** 16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +10, Dex +12, Con +11, Wis +11

Skills Insight +11, Perception +11

Damage Resistances cold, bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagic weapons

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 21

Languages Ignan, Primordial

Challenge 19 (22,000 xp)

TRAITS

Sense Heat. The archon perceives all sources of heat within 120 ft. of it. The archon knows the exact location of creatures with a body temperature above freezing or creatures that hold a source of heat as though it had blindsight.

Superheated Being. At the start of each of the archon's turns, each creature within 5 ft. of it takes 22 (4d10) fire damage. A creature that touches the archon or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 ft. of it takes 22 (4d10) fire damage.

Stoke the Core. At the start of each of the archon's turns, if there is a hostile creature within 60 ft. of it, the

radius of its Superheated Being trait increases by 5 ft., and when a creature suffers fire damage from that trait, it suffers an additional 11 (2d10) fire damage. This effect is cumulative and resets when the archon finishes a short or long rest.

When the radius of the archon's Superheated Being trait increases to 50 ft. or more as a result of this trait, the archon detonates in a massive explosion, killing it instantly. All creatures within 120 ft. must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or take 66 (12d10) fire damage on a failed save or half as much on a success.

ACTIONS

Pitchfork. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 22 (4d10) fire damage, and the target is grappled by a wreath of flame (escape DC 22). While grappled, the target is restrained and takes 16 (3d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. The grapple persists even if the archon moves away from the target, and there is no limit to the number of creatures the archon can have grappled simultaneously with this ability.

Beam of Incineration (Recharge 5-6). The archon fires a beam of white hot flame, forming a line 300 ft. long and 10 ft. wide. Creatures in the line must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or lose all resistance and immunity to fire damage for ten minutes and take 55 (10d10) fire damage. A successful save prevents the loss of resistance and immunity to fire damage and halves the damage taken.

When a noble rebukes a bard's advances, the bard disappears. Several months pass, and then the noble finds themselves being courted by a fire archon, who is also setting the gardens on fire.

A red dragon teams up with a fire archon, keeping the archon in its gullet and releasing it alongside a gout of dragon breath. This also works with a balor who keeps the archon in a bag of holding (the balor's death throes ability destroys all its equipment, so there won't be extra loot for the party).

TREASURE

Fire archon ashes are of tremendous use to alchemists and spellcasters. The ashes of a single fire archon can be sold for 2,500 gold pieces. Alternatively, when casting a

spell that deals fire damage a spellcaster can use the entire remains of a fire archon to cause the spell to deal maximum damage on all of its damage dice that deal fire damage for that spell's duration. When used in this manner, the ashes are consumed by the spell's casting.

ECOLOGY

Fire archons are often found in the company of fire-immune creatures. Elementals, fiends, dragons, or fire giants are all common companions. With their tremendous power and force of will, the fire archon is likely to be leading the group unless they are traveling with a truly powerful creature, or the soul of the fire archon was loyal to the creature in life. Fire archons don't lead in a conscious, vocal way, they simply follow their hearts and other creatures tag along, fighting when the archon fights, and resting when it rests.



EARTH ARCHONS

Earth archons are formed by the soul of one who died protecting someone they love. It need not be romantic love, a devoted knight who falls in service to their king would qualify, but unlike most archons, it is the intensity of the passion that matters more than the power of the mortal. More than one earth archon has formed from the soul of a kind grandparent who sacrificed their last bit of food for a hungry child. This origin gives earth archons a much kinder temperament than their other elemental kin. They don't seek out opportunities to get involved in the world's affairs, but they are much more likely to join a good cause, particularly one that won't succeed without their help.

They are, unfortunately, not good at seeing through lies. Earth archons are frequently duped into serving nefarious ends, though should the truth come out they will not rest until they exact retribution.

Characters can recall information about an earth archon by making an Arcana or Religion ability check. Consult the table below for the results.

