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ADVENTURE PATH[™]



RISE OF THE RUNELORDS

ANNIVERSARY EDITION

RISE ^{OF THE} RUNELORDS

ANNIVERSARY EDITION





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ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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This game is dedicated to Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.



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INTRODUCTION

“The town of Sandpoint needs you!”

THOSE WERE THE FIRST WORDS IN THE FOREWORD OF *PATHFINDER ADVENTURE PATH #1*, WHICH PREMIERED THE FIRST RISE OF THE RUNELORDS ADVENTURE, “BURNT OFFERINGS.” THIS CALL TO ARMS WAS FOLLOWED BY TWO PAGES TITLED “WELCOME TO GOLARION,” INTRODUCING THE TOWN OF SANDPOINT, THE INNER SEA REGION, AND THE WORLD OF GOLARION ITSELF. THAT WAS 5 YEARS AGO. SINCE THEN, THE TOWN OF SANDPOINT HAS BECOME ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN LOCATIONS IN THE *PATHFINDER* CAMPAIGN SETTING. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO KNEW ABOUT SANDPOINT WERE A SMALL HANDFUL OF FOLKS HERE AT PAIZO PUBLISHING. TODAY, THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF PLAYER CHARACTER HEROES (AND—LET’S BE HONEST—NOT A SMALL NUMBER OF PC VILLAINS) HAVE STARTED THEIR ADVENTURING CAREERS THERE. SANDPOINT HAS APPEARED IN TWO ADVENTURE PATHS, AND IS THE STARTING LOCATION FOR THE *PATHFINDER RPG BEGINNER BOX*. BUT EVEN AFTER HALF A DECADE AND THE PASSAGE OF UNTOLD NUMBERS OF HEROES, THE TOWN OF SANDPOINT STILL NEEDS YOU!



If you’ve run or played through the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path, you’ll find the book you’re reading a pleasant homecoming. Much of what you remember has remained the same, but a significant amount has changed as well—for the better. In adapting and updating Rise of the Runelords to the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game from the previous rules edition it utilized, we did more than just revise stat blocks and rules content to fall into line with the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. Portions that were confusing were clarified, areas that felt too rushed have been bolstered, and entirely new encounters and locations have been added for veteran players to explore. If you’re familiar with the way Runelords looked in volumes 1 through 6 of Pathfinder Adventure Path, you’ll find surprises in each chapter awaiting your discovery, be they relatively small (such as an opportunity to meet Lonjiku Kaijitsu before his doom, or an unexpected giant ally in the hills beyond Fort Rannick) or rather significant (such as the new denizen of the basement below Habe’s Sanitarium, the fully detailed Festering Maze in Runeforge, or the additional encounters in the last half of “Spires of Xin-Shalast”). We also mined the paizo.com messageboards for feedback from who-knows-how-many people who played through the original six-part adventure (if you posted something in those boards in the last 5 years, chances are good you helped make this book what it is, so thanks!). Throughout all the changes and updates, though, our overriding philosophy was to change as little as possible, to preserve as much of the original tone of the adventures as we could so that people playing Rise

of the Runelords today could compare notes with those who played it 5 years ago and find that they share many of the same experiences.

Of course, if you’re brand new to Rise of the Runelords, now’s your chance to find out how the Pathfinder Adventure Paths got their start. An awful lot of early world development happened during the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path, and many things that got relatively minor name drops in this AP have gone on to become significant parts of the world of Golarion.

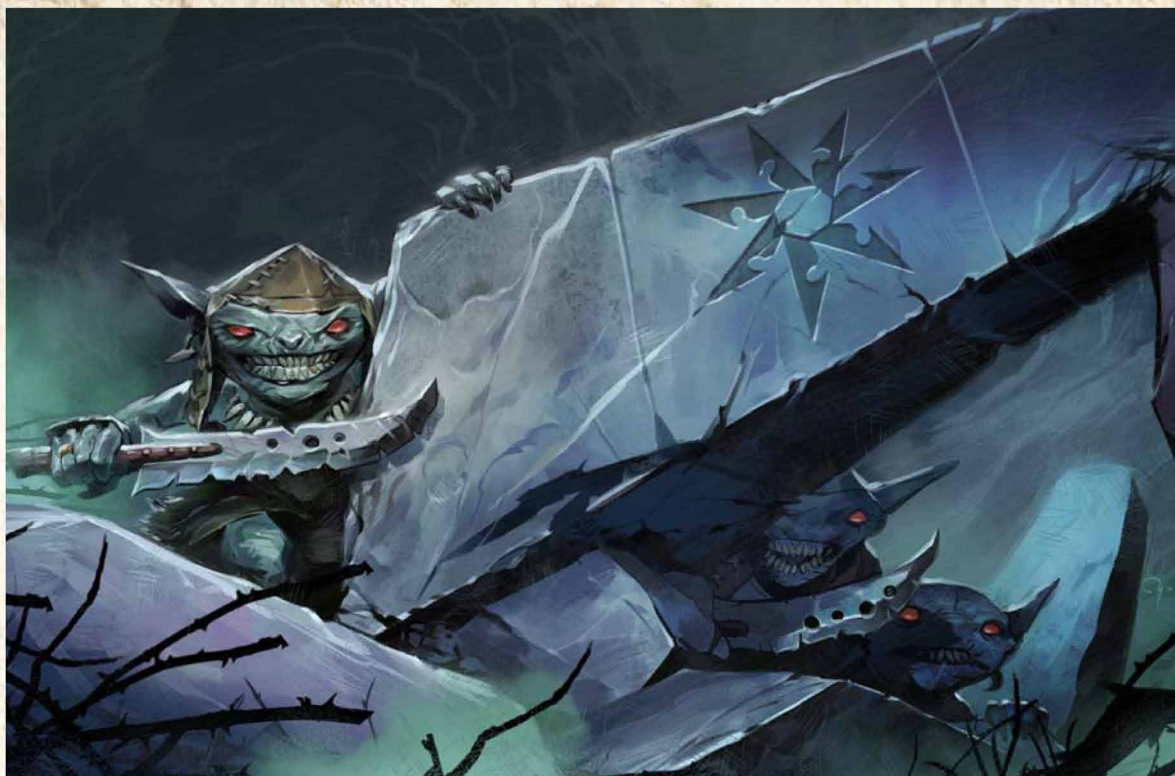
In either case, new or old, break out your Sihedrons and sharpen your swords, because the threats are greater, the monsters are deadlier, and the stakes are higher in this quintessential edition of the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path.

USING THIS BOOK

Rise of the Runelords is a complete campaign designed to take a group of four PCs from 1st level all the way to 17th or 18th level. During this campaign, the party will face an ever-escalating (both in power and size) cast of enemies, starting with goblins and working up to ghouls, ogres, and stone giants, and finally reaching dragons, sinister undead masterminds, eldritch invaders from other dimensions, and an ancient wizard-king.

The campaign itself is presented in the six chapters that make up the bulk of the book. GMs should make sure they’re familiar with an entire chapter before running it, as parts of each adventure may be attempted in an order quite different than the one in which they’re presented on the page! The end of this book contains eight appendices





designed to help expand the adventures herein or present new rules elements including monsters, magic items, and spells that players encounter along the way.

Rise of the Runelords relies primarily on content from the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, but many monsters from *Bestiary 2* and *Bestiary 3* have significant roles to play in the campaign as well. GMs should have easy access to all four of these books' contents while running this Adventure Path. In addition, a few NPCs in this campaign utilize material found in the *Advanced Player's Guide* (particularly the oracle and witch classes and the rules for character traits), but in these cases we've provided full stat blocks for those NPCs—familiarity with those base classes is really all that's needed from that book. Some of the elements from the *GameMastery Guide* (particularly the rules for haunts, which play important roles in Chapters Two and Six of this book) are significant parts of the campaign as well. The above rules can be found online for free as part of the Pathfinder Reference Document at paizo.com/pathfinder/prd. Finally, Rise of the Runelords assumes you're familiar with the world of Golarion, as detailed in *The Inner Sea World Guide*, and in particular with the region of Varisia, where this campaign takes place.

TEN FUN FACTS ABOUT GOBLINS

That original foreword for *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #1 contained more than just an introduction to the town of Sandpoint and the world of Golarion—it also reinvented the goblin for our setting. Much of the mayhem and madness that inspired the goblins in Chapter One: Burnt Offerings came from the following list James Jacobs wrote

up one night not long after Wayne Reynolds finished his now-infamous design for the Pathfinder goblin. The list is reprinted here, both for your entertainment and to aid you in capturing the specific kind of frantic evil that goblins exhibit so well.

1. HORSE HATE: Goblins excel at riding animals, but they don't quite get horses. In fact, their hatred of all things horse is matched only by their fear of horses, who tend to step on goblins who get too close.

2. DOG HATE: Although goblins raise horrible rat-faced creatures called (creatively enough) goblin dogs to use as mounts, and ride wolves or worgs if they can get them—goblins are quick to explain that wolves are NOT dogs—their hatred of plain old dogs nearly matches their hatred of horses. The feeling is mutual. If your dog's barking at the woodpile for no reason, chances are he smells a frightened goblin hiding in there somewhere.

3. GOBLINS RAID JUNKYARDS: Garbage pits, gutters, sewers—anywhere there's garbage, you can bet goblins are nearby. Goblins are weirdly adept at crafting weapons and armor from refuse, and are fond of killing people with what they throw away.

4. GOBLINS LOVE TO SING: Unfortunately, as catchy as their lyrics can be, goblin songs tend to be a bit too creepy and disturbing to catch on in polite society.



5. THEY'RE SNEAKY: An excited or angry goblin is a noisy, chattering, toothy menace, but even then, he can drop into an unsettling silence in a heartbeat. This, matched with their diminutive size, makes goblins unnervingly adept at hiding in places you'd never expect: stacks of firewood, rain barrels, under logs, under chicken coops, in ovens....

6. THEY'RE A LITTLE CRAZY: The fact that goblins think of things like ovens as good hiding places reveals much about their inability to think plans through to the most likely outcome. That, and they tend to be easily distracted, particularly by shiny things and animals smaller than them that might make good eating.

7. THEY'RE VORACIOUS: Given enough supplies, a goblin generally takes nearly a dozen meals a day. Most goblin tribes don't have enough supplies to accommodate such ravenous appetites, which is why the little menaces are so prone to going on raids.

8. THEY LIKE FIRE: Burning things is one of the great goblin pastimes, although they're generally pretty careful about lighting fires in their own lairs, especially since goblins tend to live in large tangled thistle patches and sleep in beds of dried leaves and grass. But give a goblin a torch and someone else's home and you've got trouble.

9. THEY GET STUCK EASILY: Goblins have wiry frames but wide heads. They live in cramped warrens. Sometimes too cramped.

10. GOBLINS BELIEVE WRITING STEALS YOUR SOUL: The walls of goblin lairs and the ruins of towns goblins have raided are littered with pictures of their exploits. They never use writing, though. That's not lucky. Writing steals words out of your head. You can't get them back.

CAMPAIGN SYNOPSIS

The Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path begins as the PCs take part in the Swallowtail Festival in the town of Sandpoint, yet as the celebration draws to a close, a band of goblins attacks! The PCs fight off the invaders and establish themselves as heroes, so when local bartender Ameiko Kaijitsu goes missing, the town turns to the PCs for help. Rescuing Ameiko reveals a conspiracy: her estranged brother is involved with a group that has gathered the goblin tribes for an even greater raid on Sandpoint, intent on offering the town up in sacrifice to the goddess Lamashtu. After tracking the goblins to their lair in Thistletop, the PCs confront the conspirators and defeat their leader, a bitter aasimar named Nualia who carries a curious amulet depicting a seven-pointed star.

Soon thereafter, a murderer terrorizes Sandpoint. Victims are left mutilated, and carved into their chests is

a familiar seven-pointed star—a clue left by a madman calling himself “the Skinsaw Man.” The PCs eventually confront the murderer, an old acquaintance named Aldern Foxglove, in a haunted mansion near Sandpoint. There, they learn that he is but an agent of a larger cult based in the city of Magnimar. The investigation moves to that city, where the PCs confront the Skinsaw Cult before learning a related danger has taken up residence in an old clock tower. Here, the PCs encounter the true leader of the cult, a sadistic lamia matriarch. Unknown to the PCs, this lamia matriarch has been charged with harvesting “souls of greed” to aid in the reawakening of an ancient wizard-tyrant known as Runelord Karzoug. The lamia's use of the Sihedron Rune—the same seven-pointed star both Nualia and the Skinsaw Man employed—hints at a larger threat.

The heroic PCs are next sent into central Varisia to investigate why the rangers of remote Fort Rannick have gone silent. They arrive to find the fort overrun by ogres and the surviving rangers held prisoner by degenerate ogrekin. By rescuing the rangers, the PCs liberate Fort Rannick and start to piece together what's really going on in the region. After dealing with a flooding town, a failing Thassilonian dam, and a haunted swamp, they finally arrive on the upper slopes of the infamous Hook Mountain where they confront and defeat the ogres, and learn that a powerful stone giant named Mokmurian is planning a raid on their hometown.

The PCs return to Sandpoint to help defend against Mokmurian's raiders, then take the fight to Jorgenfist, the fortress of the stone giants. By infiltrating this citadel and defeating Mokmurian, they not only end the threat of the massing army of giants but also discover that Mokmurian was but another agent of Runelord Karzoug, and that the Sihedron Rune is a symbol he is utilizing to aid in his return to this world. Yet, there's still time before Karzoug can fully regain his powers. Using Mokmurian's library of Thassilonian lore, the PCs learn that the key to Karzoug's defeat may be hidden in a lost dungeon called Runeforge, and that the route to that dungeon is hidden in a dungeon below Sandpoint.

The PCs return to Sandpoint in search of that information, finding it in a recently opened shrine to Lamashtu guarded by an ancient lunatic from the time of Thassilon itself. Following the clues they find there, the PCs head north and enter the dungeon of Runeforge. After gathering components, they utilize the magical pool at Runeforge's heart, transforming their weapons into potent *runeforged* weapons capable of providing them significant advantages in the final battle to come.

Armed with the weaponry they need, the PCs make the journey into the Kodar Mountains to confront Karzoug in his ancient city of Xin-Shalast. The PCs will need all of their wits, magic, and might to prevail, for Karzoug has drawn his most powerful allies to his side to defend him from any and all who would try to stop his return!







1

BURNT OFFERINGS

BY JAMES JACOBS



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CHAPTER BACKGROUND

THE COASTAL TOWN OF SANDPOINT HAS FACED FEW TRIALS AND DANGERS OVER THE COURSE OF ITS FORTY-TWO YEAR HISTORY, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THAT IS ALL ABOUT TO CHANGE. UNKNOWN TO THE TOWN'S FOUNDERS, THEY CHOSE TO BUILD THEIR COMMUNITY OVER THE RUINS OF AN ANCIENT STRONGHOLD ONCE USED AS LABORATORY AND PRISON, A PLACE WHERE HORRIFIC EXPERIMENTS AND UNHOLY EXPLORATIONS INTO WHAT DIVIDES MAN FROM MONSTER TOOK PLACE. THESE ARE THE CATACOMBS OF WRATH, A PLACE WHERE ARCANISTS EXPLORED AND PERFECTED THE STOLEN ARTS OF LIFESHAPING AND FLESHWARPING, ONE OF SEVERAL SUCH SITES USED BY RUNELORD ALAZNIST'S APPRENTICES DURING THASSILON'S HEIGHT, WHEN THASSILON FELL, THESE CATACOMBS WENT DORMANT, BUT THE ONE BURIED UNDER SANDPOINT WAS NOT FATED TO STAY THAT WAY.

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Five years ago and hundreds of miles from the Varisian coast, a wicked and ambitious stone giant named Mokmurian awakened a slumbering tyrant—Runelord Karzoug. In his time thousands of years ago, at the height of Thassilon's rule, Karzoug drew his magic from traditions closely tied to the seven primal sins. After many centuries of magical slumber, Karzoug wasted no time in beginning his triumphant return by activating an ancient Thassilonian artifact called a *runewell*, a device capable of extracting magical essence from the souls of certain creatures who, in life, exemplified specific spiritual traits—in this case, greed. Only these souls were useful to Karzoug in completing his return to life, and so he sent Mokmurian, now his puppet, back into the world to make ready the harvest. Karzoug uses a potent scrying device called a *soul lens* to focus on sacrifices prepared with the proper rituals and marked with the Sihedron Rune (the ancient symbol of all seven schools of Thassilonian magic). As the sacrifice dies, the soul lens draws his soul across any intervening distance to empower the *runewell*. Karzoug's growing need for greedy souls has spurred Mokmurian and his stone giant kin to further and further violence, and in time, the PCs must stand before these giants. Yet for now, the activation of the ancient *runewell* has had another, unanticipated, effect. Other runelords kept similar receptacles of magical sin as well, and when Karzoug activated his *runewell*, these others also flared to dangerous life.

In most cases, the other *runewells* were hidden deep underwater, buried far underground, or lost in remote regions, and this sudden flare of ancient magic had little noticeable effect. Yet in the Catacombs of Wrath below the sleepy town of Sandpoint, where Runelord Alaznist kept a *minor runewell* keyed to the sin of wrath, these effects were not so isolated. Although possessing but a shadow of the power

of a true *runewell*, it sent a shock wave of magical energy up through the town above, manifesting in the form of violent nightmares from which many folk woke in a terrible rage that vanished in the span of a heartbeat. In a few unfortunate cases, however, the wrath found fertile soil.

Lonjiku Kaijitsu, a bitter noble who still seethed with rage at being cuckolded years before, woke in the middle of the night, called his wife to the back porch of their cliffside manor, and threw her over the edge to die on the jagged rocks below.

Jervas Stoot, an eccentric artist who channeled his rage from years of paternal abuse into the creation of hauntingly beautiful woodcarvings of birds, began to lay his plans for the murder of nearly two dozen folk whom he felt had wronged him over the years.

Nualia Toby, left pregnant and abandoned by a local cur and shamed in her foster father's eyes, finally succumbed to her anger and forsook the goddess of dreams and stars for the goddess of monsters and madness, promising herself that she would burn her father and his church to the ground.

These three unfortunates became consumed by their wrath, and their actions over the course of the next several months came to be known as the Late Unpleasantness (see page 372 for a full accounting of these events). Those days are over now, fresh in memory still, but thankfully past. The people of Sandpoint now prepare to consecrate a new cathedral to replace the old one that recently burnt to the ground, and are eager to put all reminders of the Late Unpleasantness behind them for good.

Lonjiku's murderous act has gone all but unnoticed, and Stoot is long dead, yet Nualia has not been idle over the past several years. She is ready to finish what she started with that first fire. This time, all of Sandpoint shall become burnt offerings to her insane goddess.





BURNT OFFERINGS

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: FESTIVAL AND FIRE

PART TWO: LOCAL HEROES

PART THREE: GLASS AND WRATH

PART FOUR: THISTLETOP



CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

The PCs attend the Swallowtail Festival (a ritual to consecrate Sandpoint's new cathedral) and end up defending the town from a goblin raid. In the days to follow, the PCs come to terms with their growing local fame, making friends and contacts among Sandpoint's citizens. As rumors of massing goblin armies build, the disappearance of a local tavern owner leads the PCs to uncover treachery within The Sandpoint Glassworks and the existence of an ancient catacomb below the town. An investigation of these discoveries reveals two things: that monsters dwell below the city and that the goblin raid on the town was but the first the monsters have planned.

In order to save Sandpoint, the PCs must travel to Thistletop, the lair of the most powerful goblin tribe in the region, where they can confront the woman whose madness and wrath presents such a menace, yet who is herself the tip of a much larger conspiracy that will soon threaten all of Varisia.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Rise of the Runelords assumes that the adventuring party consists of four PCs, and that experience points are earned on the fast advancement track. At this rate, you can expect your party to gain approximately three levels of experience in each chapter of this adventure. The start of each chapter includes an advancement track that lists the assumed points during the chapter at which the party will be leveling up. Use these tracks as guidelines—if you reach a point of the adventure where the PCs are lower level than the region's encounters

expect them to be, you might consider incorporating a few additional encounters of your own design to give the PCs a chance to catch up in level. Alternatively, if you don't give out experience points in your campaign but simply inform the PCs when they can level up their characters, you can use the advancement track as a guide for when the PCs can level up.

You can even use the medium or slow advancement tracks if you wish. On the medium track, you'll find that as the adventure progresses the PCs will be about a level below what's expected, while on the slow track you'll find them to be two (or at times even three) levels lower than expected. A particularly experienced group of players might enjoy the challenge that these slower tracks can thus provide!

STARTING CHAPTER ONE: The player characters should begin as brand-new 1st-level adventurers (preferably with campaign traits selected from those provided in the *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition Player's Guide*; see page 7).

2ND LEVEL: The PCs should reach 2nd level after dealing with the situation in the Glassworks, just before they enter the Catacombs of Wrath.

3RD LEVEL: The PCs should reach 3rd level early in the exploration of Thistletop—or perhaps even at the climax of the Catacombs of Wrath.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: The PCs should reach 4th level by the conclusion of this chapter.



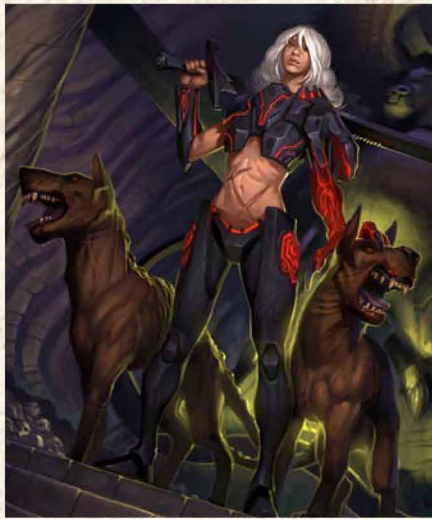


NUALIA'S STORY

The primary villain of this chapter is a bitter aasimar woman named Nualia. She was a foundling raised by Sandpoint's previous religious leader, a man named Ezakien Tobyn, and her childhood was lonely and sad. Her unearthly beauty made the other children either jealous or shy, and many of them took to playing cruel jokes on her. The adults in town weren't much better—many of the superstitious Varisians viewed Nualia as blessed by Desna, a sort of "reverse deformity." Rumors that her touch or proximity could cure warts and rashes, that locks of her hair brewed into tea could increase fertility, and that her voice could drive out evil spirits led to a succession of awkward and humiliating requests over the years. Poor Nualia felt more like a freak than a young girl by the time she came of age, so when Delek Viskanta, a local Varisian youth, began to court her, she practically fell into his arms in gratitude.

Knowing her father wouldn't approve of a relationship with a Varisian (he wanted her to remain pure so she could join a prestigious convent), they kept the affair secret. The couple met many times in hidden places, a favorite being an abandoned smuggler's tunnel under town that Delek had discovered as a child. Before long, Nualia realized she was pregnant. When she told Delek, he revealed his true colors and, after calling her a slut and a harlot, fled Sandpoint rather than face her father's wrath. Nualia's shock quickly turned to rage, yet she had nowhere to vent her anger. She bottled it up, and when her father discovered her delicate condition, his reaction to her indiscretions only furthered her shame and anger. He forbade her to leave the church, lectured her nightly, and made her pray to Desna for forgiveness. In so doing, he unknowingly nurtured her growing hate.

When the *minor runewell* in the Catacombs of Wrath below Sandpoint flared to life, Nualia's own anger was a magnet to its magic. The wrathful energies suffused her mind and she flew into a frenzy. Seven months pregnant, she miscarried her child later that night, a child whose monstrously deformed shape she only glimpsed before blanching midwives stole it away to burn it in secret. As the child had been conceived in the smuggler's tunnels below town, in close proximity to a hidden shrine to Lamashtu (the goddess of monstrous births), the child itself was deformed and horrific. The double shock of losing a child and the realization she had been carrying a



fiend in her belly for 7 months was too much. Nualia fell into a coma.

As Nualia slept, she dreamed unhealthy dreams. Fueled by the wrath from below and the taint of Lamashtu, Nualia became further obsessed with the cruel demon goddess and the conviction that her wretched life was inflicted on her by those around her. She came to see her angelic heritage as a curse, and the demon-sent nightmares showed her how to expunge this taint from her body and soul, replacing it with chaos and cruelty. When she finally woke, Nualia was someone new, someone who didn't

flinch at what Lamashtu asked of her. She jammed her father's door shut as he slept, lit the church on fire, and fled Sandpoint.

The locals assumed Nualia had burned in the fire, a tragedy made all the worse by the death of Father Tobyn as well. Yet Nualia lived. She fled to Magnimar, where she enlisted the aid of a group of Norgorber-worshiping killers known as the Skinsaw Cult. With their aid, she tracked down Delek and murdered him. Yet his death did not fill her need for revenge—it only quickened her need for more of the same, for Sandpoint and its hated citizens still lived.

Seeing a kindred spirit in the tortured woman, the mysterious leader of the Skinsaw Cult gave Nualia a medallion bearing a carving of a seven-pointed star called a "Sihedron medallion." Nualia learned that she had a larger role to play, and that her dreams were a map to her destiny. Taking the advice to heart, Nualia returned to Sandpoint and found herself drawn to the brick wall in the smuggler's tunnels where she and Delek had conceived her deformed child. Nualia bashed down the wall, and in so doing, discovered the Catacombs of Wrath and the quasit Erylium, also a follower of Lamashtu. For many months, Nualia studied under Erylium's tutelage. During this time, Nualia received another vision from Lamashtu—a vision of a monstrous goblin wolf imprisoned in an underground room. In Nualia's dreams, she learned that this creature, a barghest named Malfeshnekor, was also one of Lamashtu's chosen. If she could find him and free him, he would not only help her achieve her vengeance against the town of Sandpoint, but he would be the key in cleansing her body of what she had come to see as her "celestial taint." Nualia wanted to be one of Lamashtu's children now. She wanted to become a monster herself.



BURNT
OFFERINGS

CHAPTER
BACKGROUND

PART ONE:
FESTIVAL AND FIRE

PART TWO:
LOCAL HEROES

PART THREE:
GLASS AND WRATH

PART FOUR:
THISTLETOP

PART ONE: FESTIVAL AND FIRE

FOR FIVE YEARS, THE FAITHFUL OF SANDPOINT HAVE ATTENDED CHURCH IN TEMPORARY STRUCTURES ERECTED AFTER FIRE DESTROYED THE PREVIOUS TEMPLE, AND WHILE THEIR NEW RELIGIOUS LEADER WAS HELPFUL, KIND, AND WISE, CHURCH WASN'T THE SAME. NOW, THE NEW CATHEDRAL IS FINALLY DONE. ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR THE SWALLOWTAIL FESTIVAL TO RENEW THE SITE'S BLESSINGS FROM THE GODS AND IT WILL BE AS IF THE SANDPOINT FIRE HAD NEVER OCCURRED.

If you're using the campaign traits from the *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition Player's Guide*, the PCs should already be in Sandpoint when this adventure begins. If they're not, you'll need to arrange for their arrival before starting. The Swallowtail Festival itself is held on the Autumnal Equinox—generally on the 22nd or 23rd of the month of Rova.

Make sure to familiarize yourself with the town of Sandpoint, detailed on pages 370–387, before you begin this adventure. Much of the first half of “Burnt Offerings” is left for the PCs to experience in an organic order, and while they wait for the next stage of the adventure to unfold, you should encourage them to explore the town of Sandpoint. Likewise, they'll be returning to Sandpoint several times during *Rise of the Runelords*, and as such, a strong familiarity with the town on your part will help make these visits easier to run.

THE SWALLOWTAIL FESTIVAL

The Swallowtail Festival begins promptly, as scheduled, on the Autumnal Equinox. The square before the church quickly becomes crowded as locals and travelers arrive, and several merchant tents featuring food, clothes, local crafts, and souvenirs are there to meet them.

WELCOMING SPEECHES: The turnout for the opening speeches is quite respectable, and the four keynote speakers each deliver short but well-received welcomes to the festival. Mayor Deverin's friendly attitude and excitement prove contagious as she welcomes visitors to town and jokes about how even Larz Rovanky, the local tanner (and notorious workaholic) managed to tear himself away from the tannery to attend, much to everyone's amusement (except Larz's). Sheriff Belor Hemlock brings the crowd down a bit with his dour mood, his reminder to be safe around the evening's bonfire, and his request for a moment of silence to remember those who lost their lives in the fire that claimed the town's previous church several years ago. The next speaker is scheduled to be local nobleman Lonjiku Kaijitsu, but a sudden illness has prevented him from attending the ceremony (this

isn't something that surprises the locals, given Lonjiku's well-known dislike of frivolity and festivals). Sandpoint's own showman Cyrdak Drokkus is more than up to the challenge of bringing the crowd's mood back up with his rousing anecdotes. He delivers a not-completely-irreverent recap of the long process the town went through to finance and construct the new cathedral. He throws in a bit of self-promotion at the end, as is his wont, inviting everyone to stop by the Sandpoint Theater the following evening to check out his new production of “The Harpy's Curse,” revealing that the lead role of Avisera the harpy queen will be played by none other than the famous Magnimarian diva Allishanda! Finally, Father Zantus steps up to give a short speech thanking everyone for coming before declaring the Swallowtail Festival underway.

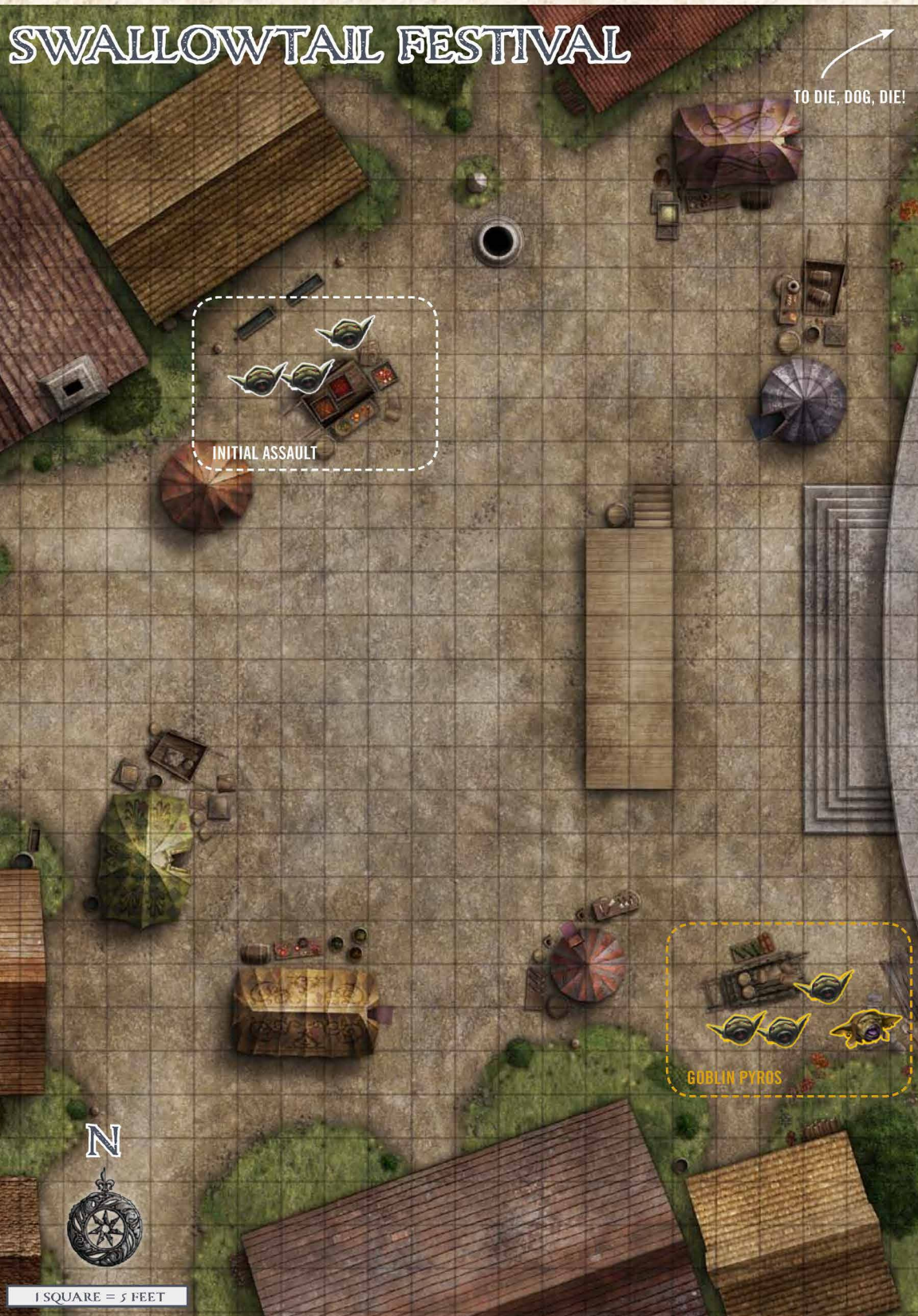
FESTIVAL FUN AND GAMES: Numerous games and contests take place during the day, including sack races, games of hide-and-seek, weight-lifting challenges, balance beam contests, tug-of-war events, and the like. The PCs can take part in as many or as few of these games as they wish—you can use these games as a method to introduce the PCs to each other or to key NPCs in the town. Resolve games with opposed ability score or skill checks. Winners of these games generally win nothing more than bragging rights for the rest of the day, but for many of Sandpoint's residents, this is a fine prize indeed!

SWALLOWTAIL RELEASE: At noon, Father Zantus and his acolytes wheel a large covered wagon into the square, and after recounting the short parable of how Desna first fell to earth and was nursed back to health by a blind child whom she transformed into an immortal butterfly as a reward for her aid, they pull aside the wagon's cover, releasing the thousand children of Desna—a furious storm of swallowtail butterflies that swarm into the air in a spiraling riot of color to a great cheer from the crowd. Throughout the rest of the day, children futilely chase butterflies, never quite quick enough to catch them.

LUNCH: Lunch is provided free, at the expense of Sandpoint's taverns. Each brings its best dishes—this event is as much a marketing push by the taverns to win

MAPS FOR THE MAYHEM

The Swallowtail Festival map is also available as *Flip-Mat: Town Square* (available at [paizo.com](https://www.paizo.com)). When you move on to the “Die, Dog, Die!” fight, use the map of Northgate on the Flip-Mat’s opposite side.



new customers as it is to feed a hungry crowd. It soon becomes apparent that the darling of the lunch is, once again, Ameiko Kaijitsu, whose remarkable curry-spiced salmon and early winterdrop mead easily overshadow the other offerings, such as the Hagfish's lobster chowder or the White Deer's peppercorn venison.

CONSECRATION: Finally, as the sun begins to set, Father Zantus takes the central podium, uses a thunderstone to attract everyone's attention, and clears his throat as he prepares to recite the Prayer of First Dreaming. Unfortunately, the thunderstone's detonation is also the prearranged trigger for the goblins, who have slowly been infiltrating the town while its citizens are merrily distracted.

GOBLINS IN THE STREETS!

Goblins are sneaky little monsters, but even so, their infiltration of Sandpoint required the aid of a few key assistants. Most notable among these is local noble and businessman Lonjiku Kaijitsu. Although Lonjiku's involvement in the assault is far from willing, it's crucial to the goblins' plans. Lonjiku's been blackmailed, and by his own son Tsuto, no less. Tsuto threatened to reveal his father's ties to one of Sandpoint's most notorious Sczarni families (a loosely affiliated network of Varisian criminals), promising to keep quiet if his father would simply comply with a few "innocent" requests; namely, making sure that someone leaves the north town gate open, that a ladder is left against the wall in the cemetery, and that on the night before the big festival no one would be at the Sandpoint Glassworks. Shamed by his son's knowledge of his ties to the Sczarni and his own lack of courage to stand up to his offspring, and ignorant of Tsuto's alliance with the local goblins or his part in the plan to raid Sandpoint, Lonjiku set things into motion and then feigned illness—he remains in his home on the bluff overlooking Sandpoint during the Swallowtail Festival.

When Father Zantus uses a thunderstone to signal the start of the cathedral's consecration, three different groups of goblins quickly mobilize. One group (smuggled in by Tsuto in a covered wagon and left behind some buildings south of the festival square) emerges and races north into the festival grounds. Another band invades via the open northern gate. Both of these groups are timed to throw the town into panic and distract the town guards from realizing that a third band of goblins is infiltrating the city's cemetery to steal the remains of the town's previous religious leader, Ezakien Tobyn.

Dozens of goblins take part in the raid, members of five different tribes scattered throughout the Sandpoint hinterlands who have been organized into this strike by the most powerful local goblin tribe of them all—the Thistletop goblins.

When the goblins attack, they shriek and leap and race and cackle, taking great joy in the panic and fear they spread among the humans (whom most goblins insultingly call "longshanks"). Some goblins wave

torches and light tents on fire, while others chase children and pets with ill intent. The entire time, goblin warchanters sing a horrifically catchy and nerve-racking goblin song at the top of their lungs, further spurring their kin into murderous frenzy. Everywhere the PCs look, goblins tear through merchant stalls, menace locals with their dogslicers, throw rocks through windows, and otherwise make terrors of themselves.

There are 30 goblins raiding Sandpoint, but there's no need to run combat with all of them. You can focus strictly on the goblins the PCs encounter, using the following three encounters to introduce players to the knee-biting horror that is the goblin.

INITIAL ASSAULT (CR 1)

As Father Zantus takes the stage to begin his speech, the PCs should be nearby. The point of this encounter is to force the PCs, who might or might not yet know each other, to work together to fight against a group of goblins. Read or paraphrase the following to start the encounter.



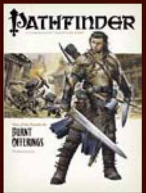
A sharp retort, like the crack of distant thunder, slices through the excited crowd as the sun's setting rays paint the western sky. A stray dog that has crawled under a nearby wagon to sleep starts awake, and the buzz of two dozen conversations quickly hushes as all heads turn toward the central podium, where a beaming Father Zantus has taken the stage. He clears his throat, takes a breath to speak, and suddenly a woman's scream slices through the air. A few moments later, another scream rises, then another. Beyond them, a sudden surge of strange new voices rises—high-pitched, tittering shrieks that sound not quite human. The crowd parts and something low to the ground races by, giggling with disturbing glee as the stray dog gives a pained yelp and then collapses with a gurgle, its throat cut open from ear to ear. As blood pools around its head, the raucous sound of a strange song begins, chanted from shrill, scratchy voices.

THE GOBLIN SONG

GOBLINS CHEW AND GOBLINS BITE
GOBLINS CUT AND GOBLINS FIGHT.
STAB THE DOG AND CUT THE HORSE,
GOBLINS EAT AND TAKE BY FORCE!

GOBLINS RACE AND GOBLINS JUMP
GOBLINS SLASH AND GOBLINS BUMP.
BURN THE SKIN AND MASH THE HEAD,
GOBLIN HERE AND YOU BE DEAD!

CHASE THE BABY, CATCH THE PUP.
BONK THE HEAD TO SHUT IT UP.
BONES BE CRACKED, FLESH BE STEVED,
WE BE GOBLINS! YOU BE FOOD!



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CREATURES: Any PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check sees that the shape that raced by and killed the dog now hides at the wagon's edge—a single goblin, licking the blood from its dogslicer as it looks excitedly at the crowd, seeking out a new target. The song is a nameless goblin rhyme, performed by several goblin warchanters and intended to give the goblins a boost of bardic music to spur them on. There are several goblin warchanters generating this effect, and they spread out their performances so that for the first 5 rounds of these first two initial combats, all goblins gain a +1 bonus on saving throws against fear and charm effects and on attack and damage rolls—these bonuses are included in their stat blocks below.

In this initial battle, a group of three goblins (including the one who just killed the dog) attacks the PCs.

GOBLINS (3)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	6 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Melee dogslicer +3 (1d4+1/19–20)

TACTICS

During Combat You should take care to present these goblins' tactics in battle as scatterbrained at best. One goblin might try to clamber up onto a nearby table of food (Climb DC 5) so he can gain a +1 bonus on attacks for higher ground against a PC. Another might get distracted by a plate of salmon and waste his action stuffing his pockets with food for later. A third could grab up a big carving knife if his dogslicer breaks. Each time a goblin takes an action, he should interact in

some way with the environment, even if doing so wastes an opportunity to hurt a PC. The point of this battle isn't to test PC resources but to set the scene and flavor for the insanity that is the goblin.

Morale These goblins are convinced that the plan to raid Sandpoint can't fail and are far too excited to consider the possibility of losing the battle. As such, they fight to the death—but more by accident than out of any real sense of bravery.

GOBLIN PYROS (CR 2)

After the PCs defeat the initial three goblins, give them a few rounds to recover from the first battle. As they do, impress upon them the chaos that has engulfed Sandpoint. Goblins race everywhere, running amok and singing and slashing indiscriminately. At the point the PCs seem about ready to take action, a sudden bloom of fire from a nearby unattended wagon or cart should grab their attention.

CREATURES: A group of goblins has found the cart full of fuel for the sunset bonfire just south of the festival grounds and has lit it on fire. Even if the PCs don't rush to investigate the burning wagon, they are soon confronted with several cackling and shrieking goblins armed with dogslicers and torches. As soon as the goblins see the PCs, they shriek in delight and attack. These goblins have not only armed themselves with burning torches (weapons they wield with maniacal delight), but also have the support of one of their warchanters—a goblin bard with great skill at whipping fellow goblins



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into furious, shrieking frenzies by using her bardic performance ability.

GOBLINS (3)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	6 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Melee dogslicer +3 (1d4+1/19–20) or
torch –1 (1d2+1 plus 1 fire)

TACTICS

During Combat On the first round, the goblins gleefully try to burn PCs with their torches, but as soon as one of them is slain, the surviving goblins realize the fight is for real and switch to their dogslicers.

Morale If the warchanter dies, remaining goblin warriors panic and flee.

GOBLIN WARCHANTER

XP	CR	HP
200	1/2	9

Goblin bard 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +1 size)
hp 9 (1d8+1)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3; +1 vs. fear and charm

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dogslicer +1 (1d4/19–20) or
whip +1 (1d2 nonlethal)

Ranged shortbow +6 (1d4+1/×3)

Special Attacks bardic performance 5 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +1)

Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +2)

1st (2/day)—*cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 12)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 11), *ghost sound* (DC 11), *mage hand*,
message

TACTICS

During Combat The warchanter continues her bardic performance during combat, using her whip to try to trip PCs. She casts *hideous laughter* on any PC who seems to be particularly dangerous, and *cure light wounds* on herself after she is first wounded.

Morale The warchanter fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +0; **CMB** –2; **CMD** 12

Feats Martial Weapon Proficiency (dogslicer)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Linguistics +3, Perception +5, Perform (sing) +5, Ride +8, Stealth +15

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ bardic knowledge +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** studded leather, dogslicer, shortbow with 20 arrows, whip, 20 gp

DEVELOPMENT: After tangling with the first two groups of goblins, the PCs are likely to be wounded.

Keep them on their toes by describing goblin antics around them (perhaps a goblin leaps off a roof in an attempt to land on a victim but misses and breaks his neck, or maybe a goblin throws a lit torch at a fleeing mother only to have it land on another goblin and light his armor on fire), but allow them a few rounds to catch their breath. If they're particularly wounded, Father Zantus rushes to their side. He thanks them for what they're doing to help fight the goblins and can cast up to three *cure light wounds* or use channel energy two more times on the PCs to heal them (he's used the ability already several times to save wounded citizens). He heals 2d6 points of damage with each use of channel energy.

As soon as the PCs have mostly recovered, it's time to spring the big fight on them.

DIE, DOG, DIE!

This final event during the goblin raid occurs after things at the festival itself have calmed somewhat. Here and there, the sounds of battle, clanging swords, calls of support by the town guard, and shrieking and singing goblins echo through the streets, but at the festival itself, most of the citizens have fled. One or two goblins remain behind to scavenge food, and many more lie dead (along with a few unfortunate citizens). It should be obvious that the fight has moved on, especially when the sound of a scream and a frantic barking come from the north.



GOBLIN
WARCHANTER



CREATURES: Just east of the White Deer, near Sandpoint's north gate, a goblin commando mounted on a goblin dog has bravely attacked a noble and his hunting dog. The man in question is named **ALDERN FOXGLOVE** (CN male human aristocrat 4/rogue 3), a noble destined to play an important role in Chapter Two, but who for now is merely another frightened citizen. Aldern cowers behind a rain barrel where he calls for help, while his dog fights against the commando. As the PCs arrive on the scene, they're just in time to see the goblin commando kill the dog with his horsechopper. The dog crashes dying to the ground as the commando's goblin kin (who were themselves cowering nearby as the dog was handled) throw up a cheer and emerge from hiding.

The goblins are still distracted by their kill, and as they turn their attention to Foxglove, the PCs have the opportunity to attack with surprise. These goblins do not gain the benefits of a warchanter's bardic performance, for by this time, the goblin bards have exhausted their daily uses of this ability.

GOBLIN COMMANDO

XP	CR	HP
200	1/2	12

Male goblin ranger 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size)

hp 12 (1d10+2)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk horsechopper +4 (1d8+1)

Ranged shortbow +5 (1d4/×3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (animals +2)

TACTICS

During Combat The goblin commando makes sure to use his

Mounted Combat feat as often as possible to try to negate an attack each round against his mount, and uses his superior mobility to remain out of melee so he can shoot at the PCs with his bow from dogback (taking the standard -4 penalty for using a ranged weapon while mounted). If all of his goblin warriors are defeated, he drops his bow and races in to fight the PCs in melee.

Morale The commando fights to the death—yet does so more by accident than out of bravery.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 15, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14

Feats Mounted Combat

Skills Handle Animal +3, Linguistics +0, Perception +5, Ride +9, Stealth +13, Survival +5

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ track +1, wild empathy +0

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** studded leather, masterwork horsechopper, shortbow with 20 arrows

GOBLIN DOG

XP	CR	HP
400	1	9

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 157)

GOBLINS (3)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	6 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Melee dogslicer +2 (1d4/19–20)

DEVELOPMENT: Once the goblins are dealt with, Aldern thanks the PCs profusely. If one of the PCs is an attractive female human, elf, or half-elf, he focuses his attentions on her, complimenting her on her skills in the fight and on her beauty. Otherwise, he focuses his attention on the PC who seemed to do the most damage in the fight, complimenting him on his skill at arms and bravery.

As he glances about nervously looking for more goblins, he informs the PCs that he'll be in town for a few more days; he's staying at the Rusty Dragon to the south, and when they get a chance, he'd love to talk with them more and perhaps reward them properly for saving his life.

VICTORY!

By the time the PCs defeat the goblin commando and save Aldern Foxglove from his fate, Sandpoint's overall battle against the goblins has been decided. Surviving goblins flee north in droves, in some cases preferring to leap to their certain deaths off the cliff at Junker's Edge rather than be captured. Several of the little menaces are caught alive, but they prove useless when interrogated; none of these goblins know much more than that they were given orders to kill everyone in town and burn down the place. None of the captured goblins can even remember their leader's name, apart from the fact that he was one of "you longshanks." Their leader was on a secret mission to the town's graveyard—that much most goblins can say, but none of them know what that mission was. It was secret, after all!

In fact, this "leader" was Tsuto Kaijitsu. He led a group of Thistletop goblins into the cemetery, stole Ezakien Tobyn's remains, and then returned to Thistletop so his lover Nualia could offer the remains to Lamashtu in return for the first stage of her transformation into a demon.

In the shadow of the goblin attack, Sandpoint is hardly interested in finishing up the Swallowtail Festival—citizens retreat to their homes to hide and recover from the day's horrors, yet as they go, they take the time to thank the PCs for saving them. Finally, at some point before the end of the day, the PCs are approached by Ameiko Kaijitsu. The innkeeper has been quite impressed with the PCs' actions, and offers them free rooms at the Rusty Dragon for a week as a way to thank them for helping to defeat the goblins.



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PART TWO: LOCAL HEROES

AS SANDPOINT RECOVERS FROM THE ATTACK AND BURIES ITS (THANKFULLY FEW) DEAD, THE CITIZENS DO THEIR BEST TO GET ON WITH THEIR LIVES. THE CATHEDRAL IS CONSECRATED THE NEXT DAY DURING A MUCH MORE SUBDUED AND INDOOR CEREMONY, BUT BY THE END OF THE WEEK, THE GOBLIN ATTACK IS REMEMBERED MOSTLY WITH CHUCKLES. NOW THAT THE TERROR OF THE RAID IS OVER, IMAGES OF GOBLINS ACCIDENTALLY LIGHTING THEMSELVES ON FIRE, GETTING STEPPED ON BY HORSES, OR DROWNING IN HALF-FULL RAIN BARRELS COLOR MEMORIES OF THE RAID IN AN ALMOST COMICAL LIGHT. BUT ONE THING THE LOCALS HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN IS THEIR NEW HEROES.

Unless a PC takes extra care to hide it, his name soon becomes household knowledge. Everywhere the PCs go in town, locals welcome them. A simple walk down Main Street might result in local baker Alma Avertin charging out to press a fresh-baked loaf of bread into the arms of the skinniest PC with worried comments that he must be starving. A visit to the Hagfish brings an immediate round of cheers, applause, and a round of drinks on the house (and likely a challenge to drink from Norah's tank). A trip to the Sandpoint Theater might have Cyrdak Drokus trying to talk the PC with the highest Charisma into auditioning for his new play. A stop at Savah's Armory is greeted with an instantaneous offer of 20% off anything in stock. Certainly not everyone in Sandpoint wants to be the PCs' new best friend, but they should feel more than welcome.

The events detailed in this part can happen in any order—feel free to mix things up as you wish, or to fit logically with the PCs' actions in town. These events can even continue to occur after the PCs have turned their attention to the Catacombs of Wrath or Thistletop, or even well into the next adventure.

THE DESECRATED VAULT (CR 1/2)

In the aftermath of the raid, Father Zantus doesn't immediately notice the desecration of Ezakien Tobyn's vault, but soon after (perhaps even that evening), he realizes that the stone door to the previous priest's burial vault hangs ajar. Fearing the worst, Zantus quickly seeks out Sheriff Hemlock, who in turn contacts the PCs and asks them to accompany him to the Sandpoint Boneyard. Belor Hemlock doesn't expect much—in a worst-case scenario, maybe a goblin got trapped in the vault—but he wants the PCs along so he can appraise them. During the walk up to the Boneyard, Hemlock thanks the PCs again for their aid during the goblin assault, and asks many additional questions. He wants to find out more about the PCs—like, what their plans for the future are. Having an allied group of adventurers is a significant resource, and Hemlock hopes to foster such an alliance with the PCs.

Hemlock asks Zantus to wait in the Cathedral once they reach the Boneyard, but asks the PCs to aid him in investigating the scene. The vault in question is a 20-foot-square stone structure that stands near the wall. Used to house the remains of previous caretakers, priests, and acolytes who served at the Cathedral, the stone door does indeed hang ajar. The ground around the place is churned up as well—a DC 13 Perception check is enough to reveal many of the footprints are goblin prints, but some of them appear to have been left by a larger humanoid. A DC 13 Survival check is enough to confirm that about six goblins and one Medium humanoid climbed the wall, then approached and entered the vault.

CREATURES: It's an easy enough task to open the vault door, but Tsuto's left a frightening surprise behind to further the campaign of terror against Sandpoint. After he stole Tobyn's bones, he used a *robe of bones* to place two human skeletons in the vault as he left. The skeletons have remained within ever since—they immediately lurch out to attack anyone who opens the vault door, and fight until they are destroyed.

HUMAN SKELETONS (2)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	4 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 250)

DEVELOPMENT: A search of the vault's interior turns up two things of interest. First, the discarded *robe of bones* lies in a corner (no patches remain on the now only faintly magical robe). Second, and more disturbing, is the fact that the sarcophagus that contained Ezakien's body has been opened and his remains stolen. Sheriff Hemlock has little insight into why the bones have been taken, but if the PCs don't come to the conclusion, he'll muse that, perhaps, the goblin raid was a distraction so that this unknown thief could steal the remains of the town's previous priest. The sheriff recommends that the PCs keep this information to themselves, in any event—the townsfolk have had enough distress this week, after all!



THE SHOPKEEP'S DAUGHTER (CR 2)

Pick a PC, preferably one who fancies himself a ladies' man or a popular fellow (while this encounter assumes the PC is a male, it can just as easily work for a female PC). The combination of this character's good looks, fame, and heroic qualities sends ripples through town, and now and then the PCs should overhear rumors and whispers about this PC's "availability." The PC should catch local young women giggling or blushing as he walks by, and he might receive a few anonymous love letters or other minor trinkets left as gifts at wherever he's been staying the night.

At some point before these idle fancies have a chance to develop into real relationships, one of Sandpoint's most brazen citizens makes her move. Daughter of the owner of the Sandpoint General Store, **SHAYLISS VINDER** (CN female human commoner 1) is certainly an attractive young woman, but it's her older sister who's been in the gossip lately. Rumor holds that Katrine Vinder's been "shacking up" with one of the workers at the lumber mill, and her overly protective father's been up in arms about it.

So when Shayliss bashfully approaches a PC, her claim that her father has been too distracted with her sister's private life to keep up with the store's pest problem should seem plausible. Shayliss explains that the store has rats. Why, just yesterday, she's sure she saw one the size of a goblin hiding behind a barrel at the far end of the basement. Her father doesn't believe her, but she knows he's just more distracted by what Katrine might or might not be up to at the lumber mill. And since there's this handy new hero in town, well, Shayliss just thought maybe said hero could come back with her to kill a few rats in the store's basement. She stresses that there's not many rats, certainly not enough to warrant having more than one hero to take care of them. If other PCs insist on coming along, she throws her hands up in the air in disgust and says, "Never mind, I'll take care of them some other way" and walks off in a huff, hoping her hero comes with her alone anyway. If he doesn't, she simply approaches him again when he's alone and repeats her request.

Of course, there are no rats in the basement. Shayliss is, if anything, even more of a trouble-seeker than her sister, something that a DC 20 Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check can warn a PC about. Any refusal to accompany flirtatious Shayliss back to the store must be handled delicately; without a successful Bluff check (against her Sense Motive +0) or a DC 20 Diplomacy check, her infatuation with the PC might quickly turn into bitter hate, and she could become a recurring foil as she spreads slanderous rumors about the PC and his friends.

Shayliss reveals her true intentions as soon as she has her chosen PC alone in the basement of her father's store; her bodice comes off and she slides herself into an

embrace as she tries to guide the PC over to a convenient cot someone's set up in the back of the room.

Whatever develops from this awkward interlude, Shayliss' father Ven Vinder is destined to head down into the basement not long after Shayliss makes her move. Allow the PC a DC 15 Perception check to hear Ven coming down the stairs at the far end of the basement. If the PC fails to notice Ven's approach, he certainly will when the shopkeep finds the PC and his daughter, roars in rage, and threatens the PC with his large and meaty fists.

If the PC flees, Ven won't follow, but neither will he allow the PC or his friends to shop in his store anymore. Being a well-liked man in town, Ven's displeasure with the PCs imposes a -2 penalty on all Diplomacy checks made in town until the PCs find some way to make things right with him.

A PC who tries to talk his way out of the situation can do so with a successful Bluff check or a DC 20 Diplomacy check; success with a roll 10 higher than the required DC indicates that the character has not only extricated himself, but has done so in a way that leaves no hard feelings with Shayliss, who might try to seduce the PC again at a later date.

This encounter is not meant to be physically ruinous to the PCs, but it can certainly head that way—Ven might be a commoner, but he knows his way around a fistfight. If the PC retaliates with lethal force, Ven tries to flee with his daughter to call the sheriff, at which point the PC's reputation in town immediately falls under scrutiny. If either Ven or Shayliss is killed, the PC faces a murder charge, spends 1d3 days in jail, and is then sent to Magnimar for trial.

VEN VINDER

XP	CR	HP
600	2	31

Male middle-aged human commoner 7

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (-1 Dex)

hp 31 (7d6+7)

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +4 (1d3+4)

TACTICS

During Combat Ven always uses Power Attack when pummeling foes. Although he's enraged to find his beloved daughter in the arms of a "thug," he won't continue beating on a foe once his target is unconscious—but neither will Ven attempt to stanch a beaten foe's bleeding.

Morale Ven is enraged, but if reduced below 5 hit points, he drops to his knees and begs for mercy. Of course, if granted mercy, Ven's anger remains, and he'll nurse a grudge against the PC once he's had a chance to recover and foster fresh anger.



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STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 8, **Con** 10, **Int** 11, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 14

Feats Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill

Focus (Intimidate), Toughness

Skills Appraise +7, Intimidate +12, Perception +9, Profession (merchant) +9

Languages Common

STORY AWARD: If the PCs manage to navigate this delicate encounter without hurting anyone and without disrupting the Vinder family, award the party 800 XP.

THE BOAR HUNT (CR 2)

This event occurs whenever the PCs decide to pay a visit to the Rusty Dragon to take up Aldern Foxglove's invitation after they saved him from certain "goblining." If they don't visit him, he seeks them out 1d3 days after the goblin raid. Before he returns to his townhouse in Magnimar in a few more days, he is hoping to go on a boar hunt in nearby Tickwood Forest, and would like to invite along the PCs. If they decline the offer, he seems disappointed but covers it quickly with a shrug. True to his word, he gives the PCs a reward of 50 gp for saving his life, then invites them to stop by his home in Magnimar the next time they're in town.

Whether they agree to the hunt at the Rusty Dragon or after Aldern seeks the PCs out on his own, the hunt itself takes place in nearby Tickwood. Aldern gladly buys each PC his own mount from Goblin Squash Stables, then eagerly leads the PCs and his three menservants west over Tanner's Bridge and along the southern banks of the Turandarok River.

It's a mile-and-a-half ride to Tickwood Forest, just north of the upthrust limestone escarpment known as the Devil's Platter. Despite its ominous name, Tickwood is actually a relatively safe woodland, one well known to be the home of wild boars, deer, firepelt cougars, and the rare giant ticks for which the wood is named—but no goblin tribes dwell within its boundaries.

The ride to Tickwood takes about half an hour, and you can take advantage of this time to build up Aldern's character. He's a charming conversationalist, well read and with a seemingly endless cache of stories about the high life in Magnimar. He's more interested in the PCs, though, and you can use Aldern's interest in the PCs to help the players further establish small details about their characters. Who are they? Where are they from? How long have they been fighting goblins? Do they have any harrowing tales of their adventures? In particular, Aldern should be interested in the PC he was taken with in their previous encounter. Preferably, this should be an attractive female character, in which case his attention should seem like friendly flirting. If instead his attentions are on a character who seemed especially good at fighting goblins, his attention should almost seem like a desperate

attempt to "learn how to be a hero." Play up his attentions as friendly at first, but by the time the PCs finish the hunt, they should feel a little bit annoyed or disturbed at Aldern's seemingly growing obsession.

Feel free to make as much or as little of the actual boar hunt as you wish. The boars of Tickwood are typical specimens of their ilk—ill tempered and quick to attack anyone who intrudes upon their territory. Aldern invites them back to the Rusty Dragon that evening, where he hands the boar over to Ameiko to cook for a big dinner (see "Trouble at the Rusty Dragon").

TICKWOOD BOAR

XP	CR	HP
600	2	18

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 36)



ALDERN
FOXGLOVE

TROUBLE AT THE RUSTY DRAGON

There are only two inns in Sandpoint, so unless all of the PCs are local, they'll need to visit either the White Deer or the Rusty Dragon whenever they need to rest. Since the owner of the Rusty Dragon offered the PCs free rooms for a week as thanks for their heroics, and since Aldern Foxglove is staying here and might invite the PCs here to share a meal, chances are good that the PCs soon become regulars at the Rusty Dragon. Ameiko runs a very adventurer-friendly establishment, and the locals who frequent the establishment's tavern enjoy hearing stories of derring-do and hijinks from the tavern's visitors.

At some point during a visit to the Rusty Dragon (preferably when most or all of the PCs are present—while they're enjoying the boar that they and Foxglove caught is a good time), a surly visitor slams the tavern's door open and bellows out a sharp-tongued command in a strange language.

This is local aristocrat Lonjiku Kaijitsu, an elderly Tian man and one of Sandpoint's most well-known nobles. Characters who speak Minkaian can understand what it is he barks out as he enters the tavern: "Where the hell is my daughter?" The other patrons of the bar, recognizing him and knowing of his reputation for wrathful outbursts, grow very quiet and interested in their meals. If the PCs don't intervene, Lonjiku stalks farther into the tavern, his eyes scanning the room for his daughter only to alight on Sandpoint's newest heroes.

Lonjiku is a middle-aged Tian man, although he looks much older than his age due to lack of sleep caused by recent events—namely, his incidental role in the goblin raid. Increasingly paranoid and wracked with shame, Lonjiku has decided it's time to move back to Magnimar for a while, and he's planning on taking his daughter with him. Accordingly, he's come to the Rusty Dragon to issue an ultimatum to Ameiko—come with him or be cut out

of the will. Secretly, Lonjiku hopes she opts for the latter, as her becoming an adventurer and then an innkeeper has all but shamed him into disowning his daughter already.

When he notices the PCs, though, he gets distracted. Here are the heroes who saved Sandpoint from the raid he played a small part in orchestrating (even if Lonjiku didn't realize exactly what Tsuto was up to at the time). In a fit of jealousy and misguided anger, Lonjiku approaches the PCs and starts accusing them of endangering the townsfolk with their ill-advised "antics" against the goblins, implying they should have left the defense of the town to the city guard and other "trained professionals." If the PCs claim to be adventurers or mercenaries or some similar profession,

Lonjiku barks a derisive laugh, rolls his eyes, and says, "Just what we need—a filthy

band of vagrants to attract even more trouble to town." Play Lonjiku as an arrogant, insulting old man, but just before you push the PCs too far, Ameiko rushes into the front room, a ladle dripping with soup in her hand, to find out what all the ruckus is about.

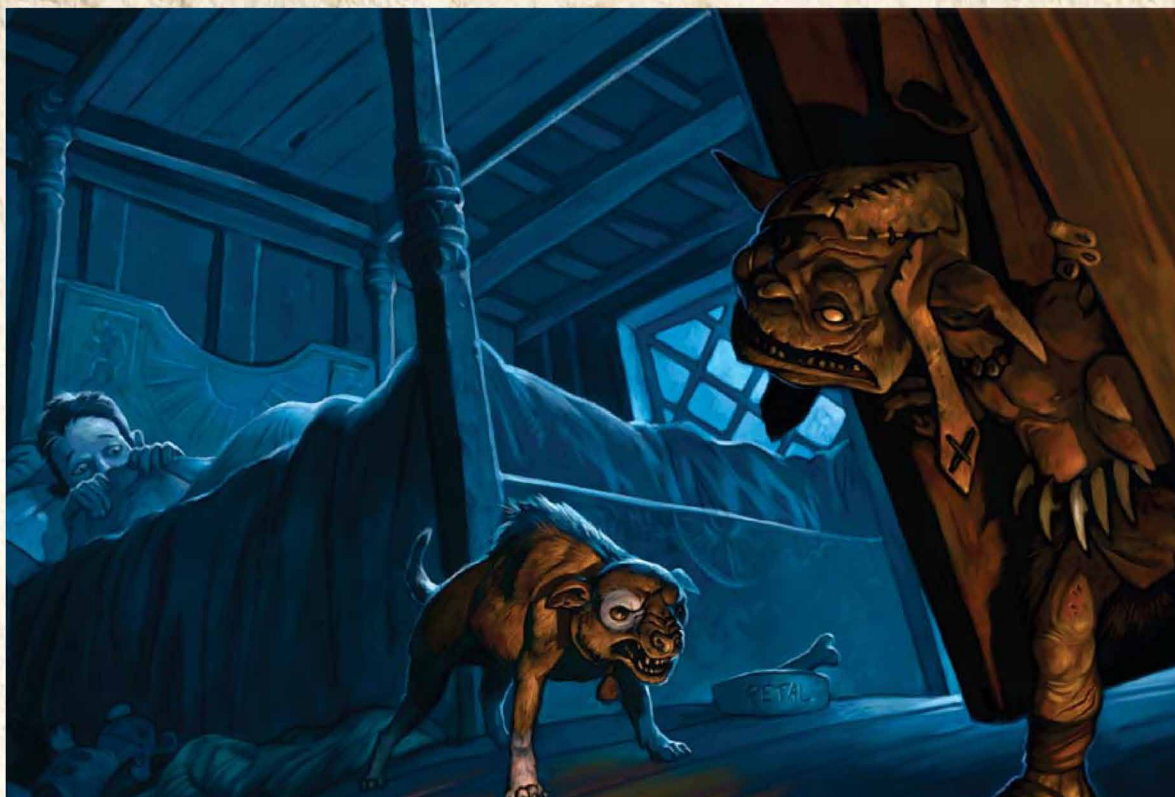
The primary goal of this encounter isn't to start a fight—it's to introduce Lonjiku and Ameiko so that when later events see these two pop up again in more tragic circumstances, the PCs have some sort of reference to them. If the PCs do nothing but watch, the two argue in Minkaian for a moment as Lonjiku issues his ultimatum and Ameiko tells him to leave her inn (albeit with a string of creative and shocking profanity).