DC INFORMATION

18	Earth archons are mighty elemental spirits animated by the soul of a powerful mortal that went to the wrong plane. They are extremely resilient to physical attack and can pass effortlessly through anything of earth or stone.
22	Earth archons consume weapons that hit them, disarming their attacker. The archons can hold more weapons than would physically fit within them, a mystery that remains unsolved.
27	Earth archons can bind their foes within twisting roots and deal tremendous damage with the heavy rocks they favor in melee combat. When wounded, they will retreat beneath the earth with surprising speed.

TACTICS

Earth archons are as simple in battle as they are in mind. They are a little faster than the average humanoid but are better served by entering battle from beneath the ground using their burrowing speed and Superior Earth Glide. When employed by a villain, their Demolisher trait allows them to break down fortifications, castle gates, and any other obstacle in their way with ease.

In a fight, they want to get close to as many characters as possible to use Twisting Roots and Stone Flail attack to full effect. Attacking a restrained character with Stone Flail makes the attack much less likely to miss, and with only one attack every turn, a miss hurts a lot. The archon has no fear of melee combat between its resistance to physical damage

Earth Archons

Defenders of loved ones, be they bodyguard or mother, are most apt to become earth archons. They abhor weapons and are slow to start fights. They're slow to do just about anything, really, save for defending themselves. Striking them in close combat is not recommended, they've an appetite for weaponry and can consume a startling quantity of metal. There's no sight like a regiment of disarmed soldiers standing helpless while an earth archon slowly glides away.

Provided you have good intentions, earth archons are the least dangerous of their kind. They are not much for communication, and judge by actions. If they see you doing good deeds, they will leave you alone at a minimum, and may even lend their strength to your cause.

– *Talien Vos Karven*

Classification: brute

Favors: none

Foils: low saves (STR, DEX), melee, weapons

and Consuming Body trait, and actively seeks out powerful combatants to neutralize them by taking hits. Though unarmed strikes are technically melee weapons, don't let the earth archon pull anyone's hands off.

When building an encounter around an earth archon, look for monsters that have ranged attacks and supporting spells. The earth archon is very vulnerable to spells like *forcecage* and other disabling spells, and having allies who can disrupt concentration or cast *counterspell* will help the archon do what it does best.

Easier Tactics – Don't sneak into the backline, just charge the front. A raging barbarian or well-armored Paladin can go toe to toe with an earth archon for at least a few rounds, and they have the hit points and high Constitution saving throws to endure some Stone Flail hits. They are vulnerable to Twisting Roots, but if the archon stays far enough away that only the frontline is hit, it won't make the encounter too challenging.

Harder Tactics – An ambush by an earth archon is devastating. It doesn't need to make Stealth checks when it's

EARTH ARCHON

Large elemental, neutral good

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 324 (24d12 + 168)

Speed 35 ft., burrow 35 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	10 (+0)	25 (+7)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +13, Con +13, Wis +8

Skills Perception +8

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Terran, Primordial

Challenge 18 (20,000 xp)

TRAITS

Superior Earth Glide. The archon can burrow through any terrain or object, natural or manmade, that is at least 75% earth or stone. While doing so, the archon doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

Demolisher. The archon can move through objects and structures other than those affected by Superior Earth Glide as though they were difficult terrain. The archon deals 6d6 bludgeoning damage to objects and structures it moves through for every 5 ft. of movement it spends in conjunction with this ability while moving through a space they occupy.

Consuming Body. Once per turn, when a creature hits the archon with a melee weapon, the archon tries to absorb the weapon. The weapon's wielder must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or have the weapon pulled from their hands and into the archon's body.

There is no limit to the number of weapons an archon can store. Consumed weapons can be removed by a creature using its action within 5 ft. to attempt a DC 21 Strength ability check, retrieving the weapon on a success. All consumed weapons are released when the archon is destroyed, falling to the ground in the archon's space.

Self-Preservation (once per short rest). As a reaction when the archon is first reduced to less than half of its maximum hit points, it may immediately move up to its burrow speed without provoking opportunity attacks. The archon can't use any modes of movement other than burrowing for this ability.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The archon uses Twisting Roots, if able, and then makes one Stone Flail attack.

Twisting Roots (Recharge 5-6). All creatures within 15 ft. of the archon must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained by twisting roots. These roots are attached to the archon, and if a restrained creature is ever more than 15 ft. away from the archon, but no more than 200 ft. while restrained by these roots, it is immediately pulled to the nearest unoccupied space within 15 ft. of the archon. Restrained creatures or an ally within 5 ft. can use their action to attempt a DC 21 Strength ability check, ending the effect on a success.

Stone Flail. *Melee weapon attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 51 (8d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

30 ft. underground, and it can spring up and use Twisting Roots to target the entire party, then hit somebody fragile with its Stone Flail attack. If you want to get tricky, once it restrains a couple of fragile characters, have the archon burrow 10 ft. into the ground and start moving through the earth, dragging the restrained characters with it. If the party is busy dealing with other monsters, being split up like this is devastating.

PLOT HOOKS

A city's garden blooms with new life, and new rodents that are causing untold problems in the nearby food silos. An earth archon has taken up residence in the garden and every exterminator hired to deal with the vermin problem has disappeared.

An overwhelming army lays siege to a small castle, and just when defeat seems inevitable, an earth archon rises out of the ground and obliterates the army. It declares the city under its protection, but it doesn't always correctly identify threats. A food caravan that runs over a rabbit would face the archon's wrath, for example.

A forest suffers under a raging fire, and an earth archon moves in to help it heal. No humanoids may pass through the forest while it mends, lest they face in archon in battle.

TREASURE

When an earth archon dies, it releases every weapon and object it absorbed. Roll 1d8 and consult the following table for the loot within a particular earth archon.

D8 TREASURE

1-3	Three daggers, two longswords, four halberds, plus 1,600 gold pieces worth of gemstones divided between opals, sapphires, and aquamarine.
4-5	One greataxe, six short swords, plus 1,800 gold pieces worth of gemstones divided between peridot, topaz, and tiger eye.
6-7	Two greatswords, one heavy crossbow, three lances, plus 2,200 gold pieces worth of gemstones divided between fire opal, emerald, and rubies.
8	One shovel, two war picks, one whip, one maul, plus 2,500 gold pieces worth of gemstones divided between diamonds and moonstones.

ECOLOGY

Earth archons seek out the weak and downtrodden, those that can't defend themselves, and they love the creatures of the forest. Birds, squirrels, and other small critters often rest on an earth archon while the elemental is stationary. The archon sometimes attracts lesser earthen beings, such as galeb duhr, gargoyles, or dao, but rarely keeps them as permanent companions.

LIGHTNING ARCHONS

The true origins of a lightning archon are in the irrationality and impulsiveness of the soul. Those with great power who are quick to use it are most likely to become lightning archons, and they take little of their morality with them. Lightning archons delight in the use of their abilities and tend to attack the first things they see. They also enjoy springing ambushes and will hide for days waiting for a tempting target to pass by.

The two ways to avoid combat with a lightning archon are to wear no metal items, which has about a 50% chance of working, or to gain immunity to lightning damage, which the archons will always respect.

Characters can recall information about a lightning archon by making an Arcana or Religion ability check. Consult the table below for the results.

DC INFORMATION

18 Lightning archons are incredibly fast beings that attack first and never ask questions. There is no record of a successful negotiation with a lightning archon.

22 Lightning archons dart in and out of combat, electrocuting creatures they pass by and leaving a residual charge that makes them more vulnerable to future attacks. Striking at them with a metal weapon is dangerous, dealing damage to the wielder with each hit. Resonance the archon creates may reflect targeted magical effects back on their casters.


27 Lightning archons prefer targets wearing metal armor and may let a group with no visible metal pass by them unassailed. They are skilled ambushers and can render themselves invisible without the aid of magic. Only those with truly keen sense will detect them before it's too late.