Enraged, Lonjiku tries to grab her by the hair to drag her from the tavern, but she dodges and brains him with her soupy ladle, splattering fish stock and potatoes all over his hair and outfit. This act of public defiance wounds Lonjiku's pride more than anything else, and after he sputters for a moment, he finds his voice and utters, "You're as dead to me as your mother," before leaving the tavern.

Allow the PCs to intervene at any moment. Any attempt to subdue, grapple, or forcibly eject Lonjiku from the tavern should automatically succeed (he only has CMD 10, after all). Any actual violence against



AMEIKO
KAJITSU



Lonjiku brings his cowardice to the fore, and he shrieks and flees the tavern. If they attempt instead to help Lonjiku subdue his daughter, he shrieks at the PCs, “I don’t need the help of a band of curs!” before abandoning his attempt and leaving the tavern. Regardless of how Lonjiku leaves, he can’t resist the parting shot to his daughter about her mother—a cruel comment that almost brings Ameiko to tears, yet as her father leaves, she bravely picks up her ladle, inspects it, pulls a hair out of the mess, and says, “I’ll need a well-cleaned ladle now, since jackass stew’s not on the menu.” The resulting cheers and laughter from the tavern’s patrons help her attitude immensely—if the PCs came to her aid, she thanks them, extends their free rooms another week, and tells them their dinner’s on the house.

STORY AWARD: Award the PCs 400 XP if they get involved in the altercation—you can raise this award to 600 XP if they do a particularly good job roleplaying, at your discretion.

MONSTER IN THE CLOSET (CR 1/2)

Alergast and Amele Barrett are a typical Sandpoint family, with two children (little Aeren and baby Verah) and a loyal family dog named Petal. They were present at the Swallowtail Festival, where Aeren saw a goblin light a cat on fire and then caper around the burning remains—the poor boy really hasn’t been the same since. Every night, his howls of terror send Petal into a barking fit, and when his parents investigate, Aeren claims a

goblin came out of his closet. Alergast checked the closet dutifully but found nothing, and ever since, the kid’s complaints about the “closet goblin” have grown more and more tiresome to his parents. Yesterday, Alergast threatened to make Aeren sleep in the woodshed if he couldn’t learn to “be a man” and sleep through an entire night without crying and telling stories.

All of this is told to the PCs by a tearful Amele Barrett several evenings after the goblin raid; she approaches the PCs in a panic, clutching baby Verah to her chest with one hand and clinging to the back of Aeren’s shirt with the other. She goes on to say that last night Alergast didn’t go to soothe Aeren when he had his night terrors. But then, a few moments later, they heard poor Petal cry out in pain and Aeren’s screams turn shrill. This time Aeren wasn’t just having nightmares. Amele pauses, takes a breath, and then shows the PCs Aeren’s arms. They’re covered with fresh goblin bites.

When Alergast burst into the room, he found a goblin crouched on his son’s chest. Petal was dead, a knife deep in his ear, and the goblin was frantically trying to chew off Aeren’s arm. Alergast attacked the goblin and chased it back into the closet, where it clambered into a hole it had cleverly hidden under an old fur. Alergast flew into a rage, and as he started tearing apart the closet in an attempt to get at the goblin, Amele panicked and fled the house with her children to seek out the PCs for aid.

CREATURE: The goblin in the Barrett house is a commando named Gresgurt who sneaked into the building after the raid turned sour. He found a loose



floorboard in the closet, frantically hacked an opening large enough for him to fit into the enclosed crawl space under the house, and pulled a fur over the hole to hide it. He only intended to stay there for a few hours until things died down outside, then planned on sneaking out of town, but the exhaustion of the raid caught up with him and he fell asleep. When he woke the next night and tried to sneak out, he woke Petal and Aeren. As frightened by the dog as the kid was of him, Gresgurt fled back into the crawl space, visions of the hateful and frightening dog filling his little goblin mind. It seemed like every time Gresgurt peeked out, that dog was there, ready to bark. Unable to escape for fear of the dog, Gresgurt subsisted on spiders and worms plucked from the dirt floor of the small crawl space for days, and over those days, his fear turned to anger. His driving desire shifted from escape to a burning need to kill the dog. And yet, he had no real weapons; he'd broken his horsechopper in his efforts to get into the crawl space below the house. All he had left were fragments of the blade, one of which he used to build a crude knife. Tonight, he emerged, killed Petal, and in his nearly starved state tried to eat Aeren alive.

When the PCs arrive at the Barrett house, they find it disturbingly silent. Upon reaching Aeren's room, they find Alergast Barrett on his belly, as if he had crawled into the closet. In truth, he did just that. In an attempt to kill the goblin, Alergast underestimated the creature. When he reached down into the hole to try to grab Gresgurt, the goblin jumped up and cut his throat. Ravenous, the commando tried to haul Alergast's body into the crawl space to eat it, but the body got stuck once he got the upper torso through the hole.

If the PCs pull back Alergast's body, they find him to be quite dead, the flesh of his face and upper torso eaten away. An instant later, the insane goblin shrieks in rage at its stolen dinner and leaps up out of the hole to attack. By this point, Gresgurt's long captivity in the crawl space has left him almost feral with hunger and fear, and he's come to view the entire house as his.

GRESGURT

XP	CR	HP
200	1/2	12

Goblin commando (see page 18)

Melee dagger +3 (1d3+1)

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs kill Gresgurt, Amele is thankful until she learns of her husband's fate, whereupon she has a complete breakdown. The PCs might be at a loss as to what to do with the situation, but fortunately the commotion quickly summons Sheriff Hemlock, who takes in the scene with his customary grim expression. He thanks the PCs for helping and arranges to have the Barrett family stay at the cathedral for a few days. Amele's sister from Magnimar soon arrives in Sandpoint to take the distraught family back south to live with her. If the

PCs are present when she collects her sister's broken family, she shoots them a cold glare and mutters, "Too bad you heroes weren't a bit more thorough in your 'heroing.'"

GRIM NEWS FROM MOSSWOOD

Shalelu Andosana isn't quite a bounty hunter, a survivalist, or a mercenary, but rather a mix of all three. The elven woman passes through town once or twice a season to buy supplies and never remains more than a few days, always staying in the same room at the Rusty Dragon free of charge thanks to her long friendship with Ameiko. Near the end of each visit, she meets with Sheriff Hemlock and Mayor Deverin for a few hours at the garrison to give a report on the state of the hinterlands before she leaves town again, a pouch of gold at her side. Both Hemlock and Deverin value Shalelu's reports, since they provide unbiased insight into how the local farmlands are faring and keep the town council abreast of burgeoning dangers in the region.

Shalelu pays a visit to Sandpoint during the days after the goblin raid—you should time her visit for a point after the PCs have had a chance to get to know folks in Sandpoint and have played through several of the encounters on the preceding pages. Her visit to Sandpoint is unexpected—she last passed through town only a month ago and wasn't expected until the last week of autumn. She dispenses with her visit to the Sandpoint Market and the Rusty Dragon, instead requesting an immediate meeting with Sheriff Hemlock and Mayor Deverin. The unusual meeting and Shalelu's ragged look combine to make an already jumpy populace suspect that the woman brings news of a new goblin threat.

Sheriff Hemlock seeks out the PCs and asks them to join himself, Mayor Deverin, and Shalelu at the town hall, explaining that he's got some news that might interest them. The meeting takes place in a comfortable office on the second floor of the town hall. If they haven't met Kendra Deverin yet, Hemlock introduces the PCs to the mayor and she gratefully thanks each of them for the help they provided Sandpoint during the raid.

Hemlock then introduces Shalelu to the PCs as an "unofficial member of Sandpoint's town guard" (an introduction that causes her to smirk) and the PCs to Shalelu as "Sandpoint's newest crop of goblinslayers." Hemlock explains that Shalelu has been a thorn in the side of the local goblin tribes for years, and that few in the region know more about them than she does. He goes on to recap her report that Sandpoint hasn't been the only place in the region that's had goblin troubles. In short, there's been an increase in goblin-related raids along the Lost Coast, particularly in the dale between Nettlewood and Mosswood. Only a day ago, a farm south of Mosswood was burnt to the ground by a group of goblins. Shalelu was thankfully nearby, and while the farm couldn't be saved, she did rescue the family and drive off the goblins; the family is staying

at a nearby farm for now, but the goblin problem is obviously not going away.

At this point, Hemlock cedes the floor to Shalelu, asking her to tell the PCs what she told him.



“Belor’s told me of your work against the goblins—well done. I’ve dedicated the last several years of my life to keeping them from causing too much trouble around these parts, but they’re tenacious and fecund little runts. Like weeds that bite.

“There are five major goblin tribes in the region, and, traditionally, they’re pretty good at keeping each other in line with intertribal squabbles and the like. Yet from what I’ve been able to piece together, members of all five tribes were involved in the raid on Sandpoint. A fair number of the Mosswood goblins I dealt with yesterday were already pretty beat up, and there was a lot of chatter about the ‘longshanks’ who killed so many of them. Now that I’ve met you, it seems obvious from their descriptions who they were talking about. Seems like you’ve made an impression.

“In any event, the fact that the five tribes are working together disturbs me. Goblin tribes don’t get along unless they’ve got something big planned, and big plans require big bosses. I’m afraid that someone’s moved in on the goblins and organized them. And judging by these recent raids, what they’re organizing seems like bad news for all of us.”

After Shalelu’s speech, Sheriff Hemlock announces that he’s taking a few of his guards south to Magnimar to see about securing additional soldiers to station at Sandpoint for a few weeks, at least until the extent of the goblin threat can be determined. While he’s out of town, he’s asked Shalelu to sniff around Shank’s Wood, Brinestump, Mosswood, Devil’s Platter, and other places where goblins live to see if she can discover anything else about what’s going on. He would also like the PCs to maintain a public presence in Sandpoint over the next few days, if they don’t mind. “The locals seem to have taken to you,” he says, “And seeing you around town will do a lot for keeping worries down over the next few days.”

Once the meeting is over, Shalelu asks to join the PCs for dinner at the Rusty Dragon (or wherever else they may be staying); she’d like to hear more from them about the Sandpoint raid, and in return she’s got a fair amount of goblin lore she can impart to the PCs.

GOBLIN TRIBES: As she mentioned earlier, there are five major goblin tribes in the region. The closest to Sandpoint are the Birdcruncher goblins, who live in caves along the western edge of the Devil’s Platter, although traditionally these goblins are the least aggressive of the five. To the south are the Licktoad goblins of the Brinestump Marsh, pests who are excellent swimmers. East are the Seven Tooth goblins of Shank’s Wood,

goblins who’ve secured a place for themselves by raiding Sandpoint’s junkyard and rebuilding the stolen refuse into armor and weapons. Farther east are the Mosswood goblins, likely the largest tribe but one traditionally held back by feuding families within their own ranks. And finally, there are the Thistletop goblins, who live on the Nettlewood coast atop a small island that some say holds a passing resemblance to a decapitated head.

GOBLIN HEROES: Shalelu notes that goblins generally live short, violent lives. It’s unusual for a single goblin to achieve any real measure of notoriety, but when one does, it’s well earned. Currently, six goblins in the region enjoy the status of “hero.”

Big Gugmut is an unusually muscular and tall goblin from Mosswood who, it is said, had a hobgoblin for a mother and a wild boar for a father.

Koruvus was a champion of the Seven Tooth tribe, as well known for his short temper as he was for his prized possession—a magic longsword sized for a human that the goblin stubbornly kept as his own (despite the fact that it was too large for him to properly wield). Koruvus vanished several months ago after he supposedly discovered a “secret hideout” in a cave along the cliffs, but the Seven Tooth goblins remain convinced he’s out there still, a ghost or worse, waiting to murder any goblin who tries to discover his hideout.

Vorka is a notorious goblin cannibal who lives in the Brinestump marsh, a “hero” mostly to goblins other than the Licktoad tribe.

Rendwattle Gutwad is the obese chieftain of the Brinestump goblins, a corpulent monster who, it is said, never leaves his throne.

Ripnugget is the leader of the Thistletop goblins and controls what the five tribes agree is the best lair.

And then there’s Bruthazmus, an infamous bugbear ranger who lives in northern Nettlewood and often visits the five tribes to trade things he’s stolen from caravans for alcohol, news, or magic arrows. Shalelu notes that Bruthazmus has a particular hatred of elves, and that they have fought on several occasions. To date, neither of them has managed to get the upper hand on the other, but Shalelu bitterly vows that she won’t be the first to fall in their private war.

Shalelu continues to have a presence throughout the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path; as with Sheriff Hemlock, Ameiko Kaijitsu, and Father Zantus, you should use her as a recurring NPC to keep the PCs invested in the region. She can become an ally of the group, even joining them in their efforts against the goblins for a time if you think they need a little extra help. She might even develop a romantic relationship with one of the PCs, especially if one of them is of a like mind and shares her love of the natural world and hatred of the goblins who squat in its tangled places.

It’s likely that, after this event, the PCs will want to start scouring the region for goblins and reasons



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for their increased aggression, but you should use Hemlock's request for them to stay in town as an anchor for now. Once the next chapter begins, the PCs will have plenty to keep them busy in town before they turn their attention to the hinterlands.

SHALELU ANDOSANA

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	53

Female elf fighter 2/ranger 4

CG Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 53 (6d10+16)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +2 vs. enchantments, +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +8/+3 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged +1 composite longbow +11/+6 (1d8+1/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (goblinoids +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +2)

1st—*resist energy*

TACTICS

During Combat Shalelu prefers to fight with her bow, resorting to melee only when truly desperate or when an ally seems in dire need of healing from her wand.

Morale Shalelu is loyal to her friends, and as long as even one of them remains in danger, she won't abandon them. That said, if she feels she can escape, get help, and return in time to save anyone captured by enemies before it's too late, she might try to do so.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Weapon Focus (composite longbow)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +12, Stealth +15, Survival +10, Swim +10

Languages Common, Elven, Goblin

SQ elven magic, favored terrain (forest +2), hunter's bond (companions), PC gear, track +2, weapon familiarity, wild empathy +3

Combat Gear *sleep arrows* (10), *potion of delay poison*, *potions of lesser restoration* (2), *wand of cure light wounds* (25 charges), *antitoxin* (2); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 composite longbow with 20 arrows, masterwork short sword, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *campfire bead**, *cloak of resistance* +1, backpack, bedroll, climber's kit, flint and steel, manacles, silk rope (50 ft.), sunrods (3), trail rations (4 days), waterskin, winter blanket, wooden holy symbol of Desna, 8 pp, 2 gp

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

THE MISSING BARTENDER

Run this event in the morning at some point after Sheriff Hemlock has left town to request more soldiers from Magnimar. The PCs are approached by a timid elderly halfling woman named **BETHANA CORWIN** (NG female halfling commoner 1), a maid who works for Ameiko Kaijitsu at the Rusty Dragon. She's obviously upset and asks to speak to the PCs somewhere in private.

In short, her employer has gone missing. Bethana woke earlier this morning to find that Ameiko hadn't already started breakfast, for the first time Bethana could remember. Worried, she knocked on Ameiko's door but didn't get a response. Against her better judgment, Bethana entered Ameiko's room to find it empty and the bed unspent in. Worse, she found a crumpled piece of parchment near the bed—a note from Ameiko's older brother Tsuto.

SHALELU
ANDOSANA

Hello, sis!

I hope this letter finds you well, and with some free time on your hands, because we've got something of a problem. It's to do with father. Seems that he might have had something to do with Sandpoint's recent troubles with the goblins, and I didn't want to bring the matter to the authorities because we both know he'd just weasel his way out of it. You've got some pull here in town, though. If you can meet me at the Glassworks at midnight tonight, maybe we can figure out how to make sure he faces the punishment he deserves. Knock twice and then three times more and then once more at the delivery entrance and I'll let you in.

In any case, I don't have to impress upon you the delicate nature of this request. If news got out, you know these local rubes would assume that you and I were in on the whole thing too, don't you? They've got no honor at all around these parts. I still don't understand how you can stand to stay here.

Anyway, don't tell anyone about this. There are other complications as well, ones I'd rather talk to you in person about tonight. Don't be late.

Tsuto

At this point, Bethana hands the PCs the note. Although it was written in Minkaian (likely to keep prying eyes from reading it, Bethana muses), Ameiko had been teaching Bethana the language over the last few years. The halfling has helpfully already translated the note's message on the opposite side—this note is reproduced as Handout 1-1.

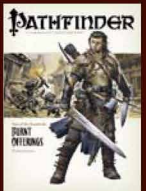
Bethana explains that Tsuto was something of a scandal when he was born back in 4688 (a year before Ameiko), since he's a half-elf. Bethana sagely notes, with big eyes, that neither of Ameiko's parents are elves. It was obvious that old Lonjiku wasn't the boy's father, and his rage at the discovery of his wife's indiscretion was the talk of the town for months. Lonjiku's wife Atsui never revealed who the father was, and it's a testament to Lonjiku's stubbornness that they remained married. Tsuto was handed over to the Turandarok Academy to be raised outside of the Kaijitsu family, ignored by his father and forbidden visits from his mother. Ameiko started visiting him in secret once she learned about his existence at the age of 10, visiting him a few times a month to keep him company, bring him some food, and promise him that someday things would get all sorted out. That all changed in 4705, when they had a terrible argument in which Tsuto struck Ameiko. Bethana doesn't know what the argument was about, but whatever it was sent Ameiko away from Sandpoint for a year, during which time she made a living as an

adventurer. She returned to Sandpoint a year later to attend her mother's funeral. Tsuto was quite public in his opinions that his father had pushed Atsui off a cliff to her death, and during the funeral there was a confrontation. Lonjiku nearly broke Tsuto's jaw with his cane, after which Tsuto cursed him and left Sandpoint. Ameiko has tried to reestablish contact with him ever since, but was never able to track him down.

Bethana's worried that Tsuto's up to no good. Since Sheriff Hemlock's out of town, the PCs are the only ones she can turn to. She begs them to head over to the Glassworks and find out what happened to Ameiko as soon as possible.

ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

You can certainly design additional encounters in Sandpoint after this part of the adventure is over. Appendix Two: Sandpoint (see pages 370–387) provides numerous NPCs whom the PCs can encounter—perhaps the PCs are approached by Daviren Hosk of Goblin Squash Stables and offered a bounty of 5 gp for every pair of goblin ears they bring him, or maybe the PCs are invited by Cyrdak Drokus of the Sandpoint Theater to do reenactments of their fights against the goblins (accompanied, of course, by fine illusion-work from Cyrdak as special effects). They could even be invited to Niska Mvashti's house for a harrow deck reading to reveal the secrets of their future. Take advantage of this opportunity to foreshadow events to come as you see fit!



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THE PROCESS OF GLASSMAKING IS AS MUCH AN ART AS IT IS A CRAFT, AND ONE THAT THE KAJITSU FAMILY HAS HELD PRIDE IN FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS. AFTER THE FAMILY WAS EXILED FROM TIAN XIA AND MADE THE PERILOUS JOURNEY OVER THE CROWN OF THE WORLD, THEIR SKILL AT GLASSMAKING PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN SECURING A ROLE AMONG THE ARISTOCRACY. WHEN THE SANDPOINT MERCANTILE LEAGUE WAS ESTABLISHED TO FOUND THE TOWN, THE KAJITSUS WERE THERE. NOT LONG AFTER SANDPOINT WAS FOUNDED, THEY BEGAN CONSTRUCTION OF WHAT WOULD BECOME ONE OF THE TOWN'S MOST UNIQUE AND PROFITABLE BUSINESSES—THE SANDPOINT GLASSWORKS.

Tsuto's primary responsibility to Nualia was to serve as the link between Sandpoint and Thistletop, since not only did he know the town the best, but he also had links to one of its most important citizens—his father. After blackmailing Lonjiku into aiding in the preparation of Sandpoint for the goblin raid, Tsuto had his father right where he wanted him. A few days after the raid, he sent his father a note demanding a payment of 2,000 gp or Tsuto would reveal Lonjiku's role in the raid. Infuriated, Lonjiku privately decided it was time to take care of his wife's son, once and for all. He agreed to the payment,

Lonjiku dealt with, Tsuto sent a note to his sister, Ameiko, the one person in Sandpoint he didn't hate. He asked her to meet him at the Glassworks the night after he murdered Lonjiku, hoping to convince Ameiko to join Nualia's band. Unfortunately, he miscalculated his sister's loyalty to Sandpoint, and when she refused to join with him, he had his goblins beat her unconscious, bound her, and locked her in area **A21** below the Glassworks. He's not quite sure what to do with her and plans on heading back north to Thistletop with her to ask Nualia for advice, intending to leave the Glassworks an abattoir to further throw fear into the hearts of Sandpoint's citizens.

When the PCs arrive at the Glassworks, they find the building curiously silent. Neighbors have noticed the lack of traffic into and from the building, but since the furnace chimney still plumes with smoke, most assume that the building is simply closed to allow Lonjiku and his workers some privacy while they work on a big project. A quick investigation of the building perimeter reveals that curtains have been drawn over the windows and all the doors are locked. The skylights above that look into areas **A1** and **A17** are unobscured, and a character who makes a DC 20 Climb check to get on the roof can look through them (which, in the case of **A17**, reveals a gruesome sight indeed). The rumble of the Glassworks' furnace is plainly audible from within, but a character who listens at any of the curtained windows along area **A17** and makes a DC 12 Perception check can also hear what sounds like high-pitched giggles, shrieks, and breaking glass as well.

All of the external doors can be picked with a DC 20 Disable Device check; battering them down takes a bit



more work (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 23). In either case, such acts are quick to draw gawkers eager to find out what Sandpoint's new heroes are doing trying to break into the Glassworks. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy check or a Bluff or Intimidate check is more than enough to calm and disperse the locals, especially given the odd fact that the Glassworks should be open for business anyway. Several locals suggest that the PCs head up to Kaijitsu Manor to talk to Lonjiku or his servants rather than breaking into the place, but a trip up Schooner Gulch Road to the manor reveals that none of the servants there have seen Lonjiku since yesterday evening. They assume he's working down in the Glassworks and point to the smoke pouring out of its chimney as proof. In fact, the Glassworks are now under the control of Lonjiku's treacherous son and his goblin allies.

A1 DISPLAY ROOM: This room contains a shop where customers can browse the various glassware produced here. Bottles, windowpanes, and glasswork art are the primary contents.

A2 STOREROOM: Finished products are stored here.

A3 CLEANING CLOSET: Cleaning supplies and tools such as brooms are stored here.

A4 STOREROOM: Tools, clothing for servants, firewood, and other miscellaneous supplies are kept here.

A5 SERVANT'S QUARTERS: Lonjiku's staff of skilled laborers lived on site; the eight workers slept here. The beds are all in various states of disarray and blood is spattered over the walls and sheets. No bodies are apparent—they've been taken by the goblins to area A17 for entertainment after they murdered the sleeping workers the night before.

A6 DINING ROOM: The staff used this room to relax, eat, and play cards in their off hours. The room is a wreck—when Tsuto's goblins came through here, they made a mess of it.

A7 WASHROOM: This room contains several washtubs for bathing and laundry; the small room adjacent is a toilet.

A8 KITCHEN: This is where the staff prepared their meals; the goblins tore this place apart looking for food, and the room is in disarray as a result.

A9 PANTRY: This room is a mess; barrels and sacks of grain and crates of dried fish and venison have been completely demolished, and most of the food is missing. A broken



dogslicer lies near the northern corner, discarded by a goblin who ruined it trying to get at the food.

A10 STOREROOM: This room contains several mounds of firewood for the kitchen stove.

A11 MEETING ROOM: The staff meets here to discuss work schedules or large projects.

A12 RECEPTION: Customers seeking custom glass jobs or looking for business opportunities to export glass meet with a representative here to arrange business.

A13 OFFICE: A smaller office for more private meetings with important customers.

A14 FILES: Several cabinets and shelves containing files and contracts with dozens of exporters and businesses from Magnimar, Korvosa, and other local towns fill this room.

A15 PREPARATION: The primary agents for glassmaking (sand, soda ash, and lime) are prepared here.

A16 LOADING ROOM: A wheelbarrow sits against a wall here, and shelves on the walls contain additional reagents to create different colors of glass (manganese for clear glass, cobalt for blue, and tin for white; untreated glass is green, while a high quantity of any reagent makes black glass). A safe on the floor hangs open after Tsuto used his father's key to open it and stole the gold and silver used to make red and yellow glass. Through a doorway, stairs lead down to area A19.

A17 GLASSWORKING ROOM: A furnace burns along the southeast wall of this room. Marble tables sit in the chamber, used to work raw glass into usable shapes, with nearby wooden tables cluttered with various tools of the trade. The building's furnace rumbles loudly, penalizing Perception checks with a -4 penalty. The main furnace burns at the northeast end, a large chamber that utilizes alchemically treated wood that burns with a hot blue light. The workers use this room to melt glass, but Lonjiku also periodically "rented" the furnace to Sczarni thugs for the disposal of evidence, as the fires are hot enough to burn bones and teeth. A creature bull rushed or otherwise placed in the furnace takes 6d6 points of fire damage per round. The opening is narrow enough to prevent a Medium creature from being pushed inside easily (bull rush attempts to do so take a -8 penalty). As the furnace's stone pipes run southwest, they reach smaller and progressively cooler furnaces used to keep glassworking projects at the proper temperature—glass shatters if it's allowed to cool too quickly.

When the PCs arrive, this room is a gruesome display of goblin boredom. The bodies of the eight murdered staff

lie in various stages of dismemberment; the goblins have been burning legs and arms in the furnace with glee, and pouring melted glass on the remains in an attempt to duplicate Tsuto's masterpiece. This would be his father's body, propped up in a chair in the central alcove and encased in thick, runny sheets of hardened glass.

This is where the PCs are most likely to encounter Tsuto's goblins—see "Against the Goblins" for details on this fight.

A18 STAIRS: These stairs lead down to the beach below.

A19 UNDERGROUND STORAGE: This room is used to store sand and other raw materials. Two wheelbarrows sit against the wall. Just east of the stairs up to area A16, a brick wall has been dismantled to reveal an older passageway leading south. This is one of two walls Rokuro Kaijitsu bricked over after he learned that several of his employees were using the basement as a staging ground for their smuggling operation. Tsuto's goblins removed this wall and the one north of area A22 the night before the raid. With his father blackmailed, Tsuto had no worries that word of his actions unblocking these tunnels would spread.

A20 STORAGE: This room is used to store glassware, windows, and other finished goods.

A21 STORAGE: The door to this room is locked. Although the room is used for storage, Tsuto has recently turned it into an impromptu holding cell. His sister, Ameiko, lies on her side on the floor in here, bound at the wrists and ankles with rope and blindfolded and gagged with strips of leather. For more information about her reaction to being rescued, see Rescuing Ameiko on page 32.

A22 SECRET OFFICE: Once used by smugglers to track their illicit businesses, this room served Tsuto Kaijitsu for the past few days as a place to orchestrate his actions in Sandpoint. After murdering his father and imprisoning his sister, Tsuto drank himself to sleep in this room. He likely wakes when a goblin fleeing from the PCs races down here to warn him of trouble (see "Against the Goblins").

A23 SMUGGLER'S ENTRANCE: The long tunnel leading from this room winds for some distance through the bedrock below Sandpoint. Built decades ago by smugglers, the tunnel remains stable and serviceable as it winds lazily northeast for just over 1,750 feet before reaching a dead end. A DC 20 Perception check reveals a secret door that opens into a 30-foot-diameter cave on the side of the cliff overlooking the Varisian Gulf. The cave mouth slopes down to a narrow beach; no Survival check is required to note the crude collection of goblin beds or remnants of their meals strewn about the cave.



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From the tunnel's southern half, two side tunnels branch off. One leads east to a collapse after 400 feet (it once led all the way to the Turandarok River), but the one to the west seems to have once been bricked over at the point where it diverges from the main tunnel. This westerly passageway winds for 50 feet before turning north for another 100 feet. This tunnel was an attempt to break into what the smugglers assumed would be the garrison basement, so that they could smuggle prisoners out for great profit. Yet what they discovered were the Catacombs of Wrath, and what the smugglers found there convinced them to brick up the tunnel and never speak of it again. The brick wall was torn down recently on Nualia's return to the area, after which she established contact with the quasit queen of the catacombs.

AGAINST THE GOBLINS (CR 3)

In all, there are eight goblins in the Glassworks. If the PCs follow the sound of breaking glass and evil little shrieks, they find the goblins capering and defiling the bodies of the murdered workers in area A17. Unless the PCs are particularly noisy, they should be able to reach area A17 without alerting the goblins. Give the PCs the advantage of a surprise round against the little monsters, because once the battle begins, things can get ugly quickly.

Keep in mind that this fight is in a glassworking factory. Goblins are masters of improvisational fighting, and are quick to use the environs of the room to their advantage in the following ways.

BROKEN GLASS: As the battle progresses, feel free to mark certain squares as containing broken glass. Treat these squares as if they contained caltrops.

FEEDING THE FURNACE: A goblin might attempt to trip a PC; if he falls prone, three goblins pile onto him and attempt to carry him into the furnace. Chances of this succeeding are nil as long as the PC isn't helpless, but it should give the PCs a bit of a hair-raising time nevertheless—especially if the PC being fed into the furnace is unconscious.

HOT GLASS TONGS: Some goblins use tongs dripping with molten glass as improvised weapons to burn the PCs.

THROWN GLASS: Goblins who can't reach a PC in melee throw bottles or sling panes of glass at them as improvised ranged attacks.

GOBLINS (8)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	6 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Melee dogslicer +2 (1d4/19–20) or

tongs of molten glass –2 touch (1d4 fire)

Ranged hurled glassware –1 (1d3)

TACTICS

During Combat The goblins are still riding the high from killing the staff, and react to the PCs' arrival with excitement. Most of them fight with dogslicers, but one or two goblins attack the PCs using tongs dripping with molten glass.

Morale Once at least five are dead, one of the surviving goblins recognizes the PCs as the heroes of Sandpoint, drops his weapon, and shrieks out (in Goblin), "Wait! It's those longshanks what stopped the raid! Run for your lives!" The remaining goblins panic and flee for the basement, seeking to regroup below with Tsuto. Once at his side, the goblins fight until he is defeated, at which point any surviving goblins flee down the smuggler's tunnel or cower and beg for mercy.

TSUTO KAJITSU

XP	CR	HP
800	3	31

Male half-elf monk 2/rogue 2

LE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 Wis)

hp 31 (4d8+10)

Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d6+1) or

flurry of blows +4/+4 (1d6+1)

Ranged composite shortbow +5 (1d6+1/×3)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, sneak attack +1d6, stunning fist (2/day, DC 14)

TACTICS

During Combat Tsuto's main advantage in battle is his mobility.

He uses Acrobatics to move around the battlefield and flanks foes with his goblins as he can. When facing spellcasters, he uses stunning fist to keep them occupied.

Morale If brought below 8 hit points, or if all of his goblins are slain, Tsuto runs for his life down the smuggler's tunnel, abandoning all thought of returning to Nualia with his sister in tow and fleeing back to Thistletop.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 20

Feats Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Skill Focus (Bluff), Stunning Fist, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +6, Disable Device +10, Disguise +6, Intimidate +6, Perception +11, Perform (wind) +4


Languages Common, Elven, Goblin

SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1, elf blood

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** composite shortbow with 20 arrows, *ring of protection* +1, masterwork thieves' tools, masterwork flute, silver earrings (25 gp for the pair), journal, 6 pouches of gold dust worth 50 gp each, 8 pouches of silver dust worth 5 gp each, 10 pp


INTERROGATING TSUTO

Although the goblins know close to nothing if captured and interrogated, Tsuto is a different story. His loyalty to Nualia is unwavering, and unless the PCs use magical



means like *charm person* to secure his cooperation, he remains silent in the face of any attempt to get him to talk. He attempts to escape at the first opportunity, but if faced with no other option, tries to take his own life, trusting (erroneously) that when she grows powerful enough, Nualia will bring him back from the dead.

Tsuto's journal (see Handout 1–2) likely proves a better source of information. This small, leather-bound booklet contains two dozen parchment pages, most of which Tsuto has filled with maps of Sandpoint or erotic drawings of Nualia (who can be recognized as the presumed-dead adopted daughter of Father Tobyn with a DC 15 Knowledge [local] check). The maps each depict different attack plans. The first set shows the attack plans for a group of 30 goblins—one of these battle maps is circled, and the PCs should recognize it as the attack the goblins made on Sandpoint at the start of the adventure. Of more pressing concern are the next several pages, which illustrate an assault on Sandpoint by a force of what appears to be 200 goblins. None of these are circled, and while many are scratched out as if they've been rejected, the implications should be ominous nonetheless.



Most of the drawings of Nualia do not depict her with her demonic hand, although one on the last pages of the book does; it portrays her with not only a single demonic hand, but also bat wings, horns, a forked tail, and fangs.

Three short passages in Tsuto's journal contain information that is of particular interest to the PCs—these are reproduced below as Handout 1–2.

If the PCs secure Tsuto's cooperation via magic, he can be a font of information, revealing the entirety of Nualia's plans, her current location, and even information on Thistletop's layout and defenses. If asked about his journal, he confirms that Nualia plans to offer Sandpoint as a burning sacrifice to Lamashtu in return for a transformation from the angelic to the demonic, a ritual she's already begun by burning Father Tobyn's remains. He doesn't know much about the creature she calls "Malfeshnekor," only that it's some monster that she believes is imprisoned somewhere below Thistletop and that releasing and recruiting it will make their coming raid on Sandpoint a guaranteed success.

RESCUING AMEIKO

If for some reason the PCs wait until after sunset to investigate the Glassworks, Tsuto and his goblins have returned to Thistletop; Ameiko is placed in a cell there (in area D9), and if the PCs don't rescue her in a few days, she is eventually sacrificed to Lamashtu in area D12, yet another burnt offering to appease Nualia's wrath.

Ameiko is conscious but badly wounded, stable at –2 hit points and in no shape to aid the PCs unless they can heal her. Even if healed, she remains distraught at her brother's treachery. Tsuto revealed to Ameiko that he and several other mercenaries were led by Nualia and hinted that she's got big plans for Sandpoint's future. Tsuto warned Ameiko

that she didn't want to be in town when those plans came through, and offered her a chance to join his group at Thistletop. Ameiko recoiled at the suggestion and slapped her brother in shock that he'd sunk to such a low. He responded by unleashing his goblins on her. They overwhelmed her and left her here. She's grateful for

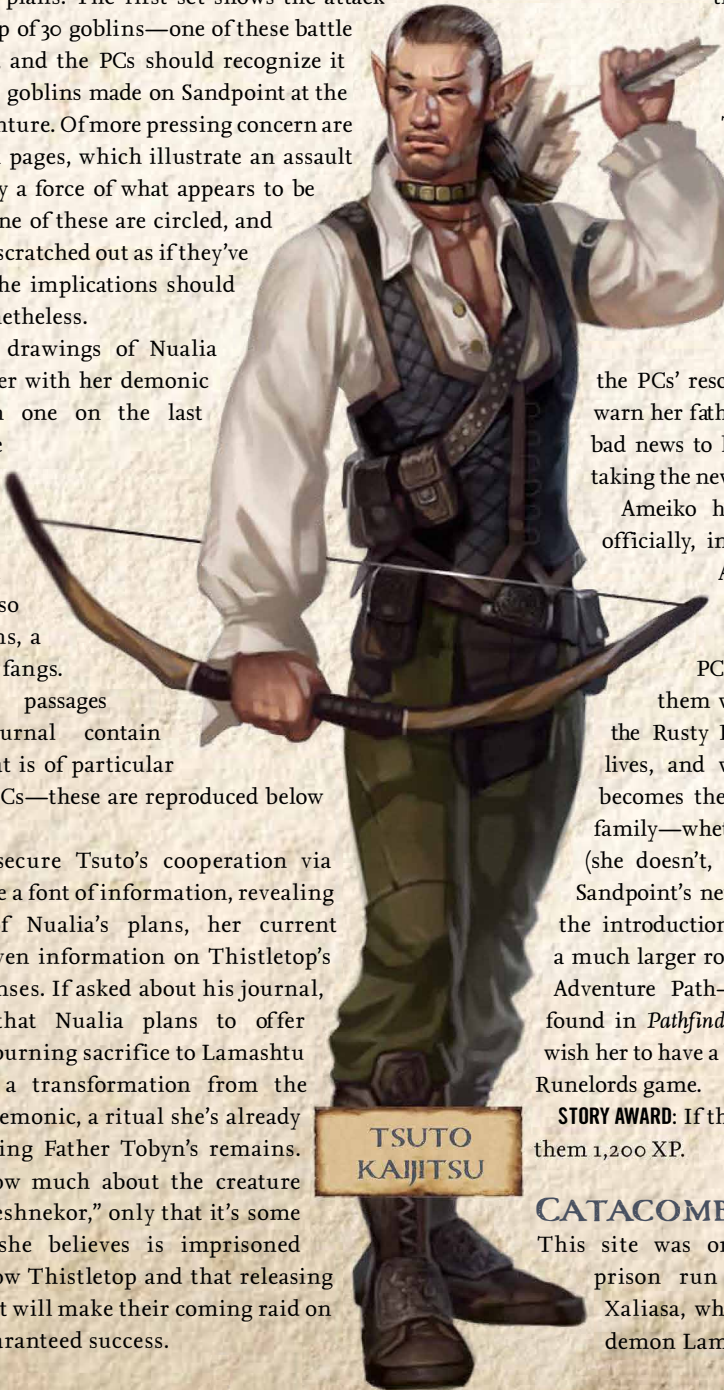
the PCs' rescue, but is eager to leave and warn her father. If the PCs don't break the bad news to her, she learns soon enough, taking the news stoically.

Ameiko has no further role to play, officially, in the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path, but this can certainly change in your game. Certainly, after the PCs rescue her, she rewards them with free room and board at the Rusty Dragon for the rest of their lives, and with her father's death she becomes the sole heir of the Kaijitsu family—whether she likes it or not (she doesn't, really), Ameiko has become Sandpoint's newest noble. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, Ameiko has a much larger role to play in the Jade Regent Adventure Path—her full statistics can be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #49 if you wish her to have a larger role in your Rise of the Runelords game.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs rescue Ameiko, award them 1,200 XP.

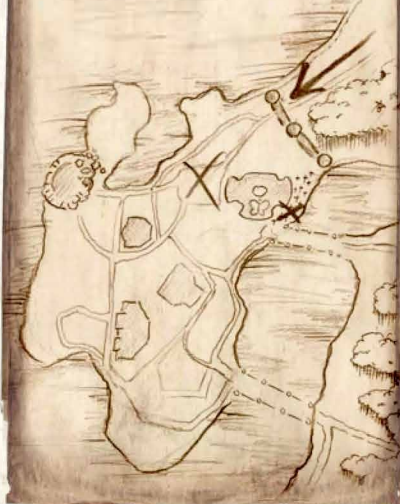
CATACOMBS OF WRATH

This site was originally a laboratory and prison run by a cruel man named Xaliasa, who had given his soul to the demon Lamashtu in return for eldritch



TSUTO
KAIJITSU

THE RAID WENT ABOUT AS PLANNED. FEW THISTLETOP GOBLINS PERISHED, AND WE WERE ABLE TO SECURE TOBYN'S CASKET WITH EASE WHILE THE RUBES WERE DISTRACTED BY THE REST. I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL THE REAL RAID. THIS TOWN DESERVES A BURNING, THAT'S FOR SURE.



RIPNUGGET SEEMS TO FAVOR THE OVERWHELMING LAND APPROACH, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S THE BEST PLAN. WE SHOULD GET THE QUASIT'S AID. SEND HER BREAKS UP FROM BELOW VIA THE SMUGGLING TUNNEL IN MY FATHER'S GLASSWORKS, AND THEN INVADE FROM THE RIVER AND FROM THE GLASSWORKS IN SMALLER BUT MORE FOCUSED STRIKES. THE REST EXCEPT BRUTHAZMUS AGREE, AND I'M PRETTY SURE THE BUGBEARS JUST BEING CONTRARY TO ANNOY ME. MY LOVE'S TOO DISTRACTED WITH THE LOWER CHAMBERS TO MAKE A DECISION. SAYS THAT ONCE MALFESHNEKORS RELEASED AND UNDER HER COMMAND, WE WON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT BEING SUBTLE. I HOPE SHE'S RIGHT.



MY LOVE SEEMS BENT ON GOING THROUGH WITH IT—NOTHING I CAN SAY CONVINCES HER OF HER BEAUTY. SHE REMAINS OBSESSED WITH REMOVING WHAT SHE CALLS HER "CELESTIAL TAIN" AND REPLACING IT WITH HER MOTHER'S GRACE. BURNING HER FATHER'S REMAINS AT THE THISTLETOP SHRINE SEEMS TO HAVE STARTED THE TRANSFORMATION, BUT I CAN'T SAY HER NEW HAND IS PLEASING TO ME. HOPEFULLY



WHEN SHE OFFERS SANDPOINT TO LAMASHTU'S FIRES, HER NEW BODY WON'T BE AS HIDEOUS. MAYBE I'LL LUCK OUT. SUCCUBI ARE DEMONS TOO, AREN'T THEY?

and dark powers. He was a cleric of Lamashtu in the service of Runelord Alaznist, but unknown to her, Xaliasa was also a secret assassin pledged to Karzoug. Working as a double agent eventually drove Xaliasa mad, and he came to be known to his minions as the Scribbler. He was thought to have perished in the currently inaccessible lower levels of the catacombs when Thassilon fell and Alaznist's empire sank under the sea. Yet not all of his allies perished—his quasit minion Erylium survived.

After spending centuries alone and trapped in the dark catacombs, Erylium went somewhat insane as well. Originally obsessed with escaping, she eventually came to see the complex as her own private empire. The zombies imprisoned in area B9 became her subjects, and the vargouille guardian of area B4 her pet. She pored over the crumbling texts and notes left behind by her master, and eventually became a witch, selecting Lamashtu as her demonic patron as had her master so long ago. And for thousands of years more, Erylium ruled her tiny realm with petty cruelty and glee.

When smugglers broke into the catacombs only 4 decades ago, they caught Erylium off guard. Rather than attempting to trick the intruders into serving her, she attacked them and scared them off. By the time she'd recovered from her triumphant celebrations, they'd already bricked up her escape route. Yet the event had done the trick and broken the quasit out of her madness.

Over the next 4 decades, she listened for countless hours at the top of the ruined stairs at area B5, eager to learn more of those whom she soon came to think of as the Enemy Above. Every week, Erylium used her *commune* ability to learn more and more about Sandpoint from her demonic patron, or sent her black wren familiar out to spy. As the years wore on, Lamashtu's cryptic responses and her wren's reports led Erylium to believe that something was coming, something that would provide her with a real army, and that her general was even now being groomed by Lamashtu for her glory.

Five years ago, the *minor runewell* located in area B13 mysteriously reactivated. Erylium saw this as a sign, and used the *minor runewell* to call forth several monsters called *sinspawn* to aid her in the times to come. Soon thereafter, Lamashtu revealed that Erylium's general was nearly ready, but that it fell to Erylium to recruit her. She would know her by her silver hair and violet eyes, a rarity in the world above. When Nualia arrived not long thereafter, a fresh convert to Lamashtu's side, Erylium took to the role of mentor with pride. The quasit knows that soon her empire shall grow.

B1 GUARD CAVE (CR 2)

CREATURE: A *sinspawn* dwells in this cave, charged by Erylium to guard the approach to her realm. The *sinspawn* does its job admirably, standing at its post for hours at a time until it is relieved by another.



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SINSPAWN

XP	CR	HP
600	2	19

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 246)

B2 OLD STOREROOM



The original purpose of this chamber is unclear, but large mounds of rubble lie strewn on its floor. The wall to the west has been torn down to reveal a tunnel leading to the west.

An investigation of the rubble reveals that most of it seems to have consisted of broken urns and other pottery containers that once held food stores, long since crumbled to dust.

B3 WELCOMING CHAMBER



A red marble statue of a strikingly beautiful but, at the same time, monstrously enraged human woman stands in the middle of this room, her stony expression twisted in fury. The woman wears flowing robes, and her long hair is held back from her face by an intricate headdress of hooks and blades. In her left hand she carries a large book, the face of which is inscribed with a seven-pointed star. Her right hand holds a glittering metal-and-ivory ranseur.

The statue depicts Runelord Alaznist, identifiable as such with a DC 25 Knowledge (history) check.

TREASURE: The masterwork ranseur clutched by the statue can be removed with a little tugging. As a replica of Runelord Alaznist's signature weapon, the ranseur is a work of art as much as a weapon. It's worth 400 gp.

B4 WASHING POOL (CR 2)



Water ripples quietly in this circular stone pool, the rim of which is lined with skulls.

This pool was once used as a place to wash the grime of the world above from the feet of visitors to the Catacombs of Wrath. Once per hour, the waters of the pool magically replenish and are purified.

CREATURE: This approach to the Catacombs of Wrath is still guarded by an ancient creature, a hideous vargouille that generally rests in the shadows near the wall. The monster was placed here by the Scribbler, and over the centuries has remained, patiently waiting for a release from its duties and eager to attack anything that enters the room save sinspawn, Koruvus, Erylium, or anyone who openly displays a symbol of Lamashtu.

VARGOUILLE

XP	CR	HP
600	2	19

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 272)

B5 STAIRS



A flight of spiral stairs winds up around a circular pillar into darkness above.

These stairs once led up to a small vault on the surface, but when Thassilon fell, that structure collapsed. If the PCs somehow manage to dig their way up through the 30 feet of rock between the top of the stairs and the surface, they find themselves emerging in an alley in the cluster of buildings between Tower Street and Junker's Way. Narrow fissures remain in the stone, helping to keep (relatively) fresh air in the catacombs, and providing a route for Erylium's familiar to come and go.

B6 ANCIENT PRISON (CR 4)



This large chamber was obviously once a prison, as testified by the twenty cells that line the room's perimeter. A rickety wooden platform overlooks the room, with two flights of stairs descending to the prison floor ten feet below. A five-foot-wide wooden walkway runs from the northern edge of the platform to a passageway to the east.

As its appearance suggests, this room was indeed used to keep prisoners, mostly agents of Shalast who ventured too close to Bakrakhani holdings. Skeletons lie in most of the cells—prisoners who starved to death ages ago. Although the walkway above the room looks rickety, it's actually quite stable, for the wood (as with many ancient Thassilonian ruins) still retains its ancient magical preservative aura to help withstand the passage of time. These same preservative magics have kept the bones in the cells from crumbling to dust, although they remain quite dry and brittle.

CREATURES: Two sinspawn wait here. If an alarm has been raised, they've hidden themselves in the rafters just under the platform, waiting to reach up and attack anyone who comes too close to the edge. If the alarm hasn't been raised, the sinspawn are bickering in the eastern part of the room over some crumbling skulls stolen from the remains in the surrounding cells.

SINSPAWN (2)

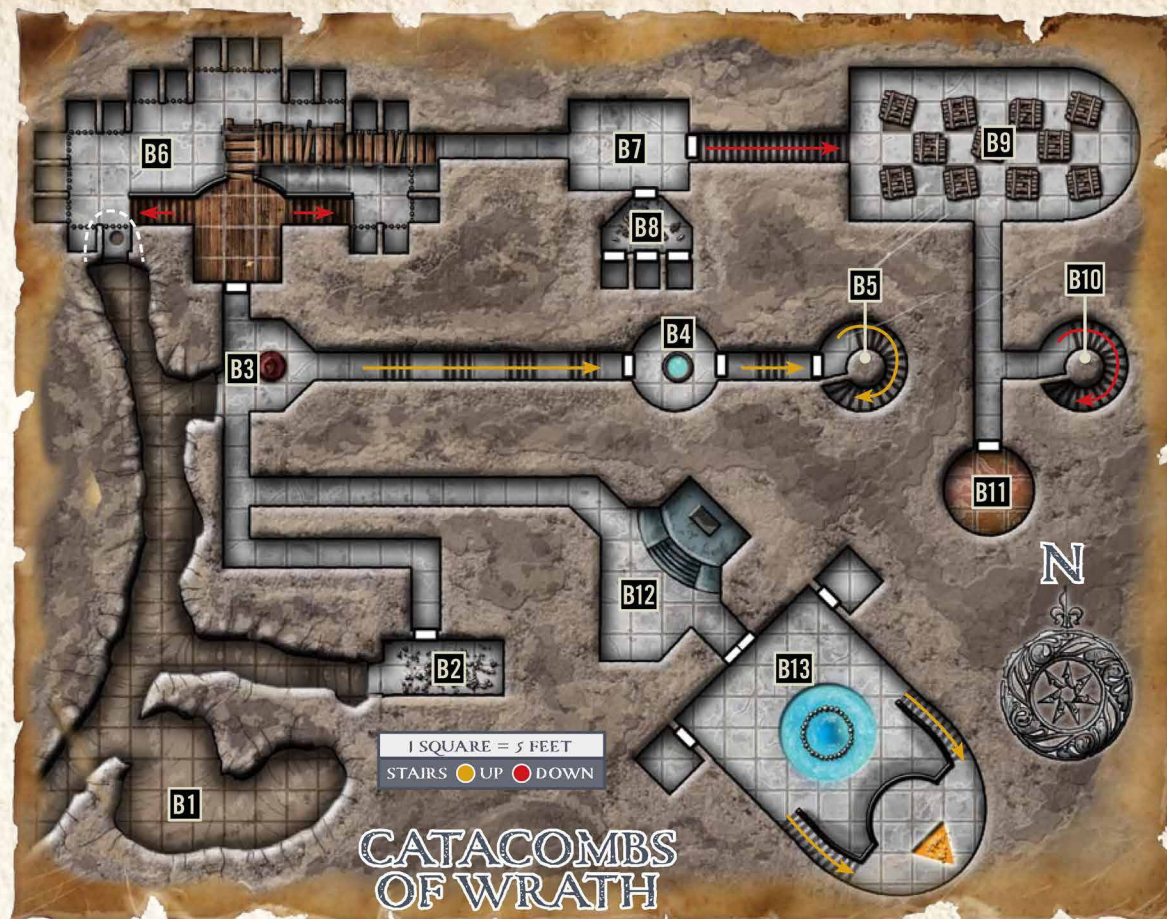
XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	19 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 246)

B7 INTERROGATION CHAMBER



This room contains several ancient relics of what appear to be torture implements, although their function and style seem strange and archaic. In one corner sits a spherical cage with spikes protruding inward from its iron bars. In another stands what appears to be a star-shaped wooden



frame, its surface studded with hooks. And in the center of the room is a long table covered with leather straps and a number of cranks that seem designed to rotate and swivel.

All of the torture devices here saw plenty of use back in Thassilon's day, but are far too decayed or rusted to be of much use today.

B8 ANCIENT STUDY



The crumbling remnants of several chairs and a long table clutter the floor of this room. To the south stand three stone doors, each bearing a strange symbol that resembles a seven-pointed star.

This room once served as a study, but time (and Erylium's centuries of frustration) have taken their toll here. A search of the rubble uncovers the fragments of countless books and scrolls with bits of spiky writing in a strange language all over them. These were once part of the Scribbler's library, and taught Erylium much of what she knows today as a witch and a follower of Lamashtu, but are now useless.

The three solid doors to the south were once prison cells. Within each is a single skeleton of a badly

deformed humanoid; one has three brittle arms, another has an enormous misshapen skull, and the third has a rib cage that goes all the way down to its pelvis—a pelvis with stunted leg bones strewn below its strangely flat girth.

TREASURE: A DC 20 Perception check while looking at the torn-up pages reveals a *scroll of flaming sphere* (CL 5th) under a broken chair.

B9 PRISONER PITS (CR 4)



The ceiling of this strangely cold chamber arches to a vaulted height of twenty feet. The floor contains eleven wooden lids strewn haphazardly over eleven five-foot-wide pits in the ground. From the darkness within these pits echo up strange shuffling sounds and, every so often, a low moan.

Each of the pits is 20 feet deep. The wooden covers over the top of each are quite fragile, and collapse if anyone walks on them. A DC 15 Reflex save allows a character to leap to safety in an adjacent square; otherwise a 20-foot fall into the pit below is only the beginning of the victim's problems.

CREATURES: Each of these pits contains a single human zombie, a pitiful creature left over from an age



thousands of years in the past, its flesh maintained by necromantic magic. These zombie pits once served as yet another way the Bakrakhani tormented their prisoners; now, they serve only as Erylium's playthings.

After Nualia opened the Catacombs of Wrath, very few creatures wandered into the dungeon from the hidden smuggler's tunnel entrance. One of them, though, was a goblin hero of the Seven Tooth tribe named Koruvus. When he discovered the secret tunnel, he brashly declared to the other goblins that he was going to explore it, loot the treasure doubtless hidden within, and come back to take over the Seven Tooth tribe. He never returned, but the Seven Tooth goblins expect him to do so any day.

In fact, Koruvus stumbled into the Catacombs of Wrath and drank from the waters atop the altar at **B12**, whereupon he was twisted into a monstrous, insane mockery by the fickle cruelty of Lamashtu's whims. He's come to see Erylium as his new queen, and follows her orders slavishly. The quasit was initially amused by this development, but it didn't take her long to grow tired of Koruvus's loud nature and she ordered him to guard her flock in area **B9**. Koruvus does so obsessively, leaving only to drink from the fountain at **B4** or to scavenge rats in the smuggler's tunnels for food when he can't stand the hunger pangs any longer.



KORUVUS

XP	CR	HP
800	3	26

Variant male goblin fighter 2

CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 26 (2d10+11); fast healing 1

Fort +8, **Ref** +2, **Will** -1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **Immune** acid, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *longsword* +4 (1d8+4/19-20), silver dagger +3 (1d4+1/19-20), mwk handaxe +3 (1d6+1/x3)

Special Attacks breath weapon

TACTICS

During Combat Koruvus takes his duty as guardian of this chamber seriously, and immediately attacks anyone who enters the room. He uses his breath weapon on the first round of combat, then moves in to engage the largest, most dangerous-looking foe with his weapons.

Morale Koruvus fights to the death, and pursues foes all the way to the Glassworks or the catacombs' exit if necessary before returning here.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 3, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Great Fortitude, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Intimidate +5, Ride +6, Stealth +6

Languages Goblin

Gear +1 *longsword*, silver dagger, masterwork handaxe

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, Koruvus can spew a 20-foot-long line of foul-smelling and acidic blood from his mouth. Any creatures in this area take 2d4 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 13 half). A creature that takes damage from the acid must also make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

HUMAN ZOMBIES (11)

XP	CR	HP
200 each	1/2	12 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288)

STORY AWARD: The zombies are relatively harmless in their pits—if the PCs destroy them with ranged weapons, award them 200 XP for the lot.

B10 BLOCKED STAIRS

This twisting flight of spiral stairs once led down to even deeper complexes below Sandpoint, but like the flight of stairs leading up from area **B5**, this route was closed by the ancient cataclysm. In time, this rubble will be cleared, in which case these stairs lead to the Scribbler's realm in Lamashtu's Shrine (see Chapter Five for more details).

B11 MEDITATION CHAMBER



This strange room is a fifteen-foot-diameter sphere. Several objects float in the room, spinning lazily in space—a ragged book, a scroll, a bottle of wine, a dead raven surrounded by a halo of floating and writhing maggots, and a twisted iron wand with a forked tip. Yet perhaps the most unnerving aspect of the room is the walls, for they are plated in sheets of strange red metal that ripple every once in a while with silent black electricity that seems to coalesce into strange runes or even words far too often for the effect to be chance.

This unusual room still bears a magical effect placed here long ago. Any creature or object that enters the room is immediately affected by a *levitate* spell and floats in the air. The Scribbler found levitation to be an excellent way to relax, but was unable to cast the spell himself and so hired one of Alaznist's apprentices to create this room for him.

Erylium spends a few hours each day here, drinking and snacking on maggots while she reads her favorite book, but she is currently located in area **B13**.

This room was important to the Scribbler in life, and echoes of his madness and personality manifest here as the crackling lighting. Someone who can read Thassilonian may recognize snatches of words here and

there in these shapes, words having to do with anger, wrath, and a need for revenge, but never anything close to a full thought. More information about the Scribbler can be found in Chapter Five—for now, the lightning should seem like nothing more than a strange feature of these peculiar chambers.

TREASURE: The bottle of wine was brought to Erylium by Tsuto several hours ago as a gift. The scroll is a *scroll of burning hands* (CL 3rd).

The book is a magically preserved but still ancient prayer book dedicated to the worship of Lamashtu, the Mother of Monsters. Written in Abyssal, this well-read tome is Erylium's pride and joy, the most important of her belongings. The book reads as much like a bestiary of the world's most horrific and cruel monsters (along with numerous woodcut illustrations of how they kill) as it does a religious text. The book is worth 100 gp.

The iron wand is a *wand of shocking grasp* (28 charges) that Erylium knows is magic but can't use—she plans on someday using it to bargain for a magic wand that she can use.

B12 SHRINE TO LAMASHTU



The tunnel widens here into what appears to have once been a small shrine, for to the northeast, steps lead up to a platform of gray stone. Sitting atop the platform is an ancient altar, little more than a jagged block of black marble with a shallow concavity on top of it. This basin is filled with what appears to be filthy water.

Unlike the other Runelords, Alaznist was a woman of faith—faith in ruin, devastation, and wrath. While she had an alliance with the nascent demon lord Yamasoth, she drew inspiration from all demon lords. She encouraged her minions to venerate demons as well—she cared not whom they revered, as long as they were destructive.

The demon queen Lamashtu was a favorite choice, and the Mother of Monsters was the Scribbler's patron. The Scribbler used this altar to commune with Lamashtu—Erylium uses the altar for the same purpose, and it was here that she baptized Nualia and began to teach her.

Treasure: The basin on the altar constantly generates 4 doses of the *waters of Lamashtu* (*The Inner Sea World Guide* 297). It was by drinking this vile fluid that the goblin Koruvus became the mutant he is today. If harvested from the altar, the waters degrade to normal unholy water after 1 hour—the altar replenishes itself at the rate of 1 vial's worth per day.

B13 CATHEDRAL OF WRATH (CR 5)



This huge room looks like nothing more than an immense underground cathedral. Stone doors stand to either side of the main entrance, but beyond this, the walls are carved with strange, spiky runes. In the center of the room is a large pool, with a ring of polished human skulls balanced on stone spikes arranged in a circle around the deeper midsection. At the far end of the room, a pair of stone stairways leads up to a pulpit on which sits a second pool, this one triangular and filled with churning, bubbling water that looks almost like translucent lava. Yet while wisps of what look like heat and steam rise from the strange orange liquid, the room itself is deathly cold.

While Runelord Alaznist encouraged the veneration of demons, her true faith lay in the purity of wrath. And thus, at each of her most important holdings, she made sure to place a “shrine” to her favored sin in the form of a *minor runewell*. Less potent than those used by the other runelords, but more numerous, the *runewells* of wrath allowed communication between those stationed at distant locations. In addition, they were empowered with the capacity to harvest wrath from the souls of the dead so as to create her favored shock troops—sinspawn. When Karzoug activated his much more powerful *runewell* several years ago, the *minor runewell* in this room



flared back to life. Ever since, Erylium has taken care to nurture it. Its magic had been waning, but the recent slaughter of so many goblins above has done wonders to recharge the pool's wrath, and now it glows and bubbles nearly as much as when it was first reactivated years ago. Erylium hopes that when Nualia leads the second, "real" assault on Sandpoint, the number of goblins slaughtered alone will give her enough sinspawn to expand her own army into the world above and to begin harvesting more victims to transform into new sinspawn.

Rules for *minor runewells* can be found on page 425 of this book—this particular *minor runewell* currently stores 20 sin points. It is from this *minor runewell* that the

sinspawn that haunt the catacombs were recently created by Erylium.

The two small rooms to the northeast and southwest of the cathedral entrance were once used as storage and robing chambers—both rooms are empty today, and their doors hang ajar. The ceiling of this room is 20 feet high.

CREATURES: Although the Catacombs of Wrath are now open and Erylium is free to leave, her thousands of years spent as the catacombs' queen have left her with a bit of agoraphobia and the senseless worry that if she leaves her catacombs, someone could move in and steal her crown. As a result, she still spends nearly all of her time here.

When the PCs enter the room, the quasit flies into a rage. She shrieks, accuses the PCs of "daring to intrude upon the Mother's sanctum," and slashes her own wrist with her dagger, allowing some of her blood to drip into the *minor runewell* and form a sinspawn. As she does, the *minor runewell's* glow diminishes noticeably. A DC 20 Sense Motive allows a character to note the sudden look of worry that Erylium gets when she sees this. She does not create any more sinspawn after the first one.

ERYLIUM

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	35

Female quasit witch 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 66, *Advanced Player's Guide* 65)

CE Tiny outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +2 size)

hp 35 (6 HD; 3d10+3d6+9); fast healing 2

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

DR 5/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +10 (1d4-1), 2 claws +10 (1d3-1 plus poison)

Ranged +1 *cold iron returning dagger* +11 (1d2/19-20)

Space 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks hexes (slumber [3 rounds], tongues [understand only, 3 minutes])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +7)

At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only)

1/day—*cause fear* (DC 12, 30-foot radius)

1/week—*commune* (6 questions)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

2nd—*hold person* (DC 14), *summon monster II*

1st—*command* (DC 13), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 13), *summon monster I*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 12), *touch of fatigue* (DC 12)

Patron Shadow

TACTICS

Before Combat Erylium becomes invisible as soon as she hears enemies approaching.

During Combat Although tough to hit and capable of healing



ERYLIUM



from wounds quickly, Erylium remains something of a coward in a fight. She uses flight to maintain ranged superiority over foes, using spells like *summon monster* or *hold person* (aimed at the best-armored of her foes) in the first few rounds of combat. She uses her Tiny +1 *cold iron returning dagger* against foes once she runs out of spells, but if cornered, she fights with her claws and bite.

Morale If reduced to 5 hit points or fewer, Erylium becomes invisible and flees, waiting for her fast healing to fix her up before returning here to attack the PCs again.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 15, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +10, Fly +12, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (planes) +8, Perception +9, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +21

Languages Abyssal, Thassilonian; telepathy (touch), *tongues*

SQ change shape (Small centipede or raven; *polymorph*), witch's familiar (Diminutive-sized wren named Orm)

Other Gear +1 *cold iron returning dagger*, tiara worth 50 gp, black silk gown worth 25 gp, obsidian unholy symbol of Lamashtu worth 10 gp

SINSPAWN

XP	CR	HP
600	2	19

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 246)

STORY AWARD: If the PCs use the *minor runewell* to create and then kill enough sinspawn, they can remove the

menace the *minor runewell* poses to the Sandpoint region. Grant the party a reward of 1,200 XP if they accomplish this.