TACTICS

Lightning archons are at their most powerful when moving rapidly amongst the party, using their fast flying speed to pass through as many characters as possible and then hitting them all with Thunder Bolt when available, or targeting two with Jolt. They're going to take a lot of opportunity attacks from doing so, but if the characters taking the attacks have metal weapons, it's worth it. Always target characters with metal armor first. Finally, with their Stealth bonus being so high and their Clear Skies ability allowing them to hide without cover, lightning archons can launch extremely dangerous ambush attacks.

Lightning archons always fight to the death, and don't negotiate, though if they spot a party with no metal items they may decide to ignore them, unless it's been a very long time since their last fight. They also feel an instinctive respect toward anything immune to lightning damage, and will treat such creatures as friends.

Lightning Archon



Real lightning looks like a drop of molasses next to an archon, made of the stuff. This is one of the fastest creatures across the planes, so if you find one, get ready for a fight or use magic to escape, because you aren't getting away on foot, horseback, or even wings. I remain uncertain as to what variety of soul forms a lightning archon, and they are so different from the standard air elemental. A fascinating creature, to be sure. My speculations are thus: brilliant geniuses, masterful martial artists, and electrophiles are predisposed to becoming lightning archons. Lightning wit, lightning reflexes, and the magically inclined who specialize in lightning.

They differ from other archons in their armament, or lack thereof, preferring to project bolts of energy and call down thunder from above. Lightning archons are dangerous ranged combatants, and the way they energize their targets means two or more working together are an exponentially greater threat. I've yet to coax a single word out of one of these, but given the habits of other archons, diplomacy is theoretically an option. Please send a letter to the address in the back of this book if you open negotiations with a lightning archon.

- Talien Vos Karven

Classification: skirmisher

Favors: none

Foils: clerics, fighters, lightning damage, low saves (STR, DEX, CON), nonmagical weapons, spellcasting, thunder damage

When building encounters, because the lightning archon's Shocking Charge ability energizes a target until the start of the archon's next turn, two or more lightning archons working together have extreme synergy. One archon can energize some of the party and attack them with Jolt, and the other can energize the rest and hit them all with Thunder Bolt.

If a lightning archon seeks out company other than more of its own kind, it will only associate with creatures that are immune to lightning damage. Once a lightning archon picks allies, it's very loyal to them.

Easier Tactics – Don't attack from hiding, and don't energize the whole party. Focus on one or two characters

LIGHTNING ARCHON

Medium elemental, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 234 (36d8 + 72)

Speed 10 ft., fly 240 ft.

STR 12 (+1) **DEX** 26 (+8) **CON** 15 (+2) **INT** 18 (+4) **WIS** 20 (+5) **CHA** 12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Int +10, Wis +11, Cha +7

Skills Acrobatics +14, Perception +17

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagic weapons

Damage Immunities thunder, lightning

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages Auran, Primordial

Challenge 19 (22,000 xp)

TRAITS

Arc Lightning. The archon's attacks score a critical hit on a 18-20. If the archon scores a critical hit on a creature, it may use its bonus action to make an additional attack against a creature in range that it has not attacked that turn.

Clear Skies. The archon can suppress its lightning as a bonus action, turning invisible. This effect lasts until the lightning archon attacks or uses another bonus action to reactivate its lightning. While so invisible, the archon's Plasma Core ability is inactive.

Plasma Core. Whenever a creature hits the archon with a melee weapon made with any quantity of metal, the weapon's wielder takes 13 (2d12) lightning damage. The archon emanates bright light within 120 ft., and dim light out to 240 feet.

Shocking Charge. The archon can enter a hostile creature's space but cannot end its turn within a hostile creature's space. The first time it enters a creature's space on

a turn, that creature takes 19 (3d12) lightning damage and becomes energized until the start of the archon's next turn. Energized creatures suffer additional effects from the archon's attacks, detailed below.