FORESHADOWING THE SINKHOLE

The Catacombs of Wrath constitute only the first of two dungeon levels that exists under northern Sandpoint. A deeper level (Lamashtu's Shrine) exists below this upper level, accessible via the stairwell found at area B10. Although these stairs are currently clogged with rubble, a portion of the Catacombs of Wrath collapses in Chapter Five, forming a large sinkhole and drawing attention to the stairs.

The currently inaccessible stairwell can function in and of itself as a hint that there are deeper dungeon levels, but if you wish to place a little bit more foreshadowing into your game, feel free to have strange manifestations of the evil growing in the chambers below the catacombs. The PCs could hear the distant, muted howl of strange dogs that a DC 20 Perception check seems to indicate are coming up from somewhere below the ground of this level. Short scribbled threats written in Thassilonian or Abyssal might appear on walls here and there, only to vanish before another player can confirm the presence of the eerie scribbles. As long as the PCs suspect that there's something more going on in or below the Catacombs of Wrath, you're doing your job—just take care not to intrigue them too much! At 2nd level, they're far from ready to deal with the horrors that wait in Lamashtu's Shrine far below!



PART FOUR: THISTLETOP

THE ANCIENT SITE KNOWN AS THISTLETOP HAS LONG SERVED AS A DEN FOR GOBLINS. TODAY, IT SERVES AS SOMETHING MORE—THE LAIR OF A BAND OF OUTLAWS LED BY NUALIA, KNAVES AND CRIMINALS WHO HAVE RECRUITED THE GOBLINS AS THEIR INSTRUMENTS OF DESTRUCTION. IN ORDER TO SAVE SANDPOINT FROM THESE GOBLINS, A JOURNEY TO THISTLETOP MUST EVENTUALLY BE UNDERTAKEN—BUT THE LOST COAST'S NEW HEROES SHOULD TAKE CARE TO ENSURE THEY ARE PREPARED FOR THIS STAGE OF THE ADVENTURE. GOBLINS ARE THE LEAST OF THE DANGERS THAT LURK IN AND BELOW THISTLETOP—FOR THE SITE WAS ONE OF MANY USED BY RUNELORD KARZOUG IN HIS ANCIENT WAR AGAINST HIS ENEMIES TO THE WEST.



The map of the Sandpoint hinterlands on page 386 shows the location of Thistletop. If the PCs follow the Lost Coast Road east, they can reach the Thistle River crossing relatively quickly—it's only a 6-mile journey (2 hours by foot), and unless you want to spring an attack on the PCs by a group of six goblin warriors (a CR 2 encounter), they shouldn't run into much trouble along the way.

Thistletop is located on the Varisian coast—approaching by land is difficult since the tangles of Nettlewood are in the way. A DC 14 Survival check reveals a route through the woods. If the check exceeds this DC by 10, the PCs come across one of several narrow goblin trails that eventually lead to area C1. Each attempted Survival check takes 1d4 hours of wandering in the woods, and for each hour of wandering there's a 30% chance that 1d4 PCs stumble into a patch of poisonous plants, either stinging nettles (Fortitude DC 12 to avoid 1 point of Dexterity damage) or a goblinberry patch (Fortitude DC 12 to avoid 1 point of Strength damage). A character can substitute a Knowledge (nature) check for these saving throws to avoid damage.

Thistletop is a curiously round island about 60 feet off shore, connected to the mainland by a rope bridge. The island had an unusual genesis—it was once the head of one of Karzoug's sentinel statues that stood upon the ridge of land called the Rasp before the nation of Bakrakhian became the Varisian Gulf. The statue has long since crumbled and become overgrown by the Nettlewood, but the head escaped such obscurity by landing in the surf. The magical nature of the statue's construction drastically slowed the process of erosion on the head's features, and when the sun hits the western cliff of the isle just right, one can just make out the ancient features of the statue's face. The statue once contained a small complex, but today only a few of the original rooms within the head itself remain accessible.

One of these rooms contains an imprisoned barghest named Malfeshnekor. An ancient agent of Alaznist, the monster was captured by Karzoug's minions and imprisoned here for interrogation. Yet the end came too quickly, and when the statue's head tumbled into the sea, Malfeshnekor found himself one of the few surviving creatures. And yet,

the outsider remained trapped. For the next several thousand years he waited. For a time, a group of Lamashtu cultists settled in the rooms above. Himself a loyal minion of Lamashtu, Malfeshnekor quickly discovered he was able to communicate empathically with any priest who stood before the altar. In so doing, he was able to lead the cultists to discover the small complex in which he waited, but the cultists were slaughtered by a hellcat guardian before they reached him.

Well over a century later, Malfeshnekor sensed new creatures settling nearby—goblins. As with the Lamashtu cultists, the barghest had a crude empathic link with these goblins. Malfeshnekor couldn't quite communicate with them as he had with the clerics of Lamashtu, but the goblins could still sense him. They felt drawn to Thistletop for reasons they didn't quite comprehend, and it quickly became the most coveted tribal land among their kind. Traditionally, the Thistletop goblins were led by clerics who sensed the barghest's empathic urgings during their rituals. These urgings encouraged the goblins to explore the lower levels of their lair, yet goblins are fragile and stupid creatures. None ever found the secret door that led to Malfeshnekor's level, and now that the current leader of Thistletop is himself too unwise to receive Malfeshnekor's empathic sendings, the barghest had begun to despair.

And then, with Nualia's arrival and the reconsecration of the temple, Malfeshnekor realized his time of freedom was close. Nualia is his salvation, and he her path to becoming a true demon.

C1 HIDDEN ENTRANCE



The briars and thistles that grow so rampantly in Nettlewood are even more dense and tangled here, close to the shore. Although not quite dense enough to block the sound of waves crashing on the unseen shores to the west, the undergrowth is certainly thick enough to block sight and access to the coast. Few trees grow this close to the edge of the sea, but the briars themselves often reach heights to rival them; here, the patch is nearly twenty feet high.



BURNT OFFERINGS

CHAPTER
BACKGROUND

PART ONE:
FESTIVAL AND FIRE

PART TWO:
LOCAL HEROES

PART THREE:
GLASS AND WRATH

PART FOUR:
THISTLETOP

MAP FOUR:
THISTLETOP

THISTLETOP



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
STAIRS ● UP ● DOWN



The thorns that comprise the “walls” here are quite damp; the fog every morning and evening ensures that. As a result, the brambles don’t burn well. An attempt to smoke out the goblins or burn down their thistle maze only results in a slow-burning smoky fire that alerts the goblins to the PCs’ precise location.

While the PCs can certainly attempt to reach Thistletop by the sea or by traveling along the beaches, they’ll still need to navigate the treacherous sea cliffs to get to the stockade built atop the island. The cliffs themselves are 80 feet high, and since the damp sea air makes the walls slick, it’s a DC 15 Climb check to navigate them—no easy task for most goblins, or most low-level PCs, for that matter!

As a result, the goblins created this small network of tunnels and chambers in the briars to make it easier for them to come and go. If the PCs discover these tunnels, they can certainly use them as well. A cleverly constructed rigid mat of thistles and nettles hides the entrance to the tunnels. A DC 12 Perception check is enough to notice that the briars here can be lifted aside to reveal a 4-foot-high tunnel leading into the briars. Similar “thistle doors” are within the tunnels beyond—they can be discovered with a DC 12 Perception check as well. Opening a thistle door is a standard action, although a character can try to open one quickly as a move action. Doing so requires a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid being scratched and jabbed by thorns and taking 1 point of damage. A character wearing gauntlets or heavy armor automatically makes this saving throw.

C2 THISTLE TUNNELS



A four-foot-high tunnel winds through the dense briars and nettles. The floor is hard-packed earth, with patches of wiry plants growing stubbornly here and there.

Large creatures must crawl to navigate the thistle tunnels. Bipedal Medium creatures can navigate them by stooping over and hunkering down, effectively squeezing to move, and thus taking a –4 penalty on attack rolls and a –4 penalty to AC; such characters must spend 2 squares of movement for each square traveled. Small and smaller creatures can move about normally, as can most quadrupedal Medium creatures (including goblin dogs). The larger chambers within all have higher ceilings, wherein these penalties do not apply to Medium creatures.

Although the ceilings and walls of these tunnels consist of tangled, thorny vines, a character who brushes against them need not worry about damage. A character pushed into a wall must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid taking 1 point of damage (characters in heavy armor automatically make this save).

A creature with the woodland stride ability (such as any druid of at least 2nd level) can move through these tunnels without penalty, despite size, and can even

pass through the tangled briars with ease, effectively walking through the walls of this area. Gogmurt the goblin druid uses this ability to great effect when defending the area, but certainly doesn’t expect to ever face enemy druids who can do the same.

It’s possible to hack a new path through the briars with any slashing weapon. A 5-foot-square section of briars has hardness 1 and 40 hit points. Hacking at briars counts as being pushed into a wall for chances of taking damage from the nettles and thorns.

A character who searches for tracks in the thistle tunnels automatically sees the countless goblin and goblin dog prints in the soft earth. A DC 12 Survival check, however, allows a character to notice that a large object was recently dragged through the tunnels. Following these drag marks can lead a character from the entrance at area C1 directly to the exit at area C9—these signs are evidence left from the goblins’ recent transportation of the unconscious horse Shadowmist through the tunnels to the fort—this horse is currently imprisoned in area C18.

C3 THE HOWLING HOLE



Three thistle tunnels open into a large cavelike chamber. Above, the thorny canopy grows thin enough that tiny slivers of the sky above can be seen, while below, the ground consists of trampled dirt. To the west, the distant sound of sloshing waves echoes up from a hole.

The Thistletop goblins use this chamber as a staging room for raids, gathering here to receive final pep-talks from the commandos. The hole drops down into area C27 below, a sea cave inhabited by a dangerous tidal predator known as a bunyip. It’s a DC 20 Climb check to navigate the 70-foot shaft, which opens into the sea cave 10 feet above sea level. The water is deep enough that the 80-foot fall into the water below deals only 2d3 points of nonlethal damage plus 4d6 points of lethal damage.

The goblins know something monstrous lives down below—the bunyip’s howls drive them into a panic on a daily basis—but none of them have actually seen the bunyip up close. At best, they’ve had brief glimpses of something big and gray swimming in the water now and then. Depending on the goblin interrogated, the shape is that of a fish, an octopus, a ghost, or an enormous crab. The goblins have taken to dropping prisoners (and unruly goblins) into the hole, since the “Howling Hole,” as they call it, usually remains quiet for a few days after such a sacrifice.

C4 REFUGEE NEST (CR 4)



This thirty-foot-diameter, low-ceilinged chamber stinks of smoke. A shallow fire pit smolders in the center of the floor, while nine tangled reed-and-leaf nests line the walls.



CREATURES: After the assault on Sandpoint, the Birdcruncher goblins were left leaderless. Many of them fled into the wilderness, but nearly two dozen of them fled north to throw themselves upon Chief Ripnugget's mercy. The Thistletop chieftain is a hard goblin to please, and he's forced the Birdcruncher refugees to live here for the past several days while he decides what to do with them. So far, half of their number have been tossed down the Howling Hole or handed over to Nualia for living sacrifices. The remaining goblin refugees huddle here in fear that one of them may be next. Nonetheless, if presented with intruders, the 10 goblin refugees launch into a frenzy of shrieks and fury in a desperate attempt to gain Ripnugget's favor by killing "longshank" intruders.

GOBLIN REFUGEES (10)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	5 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

C5 GOBLIN DOG KENNEL (CR 5)

The floor and walls of this musty-smelling chamber are covered with matted, wiry fur. Well-gnawed bones lie scattered about the floor, and a dozen wooden stakes have been driven into the ground near the walls.

CREATURES: The Thistletop goblins kennel their 12 goblin dogs here, keeping them tied to the stakes via leashes of hairy, fraying rope. Currently, only four goblin dogs are here; the other eight can be found to the north in areas **C10** and **C16**.

GOBLIN DOGS (4)

XP	CR	HP
400 each	1	9 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 157)

C6 TANGLETOOTH'S DEN (CR 3)

A cloying musky scent lies heavy in the air here. A matted nest of red and black hair sits to the east.

CREATURE: Tangletooth, Gogmurt's firepelt animal companion, spends the majority of her time sleeping here, periodically snarling at goblins who wander by the tunnel to the northwest. A firepelt is a cougar native to the region, its silky fur a mix of red and black stripes.

TANGLETOOTH

HP
26

Firepelt cougar (small cat) animal companion

N Medium animal

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

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)

hp 26 (4d8+8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.; sprint

Melee bite +6 (1d6+3 plus trip), 2 claws +6 (1d3+3)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 20, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 22 (26 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Acrobatics +9 (+17 when jumping), Climb +7, Perception +5, Stealth +12

C7 GOGMURT'S LAIR (CR 4)

A tangle of vines hang from the thorny ceiling of this chamber, each suspending a clattering collection of bird skulls, rib bones, teeth, and other bits of gruesome decor. In a few places the vines droop all the way to the floor. A large nest of nettles and thorny vines sits to the south, a halo of half-eaten dead birds and rats indicating that whatever sleeps there eats in its bed.

CREATURE: Gogmurt has served Warchief Ripnugget as an advisor and the Thistletop goblins as a spiritual leader for many years, but over the last few months, the presence of "the longshanks" (Nualia and her allies) has been an unwelcome thorn in Gogmurt's side. He argued against the attack on Sandpoint, reasoning it would only rile up the humans and visit eventual retaliation in the form of hunting dogs, horse-mounted soldiers, and adventurers. Yet Nualia's words made more sense to Ripnugget, who then chose to ignore Gogmurt's advice. The bitter goblin druid has all but washed his hands of the tribe as a result, and in his foul mood has ordered more goblin refugees than necessary into the Howling Hole.

Gogmurt has been brooding here for days, and has been expecting adventurers to strike at Thistletop at any time, day or night. While he doesn't agree with Ripnugget's current tactics, he remains loyal to the idea of the Thistletop goblin tribe, and reacts swiftly to defend this area once he hears intruders. His woodland stride ability gives him incredible mobility in this area; he can step through the thorny walls with ease during fights. He hasn't been sleeping lately, and has taken to casting *lesser restoration* daily to fight off fatigue.

GOGMURT

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	39

Male goblin druid 4/rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)

hp 39 (5d8+14)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8; +4 vs. Fey and plant-targeted effects



OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *flame blade* +3 (1d8+2 plus fire) or
spear +3 (1d6-1/x3)

Ranged sling +7 (1d3-1)

Special Attacks wild shape 1/day, sneak attack +1d6

Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd—*animal messenger*, *flame blade*, *lesser restoration*
(already cast)

1st—*charm animal* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *entangle* (DC 14),
speak with animals

0 (at will)—*flare* (DC 13), *guidance*, *mending*, *stabilize*

TACTICS

Before Combat Gogmurt uses *speak with animals* and casts *flame blade*, then uses his *wand of produce flame* before investigating the PCs' arrival. If he thinks there's time, he also casts *animal messenger* to send a thrush out to the island to deliver a bloodstained goblin tooth to Warchief Ripnugget—a prearranged code to warn that the adventurers have finally arrived to murder them all. Gogmurt calls Tangletooth to his side and directs her in combat using *speak with animals*.

During Combat Gogmurt casts *entangle* on the first round

of combat, taking care to place the spell so that it blocks access to area C9 but doesn't block his own possible escape routes. If the PCs have animal minions, he casts *charm animal* on one of them. On following rounds, he fights with his *flame blade* in one hand, throwing fire from *produce flame* in the other when he needs to make ranged attacks. As soon as he's brought below 20 hit points, he retreats by fleeing into the brambles, heals himself as best he can, and then returns to ambush the PCs from behind by swapping out a remaining 1st-level spell for *summon nature's ally I*.

Morale If he is ever brought below 10 hit points and has no healing left, Gogmurt attempts to flee north to warn Warchief Ripnugget about the PCs. If surrounded or captured, Gogmurt's resolve breaks and he sobs for mercy.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 15

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Dodge

Skills Handle Animal +8, Knowledge (nature) +9, Linguistics +3,
Ride +12, Stealth +16, Survival +12

Languages Common, Druidic, Goblin

SQ nature bond (animal companion), nature sense, wild
empathy +4, trackless step, trapfinding +1, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *wand of produce flame* (34 charges), *wand of tree shape* (4 charges); **Other Gear**
+1 leather armor, sling, spear, *cloak of resistance* +1

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs capture Gogmurt alive, he responds to interrogation attempts with cursing and spitting unless he's made friendly (his initial attitude is hostile) with a Diplomacy check, successfully intimidated, or reduced to 5 or fewer hit points. At this point, the craven druid sobs for mercy. He knows that the PCs are here for what the goblins did to Sandpoint, and tries to justify the assault by saying it was all the longshank's fault before clapping a hand over his mouth when he realizes he probably just insulted his captors.

Gogmurt knows that Warchief Ripnugget has become enthralled with several taller folk of late, in particular a "very angry woman with white hair and weird eyes and a torn-up belly" whom he suspects Ripnugget has become infatuated with. The chieftain has certainly been placing a lot of trust in this strange woman's advice—it was at her urging that the assault on Sandpoint took place. Gogmurt has distanced himself from the chieftain and these new allies, not wanting to be tainted by her bad ideas. He does know that she has four dangerous

GOGMURT AND
TANGLETOOTH



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allies of her own: a brutish bugbear mercenary named Bruthazmus who lived for many years in a hut on the northeastern side of Nettlewood, a quiet human man who wears lots of metal armor, a dark-skinned violent human woman who's used fire to scorch several goblins who got too close to her, and a male half-elf who seems too happy all the time and who sometimes plays the flute. Gogmurt suspects that the half-elf and the angry woman with the torn-up belly are lovers, because he's seen them "going at it like donkey rats" in the woods at times. He woefully mutters that this news only made Chief Ripnugget angrier when the druid tried to use it in an attempt to win back his chieftain's favor. "Worse than a harpy, that one!" Gogmurt spits. Then he quickly clarifies his accusation: "The woman. Not Chief Ripnugget. Don't tell him I called her a harpy!"

Gogmurt begs the PCs not to hurt any more goblins, pointing out that the angry lady and her friends are the real troublemakers. If they can get into Ripnugget's fort to the north and get rid of them, Gogmurt promises that no goblin will ever bother Sandpoint again—a promise he can't possibly honor, but he's desperate enough to say anything. He refuses to accompany the PCs north. If he's forced to come with them, his piteous sobbing and sniffing should make stealth close to impossible.

C8 WATCHPOSTS

Three of these passageways, closed off at either end by a thistle door, allow goblins to keep an eye on the sea surrounding their main lair to the north. The assault on Sandpoint left the goblins a little underpopulated, though, and currently no one mans these posts.

C9 ROPE BRIDGE (CR 4)



A rope bridge spans the gulf between the cliff and a roundish, flat-topped island sixty-some feet to the north. Thick patches of nettles and briars grow here and there atop the island, but its most impressive feature is a wooden one-story stockade. Two thirty-foot-tall watchtowers guard the stockade's southern facade. The rope bridge itself is made of hairy rope and thick wooden planks; the whole thing creaks and sways in the wind above the churning surf eighty feet below.

TRAP: This rope bridge might seem treacherous, and it is. The goblins have rigged it so that if more than three Medium creatures (with a Small creature counting as a third of a Medium creature and a Large creature as three Medium ones) attempt to cross, the western supports tear free, dropping the planks down to hang vertically from the eastern rope and dumping anyone on the bridge into the waters below. A DC 13 Reflex save allows

a creature on the bridge to grab at the remaining ropes (or leap to safety if it's within 5 feet of either shore). A series of knotted ropes at the base of the northern posts allow one to tie off the trap so that it can support many times the weight. (The goblins rigged the bridge this way recently when they hauled their unconscious horse hostage Shadowmist over the bridge.)

Originally, the goblins rigged the bridge so that it would fall completely into the water below, but when they tested it and realized that they'd stranded themselves on the island, they rebuilt the bridge so it would leave one rope connected, making it easier to repair.

RIGGED ROPE BRIDGE

XP
1,200

CR
4

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; **Disable Device** DC 15

EFFECTS

Trigger location or manual; **Reset** manual

Effect 80-ft fall into water (2d3 nonlethal plus 4d6 lethal); multiple targets (all creatures on rope bridge); DC 13 Reflex save avoids fall

C10 THISTLETOP (CR 5)



The stockade is made of thick wood. Closer inspection reveals that most of the wood seems to have been scavenged from ships—a few nameplates remain affixed to some of the beams, while other timbers look like they might have once been masts.

The front doors leading into area C11 are barred from the inside if the alarm has been raised; otherwise they hang ajar. The walls of the stockade itself can be scaled with a DC 20 Climb check. Note that while the stockade is made of wood, the damp sea air and thick layers of soggy moss and lichen that grow here and there make it difficult to burn without significant work—a fortunate feature indeed, for most goblin dens made of wood don't last much longer than it takes for the first goblin to light a fire.

CREATURES: Four goblins mounted on goblin dogs patrol the grounds surrounding the stockade, but being goblins, they are easily distracted. Unless the alarm has been raised, the four goblins are gathered to the northwest of the stockade, enraptured by a game of "killgull," a mean-spirited pastime in which a seagull is caught and a 30-foot length of twine is tied to its leg while the far end is held by a goblin. The other goblins take turns trying to pelt the gull out of the sky with thrown rocks, while the goblin holding the twine tries to help the gull avoid being hit by tugging and yanking the twine. Each goblin gets three throws. If the gull still lives at the end, the goblin holding the twine wins. Otherwise, the goblin whose stone kills the gull wins. Whoever wins gets to eat the seagull. Whatever's left



over is then used to attract new seagulls. While the goblins play, they let their goblin dogs wander around as they will, although the creatures generally run around the goblins and shriek and yap at the gulls.

Note that additional goblin guards watch from the towers (area **C13** and **C15**); see those areas for details on how closely they're paying attention.

THISTLETOP GOBLINS (4)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	5 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

GOBLIN DOGS (4)

XP	CR	HP
400 each	1	9 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 157)

C11 TROPHY HALL



The floor of this room is hard-packed soil, as if the builders either ran out of lumber after building the walls and roof, or as if they simply never thought about building a floor. A number of poorly preserved horse and dog heads are mounted along the eastern wall, while along the southern wall hangs a pair of large black-feathered wings tacked to the wall with daggers.

The wall hangings represent Warchief Ripnugget's greatest trophies. The horses and dogs are farm animals that Thistletop's commandos have caught over the years and brought back here for Ripnugget to kill in area **C16**. The feathered wings once belonged to a harpy named Bristanch that dwelt a half-mile down the coast. Ripnugget's triumph over the harpy is perhaps the single greatest victory the goblin can boast of, since Bristanch murdered nearly half the Thistletop tribe (including two of the previous chieftains) before Ripnugget killed her.

TREASURE: One of the daggers used to display Bristanch's wings once belonged to the harpy herself—this dagger has a pearl handle, and is worth 100 gp. The other six daggers are mundane.

DEVELOPMENT: If the alarm has been raised, the six goblins from area **C14** are found here, ready to defend the room from any intruders.

C12 FOOD STORES

This door has been nailed shut; it can be opened with a DC 24 Strength check, or by a DC 10 Disable Device check and 1d4 minutes of work.



This storeroom is half-filled with crates, barrels, and large sacks of grain. A small hole has been chopped into the lower side of one of the barrels, allowing pickles and brine to drain out and giving the room a singular stink of vinegar.

Like all goblins, the Thistletop goblins enjoy eating. The broken pickle barrel is something of a recent scandal here; none of the goblins are confessing to the crime, and Warchief Ripnugget has become flustered enough by the vandalism that he's threatened to lock whoever's responsible in with the "monster" in area **C18** once he finds out who's responsible. Until then, Ripnugget has had the door nailed shut to prevent future crimes.

C13 PICKLE THIEVES (CR 1/2)



An open flight of wooden stairs winds up to a trap door in the ceiling, thirty feet above.

CREATURES: Two goblins are, in theory, on guard duty atop this tower, but they've both fallen asleep. These goblins are responsible for raiding the pickle barrel in area **C12**, as a search of a bag hidden in the northeast corner of the watchtower confirms. This bag can be found with a DC 15 Perception check; within are a few half-eaten pickles. The goblins were planning on eating all of this evidence, but after eating most of their stolen pickles they collapsed into a food coma. If wakened by the sound of battle (remember that the Perception DC to hear anything while sleeping increases by +10) or a raised alarm, these two goblins assume that they've been caught and, in a panic, hurl their remaining stolen pickles out of the tower into the thistle patch to the west, and only then move to support any fights down below with hurled javelins.

THISTLETOP GOBLINS (2)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	5 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

C14 BARRACKS (CR 3)



Six poorly constructed bunk beds, little more than hammocks slung from rickety frames, stand along the walls of this room. Each is heaped with a vermin-infested blanket and a lump of straw that serves as a frustrating pillow.

CREATURES: Each of these bunk beds sleeps three goblins—the Thistletop tribe numbers 18 in all (not counting Warchief Ripnugget, his wives, or Gogmurt), although 12 of them are on duty elsewhere. As long as the alarm hasn't been raised, the remaining six goblins are here, sleeping. If the alarm has been raised, these six goblins move into area **C11** to help guard the trophy hall.

THISTLETOP GOBLINS (6)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	5 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)



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C15 EASTERN GUARD TOWER (CR 2)



An open flight of wooden stairs winds up to a trap door in the ceiling, thirty feet above.

CREATURES: This open-air tower gives a great view of the surrounding area. The goblins guarding this tower aren't quite as irresponsible as the pickle thieves in the other tower, but neither are they paragons of observation. Habitual card-players, these two play with a deck of 43 cards cobbled together from three different sets of cards, making up the rules as they go along. Their games are generally more argument than anything else, but if they hear battle or other signs of intrusion, they abandon their cards at once to join the fight.

THISTLETOP COMMANDOS (2)

XP	CR	HP
200 each	1/2	12 each

Goblin commando (see page 18)

C16 EXERCISE YARD (CR 5)



This large courtyard is open to the sky. Tenacious clumps of partially trampled grass grow fitfully here and there in the hard-packed earth, in places stained with blood or scratched with furrows. To the north, what appear to be two dead goblins lie slumped at the entrance to an outbuilding.

This yard serves the goblins as a place to exercise, to train their goblin dogs, and as an impromptu arena. Warchief Ripnugget often uses this area to challenge creatures and prisoners brought back by raiders (typically horses and dogs, but sometimes actual humanoid prisoners).

CREATURES: Four goblin dogs have been left to run free in this yard. The slaving creatures often scratch at the walls around area C18 to torment the creature within, but otherwise have fun chasing each other and fighting.

GOBLIN DOGS (4)

XP	CR	HP
400 each	1	9 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 157)

C17 STORAGE SHED



Shelves lined with crude tools, nets, and tack for goblin dogs line the walls here. To the northeast stands a large L-shaped wooden cage that contains dozens of rabbits.

The rabbits are used to feed the goblin dogs, while the other tools here are used to train the creatures. In emergencies, the rabbits can serve the goblins as backup food supplies, but goblins who snack on rabbits before

the rest of the food runs out are generally thrown into the Howling Hole, under Chief Ripnugget's "steal food, become food" policy.

C18 CAGED HORSE (CR 2)



The door to this outbuilding has been nailed shut, and additional boards have been nailed over these nails. The door itself is cracked and splintered in places. Two dead goblins, their heads crushed in by something heavy, lie in the dirt by the door, their ripening bodies covered with flies.

The door to this outbuilding can be opened with a DC 25 Strength check, or by a DC 15 Disable Device check and 2d4 minutes of work. A DC 20 Heal check can establish that both goblins were slain when a large hoofed animal, likely a horse, stepped on their heads.

CREATURE: The Thistletop goblins have captured horses many times before, bringing them back here for their chieftain to kill during cruel bloodsports in the exercise yard. Yet always before, these captured horses were light riding horses. Locked inside this room is a terrible mistake—a heavy warhorse named Shadowmist, stolen several days ago from traveling merchants. The goblins murdered the two caravan guards and one of the two remaining horses (the merchants escaped on horseback to Sandpoint), but Shadowmist proved to be more than a match for the goblins. Through a mixture of luck and false bravado, the goblins managed to knock Shadowmist unconscious while only losing four of their own. They bound up the horse's legs, loaded it into the merchants' wagon, and hauled it back here as a prize for Chief Ripnugget. Though the methods by which they managed to drag the unconscious horse through the thistle maze and across the rope bridge were as ingenious as they were ill-advised and risky, the goblins managed to get the horse here.

Tragedy struck when the excited goblins dumped the horse in the exercise yard, cut its bonds, and poured a potion of *cure light wounds* into its mouth so that their chief could show off his horse-killing skills on a live horse. Shadowmist immediately leapt up and began racing in circles in the yard. The goblins panicked and fled, shrieking for Chief Ripnugget to kill the creature, but when he tried to do so, the horse proved even tougher than Ripnugget was expecting. The chief took a crushing blow to the arm, breaking it and forcing him to flee. Enraged, he accused the goblins who had caught the horse of trying to assassinate him, then told them to trap the monster in the shed while he figured out what to do with it. Mortified, the goblins managed to lure the horse into the shed (losing three of their number in the process—two outside, one inside), but in the end managed to nail the door shut while Shadowmist



stomped and raged inside. None of the bodies hide anything of value.

Ripnugget asked Gogmurt to come “take care of the monster horse,” but the druid has refused to help as long as Ripnugget allows Nualia to stay in Thistletop. Enraged at the druid’s answer, the equally stubborn goblin chief has decided to let Shadowmist reach the verge of starvation before attempting to kill him again.

Shadowmist is a magnificent creature, yet his days in captivity have begun to take their toll. Slowly starving, the wild-eyed horse can be a great asset for the PCs if they can calm him down with a DC 25 wild empathy or Handle Animal check or magic like *charm animal*. If the PCs offer Shadowmist food, they gain a +10 bonus on their checks to calm the horse down.

SHADOWMIST

XP	CR	HP
600	2	19

Advanced horse (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 177, 294)

hp 19 (currently has 14 points of nonlethal damage from abuse)

STORY AWARD: If the PCs manage to rescue Shadowmist and either return him to his proper owners back in Sandpoint or claim him as their own, award them XP as if they had defeated the horse in combat.

C19 THRONE ROOM (CR 6)

If the alarm has been raised, all of the doors into this room are closed tightly and locked. Ripnugget carries the keys, but the doors can be picked with a DC 20 Disable Device check.



This large throne room is decorated with hanging furs along its walls, mostly black-and-red striped firepelt skins, various dog pelts, and in some cases, what look like horse hides. Four square timbers support the ceiling, their faces studded with dozens of iron spikes, with the lower reaches decorated with dozens of impaled and severed hands in various stages of decay. To the northeast, a wooden platform supports a throne heaped with dog pelts and horse hides. Dog skulls adorn the armrests and a horse skull leers over the throne’s back.

The hands are all that remain of the last several dozen human victims of the Thistletop goblins; the rest of these victims have long since been eaten or smoked and put into storage in area C20. The spikes make it relatively easy to climb the pillars with a DC 5 Climb check.

Warchief Ripnugget, lord of the Thistletop goblins, has been spending an increasing amount of time here in his throne hall. His favorite pastimes include watching his commandos stage mock battles, being entertained by warchanters, or plotting additional raids on Sandpoint to present to his new obsession—Nualia. His interest

in his wives has all but vanished, so enthralled has he become by the exotic aasimar.

While most of the Thistletop goblins personally feel that Ripnugget’s obsession with Nualia is embarrassing and even traitorous, none of them are brave enough to confront their leader with their feelings (with the exception of the druid Gogmurt).

In truth, Ripnugget’s obsession with Nualia has nothing to do with sexual attraction—her skin is too smooth, her ears are too small, and she’s just too tall to interest the goblin in that way, but it makes a convenient cover to hide his real interest—he believes that she may well be the key to unraveling the mystery of what Malfeshnekor really is. When she arrived with her entourage and an offer of alliance, Ripnugget (in a rare display of common sense) realized that they were more than a match for him and his goblins, and, instead of fighting, chose to listen to what she had to say. When she revealed her holy symbol and spoke of Malfeshnekor, Ripnugget was shocked but recovered his wits quickly enough. He came to believe that this strange woman was in fact Malfeshnekor’s mouthpiece, and that she had been sent to Thistletop to usher the goblins into a new age of triumph. Certainly, her plan to assault Sandpoint seemed like a good idea at the time, and even though it didn’t quite go like she promised, the fact that she’s managed to consecrate the shrine (area D12), establish a link with Malfeshnekor, and slowly but surely opened up the ancient chambers deep below (and in so doing increased the size of the Thistletop holdings) has been more than enough proof to Ripnugget that Nualia is the best hope for his tribe’s future.

CREATURES: Even if the alarm has been raised, Warchief Ripnugget can be found here. If caught by surprise, he’s in the middle of watching his goblins reenact the raid on Sandpoint as they fight against a *silent image* provided by the warchanter. If the alarm is raised, his goblins clamber up the three pillars closest to the throne and hide, while the warchanter ducks behind the throne. In either case, his pet gecko Stickfoot waits loyally at his side.

Assuming the PCs don’t immediately attack when they enter the room, Warchief Ripnugget is willing to parley in the same way that he spoke to Nualia several months ago. This time, though, he doesn’t have any intentions of allying with his visitors; he merely wants time to size the PCs up before he orders them slain. He certainly recognizes them from their heroic stand at Sandpoint—although he wasn’t present at the assault, he’s heard plenty of stories about the longshanks who proved so key to the town’s defense. He knows the PCs are formidable foes, especially since they’ve reached his throne room alive. In any case, he refuses to let the PCs step more than 5 feet into his throne room, informing them that they have not yet earned the right to approach him.



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If the PCs agree to talk, he picks the least-armored PC, compliments that character on being someone who looks like she understands the value of the spoken word over battle, and allows that one PC to approach. Of course, Ripnugget doesn't really have any intention of talking. As soon as that PC is within 5 feet of the northeast pillar, he gives the order to attack.

WARCHIEF RIPNUGGET

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	42

Male goblin fighter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 42 (5d10+10)

Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear,

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 short sword +10 (1d4+5/19-20)

Special Attacks weapon training (light blades +1)

TACTICS

Before Combat Ripnugget drinks his *potion of barkskin* +2 as soon as he hears anyone about to enter his throne hall if the alarm has been raised.

During Combat Ripnugget mounts up on Stickfoot the first chance he gets, so he can take advantage of his Mounted Combat feats in battle. He prefers to use a combination of Spirited Charge and Ride-By attacks.

Morale Ripnugget fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword)

Skills Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +9, Ride +12, Stealth +13

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +2, *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** masterwork breastplate, +1 short sword, dented crown worth 20 gp, key ring for all locks in areas **C11-C24** and areas **D1-D3**

STICKFOOT

XP	CR	HP
400	1	11

Giant gecko (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 186)

THISTLETOP COMMANDOS (3)

XP	CR	HP
200 each	1/2	12 each

Goblin commando (see page 18)

THISTLETOP WARCHANTER

XP	CR	HP
200 each	1/2	9 each

Goblin bard 1 (see page 17)

TACTICS

During Combat The warchanter inspires courage in all of her allies on the first round of combat. On the second round, she casts *hideous laughter* on the most heavily armored PC, then uses *ghost sound* to make it sound like more goblins are approaching from one of the southern doors to trick the PCs into wasting time reacting to that illusory threat. She may also use her *wand of silent images* to create an illusion of a curtain dropping down between her and the rest of the room, providing herself cover she can use to shoot arrows at anyone who fails to see through the illusion. She runs to Ripnugget's aid with a *cure light wounds* (spell or potion) if she sees him reduced to fewer than half his hit points.

STATISTICS

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *wand of silent image* (5 charges); **Other Gear** studded leather, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows, whip, 20 gp

DEVELOPMENT: Warchief Ripnugget fights to the death, but it's still possible to catch him alive. In this case, he tries to bluff the PCs into thinking that he was responsible for the raid on Sandpoint, and that he should be brought back



WARCHIEF RIPNUGGET
& STICKFOOT



to town for a trial, because “isn’t that what you longshanks do?” This is, of course, a stalling tactic; he hopes to escape at the first opportunity to seek aid from Nualia or, if he’s really desperate, from Gogmurt the druid. Only if he’s charmed or otherwise magically compelled can he be made helpful, in which case he knows the layout of the rooms on level one below (but not level two), and can tell the PCs much about Nualia, her plans, her allies, and Malfeshnekor (whom he suspects is a goblin god imprisoned somewhere below).

C20 FOOD STORAGE

The door to this room is locked; the key is carried by Chief Ripnugget. The lock can be picked with a DC 20 Disable Device check.



This foul-smelling butchery is a horrifying affront to all the senses. Haunches of poorly smoked meat hang from hooks along the ceiling or lie heaped in and atop crates. In some cases, the meat seems to be dog or horse, but in many other cases, the meat has all-too-recognizable features, like feet, hands, or grimacing faces.

This food store contains the goblins’ favorite food—the meat of their vanquished enemies. The fate of several missing travelers and merchants is revealed here, although no single body is intact enough to be easily recognizable.

C21 ARMORY



This room contains a small armory of crudely made weapons (mostly dogslicers and shortbows) and several small goblin-sized suits of studded leather armor and dented shields. To the south stand a pair of workbenches.

TREASURE: The workbenches are where the goblins cobble together weapons for their tribe. All of the weapons and suits of armor here are Small. In all, there are 23 dogslicers, 11 shortbows, 80 arrows, 11 suits of studded leather, six light wooden shields, and two coiled whips. On the north wall hangs a single masterwork dogslicer. With the exception of this lone dogslicer, the gear stored here is of poor quality, bespeaking typical goblin crafting expertise.

C22 MEETING ROOM



A round table and a few chairs are this room’s only furnishings.

Warchief Ripnugget uses this room to meet with his commandos, issuing orders or receiving reports from the field.

C23 CHIEFTAIN’S ROOM



Several rugs made from dog or horse hide lie strewn over the dirt floor of this room. Against the north wall stands an impressive collection of horseshoes, each nailed to the wall. To the east sits a ragged padded chair next to a rickety desk that may have once been an expensive antique. In the northwest corner sits a canopied bed covered with silk sheets and sporting an elaborately carved headboard that features nymphs and satyrs cavorting in a forest. The bed’s sheets are stained with dirt, while the headboard is bashed and battered.

Warchief Ripnugget lives in style—even if his furniture has been mostly scavenged from shipwrecks or Junk Beach in Sandpoint, it’s the best junk a goblin can find. The horseshoe collection is currently 122 shoes strong, although none of them are intrinsically valuable.

TREASURE: Although Ripnugget keeps most of the tribe’s treasure in area C24, he keeps one item to himself—a silver holy symbol of Lamashtu with tiny garnets for eyes, given to him by Nualia and worth 40 gp. Ripnugget keeps this symbol under his pillow, where a DC 15 Perception check can uncover it.

A DC 20 Perception check on the chair to the east finds a large iron key wedged under the seat; this key opens the treasure chest in area C24.

C24 TREASURY (CR 3)



This small, foul-smelling room features little more than a reeking hole in the ground, its rim stained with refuse and waste.

Although goblins are prone to relieving themselves in the wild or off the edge of the cliff outside, some of them sometimes remember that they’re supposed to keep this latrine looking used. In fact, the west wall of this nasty-smelling room hides a secret door that can be discovered with a DC 20 Perception check. Beyond is another small room, this one much less foul-smelling and containing a single extra-large sea chest with a heavy iron padlock. The key to this lock is hidden in Chief Ripnugget’s room (area C23).

TRAP: The sea chest is trapped, courtesy of one of Chief Ripnugget’s predecessors who had a great talent for such devices. The trap triggers if the chest is attacked, if the lock is attempted with a pick, or even if the lock is tried with the proper key and turned left instead of right. When triggered, a rusty blade of jagged metal springs out of the chest’s lid. The blade was once poisoned, and while the poison has long since decayed, the blade still has a great chance of giving victims tetanus.





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FILTHY SLASHER TRAP

XP 800	CR 3
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Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 22

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset manual

Effect Atk +8 melee (scything blade; 1d8+4/19–20 plus tetanus). This disease, also called “lockjaw,” is typically introduced via deep wounds from contaminated objects like rusty metal. Tetanus victims become more and more prone to violent muscle spasms, splitting headaches, fever, and difficulty swallowing. Stiffness of the jaw is a common result of tetanus infection.

Tetanus: Scything blade—injury; save Fort DC 14; onset 1d6 days; frequency 1/day; effect 1d4 Dex damage. Each time someone takes Dexterity damage from tetanus, there’s a 50% chance his jaw muscles stiffen, preventing speech and the use of spells with verbal components for the next 24 hours.

TREASURE: Inside the chest lies the accumulated wealth of the Thistletop tribe, culled from junkyards, shipwrecks, ambushed merchants, and unfortunate rival goblin tribes over the past decade or so. This collection consists of an unorganized pile of 7,432 cp, 2,490 sp, 89 gp, 3 pp, a leather pouch of 34 badly flawed malachites worth 1 gp each, a Medium chain shirt, a Medium masterwork scimitar, a pair of masterwork manacles, a gold holy symbol of Sarenrae worth 100 gp, a jade necklace worth 60 gp, and a fine blue silk gown with silver trim worth 150 gp.

C25 SUBMERGED SEA CAVE

This entrance to the sea caves under the thistle maze is underwater, but can be noticed from above with a DC 20 Perception check. Navigating the waters is tough, requiring a DC 20 Swim check due to the surf’s strong undertow. The cliffs leading up from the beaches here are 80 feet high, and can be scaled with a DC 15 Climb check.

C26 SECONDARY SEA CAVE ENTRANCE

Unlike the entrance at C25, this sea cave entrance remains above water even at high tide, although there are no ledges leading into the cave beyond. It’s a DC 20 Swim check to navigate the churning surf leading south.

C27 BUNYIP LAIR (CR 3)



A glittering grotto sparkles here, its walls dripping with moisture and alive with sea urchins, anemones, and other tidal life. The cave’s roof rises to a natural dome ten feet above the water where a five-foot-wide chimney rises through the roof in a shaft. The waters here are less choppy, but they are far from still. A five-foot-wide, fifteen-foot-long ledge sits just above the water level to the south.

Navigating the sheltered waters here is somewhat easier than at the entrances to the sea cave—it’s only a DC 15 Swim check to move around in here. The western entrance remains underwater even at low tide; the water in the cave itself is 20 feet deep at its deepest point directly under the shaft, but never gets shallower than 10 feet.

CREATURE: This cave is the lair of a dangerous coastal predator called a bunyip. A sleek aquatic hunter that looks something like a seal with fins and a mouth full of several rows of sharklike teeth, the bunyip has learned that food often falls down from the hole above, especially when it roars. It’s grown somewhat lazy in its hunting as a result, and rarely leaves this cave anymore, spending much of its time sleeping on the southern ledge.

BUNYIP

XP 800	CR 3	HP 32
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hp 32 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 50)

TACTICS

During Combat The bunyip roars as soon as it sees intruders, then dives into the water to attack the closest foe. Once it selects a target, it only switches to another foe when its current foe is dead or when another target hits it for more than 8 points of damage.

Morale Although the bunyip is territorial, it still flees into the open sea if brought below 8 hit points. It returns 3d6 hours later to try to reclaim its lair.

TREASURE: A search of the cave pool’s bed quickly turns up an incredible tangle of bones, all that remains of the bunyip’s meals. Many of the bones are from goblins, but a fair amount are larger and human-sized. Several items of value lie scattered down here as well. Each search of the mess takes 5 minutes, and with a successful DC 20 Perception check, one of the following treasures is uncovered: 3d6 gp (to a maximum of 100 gp), a deep green spinel worth 100 gp, a rusted kukri with an intact violet garnet in its hilt worth 500 gp, a rotted quiver containing three +1 arrows, and a bone wand of shield with 9 charges remaining.

THISTLETOP DUNGEON: LEVEL ONE

It was 200 years ago that a Varisian cult of Lamashtu fled here from the east to avoid being slaughtered by the advancing Chelish army. Taken with the unique shape of this small island, the cultists established a church of Lamashtu atop it, expanding into the ground below and excavating the chambers on this level. Near the end of that excavation, they discovered the intact second level below, but in opening it, they also unwittingly released a hellcat that had been trapped in area E2 for thousands of years. The cultists were quickly slaughtered by the outsider, which had gone insane after its long imprisonment. The monster has long since fled into the world, leaving



the complex roughly in its current condition when the Thistletop goblins first came to dwell here.

Although goblins can see in the dark, several of Nualia's followers cannot, and so hooded lanterns hang in each hallway and in most rooms throughout the complex; these lanterns are generally left lit only during daylight hours. Ceiling height averages 8 feet in most rooms, and doors are generally rickety wooden affairs rigged by the goblins.

D1 ABANDONED FEAST HALL



A single lantern hangs from a hook on the wall next to where the stairs enter this room from the north. Several rickety doors open into this room, and a few discarded dog pelt rugs lie forgotten in the northeast corner.

Before Nualia arrived, the goblins used this room as a feast hall. Ripnugget let Nualia move the table and chairs that once stood in here up north to area D14, and since then the goblins have taken to having their meals wherever they want.

D2 CHIEFTAIN'S HAREM (CR 4)



Dozens of ratty cushions, lumpy pillows, and rumpled dogskin furs lie heaped in the south half of this chamber, which smells of a nauseating mixture of vinegar and rotten flowers.

CREATURES: The stink in the air is, horrifyingly enough, perfume worn by the four hideous goblin women who lounge about in this chamber. These four are Warchief Ripnugget's wives, although he hasn't had time to visit them in weeks. Starved for attention, the goblins have taken to one of Nualia's allies with an obscene and disturbing glee. This is Bruthazmus the bugbear, and unless he suspects intruders have reached this level, he's 80% likely to be encountered here (he's otherwise to be found in his lair at area D4d).

For many years, Bruthazmus lived a lonely life as a trapper in the northern reaches of Nettlewood, periodically stalking the Lost Coast Road for merchants and couriers to jump. The day he met Nualia, he thought the exotic-looking woman was some sort of nature spirit. He tried to catch her to sell her to pirates from Riddleport, but she handily defeated him without taking a wound herself. When she offered him a job as her bodyguard rather than executing him, the bugbear seized the chance. He's long coveted the prime location claimed by the Thistletop tribe, and now that he's here, he knows he has Nualia to thank for his turn in fortunes. He remains cruel and abusive to most others he meets (including Nualia's other allies, whom he does not enjoy the company of, excluding these delightful goblin wives), but has taken to treating Nualia almost as a mother.

Bruthazmus hasn't quite gotten over the fact that he hasn't been given permission to go down to Sandpoint and cause problems. He's bitterly jealous of Tsuto as a result, whom he suspects has been razing Sandpoint all the time Bruthazmus has been caged up here. His hatred of elves doesn't help the bugbear's attitude toward Tsuto, and he often fantasizes about adding Tsuto's ears to his elf-ear necklace, even though the half-elf's ears aren't nearly as pointed as he would like.

BRUTHAZMUS

XP	CR	HP
800	3	31

Male bugbear ranger 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 38)
CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 31 (4 HD; 3d8+1d10+13)

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

BRUTHAZMUS



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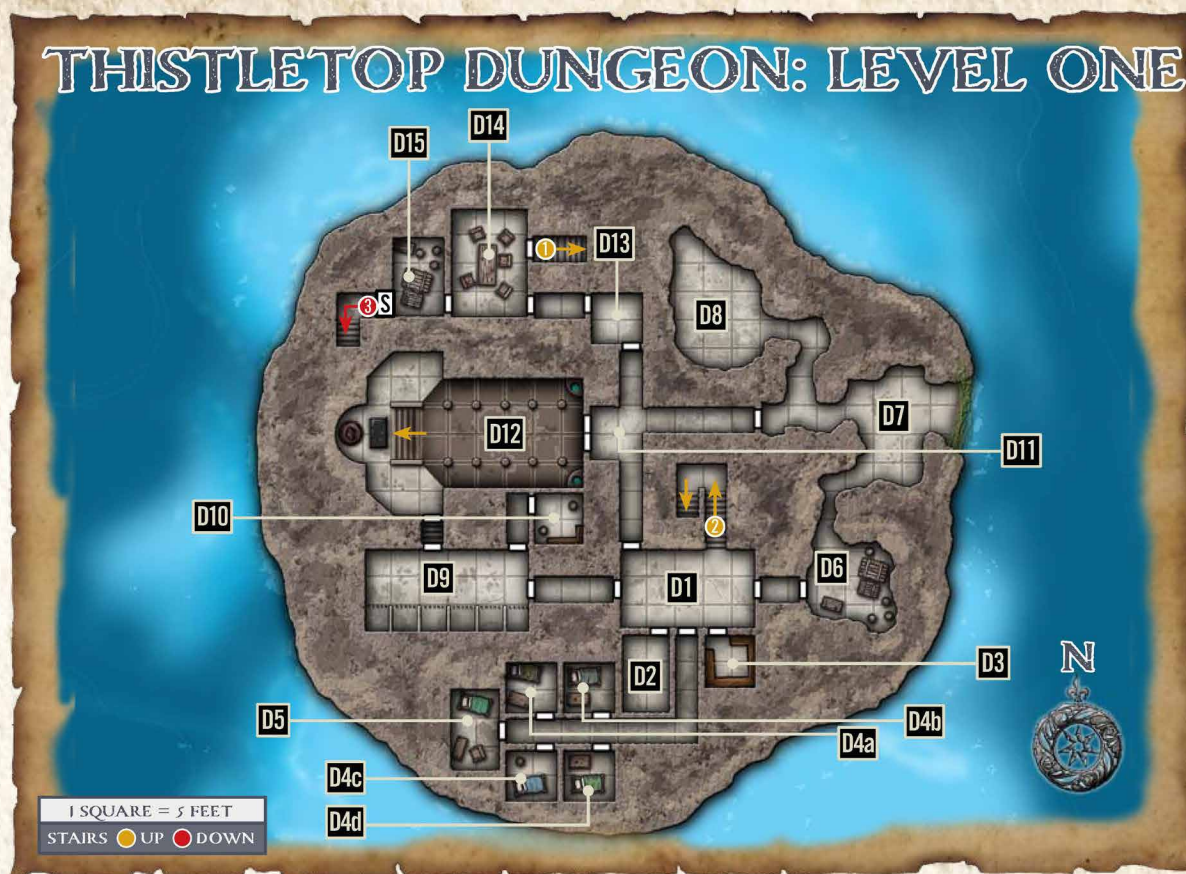
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MAP FIVE:
THISTLETOP DUNGEON:
LEVEL ONE



Melee heavy flail +7 (1d10+6/19-20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +8 (1d8+4/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (elves +2)

TACTICS

During Combat Bruthazmus reacts to intrusions on his personal time with roars and curses. There's a 50% chance he's not wearing his armor if encountered in area **D2**; in any event, he flies into combat with his heavy flail with a murderous glee. He attacks elves in preference to any other target.

Morale If brought below 15 hit points, Bruthazmus attempts to flee to area **D15**, where he barricades the door and then races downstairs to area **E4** to join Nualia, hoping to get some healing and then remaining at her side as a bodyguard until the PCs are no longer a threat.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** 17, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow)

Skills Intimidate +3, Stealth +13, Survival +8

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ stalker, track +1, wild empathy +0

Combat Gear 4 +1 elf bane arrows, *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** studded leather, heavy flail, mwk composite longbow with 20 arrows, 4 pp

THISTLETOP GOBLINS WIVES (4)

XP	CR	HP
135 each	1/3	5 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

D3 GOBLIN NURSERY



The walls of this room are lined with small wooden cages. Inside each cage is a dirty mound of straw.

Horribly, this is the Thistletop nursery. Most goblin tribes have equally reprehensible methods of raising children—very few tribes actually coddle and protect their young, since the theory is that such activity only results in adult goblins who can't defend themselves. Goblin wisdom instead supports methods like these cages, where fast-growing goblin babies and children are raised like animals on daily regimens of raw meat and abuse so they grow up properly mean and strong.

There are no babies kept here currently—the Thistletop goblins have had other things (such as planning the raid on Sandpoint) on their minds lately. GMs seeking to confront their players with awkward social situations might want to put a few sharp-toothed feral goblin children and babies in these cages for the unsuspecting adventurers to discover.


D4a TSUTO'S CHAMBERS



This room is clean and well organized. A low dresser to the southwest has a stack of papers sitting atop it, weighted down by a large chunk of obsidian, while to the northwest sits a well-made bed.

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If Tsuto escaped from death earlier in this adventure, there's a 30% chance he's here, sleeping. Otherwise, he's encountered at area D15. If he's here, the half-elf does everything in his power to escape to area D15.

The notes on the nightstand are mostly rough drafts of Tsuto's plans to blackmail his father and to use the Sandpoint Glassworks as a staging ground for the coming investigation of the Catacombs of Wrath—it's unlikely that there's anything here that's news to the PCs by this point, although if they haven't discovered the Catacombs of Wrath yet, these notes should point them in that direction.

D4b ORIK'S CHAMBERS (CR 3)



This one-person bedroom shows many signs of having been lived in. The bed itself is rumpled and unmade, and a half-eaten meal of bread and smoked salmon sits on the nightstand. A few articles of dirty clothing sit at the foot of the bed.

CREATURE: This is the current home of Orik Vancaskerkin, a down-on-his-luck mercenary from the lawless city of Riddleport. After a scam involving a tiefling prostitute, a shift alchemist, and an *elixir of love*, Orik was forced to flee town. He's pretty sure that Clegg Zincher, the now-dead alchemist's powerful brother, still carries a grudge for what Orik did to the alchemist when he discovered, to his horror, that the *elixir of love* was actually just cheap ale laced with lavender. While Orik bears no regrets for murdering the alchemist, he does regret the fact that Clegg Zincher effectively made it impossible for him to continue living in Riddleport. He misses his hometown greatly, despite the fact that little good ever came of living there, and has several half-formed plans to return there some day to face Clegg and perhaps seize control of Zincher's power for himself.

But doing something like that requires allies and money, and when a strange but beautiful woman approached him in the seedy Magnimar bar he'd taken up in, he accepted her offer to serve as her bodyguard without question. Since then, and since helping plan the assault on Sandpoint, Orik has come to think that his allegiance to Nualia may be just the latest in a long string of bad choices. Still, she pays regularly in platinum, and to date he hasn't really had to do much actual bodyguarding, since she's remained here at Thistletop for some time. He knows she's after something in the chambers below, but doesn't know (or care) what it is. Orik has also developed something of an infatuation with another of Nualia's minions, the foul-tempered (charmingly so, to Orik) Lyrie Akenja. Unfortunately, Lyrie seems more obsessed with Tsuto than anything else. Orik has considered murdering Tsuto to remove him from the picture, but since the half-elf is currently Nualia's lover, he's avoided such drastic moves to this point. Things have become so unbearably complicated for Orik that he's considering giving up on the whole thing and heading east to Korvosa to try his luck there.

Orik is ruggedly handsome, with a visage and demeanor that doesn't mesh well with smiles and laughter. Of late, he's spent most of his time here, waiting for something—anything—to develop down in the chambers below or with the Sandpoint situation so he can collect his final payment from Nualia. The raid on Sandpoint has left him somewhat conflicted, since on his one visit to the town on his way south to Magnimar several months ago, he found the place friendly and charming.



ORIK
VANCASKERKIN



BURNT OFFERINGS

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ORIK VANCASKERKIN

XP	CR	HP
800	3	42

Male human fighter 4

CN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 42 (4d10+16)

Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear,

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk bastard sword +9 (1d10+5/19-20)

Ranged composite longbow +5 (1d8+3/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat Orik relies on his strength in battle, focusing his attacks on taking down one target at a time and preferring to fight with his back to a wall or an ally. He generally fights with Power Attack.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 5 hit points, Orik throws down his weapons and begs for mercy. He promises to help the PCs however he can if given his life—this promise is mostly legitimate, as detailed in Development below.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Athletic, Blind-Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Linguistics +1, Swim +6

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 banded mail, masterwork heavy steel shield, composite longbow with 20 arrows, masterwork bastard sword, everburning torch, 2 pp, 95 gp

DEVELOPMENT: If Orik surrenders, he does what he can to ensure his continued well-being. If that includes giving his wealth to the PCs or even aiding them against Nualia and her other allies, so be it. Unfortunately, Orik hasn't explored much of the dungeon here, and can say nothing about areas **D7–D8** (except that there's some kind of wriggly monster in there), areas **D9–D10**, or any of the chambers on level two. He's only been in the temple of Lamashtu (area **D12**) once, enough to know that he doesn't want to go back if he can help it; that religion kind of gives him the chills. He knows that the temple is guarded by a pair of "monster dogs," but beyond knowing that their howls are horrifying, he isn't sure what they are.

D4c LYRIE'S CHAMBERS



While this bedroom is clean and brightly lit by an everburning torch lying on the nightstand, its spartan decor makes it unclear whether it's actually lived in.

In fact, this chamber does belong to another of Nualia's minions, but since Lyrie spends most of her time in area **D15** researching the various artifacts and relics recovered from the dungeons below, she's only encountered here during the night as she sleeps.

TREASURE: The everburning torch belongs to Lyrie, a spare in case the one she carries is lost.

D4d BRUTHAZMUS'S CHAMBERS



This bedroom has a faint musty odor. The bed is covered with matted gray and black hair, and bloodstains mar the stone floor, while a morbid stack of birds' feet lies heaped on the floor by the side of the bed.

Bruthazmus the bugbear has taken to sleeping in area **D2** of late, and hasn't been back to this room in days. The bloodstains are all that remain of his last meal taken here—the bugbear prefers his food still alive and wriggling as he eats, and has taken a liking to seagull (he gobbles the whole bird, but detests the texture of the feet and won't eat them).

D5 NUALIA'S CHAMBERS



This large chamber seems to serve a dual purpose. To the north is a fine bed with silk sheets, while to the south, a desk and chair under a hanging lantern make a comfortable-looking study.

This large room serves Nualia as a bedchamber, although she's not spent much time here recently. She had the fine bed in the north side of the room brought in piece by piece from Magnimar, one of her few concessions toward luxury.

D6 STORAGE ROOM



Crates, barrels, and mounds of miscellaneous refuse lie heaped against the walls here. To the north, the sound of crashing surf echoes.

Most of the junk scavenged from Junk Beach by the Seven Tooth goblins ends up here, tribute sent north to the Thistletop goblins to keep them on the greater tribe's good side. While the raw materials here can be turned into furniture, dogslicers, or even armor, at this point only a goblin is likely to see value in the mounds of refuse.

D7 TENTAMORT HUNTING GROUNDS (CR 4)



The floor of this cavern seems strangely polished and smooth. To the east, a thick curtain of vines and nettles hangs down over a wide opening overlooking the Varisian Gulf.



CREATURE: This cavern has been the hunting grounds of a tentamort for many years. The monster looks something like a leathery, eyeless squid with a squat body the size of a rain barrel. Its lower body splits into a tangle of tentacles the creature uses to slowly move, while two longer tentacles, one thick and muscular and the other lithe and tipped with a bone stinger, emerge from either side. Exceptionally long-lived, the nearly mindless predator has fed on sea birds for years and has grown quite adept at snatching them out of the sky from its perch overlooking the sea to the east. When the goblins moved in, they lost several to the tentamort's tentacles (including one of their best fighters) before they decided to leave the monster alone.

Lyrie spent several days studying the monster after she arrived, going so far as to lure several goblins in here so she could watch the monster eat them, but she's learned all she can of the creature and grew bored with it a few days ago.

TENTAMORT

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	39

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 261)

D8 TENTAMORT LAIR



Dozens of strange dead bodies lie scattered about this room. Most are sea birds and ospreys, but there are six dead goblins here as well. Each body is literally skin and bones, as if all of the interior organs and muscles have somehow been drained away, leaving behind skeletons draped with leathery, slowly rotting skin.

TREASURE: The bodied of the goblins who fell victim to the tentamort were never recovered, and their armor and weapons lie in rotting, rusty heaps. One of the bodies belongs to the ex-goblin hero Tiovunk; his carcass still wears a suit of *+1 hide armor* (made from dogs) and bears a ruined (but once masterwork) horsechopper and a masterwork short bow.

D9 PRISON



The southern wall of this room is a bank of cells with iron doors, six in all. The rest of the room is obviously a torture chamber; a rack sits against the far wall, an iron maiden stands to the north, and a fire pit smolders below a spiky cage dangling from a chain in the ceiling to the east.

If the goblins have captured any prisoners during the adventure, they're kept here. Since their jailer and torturer, Brunkel, went missing during the raid on Sandpoint, this area has been neglected by the goblins, who often forgot to come down to check on prisoners

for several days anyway, leaving the prisoners to ration their already meager food and water to avoid thirst and hunger. If she's been brought to Thistletop, Ameiko Kaijitsu (or any other key NPCs who've been captured by the goblins) can be found languishing here.

Each of the iron doors enclosing the cells can be broken with a DC 26 Strength check, or the locks picked with a DC 25 Disable Device check. Keys for the cells can be found in area D10.

D10 BRUNKEL'S LAIR



A dusty nest of rags, dog hides, and straw sits in the northeast corner of this room. To the south, a long workbench cluttered with pliers, hooks, tongs, saws, and knives runs along the wall.

Brunkel, a goblin fighter/rogue and once the second-toughest goblin in the tribe, lived here where he served as a torturer and jailer. The Thistletop goblins assumed that if anyone could survive the raid on Sandpoint, it would be Brunkel. They were wrong—Brunkel died on the sheriff's sword within minutes of the raid's beginning.

Keys to the cells in area D9 can be found scattered among the torture implements on the southern workbench.

D11 CHAPEL ENTRANCE



Two large stone doors sit in the western wall here, their faces carved with images of horrific, deformed monsters clawing their way out of pregnant women of all races.

These two stone doors are well maintained, and open easily. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the scene depicted on the doors as one common to churches of Lamashtu.

D12 CHAPEL TO LAMASHTU (CR 5)



Stone fonts containing frothy dark water sit to the north and south of the eastern entrance to the room, and twin banks of stone pillars run the length of the long chamber. At the western end, shallow stairs rise to a platform about two feet off the ground. The walls surrounding this platform are lit by hanging braziers that emit glowing red smoke, giving the place an unnerving crimson lighting that throws the bas-relief carvings of countless monsters feasting on fleeing humans into lurid display. A black marble altar stone, its surface heaped with ashes and bone fragments, squats before a ten-foot-tall statue. The sculpture depicts a very pregnant but otherwise shapely naked woman who wields a kukri in each taloned hand and has a long reptilian tail, birdlike

taloned feet, and the snarling head of a three-eyed jackal with a forked tongue. The left kukri flickers with fiery orange light while the right one glows with a cold blue radiance.

Recently reconsecrated by Nualia, this shrine to Lamashtu had lain dormant for many years, ever since the previous chieftain succumbed to rabies and left Ripnugget in charge. Ripnugget has always viewed his inability to receive Malfeshnekor's empathic sendings as a flaw, but after he threw several goblins who dared question this flaw into the Howling Hole, no one at Thistletop talks about it. Ripnugget has come to view Nualia's arrival as Lamashtu's blessing, and attending her weekly sermons has become mandatory for the goblins, despite the fact that one or two of them end up sacrificed on the altar if they can't offer up other goblins or prisoners in their place. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the temple and statue as being sacred to Lamashtu. The glowing effects on the statue's kukris are *continual flame* spells.

Every day that Nualia leads a service here, she prepares a *desecrate* spell instead of a *cat's grace* spell, and casts it at the start of her sermon. If the PCs wish to time their infiltration of Thistletop to coincide with one of her ceremonies, they'll find the upper reaches of the fortress empty and easy to infiltrate, but if they come upon this room they may well encounter more than they can handle.

An examination of the altar reveals smears of ash and bits of bone—all that's left of Nualia's foster father after his remains were sacrificed to Lamashtu as burnt offerings.

CREATURES: When Nualia arrived here, drawn by her dreams, she quickly rededicated this chapel to Lamashtu in much the same way Sandpoint would rededicate their own chapel several months later. In reward, Lamashtu sent Nualia three of her minions, lean creatures that look like jackals with smoking red eyes and black fangs—yeth hounds. Two lurk in the shadows of the chamber while the other remains at Nualia's side; all three are completely loyal to her. When she performs sacrifices to Lamashtu, Nualia does so with her bastard sword, beheading the victim and then inviting the yeth hounds to feast on the body while she holds the decapitated head over the altar so it can watch its body being consumed during the last few moments of its consciousness.

When no one else is here, the yeth hounds hover near the ceiling in the north and south sides of the room. If they sense any intruders, they quickly race down through the air to attack, their howls quickly putting the complex on alert.

During rituals, all of the goblins in the complex, as well as Tsuto, Lyrie, and Bruthazmus, gather here to watch and pray. Orik attended the first service, but has since bowed out, claiming that someone needs to guard the complex during the ceremony. To his relief, Nualia agreed. In any event, taking on a room of goblins and

cultists is not a good plan for low-level PCs, as a battle against Nualia, three yeth hounds, 22 goblins (including a warchanter and five commandos), and the other three members of Nualia's band is approximately a CR 10 encounter! (Note that there's actually not enough room for all of the goblins to observe in this room during such ceremonies—any overflow spills into area D11 and the adjoining hallways.)

While Nualia is immune to a yeth hound's fear-inducing howl (since she's an evil outsider), the goblins and other inhabitants of Thistletop are not. Depending on which doors in the dungeon remain open, the howls of these monsters when they attack the PCs could well affect many of the other denizens as well. Goblins affected by the howls shriek and panic and run in circles, while other NPCs hide under beds or in corners if they're affected by the fear. Remember that a yeth hound's bay is a spread, and as such, it can turn corners but can't pass solid barriers (such as closed doors). Nonetheless, the baying is quite loud, and should suffice to alert every denizen of Thistletop that intruders have entered the chapel.

YETH HOUNDS (2)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 286)

D13 GOBLIN ART GALLERY



The lower four feet of the walls in this empty room are covered with crude drawings in mud, blood, and paint. Most of the drawings show goblins engaged in some sort of violence against humans, horses, or dogs. One picture on the north wall is at least three times the size and complexity of the other scrawlings. This image shows Thistletop from the side, the goblin stockade perched atop it like a crown. A cave has been drawn into the center of the image, and looming inside is what appears to be an immense, muscular goblin with snakelike eyes and a dogslicer in each taloned hand. If the scale compared to the rest of the drawing is to be believed, this goblin must be at least thirty feet tall.

Fortunately for the PCs, the depiction of Malfeshnekor here is based on nothing more than the goblins' hopes and dreams.

D14 WAR ROOM



A large table surrounded by chairs fills much of this room. A slate board to the north is covered with scribbles in chalk, but the map of Sandpoint that has been carefully inscribed on it leaves no doubt as to the purpose of this room—this is doubtless where the recent raid was planned.



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An investigation of the slate and the notes written there can confirm this and more. Namely, that once “the whispering beast is tamed,” the architects of the plan intend to mount a second raid on the town, one that incorporates not only additional goblin tribes culled from as far as the Fogscar Mountains to the north, but creatures referred to as “sinspawn” who will invade Sandpoint from below. If the PCs have fought sinspawn already, they recognize these dangerous monsters as the ones mentioned here. No exact timetable is given for when this second raid is to happen, but close examination reveals that the final assault is scheduled for only a few weeks in the future.

D15 RESEARCH ROOM (CR 3)



A large wooden worktable sits in the middle of this room, its surface cluttered with scrolls, books, stone tablets covered with dense, spiky runes, and fragments of carvings that appear to have been chipped off of statues or bas-reliefs. To the north, a floor-to-ceiling set of wooden shelves sags with picks, shovels, brushes, lanterns, and other equipment one might expect to see at an archaeological site.

This chamber has been claimed by Nualia and her minions as a place to study and research the artifacts that they’ve recovered from the chambers below and from other ancient Thassilonian sites they’ve raided. The secret door to the east was built by the cult of Lamashtu that once dwelt here after their excavations uncovered a sealed stairway leading down to the chambers below; they installed this door to prevent the discovery of the chambers by their enemies. The door’s been used often recently, and if the alarm hasn’t been raised, it actually hangs ajar. If it’s closed, it’s only a DC 18 Perception check to find it due to the heavy traffic that’s been passing through it over the past few weeks.

CREATURES: Although all five of the bandits have spent time in this room, only Lyrie Akenja and Nualia have the obsessive interest in these ruins to spend much time here. And since Nualia’s been spending more and more of her time in the observation deck below (area E4), Lyrie’s been able to study here in peace and quiet, a luxury she’s quite enjoyed.

Nualia hired Lyrie primarily for her knowledge of arcana and architecture, her ability to read Thassilonian, and her arcane magic. Lyrie was in a desperate place when Nualia encountered her in Magnimar—she had recently been informed that she was no longer under consideration to join the Pathfinders as an initiate. She suspects bitterly that they kept copies of her notes and applicant thesis, and that their rejection of her application had more to do with the fact that they suspect she murdered two of the competing initiates. That this is true doesn’t matter to Lyrie. When Nualia offered to pay her in platinum to study Thassilonian relics, she gratefully accepted.

Lyrie is in her early twenties, with dark skin and long hair braided tightly into cornrows. She’s always had a poor self-image, a quality that has left her bitter, cruel, and quick to assume insult in innocent comments or to look at things in the bleakest possible manner. Her only true friend is her cat familiar, Skivver, even though he has a bad habit of scratching and marking his territory.



LYRIE
AKENJA



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LYRIE AKENJA

XP	CR	HP
800	3	24

Female human wizard 4
CE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +3; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 24 (4d6+8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +1 (1d4–1/19–20)

Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (6/day)

Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd—*invisibility*, *mirror image*, *shatter* (DC 16)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 15), *grease* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*

TACTICS

Before Combat Before combat starts, Lyrie casts *mage armor*.

During Combat Lyrie knows she's outclassed in most fights, and prefers to avoid combat when alone if possible. If forced into combat, she first casts *mirror image*, then focuses most of her spells on heavily armored characters, casting *shatter* on a weapon and *ray of enfeeblement* in an attempt to get them to suffer for wearing such heavy armor. She relies heavily on her *wand of magic missile* in combat.

Morale Lyrie is a coward at heart, and as soon as she's hit for damage, she attempts to flee to the closest ally for help. If she believes the PCs have harmed Tsuto, though, her anger takes over and she fights to the death in an attempt to avenge him.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +2, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Elven, Goblin, Osiriani, Thassilonian

SQ arcane bond (cat named Skivver)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of comprehend languages*, *scroll of minor image*, *scroll of see invisibility*, *scroll of sleep*, *scroll of whispering wind*, *wand of magic missile* (38 charges); **Other Gear** dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, silver comb (25 gp), fine silk gown (60 gp), everburning torch, small pouch of artifacts (hair, fingernail clipping, used handkerchiefs, and a pearl earring worth 50 gp) stolen from Tsuto Kaijitsu, 3 pp, 278 gp

Spellbook Contains all prepared spells plus *comprehend languages*, *detect secret doors*, *floating disc*, *identify*, *locate object*, *minor image*, *obscuring mist*, *see invisibility*, *sleep*, and *spider climb*.

DEVELOPMENT: If Tsuto escaped from the PCs earlier and the alarm has been raised, he's encountered here. He

and Lyrie have pushed the table up against the eastern door, making it a DC 22 Strength check to push the door open. If Bruthazmus escaped the PCs as well, he passes through this room on his way to alert and defend Nualia, alerting Lyrie to the PCs' approach as he passes by.

THISTLETOP DUNGEON: LEVEL TWO

Cracks line the walls here and there, and while the first few rooms are fairly clean, dust and rubble clutter areas **E6–E10**. Spiderwebs clutter the corners of the rooms. Areas **E1–E4** are lit by lanterns left on the floor by Nualia and her minions, but areas **E5–E10** are unlit unless otherwise indicated.

This level is part of the original complex that was hidden in the head of Karzoug's sentinel statue. When the statue collapsed, the head came to rest at an angle; as a result, this entire level is sloped downward toward the west. While the canted floor doesn't appreciably impact movement, it does grant creatures a +1 bonus on attack rolls made against foes who stand in squares west of the attacker's square.

Air quality in these chambers is surprisingly good, despite the fact that many of the rooms here have been sealed shut for a long, long time. The temperature never varies from a comfortable 60° F. Both of these conditions are remnants of what once were several magical concessions toward comfort from long ago; most of the other effects (such as lighting) have long since failed, but the replenishment of air and temperature maintenance remain functional. *Detect magic* reveals this as a faint transmutation aura.

E1 ANCIENT DOOR



A stone door just around the corner from the steps hangs slightly ajar, the detailed carvings that once covered its surface defaced by chisel marks and hammer blows to the extent that only a few remnants of images (mostly of gemstones and crowns) remain. The floor here is slanted downward toward the west.

This door was damaged hundreds of years ago when the cultists of Lamashtu tried to batter it open, only to release the monster that once lurked in the room beyond.

E2 THE HELLCAT'S HALL



Two pillars support the ceiling in here. In many places the stone walls, floor, and ceiling are caked with ancient grime and soot. Alcoves in the north and south walls contain partially damaged statues of a man in robes clutching a book and a glaive. The entire room is canted toward the west, and whatever ancient upheaval caused the complex to tilt knocked the statues from their bases so that now they lean against the western walls of their alcoves.

THISTLETOP DUNGEON: LEVEL TWO



The statues once depicted Runelord Karzoug, although time and the hellcat's endless anger have left them too damaged to be recognizable beyond their basic shapes. The hellcat is long gone, having been released hundreds of years ago by the clerics of Lamashtu who settled in the chambers above.

E3 TRAPPED HALL (CR 4)



This short hallway rises in a slope to the east. Five feet from the western door, the floor is polished and shiny, unlike the dusty floor elsewhere. A pair of stone statues depicting stern men wielding glaives stand in alcoves north and south of this section of the hallway. At the eastern end stand two stone doors, their faces carved with strange runes. Just past the doors is a third alcove in which a partially collapsed statue sits. The top half of the statue is missing, leaving behind a ragged stump of a torso.

The eastern statue broke long ago, tumbling down the hallway to come to a rest against the western door, which made it difficult to open for Nualia and her minions on their first visit. They've cleared away the rubble since then.

TRAP: Two hidden iron portcullises are recessed into the ceiling around the polished section of floor, as indicated on the map. When a creature steps between them, a pressure plate causes them to both drop with a clang; 1 round later, the two statues began slashing at

the space between them, cutting the trapped intruder to ribbons. A lever that raises and lowers the portcullises and switches the trap on and off can be found in area E4.

When Nualia first explored this area with her allies, one of her bodyguards (a stoic Shoanti barbarian named Jagen) triggered the trap and was killed by it. Since then, she and her remaining allies have explored these chambers very slowly, with Tsuto checking for traps extensively before they move on to new areas. The polished section of floor is all that remains of the mess Jagen made after the survivors cleaned the place up—Nualia burnt his remains in the temple (area D12) as an offering to Lamashtu and sold his gear during a trip to Magnimar a few days later.

While she's working in area E4, Nualia keeps the trap activated; when her allies wish to visit her, they call out from the doorway to area E2 to have her turn the trap off. If the PCs trigger the trap, Nualia hears the noise and prepares for trouble. Once the trap is triggered, the glaives continue slashing whoever stands in the room as long as pressure remains on the square between them. Both glaives are standard glaives and can be sundered (the trap has a CMD of 18, and attempts to sunder the glaives do not provoke attacks of opportunity from the trap). Two rounds after the trap activates, a 10-foot-deep pit opens in the square, dumping what remains of the victim into the area below before the whole thing resets itself. A still-living victim can attempt a DC 20 Reflex save to avoid falling into the pit by either clinging to the portcullises or the statue alcoves, but when the pit closes automatically

1 round later, the victim's weight on the lid could start the cycle all over again.

SLASHING CAGE TRAP

XP
1,200

CR
4

Type magical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect portcullises drop to seal target in 5-foot area between them (Reflex DC 15 to jump to an adjacent 5-foot-square as they drop); 1 round later, both statues slash at the area with their glaives for 2 rounds; 2 glaives +8 (1d10+4/x3); 10-foot fall after 2 rounds (1d6 damage, fall, Reflex DC 20 negates).

E4 OBSERVATION DECK (CR 6)



Wide stone ledges of red marble line the curving walls of this room, which is well lit by four burning skulls that sit in each corner. Three chairs rest in the room, and both stone ledges are covered with old books, scrolls, teeth, bones, scrimshaw artwork, jars of deformed creatures soaking in brine, taxidermied animals and limbs, and other strange objects. To the north, a large round fountain filled with frothy blue water fills the room with the gentle sound of bubbling.

The bubbling font of water used to allow those who drank from it the ability to view the surrounding terrain from the sentinel statue's eyes. Now, the fountain merely functions as a perpetually full container of drinking water. The burning skulls bear continual flames.

The objects on the shelves are various holy texts, scrolls, relics, and objects sacred to the worship of Lamashtu, identifiable as such with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check.

CREATURES: The primary villain of this adventure is likely encountered here. Nualia's recent success with the ritual to offer her foster father's corporeal remains to Lamashtu saw her rewarded with a promise of things to come—her left hand has been transformed into a red demonic talon. With the exception of her demonic hand and her scarred belly, the rest of her body is incongruously beautiful. Yet in her madness, Nualia has come to view her silver hair, violet eyes, and shapely figure as a curse, a scar visited upon her by her angelic heritage. She wants to shed this

part of her, to become fully monstrous to better serve her new mistress. She wears the mark of her devotion to Lamashtu proudly, keeping her midriff bare to expose the ugly scars and wounds across her belly. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check is enough to recognize this as the Mark of Lamashtu, denoting the carrier not only as one devoted to the Mother of Monsters, but one capable of birthing monsters from her own body.

The transformation of her hand into a talon is not the only reward Lamashtu has sent Nualia. Her third yeth hound is a constant companion, loyal and eager to please her.

NUALIA

XP
1,600

CR
5

HP
59

Female aasimar cleric of Lamashtu 4/fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 7)

CE Medium outsider (native)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dex, -2 fury of the Abyss)

hp 59 (6 HD; 4d8+2d10+26)

Fort +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *bastardsword* +10

(1d10+4/19-20), claw +3 (1d6+1)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +7 (1d8+3/x3)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 6/day (DC 15, 2d6), ferocious strike (+2 damage) 6/day, fury of the Abyss (+2) 6/day, Lamashtu's Mark (DC 16)

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

1/day—*daylight*

Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd—*bull's strength*^o, *cat's grace*, *cure moderate wounds*, *shatter* (DC 15)

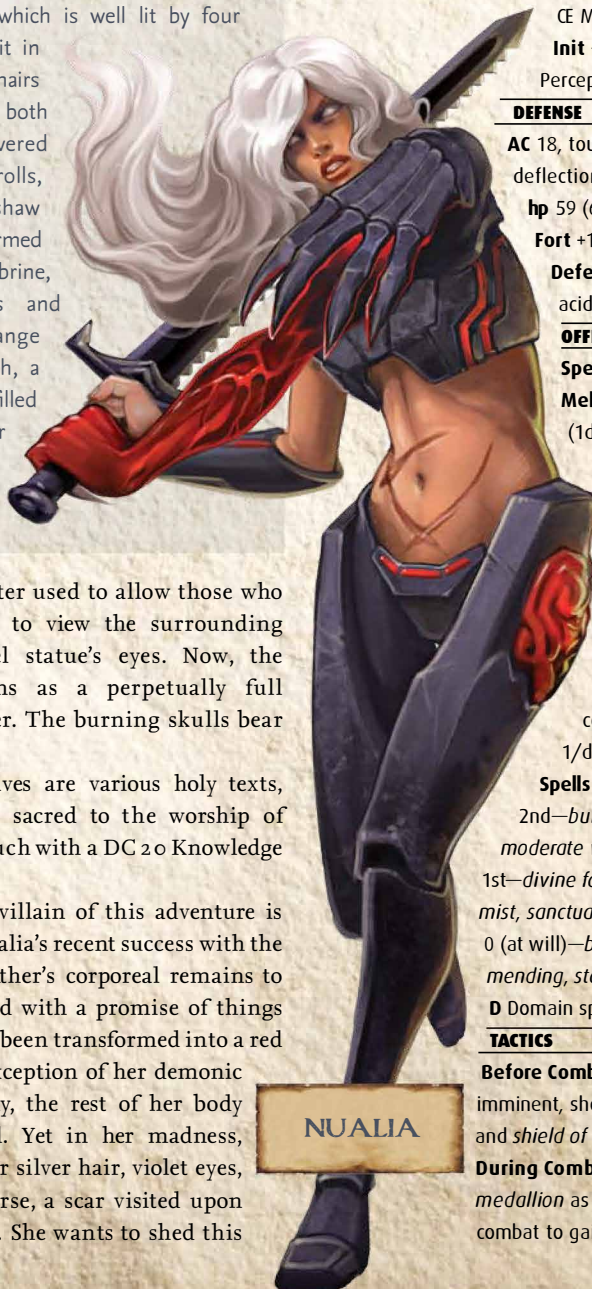
1st—*divine favor*, *doom*^o (DC 14), *obscuring mist*, *sanctuary* (DC 14), *shield of faith* 0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *mending*, *stabilize*

D Domain spell; **Domains** Demon, Ferocity

TACTICS

Before Combat If Nualia suspects combat is imminent, she casts *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, and *shield of faith* on herself.

During Combat Nualia activates her *Sihedron medallion* as a free action at the start of combat to gain *false life* and casts *divine favor*.



NUALIA



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She prefers to fight with her bastard sword, her face an impassive mask save for her eyes, which blaze with anger. She uses *fury of the Abyss* on each of the first 6 rounds of combat (these bonuses are included in the stats above), and activates her ferocious strike on the first six successful hits. She saves *shatter* to use on any weapon that seems to be particularly dangerous in an enemy's hands. If possible, she moves into the hall to the south so that it's harder to surround her, and so she has an escape route handy, using channeled negative energy to clear a path if needed.

Morale Nualia is loath to abandon her hard work, but if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, she does just that, reasoning that escape and eventual revenge is better than death at the hands of the PCs. She uses *obscuring mist* and/or *sanctuary* to aid her escape, then does her best to flee Thistletop, ordering any surviving minions she encounters to guard her retreat. If she escapes, she makes her way to Magnimar to reunite with the Skinsaw Cult—see page 67 for more details.

Base Statistics Without her prep spells, Nualia's statistics change as follows: **AC** 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16; **hp** 49; **Ref** +1, **Melee** +1 *bastard sword* +8 (1d10+2/19–20), *claw* +1 (1d6); **Ranged** mwk composite longbow +5 (1d8+1/x3); **Str** 12, **Dex** 8; **CMB** +6, **CMD** 15.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Lamashtu's Mark, Power Attack, Selective Channeling, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

Skills Diplomacy +5, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +4, Perception +5

Languages Celestial, Common, Goblin

Gear +1 *breastplate*, +1 *bastard sword*, masterwork composite longbow with 20 arrows, *Sihedron medallion*, gold holy symbol (100 gp), 7 pp, 5 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Subdomains Nualia's subdomains (introduced in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*) grant her unusual abilities. *Fury of the Abyss* allows her to gain a +2 bonus on melee attacks, melee damage rolls, and combat maneuver checks for 1 round as a swift action, during which round she takes a –2 penalty to her AC. *Ferocious strike* allows her to gain a +2 bonus on damage rolls with a melee attack up to six times per day.

YETH HOUND

XP	CR	HP
800	3	30

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 286)

TREASURE: Nualia's notes and several journals lie on the tables here. Sorting through these notes takes several hours, but reveals the whole of Nualia's story, as detailed on page 12. The notes also outline her plans to send an army of goblins against Sandpoint and burn the town to the ground, not only to offer it all as a burnt offering to Lamashtu in hopes of being made a half-fiend, but also to fuel the *runewell* in the catacombs below.

The notes go on to detail how to cause *sinspawn* to manifest from the *runewell*, and claim that if someone were to overextend the *runewell*'s stores, it would be deactivated. Nualia isn't sure how to reactivate it, and several times stresses that the *runewell* shouldn't be used much until after Sandpoint is razed and the deaths of hundreds of angry citizens and goblins have refilled the well.

E5 PORTAL OF GREED



The southern wing of this L-shaped hallway ends at a pair of stone doors carved with the depictions of two skeletons reaching out to clutch a skull between them, while to the east the hallway narrows down to frame a circular carving of what seems to be an immense stack of tens of thousands of gold coins that rises from floor to ceiling. The edges of these coins are carved with tiny, spiky runes.

The stack of oversized coins is actually a cleverly carved stone pillar that can be triggered to sink into the floor to provide access to the rooms beyond. Nualia and her allies have not yet discovered the method to trigger the pillar—hidden in the wall to the left and right are tiny, coin-sized slots. A successful DC 28 Perception check reveals the coin slots and the fact that there's a hollow space beyond the pillar. Inserting at least 1 gp into each slot causes the pillar to noisily grind down into the floor. The coins themselves vanish, transported to Karzoug's treasury hundreds of miles away in legendary Xin-Shalast.

The pillar itself bears a *permanent image* (CL 15th) to make it look as if it were made of gold—it is in fact made of stone.

E6 CRYPT (CR 6)



Four pillars support the domed ceiling of this room. Several dark alcoves containing standing sarcophagi grace the walls, and a statue of a stern man wielding a glaive and holding a book stands in the southern part of the chamber.

This small crypt was used to inter the bodies of the complex's architects, as was tradition in Karzoug's time. The architects, in this case, were interred alive, but now only bones remain inside. The carvings on the walls can be identified as depicting Runelord Karzoug with a DC 30 Knowledge (history) check.

A secret door to the west can be found with a DC 25 Perception check.

CREATURES: Although the architects willingly allowed themselves to be buried alive here, three of the six were not able to maintain their devotion for long. They died in horror, and now their shadows haunt the chamber. These three shadows emerge to attack any intruders 1d6 rounds after the room is entered (they do not pursue foes

out of this room, though). Nualia and her allies haven't discovered the secret door here yet, and have largely left the room alone for now.

SHADOWS (3)	XP 800 each	CR 3	HP 19 each
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(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 245)

E7 COLLAPSED TREASURY (CR 5)



The sound of sloshing water fills this room, which has almost entirely collapsed into a large tide pool. What few walls do remain intact here bear detailed and impressive carvings of incredible treasures filled to overflowing with coins, gems, jewelry, and other items of value. To the east, the walls depict a carving of a towering mountain, its peak carved in the shape of a stern face just above a great palace. Below, the side of the mountain's valley cradles an immense city of spires.

In the pool, the remains of what must have once been an incredible treasure lie in the sloshing waters. Shattered urns, crumbled stone chests, rusted bits of once-beautiful armor and weapons, and other long-ruined treasures from an ancient past lie below. Most impressive of them all is a large, coral-encrusted helmet sized for a giant; the helm measures nearly 5 feet across, and its full-face guard bears an expression of twisted rage and fangs. The helm itself appears to be made of gold.

A DC 30 Knowledge (history) check identifies the city depicted as legendary Xin-Shalast, a lost city rumored to be hidden somewhere in the Kodar Mountains. Tales speak of the city as having streets of gold and buildings carved from immense gems, but although countless explorers have sought it (and many have died or vanished), none have ever managed to locate this fabled city. Most scholars agree that it never existed at all, that it was a fictitious location invented by the ancients.

The pool is connected to the sea via a 10-foot-wide underwater tunnel. The tunnel is 20 feet long in all, and the powerful riptide within makes navigating it possible only with a DC 20 Swim check. It emerges at the base of the island, about 30 feet underwater, an entrance hidden by coral growth and seaweed that can be discovered from outside by a DC 25 Perception check.

CREATURE: Only 1d3 rounds after the PCs enter this room, the gold helmet down below suddenly shifts and moves, as if it were rotating to look at them. While paranoid PCs might suspect the helmet is haunted or animated, it is in fact nothing more than a discarded rune giant helmet. The helm itself has become the home of a 450-pound hermit crab, and it reacts poorly to any attempts to enter what it's come to think of as its pool. When it attacks, the helm suddenly rises up to release a pair of immense claws and spindly legs.

GIANT HERMIT CRAB

XP 1,600	CR 5	HP 51
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Variant giant crab (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 50)

N Medium vermin (aquatic)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 51 (6d8+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d4+6 plus grab)

Special Attacks constrict (1d4+6)

TACTICS

During Combat The crab pursues foes who flee no farther than the top of the stairs or the underwater exit to the sea bed.

Morale The crab fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +10 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 23 (35 vs. trip)

Skills Climb +14, Swim +14

SQ water dependency

TREASURE: Although this was once a treasure, the loot gathered here normally didn't stay long before it was transported to Xin-Shalast. A search of the pool takes 3d6 minutes, but uncovers 3,500 sp, 630 gp, 40 precious stones worth 10 gp each, and a jade *amulet of natural armor* +1. The greatest treasure in the room is the ancient helm. The helm isn't solid gold (some of it is bronze) but it's still worth 3,000 gp if the PCs can haul its 300-pound weight up out of the hole it's been resting in for hundreds of years.

E8 COMMUNICATION ROOM



This barren room contains an upraised dais on which sits a marble throne. To either side stand statues of a man clutching a book and a glaive. A ghostly figure seems to be seated in the throne, an image of the same man who appears in the statues. He seems to be addressing an audience as he moves his hands about, his fingers decorated with hooked rings, but the words issuing from his phantom mouth are difficult to make out and in a strange language.

This room once allowed the agents stationed here to communicate with a projected image of Karzoug. When the statue collapsed, the magic here was damaged, and now a short loop of Karzoug's last message plays endlessly; over the ages, the illusion has slowly faded, so that all that remains is this ghostly echo.

His spoken words are in Thassilonian, and repeat the following short message over and over: "...is upon



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us, but I command you remain. Witness my power, how Alaznist's petty wrath is but a flash compared to my strength. Take my final work to your graves, and let its memory be the last thing you...".

The image is harmless, and functions at CL 20th.

E9 TRANSMUTATION ROOM



This room contains three low tables, their tops covered with a strange and chilling selection of tools, saws, long-bladed knives, and objects whose purpose is not readily apparent. A strange collection of bones lies near the southern table—too many to be one skeleton, but too few to be two.

The working of transmutation magic went beyond the classic transformation of lead into gold for the wizards of Shalast—they worked the magic of change upon every matrix they could shape. This room was used to change and modify living flesh; the tools remaining on the tables being used for quick adjustments where magic wasn't necessary, or to cut away extraneous tissue. The skeleton seems to have belonged to a two-headed man with an additional partial skeleton of a smaller man growing from the small of his back—all that remains of the last poor soul worked on here before the end came. The ancient skeleton crumbles to dust if touched.

TREASURE: The surgical tools on the tables are exquisitely made, and are worth 100 gp in all. Sitting on the easternmost table is an object that, upon closer examination, isn't a tool at all. It appears to be a silver-and-gold seven-pointed star; one surface is studded with nodules and blades, and the other features a thin, curved handle. This object is the only remaining key to area E10.

E10 Malfeshnekor's Prison (CR 7)



The doors to this room are made of stone but bear no handles. An indented outline of a seven-pointed star, its shape covered by hollows and slits, graces the spot where handles should be.

This door is sealed with an *arcane lock* spell (CL 20th), but the key in area E9 can be used to easily twist and open the doors.

This room is lit primarily by a 10-foot-long pit of flickering fire that fills the room with a strange humid heat and the smell of burning hair. In the northern corners of the room, wooden risers each hold several dozen golden candles that burn without melting, while to the south the wall bears an immense carving of a seven-pointed star.

The fire pit is only a few inches deep—stepping into and out of the pit doesn't impact movement, but

each time a creature passes through the pit, it takes 1d6 points of fire damage (but no more than once per round). The flames themselves are magically sustained, and can burn forever without going out.

Two alcoves to the south are hidden by secret doors. A successful DC 25 Perception check reveals the doors (one check per door)—the alcoves beyond were once used to store valuable supplies for the conjuration and entrapment of magical creatures, but when the end came to Thassilon, one of the wizards stationed here raided the chambers and fled with most of the contents. Each alcove contains little more than dusty shelves today, although a bit of treasure still remains in the western one (see *Treasure*, below).

CREATURE: The powerful barghest Malfeshnekor, once one of Alaznist's lieutenants and the commander of a legion of sinspawn, has spent the last several thousand years imprisoned in this room. Karzoug's agents captured the barghest and transported him here, using a *binding* spell (hedged prison) to imprison him here so that he could be interrogated at a leisurely pace. Yet when the end of Thassilon came, it happened fast. Malfeshnekor was forgotten, survived the sentinel statue's collapse, and has now gone nearly insane with rage and hunger—despite the fact that he need not eat, his supernatural hunger has not abated. Although the binding keeps him from physically leaving this room, nothing prevents him from assaulting anyone who enters it.

MALFESHNEKOR

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	85

Male greater barghest (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 27*)

TACTICS

Before Combat If Malfeshnekor hears activity outside, he casts *invisibility sphere* on himself. In the following rounds, he casts *blink* and *mass bull's strength* on himself only, then waits for the intruders to enter.

During Combat Malfeshnekor prefers to engage foes inside of his prison in melee, casting *rage* on the first round of combat. He saves *crushing despair* and *charm monster* to use against foes who attack him with ranged attacks beyond the limits of this room.

Morale Malfeshnekor has no choice but to fight to the death.

TREASURE: Each of the racks in the northern corners contains 30 *eternal candles* (60 candles in all), minor magic candles that burn eternally without heat, similar to a *continual flame* spell but shedding only shadowy light in a 5-foot radius. Each *eternal candle* is worth 25 gp.

A single silver coffer sits on its side on one of the shelves in the western alcove. The coffer itself is worth 100 gp, but the real treasure sits inside, buried in a bed of fine white sand—a *ring of force shield*. When activated, the shieldlike pane of force generated manifests as a seven-pointed star—the Sihedron rune.



BURNT OFFERINGS

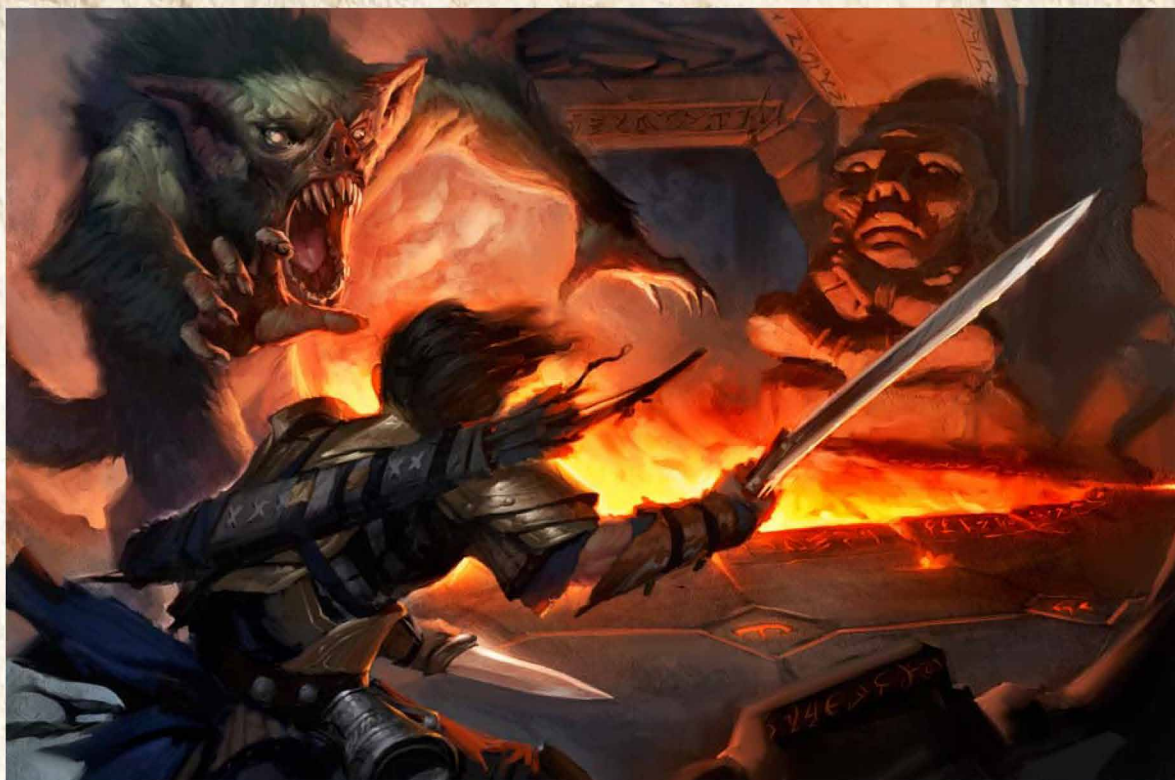
CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: FESTIVAL AND FIRE

PART TWO: LOCAL HEROES

PART THREE: GLASS AND WRATH

PART FOUR: THISTLETOP



CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

Relatively little involving the metaplot of *Rise of the Runelords* occurs during the course of “Burnt Offerings.” Although the chapter’s events are closely tied to Karzoug’s awakening, and certain characters in the adventure have ties to characters whom the PCs are destined to meet later in the campaign, the adventure’s primary purpose is to introduce them to their new home of Sandpoint and to instill in them a desire to protect it and its citizens.

In the short term, the goblin menace facing Sandpoint is most easily dealt with by defeating Nualia; with her out of the picture, her surviving minions quickly fall to bickering among themselves. Of them all, only Tsuto might harbor enough of a need for revenge against the PCs that he might become a recurring problem. Defeating Malfeshnekor is purely optional; doing so causes the Thistletop goblins to fall apart as a tribe over the course of a few months. Without Nualia to lead all five tribes, the goblins return to being only a minor menace at the fringes of the wild lands.

The second danger facing Sandpoint is, of course, Erylium and the *minor runewell* in the Catacombs of Wrath. If the PCs fail to defeat Erylium, she makes sure that now and then as time goes on, additional sinspawn periodically emerge from the *minor runewell* to cause problems for the town. Without a major source of wrathful souls, they never become a significant threat, but the place remains a peril. Eventually, the PCs will be returning to the Catacombs of Wrath (see Chapter Five), but for now, let them think that deactivating the *minor runewell* closes the book on this particular dungeon.

In any event, once the PCs have stopped Nualia’s plans for good, they deserve a rest and a chance to relax in Sandpoint. Give them some time to craft magic items, bolster relationships with NPCs, and perhaps meet new characters in town. They might even have a few additional encounters with local creatures; a lost goblin snake or reefclaw that ends up in the harbor can rile things up pretty good, and the appearance of an attic whisperer in a local home might give the PCs a creepy bit of foreshadowing for the inevitable *Skinsaw Murders*.

It’s possible that Nualia escapes death in this adventure—in this case, she makes her way to Magnimar as soon as she can to rejoin her allies there. When the PCs confront the *Skinsaw Cult* in Chapter Two, they should find evidence that Nualia has visited them recently, but her exact role in the rest of the campaign is left to you. She could end up aiding Lucrecia’s efforts against Turtleback Ferry, become one of Mokmurian’s allies, join forces with the Scribbler, or even make the pilgrimage to Xin-Shalast to pledge her service to Karzoug. You should advance her levels as appropriate to keep her a powerful enemy (three levels or so above the average party level)—consider giving her levels of the divine scion prestige class detailed in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic*. She could even complete her transformation into a demon—this ritual is detailed in full on page 45 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Book of the Damned II: Lords of Chaos*. Nualia as a half-fiend, or even as a succubus, would certainly make an even more dangerous foe than a mere wayward aasimar!



2

THE SKINSAW MURDERS

BY RICHARD PETT





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PART TWO 77
The Thing in the Attic

PART THREE 83
Walking Scarecrows

PART FOUR 88
Misgivings

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Chasing the Skinsaw

PART SIX 112
The Seven's Sawmill

PART SEVEN 119
Shadows of Time

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Habe's Sanatorium

MAP TWO 84
Farmlands

MAP THREE 92
Foxglove Manor

MAP FOUR 111
Foxglove Townhouse

MAP FIVE 114
The Seven's Sawmill

MAP SIX 120
The Shadow Clock





CHAPTER BACKGROUND

AFTER SLUMBERING FOR MILLENNIA, RUNELORD KARZOUG WOKE IN THE DEPTHS OF THE LOST CITY OF XIN-SHALAST. UNABLE TO TRAVEL FAR FROM THE SOURCE OF HIS POWER, HE CONSCRIPTED THE STONE GIANT MOKMURIAN AS HIS MINION, BUT KARZOUG DEMANDED MORE. ENSLAVED GIANTS WERE WELL AND GOOD FOR WAR, BUT THEY LACKED FINESSE. KARZOUG NEEDED MORE SUBTLE AGENTS TO PROVIDE HIM WITH BOTH INTELLIGENCE ON THIS NEW WORLD AND SOULS TO FUEL HIS RETURN TO POWER. HE TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THE MONSTROUS CREATURES THAT HAD CLAIMED SECTIONS OF XIN-SHALAST DURING HIS LONG SLEEP. OF ALL THESE, IT WAS THE LAMIAS WITH WHOM HE FORGED THE CLOSEST BOND.



The two lamia matriarchs Karzoug chose to act as his agents in Varisia were siblings—a devious rogue named Xanesha and a deadly sorcerer named Lucrecia. Lucrecia chose the backwater town of Turtleback Ferry as her hunting grounds. Xanesha, on the other hand, opted for quantity over quality of greedy souls, and came to the bustling city of Magnimar. Unlike Lucrecia, who grooms greed in her victims (as a farmer might raise cattle for the slaughter), Xanesha plans to hunt dozens of victims in the wild and thus provide her master with sinful souls at a much quicker rate.

Before she began her work, though, Xanesha needed a cover. Her investigations led her to an organization called the Brothers of the Seven, a secret society that was itself a cover for a cult of murderers known as the Skinsaw Men. Xanesha insinuated herself into the cult by seducing its leader, a corrupt justice named Ironbriar, and it wasn't long before she took charge of the cult completely.

Xanesha found that running a cult of killers suited her. They never questioned her background and assumed she was a divine agent sent by their sadistic deity. Xanesha never bothered to correct them. She began directing her new minions to “harvest” greedy souls—primarily merchants, bankers, moneylenders, gamblers, and adventurers. These unlucky men and women were brought back to the cult's headquarters within a lumber mill kept as a cover for the cult's sinister truths, where they were marked with the Sihedron Rune and then sacrificed. To further augment her own wealth, Xanesha formed an alliance with the Red Mantis assassins, agents of whom Xanesha had learned were active in Varisia developing several horrific diseases to use as weapons. Xanesha suspected that the caverns below a local manor built by a founder of the Brothers of the Seven might hold just such a disease that she can sell to the Red Mantis, and in so doing make a tidy profit for herself. And when a desperate noble named Aldern Foxglove approached her, the lamia matriarch saw a chance to satisfy two goals at once.

THE FOXGLOVE LEGACY

Built nearly 80 years ago by a Magnimar merchant prince named Vorel, Foxglove Manor was one of the first homes raised along the Lost Coast. Himself a founding member of the Brothers of the Seven, Vorel was forced to borrow money from his partners to build the manor, and promised them that, after a century, ownership of the manor and its grounds would revert to the society.

Of course, Vorel Foxglove had his own sinister plans—a necromancer by trade, he spent the next 20 years of his life researching methods to become a lich. Yet on what was to be the eve of his triumphant transformation, his wife Kasanda uncovered his vile plan. She confronted him, ruined his phylactery, and triggered a necromantic backlash that destroyed Vorel's body in one horrendous blast of disease and decay. His soul became absorbed by the manor, treating the house as the phylactery his wife had ruined. In a matter of minutes, Kasanda, her child, and all of the manor's servants succumbed to a potent and horrific affliction spread by Vorel's vengeful spirit.

When nothing had been heard from Foxglove Manor for days, visitors found the family and servants dead of a mysterious disease. Disposal of the bodies was handled with utmost secrecy by the surviving Foxgloves of Magnimar, and they shunned Foxglove Manor for decades to follow.

The building stood vacant for nearly 40 years before Traver Foxglove decided to move his family into the manor to reclaim his heritage and expunge the sour taint of the house's reputation. His wife Cyralie gave birth to Traver's only son Aldern not long after they moved in. For 6 years, it seemed as if whatever was wrong with the manor had corrected itself. Traver's son and daughters were growing into fine young aristocrats and his fortunes seemed to be booming.

In Traver, Vorel's unquiet spirit found unformed clay he could sculpt, and as the years wore on, Vorel's influence over Traver grew. In time, Cyralie became





convinced that Traver's mental decline was caused by the manor itself. In a fit of desperation, she lit the servants' outbuilding on fire then returned to the manor intending to do the same to it, but Traver, now fully in Vorel's embrace, murdered her before she could light that fire. The shock of watching his wife die freed Traver from Vorel's influence long enough for him to kill himself in despair.

Smoke from the fire was seen as far away as Sandpoint, and when townsfolk arrived to investigate, they found the servants' outbuilding burnt to the ground and Traver dead by his own hand. His wife's body was found burnt and dashed against the rocks below. Cowering in a second-floor bedroom, though, the townsfolk discovered the Foxglove children. Aldern and his older sisters spent time in a Magnimar orphanage before they were claimed by Traver's second cousin and brought to the city of Korvosa to be raised.

Fifteen years passed before Aldern, now a grown man and a successful merchant himself, returned to the Lost Coast. Rich and popular, he secured a townhouse in Magnimar and set into motion his claim to the family manor. As he reestablished old family connections, he also approached the Brothers of the Seven—Aldern found that the society welcomed him with open arms, and it was primarily through their influence that he was able to reclaim Foxglove Manor with such ease.

But Aldern Foxglove had trouble finding skilled laborers and servants to aid him in restoring his family estate—Foxglove Manor's reputation as a bad place had had decades to take root in local superstition. Worse, the manor's cellars were infested with rats—horribly diseased and

aggressive rats that kept to themselves as long as no one ventured too far into the basement. The job was enormous, from the need to patch the leaky roof in dozens of places to dealing with the strange and repugnant fungus that grew so tenaciously in the basement.

It was about this time that Aldern, returning from a visit to Sandpoint, happened upon a group of Varisians on the moor not far from Foxglove Manor, trapped by the terrible gale he himself was trying to get home through. Seized by an uncharacteristic fit of charity, Aldern did one of the few selfless things of his life and brought the dozen Varisians home with him, inviting them to stay in his manor until the storm had ended. And in doing so, he brought Iesha into his life.

Iesha was surely the most beautiful woman Aldern had ever met, a goddess with raven-black hair and luscious curves, the voice of an angel and the heart of a lion. Aldern fell wildly and passionately in love with the Varisian woman and proposed marriage to her before dawn broke. Overwhelmed by the man's handsome looks, social standing, apparent generosity, and wealth, Iesha accepted, and they were married within the week. Alas, as Iesha would soon learn, there was more to Aldern than met the eye.

For Aldern had a mean streak in him, one planted in his soul during his unpleasant upbringing in Korvosa and nurtured by his association with the Brothers of the Seven—in particular by that group's leader, Justice Ironbriar. Aldern's passions and lust for Iesha gave way to jealousy and paranoia, and he grew overprotective of his wife's honor to the extent of locking her in the manor during his business trips to Magnimar. There, Ironbriar



continued to work at the man's soul, grooming him for eventual induction into the Skinsaw Cult.

Then, one night after arriving home late from Magnimar, Aldern found Iesha and one of the carpenters together in the library. Making a wildly inaccurate guess at what was going on, he brained the man with a statuette from a shelf, causing Iesha to fly into a frenzy. When Aldern recovered from his rage, he found he'd strangled his wife to death with her own silk scarf.

In a growing panic, Aldern disposed of the carpenter's body by throwing it down the nearby well, but he couldn't bring himself to do the same with Iesha. Instead, he wrapped her corpse in a sheet and hid it in the attic, locking the door and intending to return later to deal with the evidence. He then fled back to the Brothers of the Seven in Magnimar to seek their advice on how to handle this tragic turn of events.

The Brothers of the Seven promised him they'd take care of his problem, asking him to avoid returning home to his manor while they went to work. In the days that followed, Aldern explained to visitors that Iesha was away visiting friends in distant Absalom and that work on restoring his manor had come to a halt while he awaited more funds to pay for the final stages of the restoration. He kept up a brave face in public, but in truth, he was slowly being driven bankrupt, both morally and financially, by the Brothers of the Seven. Every week, they demanded more payments in return for their services, while at the same time providing him with the flayleaf he had become addicted to, drawing him further and further into their control. They never did go to Foxglove Manor to hold up their end of the deal.

That was when Xanesha decided to involve Aldern in her plans. Promised that his debt to the Brothers of the Seven would soon be paid in full, he was told that he could finally meet the group's mysterious patron. He was taken before Xanesha, who in her human guise informed Aldern that one final task remained before him. It was a simple task, really—return to Foxglove Manor, catch one of the diseased rats that plagued the cellars, and return with it to Xanesha for her to study.

Eager to finally be free of his debt, but nervous about returning to the scene of his crime, Aldern swore off the flayleaf, cleaned himself up, and headed north. He lacked the courage to go directly to Foxglove Manor, though, and instead continued on to Sandpoint, where he attended the Swallowtail Festival. When the goblins raided the town, Aldern's life was saved by the PCs. Aldern grew obsessed with one of these strangers, realizing that here might be someone he could use to climb out of his pit of depression. Ever a master of deception, he maintained his facade of being a successful local noble while he nurtured this new obsession.

Yet when he finally returned to Foxglove Manor after his stay in Sandpoint (avoiding the upper floors and the sounds of muffled sobbing that he assumed were only

in his mind), he had difficulty finding any rats. Vorel's spirit had wakened once again and caused the rats to retreat far underground. When Aldern searched the basement, he heard a strange scratching from under the sagging floor in a central room. Assuming the sounds to be the rats he sought, he dug through the floor and uncovered an ancient stairwell, one that led to Vorel's hidden laboratory under the manor. In these caverns, he finally discovered not only the rats he sought, but the source of their affliction: a disturbing patch of fungus that grew along a cave wall. Harvesting both, he unknowingly exposed himself to latent necromantic contagions, and by the time he returned to Magnimar with the samples secured for Xanesha, he had already all but succumbed to a potent form of ghoulish fever.

Xanesha recognized the sickness for what it was and encouraged its growth. Her influence lives on in Foxglove's undeath. She taught him the Sihedron ritual, and once his transformation was complete, sent him back to Foxglove Manor to build an army of ghouls and expand Karzoug's harvest.

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

When a string of murders strikes Sandpoint, the PCs begin piecing together clues and soon realize the region may well face a plague of ghouls. After investigating murder scenes, interviewing victims, and perhaps running into some unexpected trouble along the way, the search for answers leads the PCs to Foxglove Manor.

Arriving at Foxglove Manor, the PCs find the rumors about the mansion being haunted are entirely true. Eventually, they confront the murderer—a ghoulishly transformed Aldern Foxglove—only to discover he's been working for another group based in Magnimar. Retracing his steps, the PCs come to the largest city in western Varisia and uncover a sinister secret society, finally confronting its monstrous leader atop a teetering clock tower.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

4TH LEVEL: The PCs should be very close to 5th level when they begin Chapter Two.

5TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 5th level relatively early in this chapter, perhaps even as soon as they start investigating the first set of clues left by the murderer.

6TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 6th level soon after they begin investigating Foxglove Manor.

7TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 7th level soon after they reach Magnimar.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: The PCs should be close to 8th level at the conclusion of this chapter.



THE SKINSAW MURDERS

CHAPTER
BACKGROUND

PART ONE:
MURDER MOST FOUL

PART TWO:
THE THING IN THE ATTIC

PART THREE:
WALKING SCARECROWS

PART FOUR:
MISGIVINGS

PART FIVE:
CHASING THE SKINSAW

PART SIX:
THE SEVEN'S SAWMILL

PART SEVEN:
SHADOWS OF TIME

PART ONE: MURDER MOST FOUL

A MYSTERIOUS KILLER IS AT LARGE IN SANDPOINT, BUT AS THE ADVENTURE BEGINS, FEW IN TOWN KNOW THAT A MURDERER STALKS THEIR STREETS AT NIGHT. THE MURDERER IS NONE OTHER THAN ALDERN FOXGLOVE, TRANSFORMED INTO A GHAIST AND TOLD BY XANESHA THAT, BY CARVING THE SIHEDRON RUNE UPON THE BODIES OF HIS VICTIMS BEFORE THEY ARE SLAIN, HE CAN SOMEDAY CLAIM THE OBJECT OF HIS MOST RECENT OBSESSION AS HIS OWN. HIS FIRST VICTIMS HAVE EITHER NOT YET BEEN DISCOVERED OR HAVE BEEN HUSHED UP BY SANDPOINT'S SHERIFF IN AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE TOWN FROM RELAPSING INTO THE PANIC THAT GRIPPED THEM SEVERAL YEARS AGO WHEN ANOTHER MURDERER, A MAN NAMED CHOPPER, MENACED THE TOWN.

An important part of this adventure is the unmasking of the murderer as none other than Lord Aldern Foxglove, the nobleman whom the PCs saved from the goblins at the start of Chapter One. Keep the pace of events up for the first part of this adventure: A murderer is at large, and as the body count mounts, a tangible sense of fear and frustration grows on the streets. By the time the PCs confront the villain, the discovery of his identity should be all the more shocking.

As Aldern continues to kill, it soon becomes apparent that those he murders are the lucky ones. As this adventure continues, a plague of ghouls in the Sandpoint region quickly drives away memories of goblins. Here is a menace that can't be frightened by dogs or easily defeated by organized resistance, a menace that rises in the bodies of the dead. Without the aid of heroes, the ghoul plague of Sandpoint could have devastating repercussions.

Aldern Foxglove, now the Skinsaw Man, operates from his ruined family seat at Foxglove Manor—a place now called the Misgivings by the locals for its tragic history. Approximately 6 miles southwest from Sandpoint, Foxglove Manor looms on a remote promontory overlooking the Varisian Gulf. Foxglove's undead state allows him to use the water to mask his tracks as he emerges from the surf or rivers to do his horrible work. By using waterways, he makes it impossible to track him to Foxglove Manor—the PCs must piece together the location of his lair by investigating the sites of his murders and the spread of his plague.

OBSESSION

In the previous chapter, the PCs rescued Aldern Foxglove from a band of goblins and then accompanied him on a boar hunt—his way of repaying the PCs for saving his life. Although he hid his desperation well, Aldern was deep in debt to the Brothers of the Seven at the time. When the PCs rescued him, he became obsessed with one of them, seeing in this PC a misplaced opportunity for his own redemption. Aldern's obsession stems from one of three sins: lust, envy, or wrath.

LUST: If the character is female, Foxglove lusts after the character, intending to replace his beloved Iesha and hoping in a twisted way that, in so doing, he'll somehow redeem the murder of his previous lover. Aldern wants to show the character how powerful he is, how clever he is, and how ruthless he is.


ENVY: If none of the PCs who rescued him are beautiful females, Aldern instead becomes insanely jealous of a PC who struck him as particularly brave and powerful. He wants to take that character's place, to prove his own might and wit. Aldern seeks to ridicule and drive out the character, involving him in a web of intrigue in which the PC might even get the blame for the murders himself.

WRATH: If neither of the two conditions above can be met, Foxglove's obsession has been twisted by his new undead state, and he now hates his rescuer and wants to destroy him. Aldern attempts to implicate the character as the murderer in the hope that the PC will be hanged.

Aldern's obsession with the PC compels him to steal relics and objects belonging to or discarded by the character. Try to foreshadow the discovery of Foxglove's "collection" in area B37 by informing the PC that minor personal items go missing now and then. None of these items should be particularly valuable to the PC—you want to unnerve the PC, after all, not lure him or her into a hunt for a missing piece of gear or favorite treasure.

SHERIFF HEMLOCK'S PLEA

After the PCs deal with Nualia and the goblins in Chapter One, give them some time to rest and recover from their adventures. There's no need to start Chapter Two the very same day that they return triumphant from Thistletop. Once you judge that enough time has passed and the PCs are ready for this adventure, they are approached by a sullen and grim-faced Sheriff Hemlock, who's decided to take the PCs into his confidence regarding this new string of murders. After the PCs' aid in defending Sandpoint, Sheriff Hemlock sees them as strong allies for the town, and the nature of the murders reminds him of Chopper's spree several years ago (see Appendix 2).

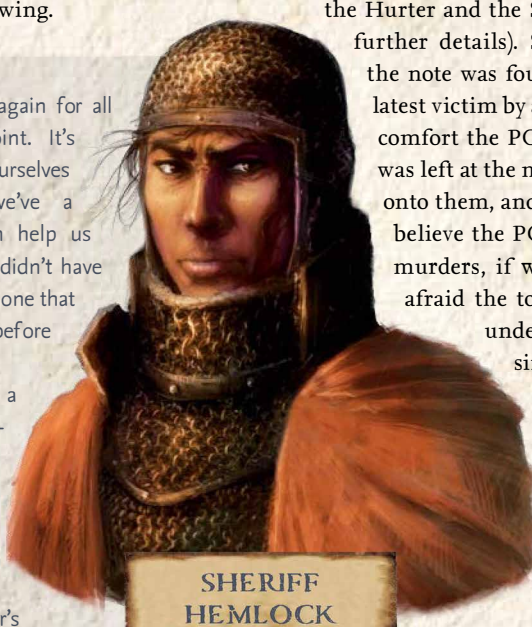


He wants help in investigating the crimes before things reach the same level of hysteria that they did then, and that means coming to the heroes of Sandpoint. After greeting the PCs and securing a relatively private place to talk to them, he says the following.



"First, let me thank you again for all you've done for Sandpoint. It's fortunate you've proven yourselves so capable, because we've a problem I think you can help us with—a problem I wish I didn't have to involve anyone with, but one that needs dealing with now before the situation grows worse.

"Put simply, we have a murderer in our midst—one who, I fear, has only begun his work. Some of you doubtless remember the Late Unpleasantness, how this town nearly tore itself apart in fear as Chopper's slayings went on unanswered. I'm afraid we might have something similar brewing now.



"Last night, the murderer struck at the sawmill. There are two victims, and they're... they're in pretty gruesome shape. The bodies were discovered by one of the mill workers, a man named Ibor Thorn, and by the time my men and I arrived on the scene, a crowd of curious gawkers had already sprung up. I've got my men stationed there now, keeping the mill locked down, but the thing that bothers me isn't the fact that we have two dead bodies inside. It's the fact that this is actually the second set of murders we've had in the last few days.

"I come to you for help in this matter—my men are good, but they are also green. They were barely able to handle themselves against the goblins, and what we're facing now is an evil far worse than goblins. I need the help. But I'm afraid you'll need the help too. You see, I'm afraid that this particular murderer knows one of you as well."

At this point, Hemlock passes a bloodstained scrap of parchment to the PC you have chosen to be the target of Foxglove's obsession (see Handout 2-1). That PC's name is written in blood on the outside of the folded parchment; inside is a short message depending on the type of obsession that PC has engendered in Foxglove's diseased mind.

LUST: "You will learn to love me, desire me in time as she did. Give yourself to the Pack and it shall all end."

ENVY: "We have spoken of this before, my master. Now it begins. Join the Pack and it will end."

WRATH: "I do as you command, master!"

Whichever note is used, it's signed "Your Lordship" (one of Aldern's three personalities to emerge since his transformation into a ghast—the other two being the Hurter and the Skinsaw Man—see page 105 for further details). Sheriff Hemlock explains that the note was found pinned to the sleeve of the latest victim by a splinter of wood. He's quick to comfort the PCs with his belief that this note was left at the murder scene to throw suspicion onto them, and that while he certainly doesn't believe the PCs had anything to do with the murders, if word of this note gets out, he's afraid the town's reaction might not be as understanding. For this reason, and since he doesn't want to start a general panic, he asks the PCs to keep as quiet as possible about the murders.

Of course, it's possible the PCs won't want anything to do with the investigation. Sheriff Hemlock won't force them to help, but Foxglove is a cunning foe. New murders occur every few days,

and if the PCs let things go for too long, the situation can quickly get out of control, as detailed on page 86 under "Additional Murders." Once things go bad, Hemlock might try to hire the PCs for aid, promising them a 500 gp reward if they can help stop the murders. Worse, the growing number of notes left for one of the PCs by the killer could make it look like the PCs are harboring a murderer themselves.

THE LEADS

Before the PCs race off to investigate the murders, Sheriff Hemlock runs the current list of clues by them. He informs them that while he'll be working with them to figure out what's going on, he suspects he'll have his hands full keeping the peace in town. By deputizing the PCs, he hopes that the best possible minds and resources will be focused on solving the murders, leaving him and his guards to the task of keeping Sandpoint from erupting in a panic. He promises the PCs all the support they want, but again asks them to keep their investigations quiet for the town's sake.

Hemlock provides the following list of leads.

SANDPOINT LUMBER MILL: The most recent murders took place here—the bodies are still present, and little has been done with the crime scene itself. Sheriff Hemlock suggests that this should be the first place the PCs investigate, since he would like to clean the mill up right away and get the bodies buried.

IBOR THORN: Sheriff Hemlock has interrogated Ibor, the man who discovered the bodies at the lumber mill, and doesn't suspect the frightened man knows much more.

YOU WILL LEARN TO LOVE ME, DESIRE ME IN
TIME AS SHE DID. GIVE YOURSELF TO THE
PACK AND IT SHALL ALL END.

YOUR LORDSHIP

WE HAVE SPOKEN OF THIS BEFORE, MY
MASTER. NOW IT BEGINS. JOIN THE PACK
AND IT WILL END.

YOUR LORDSHIP

I DO AS YOU COMMAND, MASTER!

YOUR LORDSHIP

VEN VINDER: This merchant is Sheriff Hemlock's only suspect, although the sheriff is fairly certain that Ven is innocent and that the murders were committed by someone else.

THE FIRST MURDERS: Three con men from the town of Galduria were found murdered in an abandoned barn south of town a few days ago—their bodyguard survived the assault but has gone insane and was sent to Habe's Sanatorium—a privately run respite for the insane.

THE RUNE: The star carved on one victim's chest certainly has significance to the killer, but Hemlock's at a loss as to what it means. Perhaps an expert on runes (such as local scholar Brodert Quink) can be consulted?

SANDPOINT LUMBER MILL

One of the mill's operators, a penny-pinching man named Banny Harker, has been engaged in a semisecret affair with the daughter of a local shopkeeper. He and Katrine Vinder had been meeting at the mill often of late, using the noise of the log splitter to cover sounds of their trysting. Harker's name was one of many on the list provided to Foxglove by Xanesha, but Katrine was not—she was merely in the wrong place at the wrong time late last night.

After spending a few hours watching the activity at the mill from the safety of the marsh across the river, Foxglove crossed the water and clambered up the mill's

walls, entering through the upper floor. The ghost quickly overpowered Harker and set about preparing his body for the ritual to consign his greedy soul to Karzoug, but was interrupted as Katrine entered the room, seeking her lover's arms. A struggle ensued, and after Katrine managed to injure Foxglove with an axe, he pushed her into the log splitter. She died instantly, allowing Foxglove plenty of time to finish his gruesome task and slip back out into the night, returning to Foxglove Manor via the waterways.

The Sandpoint Lumber Mill stands on the shore of the Turandarok River. A sizeable crowd has gathered outside by the time the PCs arrive, and groups of nervous-looking town guards stand at the mill's entrances. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check is enough to reveal that the mill was working last night—Harker and Thorn, the two millers, often worked late into the night, which had become a bone of contention around town as the noisy mill and its infernally creaky log splitter kept neighbors awake. The guards have already been informed by Sheriff Hemlock of his intent to deputize the PCs, and even if the sheriff doesn't accompany them to the mill, the guards nod silently and step aside to allow the PCs entry.

The mill is a well-built wooden structure with very thick walls. The roof is of wooden shingles, and doors are simple timber and unlocked. The mill machinery has been disengaged, but if it is started again everyone



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inside the mill makes Perception checks at a -4 penalty due to the noise. There are several points of interest to the PCs as they investigate the site, each detailed below.

THE TIMBER PIER: Timber is delivered to the mill via a small pier that extends out into the Turandarok River. A DC 15 Perception check made by anyone investigating the pier reveals a set of muddy footprints that leads from one end of the pier up to the mill itself. A DC 15 Survival check reveals that a barefoot human man clambered up from the mud under the pier, crossed over to the mill, and then scaled the wall to an upper-floor window.

THE MURDER SCENE: The mill interior is coated with sawdust strewn with footprints and splashes of blood. A DC 10 Survival check reveals what should be obvious—that a desperate struggle took place here several hours ago. If this check exceeds the DC by 10 or more, the character can tell that one set of prints in particular is not only barefoot, but reeks of rotten meat. Harker's body, Katrine's body, a suspicious axe, and a lingering stench of rotten flesh constitute the primary clues here.

THE ROTTEN SMELL: The lingering scent of decay in the air is curious—it smells almost as if an animal had died somewhere in the room and its remains were allowed to ripen. This is the lingering scent of Foxglove's undead body, a smell that is strongest on the blade of the suspicious axe and a few of the footprints he left behind.



KATRINE'S BODY: Poor Katrine was killed instantly when Foxglove pushed her into the log splitter. Her mangled, ruined remains lie on the mill's lower floor amid heaps of bloodstained firewood. A pale-faced, obviously upset guard stands at attention nearby. The log splitter itself is powered by a waterwheel and consists of a chute in the floor with rotating saw blades that cut logs as they are fed in. While there are no clues among Katrine's mangled remains, try to impress upon the PCs her horrible fate and the cruel efficiency of the log splitter as a deadly weapon—this helps foreshadow events awaiting the PCs later in this adventure.

HARKER'S BODY: Harker's body has been horribly desecrated. The poor man has been affixed to the wall by several hooks normally used to hang machinery. The body is mutilated, the face carved away and lower jaw missing entirely. His bare chest is defaced as well, bearing a strange rune in the shape of a seven-pointed star. This rune (the Sihedron Rune) should be familiar to the PCs, especially if they own the Sihedron medallion once worn by Nualia. Its appearance on the chest of a murdered man should drive home its importance to the PCs, yet they should be at a loss still as to what the rune means. A DC 25 Knowledge (arcana or history) check is enough to identify the marking as the Sihedron Rune, an antiquated glyph that symbolizes arcane magic once practiced in ancient Thassilon.

Closer examination of the body combined with a DC 15 Heal check reveals the presence of several additional

wounds. Unlike the deeper slashes on the body, these smaller gashes almost seem to have been made by a claws—claws on a five-fingered, human-sized hand. The rotten scent seems stronger near these wounds. The body is only recognizable as Harker's by a faded tattoo of a raven across his lower abdomen. With his missing face and jaw, his body is in no shape to function for a *speak with dead* spell.

THE SUSPICIOUS AXE: A handaxe is embedded in the floor near the log splitter, as if it had been dropped there. The handle is covered with bloody finger-marks (left by Katrine), and a close examination of the head reveals two things of note. First, smears of what look like rotten flesh and fragments of bone are caked on its blade, and second, the rotten meat stink is strong on it. Anyone who examines the blade this closely must make a DC 13 Fortitude save to avoid being sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A character who has fought a ghast before automatically recognizes the distinctive stench—otherwise, someone who makes a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check can identify the lingering stink of corruption as beyond that which a dead body can normally produce—the axe was likely used within the last 24 hours against some form of corporeal undead. If the DC is exceeded by 10 or more, the scent can be identified as having come from a ghast's flesh.