Ride the Lightning. The archon has advantage on all attack rolls against creatures wearing metal armor, and such creatures have disadvantage on saving throws against the archon's abilities.

Ultimate Evasion. If the archon is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a saving throw and suffers an effect on a success, it instead suffers no effect on a success.

Reflected Magic. As a reaction when the archon succeeds against a spell that targets just the archon, the spell instead targets the casting creature as though cast by the archon (though with the same spell attack and save DC as the original caster), and the caster becomes energized until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The archon makes two Jolt attacks that must target different creatures.

Jolt. *Ranged weapon attack:* +14 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 34 (4d12 + 8) lightning damage. If the target is energized, damage from this attack ignores resistance or immunity to lightning damage and the target must succeed on a DC 22 Strength saving throw or have its speed reduced to 0 until the end of its next turn.

Thunderbolt (Recharge 4-6). The archon conjures a bolt of lightning, teleporting to a point it can see within 120 ft in a blast of lightning. Creatures within 30 ft. of the point must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or take 52 (8d12) thunder damage. If a target failing its save is energized it is restrained and deafened until the end of its next turn.

and using Jolt, and only use Thunder Bolt when it won't hit more than two characters. If the party has characters without metal armor or who have non-metal weapons, be sure to provoke opportunity attacks from them often, as that's a safe way for the party to deal damage.

Harder Tactics – Ambushes are a great way to start harder encounters. Start this one with a Thunder Bolt that hits as many characters as possible, and then focus the archon's attacks on ranged characters and spellcasters. Once it's just melee characters left standing, the archon has little to fear and can fly in circles above them, raining down electric death. The archon's incredible speed affords it the ability to stay out of range of most opponents for the entirety of a fight.

PLOT HOOKS

Everyone who travels a mountain pass is being struck by lightning and killed instantly. A lightning archon is waiting there and cackling to itself as it kills anyone who trespasses in its domain.

A powerful sorcerer binds a lightning archon into an iron golem, granting the golem immunity to lightning damage. The archon shares the golem's space and can use all of its abilities from within the golem, and the lightning archon can't move from the golem or be harmed until the golem is destroyed.

A dying lightning archon possesses the weapon of a character in the party, granting it bonuses to attack and damage and allowing the wielder to use Thunder Bolt once per day. Eventually the archon will be recovered enough to move on, but the party should have the opportunity to make the binding permanent. Well, permanent until something goes wrong and the archon escapes. It won't be happy when it does.

TREASURE

A deceased lightning archon leaves behind crystallized sand, called fulgurite, that retains some of the archon's power. It can be sold for 1,200 gold pieces, or the energized fulgurite can be fashioned into a Lightning Anchor, a charm worn as an amulet or ring that protects its wearer and nearby allies from natural lightning storms. See the "Lightning Anchor" sidebar for full details.

LIGHTNING ANCHOR

Wondrous item, rare

The Lightning Anchor absorbs the energy from lightning bolts. Whenever the wearer or a creature within 30 ft. of them would be struck by lightning, the lightning hits the Lightning Anchor instead, which absorbs the bolt entirely. This ability only functions on lightning bolts, rather than lightning damage from magical effects (however, lightning from a *call lightning* spell or the storm associated with use of *control weather* will charge the amulet). For each lightning bolt absorbed in this way, the Lightning Anchor gains 1 charge, up to a maximum of 3. The wearer can spend 1 charge as a reaction when they or a creature within 30 ft. of them would take lightning damage to prevent that damage entirely.

ECOLOGY

Lightning archons gather in small groups of two or three, presenting a great danger to anyone and anything nearby. They will gather an associate with anything immune to lightning damage, but even then they don't speak more than a few words. When not hunting something, they can be seen flying, throwing lightning at each other and laughing.