THE MARSH: If the PCs think to investigate the marsh on the other side of the river from the mill, a DC 20 Perception check reveals a relatively dry spot that bears a number of barefoot human tracks and a lingering stink of rotten flesh. A DC 15 Survival check made at this point reveals that the tracks lead from and into the river, but never away from the site. The spot is hidden by several low banks of nettles, but offers a perfect view of the mill to anyone hidden here.

STORY AWARD: Award the PCs 400 XP for identifying the Sihedron Rune, 400 XP if they deduce the fact that the murderer watched the site and perhaps used the river to cover his tracks, and 600 XP if they discover that the murderer may have been an undead creature.

IBOR THORN

Harker's partner Ibor is a young man, handsome if a bit narrow-faced. He is still in shock after having discovered the bodies when he arrived at work this morning. Although the sheriff already interrogated Ibor, Hemlock admits that the PCs might be able to get something out of the miller that he could not. He cautions them to be gentle in their interrogation, though—Thorn's been through a lot in the last few hours.

Ibor waits in a holding cell below the Sandpoint Garrison. His initial attitude toward the PCs is indifferent—unless he's made friendly, he refuses to say anything more, claiming nervously that he's already told the sheriff everything he knows.

If the PCs can secure Ibor's cooperation, he sighs heavily. Ibor can confirm that Harker had frequent



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midnight trysts with Katrine, but although Ven's a protective father, Ibor doesn't think he's capable of doing what was done to the victims. A DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that Ibor's holding something back. If pressed, or if he is made helpful, he admits that Harker had been "cooking the books" for some time. Ibor's quick to point out that he never took part in the scams, but does admit that Harker might have stashed away quite a lot of money by skimming from the top of sales and business over the past several years. The Scarnettis, the noble family that owns the lumber mill, have a reputation for being ruthless—there are rumors that they're responsible for burning several competing grain mills in the region, after all, and Ibor wouldn't put it above the Scarnettis to hire someone to kill Harker if they found out he'd been embezzling money.

In fact, the Scarnettis have nothing to do with the murders, and an investigation of Titus Scarnetti and his family should quickly turn into a dead end, even when it becomes apparent that Harker was indeed embezzling from the mill's profits. Feel free to expand on this red herring as you wish—the detail that's important for the PCs to learn is that Harker was greedy, the only tie between all of the eventual murder victims.

STORY AWARD: Grant the PCs 400 XP if they learn about Harker's greed and that he was embezzling money.

VEN VINDER

Ven was the first person Sheriff Hemlock visited after learning of the murders, but after he informed Ven of his daughter's death at the mill, the man flew into a rage. Sheriff Hemlock took him into custody and let him cool off in a cell, but even though Ven fought like a devil, Hemlock's sure that his rage is born from the death of his beloved daughter and not from guilt at being caught. He's prepared to release Ven, but if the PCs wish to speak to him first, he lets them do so.

Of course, if in the previous chapter the PCs made an enemy of Ven Vinder, the shopkeeper suspects the PCs have something to do with Katrine's death. In this case, Ven wastes no time in accusing them of murdering his child and calling them jackals, deviants, and worse. His anger flares up again, doing him little good in clearing his name from the list of suspects. Although his accusations have little effect at the time, they take root in the minds of several of Sandpoint's citizens—Ven is well liked, and if he suspects that the PCs were involved in the murder, many in town are predisposed to accept his accusations. These seeds of suspicion grow as the adventure continues.

The PCs may actually grow to suspect that Ven killed Harker and his own daughter in a fit of wrath at finally discovering proof of their affair. If they do,

let them—if it's one thing that any murder mystery needs, it's red herrings. Eventually, the fact that Ven has little connection with the other murders should exonerate him. In any event, Sheriff Hemlock has little reason to keep him locked up once Ven's wife corroborates his alibi—that he was at home all evening during both sets of murders.



THE SIHEDRON RUNE

Although Sheriff Hemlock doesn't recognize the strange seven-pointed star carved into the dead man's chest, the PCs likely do: It's the same star from the dungeons below Thistletop and on the magic amulet worn by Nualia. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough for a PC to know that an expert on the ancient ruins that

dot Varisia's landscape dwells here in Sandpoint, living in the shadow of the Old Light, the town's own Thassilonian ruin. If the PCs don't make this connection, this expert may seek them out on his own once knowledge of the strange star pattern leaks into the rumor mill.

This person is **BRODERT QUINK** (NG male human expert 7), an authority on Varisian history who moved to Sandpoint to study the Old Light. Brodert is tremendously excited to be involved in a murder investigation, and does everything he can to aid the PCs. Unfortunately, much of the lore about ancient Thassilon has been lost; what does remain has been gathered from barely legible carvings on the surviving monuments or extracted from the myths and oral traditions of Varisian seers and storytellers.

What he knows about Thassilon is that it was a vast empire ruled by powerful wizards. The sheer size of the monuments they left behind testifies to their power, and the unnatural way many of these monuments have resisted erosion and the march of time testifies to their skill at magic. Most sages place the height of the Thassilonian empire at 7,000 to 8,000 years ago, but Brodert thinks the empire was even older—he suspects (correctly) it collapsed no sooner than 10,000 years in the past.

Much of what Brodert has to say is vague theory based on conjecture—his belief that the Old Light was once a war machine capable of spewing fire from its peak is relatively unpopular among his peers, for example. Yet he can tell the PCs a few things of interest about the star—namely, that it seems to be one of the most important runes of Thassilon. The star itself is known as the "Sihedron Rune," and signifies not only the seven virtues of rule (generally agreed among scholars to have been wealth, fertility, honest pride, abundance, eager striving, righteous anger, and rest), but also the seven schools of magic recognized by Thassilon (divination magic,

MESSRS. MORTWELL, HASK, AND TABE-

A DEAL HAS COME ABOUT THAT I NEED CAPITAL FOR. IT INVOLVES PROPERTY AND GOLD, AND THOUGH I AM NOT AT LIBERTY TO TELL YOU THE EXACT DETAILS, IT WILL MAKE US ALL RICH. COME TO BRADLEY'S BARN ON COUGAR CREEK TONIGHT. WE CAN MEET THERE TO DISCUSS OUR FUTURES.

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Brodert points out, was not held in high regard by the ancients). Brodert notes with a smirk that much of what is understood about Thassilon indicates its leaders were far from virtuous, and he believes the classic mortal sins (greed, lust, pride, gluttony, envy, wrath, and sloth) rose from corruptions of the Thassilonian virtues of rule. In any event, the Sihedron Rune was certainly a symbol of power, one that may well have stood for and symbolized the empire itself. The fact that the killer carved it into the flesh of his victim might point to the fact that the murderer is some sort of scholar—although as soon as Brodert comes to this conclusion, he just as quickly proclaims himself to be innocent. Of course, he is, but the PCs don't know that—having Brodert become an early suspect in the murders can be an interesting red herring.

A PC who can make a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana or history) check can provide much of the same information about the Sihedron Rune as can Brodert, but a visit to the old sage can still serve to introduce yet another of Sandpoint's locals to the PCs.

STORY AWARD: Learning about the Sihedron Rune's history, particularly its association with the seven virtues and the seven sins, earns the PCs 600 XP.

THE FIRST MURDERS

Sheriff Hemlock explains that 2 days ago, a patrol of guards along the Lost Coast Road were assaulted by a deranged man near an abandoned barn south of town along the banks of Cougar Creek. The man was obviously sick and insane, his flesh fevered, eyes wild, mouth frothing, and clothes caked with blood. The guards subdued him, but when they checked inside the barn they discovered the mutilated bodies of three men. Although all three bodies were far too disfigured to identify, one of them carried a piece of parchment that Hemlock gives to the PCs to read (reproduced as Handout 2-2). The note identifies the bodies as Tarch Mortwell, Lener Hask, and Gedwin Tabe, three notorious con men and swindlers known well to Sheriff Hemlock as local troublemakers.

He personally forbade the three men from operating their con games and barely legal operations in Sandpoint, and wasn't particularly surprised at the time to find them murdered—it was only a matter of time before they tried to swindle someone worse than them, after all. But in light of the mill murders and the fact that Mortwell, Hask, and Tabe all bore the same seven-pointed marking on their chests that Harker did, Hemlock is convinced there is something worse than revenge afoot.

The bodies of all three men lie in state in a cool basement room below the Sandpoint Garrison, not far from the holding cells containing Ibor and Ven—the PCs are welcome to examine them if they wish. Although decay has set in, a DC 15 Heal check reveals that all three bodies bear claw marks similar to those that the PCs might have discovered on Harker's body.

The insane man has been identified as one Grayst Sevilla, a local Varisian thug. He's been given over to the care of Erin Habe, caretaker of an independent sanatorium south of town; if the PCs wish to speak to Grayst to learn more, Sheriff Hemlock welcomes them to try but warns them that Grayst is "a bit off his rocker" and they shouldn't expect much. He provides them with a letter of introduction to Habe if they ask.

WHAT THE SKINSAW MAN DID: Two days ago, the Skinsaw Man lured these greedy swindlers to Bradley's Barn with a note he knew they couldn't resist. Suspicious, the three men hired a Varisian thug named Grayst to guard them. Unfortunately, even the four of them were no match for the Skinsaw Man, who easily overpowered the group. Foxglove had little interest in slaying Grayst, and instead bound him with rope, letting the man watch as he prepared the three swindlers for sacrifice, a display that drove Grayst mad. As the ghast worked, he spoke to his audience, and when he was done he left Grayst a parting gift—a bite to the shoulder that infected him with ghoul fever. Grayst lapsed into a fever-haunted state of delusion, and only managed to escape his bonds the next day when he heard others passing by—others who turned out to be Hemlock's men.



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THE SAINTLY HAVEN OF RESPITE, BETTER KNOWN LOCALLY AS HABE'S SANATORIUM, IS RUN BY ERIN HABE, AN EXPERT ON DISEASE AND MENTAL DERANGEMENT. INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY FROM HIS YEARS AS A DOCTOR IN MAGNIMAR, HE CHOSE TO BUILD THIS SANATORIUM IN A REMOTE DALE SOUTH OF SANDPOINT BECAUSE OF ITS SECLUSION. HE HOPED THAT HERE, HIS WARDS WOULD FIND THE PEACE OF MIND THEY NEEDED TO HEAL, JUST AS HE HIMSELF HOPED TO FIND THE PRIVACY TO CONTINUE HIS EXPERIMENTS INTO WHAT CAUSED THEIR RESPECTIVE DEMENTIAS WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT OTHER FOLK MISUNDERSTANDING HIS SOMETIMES NECESSARILY BLOODY METHODS.

Unfortunately for Erin Habe, building the Sanatorium consumed all of his funds—and since his patients are not the type who can pay for his services (nor are they generally the type fortunate enough to have relatives who would pay), Habe soon had to turn to an outside source of funding to keep his Sanatorium up and running.

Habe wanted a silent partner to back his research, someone wealthy who could pay for the Sanatorium's expenses, but who wouldn't meddle in the day-to-day affairs. He believed he'd found his backer in the form of an elderly man who claimed to be a retired businessman eager to put some of his money back into society to better its ills. This man was, unknown to Habe, a smooth-talking necromancer named Caizarlu Zerren. Caizarlu was a member of the Magnimar Sczarni gang known as the Gallowd in his youth, but his dalliances in necromancy eventually went too far even for his fellow criminals, and they ran him out of town. In true Sczarni style, as he fled, the necromancer stole a small fortune in gemstones and jewels. The necromancer spent several months drifting from town to town in Western Varisia, but when he heard rumors that a man was looking for an investor to help run a Sanatorium, Caizarlu realized that not only was this an excellent opportunity to get himself a new base of operations hidden from the Sczarni (who he could only assume were still hunting for him to reclaim those stolen jewels), but also that a Sanatorium would be an excellent place to harvest raw materials for his necromantic experiments. Convincing Erin Habe that he was little more than a kindly retired businessman with a large wallet was unusually easy, and for the past few years, Caizarlu has lived in Habe's basement as the silent partner the alienist always wanted. Their arrangement has evolved beyond one of landlord and tenant, though—for whenever one of Habe's patients passes away (as they inevitably do—the alienist's experiments are not always safe for the patients), Caizarlu is always willing to dispose of the body. As long as the elderly Varisian pays the bills, and as long as what goes on down in the

basement stays in the basement behind locked doors, Erin Habe has no complaints.

The arrival of Grayst Sevilla has upset this arrangement in numerous ways, however, for here, for the first time in the Sanatorium's history, is a patient that equally intrigues both sinister scientists—a living man on the verge of becoming a ghoul.

SANATORIUM FEATURES

The squat, stone building that serves as the sanatorium has three floors under a stout, stone-flagged roof, and is built in the lee of the limestone escarpment known as Ashen Rise. All doors are stout wooden ones (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25), and a brisk sense of cleanliness fills the place—floors are scrubbed and walls are freshly painted white. Narrow windows, no more than 4 inches wide, allow for air circulation but are too small to allow access into the building. The somewhat sour smell of burning incense abounds—a scent that Habe has found soothes most deviant minds. All of the doors in the Sanatorium can be locked—when they're locked, a DC 30 Disable Device check picks the lock. Erin Habe carries keys to every door in the Sanatorium, save those in the cellar (those are carried by Caizarlu).

Erin Habe has many secrets he doesn't want made public—not the least of which is the fact that he knows his downstairs neighbor is a necromancer or that his own experiments on his patients push ethical and moral boundaries. When Sheriff Hemlock arrived at the Sanatorium's front door a few days ago, Habe was worried that the man had come to investigate the place—both Habe's questionably ethical research methods and the nature of his cellar-dwelling source of income. It was with barely hidden relief that he realized Hemlock was merely handing him another patient, a half-crazed man named Grayst Sevilla.

In the past few days, Grayst has become Habe's favorite subject. Not only is this man obviously insane, driven so by some still-undiscovered trauma, but he also suffers from a terrible disease causing a hideous physical malaise. Habe has recently determined that Grayst has

A5 ORDERLIES' ROOMS (CR 1): Each of these small bedrooms serves one of the two orderlies as a place to sleep. The orderlies are tiefling brothers—Gortus and Gurnak. After escaping slavery in Cheliax and stowing away on a ship bound for Magnimar, they responded to an advertisement for work up along the Lost Coast. The promise of pay, free room and board, and most importantly a remote place to hide out for a few years was too much to resist, and they've been working for Erin ever since. Gortus and Gurnak are bullies and brutes, and they won't hesitate to get physical with the PCs if Erin wants them "escorted" from the premises.

GORTUS AND GURNAK	XP	CR	HP
	200 each	1/2	10 each

Male tiefling rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264)

A6 STORAGE: Dusty tailoring supplies, including bolts of plain cloth and boxes of sewing supplies, vie for space in this cluttered room with food and water stores.

A7 WORKER'S ENTRANCE: This room contains a few oiled raincoats hanging on pegs—the orderlies use this entrance to come and go from the building when they make their patrols of the grounds.

A8 GUARDPOST: The door leading into area **A9** is reinforced with iron bands (hardness 8, hp 30, Break DC 26). It's normally kept locked.

A9 CELLBLOCK: The central part of this room is sometimes used as a common room for the patients, but the two current "guests" generally prefer to spend all their time in their cells. The northwestern cell is occupied by **BLIND SEDGE** (CN male human commoner 2), an old farmer who has no family and lost his sight to a goblin attack. The southwestern cell is occupied by a man named **WALD** (CN male human expert 1), a larger-than-life, 97-year-old man whose tenacious grip on life is matched only by his senility. The two men shriek and holler if they hear motion in the central room, but since their cell doors are kept locked, they're harmless.

A10 EXAMINATION ROOM: The central feature of this room is a large operating table on which Erin performs many of his surgeries and examinations on patients. A cabinet along the north wall is exceptionally well stocked with all manner of obscure and frightening-looking surgical tools—a DC 15 Heal check is enough to note that the supplies are both well-used and unnecessarily invasive for what should be a Sanatorium. Erin can be found here if he isn't in area **A3**, studying a patch of skin he's harvested from Grayst—if startled here, he overreacts and flees the room, opening the doors to cells **A11** and **A13** if he can so as to cover his flight downstairs to get Caizarlu's help in defeating the intruders. A secret door (DC 20 Perception

check to notice) is hidden in the western wall of a closet to the southeast.

A11 PIDGIT'S CELL (CR 2): The door to this high-security cell is made of iron (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28)—and for a good reason, since the cell's sole occupant is a crazed wererat named Pidgit Tergelson. Pidgit's been under Erin's care for as long as the Sanatorium's been operating, and the wererat's condition has only worsened over the years. Erin is researching a possible link between Pidgit's lycanthropy and his mental disorder, but often spends months or even years all but ignoring the manic wererat as other projects come up. If Pidgit's cell is opened (as might be the case if Erin opens the door in an attempt to cover his retreat from the PCs), the wererat tentatively creeps from his cell until he spies any slashing weapon, whereupon his insanity kicks in and he frantically tries to secure the blade for himself, fighting to the death if he has to. Pidgit spends all of his time these days in hybrid form, and has effectively forgotten he was once a human being.

PIDGIT TERGELSON	XP	CR	HP
	600	2	20

Manic afflicted wererat (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 197)

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

Melee bite +4 (1d4+3 plus filth fever)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Manic (Ex) Whenever Pidgit sees a bladed weapon, he becomes sickened with delight. If someone directly confronts Pidgit with a bladed weapon as a standard action (not merely using the weapon to attack), Pidgit must make a DC 14 Will save to resist becoming fascinated by the blade for 1d6 rounds. Full details on manias (and other forms of insanity) can be found on pages 250–251 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.

A12 EMPTY CELL: This high-security cell is currently empty; the door is unlocked.

A13 GRAYST'S CELL: This high-security cell is currently occupied by Grayst Sevilla. See page 81 for details on this unfortunate "patient."

A14 CAIZARLU'S LAB: This large room combines the features of a wizard's laboratory and a catacomb—several tables bearing bodies covered by drapes dominate the room, while tools ranging from shovels to dissection implements sit on shelves against the wall. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check confirms that this is a necromantic laboratory. During the day, Caizarlu is always here, while at night, he's here 50% of the time (otherwise he's sleeping in area **A16**.) Currently there are three bodies on tables, humans who were "patients" in life, and whose bodies are preserved via *gentle repose*. A DC 20 Perception check is good enough for a PC to locate the *wand of gentle repose* (17 charges) that Caizarlu uses



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ERIN HABE

for these preservation efforts, hidden in a slot in a table leg. The only other item of interest here is a map of the Sandpoint hinterlands that Caizarlu has been using to track what he calls “ghoul activity.” The necromancer gathered this information over the past several days, and has noted in particular that there’s been an increase in ghoul sightings around the southern farmlands and along Foxglove River. Caizarlu’s current research is concerned with developing a method by which one could track a ghoul’s lineage back through several “generations” of ghoul attacks. His research has stalled, and he’s hoping that Grayst will succumb soon so he’ll be able to dissect the body to gather more data before it rises as a ghoul and becomes much more difficult to study. One takeaway from his notes is the very strong possibility of what he calls a “ghoulish source” having risen to prominence in the region.

A15 ZOMBIE STORAGE (CR 3): Caizarlu keeps four older ex-patients in storage here. All four are human zombies created via a *scroll of animate dead*. They follow the necromancer’s orders as a result—he generally keeps the door to the room locked when he’s not here, but unlocks it while he’s working so if he needs help, he can call the four zombies out for assistance at any moment.

HUMAN ZOMBIES (4)

XP	CR	HP
200 each	1/2	12 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288)

A16 CAIZARLU’S ROOM: The necromancer spends his nights here, in a relatively stark room that features a simple bed, a study table, and a plain wooden chair. His spellbook sits atop the desk—this book contains all the spells Caizarlu has prepared, plus *cause fear*, *false*

life, *gentle repose*, *ghoul touch*, *halt undead*, and *identify*. There are also quite a lot of notes in the spellbook concerning ancient Thassilonian traditions of magic, including a few drawings of the Sihedron rune. You can use these notes to give the PCs further information about the rune if they missed opportunities earlier in the adventure, but Caizarlu’s interest in the rune is coincidental—he has no actual connection to the Skinsaw Murders.

MEETING THE DOCTOR (CR 2)

Erin Habe’s initial reaction to visitors is unfriendly—unless made friendly, he refuses anyone entry, claiming that he’s in the middle of some frightfully important work and cannot be disturbed. Presenting Hemlock’s letter of introduction grants the PCs a +2 bonus on Diplomacy or Intimidate checks. If the PCs manage to make Habe friendly, he’ll agree to let them interview his patient Grayst, but only for a few minutes. He asks the PCs to wait in area **A4** with him while he sends the orderlies upstairs to gather Grayst and bring him down to meet the PCs.

Habe remains nervous and twitchy the entire time—he’s worried that the PCs might see something in the Sanatorium that would arouse their suspicion, and wants them out of the building as soon as possible. If the PCs make any threatening moves (such as drawing weapons or casting spells), the jumpy doctor shrieks and reacts as detailed below under his tactics.

ERIN HABE

XP	CR	HP
600	2	25

Male human expert 4

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 25 (4d8+4)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20)

TACTICS

During Combat If Erin panics, he tries to flee to area **A3** or area

A10, whichever is farther from the PCs, and barricades himself in the room. If he has a chance, he’ll open the doors to areas

A11 and **A13**, or pound on the door leading downstairs from area **A4** to bring more dangerous foes than him into the fight.

Morale If brought below 10 hit points or cornered, Erin drops to his knees and begs for mercy. He blames his sinister experimentation on Caizarlu, saying the necromancer forced him to take part in several experiments and warning the PCs that Caizarlu dwells downstairs. If the PCs seek Caizarlu out, Erin takes the first chance he can to flee—if he escapes, he heads south to Magnimar, hoping to lose himself in the big city and, someday, repair and rebuild his reputation.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** 10, **Int** 15, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats Iron Will, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

Skills Bluff +9, Craft (tailor) +9, Diplomacy +6, Heal +6,

Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +6, Profession (alienist) +6,

Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +8

Languages Common, Shoanti, Varisian

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 padded armor, masterwork dagger, masterwork manacles

STORY AWARD: Award the PCs XP as if they defeated Erin in combat if they manage to secure an interview with his patient without resorting to violence at all.

MEETING THE PATIENT (CR 2)

Grayst's skin is pale and looks gangrenous, his hair wild and eyes milky white. Anyone seeing him who makes a DC 14 Heal check realizes he's quite sick and close to death, and anyone who succeeds at a DC 24 success realizes Grayst is in the advanced stages of ghoulish fever. Grayst is mostly nonresponsive, wrapped as he is in a straitjacket, but a DC 20 Diplomacy check is enough to get him to respond to questioning. Unfortunately, Grayst has little to say apart from incoherent mumblings about "razors" and "too many teeth" and how "the Skinsaw Man is coming."

This all changes as soon as the PC with whom Foxglove is obsessed comes into view—Foxglove spent some time talking about this one, even showing Grayst a cameo painting he'd had done of the character. When he sees this PC, Grayst's eyes bulge and he speaks:



"He said. He said you would visit me. His Lordship. The one that unmade me said so. He has a place for you. A precious place. I'm so jealous. He has a message for you. He made me remember it. I hope I haven't forgotten. The master wouldn't approve if I forgot. Let me see... let... me... see..."

The message Grayst has for the PC depends on the nature of Foxglove's obsession.

LUST: "He said that if you came to his Misgivings, that if you joined his Pack, he would end his harvest in your honor."

ENVY: "He said you should come to the Misgivings soon, to meet the Pack, for they have something wonderful to show you."

WRATH: "The master said that the bodies you are finding are signs and portents, that when he is done, you shall be remembered forever and the Misgivings shall be your throne!"

A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough for a PC to recognize "the Misgivings" as a local name for a run-down and abandoned estate further south—a place called Foxglove Manor.

At the climax of his speech, the message delivered, Grayst collapses and issues a low moan. One round later, his moan rises to a shriek, and as he lurches to his feet, his arms tear free of the old straitjacket. The man has nearly succumbed to ghoulish fever, and although severely ill, remains as strong as he ever was. He lunges at the PC he was speaking to, eager to kill the one whom his "master" loves more than him. The orderlies do their best to get Habe to safety before they step in to help, but anyone who tries to protect the targeted PC is assaulted by the diseased man as well.

GRAYST SEVILLA

XP
600

CR
2

HP
22

Male human fighter 4

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +1



GRAYST
SEVILLA



DEFENSE

AC 7, touch 7, flat-footed 7 (–3 Dex)

hp 22 (4d10–4)

Fort +2, Ref –2, Will +2; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +8 (1d3+3)

TACTICS

During Combat Grayst focuses his anger on the PC he recognizes as being the focus of Foxglove's obsession, ignoring all other targets and even provoking attacks of opportunity in his attempts to reach his target.

Morale Grayst fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 4, Con 6, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +4; CMB +7; CMD 14 **Feats** Diehard, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Intimidate +7, Stealth +1

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ armor training 1

DEVELOPMENT: After Grayst's outburst, Habe begs for the PCs' forgiveness. He honestly had no idea that the man would react in such a manner, but more to the point, desperately wants to avoid having any bad word of mouth get around about him. Only if the PCs promise their silence (and do so with a successful Diplomacy check to back it up to make him at least friendly in disposition) does Habe allow the PCs to leave without panicking—otherwise, he assumes they'll be turning him in and tries to flee to recruit Caizarlu's aid in capturing the PCs.

Grayst, unfortunately, remains insane. Barring a *heal* or *greater restoration* spell, he's destined to live the rest of his short life as a madman. Aside from the clues he's given the PCs already, he has little more to offer them.

THE NECROMANCER (CR 4)

The old Varisian necromancer Caizarlu Zerren is something of a red herring—although evil and a dabbler in undeath himself, he has nothing directly to do with the Skinsaw Murders or the cult. Some of his notes in the basement can still inform the PCs about some of the other events unfolding in the region, but for the most part, Caizarlu is intended to be a foe to confront and defeat. Exactly how Caizarlu becomes involved with the PCs depends entirely on how they handle themselves in seeking an interview with Grayst. If the necromancer hears the sounds of combat or shouting above, he'll gather his four zombies from area **A15** and come to investigate—he's pretty comfortable with his current living situation, and won't suffer what he believes to be a group of misled do-gooders to ruin a good thing.

CAIZARLU ZERREN

XP
1,200

CR
4

HP
35

Male old human necromancer 5

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor)

hp 35 (5d6+15)

Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +1 (1d4–2/19–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 13, 6/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +8)

6/day—grave touch (2 rounds)

Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)

3rd—*displacement*, *stinking cloud* (DC 16), *vampiric touch* (2)

2nd—*acid arrow*, *blindness/deafness* (DC 16, 2), *command undead* (DC 16), *mirror image*

1st—*chill touch* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15, 2)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

Opposition Schools Abjuration, Enchantment

TACTICS

Before Combat Caizarlu casts *mage armor* and *mirror image* before entering combat.

During Combat Caizarlu lets his zombies engage foes in melee while he hangs back to cast spells, starting with *displacement* and following with his offensive spells. He uses *vampiric touch* whenever he drops below 20 hit points.

Morale Caizarlu attempts to flee if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points—if flight isn't an option, he miserably begs for his life on his hands and knees.

STATISTICS

Str 7, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 12

Base Atk +2; CMB +0; CMD 10

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Craft Wand, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

Skills Bluff +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +8

Languages Common, Necril, Shoanti, Thassilonian, Varisian

SQ arcane bond (dagger)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of gaseous form*, *wand of false life* (29 charges), *wand of identify* (15 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, key ring (contains keys to areas **A15** and **A16**), 11 pp, 4 gp, 14 gp

DEVELOPMENT: If Caizarlu escapes the battle, or if the PCs accept his surrender and then let him go, the old man nurses a bitter grudge against the PCs for ruining a good thing. He may well show up later in the campaign as a recurring villain if you wish—after he's gained a few more levels and a few more undead minions, of course!



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PART THREE: WALKING SCARECROWS

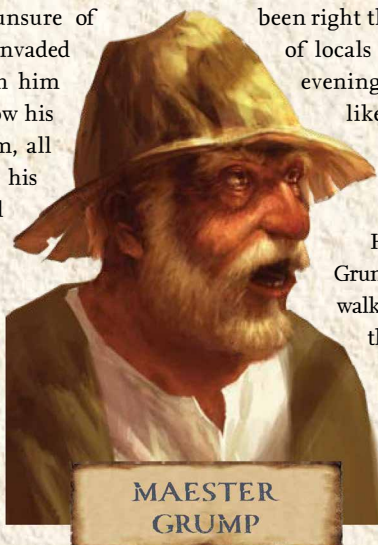
ALTHOUGH THE SWINDLERS AND THE MILLERS WERE THE FIRST VICTIMS DISCOVERED, THEY WERE NOT THE FIRST TO FALL TO THE SKINSAW MAN. THIS DUBIOUS HONOR FELL INSTEAD TO A FAMILY OF FARMERS WHO LIVED RELATIVELY CLOSE TO FOXGLOVE MANOR. OLD CRADE HAMBLEY WAS KNOWN AMONG SANDPOINT'S FARMERS FOR BEING A PENNY-PINCHER AND A TENACIOUS HAGGLER WHEN IT CAME TO SELLING HIS CROPS. HIS FAMILY DWELT IN POVERTY, EVEN THOUGH HIS FARMS SEEMED TO MAKE AS MUCH MONEY AS THOSE OF HIS NEIGHBORS. HE WAS CERTAINLY A GREEDY SOUL, AND PERFECT GRIST FOR KARZOU'S RUNEWELL.

With this first set of murders, the Skinsaw Man was still a bit unsure of his powers. When he invaded the Hambley place, he brought with him several ghouls from the warrens below his manor. When they attacked the farm, all five members of the family—Crade, his wife Lis, and their three sons—fell to the horrific assault. The next night, when they arose as ghouls themselves, the Skinsaw Man was there to greet them, welcoming them into his pack. He told them to spread his sickness, to sneak into neighboring farms and attack their livestock, pets, and children.

In the following days, local farmers began talking about walking scarecrows that came out of the fields at night to feed—nothing was seen, but plenty was heard. Screams in the dark, glimpses of people being chased through fields and out over the moors by... things. When neighbors visited farms in the morning, they found them empty. At first, the fiercely independent farmers thought they could deal with the unseen menace themselves, but yesterday it became too much. A group of farmers armed with torches went to inspect the Hambley place, and only one survived.

A day after this adventure begins, this one survivor, a man named Maester Grump, arrives in Sandpoint breathless and covered with mud and sweat. He seeks out Sheriff Hemlock to tell his tale, and soon thereafter Hemlock tracks down the PCs.

Farmer Grump breaks into frantic babbling as soon as the PCs arrive, nervously muttering about walking scarecrows. Calming him down requires a few minutes of work, at which point he tells a short but harrowing story, speaking of how the southern farmlands have become plagued by foul walking scarecrows that stalk the night. All the farmers knew that the problems were



MAESTER GRUMP

coming from the old Hambley place—things “just ain’t been right there for a few days now”—but when a group of locals paid the Hambley farm a visit yesterday evening, they were attacked by folk that looked like corpses but fed like starving animals. At this point in the telling, Grump’s worked himself into a lather again and shrieks, “They even ate the dogs!”

Hemlock explains that his men picked up Grump as he ran into town screaming about walking scarecrows. The sheriff asks the PCs if they can investigate, and agrees to provide up to four of the local watch to help them—he would provide more, but dares not leave the town any more exposed than it already is. He hopes that Grump’s story has been enhanced by the booze he can smell on the old farmer’s breath, but worries that the moonshine may actually have dulled the man’s memories of the grim fate that has been visited upon the Hambleys, and that the situation there is even worse than Grump knows.

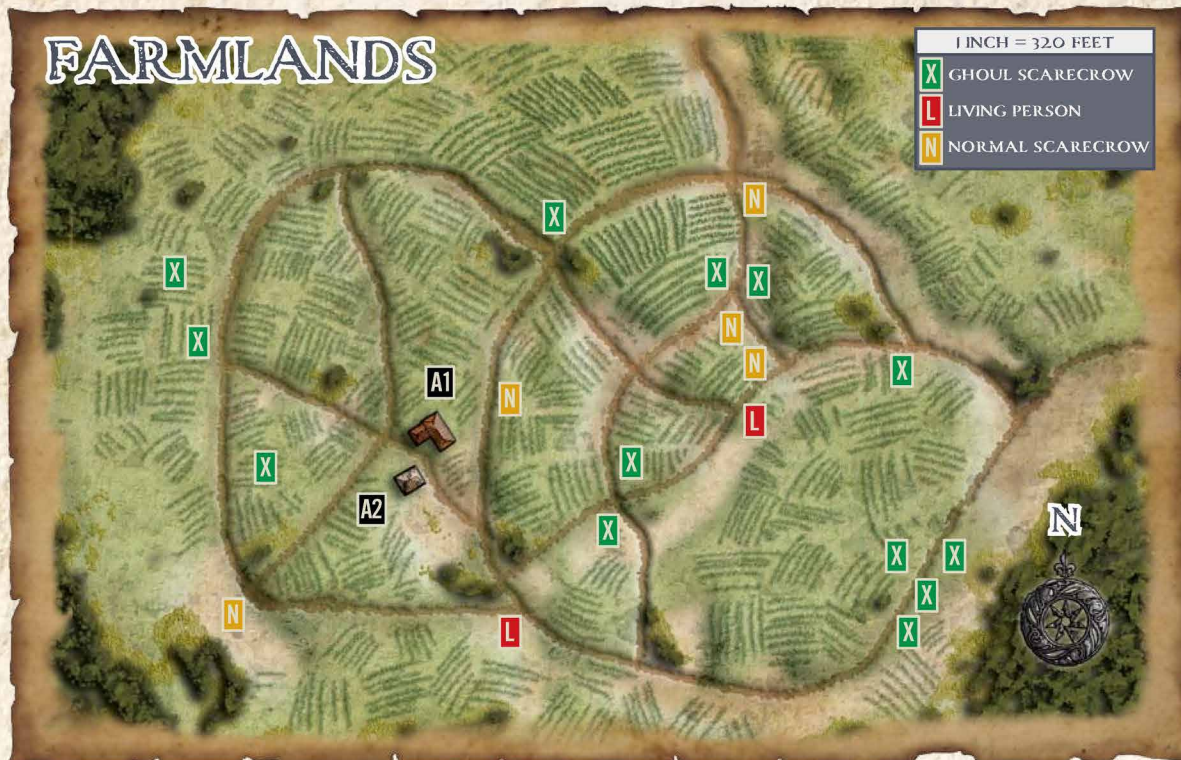
If the PCs take Sheriff Hemlock up on his offer of aid, statistics for Sandpoint guards can be found on page 373. And of course, if the PCs have already visited Habe’s Sanatorium and have uncovered the truth about that place, they may already have a good idea of the peril that awaits them on the farm.

THE HAMBLEY FARM (CR 7)

The news of walking scarecrows spreads quickly through the farmlands, and PCs stopping to visit farms on the way find the normally friendly locals unwilling to chat with visitors. Over three dozen farmsteads dot the fields and vales southeast of Sandpoint, the farthest being some 6 miles from town. Farms to the east and north have heard stories of the trouble to the south, but it’s not until the PCs move south of Ashen Rise and approach Soggy River that the rumors turn into firsthand accounts.

Footpaths, dusty tracks about 10 feet wide hemmed in by fields of corn and other crops, connect the

FARMLANDS



1 INCH = 320 FEET

X GHOUL SCARECROW
L LIVING PERSON
N NORMAL SCARECROW

farmsteads. The Hambley farm is nestled at the western edge of the Whisperwood, a forest said to be home to capricious gnomes, pixies, and other fey, but now overshadowed by the closer menace. All five of the other farms south of the Soggy River are now deserted, their occupants having either fled north to seek shelter with other farmers or been captured by the ghouls. Some of the ghouls created from these farmers have gone on to dwell in the tunnels below Foxglove Manor, but six remain in the vicinity of the Hambley farm, eager to continue their murderous spree.

The layout of the Hambley farm is shown on the Farmlands Map. Fields of tall-stalked plants transform the paths between them into oppressive tunnels, making it dangerously easy for visitors to become lost. The Hambley farmhouse and barn sit in the western portion of these fields. Both house and barn seem unremarkable from the outside, but an exploration of the interiors reveals the true extent of the horror visited upon the region.

The ghouls have not been idle over the past several days, and have been adding to their number by binding the victims they have chosen not to eat, making scarecrows of them and hanging them up to “ripen” in the surrounding fields. These ghoul scarecrows are marked with Xs on the map. Bound by baling twine to their frames, they hang confused, blinking through sack-covered faces in the harsh sun, unsure of what has happened to them yet aware of a growing and monstrous hunger. Each of these poor souls is effectively a ghoul now, and if any living creature approaches within 30 feet,

they struggle hideously against their bonds, making a Strength check each round in an attempt to break free. It’s only a DC 15 check to do so—any ghoul that rips free of its frame immediately attacks the nearest living creature with a shriek.

To confuse matters further, several normal scarecrows stand in the fields. Worse, two poor souls who haven’t yet succumbed to ghoul fever (but who surely will within a day) also hang from frames at the locations indicated on the map. These two living people are Horran and Lettie Guffmin, dragged off from their farm last night and left bound, gagged, and masked as scarecrows. Both are down to 2 Dexterity and 2 Constitution from ghoul fever; if rescued, they feebly warn the PCs about the ghouls that dwell in the barn before begging to be returned to their families.

GHOUL SCARECROWS (13)

XP	CR	HP
400 each	1	13 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 146)

A1 BARN: The barn is the larger of the two structures, an L-shaped building constructed around a unique feature—a 12-foot-high stone head, canted slightly to the left, depicting a helmed warrior, his face a stern model of determination. Moss has grown over much of the weathered figure, making his features hard to discern. This head, known locally as “the Stone Warrior,” is a remnant of an ancient Thassilonian statue that once stood in the area. Realizing the statue was too large to move and too unique to destroy, Hambley decided to use

TAKE THE FEVER INTO YOU, MY LOVE—IT SHALL
BE BUT THE FIRST OF MY GIFTS TO YOU.

YOUR LORDSHIP

I FEAR YOU. I HATE YOU. YOU MUST FEAR
AND HATE ME AS WELL. YOU MAY UNMASK
ME, SO I MUST UNMASK YOU FIRST.

YOUR LORDSHIP

YOU, AND YOU ALONE, HAVE BROUGHT THIS
FEARFUL HARVEST. THEY ARE DEAD BECAUSE
OF YOU, AND MORE SHALL JOIN THEM SOON.

YOUR LORDSHIP

it as a support for his barn and incorporated it into the building's structure. The ghouls themselves have made this barn their primary lair, and the place has become a macabre tangle of bones and partially eaten carcasses (in most cases livestock, but in some, human farmers).

CREATURES: In all, there are seven “free” ghouls dwelling in the region—six typical ghouls, who dwell in the barn, and a ghost lurking in A2 who in life was named Rogors Craesby. If the ghouls in the barn become aware of any intrusions (perhaps because of a shrieking ghoul leaping off its scarecrow frame), one group of three moves out into the fields to seek out intruders, while the remaining three move into the farmhouse to join Rogors.

GHOULS (6)	XP	CR	HP
	400 each	1	13 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 146)

A2 FARMHOUSE: The farmhouse is in a terrible state as well. It was here that Foxglove murdered Hambley and his family—while his wife and sons have joined the ghoul pack that now dwells in the barn, Hambley's mutilated body lies in the farmhouse's kitchen. Although the corpse is already decaying and swarming with flies, the Sihedron Rune is still plainly visible upon the man's chest, as is a single scrap of parchment pinned to his tunic (see Handout 2-3). The parchment

bears the name of the PC Foxglove is obsessed with; the contents depend on the nature of his obsession.

LUST: “Take the fever into you, my love—it shall be but the first of my gifts to you.”

ENVY: “I fear you. I hate you. You must fear and hate me as well. You may unmask me, so I must unmask you first.”

WRATH: “You, and you alone, have brought this fearful harvest. They are dead because of you, and more shall join them soon.”

A search of the rotting body uncovers a rusted iron key in one pocket—the key to a footlocker hidden in the master bedroom (see Treasure below).

CREATURE: A one-eared ghost lurks inside the Hambleys' farmhouse. In life, he was a man named Rogors Craesby and served as a caretaker for Foxglove Manor. He is now the leader of the ghouls here in Aldern's absence.

ROGORS CRAESBY	XP	CR	HP
	600	2	17

Male ghost (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 146)

Gear key to the front door of Foxglove manor

TREASURE: Rogors was once the caretaker of Foxglove Manor, and an iron key still hangs around his neck on a leather cord. The key bears a heraldic symbol of a curious flower surrounded by thorns. A DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) check identifies the heraldry as the Foxglove



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family crest—any PC who spent more than a few hours with Aldern Foxglove in Chapter One gains a +10 bonus on this check and can attempt it even if she has no ranks in the skill. If the PCs don't already know about it, a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check reveals to them the fact that the Foxglove family estate is located on the coast a mere 3 miles to the west of the Hambley farm.

A search of the master bedroom, along with a DC 22 Perception check, uncovers a loose floorboard under which Crade Hambley hid a stout wooden coffer. It can be unlocked with the key found on his body or with a DC 25 Disable Device check. Inside, meticulously organized into leather pouches containing 100 sp each, is Hambley's life's savings—a total of 3,400 sp. Characters who might feel awkward about claiming these coins as their own can turn the savings over to Mayor Deverin, who gladly attempts to track down Hambley's heirs or, barring that, uses the savings to help out the rest of the hinterlands farmers.

ADDITIONAL MURDERS

Of course, Aldern Foxglove has no intention of stopping his murder spree with the latest deaths at the Sandpoint Lumber Mill. As this adventure progresses, the Skinsaw Man continues to visit Sandpoint every few nights to look for new victims. He stays away from areas where the PCs are known to be present—he has little wish to confront them now, and would rather they come to his lair on their own. Several clues as to the Skinsaw Man's identity and the location of his lair wait to be uncovered by the PCs

in the preceding encounters, but they may not pick up on them. Alternatively, they may drag their feet about investigating the region's most notorious haunted house.

If the PCs need additional clues or motivation, you can provide both by having the Skinsaw Man claim additional victims in Sandpoint. Xanesha has done her research, and has singled out nearly a dozen individuals in town whose greed marks them as excellent candidates for the Sihedron ritual. For the most part, these victims should be minor NPCs from town, but if the PCs really need a shot in the arm, you can target one of the NPCs they've grown close to. Titus Scarnetti might be a good choice for a high-profile murder victim. Barring that, one of the local shopkeepers, like butcher Chod Bevuk, grocer Olmur Danvakus, or boutique owner Hayliss Korvaski all make likely victims. Hopefully the PCs head south to Foxglove Manor before Sandpoint runs out of citizens!

Although the results of each murder are similar to those the PCs saw at the mill, you should endeavor to include a new clue at each site. Perhaps they find a bloody, obviously clawed handprint on a wall. They might find a pet, partially eaten and with a few long teeth lodged in the flesh (identifiable as ghoul or ghastr teeth with a DC 20 Knowledge [religion] check). And at each murder, they find new notes penned for the target of Foxglove's obsession, notes that grow increasingly foul and descriptive in their threats and invitations to "become one with the Pack." If the PCs seem to be growing too frustrated, it's probably time to have one

YOU CONTINUE TO IGNORE my INVITATIONS, my LOVE. Did you NOT SENSE my NEED FOR you THAT EVENING AFTER WE HUNTED?

YOUR LORDSHIP

CAN THIS BE? CAN THE FOX BE OUTFOXING THE HUNTER? STRANGE—YOU SEEMED SO CONFIDENT AGAINST THE BOARS OF TICKWOOD...

YOUR LORDSHIP

YOU'VE LET THEM ALL DIE! THEIR LIVES COULD HAVE BEEN SPARED, BUT YOUR FOOLISHNESS DOOMED THEM ALL! JUST AS YOU LET MY DOG DIE ON THAT GOBLIN'S BLADE, I LET THEM DIE UPON MY OWN!

YOUR LORDSHIP

of these notes more or less spell out where Foxglove is hiding with a message like this (see Handout 2-4):

LUST: "You continue to ignore my invitations, my love. Did you not sense my need for you that evening after we hunted?"

ENVY: "Can this be? Can the fox be outfoxing the hunter? Strange—you seemed so confident against the boars of Tickwood..."

WRATH: "You've let them all die! Their lives could have been spared, but your foolishness doomed them all! Just as you let my dog die on that goblin's blade, I let them die upon my own!"

NIGHT OF THE GHOULS

These increasingly frequent attacks on the town soon unnerve the citizens of Sandpoint to the brink of chaos. Some folk pack their belongings and move out by daylight, while others bar their doors and shutters at dusk to keep out the "Night Things." The number of ghoule attacks in the outlying regions increases, and before long there can be no denying the nature of this new plague of violence. If the PCs let things go this far, you'll need to improvise, drawing upon the information given about Sandpoint elsewhere in this book as necessary.

Finally, keep in mind that normally those slain by Aldern Foxglove rise the next night as ghouls. The

Sihedron ritual disrupts this process—any creature he kills and then offers to Karzoug via the ritual does not rise as an undead upon the next midnight. But as his murder spree continues, he might leave other victims as unmarked, undead time-bombs that rise a night after their death to wreak even more mayhem on the town of Sandpoint. In this event, you should make sure to track where each of the bodies is kept—unless the PCs wish otherwise, the bodies are stored in a few empty cells in the Sandpoint Garrison while the investigation into the deaths continues.

One interesting and potentially exciting logical development from the increasing number of ghouls is a midnight siege on the town of Sandpoint. In this event, the ghouls in the outlying regions grow hungry and eager to sup upon the tender bellies and bones of fat merchants, rather than continuing to scrap and gnaw the lean limbs of honest hard-working farmers. The ghouls don't just walk into town, though—they're sneakier than that. Taking a cue from Foxglove himself, the undead weigh themselves down with stones and use the Turandarok River to invade the town at midnight, rising from the river's waters to stagger wet and sodden into the town's streets. If you opt for this event, the PCs should first hear of it in the form of screams as the ghouls begin breaking into riverfront homes.



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PART FOUR: MISGIVINGS

THE “MISGIVINGS” IS THE LOCAL NAME FOR FOXGLOVE MANOR, A REGION SHUNNED BY LOCALS FOR YEARS AS A PLACE OF SHADOWY MENACE, BAD LUCK, AND HAUNTS. NO ONE TRAVELS THE ROAD TO THE MISGIVINGS TODAY. BEFORE HIS TRANSFORMATION INTO A GHAST, LORD FOXGLOVE MADE ATTEMPTS TO REBUILD AND RECLAIM THE PLACE, BUT FOUND FEW WILLING TO WORK IN THE REGION DUE TO ITS ILL HISTORY. OF COURSE, NOW THAT HE’S BECOME UNDEAD, THE HOUSE’S REPUTATION HAS PLAYED RIGHT INTO HIS MURDEROUS HANDS.



The route leading out to Foxglove Manor is a 3-mile hike along a narrow path that follows the Foxglove River from the covered bridge where it flows under the Lost Coast Road to the dark sea cliffs overlooking the Varisian Gulf. Here, wild sea birds call out to a roaring ocean that churns hundreds of feet below. As the PCs near Foxglove Manor, it almost seems as if nature herself has become sick and twisted. Nettles

and thorns grow more prominent, trees are leafless and bent, and the wind seems unnaturally cold and shrill as it whistles through the cliffside crags. The path slowly rises, bending around a steep corner in the cliffs, and then Foxglove Manor looms at the edge of the world.

The strangely cold sea wind rises to a keening shriek as Foxglove Manor comes into view. The place has earned its local nickname of the “Misgivings” well, for it almost

FOXGLOVE MANOR LORE

Once the PCs realize that Foxglove Manor and its mysterious owner might be behind the murders and the ghoul problems in the farmlands, wise characters probably do a bit of research. The following information can be determined by making Knowledge (local) checks or Diplomacy checks to gather information. A successful check reveals all information for that DC as well as all information from lower DCs.

CHECK DC	INFORMATION GAINED
DC 12	Foxglove Manor is over 80 years old, and has been the seat of the Foxglove family the whole time. Some sort of tragedy struck the family a few decades ago, and no one’s lived there since. Common rumor holds that the place is haunted.
DC 15	Foxglove Manor is known as the “Misgivings” by some locals, particularly by Varisians. It certainly has a bad reputation—sightings of strange lights in the attic windows, muffled sounds of screaming from above and below, and even rumors of a huge bat-winged devil living in the caves below the manor are but a few of the tales told about the place. The Foxglove family lived there as recently as 2 decades ago, but then a fire burned down the servants’ building, Cyralie Foxglove was found dead—burnt and dashed on the rocks below the cliffs behind the house—and Traver Foxglove was found in his bedroom, dead by his own hand. The children, including young Aldern Foxglove, were sent away to be raised in Korvosa by distant relations.
DC 20	Aldern Foxglove recently returned to live in the manor, but he had a hell of a time hiring locals to aid him in the reconstruction and repair of the old building. Until Aldern moved back in, the place was cared for by a man named Rogors Craesby (a retired innkeeper who lost an ear in a bar fight many years ago) who came in 3 days a week from Sandpoint to air the place out, check for squatters, and make minor repairs.
DC 25	Foxglove Manor was built decades ago by Vorel Foxglove, a merchant prince from Magnimar. He and his family lived there for 20 years before the entire family perished from disease. The surviving Foxgloves of Magnimar shunned the place for 40 years, until Traver Foxglove moved back in.
DC 30	The Foxgloves have traditionally been associated with the Brothers of the Seven, a secretive gentlemen’s club based in Magnimar and consisting of merchants or thieves, depending on whom you talk to. Members of the society periodically visited Foxglove Manor at night during the years the manor went un-lived-in, perhaps to check up on the building and make minor repairs—or perhaps for more sinister pursuits.



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FOXGLOVE MANOR TIMELINE

This timeline presents the major events in Foxglove Manor's history for ease of reference.

DATE	NOTABLE EVENTS
4624 AR	Foxglove Manor is built by Vorel Foxglove. Construction is funded partially by the Brothers of the Seven, with the understanding that after 100 years, ownership of the manor reverts to them.
4644 AR	Vorel Foxglove attempts to become a lich, but when his wife Kasanda interrupts the ritual and destroys his phylactery, the botched ritual backfires and consumes him in a storm of disease and tumors. His body is destroyed, and his life force becomes infused into the house above. Kasanda tries to escape with her daughter, but is infected with the disease as well and spreads it to her child and the servants; they all perish within minutes of contracting the horrific disease.
4687 AR	Vorel's great-nephew, Traver Foxglove, and his family move into the manor; Aldern Foxglove is born.
4693 AR	Convinced that the property is evil, Traver's wife Cyralie sets fire to the servants' quarters but is thrown from the window in the observatory by Traver when she tries to burn down the manor. Traver takes his own life, and the children are taken to Korvosa to be raised by relations.
12 months ago	Aldern Foxglove returns to Foxglove Manor and begins restoration work on the house.
8 months ago	Aldern meets Iesha; the two are married by the end of the week.
3 months ago	Aldern murders Iesha and stows her body in the attic. Iesha rises as a revenant that night, but is unable to escape from the attic. Her periodic sobs and shrieks add a new layer to the rumors that the house is haunted. Aldern seeks help from the Brothers of the Seven to cover up the murder.
1 month ago	Aldern goes bankrupt after being blackmailed by the Brothers of the Seven. To pay off the remainder of his debts to the Brothers, he agrees to return to Foxglove Manor and collect diseased rats for them.
Campaign starts	Before returning to Foxglove Manor, Aldern visits Sandpoint to steel his nerves. He attends the Swallowtail Festival, meets the PCs, and becomes obsessed with one of them.
1 week later	Aldern eventually returns to Foxglove Manor; he hears Iesha's sobs in the attic above, but thinking that her body has long since been taken away by the Brothers of the Seven, assumes he's imagining her ghost. His obsession with the PC grows as he toils day and night to dig through to the caverns below. He enters the caverns, gathers samples of the fungus for Xanasha, and contracts ghoul fever.

appears to loathe its perch high above the ocean, as if the entire house were poised for a suicide leap. The roof sags in many places, and mold and mildew cake the crumbling walls. Vines of diseased-looking gray wisteria strangle the structure in several places, hanging down over the precipitous cliff edge almost like tangled braids of hair. The house is crooked, its gables angling sharply and breached in at least three places, hastily repaired by planks of sodden wood. Chimneys rise from various points among the rooftops, leaning like old men in a storm, and grinning gargoyle faces leer from under the eaves.

FOXGLOVE MANOR

Decay abounds inside Foxglove Manor. Ceilings sag, plaster swells, and timbers rot. Inside, doors are often wedged shut by dampness and rot, requiring a DC 14

Strength check to open. Mold and stains mar walls and floors, often in strangely unsettling patterns (but never more so than in area B3). Rooms are unlit except where stated; during the day, the grime and mold encrusting the windows filter the sunlight to dim light within. When describing areas in Foxglove Manor, take pains to mention the little things now and then—the pervasive smell of decaying wood, the periodic groaning of the house's joists reacting to unaccustomed movement within, a dusty mound of dead flies on a windowsill, or the overall air of ancient neglect.

Foxglove Manor is, in fact, haunted by the spirit of Vorel Foxglove after his failed attempt to become a lich infused the entire structure and the caves below with his life force. In many ways, Foxglove Manor became Vorel's phylactery, and all who enter its walls are entering the



mind of this long-dead murderer and necromancer. Yet Vorel's existence as a haunting presence does not manifest as a single undead monster that can be fought and defeated—he's more like an overall aura or taint that suffuses the entire building. Certainly, his haunting presence makes the place comfortable for the undead, and ghouls have long dwelt in the caverns below. Of course, as long as he dwells within the building's walls and foundations, Vorel can make destroying the manor difficult, to say the least.

Vorel can make his influence felt anywhere inside of Foxglove Manor or in the caverns below the house. For the most part, his presence manifests as small events intended to enhance the unpleasant feeling inside the house, little more than tricks of the light and vague feelings of unease. In certain parts of the house, though, Vorel can create more potent effects. These effects are detailed in the following encounter areas in the form of haunts.

There are two obvious entrances into Foxglove Manor, the front doors (which lead into area **B2**) and the side doors (which lead into area **B7**). In both cases, the doors are locked; they can be opened with a DC 30 Disable Device check, or by the key carried by Rogors Craesby. Numerous windows could provide entrance into the manor as well; the unbroken, grime-encrusted panes of glass in their frames speak not only of the Foxglove family's wealth in being able to afford such an extravagance, but also of the manor's notorious reputation—no vandals have dared break them. The windows themselves are curtained from the inside, but it's a relatively simple matter to break most of them and climb into the room beyond. Clambering up onto an upper story or the roof requires a DC 20 Climb check—there are numerous handholds, but many are rotten and crumble under any weight. Finally, characters can attempt to enter the house via the hidden tunnel connected to the well, but doing so places them in immediate danger in area **B32**.

BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE

Attempts to destroy Foxglove Manor while Vorel's spirit still haunts the place are difficult, as some of the manor's previous inhabitants eventually learned. Small-scale destruction (such as breaking down doors, smashing in windows, or the like) go unnoticed, but damage to the underlying structure of the building should be treated as if the structure had hardness 10. Attempts to burn the manor down find the house to be remarkably flame-resistant—individual pieces of furniture burn fitfully, but the walls of the house itself only smolder under the application of flame.

A focused attempt to light the house on fire quickly rouses Vorel's spirit in a manner similar to how it reacted in the past to such attempts. Feel free to get creative regarding how the house defends itself in such

a situation, but the easiest method would be to have the offending vandal targeted by a *fear*, *confusion*, or even a *phantasmal killer* effect (CL 15th). Creatures immune to fear might instead be targeted by *dominate person* or *charm monster* effects that seek to either force the vandal away or even compel the vandal to leap from the cliffside (such commands should trigger additional saving throws as appropriate). In the event that a creature completely immune to mind-affecting effects attempts to destroy the house, Vorel's spirit rouses the ghouls below the house as well as the swarms in its walls, basement, and surroundings to rise as one to attack the offender.

OBSERVING THE MANOR

Although the Skinsaw Man comes and goes from Foxglove Manor frequently, you can assume he's within the house at any point the PCs visit the manor. If the PCs decide to camp out on the manor grounds to watch the house, perhaps hoping to catch a suspected murderer coming and going, they'll be in for a long wait. The ghouls in the tunnels below only leave at the Skinsaw Man's command when he wishes their aid—and he hasn't needed their help lately. And, of course, when he leaves the manor himself, he does so via the underwater tunnel at area **B36**, using coastlines and rivers to reach his destination.

THE FOXGLOVE HAUNTS

While Vorel Foxglove is the primary evil spirit that haunts Foxglove Manor, it is not the only one. The house's condition as a surrogate phylactery has captured the spirits of six deaths, and each of these deaths gives rise to haunts with a particular set of features that makes them more likely to affect certain characters. A seventh category of haunts exists in Foxglove Manor as well—these are universal haunts powered by the collective unquiet energy from all six spirits, and as such function as normal haunts. Haunts themselves are detailed in full on pages 242–243 of the *GameMastery Guide*—you should be sure to familiarize yourself with those rules before running this part of the campaign.

Before the PCs enter Foxglove Manor, you should assign one of six categories to each PC, jotting down their assignments on a piece of paper (do not reveal them to the PCs). When a haunt of a certain category manifests, it only affects the assigned PC—other characters can aid the PC in question and can even observe the haunt's effects, but are not endangered by that haunt's effects. When assigning haunt categories to your PCs, try to keep one PC to a haunt—if you have more than six PCs in your group, though, you'll either need to double up on some of them or invent new categories of your own. No PC should be assigned to more than one haunt; if you have fewer than six PCs in your group, unassigned haunts become universal haunts.



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UNIVERSAL HAUNT: These haunts affect everyone in the vicinity—they represent the combined spiritual energy of all six unquiet spirits bound to the Misgivings.

BURNING HAUNT (CYRALIE FOXGLOVE): Cyralie Foxglove tried to burn Foxglove Manor down when she realized it was driving her husband Traver mad, but succeeded only in burning down the servants' building before she was slain by a Vorel-influenced Traver. Burning haunts should be assigned to a violent PC, the PC with the greatest obsession with fire, or the PC most prone to loneliness and depression.

FESTERING HAUNT (VOREL FOXGLOVE): These haunts are associated with Vorel's painful death, consumed by the necromantic backlash that unleashed a thousand diseases in his flesh. This haunt should be assigned to a male PC, a PC who has a history of disease or a fear of sickness, or the PC who is the most accepting of necromancy and the undead.

INSANE HAUNT (TRAVER FOXGLOVE): An accomplished hunter and loyal husband, Traver managed to resist Vorel's influence for many years but was eventually driven to deeper and deeper madness. This haunt should be assigned to the most impulsive PC, or to the PC regarded by the players as the least trustworthy or most prone to unexpected actions.

OBSESSED HAUNT (ALDERN FOXGLOVE): This haunt plays off of Aldern's obsession with one of the PCs as much as it does Vorel's obsession with endless life. This haunt should be assigned to the PC with whom Aldern is obsessed.

VENGEFUL HAUNT (IESHA FOXGLOVE): This haunt is associated with Aldern's murdered wife Iesha, and carries with it a burning need for revenge and retribution. This haunt should be assigned to a PC who has expressed a need for revenge, or who is currently involved in a romantic relationship.

WRATHFUL HAUNT (KASANDA FOXGLOVE): Linked to Vorel's wife, this haunt is infused with Vorel's rage and hatred of women and augmented by his wife's betrayal and disruption of the lichdom ritual he attempted moments before his death. This haunt should be assigned to a female PC, or to a character who has had some form of betrayal affect her in the past.

DESTROYING THE HAUNTS: All of the haunts in Foxglove Manor share the same destruction requirement. As long as the patch of supernatural fungus in area B37 persists, the haunts in the manor above automatically reset every day. See area B37 for the methods by which the haunting of Foxglove Manor can be ended.

SPENDING THE NIGHT

Any character foolish enough to sleep in Foxglove Manor exposes himself to Vorel's presence even more. Such PCs experience disturbing dreams, either of being trapped in a crumbling house with no exits that grows smaller and smaller with each breath (for

male characters) or of being stalked through a house by a shapeless monster that wishes to do them harm or drive them to kill themselves by exposing their mistakes and weaknesses in the form of horrific visions (for female characters). In either case, a sleeping character must make a DC 15 Will save upon waking to avoid taking 1d4 points of Wisdom damage from the horrific dreams—a character who takes Wisdom damage also awakens fatigued.

B1 RUINED SERVANTS' QUARTERS (CR 5)



It's impossible to tell how many floors the outbuilding that stood here once had, for all that remains are the sooty, scorched stones of its foundation. To the east, a four-foot-wide stone well sits, partially collapsed, in the corner of the ruins.

The well drops 100 feet into a 50-foot-deep pool of rainwater. Just above the level of the water, a passageway leads southeast into area B32. An overhang makes it difficult to notice this opening from above—if the PCs can see this far into the darkness, it's a DC 35 Perception check to notice the passage from the surface.

CREATURES: The first time the PCs pass by this area, a few sickly looking ravens are perched atop the foundation stones; they fly clumsily away once approached. The second time the PCs pass by (likely on their way out of the manor), hundreds upon thousands of ravens sit quietly in this area, covering every square foot of the ruins. These ravens are disturbingly silent and still, watching as one as the PCs approach. As soon as anyone comes within 30 feet, the ravens take to the air and swoop to attack, only then revealing their true natures. These ravens are, in fact, four swarms of undead birds known as carrionstorms, created when carrion birds feed upon ghoul-tainted flesh. The carrionstorms can sense Vorel's influence in the area, and although the evil spirit cannot control them directly, the birds do their best to kill anyone attempting to escape the manor. They pursue foes as far as the Lost Coast Road, but do not follow those who flee back into the manor—their goal, after all, is to return the intruders to Vorel's cradle for him to deal with personally.

CARRIONSTORMS (4)

XP	CR	HP
400 each	1	8 each

(see page 408)

B2 ENTRANCE HALL (CR 4)



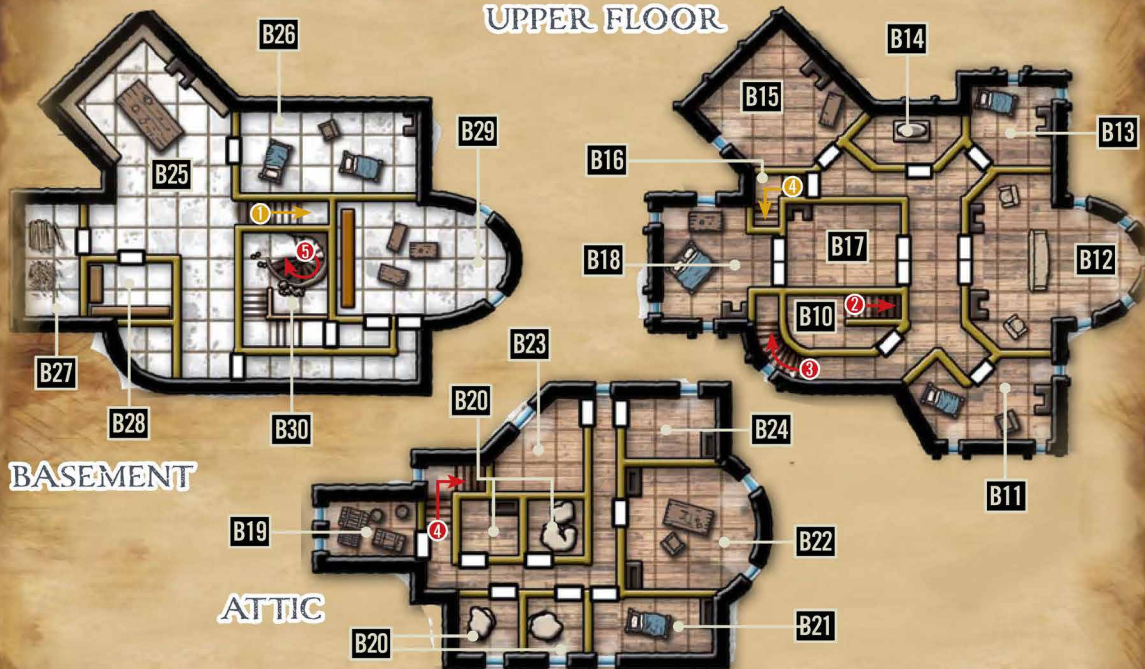
The sound of the house straining and creaking gives this long, high-ceilinged room an additional sense of age and decay. The place smells damp, the unpleasant tinge of mold lacing the air as surely as it stains the wooden floor, walls, and furniture

FOXGLOVE MANOR

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
STAIRS ● UP ● DOWN



UPPER FLOOR



BASEMENT

ATTIC

CAVERNS



in pallid patches. Moldering trophies hang on the wall to the northeast: a boar, a bear, a firepelt cougar, and a stag, yet they pale in comparison to the monster on display in the center of the room. Here crouches a twelve-foot-long creature with the body of a lion, a scorpion's tail fitted with dozens of razor barbs, huge batlike wings, and a deformed humanoid face.

As the PCs enter this room, allow the PCs a DC 20 Perception check—success indicates that they briefly hear what sound like sobs coming from somewhere upstairs. These noises come from Iesha in area B24—feel free to ask the PCs to make additional Perception checks now and then to catch a brief snatch of her sobbing as they explore the manor.

HAUNT: The first time the PCs enter this area, the PC haunted by burning automatically catches a momentary whiff of burning hair and flesh. The second time the PCs pass through this area, the haunting manifests in a much more dramatic manner, as the mantichore (killed and preserved by Traver Foxglove) lurches to sudden life, its face shifting to resemble that of Cyralie Foxglove and its fur erupting into flame. Its tail strikes forward against the victim in an attempt to burn him, then returns to normal.

BURNING MANTICORE

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	8

CE burning haunt (stuffed mantichore)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to notice smoldering fur)

hp 8; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect Atk +4 touch (burning stinger against one target in area B2, 4d6 fire damage); Reflex DC 15 to avoid catching on fire (these flames burn only the haunted target, and cannot spread to other creatures or objects)

B3 THE SPIRAL STAIN



A rather gruesome antique—what appears to be a mummified monkey head—hangs on the northern wall here, its tiny mouth gaping. A bellpull extends from the monkey's gaping mouth. A ratty throw rug partially obscures a foul stain of dark-colored mold on the floor.

The stain under the rug is about 10 feet across, a swirling pattern of dark blue, sickly green, and black mold that grows in a spiral. If examined closely with a DC 20 Perception check, it looks almost like a bird's-eye view of a spiraling staircase descending downward, with each step littered with skulls and bones. The stain itself is a harmless manifestation of Vorel's spirit, and a clue to the entrance to the caverns below—it grows back within 24 hours if scrubbed away.

TREASURE: The monkey head is actually a minor wondrous item called a *hungry decapitant*. When the attached rope is pulled, the head gives out a shrill simian shriek akin to an *alarm* spell. The strange curio, one of the few remaining from Traver's time in the house, was used to signal the start of dinner. It can be removed from the wall easily, and continues to function thereafter. It's worth 500 gp.

B4 DINING ROOM



A mahogany table surrounded by chairs sits in this room. Twin fireplaces loom to the west, while to the east, stained-glass windows obscure what could have been a breathtaking view of the Lost Coast. Each window depicts a monster rising out of smoke pouring from a seven-sided box. From north to south are depicted a gnarled tree with an enraged face, an immense hook-beaked bird with sky-blue and gold plumage, a winged centaurlike creature with a lion's lower body and a snarling woman's upper torso, and a deep blue squidlike creature with evil red eyes.

Here, as in areas B12, B22, and B29, stained-glass windows look out over the Varisian Gulf. A DC 15 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check notes that it was an unusual design choice to fit the rooms with arguably the best view of the Lost Coast with windows one cannot see through—this hint speaks to the importance of the images, constituting a set of hidden clues left by Lord Vorel Foxglove.

The route to lichdom is a personal quest. While each prospective lich can build upon the discoveries and methods of previous necromancers, the actual formula varies from soul to soul. Proud of his accomplishments, yet knowing he couldn't brag of them to most folk, Vorel instead decided to commemorate his personal path to lichdom with the banks of stained-glass windows, using symbolism and metaphor instead of facts and figures. The four stages of his process are meant to be read from attic to basement; the stained-glass windows here depict the third step of his procedure—the construction of his phylactery. Vorel built his phylactery from body parts harvested from four exceptionally long-lived monsters—a treant, a roc, a sphinx, and a kraken. A DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check is enough to note that the runes on the box are necromancy-related, that the monsters seem not to be emerging from the boxes but rather being drawn in, and that their snarling visages express not rage, but rather fear.

B5 LOUNGE (CR 4)



This dusty room features a long couch caked with white sheets of wispy fungus. Eddies of dust skitter along the warped floorboards as if caught up by a slight breeze, yet no wind is noticeable in the air.



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HAUNT: A character who makes a DC 20 Perception check notices that the dust is being disturbed, almost as if an invisible person were pacing violently back and forth before the fireplace. A character who attempts to pass through this path exposes himself to a brief flash of memory—a woman’s memory filled with worry about what her husband might be doing on those late nights spent in the basement. An instant later, the character is suddenly convinced that one of the other PCs is his child, and develops a powerful urge to escape the house with that PC before something horrible happens.

WORRIED WIFE

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	8

CE universal haunt (5-foot square in front of fireplace)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear a woman’s voice whisper, “Lorey”—this was the name of Vorel’s and Kasanda’s daughter)

hp 8; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect spell effect (*suggestion* to drag another PC out of the house to area **B1**, likely into the carrionstorms; Will DC 14 resists; CL 4th)

B6 WASHROOM (CR 1/4)



This is a simple washroom. An ancient metal washtub stands to the north, a ring of mildew crusting its inner surface. A strange, furtive scratching comes from inside the tub.

CREATURE: Rats have always been a problem in Foxglove Manor, especially now. The creatures nest

in the walls and caverns below, and most of them have been exposed to the dangerous mold growing in area **B37**. One such rat has fallen into the tub in this room and cannot escape. The creature is a horrific and pitiful sight, a blind, tumor-heavy wretch that uses scent to detect intruders. If it notices any, it begins shrieking in a frenzy, attempting a DC 25 Climb check each round in a desperate attempt to clamber out of the tub and feed on anyone it smells.

DISEASED RAT

XP	CR	HP
100	1/4	4

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10 (–2 blind, +2 size)

hp 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 132)

Melee bite +4 (1d3–4 plus disease)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blind (Ex) The rat hasn’t been afflicted long enough by its illness to have grown accustomed to its condition, and suffers the full effects of the blinded condition as a result.

Disease (Su) *Vorel’s Phage*: Bite—injury or ingestion; *save* Fort DC 11; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Cha damage and 1d4 Con damage; *cure* 3 consecutive saves. Those of the Foxglove bloodline who die of Vorel’s Phage rise soon thereafter as a ghost or other undead horror. The save DC is Constitution-based.

B7 DANCING PARLOR (CR 3)



This oak-paneled chamber must have once been breathtaking, but is a sad sight now—the floorboards are warped with moisture and the

paneling scratched and spotted with mold. A grand piano, its surface splotchy and keys warped, leans tiredly in the southeast corner.

HAUNT: Aldern's wife Iesha enjoyed dancing here for her new husband, spinning in ever-increasing pirouettes of Varisian ecstasy to the sounds of the piano. An investigation of the piano with a Perform (keyboard) check reveals that it seems unnaturally decayed, as if it had been standing unattended here for decades, yet if any keys are depressed, they are in perfect tune.

As soon as any of the piano's keys are pressed, the instrument explodes into music, playing a catchy but discordant Varisian song. A character in the room linked to vengeful haunts is swept into a series of rapidly increasing pirouettes, leaping across the room in the arms of an invisible dance partner. The haunted PC can, of course, see his partner: Iesha in all her vibrant beauty. Each round that passes, Iesha's beauty fades as her neck darkens into an angry blue-and-black bruise, her eyes bulge and water, her mouth twists in pain, and her tongue protrudes as if she were being invisibly strangled. In the final round of the haunt, she crumbles away into rot in her partner's arms.

DANCE OF RUIN

XP	CR	HP
800	3	13

CE persistent vengeful haunt (all of area B7)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception DC 15 (to hear faint piano music)

hp 13; **Trigger** touch (piano); **Reset** 1 day

Effect The haunted character is caught up in a whirling dance and spins wildly through the room for 1d6 rounds, taking 1 point of Strength damage each round (the dancing character can attempt a DC 15 Will save at the start of each round to end the dance early). Once the dance ends (whether or not it ended early), the character becomes fatigued. If the character can be successfully grappled and pinned, the haunt shrieks in rage as the haunt ends prematurely; her shriek causes 1d2 points of Wisdom damage to all in the room (DC 15 Will save negates).

B8 DRAWING ROOM



This cozy-looking drawing room is marred by the unnatural dampness and the thick sheets of mold that cling to the curtains closed over the southern window.

A character who opens the curtains sees a brief glimpse of a forlorn woman's face reflected in the window beyond—Iesha's. The reflection vanishes an instant later and does not manifest again.

B9 LIBRARY (CR 5)



This library features two chairs, one of which lies on its side, before a stone fireplace. A scarf, its reds and golds contrasting with the drab palette of the room, is draped over the side of the fallen chair. A book sits facedown on the floor between the chairs. A stone bookend, carved to look like a praying angel with butterfly wings, lies on its side in the fireplace itself.

A splash of dried blood stains the back of the northernmost chair, and an examination of the bookend reveals more blood, clots of hair, and bits of skull and flesh—in addition, part of one wing has been broken off.

HAUNT: This room was where Aldern murdered his wife and an innocent carpenter only a few short months ago. Already under Vorel's growing influence, Aldern returned home drunk one night and found the two here, huddled in the chairs by the fire, their heads almost touching as they leaned toward each other. Aldern mistook their shared examination of a book on Varisian history for passion and roared into the room, sweeping up a stone bookend from a shelf as he approached. He brained the carpenter with the bookend, knocking him senseless, then dropped the bookend and strangled Iesha with her own scarf. He hid her body upstairs and dumped the carpenter down the well (where he survived only long enough to be killed by the skaveling in area B32).

This room's haunt activates as soon as the PC haunted by vengeance approaches within 5 feet of the scarf. At this point, a horrific shriek fills the room as the scarf flies into the air to wrap around the haunted PC's throat.

IESHA'S VENGEANCE

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	10

CE vengeful haunt (5-ft. radius around scarf)

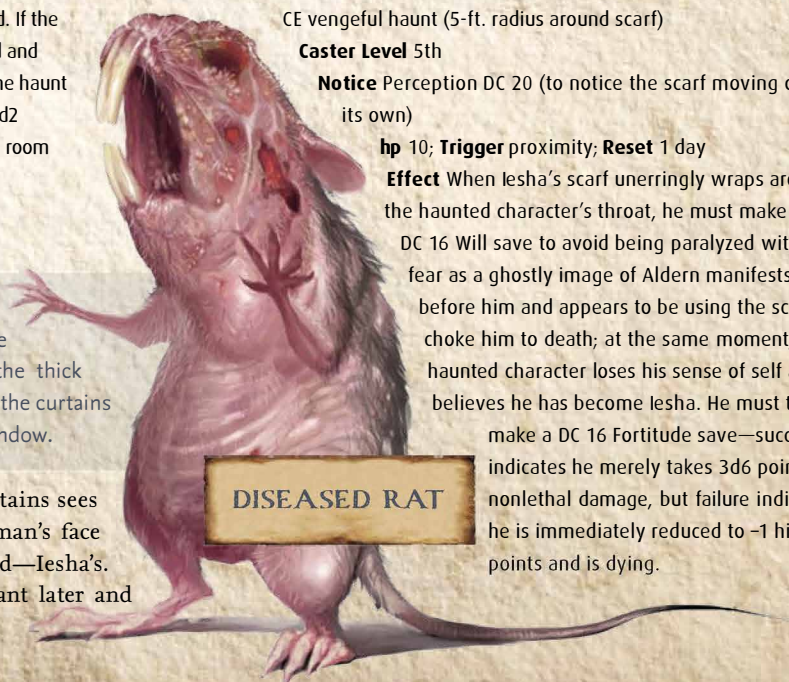
Caster Level 5th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to notice the scarf moving on its own)

hp 10; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When Iesha's scarf unerringly wraps around the haunted character's throat, he must make a DC 16 Will save to avoid being paralyzed with fear as a ghostly image of Aldern manifests before him and appears to be using the scarf to choke him to death; at the same moment, the haunted character loses his sense of self and believes he has become Iesha. He must then make a DC 16 Fortitude save—success indicates he merely takes 3d6 points of nonlethal damage, but failure indicates he is immediately reduced to -1 hit points and is dying.

DISEASED RAT



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TREASURE: Once the haunt is over, Iesha's scarf settles to the ground, lifeless. It is a work of art worth 100 gp, and can be used to influence Iesha's revenant in area **B24**. The scarf remains haunted, though, and it tries to kill again once every day as long as it remains in the manor—removing the scarf from the manor suppresses the haunt until the scarf is brought back into the building. A character not associated with vengeful haunts can carry the scarf without fear—as long as she doesn't come within 5 feet of a character the haunted scarf wants to murder!

B10 STAIRWELL

As PCs traverse this flight of stairs, their footsteps echo back at them a round later, as though an invisible person were following them. Although this might seem like a supernatural haunting, the effect is purely natural—the noise is simply the floorboards settling back after they are walked upon.

B11 ALDERN'S BEDROOM (CR 3)



This bedroom features a child-sized bed, a chair next to a toy box, and a looming stone fireplace big enough for a child to get lost in.

HAUNT: When Cyralie Foxglove tried to burn down the manor, she started (and succeeded) with the servants' quarters. She then moved back into the house, intending to reach area **B22** to light her second fire in Traver's favorite room. Her children saw her, wild-eyed and brandishing a torch, and when they saw their father attack their mother in that room, they ran down here to hide.

FRIGHTENED CHILD

XP	CR	HP
800	3	6

CE obsessed haunt (western area of room surrounding bed)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear the sound of a child sobbing)

hp 6; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect The haunted character suddenly becomes convinced that his parents are trying to kill each other, and that whichever of them survives will be coming to kill him next; he has a vision of his mother, wielding a torch, and his father, festering with tumors and wielding a long knife, both struggling to kill each other. The vision passes as fast as it occurs, at which point the haunted PC must make a DC 14 Will save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Wisdom damage from the mind-numbing terror of the sight.

B12 MUSICIANS' GALLERY



This large room features two padded chairs and a long couch facing a wide alcove lined with stained-glass windows. These windows depict a diverse array of animals and plants—from north to south

are a large pale and ghostly scorpion, a gaunt man holding out his arms as a dozen bats hang from him, a moth with a strange skull-like pattern on its wings, a tangle of dull green plants with bell-shaped flowers, and a young maiden sitting astride a well in a forest while a spindly spider the size of a dog descends along a string of webbing above her.

A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies all five of the subjects in the windows as classic spell components for necromancy magic (scorpion venom, vampire's breath, the tongues of deathwing moths, belladonna, and the heart of a maiden slain by poison); if the check exceeds this DC by 10 or more, those spell components are recognized as having ties to several known lich apotheosis formulae.

B13 GUEST BEDCHAMBER (CR 4)



This entire bedroom is caked with a thick, spongy layer of dark green, blue, and black mold.

Although disgusting and foul-smelling, the mold in this room is a harmless manifestation of the evil spirits in Foxglove Manor; if destroyed, it regrows within 24 hours.

HAUNT: After disrupting Vorel's attempt to become a lich, Kasanda fled back up from the caverns below Foxglove Manor to seek out her daughter Lorey and then escape, yet by the time she reached this room (her daughter's bedroom), Vorel had already suffused the walls of the place with his evil. Kasanda realized she was being overtaken by his phage when her daughter saw her face and screamed in terror; the disease quickly spread to her daughter and their servants. Every living thing in Foxglove Manor was dead within only a few minutes, their bodies deformed and twisted.

Both Kasanda and Lorey perished of the phage in here, and when the PC associated with the festering haunt enters the room, he suddenly feels an itching on his face. Although to his companions nothing seems amiss, the PC feels as if his face had suddenly erupted into a tangled mess of tumors and boils, lasting just long enough for him to attempt to claw the offending sickness from his skull.

PHANTOM PHAGE

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	18

CE persistent festering haunt (10-ft.-by-10-ft. area in northwest)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 15 (to hear a child's voice, quivering with fear, ask, "What's on your face, mommy?"

hp 18; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect The haunted character must make a DC 14 Will save; failure indicates he claws desperately at the flesh of his own face, dealing 1d6 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage. The haunted character must make a new save each

round he remains in this room to avoid damaging his face again and again—the haunt effect ends once he makes two consecutive saving throws, is dragged from the room, or falls unconscious from physical or Charisma damage.

B14 UPSTAIRS WASHROOM (CR 1)



An iron tub sits in the middle of this room, the floorboards around it sagging with the tub's weight.

TRAP: The floor in this room is unstable—any Medium or larger creature that enters the room triggers a collapse that drops it down into area B6.

COLLAPSING FLOOR

XP
400

CR
1

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** repair

Effect 10-ft. fall (1d6); multiple targets (all creatures in area B14); DC 15 Reflex save avoids.

B15 MASTER BEDROOM (CR 5)



This once fine chamber has been destroyed. The bed is smashed, mattress torn apart, walls gouged as if by knives, chairs hacked apart, and paintings on the walls torn to pieces—with one exception. A portrait hanging on the northwest wall seems to be untouched, although it hangs backward, its unseen subject facing the wall.

The master bedroom was destroyed by Aldern after he hid Iesha's body in the attic, although in his fit of rage he couldn't bear to destroy the portrait of his wife he'd commissioned a few months before. If turned around, the portrait reveals a beautiful dark-haired Varisian woman in a thoughtful pose.

Upon seeing the portrait, a PC haunted by obsession experiences a sudden wave of sadness, and a PC haunted by vengeance a sudden wave of fear. These emotions pass quickly without any real game effect.

HAUNT: Although the room was recently destroyed by Aldern, the haunt that suffuses the chamber is keyed to the room's first inhabitants—Vorel and Kasanda Foxglove. Only 1d4 rounds after a character haunted by wrath enters this room, he suddenly becomes dizzy and staggers, even if he has since left the room. An instant later, the dizzy spell passes but he becomes filled with an overwhelming hatred of women, and for 1d4 rounds is driven by an urge to attack the closest woman.

MISOGYNISTIC RAGE

XP
1,600

CR
5

HP
22

CE persistent wrathful haunt (northwestern half of the room)

Caster Level 5th



PORTRAIT OF
IESHA FOXGLOVE

Notice Perception DC 15 (to hear the sound of a woman's voice saying, "What do you get up to down in the damp below?")

hp 22; **Trigger** touch (painting); **Reset** 1 day

Effect The haunted character must make a DC 16 Will save or be compelled to attack the closest female (as if by *dominate person*), using all of his capabilities in an attempt to kill the target—this haunting continues for 1d4 rounds, or until the initial target is slain. If no suitable target is within sight, he instead attacks himself, leaping out the window if no weapon is handy. Each round the compulsion persists, the character may attempt a new DC 16 Will save to end the effect early.

B16 STAIRWELL

These stairs lead up to the attic. The door to this stairwell is locked but can be picked with a DC 25 Disable Device check or smashed down with a DC 24 Strength check—the key to the lock was destroyed by Aldern Foxglove.

B17 GALLERY (CR 4)



A stone fireplace sits in the northwestern portion of this chamber. Paintings hang on the walls to the north and south, each covered over with a thick sheet of dusty cobwebs that obscures its subject from view.

Wiping away the dusty cobwebs over the paintings reveals portraits of the previous tenants of Foxglove Manor. The three to the north depict Vorel and Kasanda Foxglove and their daughter Lorey. Vorel is a tall, middle-aged man with long dark hair, a clean-shaven face, and dark blue noble's clothes, while Kasanda is a stern-faced brunette woman with wisps of gray in her short hair and



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a flowing blue dress. The five to the south show Traver and Cyralie Foxglove, their son Aldern, and their two daughters Sendeli and Zeeva. Traver, like Vorel, is tall and thin, but with an even narrower face and a thin mustache. Cyralie is a young woman with long red hair and an impish smile. Each painting bears a plaque that identifies those pictured within.

HAUNT: If all of the portraits have their cobwebs cleared away, the temperature in the room drops dramatically. Breath frosts in the air and fingers of rime slither across the walls. The figures depicted in the portraits suddenly shift from paintings of living people to those of dead folk. Kasanda and Lorey slump into misshapen, tumor-ridden corpses. Traver grows pale as a long cut opens in his throat and blood washes down over his chest. Cyralie blackens and chars, and her arms, legs, and back twist as if broken in dozens of places. Aldern's flesh darkens with rot, his hair falls out, and he deforms into a ghoul-like monster. Both Sendeli's and Zeeva's portraits frost over but otherwise remain unchanged. Vorel's entire portrait, frame and all, erupts into a sudden explosion of fungus and tumorous growth. This wave of fungus and disease washes over the entire room in seconds before the room suddenly reverts to normal.

THE STRICKEN FAMILY

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	8

CE universal haunt (all of area **B17**)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 15 (to notice the room grow cold)

hp 8; **Trigger** touch; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When the room explodes into rot and fungal decay, every PC in the room must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid contracting Vorel's Phage (see page 94). Once the room reverts to normal, those characters who failed their saves can see tiny splotches of mold and tender red bumps on their flesh, but until the disease has a chance to incubate, these symptoms remain invisible to others.

B18 BEDROOM (CR 5)



The furniture in this bedroom, while dusty and unkempt, does not exhibit any major signs of water or mold damage. The one exception is a dark stain on the desk near the northern window.

HAUNT: After Traver Foxglove killed his wife in area **B22**, the shock of watching her burning body plummet onto the rocks below allowed him to regain control of his mind and body. He could feel Vorel out there still, trying to reassert control over his flesh, but for a few moments at least, Traver was his own man again. In a desperate (some might say cowardly) move, he fled here, to the room he and his wife had shared, sat down at his desk, and slit his own throat with his dagger.

As soon as a PC haunted by insanity comes within 5 feet of the desk, he shudders and is suddenly overwhelmed with the conviction that he has just killed the person he loves most. Overwhelmed with despair, he moves to the desk, retrieves what appears to be a silver-handled dagger from it, and tries to cut his own throat. Anyone who attempts to stop him is instead attacked. If he survives, the "dagger" reverts to its true form—a splintered but very sharp length of wood.

SUICIDE COMPULSION

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	10

CE insane haunt (5-ft.-radius spread around desk)

Caster Level 5th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to notice the appearance of a dagger on the desk that, an instant before, was not there)

hp 10; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect The haunted character must make a DC 15 Will save. Failure indicates he moves over to the desk and attempts a coup de grace action on himself with the jagged length of wood, dealing 2d4 (plus twice his Strength modifier) points of damage to himself. He must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the damage dealt) to avoid being slain by this suicide attempt. If anyone tries to prevent the attempt, the haunted character instead makes a single attack against that person with the "dagger." If he hits, the supernaturally guided strike automatically scores a critical hit and delivers 2d4 points of damage plus twice the haunted character's Strength modifier—in addition, this hit causes 1d4 points of bleed damage. After this attack, the "dagger" turns back into wood.

B19 WORKROOM



A large number of wooden planks, rope, and other repair supplies are stored here. The ceiling above sags noticeably; in several areas patches of the sky above are visible.

This room was partially repaired by Aldern and his hired assistants, but they didn't finish the job before Vorel's spirit manifested.

B20 STOREROOMS

Each of these rooms is stacked with old furniture, sheets and linens, boxes and crates, and other bits. Nothing of value can be found here.

B21 LOFT



The ceiling of this room angles down steeply, leaving only four feet of headroom to the southeast. A low cot and a dresser are the room's only furnishings.

This loft was once the home of the manor's head butler, but hasn't been lived in since Vorel's time.

As the PCs round the corner in the hallway beyond the entrance to this door, a sudden and unmistakable shriek

of pain echoes through the attic. The sound obviously comes from the door to area **B24**.

B22 OBSERVATORY (CR 5)



A desk and a chair sit in the middle of this drafty room. Chimneys rise to the west, while to the east, two intricate stained-glass windows are set into the wall. The northern window depicts a dark-haired woman with pale skin, large green eyes, and a black-and-red gown; with both hands she wields a jagged iron staff. The southern window's lower half has been broken and patched with canvas; what remains of its upper half depicts a handsome man dressed in regal finery and a crown of ivory and jade. Small scorch marks mar the wood near the broken window. A battered and ruined telescope lies on its side near the desk and a large trap door in the roof has been tied shut by several lengths of rope.

The trap door in the roof could once be raised and lowered, exposing a slice of the sky for observation, but the pulley system has long since fallen apart. The trap door can now be opened only with a DC 24 Strength check. The broken telescope on the floor was once a magnificent piece of equipment but is now beyond repair.

The stained-glass windows here once depicted the two wizards who most directly inspired Vorel's research into the secrets of lichdom. Each figure can be identified with a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check. The northern window depicts Arazni, the Harlot Queen of Geb, while the southern one depicts Socorro, the Butcher of Carrion Hill.

HAUNT: This room is where Cyralie confronted Traver about his encroaching madness, hoping she could convince him to leave the manor with her before it was too late. Unfortunately for her, that time had already passed. Traver attacked her, and when she tried to light the room on fire, he redirected the flow of the fire using magic to ignite her instead. As she burned to death, Cyralie staggered across the room and threw herself through the window to plummet to her death on the rocks below. This sight caused Traver to finally snap out of his madness long enough for him to retreat to area **B18** and kill himself.

When the PC assigned to the burning haunt enters this room, he suddenly feels uncomfortably hot. A second later, he believes he has suddenly caught on fire, and that the only way to put the flames out before he burns to death is to throw himself through the unbroken window and, hopefully, into the sea below. The haunted character attempts this self-destructive act only once; if restrained from leaping through the window for 1 round, he recovers his wits to some extent.

PLUMMETING INFERNO

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	10

CE burning haunt (area **B22**)

Caster Level 5th

Notice Perception DC 15 (to notice the stink of burning flesh)

hp 10; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect The haunted character must make a DC 16 Will save. If he fails, he is compelled to hurl himself through the unbroken window of Arazni, taking 2d6 points of damage from the shattering glass and a further 1d6 points of damage from the fall onto the rooftop below. A weather vane on the roof makes a single +8 attack against the falling character; if it hits, the character takes another 1d6+7 points of damage, but his fall ends. If it fails to hit him, the character must make a DC 15 Reflex save. If that fails, he slides off the steep roof over the course of 1 round, whereupon he may make a final DC 10 Climb check to catch himself before falling 300 feet to the rocky surf below, taking 20d6 points of damage in the process.

B23 PRIVATE STUDY (CR 3)



Shelves of books line the walls of this room, interspersed with curious objects such as skulls fitted with stubs of candles, tribal fetishes, and decorative scroll cases. An empty birdcage lies near the southern wall beside a small desk and a fine leather chair. Statues and sculptures grin from all corners of the room.

Aldern's father Traver often spent time here, poring over old accounts of safaris, expeditions, and the odd excerpt from the *Pathfinder Chronicles*. Traver rarely visited any parts of the house other than this room and the observatory after Vorel's influence started to take hold of his mind in the last few months before his death.

HAUNT: When the PC haunted by insanity enters this room, dozens of memories of expeditions, sea voyages, and travels to exotic locales race through his mind, remnants of Traver Foxglove's journeys before he settled down here in Varisia. As the memories build momentum, they become increasingly infused with a sense of bitter disappointment and regret, and the character becomes increasingly aware that he is now receiving memories that never were, memories of fantastic discoveries he could have made had he not chosen to settle down with a shrill harpy of a wife.

UNFULFILLED GLORIES

XP	CR	HP
800	3	6

CE insane haunt (area **B23**)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear the sound of pages rustling, as if a book were being read rapidly)

hp 6; **Trigger** Proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect Once the memories grow bitter and culminate in an overwhelming sense of depression and loss, the haunted PC must succeed at a DC 14 Will save to resist taking 1d6 points of Wisdom damage.



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TREASURE: The oddments include several dozen curious fetishes and masks, but the most impressive piece is an old painting of a bullfight. The painting bears a plaque that reads “Throwdown in Swynetown,” and in the painting, vast crowds jeer and cheer the bullfighter on, the huge bull aurochs towering over him, its cruel forward-jutting horns each the length of a spear. Dozens of bodies lie in the streets—the aurochs has clearly rampaged through them already, and although a score of brightly colored spears jut from the creature’s flanks and back, it still rages on. This painting is, in fact, an original work by renowned Magnimarian artist Andosalu, worth 600 gp.

A DC 25 Perception check made of the wall behind the painting reveals a loose brick—the small hollow beyond was one of several secret niches Vorel built into his house. This particular niche has gone unnoticed by anyone since Vorel’s death so long ago—it still contains three stacks of coins (20 pp in all), two vials that once contained doses of pesh but now contain only a foul-smelling and worthless residue, and a copper key. This key is a spare to Vorel’s workshop (area **B29**)—it also opens the lock in the stone door to area **B37**.

The books are mostly on Shoanti tribal cultures and history, along with numerous maps of mysterious realms and nautical charts. None of the books are particularly valuable. The scroll cases contain more maps, along with a *scroll of lightning bolt* and a *scroll of keen edge*.

B24 IESHA’S PRISON (CR 6)

The door to this room is locked, but the unmistakable sound of a sobbing woman can be heard beyond it. The door can be unlocked with a DC 25 Disable Device check, or battered down with a DC 24 Strength check.



This room is cold and damp; an old armoire stands near the east wall. The ceiling slopes down to only four feet high to the northeast, leaving little room for a small window. A full-size mirror in a dark wooden frame of coiling roses leans against these bricks, angled toward the tiny window.

CREATURE: After he murdered Iesha, Aldern Foxglove moved her body into this corner storeroom, wrapped it in a sheet torn from their marital bed, and hid it behind the crates. He locked the door and handed the key over to the Brothers of the Seven, assuming they would need it to clean up the situation for him. Of course, they did no such thing, and so Iesha remained here, dead. But not for long.

The night after her murder, the woman rose as an undead creature known as a revenant. Driven by a powerful desire for vengeance against Aldern Foxglove, Iesha is not without her weaknesses in her new, undead incarnation—for one, the sight of her own reflection has rendered her helpless with self-loathing. Moving

the mirror (or destroying it) causes her to instantly recover—she stands up and unleashes a baleful shriek, then cries out, “Aldern! I can smell your fear! You’ll be in my arms soon!”

Unless the PCs get in her way or attack her, Iesha then begins to unerringly seek out her murderous husband using her ability to locate creatures—Aldern is currently lurking in area **B37**, and if the PCs can keep up with Iesha, she’ll lead them directly to him (see Development, below).

If any PC is openly carrying her scarf from area **B9** or the portrait from area **B15**, Iesha must make a saving throw to avoid being overwhelmed by self-loathing; if she resists, her wrath is momentarily turned away from Aldern to the one who carries the object that reminds her of her life. Handing over the object to her can stop her rage—she immediately destroys the item, then continues on her relentless march toward Aldern.

IESHA FOXGLOVE, REVENANT

XP	CR	HP
2,400	6	76

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 235)

TACTICS

During Combat If Iesha ends up attacking the PCs, she fights them until they either hand over whatever item it was that triggered her wrath or everyone in the group spends a round not attacking her or getting in her way; at this point, she breaks off the attack and continues on her march toward Aldern.

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs allow Iesha to pass uncontested, she works her way downstairs to the basement, taking the most direct route. As an undead, she is immune to the effects of the haunts, but PCs following her may find their attempt delayed or compromised as they are forced to deal with haunts she simply ignores and passes by.

When she reaches the ground floor, she pauses over the moldy stain at area **B3** for several moments, staring transfixed at the spiral stain. After a few minutes, or once the PCs catch up to her, she unleashes a baleful shriek and begins smashing and clawing at the stained floorboards with her claws—it takes her only about a minute to smash through the floor with her savage claws, at which point she clammers through the hole and drops down into area **B30** below (characters who cannot get through the door to area **B29** can use this route to enter the caverns as well, of course).

Once through the spiral stain, Iesha continues her journey, descending the stairs and moving with unerring obsession through the caverns to the door into area **B37** partway down the ledge in area **B36**. Sensing her supernatural rage at their undead master, the ghouls in the caverns do not contest Iesha’s passage through the caverns and she does not stop to attack them—the same cannot be said of the PCs, whom the ghouls quickly move to attack if they notice them following Iesha.

The door to area **B37** poses a final barrier to Iesha. Feel free to have her scramble and smash against this



door for as long as you wish if you want the PCs to be present for her attack on Foxglove—otherwise you can have her smash through the door to confront her murderer whenever you wish. Iesha's actions once she encounters Foxglove in area **B37** are detailed in that room's "Development" section.

B25 KITCHEN (CR 4)



A large oaken table, its surface covered with moldy stains and rat droppings, sits in the center of this large kitchen. Shelves line the walls, and an oversized fireplace dominates the northeast portion of the room. The shelves in the southwest wall are in a much greater state of disarray, and two one-foot-wide cracks in the wall near the floor lead south into the earth beyond the basement walls.

The two cracks in the walls are short tunnels that lead over to area **B27**, fissures that allow the rat swarms in there to move in and out of the place as they please. Several of the tunnels wind up and provide access into the wooden walls of the manor above as well.

CREATURES: Any substantial noise in this room is enough to attract the attention of the two diseased rat swarms in area **B27**. The rapidly growing susurrus of oily, diseased rat bodies slithering through tight confines, combined with the rising wave of rodent squeaks, gives the PCs 1d3 rounds to prepare for the onslaught before the swarms pour out into area **B25**, one after the other.

RAT SWARMS (2)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	16 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 232)

TACTICS

During Combat Once enraged, the swarms continue to pursue intruders throughout the house. They do not follow prey outside.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Su) The swarm inflicts Vorel's Phage when it damages foes (Fort save DC 12; see page 94 for a description of the effects of Vorel's Phage).

TREASURE: In a cupboard near the oven sits a very fine silver dinner set, with an exceptionally large silver salver and a dozen crystal decanters. The set as a whole is worth 1,000 gp. A DC 15 Perception check reveals a small clay urn hidden in a nook behind a loose brick on the chimney. The urn is stuffed with some dried pine cones and three small violet garnets worth 100 gp each.

B26 KITCHEN STAFF'S QUARTERS



Two bunks stand in this room, relatively free of dust and mold. A single chair lies on its side between them.

This room was where the kitchen staff lived back in Traver's day. Aldern was going to rebuild this room as a new servants' quarters, but the rat problem even a year ago was enough that he didn't make much progress on this front. Since he abandoned the manor again, leaving Vorel's spirit waxing powerful, the rat problem has only increased.

B27 PANTRY



Once a pantry, this room has become a filthy, reeking lair of what must be hundreds, if not thousands, of rats. Swaths of fur cling to everything, and mounds of rat droppings cover the floor.



IESHA
FOXGLOVE

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs haven't already disturbed the rat swarms in area **B25**, they are encountered here.

B28 WINE CELLAR



Two wine racks line the walls here, their shelves empty and dusty. Mounds of broken glass bottles clutter the floor.

TREASURE: A DC 20 Perception check reveals something interesting on the top shelf of the western rack—a hinged and hidden compartment in the back wall. Beyond is a narrow nook in which are hidden eight fine vintages of wine from the famed Vigardeis vineyard in distant Cheliix. Each bottle is worth 100 gp.

B29 VOREL'S WORKSHOP (CR 4)

The door to this room is locked and made of iron, and while patches of rust mar its face, it remains quite stout. It's a DC 30 Disable Device check to pick the lock, or a DC 28 Strength check to break it down. Aldern Foxglove carries the key, but a spare can be found in area **B23**.



This room looks to have once been some sort of arcane workshop, although it now lies in ruin. A row of soggy books sits on the northern end of a workbench along the western wall. At the other end of the workbench, what looks like three iron birdcages sit, each containing a dead diseased rat. To the east, two stained-glass windows loom. The northern window depicts a thin man with gaunt features drinking a foul-looking brew of green fluid, while the southern one shows the same man but in an advanced state of decay, as if he had been dead for several weeks. His arms raised and head thrown back in triumph, his rotting body turns to smoke and spirals into a seven-sided box.

The stained-glass windows look out over the Varisian Gulf; although the basement itself is underground, the curved eastern wall of this room extends beyond the side of the cliff face. These final windows depict Vorel Foxglove taking the potion he brewed to catalyze his transformation into a lich (recognizable for who he is with a DC 25 Knowledge [nobility] check, by any PC who has examined the portraits in area **B17**, or by PCs haunted by festering or wrathful haunts), and then showing his new undead body bonding with his phylactery.

The books are in sorry shape, but a look through them reveals that they all cover various arts of necromancy and the creation of undeath. Worm-eaten and crumbling, they won't stand up to much investigation, but a character who looks through them and makes note of where the previous owner had glossed the text with marks and observations can make a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) to realize that whoever studied

these books was investigating the transformation of mortal into a lich.

The iron cages each contain a dead rat that suffered from Vorel's Phage. Physical contact with one of these rats is not enough to expose a character to the disease, but eating one certainly does. Close examination of any of these cages reveals a small symbol of a pig with a mouthful of lock picks peering at a keyhole; under the pig is a guildsign that says "Pug's Contraptions—Magnimar." These cages were left here by Aldern—he's already delivered a sample of the fungus from area **B37** to the Brothers of the Seven, and he intends to deliver these three dead rats sometime soon.

HAUNT: Kasanda finally discovered the depths of her husband Vorel's plan here; forbidden by him to enter this room, she managed to do so one fateful night by using a *chime of opening* she'd purchased for just this purpose. While Vorel prepared the final stages of his lich transformation ritual, Kasanda found his books and realized what he was up to. Enraged and horrified, she moved down to the caverns below to confront him.

The PC haunted by wrath experiences a sudden urge to read the books on the workbench as soon as she comes within 5 feet of the center of the room. If she touches them, she freezes in place as a flood of information flows through her mind. She experiences a series of visions chronicling the various stages Vorel went through in his quest to become a lich, from researching the works of previous liches, to gathering the components for the lich transformation potion, to building his phylactery, finally culminating in a vision of Vorel taking his potion and doubling over in agony as his body began to rot away. All of these visions take place as if in a realm of animated stained-glass windows, which should obviously explain the true nature of the windows in Foxglove Manor. As Vorel doubles over, the PC is filled with blinding shame that a loved one would do this to himself, followed by a burning rage that he was stopped before he finished his ritual. These visions take only a few seconds to occur; once they end, the PC doubles over in an agony of anger.

ORIGINS OF LICHDOM

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	8

CE wrathful haunt (5-ft. radius in center of room)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to notice subtle movement in the stained-glass windows, as if the man depicted therein were sneering at the observer)

hp 8; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect Once the haunted character receives the vision described above, she must make a DC 14 Will save or suddenly be filled with terror at the knowledge that Vorel has already succeeded in transforming himself into a lich, and must flee at top speed upstairs to try to find her "child" and rescue her. Anyone who gets in the character's way or tries to stop her suddenly seems to transform into Vorel, and the haunted character must attack

that character to the best of her ability until she can continue on her flight up to area **B13**. *Calm emotions*, *dispel evil*, and *protection from evil* can end this effect before the character reaches **B13**, as can any effect that removes a fear effect; otherwise the effect persists until the PC reaches area **B13**—upon seeing no child there, she recovers from the effect.

B30 THE PIT (CR 4)



Piles of broken stone, dirt, and a few ruined pickaxes line the edges of this room. The floor in the middle of the room has been torn up to reveal an ancient set of stone spiral stairs, obviously of much older construction than the surrounding basement, winding deep into the bedrock below. A foul stink, like that of rotten meat, wafts up on a cold breeze from the darkness.

These stairs existed before Foxglove Manor was constructed, leading down into an ancient complex devoted to the worship of Urgathoa, goddess of undeath. The complex has partially flooded and eroded into what looks like little more than a series of caves today. Vorel knew about the complex and incorporated the stairs into his design, but he kept their existence secret from his wife. After the manor fell vacant, Justice Ironbriar made a search of the place. He hired a priest to use *stone shape* to conceal the entrance to the caves, hoping to keep them from whoever would come to dwell here later until legal ownership of the manor reverted to the Brothers of the Seven. It wasn't until Xanasha sent Aldern back here to gather samples of the fungus she suspected grew deep below that this entrance was reopened.

The stairs descend 80 feet to area **B31**.

HAUNT: When an obsession-haunted PC first sets foot on the stairs, she experiences a sudden vision of Aldern, sweaty, filthy, and wild-eyed, digging away at the stone floor of this room with a pickaxe. With each swing, he grunts out two words: "For you." The PC knows that Aldern is speaking of her. As the vision ends, Aldern breaks through into the room beyond, and a horde of shrieking ghouls rises up to pull him into the darkness below before they turn their lambent eyes to the PC.

GHOULISH UPRISING

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	8

CE obsessed haunt (upper 20 ft. of spiral stairs)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 15 (to notice a sudden increase in the stink of rotten flesh)

hp 8; **Trigger** Proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect As the ghouls reach for the haunted PC, she must make a DC 16 Will save to shake off the vision and regain her senses. If she fails, the ghouls grab her and begin to tear and bite at her flesh. Observers see the haunted PC jerk and thrash in the air as if she were being shaken by a mob, and suddenly

deep red claw and bite wounds appear on her flesh. The haunted PC takes 6d6 points of damage from the assault (half on a DC 16 Fortitude save), and must make a DC 16 Fortitude save to resist catching ghoul fever (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146).

B31 LANDING



The stairs end in a limestone cavern. The walls drip with moisture, and swaths of black and dark blue mold grow in spiraling, tangled patterns on the floor, ceiling, and walls. Rubble and broken bones clutter the floor, and a rhythmic sound—like the breathing of some immense creature—echoes through the cave from three tunnels, one to the north and two to the west. Of the two western tunnels, the southernmost one seems to be a relatively new creation.

The tunnel leading to area **B32** is only a few months old—observing the wall's cracks and crumbling sandstone, Aldern had his ghouls use pickaxes to create a second entrance to the tunnels.

The breathing sound is nothing more than the sounds of the surf echoing strangely through various other fissures that connect area **B32** and **B36** to the cliffs overlooking the Varisian Gulf.

DEVELOPMENT: Characters who make excessive noise or light here quickly attract the attention of the ghouls in areas **B34** and **B35**, who come to investigate.

B32 FEEDING CAVE (CR 5)



This long cave stinks of rotten meat. The source of the horrific smell is readily apparent—a swath of carcasses is strewn about the floor of this place.

CREATURE: A single dire bat took residence in this cavern in the years before Aldern returned. The creature came and went by squeezing up and down the well shaft, emerging nightly in area **B1** to feed until it was savaged by Aldern and his ghoul minions. Now, the bat has become a ghoulish undead bat, and one of the cavern's most horrific guardians. Known more properly as a skaveling (such creatures are used as mounts by the foul necromantic denizens of the deepest reaches of the Darklands), the undead bat never leaves its den today, yet it defends its lair with a single-minded fury against intruders.

SKAVELING

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	58

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 242)

TREASURE: Two of the three dead humans among the skaveling's victims are long-dead Varisian nomads with nothing of much value on their remains. The third,



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however, is the corpse of notorious one-armed bandit Shaz “Redshiv” Bilger, suspected of organizing the robbery of nearly two dozen merchant convoys along the Lost Coast Road over the past decade. His partially eaten remains can be identified with a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check. Proof of his demise presented to the law at Magnimar is worth a 500 gp reward.

Of more immediate monetary gratification, though, is Shaz’s surviving gear, which consists of a pearl ring worth 300 gp, an adamantite longsword, a *hat of disguise*, and a scattering of 56 gp.

B33 DANGEROUS MOLD (CR 6)



The mold seems to grow particularly thick in this portion of the tunnel. Several pickaxes have been tossed into the corner of the room—one of them looks particularly well made.

After widening the tunnel to area B32, the ghouls abandoned their digging tools here, barely even noticing the poisonous cloud of spores the act kicked up at the time. The southern two 5-foot-squares here are thick with fungus, much of it yellow mold.

YELLOW MOLD

XP	CR
2,400	6

Hazard (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 416)

TREASURE: Of the six picks abandoned here, five are ruined from the mold and the damp. The sixth, however, happens to be a +1 *heavy pick* that has weathered the conditions rather well.

B34 GHOULISH GUARDIANS (CR 4)

CREATURES: This otherwise nondescript cave is always watched over by three ghouls, stationed here and commanded to act as guardians by Aldern. The ghouls hide in the shadows: one in the nook to the north, one in the shadows of the southeast entrance, and one in the shadows of the western entrance. If they’re spotted, they attack at once. Sounds of combat here draw the attention of the ghouls in area B35, but not the denizens of area B36; the additional ghouls from area B35 arrive in 3 rounds.

GHOULS (3)

XP	CR	HP
400 each	1	13 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

B35 THE GRAVE (CR 5)



The western half of this foul-smelling cavern is heaped with bones, each scarred by the scraping of teeth. Most of the bones have been cracked open for the marrow within.

CREATURES: Another four ghouls dwell in here, crouched upon the macabre heaps of bones as they chew the last remaining tatters of flesh from the rapidly diminishing pile of body parts. If the PCs take the time to look closely, one of these ghouls has a partially smashed-in skull from which a strangely shaped chunk of stone protrudes. This ghoul was once a carpenter in Aldern’s employ—the same one he caught with his wife Iesha. The man wasn’t quite dead when Foxglove dumped his body into the well, nor was he deceased when the ghouls in this tunnel found him—amused by his poor luck, they decided to make the doomed man into one of their own rather than feed on his delicious entrails. The bit of stone protruding from his head matches the missing wing from the statuette in area B9.

GHOULS (4)

XP	CR	HP
400 each	1	13 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

B36 THE VENT (CR 6)



The cramped tunnel opens into a vertiginous gulf here, a cathedral-like cavern with a roof arching thirty feet overhead and dropping into a sloshing pool of foamy seawater fifty feet below. A steep stone ledge winds down to these surging depths, its slope glistening with moisture and mold. A stone door stands in the northwestern wall about halfway down the slope.

The sloping ledge is difficult to navigate; a character who doesn’t climb along its surface (doing so is a DC 5 Climb check) must make a DC 12 Acrobatics check each round. Failure by 5 or more sends the character sliding down the ramp all the way to the bottom; the character takes 1d6 points of damage for every 20 feet he slides until he plunges into the cold waters at the bottom.

The pool at the bottom is 100 feet deep. At its bed, it opens into a large cavern that eventually connects to the sea via several underground tunnels that wind for nearly a half-mile to the south. The sound of the water surging and sloshing is the source of the “breathing” sound heard throughout these caves. It’s a DC 15 Swim check to navigate the pool’s waters due to the churning currents.

The stone door leading to area B37 is untrapped, but is locked. A PC can pick the lock with a successful DC 30 Disable Device, or can smash down the door with a successful DC 28 Strength check. Alternatively, the key to Vorel’s workshop opens the lock—Aldern carries one copy of this key, while a spare hangs on a peg behind the painting in area B23.

CREATURES: The characters might have come to think that they’ve seen the last of the Lost Coast’s goblins by this point, but in fact a pack of four goblin commandos from the Toadlick tribe to the north wandered a little



too close to Foxglove Manor a few weeks ago and were set upon by the skaveling while it was on one of its increasingly rare forays outside. Aldern found the goblins later that evening; he rescued their bodies from the ghoul bat and let them ripen in area **B37** amid the dangerous spores under the fungus there—as a result, the four goblins rose as ghosts. Aldern wasted no time in putting them to work here as the final guardians of his realm.

GOBLIN GHOSTS (4)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	17 each

Variant ghost (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

CE Small undead

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

Aura stench (10-ft. radius, DC 15, 1d6+4 minutes),

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size)

hp 17 (2d8+8)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d4+1 plus disease and paralysis), 2 claws +7 (1d4+1 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 15)

TACTICS

During Combat The goblin ghosts focus their attacks on one target, attempting to overwhelm their victim with their claws and bites.

Morale The goblin ghosts fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 16

Feats Weapon Finesse


Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +6, Intimidate +9, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +14, Swim +3

Languages Goblin

B37 VOREL'S LABORATORY (CR 7)




The air in this damp cavern reeks of a horrific stench—a foul combination of decay, brine, and mold. The cave contains a rickety table, its damp surface cluttered with all manner of what appears to be garbage: empty bottles, bits of clothing, crumpled bits of paper, and more, lying in neatly organized rows. A painting leans against the far side of the table, facing a large leather chair that sits nearby. This chair's high back and cushion are horribly stained by smears of rotten meat and its arms are sticky with blood. A smaller table sits against the southern wall, its surface heaped with plates and platters of rotten, maggot-infested meat. The horrific stench of the room seems strongest to the west, where the cave's wall has been overtaken by a horrific growth of dark green mold and dripping fungi. At the center, a patch of black tumescent fungus grows, its horny ridges and tumorlike bulbs forming what could almost be taken to be a humanoid outline. What appears to have once



been an exquisite puzzle box the size of a man's fist lies smashed on the ground at the fungoid shape's feet.

A closer inspection of the collection on the table should be enough to worry one of the PCs, for this is Aldern's collection of relics from that PC's life. You should tailor the list of things found here to the PC Aldern is obsessed with, ranging from mundane things like used potion bottles and scrolls on up to objects as personal as a lock of hair (perhaps harvested from the PC as she slept or from a discarded comb) or, if you can engineer such an event earlier in this adventure, even small personal objects that have gone missing. The only objects here that weren't taken from the stalked PC are a stack of charcoal drawings on water-damaged parchment depicting the character, drawn by Aldern's hand. The nature of the drawings varies (erotica for lust, heroic poses for envy, or pictures of the PC killed in numerous manners for wrath), but the subject remains the same throughout the collection of several dozen pages. Mixed in with these drawings is a letter written in a graceful hand. Addressed to Aldern at his Magnimar townhouse address, the letter is presented on page 108 as Handout 2–5, and provides the PCs with the strongest link to Magnimar they are likely to find in Foxglove Manor.



The portrait that leans against the table's far side is of Iesha, but Aldern has used his own waning artistic skills in a clumsy attempt to repaint the portrait with blood and bits of runny rotten flesh into a caricature of the PC he has become obsessed with. The painting can be cleaned with a DC 25 Craft (painting) check and a day of work to reveal its original subject. This painting was done in Foxglove's townhouse in Magnimar, and although Iesha is the main subject, an open window over her shoulder shows a portion of a city skyline that can be identified with a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check as the city of Magnimar.

The fungus on the wall comprises the remains of Vorel Foxglove—after his wife disrupted the ritual he was performing here to become a lich, the necromantic energy lashed back and destroyed his physical body, transforming it into the embodiment of contagion and fungoid corruption that grows on the wall here. Anyone who touches the foul fungus must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or immediately contract Vorel's Phage (see page 94). The onset, in this case, is immediate—the character takes the ability damage at once. Actually ingesting a portion of the fungus imparts a –4 penalty on the saving throw.

The shattered box on the ground is the remains of Vorel's phylactery. A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies it as being associated with necromancy; if this check exceeds this DC by 10 or more, the character realizes it is an incomplete and ruined lich phylactery.

In addition, characters who've been following the story laid out in the stained-glass windows in the manor above may recognize the box as the one depicted in some of those windows.

CREATURE: Aldern Foxglove, once a handsome and cultured nobleman who had a way with the ladies, is now condemned to an unlife of unending hunger, driven to eat the flesh of those he once might have called friends or lovers. His transformation into a ghast has ruined his mind, yet his former personality was not completely destroyed—at least, not at first. To deal with his increasing madness, Aldern developed a split personality. He alternately refers to himself as His Lordship, the Skinsaw Man, and the Hurter. He spends his days conversing with himself as His Lordship, fearing the arrival of the Hurter, whom he regards as an entirely separate person. His Lordship is a frightened creature with a nervous twitch and a quick, excited voice. The Hurter appears in times of stress or excitement—a hateful, murdering cannibal who seeks to continue his harvest of living flesh. It is this personality that is most tied to Vorel's spirit, yet despite its feral and savage hunger, it is the Skinsaw Man that is, perhaps, the most dangerous. This personality seeks to find salvation and purpose among the Skinsaw Cult and is slowly becoming the dominant face in this tortured soul. In time, Aldern the Hurter and Aldern the Lord will be gone, and Norgorber will have a powerful new minion to call his own.

Aldern sits in his chair as the PCs arrive, His Lordship in control for a few moments. When he sees the PCs, his eyes widen in a mixture of fear and delight, but when he sees the PC who is the object of his obsession, he staggers to his feet. His proclamation to that PC depends on the nature of his obsession.

LUST: "You! You've come to me! I knew my letters would sway your heart, my love! Let us consummate our... our... hunger!"

ENVY: "No! You were supposed to die! You still live!"

WRATH: "You live! Well and good, for now I shall have the reward of tasting your heart while it is yet warm..."

No matter the nature of his obsession, the Hurter takes over and Aldern attacks. As soon as he is injured, His Lordship takes over. At this point, Aldern drops to his knees, sobs, and begs for the PCs to save him. He is terrified that the Hurter will come again, and is willing to say anything to convince the PCs to aid him. While in this state, he can reveal much of his story to the PCs, including his association with the Brothers of the Seven.

Unfortunately for the PCs, as His Lordship begins revealing the secrets of the Brothers of the Seven, the Skinsaw Man arrives. He suddenly breaks into a wide grin, stands slowly, bows before the PCs, and says, "I wonder how your deaths shall affect your friends. What things might you have done that will go unfinished?"

What will those broken promises spawn? How will your murders shape the world?" He attacks with a renewed fury at this point, gaining a +2 profane bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls and fighting to the death.

Aldern's transformation into a ghast is a unique case—he essentially retained his skills and memories from life, while his body transformed and changed into the undead horror he is today. Those who succumb to his ghoul fever arise as normal ghouls—they do not retain any abilities they had in life.

THE SKINSAW MAN

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	90

Male unique ghast aristocrat 4/rogue 3

CN Medium undead (human)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

Aura stench (10-ft. radius, DC 17, sickened for 1d6+4 minutes),

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +1 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 90 (7d8+59)

Fort +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, evasion, trap sense +1; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 war razor +12 (1d4+5/19–20), bite +6 (1d6+2 plus disease and paralysis), claw +6 (1d6+2 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks disease (ghoul fever, DC 17), paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 17), sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Aldern's tactics in combat are influenced to a certain degree by his personalities, as detailed above. When the Skinsaw Man takes over, he puts on his *stalker's mask* and assumes the form of his obsession, attacking that character to the exclusion of all other targets.

Morale Aldern fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 22, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 27

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +16 (+21 jump), Bluff +17, Climb +14, Diplomacy +19, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +14, Ride +14, Sense Motive +14, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +21

Languages Common, Elven, Varisian

SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1

Gear +1 leather armor, +1 war razor, ring of jumping, ring of protection +1, stalker's mask, extravagant noble's outfit worth 200 gp, cameo worth 100 gp containing tiny portrait of PC, key to area B29

HAUNT: The patch of fungus on the wall presents an additional hazard to a PC associated with the festering haunt. When he sees the strangely humanoid shape on

the wall, he realizes the shape matches that of his own shadow exactly, and suddenly experiences a sensation of vertigo as he feels compelled to feed on the fungus to reclaim his stolen shadow.

VOREL'S LEGACY

XP	CR	HP
800	3	8

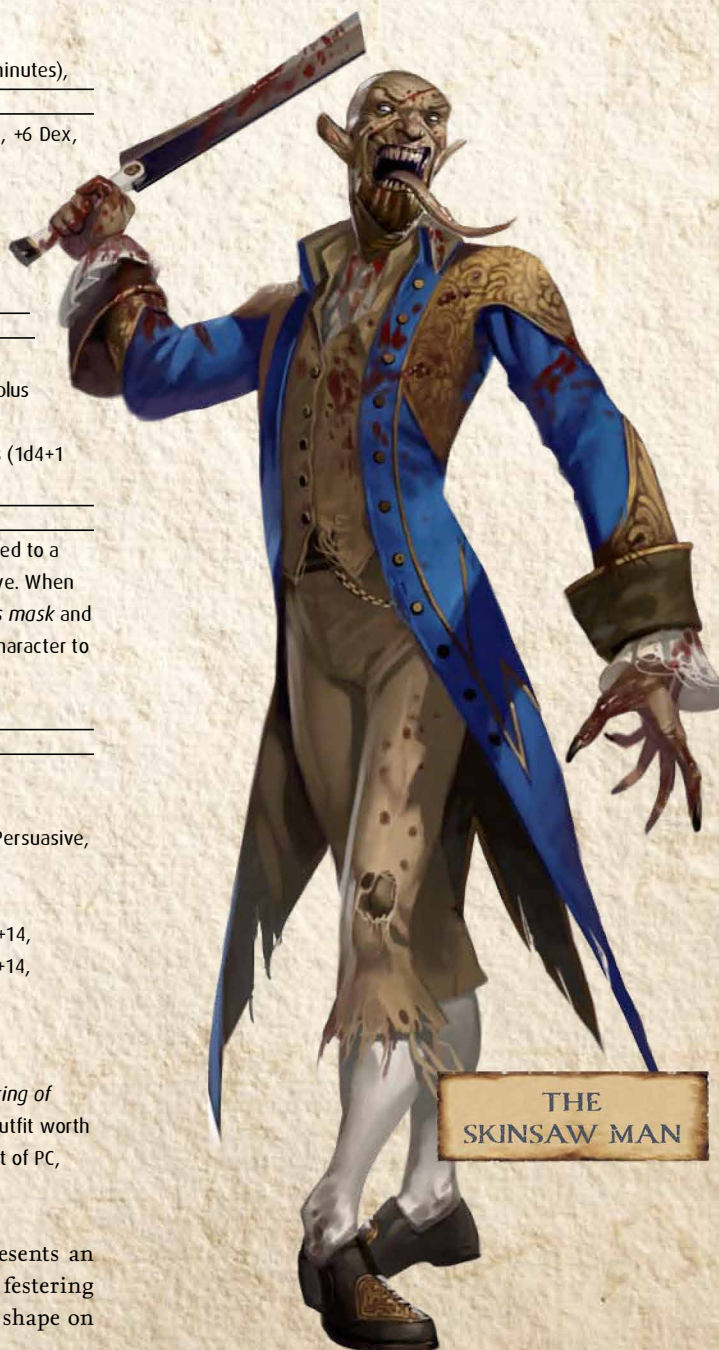
CE festering haunt (5-ft. spread from west wall)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 15 (to notice the phylactery shards rattle)

hp 8; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect The haunted character is compelled, as if via a *suggestion* spell, to eat some of the fungus on the wall. A DC 14 Will save is enough to resist the compulsion.



THE
SKINSAW MAN

Aldern,

You have served us quite well. The delivery you harvested from the caverns far exceeds what I had hoped for. You may consider your debt to the Brothers paid in full. Yet I still have need of you, and when you awaken from your death, you should find your mind clear and able to understand this task more than in the state you lie in as I write this.

You shall remember the workings of the Sihedron ritual, I trust. You seemed quite lucid at the time, but if you find after your rebirth that you have forgotten, return to your townhouse in Magnimar. My agents shall contact you there soon—no need for you to bother the Brothers further. I will provide the list of proper victims for the Sihedron ritual in two days' time. Commit that list to memory and then destroy it before you begin your work. The ones I have selected must be marked before they die; otherwise they do my master no good and the greed in their souls will go to waste.

If others get in your way, though, you may do with them as you please. Eat them, savage them, or turn them into pawns—it matters not to me.

—Xaneshia, Mistress of the Seven

TREASURE: If cleaned, the portrait of Iesha is worth 200 gp. A small silver key ring worth 10 gp sits on the table amid the rotten meat, with two keys on the ring. The larger of these two is a tarnished iron key set with a round opal worth 100 gp—this is the key to Foxglove's townhouse in Magnimar. The smaller key is made of bronze and has an unusually long tang ending in a set of three notched blades. The head of this key resembles a roaring lion. This key opens the hidden cache on the third floor of the townhouse. Finally, a DC 25 Perception check made while searching the fungus south of the dangerous black patch uncovers a mold-encrusted but still functional *chime of opening* (5 charges), the same one used over 60 years ago by Kasanda Foxglove to enter her husband's secret world.

DEVELOPMENT: The patch of dangerous fungus can be temporarily destroyed by fire, acid, or the application of at least 5 vials of holy water, but the foul stuff simply regrows in 24 hours unless the site is subjected to a *hallow* and a *consecrate* spell or a *dispel evil* spell. Casting these spells here causes the fungus to suddenly animate and tear free from the wall. The thing howls in a sloshy, barely human voice, then crumbles to dust—the haunt of Foxglove Manor is thus exorcised, and while the building retains its unwelcoming aura, it is no longer haunted.

If the PCs released Iesha's revenant from her attic prison and allowed her to work her way down into these caverns, her confrontation with Aldern could be an exciting climax for this part of the adventure. When

she reaches the locked stone door to this room, you can assume it takes her about as long as it takes the PCs to make their way down into the area from above to eventually smash her way through the door, regardless of how long the PCs actually take to navigate the undead and haunts along the way.

Confronted by Iesha, Foxglove shrieks out in grief and falls to his knees to beg forgiveness from his murdered wife. For a brief moment, as Iesha caresses Aldern's sallow cheek, it may appear that she may be willing to forgive—yet a moment later, she shrieks in rage and attempts to destroy him. Her first attack on Aldern is effectively a surprise round against the ghost, after which you can resolve the combat normally, with the PCs taking part in the battle as well.

If the PCs aren't present for this confrontation, Aldern calls the goblin ghosts from area B36 to his aid as soon as Iesha attacks. These ghosts make all the difference—with their aid, Aldern destroys Iesha while surviving the fight himself with 3d6 hit points remaining, making his eventual fight against the PCs much easier assuming they can confront him before he has a chance to heal his damage. If the goblin ghosts are not available to help, though, Iesha destroys Aldern in a few rounds of combat.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs exorcise Vorel's spirit, award them 3,200 XP. If the PCs release Iesha and she achieves peace by taking part in Aldern Foxglove's destruction, award the PCs 2,400 XP (as if they had defeated Iesha in combat).



THE SKINSAW MURDERS

CHAPTER
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PART FIVE: CHASING THE SKINSAW

ALTHOUGH THE LOST COAST IS REMOTE AND QUIET, NEWS TRAVELS FAST. WORD OF THE MURDERS IN SANDPOINT QUICKLY REACHES MAGNIMAR, WHERE UNKNOWN TO THAT CITY'S LEADERS, THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE PLEASED WITH ALDERN'S WORK. YET OTHERS SEE THESE MURDERS IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT LIGHT—FOR MAGNIMAR HAS HAD TROUBLE WITH KILLINGS OF LATE AS WELL. THE SKINSAW MURDERS OF SANDPOINT ARE INDEED LINKED TO THE KILLINGS THAT HAVE RECENTLY PLAGUED MAGNIMAR—AND WORSE, IF THE MURDERERS ARE NOT STOPPED SOON, THEY MAY JUST ADD TO THEIR LIST OF VICTIMS THE CITY'S OWN LORD-MAYOR!