ICE ARCHONS

Ice archons are formed by the souls of those with a heightened sense of their own importance and the will to control those they see as lesser. Most are fallen monarchs, barons, presidents, and other rulers. Though they may come from a general or other military leader, such individuals tend more toward fire archons. Ice archons are proud and will make (and keep) deals struck with those who show them respect and deference. To those that act with disrespect, they are an implacable foe.

Characters can recall information about an ice archon by making an Arcana or Religion ability check. Consult the table below for the results.

DC INFORMATION

18 A legend tells of a king whose soul traveled to the plane of water, rather than its true destination. So strong was the king's will that he froze the water around him and strode forth in a new body carved of ice. He made himself a crown and a spear, and traveled the material plane, issuing dictates requiring extreme force of will to resist.

22 Ice archons are formed of the soul of a fallen magnate, defended by icy shields and their strength of personality. Their shields provide powerful resistance, but can be burned through with concerted fire damage, leaving them vulnerable for a time. They are skilled with their spear and make mighty charging attacks that leave lasting injuries.

27 Ice archons respond well to praise and respect. Though they are skilled liars, they are much less talented at detecting the lies of others, and feigned deference will get you in their good graces quickly. They are most likely to honor a deal made with someone they believe respects them, and quick to betray those who speak rudely.

TACTICS

The ice archon isn't much of a solo monster, like any good ruler it depends on minions and loyal servants. The archon should focus its Dictate ability on disabling powerful threats: any enemy that can deal non-physical damage at range. Save Yield for the first time the ice archon's shield is destroyed, it will buy it time to recharge. When choosing targets for the archon's Spear attack, try to move far enough to use Charge whenever possible, but don't take opportunity attacks. The archon hates those.

When building an encounter around an ice archon, you can be very liberal with its minions. Almost any sentient creature could conceivably serve an ice archon, and even beasts can be tamed by a combination of food and the

Ice Archons

Ice archons are the most palatable, but even then, I wouldn't choose their company. They think of themselves as royalty, and thus I conclude they are born of royal souls. Or just those with an inflated sense of their own importance. They enjoy conversation, at least the parts where they get to talk, and are very happy to strike deals. They'll even keep their word most of the time, though they are consummate deceivers so bargain with caution.

Ice archons have a tendency to personalize themselves. While other archons are asexual, ice archons will shape beards of ice or an ample bosom, doing their best to make an attractive, regal masculine or feminine figure. One thing is common to all of them: every one wears a crown of ice. They are quite vain, if that wasn't clear. Exploit that.

— *Talien Vos Karven*

Classification: soldier

Favors: fire damage, high saves (CHA)

Foils: cold, weapons

archon's Dictate ability. The ice archon benefits most from powerful melee creatures to keep the party away from it and ranged backup to pour on the damage, especially creatures with area of effect attacks. A helpful spellcaster is never a bad thing, but the archon is tough and has very good saves, so it's not essential.

Easier Tactics – The best way to make this fight easier is to make poor choices when targeting Dictate. Choose sorcerers, bards, warlocks, and paladins. They're likely to succeed on their saving throw and not miss a turn. Don't use Charge every chance you get; the basic Spear attacks are still dangerous.

Harder Tactics – Dictate can completely shut down a character with poor Charisma saving throws. Many troublesome characters like wizards, barbarians, rogues, and monks have no need for Charisma and can be neutralized by focusing Dictate on them each turn. The ice archon is most useful as a control creature that can take a lot of damage before it falls, so try to keep it alive as long as possible. If it has a clear shot at using Charge, take it, and don't forget to leverage the 10 ft. reach of its spear to stay out of danger when maneuvering around the battlefield.

PLOT HOOKS

A castle of ice and snow pops up during winter, and an ice archon declares itself a new king or queen. It offers immigration incentives and begins attracting some dissatisfied peasants from nearby nations. For now, this isn't a problem, but rumors spread of mistreatment and lots of frostbite.

The party finds themselves attempting to cross an ice archon's domain, and it requires tribute. They can acquiesce to its demands and go on a side quest, or fight their way through, but the ice archon has enlisted the help of a white dragon for backup.

An ice archon is born of a questing knight, and it travels the land seeking to start a new organization of would-be heroes to take on dangerous deeds across the land! This might be a good thing, making the world safer. It might be a misguided good thing, when they kill several dragons it leads a dozen others to join forces and attack. Or it might just be a bad thing, and these knights are deciding which rulers are fit to serve and which need to be removed by force.

TREASURE

A fallen ice archon melts, leaving behind only its crown. The crown persists for 30 days, and then melts. It resizes to fit whoever wears it. See the sidebar "Archon Crown" for the full details of this item. Selling the crown is difficult if the buyer is aware of its limited lifespan, but if the party doesn't want to lie about it, they might find a group of adventurers about to venture into snowy territory who would be grateful for its protection. It is worth about 3,000 gold pieces, but buyers will do their best to negotiate a lower price.

ARCHON CROWN

Wondrous item, very rare
(requires attunement)

Attuning to the crown requires feeling worthy of a noble title. If the wearer sincerely believes they deserve to be a king or queen, that is enough to satisfy the crown, but it knows if a would-be wearer is lying.

Once attuned, the wearer of this item gains immunity to cold damage. Once per day, as a bonus action they can issue a command as the spell, but requiring a Charisma saving throw against a fixed DC of 20. The wearer regains the use of this ability when they finish a long rest.

ECOLOGY

Fire archons are often found in the company of fire-immune creatures. Elementals, fiends, dragons, or fire giants are all common companions. With their tremendous power and

force of will, the fire archon is likely to be leading the group unless they are traveling with a truly powerful creature, or the soul of the fire archon was loyal to the creature in life. Fire archons don't lead in a conscious, vocal way, they simply follow their hearts and other creatures tag along, fighting when the archon fights, and resting when it rests.

ICE ARCHON

Medium elemental, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor) (22 with Ice Shield)

Hit Points 228 (24d8 + 120)

Speed 40 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR 22 (+6) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 20 (+5) **INT** 16 (+3) **WIS** 22 (+6) **CHA** 22 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +10, Wis +11, Cha +11

Skills Deception +17, Intimidation +17, Perception +11, Persuasion +17

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing

Damage Immunities cold

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Aquan, Primordial

Challenge 17 (20,000 xp)

TRAITS

Ice Shield. The archon has a shield of ice that increases its Armor Class and grants it resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage (included in the above statistics). If the archon takes 40 or more fire damage in a single round, the shield is destroyed, reducing the archon's Armor Class and removing its resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage and leaving the archon vulnerable to fire damage. Once the shield is destroyed, the archon must make a recharge roll at the start of each of its turns. On a result of 4, 5, or 6, the ice shield reactivates.

Charge. If the archon moves at least 15 ft. straight toward a target and hits it with a spear attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 38 (7d10) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it suffers internal injuries. An injured creature can take an action or a bonus action on each of its turns, but not both. The injury lasts until the target receives magical healing, either in the form of regaining hit points or through a spell like *lesser restoration*.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The archon uses Dictate and then makes one Spear attack.

Dictate. The archon chooses one creature it can see within 120 ft. and issues a command. The target can understand this command even if it doesn't share a language with the archon and must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or spend its next turn taking one of the following actions of the archon's choice.

- **Take a Knee.** The creature drops to one knee and is considered prone. It then drops whatever it is holding and ends its turn.
- **Fall.** A creature that is flying dives directly to the ground, taking falling damage as normal. It then ends its turn.
- **Betray.** The target moves toward the closest ally and takes the attack action to make a single weapon attack against that ally.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 44 (7d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 22 (4d10) cold damage. The target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or its speed drops to 0 until the end of its next turn.

Yield (1/short rest). All creatures that can hear the archon within 120 ft. must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or be compelled to put down their arms for 1 minute. For the duration they cannot attack or target any creature with harmful abilities, spells, or other magical effects. Affected creatures can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on a success.