Haldmeer Grobaras, lord-mayor of Magnimar, is a bombastic and self-serving nobleman who sees his stewardship over the city as a reward for his hard work as an aristocrat and not as a service to his people. Normally, the plight of the poor isn't his concern—he has people who have people to take care of those problems. Yet this new plague of slayings is something else. Merchants, nobles, bankers, and recently the proprietor of one of Haldmeer's favorite gambling dens have been slain, and it's no longer possible to discount theories that an entire cult of madmen might be involved. Angry demands to stop the slayings fill the streets and taverns by day, and Haldmeer isn't sure that the frightened silence of the nights is much better.

Unfortunately, his rule of Magnimar has left the bureaucratic machine in bad need of a tune-up. Magnimar's guards aren't equipped to handle a group as crafty and sneaky as the Skinsaw Cult, especially with one of the city's own justices living a double life as one of the cult's leaders. This man, Justice Ironbriar, works behind the scenes to defeat and distract organized attempts by the government to handle the situation, sending guards and investigators on wild-goose chases and wasting resources so the cult can continue its work. And just as fast as news of the Sandpoint murders travels to Magnimar, so too does news of heroes standing against and defeating Foxglove. By the time the PCs come to Magnimar and begin their investigations there, Ironbriar is ready for them.

WELCOME TO MAGNIMAR

Magnimar is a sprawling city—any number of adventures can begin (or end) in the City of Monuments, but this adventure focuses only on those things pertinent to “The Skinsaw Murders.” Player characters, being what they are, will certainly get distracted by the sights and sounds of the city—in this case, consult the notes on the city in Appendix 3 of this book. Further details on the city appear in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Magnimar, City of Monuments*, a 64-page sourcebook that describes the city in great detail.

As the PCs explore Magnimar, they'll certainly hear rumors and news about a disturbingly familiar spate

of murders plaguing the City of Monuments. Stories of merchants, politicians, crooked guards, and moneylenders showing up dead—their bodies mutilated, faces missing, and chests carved with seven-pointed stars—seem to be on everyone's lips, and it seems that every week brings a new victim to light. The crime scenes are now tightly controlled by the city government—the PCs should have little or no chance of getting access to one of them to investigate. Which is just as well, for the Skinsaw cultists are quite adept at leaving behind no traces, and little remains behind at these sites to incriminate them.

Unfortunately for the cult, Foxglove hasn't been so careful about hiding his trail. Despite the cultists' best efforts to preserve their secrets, clues remain hidden at Foxglove's townhouse that could well send the PCs on their way to disrupting the Skinsaw Cult completely.

FOLLOWING THE LEADS

While defeating Aldern Foxglove puts an end to the murders in Sandpoint, the PCs should find numerous clues in the Misgivings that indicate Foxglove was not acting alone—that he had allies and perhaps even a superior in Magnimar. At the very least, the discovery of these links to Magnimar should compel the PCs to visit the larger city out of curiosity.

If the PCs don't take the bait, though, Xanesha and the Skinsaw Cult won't ignore them for long—plenty of viable greedy souls remain in Sandpoint to fall to the Sihedron, after all. Eventually, the lamia matriarch simply sends a new proxy to the region to pick up Aldern's murder spree where it left off. This new agent is most likely one of the faceless stalkers who serve Xanesha, since this choice allows her to also seek revenge on those who robbed her of a useful undead tool. After some research, she picks one of the PCs and orders her faceless stalker to assume that PC's form and to periodically allow citizens to witness its murderous acts. It shouldn't be long before the PCs will be forced to act to clear their own name.

More likely, though, the discovery of the “Pug's Contraptions” maker's marks on the iron cages in area

B29 or the letter from Xanesha found in area B37 compels the PCs to make a trip to Magnimar. An investigation of Pug's Contraptions reveals it to be an innocuous tinker's shop—if asked about the iron cages, Pug himself remembers selling them to Aldern Foxglove a few weeks ago. With a DC 16 Diplomacy check (or a bribe of at least 25 gp), Pug can give the PCs directions to Foxglove's townhouse—the address to which he delivered the cages once they were done. Pug has no idea what they were for: “Birds, I guess. They're bird cages, after all, ain't they?”

This clue from Pug, or the more direct clue from Xanesha's letter (a name, at this point in the adventure, the PCs shouldn't have any luck in finding more information about), should spur the PCs into investigating Foxglove's Magnimar home.

C. FOXGLOVE TOWNHOUSE (CR 6)

Aldern Foxglove's townhouse is the logical first stop in town for PCs seeking more clues about the brotherhood mentioned in the letter, but unfortunately it's also the logical place for the Skinsaw Cult to make its first attempt to murder the PCs.

The townhouse is located in the Grand Arch District, not far from Starsilver Plaza. It hasn't been lived in for months, although Aldern still owns the property. Since he's not yet been declared dead, the building has stood empty for that time. Justice Ironbriar has had copies of the building's keys made, but although the cultists ransacked the house for valuables and destroyed any clues they could find that might point back to their association with Aldern, they overlooked a hidden cache that Foxglove used to store personal oddments. If the PCs have Aldern's key, the design on its head should give them the clue they need to discover this cache.

The building itself is three stories tall. Boards have been nailed over the windows on the ground floor, courtesy of the Skinsaw Cult. A DC 20 Diplomacy check made to gather information in the vicinity reveals that the house was boarded up by carpenters one night not all that long ago. The back door is boarded over, but the front door is only locked (DC 30 Disable Device to open the lock). Attempts to enter the building by force during the day invariably draw the attention of the city guards, but no one questions PCs who enter the house using a key.

CREATURES: Justice Ironbriar is no fool. He suspects that after the PCs finished with Aldern, they'd follow up on any clues they found at the manor by visiting this building. As a result, he's prepared an ambush using two faceless stalkers, swamp-dwelling aberrations capable of assuming humanoid form. Ironbriar ordered the two creatures, on “loan” from his new mistress Xanesha,

to take the shapes of Aldern and Iesha Foxglove, and to await the PCs' arrival here. Both bide their time on the ground floor, but once they realize their “home” has visitors, they call out to the PCs and track them down, apparently eager to treat their guests to a home-cooked meal in the kitchen. Of course, this is a ruse; the faceless stalkers are merely trying to size up the PCs. Once they're ready, the monsters assume their true forms and attack.

FACELESS STALKERS (2)

XP	CR	HP
1,200 each	4	42 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 122)

TACTICS

During Combat The faceless stalkers attempt to keep one foe flanked at all times, fighting near walls if possible to prevent the same happening to them.

Morale The faceless stalkers fight until one is killed, whereupon the other attempts to flee. It does not return to its lair in the Shadow Clock, as it is terrified of Xanesha's likely response to its failure—instead it tries to flee the city entirely to return to the Mushfens.

TREASURE: A secret cache is hidden in the fireplace mantel on the third floor. This mantel is decorated with two roaring lion heads at either end; if the PCs found Aldern's key ring in Foxglove Manor, the lions match the one on the mysterious bronze key. A DC 20 Perception check reveals a tiny keyhole deep in the back of the left lion's throat. Without the key, a successful DC 30 Disable Device check is required to force the cache open.

The hidden cache in the master bedroom contains one of Foxglove's nest eggs: a bag of 200 pp along with a shallow wooden case containing a number of legal papers pertaining to the townhouse, as well as the deed to Foxglove Manor. The deed indicates that the Foxglove family only financed two-thirds of the manor's construction 80 years ago; the remainder was financed by a group called the Brothers of the Seven. The deed also bears an unusual clause near the end that indicates that after 100 years, ownership of Foxglove Manor and the lands within a mile “around and below” reverts to the brothers.

Under the case is a thin ledger—the majority of the entries are mundane, but several near the end should catch the PCs' attention. These are nearly a dozen entries from over the past 3 months labeled as “Iesha's Trip to Absalom,” each indicating Foxglove was paying someone referred to as “B-7” 200 gp a week for her “trip,” dropping off the payment every Oathday at midnight at a place called “the Seven's Sawmill.” A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to reveal the location of this sawmill, as is a DC 15 Diplomacy check made to gather information.



Now all men and women present and future that we, the members of the Brothers of the Seven, upon this day the 6th. Abadius in the year of 4624, Absalom Reckoning, hereby concede and by this deed confirm upon Vorel Foxglove provisional ownership of the holding to be known here and henceforth as Foxglove Manor, located north of Magnimar on the Lost Coast Road due west of Bleaklow Moor upon the promontory, for so long as he, Vorel Foxglove, shall live, or so long as his direct descendants shall live, to a period not to exceed one hundred years. Construction of Foxglove Manor, having been financed partially on the holdings and coin of Vorel Foxglove to the amount of six and sixty percent, and partially upon the coffers of the Brothers of the Seven to the amount of the remainder, four and thirty percent, backed by collateral in the form of the Seven's Sawmill, located itself upon Kyver's Islet of Magnimar, shall ensure only the physical and initial construction of the aforementioned manor, with any subsequent repair and maintenance to be the sole responsibility of Vorel Foxglove or his descendants for the aforementioned period of one hundred years. Upon the passing of this time, on the date of 6th Abadius of 4724, Absalom Reckoning, ownership of Foxglove Manor, to include all lands within a mile around and below, immediately and forevermore reverts to the Brothers of the Seven, with the employment of the manor, its grounds, and all improvements placed upon it by any prior inhabitants to be subject to the Brotherhood's discretion. And so that our gift, concession, warranty, acquittance, and defense have the best perpetual strength and security, we have affixed Magnimar's seal to the present charter, which shall serve in lieu of signatures, the names of the Brotherhood to remain apart from this or any other document.



FOXGLOVE TOWNHOUSE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
STAIRS ● UP ● DOWN



FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



SECRET CACHE



THE SKINSAW
MURDERS

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PART SIX: THE SEVEN'S SAWMILL

THE CULT OF NORGORBER IS A COMPLEX ORGANISM, BUT THE GOD OF MURDER, SECRETS, GREED, AND POISON WOULD HAVE IT NO OTHER WAY. THE CULT'S LEGACY IN MAGNIMAR STRETCHES BACK TO THE CITY'S FOUNDING OVER A CENTURY AGO, WHEN A FIGURE KNOWN TODAY IN WHISPERS AS THE FOREVER MAN LAID HIS OWN FOUNDATIONS WITHIN MAGNIMAR'S—HE ENSURED THAT THE CULT OF NORGORBER WOULD ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE IN THE CITY'S HEART, MIND, AND SOUL. TODAY, SEVERAL BRANCHES OF THE CULT FUNCTION SIDE BY SIDE, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY IN FULL COOPERATION. THE CULT OF THE SKINSAW MAN, IN PARTICULAR, HAS ITS OWN GOALS IN MIND FOR THE CITY...

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Many thieves' guilds include small shrines to Norgorber in his guise as the "Gray Master." Hidden sects of conspirators who venerate him as the god of secrets know him as the Reaper of Reputations. And those who see divinity in the poisonous know him as "Blackfingers." Yet the most sinister and dangerous of his followers are the Skinsaw Men—they know Norgorber as Father Skinsaw. These fanatic murderers are not assassins—they kill not for wealth, but for the sick joy of it. The Skinsaw Men hold that all of their murders serve a greater cause, their leaders receiving visions of victims that they believe to be divine messages from Father Skinsaw. With each murder, society is shaped—deeds the victim might have accomplished go unrealized and the lives of those who knew the dead shift and change in subtle ways. Over the course of years, or even centuries, murders can shape nations and write the future's history. And when the Final Bleeding occurs, then shall Father Skinsaw reveal to his flock the purpose of this shaping of society by death.

The Skinsaw Men of Magnimar come from old blood, a master cult that has existed for hundreds of years in the decadent Chelish city of Vyre. Yet today, the Magnimarian branch is very much its own entity. An elf named Ironbriar has served as the cult's master since Vorel Foxglove's disappearance—the long-lived cleric leads a double life as one of the city's justices and has used the ironic cover to great effect. Few would suspect a justice, one of the city's ruling judges, of being a cultist of the god of murder, after all. He helped establish the semi-secret Brothers of the Seven society (with the aid of six other merchants, among them Vorel Foxglove) as a cover for his cult, and over the decades, Ironbriar has taken advantage of his growing (but always small) cadre of murderers, using them now and then for additional income. The commission from the Red Mantis to deliver samples of Vorel's Phage is one such bit of moonlighting, but his involvement with the beautiful Xanesha is more personal. At first, he believed she was interested in him for his connections among the justices of Magnimar, but in fact it is his Skinsaw

Men she wants. Xanesha's loyalty, unbeknownst to Ironbriar, is in fact to Karzoug—she sees Ironbriar as little more than a tool. To ensure his cooperation, she charmed Justice Ironbriar and has maintained her magical control over the man for many months. She uses this influence to send his cultists out to kill not those whom Norgorber wills, but rather those whose greedy souls will more rapidly fill Karzoug's *runewell*.

Although himself a reprehensible murderer and traitor to Magnimar, Ironbriar's involvement in these new murders is not his own doing, and if the PCs can free him from Xanesha's control, he might even be able to lead them to her lair. If not and he is killed, there are plenty of other clues awaiting the PCs at the Seven's Sawmill that can lead them to their final confrontation with Xanesha.

SAWMILL GENERAL FEATURES

The Seven's Sawmill is one of several mills that operate along the shores of Kyver's Islet. The mill is intended to look from outside like a standard lumber mill, but while it does indeed produce lumber, the structure's primary purpose is to give the Brothers of the Seven a cover and a safe place to meet. While the sawmill looks innocuous from outside, the information the PCs can find in Foxglove's townhouse should alert them to the sinister truth.

The mill's walls are made of wood, and all doors are standard unlocked wooden affairs, with the exception of the actual entrances to the building, both of which are locked (Disable Device DC 30). Floors are wooden and worn smooth by the passage of feet. The mill itself is powered by four waterwheels in the undermill (area D3)—the grinding and creaking of these waterwheels constantly fill the mill with sound.

D1 OUTER WALK



Built over the mouth of the Yondabakari River, this wood building sits on massive wooden pilings driven into the riverbed below. A wooden boardwalk wraps around the northern rim of the





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building, and a flight of stairs leads down to a door on the east side just above the water level. The churning of four large waterwheels under the mill fills the air with sound and mist.

Characters who stake out the mill see that from outward appearances, it seems normal. Deliveries of new lumber arrive in a holding pond near the mill and are pulled up through two chutes into area **D4** by ropes and pulleys. Shipments of processed timber or firewood ship out once every 3 days, hauled by horses in large wagons.

D2 LOADING BAY



The entirety of the first floor consists of a loading area. An opening in the ceiling into the floor above is filled with a tangle of ropes and slings for lowering timber. Nearby, stairs ascend to the next floor. Two sturdy wagons sit to the south, next to a bank of machinery accessed by four low doors; the grinding and creaking of the machinery fills the room.

A character can climb up into the upper floor via the hanging ropes and slings with a DC 10 Climb check, but the stairs provide a much easier way to reach the same location. The four low doors to the south open into workspaces where the waterwheel-driven machinery that powers the logsplitters and saws on the upper floors runs up along the southern wall of the mill. As long as the waterwheels are running, Perception checks are made at a –2 penalty in this room.

The partially walled-off alcove in the northeast section of this room contains several large mounds of filthy hay. A DC 15 Survival check is enough to reveal that something large—perhaps an ogre or a giant—once used this area as a place to rest. In truth, this was once the lair of a hideous flesh golem known as the Scarecrow that has been claimed as a guardian by Xanesha—the monster can now be encountered in area **E1** of the Shadow Clock.

D3 THE UNDERMILL (CR 5)



This is a place of mist and noise. Four immense waterwheels churn steadily in the northern part of this large room, while to the south, whirring belts of leather, gears, pulleys, and thick ropes spin and churn, using the eternal motion of the river below to power pistons that rumble along the southern wall.

Levers at the west and east ends of the four waterwheels once provided emergency stops, but they have long since rusted in place; an attempt to pull either simply results in the lever breaking off. To stop the wheels, characters must either succeed at a DC 20 Disable Device check or physically destroy them. Alternatively, a DC 25 Disable Device check can sabotage the machinery elsewhere

in the room (indicated by shaded squares on the map). Failure at either of these checks by 5 or more indicates the character is caught by the machinery and takes 1d6 points of damage; he must also make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid being pulled into the gear works for another 3d6 points of damage. Each round, he can attempt a new saving throw (or a DC 20 Escape Artist check) to escape; otherwise he continues to take 3d6 points of damage per round.

Attempts to destroy the waterwheels (hardness 5, hp 120, Break DC 30) or the machinery (hardness 8, hp 60 per 5-foot square, Break DC 26) via melee attacks force a DC 15 Reflex save each round to avoid being caught up in the machines. Stopping the wheels renders the log splitters in area **D5** harmless.

CREATURES: The machinery here needs near-constant upkeep and maintenance. This task falls to three cultists who work in shifts day and night. The cultists do not wear their robes while working, but their razors and masks are never far away. They respond to intruders with feigned friendliness at first, warning them that this room is no place for visitors and that if they need assistance, they should contact the mill manager. If the PCs demand to know the manager's name and address, the cultists smile calmly, claim that they aren't allowed to hand out that type of information, and slowly move to surround the intruders. Once they're flanking foes, they don their masks and attack.

As long as a character is in a square bordered by an outer wall, he's safe. If he moves through any other square during combat, he treats that square as difficult terrain and must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save, as detailed above, to avoid being caught in the machinery or waterwheels. A character caught in the waterwheels is dumped into the river below after 1d3 rounds. The cultists are intimately familiar with the workings of the room and can move through the machinery safely (although it still counts as difficult terrain for them).

SKINSAW CULTISTS (3)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	21 each

Human cleric of Norgorber 1/rogue 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 21 (3d8+5)

Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk war razor +5 (1d4+2/19–20)

Ranged hand crossbow +4 (1d4/19–20)

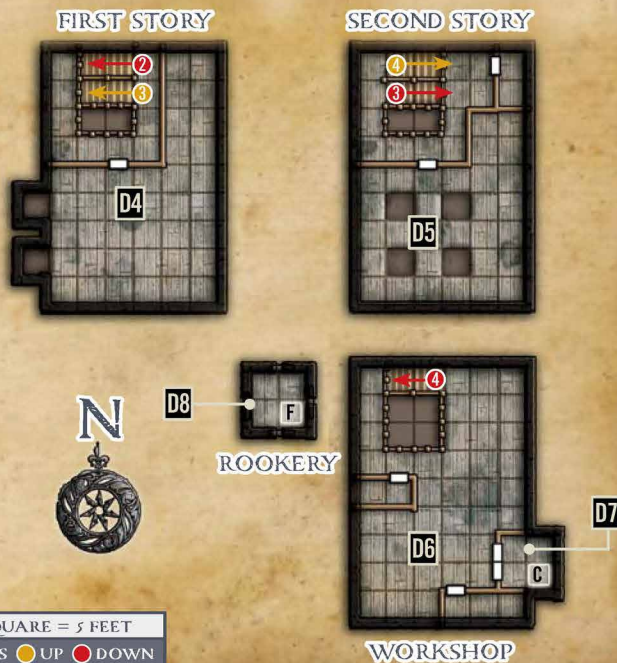
Special Attacks channel negative energy 2/day (DC 9, 1d6), sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +3)

5/day—bleeding touch (1 round), copycat (1 round)



THE SEVEN'S SAWMILL



COMBAT AT THE SAWMILL

Although the various areas in the sawmill are presented as individual encounters, once the cultists realize that they're under attack, things should quickly escalate. If the sound of battle doesn't alert cultists on other floors or neighboring rooms, a fleeing cultist should do just that. The assumption is that once a battle begins, the PCs will be faced with several waves of cultists—as one group falls, another arrives to continue the fight. These waves of cultists should culminate with Justice Ironbriar joining the fray and fighting alongside his allies.

Parties that manage to use stealth to their advantage will quickly find these encounters to be quite a bit easier—all of the denizens of the sawmill have sneak attack, after all, and taking the cultists on one or even two at a time allows them far fewer opportunities to flank and take advantage of their rogue levels.

Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +3)

1st—*command* (DC 13), *disguise self* (DC 13), *shield of faith* 0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *light*, *mending*

D Domain spell; Domains Death, Trickery

TACTICS

During Combat A Skinsaw cultist casts *shield of faith* on the first round of combat if he has a chance, saving *command* for emergencies if he needs to slow down pursuit. Here in the undermill, a cultist might attempt to trip or bull rush a character not armed with a melee weapon into the machinery.

Morale If one of the cultists is slain, the others attempt to flee upstairs to join their brothers in defending the mill.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 15

Feats Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Selective Channeling, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +7, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +9

Languages Common

SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1

Gear leather armor, hand crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork war razor, *skinsaw mask*, 20 gp

D4 LUMBER COLLECTION (CR 6)



This large storeroom is filled with stacks of timber, firewood, and other finished lumber products waiting for shipment. A network of pulleys on tracks covers the ceiling, ropes dangling here and there to aid in the shifting of inventory as needed. Machinery churns along the south wall, while nearby two chutes fitted with winches allow lumber to be hauled up from the holding pools below. Four openings in the ceiling lead to the upper floor; chutes extend through each of these from the log splitters in the room above. Under each opening is a collection bin.



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CREATURES: Except during sermons, this area is populated by four Skinsaw cultists who busy themselves inspecting lumber, arranging product, and preparing shipments. Like their fellows in the undermill, they react to intruders with smiles as they slowly work themselves into flanking positions before attacking; they do not wear their masks or robes, but they do keep their razors hidden throughout the room. At night, the cultists are out on the city streets with their razors, stalking prospective victims.

SKINSAW CULTISTS (4)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	21 each

(see page 113)

D5 LOG SPLITTERS (CR 6)



The floor of this room has a thick carpet of sawdust, penetrated by two large log splitters and saws set up over openings in the floor. Another pair of openings is fitted with winches and ropes to raise and lower uncut lumber from below.

If the waterwheels are functioning, these log splitters and saws thunder away at stacks of lumber. The cacophony imparts a -4 penalty on Perception checks to all creatures in this room.

The log splitters are powered by the waterwheel machinery; each splitter consists of a chute in the floor with blades that split logs as they are fed in. A character can clamber onto a log splitter with a DC 5 Climb check, but must succeed at a DC 5 Reflex save to avoid being caught by the whirling blades. A character who falls into one of the four shaded squares (or is pushed into it) can avoid being caught by the blades with a DC 15 Reflex save. Once a character falls into a working splitter, she takes 6d6 points of slashing damage and is then dropped into the collection bin 10 feet below in area D4.

CREATURES: During the day, four Skinsaw cultists toil in this room, loading lumber into the log splitters with care and precision. They react to intrusions as their brothers in areas D3 and D4 do, with warnings that this is a “dangerous place”—and eventually, with razors.

SKINSAW CULTISTS (4)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	21 each

(see page 113)

TREASURE: The closet in the northeast corner of this floor contains two dozen robes used by the Skinsaw cultists during ceremonies or for their prowls through the nighted streets. A barrel at the southern end of this closet contains a fair amount of loot harvested from their victims; the cultists maintain a community pool of stolen goods and coins for use as the need arises.

The barrel currently contains three bags of 100 gp; three *potions of barkskin* +3; a beautiful crystal decanter set with an obsidian stopper, worth 300 gp; and a tiny wooden box containing three poorly cut diamonds, worth 200 gp each.

D6 WORKSHOP (CR 4)



A thick layer of sawdust covers the floor, mounded nearly a foot deep in places. Workbenches sit here and there in the room, their surfaces cluttered with saws, hand drills, planers, and other woodworking tools.

This room serves the cultists not only as a place for them to work on various projects, but once a week as a



SKINSAW
CULTIST

place for them to gather to hear Ironbriar's sermons and share his visions. Lately, the cultists have taken to capturing victims alive and returning here to watch Ironbriar perform the Sihedron ritual upon the bodies before they are slain—disposal of these bodies generally falls to two lesser cultists while the rest clean up the place. Nonetheless, a DC 15 Perception check reveals numerous places where blood stains sawdust-covered floorboards, or bits of gristle remain caught in tools. The two smaller side rooms in this area are both unused storerooms.

CREATURES: During the day, two cultists work on this floor, planing timbers or creating custom-sized lumber for customers. As with the other cultists in the mill, they react to intruders with feigned concern for their safety before donning masks and drawing razors.

SKINSAW CULTISTS (2)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	21 each

(see page 113)

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs decide to wait for a cult meeting or ritual and infiltrate the sawmill at that point (these meetings take place at midnight every Oathday), they'll find the lower floors of the mill abandoned—all 13 cultists are instead in this room, where they've pushed aside the tables to make room to stand in a semicircle around Ironbriar, who leads them in prayer before murdering his latest victim (an unconscious gambler) after performing the Sihedron ritual. The cultists are unlikely to notice the PCs' arrival—give the party automatic surprise if they attack the group during this time of unholy prayer. Of course, a battle with 13 Skinsaw cultists and Justice Ironbriar at the same time is a CR 10 encounter—very difficult, but not impossible for a group of 7th-level characters.

D7 IRONBRIAR'S OFFICE (CR 7)

Both entrances into this room—the double doors and the trap door in the ceiling—are locked. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Disable Device check can pick the locks; otherwise, the wooden doors must be bashed down if the key (carried by Ironbriar) is not available.



The walls of this room bear macabre decorations—human faces stretched flat over wooden frames by strips of leather or black twine. Each face grimaces in a slightly different expression of pain, looking down on a cramped room that contains a desk, a high-backed rocking chair, and a low-slung cot heaped with scratchy-looking blankets. A ladder in the southeast corner of the room leads up to a trap door in the ceiling.

CREATURE: For the past several decades, after Vorel Foxglove vanished, an elven cleric of Norgorber named Ironbriar has led the Skinsaw Cult. His appointment to Magnimar's Justice Council only strengthened the security of the cult, but his recent magical seduction by the lamia matriarch Xanesha has perhaps damaged his reputation with his followers beyond recovery.

Justice Ironbriar keeps a home in the Alabaster District of Magnimar but is rarely there, leaving its care to a small army of servants and entertaining guests only as his role as a justice requires. The rest of his time he spends here, stalking the streets, or visiting his mistress Xanesha at the Shadow Clock.

Ironbriar is one of the Forlorn—elves raised outside of elven communities by humans. Like most of the Forlorn, Ironbriar grew up on the streets; in this case, in the city of Vyre in northwestern Cheliax. On the streets of Vyre, he quickly learned the laws of Norgorber, and by the time his travels brought him to



JUSTICE
IRONBRIAR

Magnimar, he was already a practicing priest of the god of murder.

Today, Ironbriar is a stern-faced man who believes he's finally found love, when in fact he's actually just been charmed by the object of his obsession. He keeps Xanesha's identity secret from his followers, more out of jealousy that they might try to steal her away than anything else.

Ironbriar prefers to let his cultists handle intruders, but once they start fleeing up to area **D6** with stories of the PCs causing problems downstairs, he puts on his *reaper's mask* and seeks them out personally—he looks forward to bringing their framed faces to Xanesha as trophies. He's not interested in speaking to the PCs, but if they can engage him in even a few rounds of conversation, a successful DC 25 Sense Motive check is enough for the PCs to realize that Ironbriar is affected by a charm effect.

JUSTICE IRONBRIAR	XP 3,200	CR 7	HP 61
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Male elf cleric of Norgorber 6/rogue 2

NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 20, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +3 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 shield)

hp 61 (8d8+22)

Fort +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *short sword* +12 (1d6/19–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +12 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 4/day (DC 14, 3d6), sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +8)
5/day—copycat (6 rounds), dazing touch

Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +8)
3rd—*dispel magic*, *suggestion*^o (DC 15), *summon monster III*
2nd—*bear's endurance*, *cat's grace*, *hold person* (DC 14),
invisibility^o, *undetectable alignment*
1st—*charm person*^o (DC 13), *command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *shield of faith*
0 (at will)—*light*, *mending*, *read magic*, *stabilize*
D Domain spell; **Domains** Charm, Trickery

TACTICS

Before Combat Ironbriar prepares for combat by casting *bear's endurance*, *cat's grace*, *shield of faith*, and *invisibility*.

During Combat Ironbriar prefers to let his cultists fight in melee, himself hanging back to use his spells and channel energy at range. Once he's cast his ranged spells, he moves in to flank foes with his magic sword. If fighting on his own, he tries to time things so that he casts *summon monster III* to bring in additional allies with which to flank foes—he prefers to summon 1d3 lemures with this spell so as to gain more allies

with which to flank than a single tougher ally. Ironbriar also prefers to fight in larger areas where he can take advantage of movement, and as such attempts to escape into area **D6** to fight as soon as he can.

Morale As long as he remains under the effect of Xanesha's *charm monster* spell, Ironbriar fights to the death. If the charm effect ends, he suddenly realizes how the lamia matriarch has been using him and immediately offers the PCs a deal, as detailed under Development. If the PCs refuse to deal with Ironbriar, he does his best to escape into the city—he abandons his life here and attempts to flee back to the city of Vyre to start a new life.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 22, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 24

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Selective Channeling, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Linguistics +7, Perception +13, Stealth +17

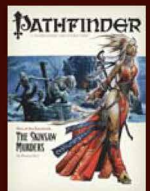
Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Halfling, Infernal, Varisian
SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (12 charges);

Other Gear mithral chain shirt, +1 buckler, +1 *short sword*, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 poisoned bolts (drow poison), *reaper's mask*, key to area **D7**

TREASURE: The faces of Ironbriar's victims are ghoulish but worth little. The large footlocker, however, is filled with oddments that Ironbriar has collected from his many victims over the years. A fair number are of a historical nature, including books, sea charts, etchings of vast rock formations and dolmens accompanied by maps, several pamphlets discussing a "forgotten" school of magic known as the Alchymyc (identifiable as complete drivel with a DC 15 Knowledge [arcana] check), and a fine painting depicting a city carved from a vast frozen waterfall with towering ice cathedrals and domes (this painting is worth 200 gp).

Near the bottom are several books. The first of these is a wizard's spellbook emblazoned with two entwined snakes (one red, one green) that contains the following spells: *blink*, *cat's grace*, *chill touch*, *enlarge person*, *fox's cunning*, *grease*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *scorching ray*, *shocking grasp*, *shrink item*, *spider climb*, and *web*. The second book is an old and beautifully filigreed tome containing numerous hand-drawn illustrations and titled *The Syrpsents Tane: Fairy Tales of the Eldest*. The book presents tales of the Tane—the most feared of a group of notorious fey known as the Twisted, goliaths of war and madness dreamt and stitched into being by the Eldest. The Tane are said to be terrible to behold, and the stories speak of them stumbling into mortal lands, where they ravage kingdoms by creating firestorms, crushing keeps with their feet, and eating dragons. Specific



THE SKINSAW MURDERS

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: MURDER MOST FOUL

PART TWO: TETHING IN THE ATIC

PART THREE: WALKING SCARECROWS

PART FOUR: MISGIVINGS

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Tane described include monstrous creatures like the Jabberwock (a thing of scales and fire and crushing fury), the Thrasfyr (also known as the Dreaming Hill of the Dark, a chimeric monster wrapped in chains that the book claims took part in the Three-Thousand-Year War of the Eldest), and the Sard (the Storm of Insanities, a thing of boughs and briars and misery, an ancient Wychwood Elm given life and hate by the Eldest). This fine and rare tome is worth 500 gp.

Finally, a slim volume near the bottom of the chest serves double-duty as a ledger and journal for Justice Ironbriar. He's recorded everything in the journal in a cipher he painstakingly invented himself using a mix of Draconic, Elven, and Infernal characters. A character who can read all three of these languages can make a DC 25 Linguistics check after 2d4 days of study to untangle the complex cipher. If a PC deciphers it, she finds enough evidence in the book to put Ironbriar in the gallows. If the PCs haven't already determined that Ironbriar wasn't the mastermind behind the murders, his journal makes it clear enough. The journal goes on to reveal that someone Ironbriar refers to as "Lovely Xanesha" has stolen his heart and provided him with a new method of murder. There's not much information about Xanesha in the journal, but the book does reveal that he's visited her dozens of times at a site in northern Magnimar called the Shadow Clock.

The ledger also indicates that Ironbriar has received payment from the Red Mantis for delivery of "Vorel's Legacy." This refers to the deadly fungus harvested from area **B37** of Foxglove Manor, sent to a sinister group of assassins based in Mediogalti. For now, this lead is a red herring that the PCs are unlikely to follow up on, but this shipment plays a significant role in the Curse of the Crimson Throne Adventure Path.

DEVELOPMENT: If Ironbriar is released from Xanesha's *charm monster* spell, all of his rage is suddenly directed at the lamia matriarch. He immediately ceases combat with the PCs, going as far as to throw down his weapon or even drop to his knees to beg for his life. If the PCs ignore this, he simply tries to flee. Otherwise, he offers the PCs a deal—he tells them that Xanesha is responsible for all of the murders, both those in Sandpoint and the recent spate here in Magnimar, and that she was using the Brothers of the Seven as patsies for her own plans (Ironbriar carefully tries to blame the "cult" aspects of the situation on her influence, and does his best to leave Norgorber out of it). In return for the PCs looking the other way for 12 hours (long enough for Ironbriar to escape Magnimar), he promises to reveal to them not only the location of Xanesha's hideout, but also the strength of her forces and guardians. He only reveals this last if he thinks he can trust the PCs. He knows about the Scarecrow and how many faceless stalkers Xanesha keeps in the tower (three in all), and can even provide a brief description of the lamia matriarch's abilities.

D8 ROOKERY



A timber cabinet sits against the northern wall here, its doors made of iron mesh. Inside perch three strangely silent ravens. A table nearby holds a tall narrow bucket of bird feed, a quill, and a vial of ink, as well as several thin parchments weighted down by a polished rock.

These are messenger ravens, as a DC 12 Handle Animal check or DC 15 Knowledge (local or nature) check can reveal. Ironbriar uses them to communicate with Xanesha; if the PCs use *Speak with Animals*, they can learn as much for the price of a few bird snacks offered from the bucket on the table, in addition to the fact that the birds quite enjoy their chances to fly to "the snake lady tower." If the ravens are released, they fly unerringly north at full speed. If at least one PC can keep an eye on the ravens with a successful DC 20 Perception check, and watch from a position of enough prominence (this rookery is prominent enough), she'll see the ravens swoop under the Irespan to the north to alight atop one of the tallest towers under the ancient stone bridge—the Shadow Clock.

IRONBRIAR EXPOSED

Although confronting Justice Ironbriar does not immediately end the overall threat Xanesha poses to Magnimar (and, indeed, this is by the lamia matriarch's design—the cult was always intended to be a convenient smokescreen for her to hide behind), the revelation that one of the city justices was in fact the leader of a notorious murder cult certainly has the potential to make a bigger splash.

In large part, the size of that splash depends upon the PCs. If they quietly defeat Ironbriar and his cultists and prevent knowledge of what he was truly up to from becoming common knowledge, the truth of the justice's disappearance simply becomes another of Magnimar's unsolved mysteries. If the PCs are linked to his death in any way, though, exposing his true nature is the only real way to avoid imprisonment in Magnimar's notorious prison, the Hells.

Lord-Mayor Haldmeer Grobaras himself seeks the PCs out to hear their story of how they exposed the corrupt elf. A corpulent man, Grobaras is also exceptionally quick-witted, and as the PCs explain things he's equally quick to pick up on the threads of the entire conspiracy. In this way, you can use Haldmeer as a convenient way to encourage the PCs to continue their search for the real leader of the Skinsaw Cult—Xanesha.

For her part, the lamia matriarch prefers to lie low in the aftermath of Ironbriar's defeat. If the PCs linger in Magnimar for long without confronting her, though, she may soon take matters into her own hands!



PART SEVEN: SHADOWS OF TIME

FOR MANY YEARS, XANESHA DWELT IN THE HOARY SPIRES OF THE LOST CITY OF XIN-SHALAST. SHE WAS HONORED TO BE AMONG THOSE FEW CHOSEN BY KARZOUG HIMSELF TO BE SENT SOUTH TO BEGIN THE HARVEST OF SOULS OF GREED. WHILE HER SISTER LUCRECIA JOURNEYED INTO CENTRAL VARISIA TO PREY UPON REMOTE VILLAGES, XANESHA ENDED UP IN MAGNIMAR. SHE TOOK HER TIME SEEKING THE PERFECT AGENT TO PERFORM THE SIHEDRON RITUAL, AND EXCEEDED HER EXPECTATIONS IN CATCHING JUSTICE IRONBRIAR.

Now, the lamia matriarch is free to explore the city and discover new greedy candidates for murder while leaving the actual work of the slayings to her underlings. Her current goal is to engineer the sacrifice of Lord-Mayor Haldmeer Grobaras, one of the greediest men in Varisia; although this task is still in its early planning stages, Xanesha could eventually bring Magnimar to its knees if she's allowed to carry out her assassination plot.

Xanesha was drawn to the part of Magnimar known as Underbridge for its lawlessness and sociological turmoil—here was a place where she could dwell without constant fear of discovery. Her chosen lair is the Shadow Clock, one of several failed attempts to bring order to this ramshackle region.

THE SHADOW CLOCK

Hidden beneath the grimy, blackened goliath that is the Irespan, the lesser works of men huddle like weeds at the foot of the great trees that are the ruined bridge's stone supports. Near one of these supports leans a decrepit and sagging clock tower, a dying structure of weathered stone, wood, and rusted metal supports that teeters to an unlikely height of over 180 feet. High above, near the tower's roof and barely 5 feet from the Irespan's stony belly, a tangle of scaffolding sits near a section of the structure that has fallen away. The tower's clock face is frozen in time, defiantly (and falsely) proclaiming it to be 3 o'clock, while above, a stone statue of an angel, her wings crumbling, leans precariously, almost as if she were preparing a final leap from her decaying perch.

The Shadow Clock is a minor marvel of engineering. The locals in the region half expect it to collapse any day, and several Underbridge taverns have longstanding betting pools on how many structures the clock tower will crush and how many people it will kill when it finally falls. The tower itself is made mostly of limestone, with a tangled skeleton of wooden supports buttressed here and there by iron bands. The stone walls are etched by wind, rain, and grime. While this pitted surface might seem to make for a relatively easy climb,

the fact that so many of the stones are loose makes such a stunt dangerous—a DC 25 Climb check is required to scale the tower's outer walls. Inside, it's not much safer; the crumbling wooden steps are known as the "Terrible Stairs" to the locals. After the tenth unfortunate death when someone tried to climb these stairs several years ago, the city ordered the tower closed.

Yet the locals of Underbridge know better. They whisper stories that someone has moved into the clock tower. Many claim to have seen a serpentine shape slithering out of the gap near the roof, slinking through the night sky into regions unknown, while others tell of a shadowy bulk twice the size of a human sometimes seen lurking in the darkness at the clock's base. No one has dared enter the tower to confirm these rumors, yet most who live in Underbridge do not doubt their veracity.

The Shadow Clock is currently inhabited by Xanesha, three charmed faceless stalkers, and a self-aware flesh golem known as the Scarecrow. Each section on the map is 20 feet higher than the previous one.

E1 THE SCARECROW'S LAIR (CR 7)



The air inside the clock tower is dusty and dry. Swaths of rubble and mounds of plaster lie in heaps on the stone floor, particularly in the southwest corner. A single wagon sits to the northeast, and six partially collapsed offices line the northern and eastern walls, their doors hanging askew and their ceilings caved in. A wooden staircase winds up into the cavernous space above. High overhead, four immense bronze bells hang from sturdy crossbeams.

The collapsed rooms were once used as barracks, workshops, and storerooms, but nothing of value remains here now. A DC 15 Survival check reveals that, despite the place's general appearance of ruin, a fair amount of foot traffic has been through the area—the floor bears several Medium humanoid footprints and a pair of enormous misshapen prints that defy easy



THE SHADOW CLOCK

N



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
STAIRS ● UP ● DOWN



RISE OF THE RUNELORDS



classification. This second pair of prints has been left by the room's guardian.

CREATURE: A thing of horror, a monstrosity created decades ago by none other than Vorel Foxglove (one of many favors he performed for the Brothers of the Seven before his unfortunate end), dwells in this area—a being known only as the Scarecrow. This misshapen monster is a thing from a child's nightmares—a flesh golem who, through an accident of magic, gained sentience many decades ago when its elemental spirit went berserk. A jumbled mass of body parts incorporating as much cow and horse as man, the Scarecrow's considerable girth is topped by an idiot head that leers and drools like a grotesque baby. Its face is cruelly stitched, the lips sewn partially together. It is dressed in straw and dung-covered rags that give off the sickly sweet smell of decay. A trio of what appear to be carved pumpkins hang from cords on the Scarecrow's belt, but a second glance reveals these to be horribly bloated human heads with a sick yellow tinge. The Skinsaw Cultists often used the Scarecrow to do minor dirty work in the city, terrifying the local slum populace with appearances every so often and letting the creature dwell in area D2 of their sawmill. When Xanesha learned about the golem from Ironbriar, she had him bring it before her and quickly added it to her collection of minions. Although the Scarecrow is immune to *charm monster* and other methods of magical manipulation thanks to its immunity to magic, it readily agreed to work for Xanesha simply because she offered it a larger place to lurk—it much prefers its new home here to the cramped quarters back in the sawmill.

When at rest here in the clock tower, the Scarecrow bides its time lurking in the northeast corner of the room, the *cloak of elvenkind* it wears increasing its ability to remain unseen. If it notices intruders, it remains motionless and hidden for several rounds before moving to attack once any of the PCs comes more than halfway into the room or once most of the group has moved along upstairs.

SCARECROW

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	79

Awakened flesh golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 160, *Classic Horrors Revisited* 12)

CE Large construct

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20 (–1 Dex, +12 natural, –1 size)

hp 79 (9d10+30)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

DR 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 scythe +13/+8 (2d6+8/x4) or

2 slams +13 (2d8+5)

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

Special Attacks berserk (5% chance)

TACTICS

During Combat The Scarecrow does not pursue foes up the stairs, but it does chase after anyone who tries to escape into the alleys of Underbridge.

Morale Although a construct and loyal to the cult, the Scarecrow values its life as well. If brought below 20 hit points, it tries to



escape into the ocean, where it remains for days until it feels brave enough to emerge and seek out someone it can bully into repairing its damage.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 24

Feats Martial Weapon Proficiency, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (scythe)

Skills Climb +14, Perception +9, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Infernal

Other Gear +1 scythe, cloak of elvenkind

TREASURE: A DC 20 Perception check made while searching the mound of debris in the southwest corner uncovers a moldy leather sack containing 125 gp, 309 sp, a tarnished silver ring worth 75 gp, and a silver mirror worth 50 gp.

DEVELOPMENT: The Scarecrow is Xanesha's primary thug—if the PCs take their time in finding her, you can have her take matters into her own hands by sending the Scarecrow out to attack them. In such a case, the Scarecrow lurks in an alleyway near their inn or wherever the PCs are staying in town, then lumbers up to attack the first lone PC it sees—the monster is inhumanly patient, and can wait for days before making its move.

E2 THE TERRIBLE STAIR (CR 4)



The inner wall of this vast space is traversed by a winding wooden stairway supported by an intricate network of wooden beams but lacking, at many stretches, a handrail or other enclosure. In certain places, two or even three stairs at a time are partially missing or gone altogether.

This stairwell looks treacherous—and it most certainly is. The rotting wood can support no more than one Medium creature in any pair of adjacent squares. If the wood is overloaded, it creaks and sways alarmingly for 1d4+1 rounds. If at the end of this time the section is still overloaded, it cracks and falls away, dropping anyone on that section into area E1 below. Anyone in a crumbling section can grab onto nearby remaining stairs with a DC 15 Reflex save, but otherwise takes the appropriate falling damage. The Scarecrow never climbs the stairs and Xanesha navigates the tower by climbing down its exterior under the cover of night, leaving only the faceless stalkers to use the stairs with any frequency—and they're always careful to stay at least 10 feet away from each other.

TRAP: If the faceless stalkers in area E3 above notice the PCs, they wait until the party is halfway up the stairs before they make their move by cutting several intentionally weakened ropes that support the massive bells above.

Once the ropes are cut, the southeasternmost bell gives way, causing the immense bronze bell to ring for the first time in years as it swings down and then tears free with a tremendous crash. The bell tumbles and smashes along the walls, tearing through the section of stairs just below it (and leaving a 10-foot-wide gap) before crashing its way down into area E1 below. Along the way, it has a chance of striking 1d4 of the characters—randomly determine which ones have a chance of being struck. Any character who didn't hear the ropes and timbers snap is considered flat-footed against the bell's attack.

Note that this trap can only be disabled from area E3; if the characters approach from below, they likely won't have a chance to prevent this dangerous event from being triggered.

FALLING BELL

XP
1,200

CR
4

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 16; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger manual; **Reset** repair

Effect Falling bronze bell, targets 1d4 characters in area E1 or E2, Atk +15 (6d6 bludgeoning damage). The bell breaks stairs in a 10-foot-long swath wherever it hits a PC. A character damaged by the bell falls into area E1, taking the appropriate falling damage, unless he succeeds at a DC 15 Reflex save to cling to the stairs.

E3 THE BELLS (CR 7)



Four immense bronze bells hang from timbers here, affixed by rusting lengths of chain and thick ropes. Above the bells are massive gears and clockworks, although they seem both rusted and scavenged—many of the smaller components are missing entirely. The rickety wooden stairs wind up and around them but don't quite reach the ceiling above, coming to an end at an opening in the wall. Here, the stairs continue up the exterior of the tower to a room that must lie just beyond the ceiling directly above the bells.

The rickety stairs lead up and over themselves out through the hole in the wall to area E4 above.

CREATURES: The three charmed faceless stalkers that guard the Terrible Stair spend most of their time waiting patiently here for intruders to attack. Their first gambit is to drop a bell on intruders; they haven't prepared any of the other bells for such an assault, and once they drop the first one, they lurk here, waiting to attack anyone who progresses farther up the stairs.

FACELESS STALKERS (3)

XP
1,200 each

CR
4

HP
42 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 122)



E4 CLOCK TOWER ROOKERY



A timber cabinet with a mesh door sits against the southern wall of this room, while a boarded-up door stands in the wall to the east.

The cabinet contains a single black messenger raven (plus any additional ravens that the PCs might have released from area D8). Xanesha uses these ravens to send messages to Ironbriar on the few occasions she feels the need to do so.

E5 CLOCKWORKS



This large and cluttered room is filled with immense gears and clockworks. Most of them appear to have rusted into place.

Whereas the stairwell leading up the inner walls of the clock tower is quite rickety, the wooden floor of this chamber is solid. The clockworks themselves have long since fallen into ruin—it would take many months of repair work by gifted tinkers to rebuild and restore the clock. Although the room looks sinister and dangerous with all its gears, there's nothing to be found here.

E6 THE ANGEL (CR 9)



The smoky, filthy rooftops of Underbridge sprawl below this dizzying perch. The conical roof supports an onyx statue of an angel. Towering like a god, her weathered features are caked with grime, making her seem almost demonic in countenance. At the far end of the hollow space under the roof, in the angel's shadow, is a nest of cushions, silk sheets, and a line of several small chests.

This space is enclosed within the partially open shell of the tower's roof—cunningly engineered supports in the sloping roof itself support the statue 15 feet above the center of this room.

CREATURE: Xanesha has claimed this area as her lair, both for the unparalleled view of Magnimar's poorest district and for the isolation afforded by its remote location. She comes and goes via climbing down the tower's exterior (she automatically makes the DC 25 Climb check to do so), usually making sure to become invisible first to prevent curious eyes from noticing her. She often spends her nights in other parts of the city, in her human guise and in the arms of charmed lovers who strike her fancy during her walks among the enemy. Many of these "lovers" pine for her company for weeks or months after she abandons them, but they are the lucky ones who aren't murdered and brought back here to serve as food. In many ways, Xanesha is a predator living hidden among her prey. She has grown fond of her position in Magnimar over the years and is content to leave the actual work of harvesting greedy souls to the Skinsaw Cult. Recently, she's been contacted with recurring frequency by Mokmurian or his agents—she realizes the time of Karzoug's return is close at hand and has decided to spur on the cult in its work. Recruiting Aldern was actually Ironbriar's idea, but Xanesha prefers to think of it as her own.

Although powerful, Xanesha is also careful. When the PCs invade her home, she likely notices soon (if not from the sound of a fight against the lumbering Scarecrow, then certainly as a result of a falling bell). She prepares as detailed in her Tactics section, but does not seek out the PCs out—instead, she watches and waits for them to come to her. If her minions can take care of the problem, all the better, but at least this way she'll have an idea of the PCs' tactics if they do survive long enough to confront her.



XANESHA

My sister—

I trust your little band of murderers is doing well, gathering the greedy souls for our Lord's rise? Has Magnimar proven to be as sinful as you had hoped? It may interest you to know that my plan to nurture greed here in this backwater has blossomed—the quality of greed in a soul is so much more refined when it is given the proper care. Are you still simply carving the Sihedron on them as they expire? How crude! My method of marking is so much more elegant. In any event, I'm sure that your plans for harvesting greed where and when you can find it "in the wild" are progressing well enough—I just hope that your raw, ungroomed, and likely inferior victims don't interact poorly when mixed with the purity of my own subjects. If you tire of your little project there, know that you're always welcome to come to Turtleback Ferry and serve as my assistant, little sister! Fort Rannick should be in our control by the time you receive this letter, in any event, so there'll be plenty of room for you if you wish to take me up on my generous offer.

Oh! Before I forget! Have you managed to harvest that lord-mayor yet? By all accounts, he might just be the cream of the crop in Magnimar—his soul might even rival several from my hand-grown harvest!



XANESHA

XP	CR	HP
6,400	9	133

Female lamia matriarch rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 175)

CE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+1 armor, +7 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 133 (13 HD; 12d10+1d8+63)

Fort +8, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10; +2 vs. poison

Immune mind-affecting effects; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee *Impaler of Thorns* +17/+12/+7 (1d8+8/19-20/x3) or touch +11 (1d4 Wisdom drain)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with *Impaler of Thorns*)

Special Attacks Wisdom drain, sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +19)

At will—*charm monster* (DC 21), *ventriloquism* (DC 18)

3/day—*deep slumber* (DC 20), *dream*, *major image* (DC 20), *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 20)

Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +13)

3rd (5/day)—*cure serious wounds*

2nd (7/day)—*invisibility*, *scorching ray*

1st (8/day)—*cure light wounds*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *sanctuary* (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat If she realizes the PCs are near (as is the case if the faceless stalkers drop a bell), Xanesha casts *invisibility*

and *mirror image* on herself. She also activates her *Sihedron medallion's* false life ability.

During Combat Xanesha uses *major image* to make an illusory flying demon appear in a cloud of smoke that then begins to circle the top of the tower. She then moves to make a sneak attack on the nearest PC. After this attack, she prefers to fight in melee, saving her *medusa mask* to temporarily petrify any particularly dangerous foe. If she is reduced to fewer than 60 hit points, she casts *cure serious wounds* on herself.

Morale If she's reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, Xanesha attempts to flee Magnimar, abandoning her plot and the scroll hidden in her nest. Simply slithering off the side of the tower and using *feather fall* to descend to the ground below is her easiest method of escape. If she escapes, she cuts ties with her kin and Mokmurian, afraid of the punishment for failure. She grows obsessed with the PCs, however, seeing their capture as the only way she can redeem herself to Mokmurian—in this case, she becomes a recurring villain who might ally with any number of foes the PCs find themselves up against in the next adventure—although she specifically tries to avoid any situation that would reveal her failure to her sister Lucrecia.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 25, **Con** 19, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 35 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Extend Spell, Improved Critical (spear), Power Attack, Silent Spell, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +23 (+27 when jumping), Bluff +23, Climb +29, Diplomacy +14, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (local) +20, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +17, Swim +29



Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Thassilonian

SQ change shape (fixed Medium humanoid form, *alter self*),
trapfinding +1, undersized weapons

Other Gear *Impaler of Thorns*, *medusa mask*, *Sihedron*
medallion, *snakeskin tunic*, keys to locked chests

TREASURE: The majority of the treasure Xanesha keeps is in the form of offerings and gifts from the Skinsaw cultists. Xanesha keeps all of these treasures spread between seven locked chests (these chests can be opened with the keys she carries, or with DC 30 Disable Device checks) set neatly in a row against the far wall. The first five chests each contain coins, kept in small leather pouches in denominations of 100 coins per pouch. In all, there is 33,000 cp, 8,100 sp, 900 gp, and 100 pp spread throughout these first several chests. The sixth chest contains 4,200 gp of various bits of jewelry and small pouches of gemstones. The seventh chest contains four potions of *cure moderate wounds*, a +2 *Small kukri*, a *ring of jumping*, and a *golembane scarab*—she's keeping this last item handy just in case the Scarecrow needs to be punished.

But the greatest treasure to be found here is not hidden among the chests. A DC 15 Perception check is all that's needed to notice a crumpled-up wad of parchment in the southwest corner of the room. Although unsigned, this is a letter from Xanesha's sister Lucrecia—a missive filled with taunts intended to mock and frustrate Xanesha—but that can also serve as an incredible source of information for the PCs. The letter is reproduced on the previous page as Handout 2–7.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs recover the list of “Sihedron Sacrifices” and reveal Xanesha's defeated plot to the lord-mayor, award them 4,800 XP.

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

With Xanesha's defeat, the murders that have plagued Magnimar and Sandpoint cease. If the lord-mayor Grobaras discovers that the murderers were planning his assassination, he faints. When he recovers, he invites the PCs to attend a feast at his home, Defiant's Garden. Grobaras is hardly a scion of virtue, but he is nonetheless a powerful man, and in reward for defeating the murderers he grants each PC 6,000 gp. In addition, the PCs have likely gathered a large number of evil magic items—the masks worn by the cultists. Any official church in Magnimar will gladly pay bounties for these evil magic items equal to half their value—in this manner, PCs can effectively sell off these valuable items and get rewarded while at the same time being assured that they will not fall back into the wrong hands.

The PCs have, at this point, braved a haunted house, defeated a dangerous cult, and saved the leader of Magnimar, yet they should feel yet more is brewing behind the scenes. The recurrence of the Sihedron Rune should trouble them as well. Unfortunately, even in Magnimar, little can be learned about Thassilon—a fact that has frustrated many scholars who have tried to decipher the mysteries of Varisia's ancient ruins. But whether the PCs realize it or not, the time draws near when they will learn all they need to know about Varisia's ancient past.



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THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

BY NICOLAS LOGUE





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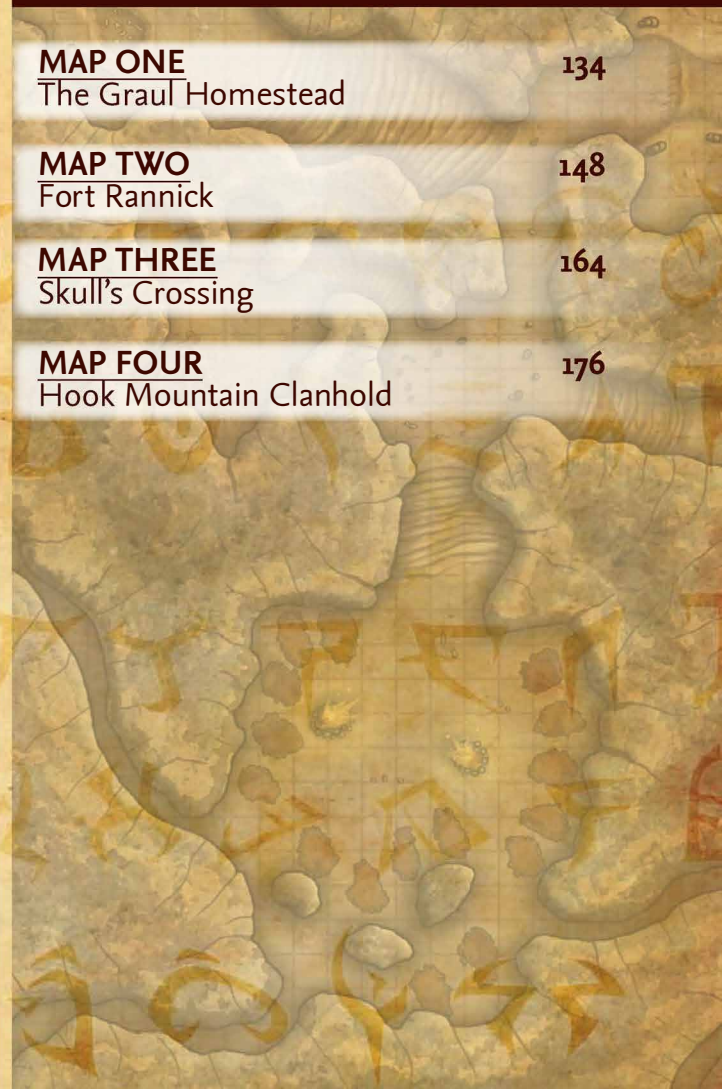
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Hook Mountain Clanhold





CHAPTER BACKGROUND

THE INBRED OGRES OF THE KREEG CLAN HAVE LONG MENACED THOSE WHO STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE IN THE SHADOW OF HOOK MOUNTAIN. THE KREEGS, MORE THAN ANY OTHER OGRE CLAN DWELLING UPON THE HOOK, ARE AGGRESSIVE, RAVENOUS BUTCHERS, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SLAUGHTER OF COUNTLESS MINING AND LUMBER CAMPS. TALES OF THE HORRORS VISITED UPON THOSE CAPTURED BY THE KREEGS ARE SOMETHING OF A LOCAL LEGEND. THE OGRES THEMSELVES HAVE LONG WAGED WAR AGAINST THE REGION'S BASTION OF WILDERNESS LAW, FORT RANNICK, YET UNTIL RECENTLY THEY HAVE MADE NO HEADWAY. TODAY, THOUGH, THE FORT LIES IN RUINS AND UNDER KREEG CONTROL.

Turtleback Ferry, a remote village not far from Hook Mountain, has long borne the brunt of Kreeg violence. Although closer to the city-state of Korvosa, it was Magnimar that answered the town's request for aid. Eager to extend their holdings and influence to the east, the lord-mayor of Magnimar established Fort Rannick to provide Turtleback Ferry with protection from the ogres, securing promises of regular taxes and trade. He stationed a band of rangers there—the Order of the Black Arrows—and charged them with keeping the region safe and free from ogres. Short but bloody skirmishes between the Kreegs and the Black Arrows have gone on for decades since then, but after their first decisive defeat at the entrance to the Valley of Broken Trees 45 years ago, the Kreegs have never quite built up enough bravery to mount a second attack on Fort Rannick... until now.

A month ago, the Kreegs experienced a most unusual event—a visitor. Barl Breakbones was a boulder-bellied stone giant, a necromancer who towered a full 5 feet over the current Kreeg patriarch, Grolki. Sent by his master, Mokmurian, to subjugate the ogres of Hook Mountain and prepare them for assimilation into the growing giant army, Barl's initial reception by the Kreegs was anything but friendly. But after Barl dispatched many of the ogres with ease (including their leader, Grolki), the rest saw the wisdom of accepting a new leader.

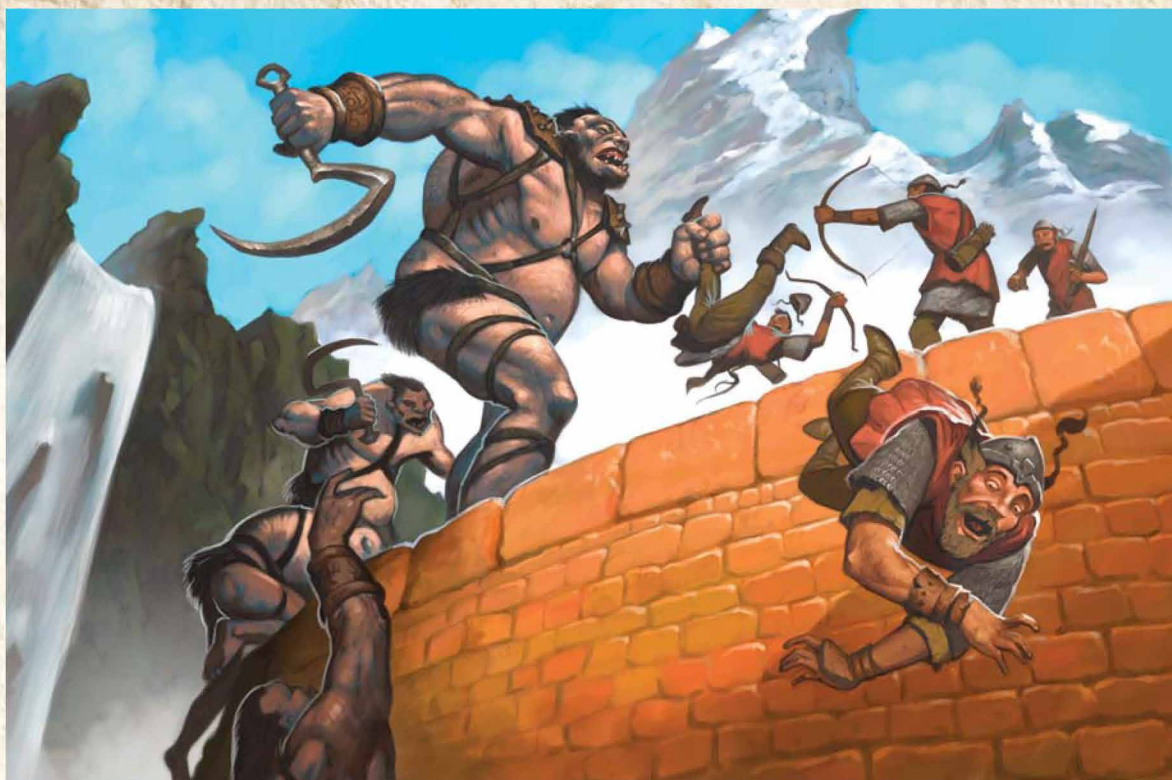
Barl settled into his new role as chieftain of Hook Mountain with ease, and immediately set the Kreegs to work. They began forging massive weapons and shields from veins of iron, enough to arm the host of marauders gathering at the stone giant fortress of Jorgenfist.

The Order of the Black Arrows spotted plumes of greasy smoke rising from these forges and sent several scouts up the slopes to spy on the Kreegs. Alas, soon after discovering what appeared to be ogres preparing for war, the scouts were spotted, captured, and killed. Furious at the incursion and concerned the rangers might divulge his purpose, Barl decided to act against Fort Rannick.

Breakbones's plans were facilitated by another of his master's servants, a lamia matriarch known as Lucrecia, sister of the lamia matriarch Xanesha who recently troubled the city of Magnimar itself. Under orders from Karzoug, Lucrecia had arrived in Turtleback Ferry under the guise of an entrepreneur several years ago; she bought an old barge there and refurbished it as a floating gambling hall. She dubbed the barge *Paradise*, and offered any and all patrons myriad opportunities to enjoy themselves in her games of chance. Lucrecia used the den of sin as a place to foster and grow souls of greed to facilitate Karzoug's return. Favored guests were given small tattoos to show on following visits to receive discounts off the entrance fee and other, less seemingly benefits. Of course, this tattoo was none other than the Sihedron Rune, and by so branding her customers, Lucrecia managed to prepare nearly half of Turtleback Ferry's populace for Karzoug's *runewell*.

Many were willing to be marked in order to enjoy Paradise's "members-only" benefits, and even the steadfast Black Arrows of Fort Rannick weren't immune to the lure of easy women and easy money. One such unsteady soul, a skilled scout and archer named Kaven Windstrike, slipped out of the fort often to sate his desire for gold and women. Lucrecia recognized him by his gear, charmed him, and sent him back to Fort Rannick as her agent. Over the following months, Kaven's dependence on Lucrecia and the exotic offerings she provided only grew, to the extent that he is now firmly her minion even without magical control. Of the many secrets Kaven shared with Lucrecia, though, none intrigued her more than the discovery that Fort Rannick's commander, a man named Lamatar Bayden, was carrying on a not-so-secret love affair with a nymph named Myriana in the nearby wilds.

When Barl Breakbones decided to mount a devastating raid on Fort Rannick, it was a simple matter for Lucrecia to organize two key points of treachery to ensure the success of the coming assault. Having learned from Kaven that Commander Bayden made regular



monthly trips into the Shimmerglens to tryst with his nymph lover, Lucrecia advised Barl upon the best time to mount his raid—while the fort's commander was absent. Then, Lucrecia convinced Kaven to delay a large patrol of rangers returning from the wilds on that very night, so that when the Kreegs descended on the fort, it was not only without its commander, but also missing many of its defenders (including its second-in-command, a man named Jakardros Sovark, who was leading Kaven's ill-fated patrol).

A night of red ruin followed as the Kreegs descended upon Fort Rannick and also on its absent commander's clandestine night of bliss. The sun rose on a fort now ruled by ogres, its commander in chains and being led back to the clanhold near the summit of Hook Mountain. In one horrific night, the Order of the Black Arrows lost its commander, its greatest leaders, and its keep.

Fort Rannick is now ruled by "Papa" Jaagrath Kreeg and his deformed family of deviants. Worried that her presence in Turtleback Ferry was beginning to draw too much suspicion, Lucrecia abandoned *Paradise*, sinking it in Claybottom Lake while it was full of gamblers, and in so doing sent two dozen greedy souls to Karzoug. The lamia matriarch has relocated to captured Fort Rannick and now waits for the next stage in the plan—with the aid of a coven of hags manipulating the early winter storms, a flood is poised to destroy Turtleback Ferry. Already secretly marked with the Sihedron Rune, half the populace of the town are unknowingly set to fuel Karzoug's *runewell* when the ancient dam known as Skull's Crossing bursts.

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

The PCs travel to Turtleback Ferry and discover that ogres have taken the fort. After rescuing the last three surviving members of the Black Arrows, the PCs mount a daring raid against Fort Rannick and defeat the ogres within, only to learn that greater dangers are afoot.

Soon thereafter, unnatural rains flood Turtleback Ferry and the PCs must explore the ruins of an ancient dam called Skull's Crossing. After saving the town from disaster, the PCs learn the ogres of Hook Mountain were to blame for the strange weather. The PCs climb Hook Mountain to end the ogre menace once and for all, only to learn that the ogres might be the least of Varisia's problems: the giants of the Storval Plateau are preparing for war.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

7TH LEVEL: The PCs should be very close to 8th level when they begin Chapter Three.

8TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 8th level during their first foray against the Grauls.

9TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 9th level midway through the grueling task of retaking Fort Rannick.

10TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 10th level near the end of Skull's Crossing.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: The PCs should be close to (if not at) 11th level at the conclusion of this chapter.

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You can spend as much or as little time on the details of this journey as you wish, using the encounter tables on pages 404–405 to liven things up as you see fit. If the PCs are running shy on XP, a few random encounters might just be what they need to prepare themselves for the horror awaiting them in Hook Mountain's shadow.

Of course, Shalelu's got her own reasons for wanting to make the journey to Fort Rannick. One of the rangers stationed there, a man named Jakardros, was at one time her mother's lover. Shalelu's memories of Jakardros are mostly of a young, exuberant man. She wasn't sure what her mother saw in the impulsive young human, but she was glad he was there for her. When her mother was slain in a dragon attack, Jakardros left suddenly and without explanation, leaving Shalelu with a bitter impression that eventually drove her into the isolated life she has lived for the past several years as a bounty hunter in

the Sandpoint hinterlands. She recently learned that Jakardros has taken up with the Black Arrows of Fort Rannick and would very much like the opportunity to find out why the man abandoned her so abruptly after her mother's death, if only to convince herself that he hadn't been taking advantage of her mother in some way. And if he had, Shalelu wants a chance to even the score.

SHALELU ANDOSANA	XP	CR	HP
	6,400	5	53

Female elf fighter 2/ranger 4
(see page 26)

TURTLEBACK FERRY

Appendix Four of this book presents Turtleback Ferry in detail. Until the floodwaters rise later in this adventure, there's not a lot to do in Turtleback Ferry (save for perhaps noticing a few Sihedron tattoos—see “Mark of the Sihedron” below) except ask around for rumors and news (see page 395 of the Appendix) and perhaps do some idle shopping for mundane supplies.

MARK OF THE SIHEDRON

Every day the PCs spend in Turtleback Ferry, have them make DC 30 Perception checks. With a success, that PC notices a disturbing tattoo on one of the locals, hidden on the small of the back, the shoulder, or on the ankle. Exposed for a moment when the local bends over to pick up a crate or otherwise allows his clothing to slip, this tattoo is of a seven-pointed star—the same star the PCs have seen used by goblins and murderers over the past several weeks: the Sihedron Rune. If the tattooed local is confronted in a public place, he'll deny that he's got a tattoo while simultaneously attempting to make sure that his tattoo is covered up again. The villager's initial attitude to the PCs is unfriendly if confronted in this way, but if he's made friendly, he quietly admits that he got the tattoo 2 months ago at *Paradise*, a floating barge converted into a gambling and drinking hall that recently sank. The villager sullenly explains that by allowing *Paradise's* owner, the lovely and silken-tongued Lady Lucrecia, to place the tattoo on him for a small fee, he could then show the tattoo at *Paradise's* door and avoid paying the cover fee to board. Further, those who got “*Paradise's* Mark” (the Sihedron Rune) were often rewarded with additional gambling chips and other perks, and were told that only a select few regular patrons had been chosen for the honor.

The villager admits he was coy about the tattoo because his wife would be furious if she found out he'd been gambling, but defensively points out that he's not the only one in town with the mark. In fact, of Turtleback Ferry's population of 430 citizens, 210 secretly bear the mark—far more than anyone in town suspects, since Lucrecia told them all to keep their tattoos a secret.

Investigations into the fate of Lady Lucrecia are destined to hit dead ends for now; everyone in town

suspects she died in the fire that sank the barge several weeks ago. If the PCs wish to investigate the sunken barge, locals can point out the location on Claybottom Lake where the barge sank easily enough. See Appendix Four for more details.

It's certainly possible to remove a Sihedron Rune tattoo from a villager with an *erase* spell; while doing so would rob Karzoug of the possibility of harvesting that villager's soul for his *runewell*, it won't stop Lucrecia's plans to destroy Turtleback Ferry by flooding it.

THE ROAD TO FORT RANNICK

Eventually, either from rumors gathered in town or simply because they're eager to solve the mystery the lord-mayor of Magnimar has placed before them, the PCs should head north from Turtleback Ferry toward Fort Rannick to investigate the Black Arrows' silence for themselves. The simplest route to the fort is to follow an old road leading up along the banks of the Skull River. The road crosses an old wooden bridge to the western shore about 3 miles north of Turtleback Ferry, and from there heads all the way up to the impressive Thassilonian ruin known as Skull's Crossing, an immense stone dam that holds back the waters of the Storval Deep. A side road branches off about 3 miles before the dam, and a crooked wooden sign pointing up this trail proclaims “Fort Rannick.”

THE STRANGE FIREPELT (CR 7)

As the PCs cross over the old wooden bridge, have each PC make a Perception check. The PC who gets the highest result hears a yowl of pain in the woods nearby, as if a large cat were wounded. If the PCs don't investigate at once, they soon hear barking dogs approaching from deeper in the woods, accompanied by a low voice singing an off-key song about eating kittens. If the PCs still avoid investigating but remain behind to listen, the barking of the dogs soon grows excited, and the sounds of combat between dogs, firepelt cougar, and ogrekin becomes impossible to ignore.

If the PCs ignore the sounds and continue north, let them. They'll reach Fort Rannick as detailed in Part Two, but without forewarning and aid from the surviving Black Arrow rangers kept at the Graul homestead, they might find themselves in over their heads.

CREATURES: The wounded animal noise comes from Kibb, a firepelt mountain lion and the animal companion of Jakardros, one of the rangers who survived the ogre assault on Fort Rannick only to become the captive of a particularly foul and brutal band of ogrekin known as the Grauls. Kibb managed to escape and has spent the last 3 weeks eluding the Grauls (who've been desperately attempting to recapture the firepelt ever since) while trying to find someone whom he can lead back to the homestead to save his master. So far, none of the hunters Kibb has encountered realized



THE HOOK
MOUNTAIN
MASSACRE

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that the firepelt was trying to get them to help, and now, the poor mountain lion has fallen prey to one of the Graul traps. His foot stuck in a bear trap, Kibb knows it's only a matter of time before the Grauls' best hunter, a lumbering half-ogre named Rukus, finds him and kills him.

Kibb grows excited if he sees human-sized creatures approaching, enough so that he advances, only to tug painfully at the iron bear trap around his back leg. A DC 15 Handle Animal, Knowledge (nature), or wild empathy check is enough for a PC to realize that the firepelt is well trained and likely a druid or ranger's animal companion, while *Speak with animals* allows a PC to learn the whole grim truth about what's going on (see Development, below). Kibb does not attack anyone who draws near unless that person attacks him first. A DC 28 Strength check (or a DC 20 Disable Device check) is enough to spring the trap and free the firepelt.

The sound of Rukus and his hounds broadcasts the ogrekin's arrival 1d4+2 rounds in advance, giving the PCs plenty of time to set up an ambush if they desire. The five hounds arrive first, howling and barking as they attempt to surround and attack Kibb or any other creatures they encounter. Rukus himself, a strapping young ogrekin with a wide mouth and one huge misshapen finger for a right hand, barrels into the clearing 1d4 rounds later. Once he sees the PCs, he roars in anger: "I's huntin' kitty cat! No concern o' you's less you's wanna be hunted too!"

RUKUS GRAUL

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	85

Male ogrekin fighter 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 204)

CE Medium humanoid (giant)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 85 (7d10+42)

Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *spear* +14/+9 (1d8+13/x3)

Special Attacks weapon training (spears +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Rukus sics his dogs on the PCs and watches the fight from the edge of the clearing for 1 round before he joins the fray. He prefers to fight against smaller or unarmored foes, flanking them with his dogs.

Morale Rukus flees back to the Graul homestead if dropped below 30 hit points or if more than three of his dogs are slain, crying and blubbering loudly the entire way.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 14, **Con** 20, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

Feats Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lunge, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Survival), Toughness, Weapon Focus

(spear), Weapon Specialization (spear)

Skills Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +12, Survival +14

Languages Common

SQ armor training 2, ogrekin deformities

Gear +1 *spear*, *belt of giant strength* +2, favorite blanket (ratty, flea-infested, and decorated with several Black Arrows insignias)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Rukus is particularly mean-looking and gains a +4 racial bonus on Intimidate checks, but has a deformed right hand that imparts a –2 penalty on attack rolls with two-handed weapons (this hand cannot wield weapons on its own).

GRAUL HOUNDS (5)

XP	CR	HP
400 each	1	13 each

Riding dogs (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 87)

KIBB

HP
39

Firepelt cougar (small cat animal companion)

N Medium animal

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d6+4 plus trip), 2 claws +8 (1d3+4)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 21, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24 (28 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Climb +9, Perception +6, Stealth +10

SQ sprint

DEVELOPMENT: If Rukus is taken alive, he barks savagely at the PCs when questioned. The ornery cuss refuses to give any information but his name unless his interrogators can shift his initial attitude of hostile to at least friendly, in which case Rukus launches into a long-winded, stuttering disclosure of his family's captives back at the "farmstead." Rukus likes patches and symbols a lot, and he brags about how "Mammy" sewed the insignias of dead captives to his favorite blanket—he proudly shows off the ratty, stained thing if asked, since he never leaves home without it tucked into the back of his belt. Five patches bearing the Black Arrow crest are sewn onto the blanket—in some cases, the patches are bloodstained. If Rukus is dead, the patches can be recognized with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check. If Shalelu is with the party, she automatically recognizes the patches.

If Kibb survives, the firepelt frantically tries to communicate with the party. If they cannot speak with animals, a successful DC 20 wild empathy or Handle

Animal check reveals that Kibb is very concerned about someone or something and wants the party to follow him. The firepelt nibbles at their cloaks, tugging them toward a poorly maintained trail that leads deeper into Kreegwood. If Rukus fled the battle, tracking him along the trail is a simple matter, and even if both Rukus and Kibb died in the battle, a successful DC 10 Perception check reveals the partially overgrown path. Following it for a half-mile leads to the Graul homestead.

THE GRAUL FARM (CR 7)

This is where the PCs get their first taste of ogrish hillbilly horror. The Grauls are notorious in Kreegwood as one of the more disgusting and aggressive half-ogre families. Not only do these ogrekin have the grit to live less than half a mile from “man-land,” but they do so with ease, snatching lone hunters and trappers with such quiet skill that they have yet to be discovered by the locals of Turtleback Ferry as the primary reason their folk periodically go missing.

The Grauls dwell on a sickly farm in a clearing in the forest. The woods around their land are decorated with several hanging cornhusk-and-leather humanoid-shaped fetishes meant to ward off intruders—an investigation of any of these fetishes reveals they’re stuffed with what appears to be a mix of dirt and human hair. A tangled field of corn and other diseased plants grows in the eastern section of their land, while to the north slump two sagging buildings: a barn and a farmhouse. Both have had their windows boarded over, and moss and fungus grow heavy on the shaded sides of the decrepit structures.

The Grauls are ruled by a notorious female ogrekin known only as “Mammy” Graul, an accomplished cannibal, necrophile, and vile wizard. Grotesquely fat, Mammy Graul rarely moves beyond the walls of her reeking bedroom, letting her boys see to her needs—all of them. She’s birthed dozens of strong ogrekin sons over the decades, and although her childbearing days are now behind her, she still enjoys visits from her sons and the occasional ogre from the highlands. She’s long had an obsessive crush on Jaagrath Kreeg, in fact, and when her boys caught several of the rangers who fled the massacre at Fort Rannick, she saw a chance to get herself further into the good graces of the powerful ogre. She’s not sure how best to approach Jaagrath, though, and in the meantime has been running out

of captives as they slowly succumb to the hungers and tortures of her sons. She’s promised herself that she’ll figure out what to do with them before they’re all dead, but time is running short.

CREATURES: While most of the Grauls prefer to spend their time indoors, either in the farmhouse or the barn, two of them prefer the outdoors. One of these two is Rukus, but if he survived his previous encounter with the PCs, he’s already retreated to his room in the farmhouse (area A6) to nurse his wounds.

The second is an 8-foot-tall son Mammy Graul affectionately calls “Old Crowfood.” Crowfood’s grotesquely deformed head resembles a giant pumpkin on the right side—a huge puffy mass of tumors and overgrown bone giving his head a lopsided look. The ogrekin stalks the perimeter of the farmstead day and night, constantly on the lookout for intruders and working to scare crows and other animals away from his pride and joy: the cornfield.

Crowfood automatically notices the PCs’ approach unless they take pains to be stealthy. If he sees intruders, he gives cry and lumbers to attack. The sounds of battle here certainly alert the ogrekin within the buildings, but they prefer to wait inside for intruders to come to them rather than confront them out in the open—especially since their home is so riddled with cruel traps.



RUKUS
GRAUL



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

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THE GRAUL HOMESTEAD

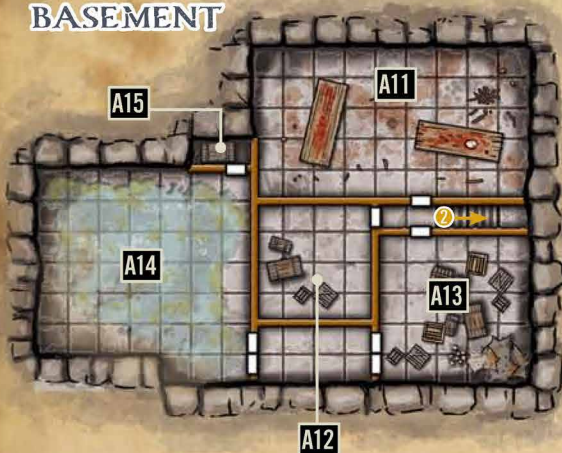
GROUND FLOOR



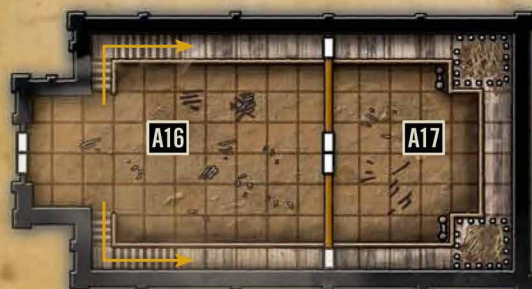
UPPER FLOOR



BASEMENT



BARN



THE GRAUL FARM



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
STAIRS ● UP ● DOWN

1 INCH = 90 FEET



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

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CROWFOOD

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	71

Male ogrekin fighter 3/rogue 4

CE Medium humanoid (giant)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 71 (7 HD; 3d10+4d8+32)

Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 ogre hook +14/+9 (1d10+10/x3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Crowfood bellows and yells as he fights.

Considerably braver than Rukus, he focuses his attacks on the largest foe, using Power Attack on every strike.

Morale Crowfood flees to area **A16** if brought below 15 hp.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 26

Feats Cleave, Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (ogre hook)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Climb +16, Handle Animal +8, Perception +11, Stealth +12

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, ogrekin deformities, rogue talents (bleeding attack +2, combat trick), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2); **Other Gear** leather armor, +1 ogre hook, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1, tattered rags and tunic

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Crowfood has a +2 racial bonus on Fortitude saves and heals damage twice as fast as from rest. He's also quite ugly and takes a -4 penalty on all Charisma-based checks.

A1 FARMHOUSE PORCH (CR 5)



This moss-encrusted, decaying farmhouse slumps drunkenly at the edge of the damp forest clearing. Rickety steps crawl up to a porch covered by a huge eave held aloft by thick pillars of pine. These timbers are decorated with crude carvings of manticores impaling children with their tail spikes and women being ripped apart by wolves. The carvings look like a child's work, but the subject matter grows more gruesome and depraved from one depiction to the next. An unsettlingly large rocking chair of lashed wood and bone sways erratically in the breeze at the far end of the porch under a vast menagerie of wind chimes composed of decidedly humanoid bones. The house's windows have all been boarded

up with thick timbers, although it's unclear whether this was done to keep intruders out or imprison whatever things make their home within.

A host of ants march happily away here and there on the porch, many the size of a grown man's thumbnail. A moth the size of a shovel head clings to the porch ceiling, watching the party with alien eyes, but it allows them to pass unmolested. The scent of bad meat, urine, sweat, and decay wafts now and then from between the cracks in the boarded-up windows.

TRAP: Concealed among the hanging bone-chimes are sharpened bone spurs mounted on a hinged rack rigged to swing down at anyone who touches the front door (the Grauls never use this entrance, preferring to come and go via the side door that opens into area **A4**). Additionally, several rusty saw blades are housed between the cracks of the porch's floorboards.

DOOR SPIKE

XP	CR
800	3

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect 4 bone spikes (+10 melee, 1d6+2 each; 1 target)

FLOOR SAW

XP	CR
800	3

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect saw blades (+14 melee, 2d6+7); multiple targets (all creatures in area **A1**)

A2 FAMILY ROOM (CR 3)



A mangy bearskin rug lies before a tremendous hearth set into the wall, its pained visage still snarling at whatever cruel hunter took its life. A huge couch haphazardly upholstered in animal hide and human flesh, replete with a collection of talons, monstrous hairy spider's legs, fox heads, and human hands and feet, sits to the west.

TRAP: The sofa is part of a hidden pit trap. Anyone coming within 5 feet of the sofa is in danger of falling through a hole in the floor into a chute lined with sharpened stakes coated in spider venom. The sofa itself is affixed to the floor via several sturdy timbers. It does not follow falling victims into area **A14** below.

PIT TRAP

XP	CR
1,600	5

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; **Disable Device** DC 12

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect multiple targets (all characters adjacent to or on the sofa); fall (10 feet deep, Reflex DC 20 avoids); spikes (+15 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 each plus poison), poison (ogre spider venom—injury; *save* Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Str and 1d4 Dex; *cure* 1 save)

A3 DINING ROOM (CR 6)



This dark room stinks of putrefying flesh. Eight wooden chairs with grinning bleached skulls crowning their backs circle a monstrous four-foot-high oak dining table covered with a crude tablecloth of crinkly human leather. The centerpiece of the dining table—a rotting human head, its stringy red hair thankfully draped over its mutilated face—serves as a gathering place for a host of buzzing, bloated flies.

TRAP: Scythes attached to coils of tightly bound rope can be set to cut into anyone stepping through any of the three doors into this room. Hidden switches on the doors themselves allows the ogrekin to disable these traps before they come into the room, but if they hear combat outside, they make sure all three scythe traps are ready to go.

SCYTHE TRAPS (3)

XP	CR
800 each	3

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

Bypass hidden switch on each door (Perception DC 20)

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect Large scythe (+15 melee, 2d6+4/x4)

A4 KITCHEN



This musty chamber smells of blood and week-old meat, and is thick with clouds of fat, greasy flies. Thumb-sized cockroaches dance along the walls, floor, and ceiling. A thick butcher's block sits under three cruel-looking cleavers that hang on a rack above. Bloodstained smocks of thick leather, one still dripping fresh gore, hang on bone-spur hooks by the door. A crockery platter of severed fingers and toes sits on a rickety old table next to a dried sinew basket overflowing with hacked-off hands and feet, all sporting stubs of congealed blood where their digits once were. A family of lucky rats gorges itself on the red stumps.

The smell in this room is horrific. Anyone (apart from one of the Grauls, who are all used to the stink) who enters this room must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid becoming sickened for 1d6 minutes. The door to the north opens into a narrow stairwell that leads down into the basement.

TREASURE: Despite their filthy condition, the three cleavers are exceedingly well made and function as masterwork handaxes.

A5 PLAYPEN (CR 5)



This simple room is strewn with “toys,” some of carved wood or bone, while others appear to be little more than partial animal carcasses. Old bloodstains mark the walls; some resemble crude, childlike paintings and feature images of dismembered horses, a ridiculous grinning horned devil tossing children off a cliff, and a big lake with a black reptilian monster sprouting tentacles from its back. Bookshelves rest against the wall, but instead of tomes they hold skulls of all shapes and sizes.

CREATURES: This “playpen” is where the two youngest Graul boys spend their time. Both are full-grown, yet out of all the Grauls they act the most like spoiled children, and rarely emerge from this chamber into other parts of the farmhouse. Maulgro Graul is a hairless and pale bloated thing with malformed, stumpy legs and a wide mouth filled with ragged teeth. Maulgro keeps his skull collection here; he says he wants to be a Kreeg and someday dance the skull-jig when Mammy captures a priest-man to fix his dead legs. Mammy has no intention of doing so, as she finds the crippled boy's awkward crawling amusing.

Maulgro's younger brother Lucky is here as well. Lucky's limbs bend in strange ways, but he's blessed not to have any other hideous deformity and almost looks human. Mammy doesn't like Lucky nearly as much as Maulgro and often neglects to even change the youngster's clothes for days at a time. The hapless fool reeks of his own waste as a result. He often steals Maulgro's favorite skulls to play keep-away, mocking the slower ogrekin to tears by dancing the skull-jig his brother will never dance himself.

LUCKY AND MAULGRO GRAUL

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	25 each

CE male ogrekin fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 204)

hp 25 each

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Lucky gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves thanks to his double-jointed limbs, and has no disadvantageous deformities. Maulgro has an oversized maw and stunted legs (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2).

A6 RUKUS'S ROOM



This filthy bedroom contains little more than a lumpy mattress heaped with twigs, mud, and hopefully little else, although the stink of sewage

in the room indicates otherwise. Dozens of humanoid fetishes crafted of bits of leather, straw, corn husks, twigs, and bones hang from cords throughout the room.

This room belongs to Rukus—it's to here the cowardly ogrekin retreats if he survives his earlier encounter with the PCs. Cornered here, Rukus has little choice but to fight, and if he does, he fights bravely, gaining a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls.

TREASURE: Most of the fetishes hanging from the ceiling are worthless, but a successful DC 25 Perception check reveals that one of them incorporates several finger bones, one of which still wears a jade ring worth 300 gp.

A7 STORAGE

This small chamber is used now and then to store refuse and other remnants from the various antics the Grauls get up to. Among the refuse here are the tiny bones of every girl child Mammy has birthed—a grisly testament to the overabundance of menfolk in the Graul family. Mammy doesn't like female competition.

A8 MAMMY'S ROOM (CR 11)



The cloying stink of this room is nearly overwhelming. Buckets of filth are stacked against the walls, fat ravenous flies lazily circling their rims. The room itself is dominated by an immense bed, its ratty sheets stained beyond hope. A huge easel sits next to the bed with a palette of various shades of brown and red paint. The sources of these morbid pigments—several crushed organs and ragged stumps of flesh—sit in receptacles next to the easel. A set of brushes made with human hair jut from a broken skull by the easel, while a comb made from a human mandible sits on a small oak bedside table nearby, its teeth clotted with thick strands of greasy black hair. The bodies of three horribly deformed men dressed in ragged finery are propped up in huge open coffins against the far wall, their mouths sewn tightly shut with lengths of hair.

CREATURES: This hellish room belongs to Mammy Graul, an incredibly corpulent monster with stringy hair and bald patches. Her obesity makes it difficult for her to move far, and she's been more or less confined to this reeking chamber for several years. She wears a huge red curtain as a shroud, and her bed creaks out in anguish as she shifts her massive form to regard any intruders to her home.

Mammy is also attended by three of her dead sons—Benk, Kunkel, and Hadge. Black Arrow rangers

killed them all over the course of the last couple years, but Mammy “saved” them by casting *animate dead* on their remains, and now the three zombies serve her tirelessly. Benk has a useless third leg on his left hip and a pin head—three old arrows still protrude from his chest. Kunkel has an extra nose jutting from his right cheek and a hunched back, his head split by a ranger's axe. Hadge's deformities are hard to determine exactly. He was trampled to death by a charging warhorse and is now little more than a shambling fleshy bag of broken bones and mashed features that flops about when ordered to attack.

MAMMY GRAUL

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	94

Female ogrekin necromancer 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 204)

CE Medium humanoid (giant, human)

Init -3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 7, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, -3 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 94 (8d6+64)

Fort +6, **Ref** -1, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee mwk quarterstaff +10 (1d6+7)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 14, 6/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)

6/day—grave touch (4 rounds)

Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +11)

4th—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *contagion* (DC 17), *dimension door*



MAMMY
GRAUL



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

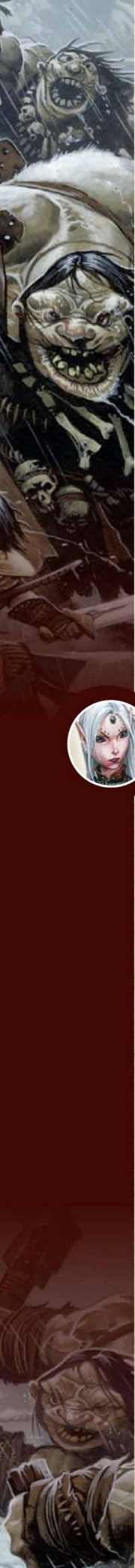
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3rd—*displacement, fly, ray of exhaustion* (DC 16), *slow* (DC 16), *vampiric touch*
2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *false life, ghoul touch* (DC 15), *mirror image, spectral hand*
1st—*chill touch* (DC 14), *grease* (DC 14, 2), *mage armor, reduce person* (DC 14), *true strike*
0 (at will)—*light, mage hand, message, open/close, touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

Opposition Schools Abjuration, Enchantment

TACTICS

Before Combat As soon as she hears trouble outside, Mammy Graul casts *mage armor* and *false life* on herself. If she realizes someone's about to enter her room, she casts *mirror image* and *fly* as well.

During Combat If the PCs confront Mammy Graul here, she's more enraged at her boys for allowing the PCs to get this far than she is at the PCs themselves, and her profanity-laced shrieks against her boys fill any surviving Grauls with such fear that none of them dare come to their mother's aid. Mammy Graul sends her three zombies to engage the PCs while she remains on her bed in the northwest corner of the room and casts spells. She starts with *spectral hand* and follows up with her offensive spells.

Morale If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, she casts *dimension door* and retreats to area **A16** to secure the aid of any surviving Grauls there. She leads them back to the farmhouse to attack the PCs, this time fighting to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 4, **Con** 18, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 16

Feats Alertness, Command Undead, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Natural Armor, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness
Skills Fly +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +10, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Giant, Necril

SQ arcane bond (toad familiar named Blub-Blug), life sight (10 feet, 8 rounds/day), ogrekin deformities

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, wand of magic missile* (CL 3rd, 44 charges), *wand of ray of enfeeblement* (28 charges), *wand of vampiric touch* (33 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork quarterstaff, spellbook (contains all prepared spells plus *animate dead, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement*, and 2d4 additional spells of your choice)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Mammy Graul's thick layers of blubber increase her natural armor bonus by an additional 3 points, but her obesity also reduces her speed to 5 feet and imparts a -4 penalty to her Dexterity.

BENK, HADGE, AND KUNKEL

XP	CR	HP
200 each	1/2	12 each

Ogrekin zombies (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288; use human zombies for statistics)

A9 BEDROOM (CR 3)



This room is filled with large, filthy beds. Human skulls with antlers fixed to them are mounted on the bedposts and headboards. Against the west wall sits a large cedar chest.

This is where most of the Graul boys sleep when they aren't bedding down in the barn.

TRAP: The chest in this room is one of the boys' favorite toys. Although not locked, the chest's lid sticks and must be wrenched open with a DC 20 Strength check. Opening the chest triggers no traps and reveals a sack of coins within. Unfortunately, the coins sit on a pressure trigger set to release a cleverly concealed war razor housed within the wall of the chest. As soon as the sack is lifted, this blade snaps out with tremendous force. The blade is also laced with poison. The boys enjoy daring each other to "beat the blade," but not quite as much as telling prisoners that they'll be let free if they can get the chest open and steal the coins.

HAND CHOPPER

XP	CR
1,600 each	5

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect war razor (+12 melee, 1d4+8/18-20 plus poison); poison (ogre spider venom—injury; *save* Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Str and 1d4 Dex; *cure* 1 save)

TREASURE: The sack of coins contains a mix of 121 cp, 110 sp, and 23 gp, along with 17 mostly skeletal severed fingers—trophies from the hand chopper trap collected and stored here by the ogres.

A10 ATTIC



Tables strewn with beakers, glass vials, old tin cans, rope, animal traps, bits of twisted metal, spikes, bones, and all manner of junk litter this area. In one corner sits some old furniture and other keepsakes.

This area is the workshop of Hucker Graul, the eldest of Mammy's boys and the mastermind behind the devious traps that lace this building. Hucker himself lives in a room in the basement (area **A12**).

TREASURE: Five flasks of acid are stored under one of the tables. With 1d10 minutes of scrounging, three full sets of masterwork thieves' tools can be scavenged from the gear here.

A11 SKIN-SHUCKING ROOM



This dark, recessed corner of the basement smells of rot and old blood. Piles of gore-spattered skin lie



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heaped on the floor. A horrid rubbery face robbed of its supporting skull and muscle rests on top, its toothless mouth agape and empty eyes revealing only the layer of tan flayed skin resting beneath.

Much of the furniture in the farmhouse above is upholstered in human leather or decorated with human bones. This grim room is where Hucker Graul prepares skins and bones for just such purposes. The face on the pile of skin once belonged to one of the Black Arrow rangers—Hucker hasn't decided what to do with it yet.

A12 HUCKER'S LAIR (CR 8)



This low-ceilinged room features a floor of hard-packed earth stained in many places by blood and mold. A lumpy mattress lies heaped against the west wall, and what appear to be several half-finished chairs made of flesh and bone lie against the eastern wall.

CREATURES: Hucker Graul creeps around here in the dark below the farmhouse. As the eldest of Mammy's sons, Hucker is also the most responsible of the Grauls. His gift for trapmaking and knack for building furniture keeps the farmhouse defended and relatively comfortable. He has little patience for his brother-sons, though, and if he hears traps sprung above or the sounds of combat, he makes a note that he'll need to reset the traps later but doesn't investigate, assuming the other Grauls are simply having another of their petty disagreements or are tormenting a new prisoner.

Hucker shuffles with a pronounced limp from an old injury suffered when one of his own traps backfired on him, a wound he bears with misplaced pride. Hair grows lopsided from the right side of his head and face rather than atop his brow, and a vestigial twin capable of grunting and gasping protrudes from the back of his neck. Hucker's best friends are two overgrown donkey rats he named Chuckles and Drooler. They eagerly defend their master, chewing intruders to pieces.

HUCKER GRAUL

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	94

Male ogrekin barbarian 1/rogue 6

CE Medium humanoid (giant, human)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural, -2 rage)

hp 94 (7 HD; 1d12+6d8+55)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +3, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 ogre hook +14 (1d10+11)

Special Attacks rage (8 rounds/day), sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

During Combat Hucker rages on the first round of combat and sends his rats to attack the PCs while he delays so he can move into a flanking position once the rats go.

Morale If brought below 25 hit points, Hucker attempts to retreat to area **A14**, hoping to lure the PCs into a fight with the tendriculos the Grauls keep there. He then fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Craft [trapmaking]), Toughness, Weapon Focus (ogre hook)

Skills Acrobatics +11 (+15 when jumping), Climb +15, Craft (trapmaking) +11, Handle Animal +9, Perception +11, Stealth +11, Survival +7

Languages Common

SQ fast movement, ogrekin deformities, rogue talents (bleeding attack +3, combat trick, surprise attack), trapfinding +3

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 hide armor, +1 ogre hook, amulet of natural armor +1, collection of severed noses in wax-sealed tin, 235 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ogrekin Deformities (Ex) Hucker has a deformed vestigial twin growing from the back of his neck, granting him a +2 racial bonus on Will saves. His malformed jaw gives him a speech impediment and a -2 penalty on any skill check that relies on speech.

CHUCKLES AND DROOLER

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	38 each

Donkey rats (variant dire rat; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)

N Medium animal

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 10 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 38 each (4d8+20)

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d8+6)

TACTICS

During Combat Both donkey rats focus their attacks on the same target each round, preferring smaller foes over larger ones.

Morale A donkey rat flees if brought below 5 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 2, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 22


Feats Dodge, Improved Natural Attack (bite)

Skills Climb +16, Perception +7, Stealth +8, Swim +16

A13 STOREROOM



It's difficult to gauge the exact dimensions of this cluttered room, thickly packed with old crates, broken farm equipment, and furniture.



Most of the things the Grauls break eventually end up stacked in this room. Hucker periodically sifts through the junk for raw materials for his projects, but currently there's little of value in here.

A14 TENDRICULOS PIT (CR 6)



This damp, steamy room reeks of rotting vegetable matter. Pools of mud and stagnant water dot the mossy floor, and the walls are caked with thick swaths of puffy fungus and mold.

CREATURE: This mossy, vine-covered section of the basement is home to one of the least fortunate of the Grauls. Ironically, Muck Gaurl used to be one of the handsomest of Mammy's boys, but after he caught and tortured a nymph princess for days on end, she spat a foul curse upon him with her dying breath. Muck began a slow, painful transformation, his flesh showing strange greenish sores and moss growing from his orifices. His limbs grew spongy and insubstantial until he collapsed into a shuddering mass of plant matter. Mammy consigned him to the basement to keep him from "mussing up the house." Muck grew larger day after day, nurtured by his brothers even as they ridiculed him for his new hideous appearance. Muck Gaurl is now a massive carnivorous plant—a tendriculos. He barely remembers his life before, and although he recognizes the Grauls as allies, he attacks anyone else who enters this room.

MUCK GAURL

XP	CR	HP
2,400	6	76

Tendriculos (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 259)

A15 THE GAURL FORTUNE



A large chest sits against the wall of this low-ceilinged chamber.

TREASURE: While the Grauls have used most of the loot taken from their victims over the years to pay tribute to the Kreegs, they've kept hold of a fair amount of treasure for themselves. This loot is kept here, in an unlocked chest. Within lies an agate-studded gold ring worth 50 gp, a necklace of emeralds and silver worth 350 gp, a pair of small leather gloves studded with pearls (actually *gloves of arrow snaring*), a large sack filled with assorted coins (210 gp, 452 sp, and 108 cp), and a ruby-inlaid red dragon-scale cloak clasp worth 600 gp. In addition, all of the equipment belonging to the three captured Black Arrows in area A17 can be found here, including an elven-made +1 *shocking longbow*. If Shalelu is with the party, her eyes widen upon seeing this weapon—it belongs to Jakardros, her stepfather. If she's already revealed her relationship

with the ranger, she'll reveal the bow's owner to the PCs at this time; otherwise she remains silent for now and hopes the weapon's presence here doesn't indicate that Jakardros is already dead.

A16 KENNEL (CR 7)



The barn houses several mounds of molding hay, grain stores, and even a large but crude still. Two catwalks rise up along the walls, leading to doors near the ceiling in the east wall. Lower, a pair of massive doors, boarded over with thick timbers, allows ground access to the room beyond. Several dingy kennels are built into the walls under the catwalks.

If any of Rukus's hounds survived the initial encounter with the PCs, they've been kenneled here. The boarded-up door to area A17 is clogged on the far side by thick webs. Wrenching it open is nearly impossible, requiring a DC 36 Strength check.

The still functions, but the moonshine it produces is nauseating—the Gaurl boys have never cleaned the thing, and the ingredients they use to brew the stuff are suspect at best. A character who drinks from the still must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid being nauseated for 1d6 rounds and must succeed at a second DC 16 Fortitude save to avoid catching blinding sickness (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 557) from the contaminated booze.

Several keys hang on a bent nail by the main entrance; these keys are for the manacles in the cages in area A17.

CREATURES: Three of the younger Grauls (Jeppo, Hograth, and Sugar) spend most of their time here, drinking away their days and periodically inflicting unimaginable tortures on any captives kept in area A17.

Hograth is the eldest of the three, a hulking brute with a vestigial arm growing from his left elbow and a no-necked, dented head. Jeppo Gaurl is a big, handsome boy towering over his brothers. His eyes are huge and milky white, and his skin pale as the full moon. Sugar is the shortest of the Grauls, standing barely more than 5 feet tall, with crooked stumpy legs and constantly twitching skin.

These Gaurl boys take their charge of tending to the Black Arrow prisoners in area A17 very seriously and ignore any sounds of combat elsewhere on the property unless Mammy Gaurl flees here to recruit their aid in mounting an assault on the PCs.

HOGRATH, JEPPO, AND SUGAR GAURL

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	25 Each

CE male ogrekin fighter 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 204)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hograth's Deformities (Ex) Hograth has a vestigial arm that grants him a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks, but has a deformed head (and corresponding weak mind) that imparts a -2 penalty on Will saves.



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Jeppo's Deformities (Ex) Jeppo's overlarge, milky eyes grant him a +2 bonus on Perception checks but are also sensitive to light (exposure to bright light dazzles him for as long as he remains in the area).

Sugar's Deformities (Ex) Sugar is particularly jumpy and prone to bodily twitches—a manifestation of a fast metabolism that grants him a +2 racial bonus on Fortitude saves and doubles his healing from rest, though his stunted legs reduce his speed to 20 feet.

A17 PRISON (CR 5)



The majority of this large, stuffy chamber is covered in filthy webs forming a funnel that dips down into the ground. A catwalk runs around the rim of the room near the ceiling, twenty feet above the ground. In northeast and southeast corners, the catwalk expands into a ten-foot-square platform that's fenced in by wooden beams, forming cages. The walls within each cage are hung with iron manacles. Most of the manacles—while bloody—are empty, but three in the southeast corner imprison emaciated men.

Anyone who falls into the thick webs below takes no falling damage but does immediately become entangled in the webs of the ogre spider that dwells below.

CREATURES: One of the Grauls' prides and joys, the immense ogre spider that dwells in this room is also one of their worst-behaved pets. The Grauls call the spider "Biggin'," and most of them have been bitten by it before. Still, the spider's too mindless to bother trying to get to anything locked in the two cages in the upstairs corners of the room. As long as the Grauls keep the thing fairly well fed, and make sure to throw a deer, pig, gnome, or other sizable creature into the web before they venture in to check the cages, Biggin' leaves those moving around on the catwalk alone.

Of course, the PCs aren't likely to know this. The immense spider scurries up out of its web to attack if no offering of food has been thrown into its web within 4 rounds of someone entering this room.

All three of the humans locked in the southeast cage are unconscious—they are the last three surviving Black Arrow rangers from Fort Rannick.

BIGGIN'

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	52

Ogre spider (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 254)

LAST OF THE BLACK ARROWS

The Order of Black Arrows has been a secretive and insular order for decades, since its founding by Zarnath Rannick. Traditionally a wandering order of hunters and rangers dedicated to patrolling the Storval Rise, the Black Arrows saw it as their duty to prevent incursions

of giants from the plateau into Varisia. When Magnimar offered the order a fort in the shadow of Hook Mountain, Zarnath accepted graciously but died in a battle against the Kreeg ogres before it was completed. His men named the keep after him, and ever since, Fort Rannick has been instrumental in keeping the ogres, trolls, and other giants of the region from spreading too far into the lowlands.

During the 45 years they've been stationed at the fort, the Black Arrows have inducted new members often—typically petty criminals given a choice between severe punishment or a lifetime sworn to manning the walls of the fort and patrolling the perilous heights of Hook Mountain. Conditions at Fort Rannick swiftly made honest men out of most of these criminals, forcing them to engage in a vicious regimen of training that stripped away all sense of their life prior to joining the order. The task of keeping the horrors of the Hook at bay is a grueling one and requires a level of discipline unattainable by many soldiers. They have a reputation for dealing with trouble among the ranks of the order in their own way—coldly and efficiently. Those who disobey commands are flogged nearly to death before being exiled to the south. Those who betray the order are mercilessly executed. Their justice is swift, their reputation fierce; it wasn't until 3 weeks ago that the Black Arrows finally met their match—and then only due to treachery from within.

Of the dozens who once composed the Order of the Black Arrow, only three survive today, and they are in bad shape. The only reason this group escaped the slaughter at the fort was because they were on a long-range patrol during the massacre. Their leader, a weathered old ranger whose worn face is as hard as leather, is named Jakardros. He and two of his men (Kaven and Vale) are all that remain; the others in the patrol have already been taken away for torture and death at the Grauls' hands.

Note that while the statistics provided for these three men on the following pages present them in full health with all of their gear, when the PCs rescue them, all three are unconscious at 0 hit points and wear only their underclothes—all of their gear lies heaped in area A15.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs rescue the three Black Arrows, award them XP as if they had defeated the three Black Arrows in combat (7,200 XP for all three).

JAKARDROS SOVARK

Jakardros lost his eye to a close call with an ogre hook a decade ago. For many years he was second-in-command of Fort Rannick under Commander Bayden. Jakardros fears the worst, for he knows the commander would sooner die than surrender to the Kreegs. After his patrol was delayed, they arrived back home to find the fort under Kreeg control. He lost a third of his unit in an attempt to retake the fort, and when they were forced to flee south into Kreegwood, the remainder were easy targets for the Grauls. Jakardros carries the loss of Fort Rannick heavily

and feels it was his fault that the ogres were able to take it. Had he been a bit more prompt returning from his patrol, he would have been back in time to help defend the place. But he wasn't, and now a 45-year tradition is dead.

When Jakardros was younger and before he joined the Black Arrows, he spent a few years as an adventurer. His group eventually ended up in the region around the Mierani Forest, where they helped a small village of elves defeat a group of murderous ettercaps led by a green dragon. Jakardros's adventuring companions all perished in the fight, giving their lives for the elven community of Crying Leaf. Jakardros was nursed back to health by an elven priestess of Desna there, and the two of them fell in love. Jakardros would have lived the rest of his life in Crying Leaf had not his lover, Seanthia, herself perished when the village was attacked by the resurrected dragon 3 years later. With Jakardros's aid, the

town defeated the dragon again, but Jakardros was too broken-hearted to remain. He gathered his belongings and, within minutes of the dragon's death, left Crying Leaf behind him, abandoning the sorrowful task of attending to Seanthia's funeral to his stepdaughter. His heart hardened, he eventually heard of the Black Arrows and applied for membership, hoping that service to the order would help him bury his broken heart.

To a certain extent, his plan worked. But now that Fort Rannick is lost, his old melancholy has returned—the loss of the fort wakening similar memories of Seanthia's death. He bitterly regrets abandoning Crying Leaf, and between wishing he'd died in either the second dragon attack or in the more recent ogre attack, his mood has grown increasingly dark—almost suicidal.

Unfortunately for Jakardros, his life is about to grow even more complex, for his stepdaughter is none other than Shalelu Andosana.



JAKARDROS
SOVARK

JAKARDROS SOVARK

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	72

Male middle-aged human ranger 8

CG Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 72 (8d10+24)

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +10/+5 (1d8+1/19-20)

Ranged +1 *shocking composite longbow* +12/+7 (1d8+2/x3 plus 1d6 electricity)

Special Attacks favored enemy (dragons +2, giants +4)

Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +7)

2nd—*barkskin*, *cure light wounds*

1st—*animal messenger*, *speak with animals*

TACTICS

During Combat Jakardros's strength lies in his archery. He trusts (and depends) on his allies and his animal companion Kibb to hold off foes in melee while he provides ranged support. Yet when his allies are in desperate need, he won't hesitate to lay down his bow and join them in melee.

Morale Jakardros has little concern for his own safety, and is actively looking for a foe that can finish him off. He fights to the death as a result. Once he's reconciled with Shalelu, though, his outlook shifts dramatically; he devotes his life to protecting the elven ranger, doting on her as if she were his own daughter. He'll fight to the death to protect her, but otherwise breaks off combat and retreats if brought below 20 hit points so he can stay alive to defend Shalelu in the future.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Endurance, Manyshot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness

Skills Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Linguistics +8, Perception +13, Stealth +13, Survival +13

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblinoid, Shoanti, Sylvan, Varisian

SQ favored terrain (forest +2, mountain +4), hunter's bond (animal—firepelt cougar named Kibb), swift tracker, track +4, wild empathy +7, woodland stride

Gear studded leather, +1 shocking composite longbow with 20 arrows, masterwork longsword

VALE TEMROS

Vale is a dark-skinned man with piercing gray eyes. His towering height of 6–1/2 feet and his muscular build consigned him to the warrior's path at an early age. Despite his stature, Vale is a quiet and withdrawn man whose passion for life only awakens during the heat of battle.

Vale was born into the Order of the Black Arrow; both his parents were members, as were his two younger brothers. All of them are now dead, slain either years ago (in the case of his parents) or weeks ago (in the case of his brothers) by various Kreeg ogres. Vale's oath of vengeance against the Kreegs has become the only thing holding him together over the past several days of torture and mind-numbing horror at the Grauls' hands. Vale seizes any opportunity to strike back at the ogres with grim satisfaction.

Apart from his prowess in battle, Vale also had a passing fancy for sieges and architecture, and spent many of his off hours in the fort talking with the resident architect, a now-dead man named Drannis. Apart from battle, discussions about normally dry topics like engineering and fortifications are among the few activities that break Vale out of his taciturn shell, making him excited and animated.

fight recklessly. He approaches battle with a wide-eyed excitement, viewing each fight as a puzzle to be solved with mind and steel. He has a knack for seeking out subtle tactical advantages (higher ground, flanking, cover, and the like) that serve him well. Vale prefers to fight with a battleaxe and handaxe, and once an enemy is engaged, he makes Power Attacks unless he can't quite hit foes with his secondary attacks. He views his greatest flaw as his lack of talent in finesse fighting, and when he grows too overconfident, he often makes trip, disarm, and flanking attacks that provoke a dangerous number of attacks of opportunity.

Morale If Vale is left on his own, the concept of retreat would never occur to him. He becomes so enthralled with the battle that he loses track of his own well-being.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22



VALE
TEMROS

VALE TEMROS

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	53

Male human fighter 4/ranger 2

NG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 53 (6d10+16)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 battleaxe +10/+5 (1d8+7/x3), +1 handaxe +10/+5 (1d6+5/x3)

Ranged composite longbow +7/+2 (1d8+4/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (giants +2)

TACTICS

During Combat Although Vale pays little attention to how much damage he takes during a fight, he certainly doesn't

Feats Dodge, Double Slice, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Focus (handaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe)

Skills Climb +9, Craft (stonemasonry) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +5, Perception +10, Profession (siege engineer) +6, Survival +10

Languages Common, Osiriani

SQ armor training 1, track +1, wild empathy +1

Gear chainmail, +1 battleaxe, +1 handaxe, composite longbow with 20 arrows

KAVEN WINDSTRIKE

Kaven Windstrike, a handsome young man with dark hair and emerald eyes, has traditionally been able to get what he wants out of life via his good looks and smooth tongue. He was a wayward youth born to harried parents in Turtleback Ferry, and his antics finally got him in over his head when he assaulted and robbed an old goatherd who turned out to be a longtime family friend. Infuriated, his father was all but ready to press charges and have the boy taken south by the law to serve time in a jail in Ilsurian, but his mother managed to temper that reaction. Kaven was given a choice: be disowned and spend time in prison, or seek membership among the Black Arrows. His father always admired the order, and figured if they couldn't shape Kaven into an upstanding man, no one could. Kaven, balking at the thought of prison, chose the Black Arrows.

At first, the disciplined lifestyle did Kaven good, and he reformed into a respected and effective member of the order. However, when Lady Lucrecia opened *Paradise's* gambling halls to the public a year ago, Kaven and two other Black Arrows sneaked down to the barge one night to sample its offerings. It was enough to remind Kaven what he liked about the quick and exciting life of gambling, high risk, and crime. Kaven volunteered for the weekly southern patrol (a route most of the Black Arrows disliked due to its relatively boring route along the eastern shore of Claybottom Lake). Rather than spending his nights in Turtleback Ferry or Pendaka, though, he took to spending them at *Paradise*. Of course, Lucrecia recognized him as one of the Black Arrows and, knowing that having an ally on the inside might someday be a vital boon, she seduced him, charmed him, and made him her pet.

As the months wore on, Kaven fell deeper and deeper into Lucrecia's thrall, to an extent that she no longer needed to keep him charmed. He not only began to steal from his fellow rangers to fund his secret nights of debauchery on the *Paradise*, but in the end it was he who betrayed them at Lady Lucrecia's request. Kaven gave her all the information about patrols and defenses she needed to ensure a swift and decisive strike on Fort Rannick, and then Kaven volunteered for the patrol that would keep him out of the fort when the assault came. He even engineered several delays during that patrol

to ensure they would not return to the fort in time to provide aid in the fight. What Kaven hadn't counted on was being captured by the Grauls—Lucrecia had promised to flee the region with him once the attack was over, and he had planned on meeting her at a prearranged time in Turtleback Ferry. In fact, Lucrecia planned to murder him at that meeting, so even though he doesn't realize it, being captured by the Grauls actually saved his miserable life.

For the past several days, Kaven has feigned loyalty to the dwindling number of Black Arrows, caught between the horror of being found out by his comrades and the possibility of being the next one chosen for torture and dinner by the Grauls. When the PCs rescue the Black Arrows, Kaven pretends to be helpful during preparation for the assault on Fort Rannick but secretly keeps an eye out for a chance to finish his betrayal and escape to Turtleback Ferry so he can track down his lover, unaware of the fact that she's already written him off as ogrekin food.

Although neither of his fellow Black Arrows suspects Kaven of being the traitor, they have noticed the seven-pointed tattoo the man bears on the inside of his left wrist. Kaven kept the tattoo hidden as long as he could, but now that he's wearing only rags, the others have noticed—they've simply had other things on their mind (like staying alive while remaining prisoners of the Grauls) and haven't asked him about the tattoo yet. Kaven knows the tattoo links him to *Paradise*, and thus to his true nature as a craven and a turncoat, and attempts to hide the tattoo from the PCs as soon as he's conscious. While he's unconscious, it's merely a DC 12 Perception check for the PCs to notice the tattoo, but once he's awake, the Perception check to notice the tattoo at any one time is opposed by Kaven's Sleight of Hand check. If asked about the tattoo, Kaven claims he's had it for years (a DC 15 Craft [tattoo] or similar skill reveals the truth—the tattoo is only a few months old), and that it represents his love of the stars. He doesn't know about its true significance, but does know that it's a good idea to keep the PCs from finding out he'd been spending a lot of time at *Paradise*.

KAVEN WINDSTRIKE

XP	CR	HP
2,400	6	49

Male human ranger 2/rogue 5

CN Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 49 (7 HD; 2d10+5d8+12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +8 (1d6+1/18–20), mwk dagger +8 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged composite longbow +9 (1d8/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (giants +2), sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

During Combat Kaven is most comfortable wielding small and fast weapons like daggers, short swords, or rapiers. In battle, he seeks out wounded foes, leaving stronger enemies for his "allies" to handle.

Morale Kaven is a coward at heart, but his worries—that abandoning his "allies" too soon would reveal the depths of his treachery—keep him in a fight longer than he might otherwise remain. If brought below 10 hit points, he feigns death with a Bluff check, hoping to seize a chance to escape once attentions are focused elsewhere. If this tactic fails, he gives in to his fear and makes a run for it. Kaven has already betrayed his allies once, and if he thinks betraying the PCs might aid in his own survival, he won't hesitate for a moment to do so again. If the opportunity presents itself, he's not above taking a hostage—although he'd prefer to take someone smaller and weaker than himself if possible, like a wizard or a gnome or a halfling.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 21

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +15, Climb +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +14, Survival +9, Swim +10

Languages Common, Giant, Varisian

SQ rogue talents (combat trick, finesse rogue), track +1, trapfinding +2, wild empathy +4

Gear +1 leather armor, +1 rapier, masterwork dagger, composite longbow with 20 arrows, ring of protection +1

DISCOVERING THE TRAITOR

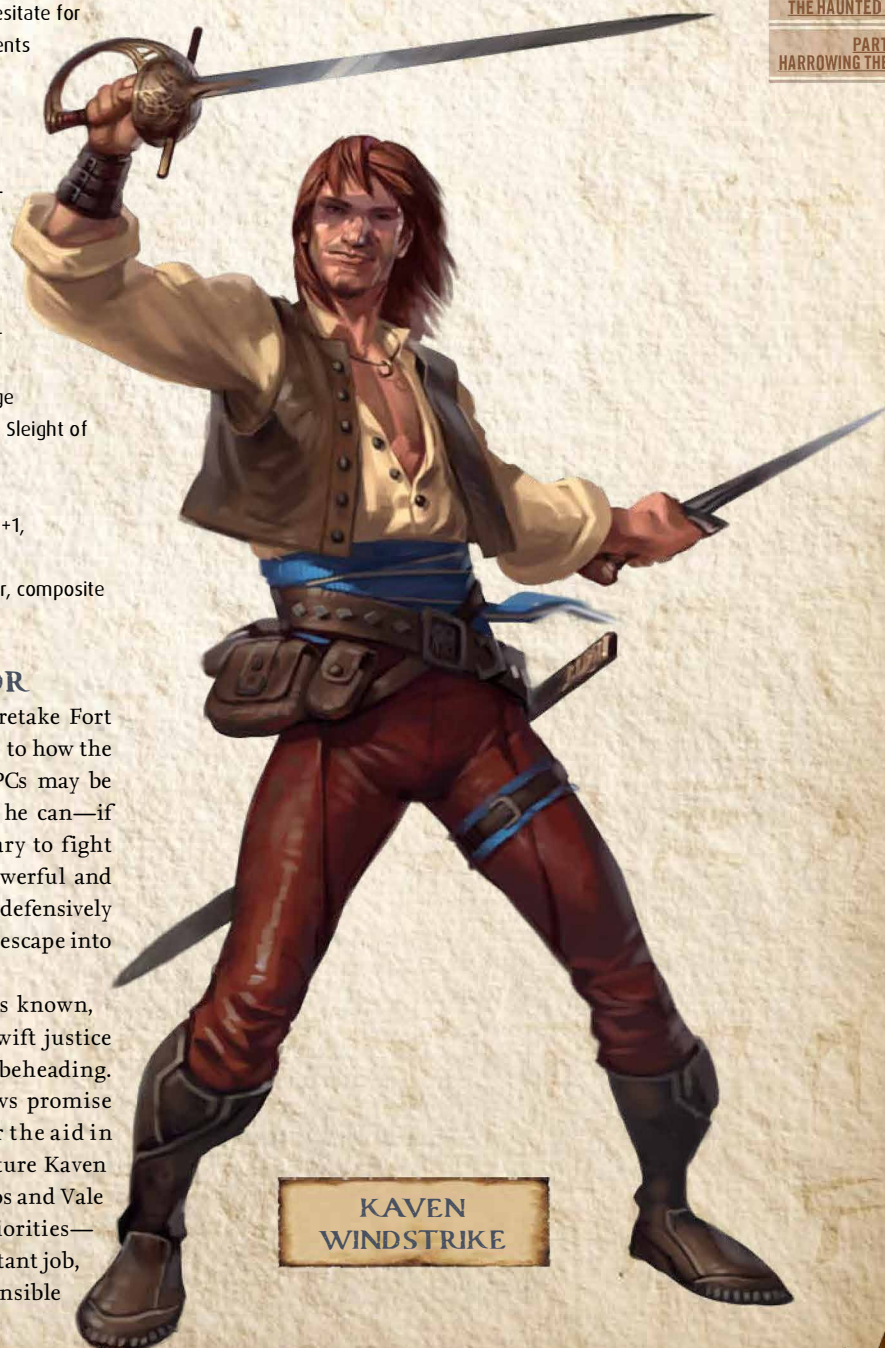
As the PCs work with the Black Arrows to retake Fort Rannick, they'll find more and more clues as to how the fort fell to the ogres. If Kaven thinks the PCs may be on to him, he tries to slip away as soon as he can—if confronted, he'll resort to combat if necessary to fight his way to safety. He knows the PCs are powerful and that alone, he's no match for them. He fights defensively as a result, constantly looking for a chance to escape into the wilds.

Once the truth about Kaven's treachery is known, Jakardros and Vale are eager to carry out swift justice in the Black Arrow fashion—execution via beheading. Assuming the PCs comply, the Black Arrows promise to award the PCs Kaven's gear in thanks for the aid in finding out the truth. If the PCs fail to capture Kaven upon learning the truth about him, Jakardros and Vale have a difficult time managing their priorities—defeating the ogres remains the most important job, but the fact that one of their own was responsible

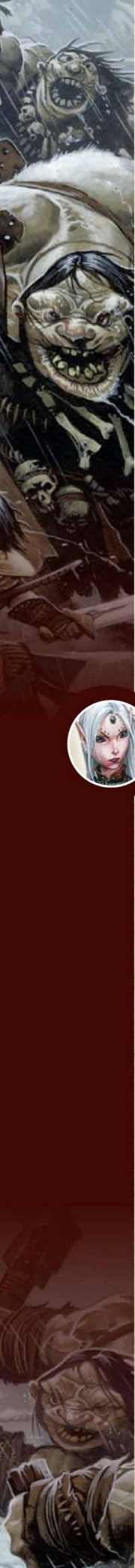
for the situation is a fact that neither Black Arrow can stomach for long.

If Kaven manages to escape, stubborn pride and lingering adoration for Lucrecia prevent him from taking the smarter route of fleeing the area. If the PCs haven't yet encountered and defeated her, Kaven's report to the lamia convinces her to retreat with him to the Hook Mountain clanhold, and the PCs will encounter both of them at Barl's side. Kaven may even show up in a subsequent chapter if you wish, having fled all the way to Jorgenfist in search of a more powerful ally like Mokmurian himself!

STORY AWARD: If the PCs learn that Kaven is the traitor, award them 3,200 XP.



**KAVEN
WINDSTRIKE**



PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

FORT RANNICK HAS FALLEN. A NOTORIOUS CLAN OF OGRES KNOWN AS THE KREEGS LAUNCHED A DEVASTATING ASSAULT ON THE FORT THREE WEEKS AGO, AN ASSAULT THAT LEFT LITTLE DOUBT OF TREACHERY IN THE MIND OF THE FEW SURVIVORS. SOMEONE MUST HAVE GIVEN THE KREEGS DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORT'S DEFENSES—THE ASSAULT WAS TOO PERFECT IN ITS EXECUTION AND TIMING FOR ANY OTHER EXPLANATION TO MAKE SENSE. AS A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO RETAKE THE LOST FORT BEGINS, WILL TREACHERY STRIKE YET AGAIN?



If the PCs make clear their intentions to try to retake Fort Rannick, all three Black Arrows pledge their assistance to the effort (Kaven must make a Bluff check to put on a brave face at this point—if he fails, the PCs might be able to uncover his treachery early). If the PCs don't come up with the idea of retaking the fort on their own, Vale eventually suggests the audacious plan. If the PCs contact Magnimar with the news, they're asked, at the very least, to scout the region and gather intelligence about the ogres now occupying the fort. If they can retake the fort, Lord-Mayor Grobaras implies that there could be a healthy reward for the PCs. In any event, the news encourages Magnimar to organize a large force to travel to the region to provide aid, but unfortunately winter has other plans. Heavy winds, rains, and even snow all but prevent easy travel around central Varisia—as a result, it will be several weeks before reinforcements arrive, and by then, Barl and the ogres will be on the move.

FORT RANNICK

Fort Rannick is located at the northern end of a wide valley that runs along the southern edge of the mountains. This bleak landscape stretches on for miles along the border between the mountains and Kreegwood. This rugged, forlorn landscape fits well with the morose and grim attitude of its guardians, the Order of the Black Arrow.

Vale can provide the PCs with a detailed map of Fort Rannick (Handout 3-1) well in advance, so they should be able to plan their invasion of the fort as they wish. The Black Arrows provide answers to any questions about locations that the PCs have, including the presence of the shocker lizards in area B37 (they're unaware of the undead in area B15, though). They don't know where the ogres are located, or exactly how many ogres are still stationed within the fort. They can all but guarantee that there are a lot. While the ogres have the advantage of numbers, the PCs have the advantage of surprise and superior knowledge of the area—the rangers are positive that the ogres wouldn't have discovered the secret caverns or tunnels, for example.

INFILTRATING THE FORT

The PCs are free to explore any means of gaining access to the fort they wish. A few options (and likely suggestions from the Black Arrows or Shalelu if the PCs ask) include the following:

DEATH FROM ABOVE: Any PCs capable of flight can descend on the fort proper from above. Alternatively, if they fly up to the eagle aerie (see area B5), they can approach the fort via the hidden ledge and tunnel from the north.

THE SECRET TUNNELS: These tunnels have not been used in decades. They are infested in some places by shocker lizards, but they might provide the perfect means of infiltrating the fort without alerting the ogres. The tunnels can be entered via the waterfall cave at area B12.

THE SLUICE GATE: On the south wall of the fort (area B7), a sluice gate opens to release refuse and sewage downhill into the creek. The PCs can attempt to circumvent the gates of Rannick by breaching this narrow access instead, but its proximity to the South Gate might be a problem.

STEALTH: Ogres can see in the dark, so night is likely to be a bigger problem than it is an advantage for the PCs. If the party consists of stealthy characters, they might be able to infiltrate the fort undetected, especially if they use spells like *invisibility* or *fog cloud* to mask their approach.

TRICKERY: The ogres recognize the Sihedron Rune as the mark of their new lord, Barl Breakbones. If the PCs march brazenly into the keep and act as if they belong there and openly display the rune, the ogres assume they are envoys sent by Barl to check up on them and quickly lead them into the keep interior to meet with "The Boss" (Jaagrath in area B29) or "The Lady" (Lucrecia in area B36). How the PCs handle their likely short-lived fame with the ogres is left to them, as neither Jaagrath nor Lucrecia is foolish enough to fall for this ruse for long.

ATTACK PLANS

The following tidbits of information are available to PCs based on skill checks or by asking the right questions



of the Black Arrows. In the event that an attack plan goes wrong, the PCs should not discount the option of retreating, regrouping, and attacking again. The ogres are disorganized and slow to rouse in an organized defense, and even if a fight turns noisy, nearby ogres are prone to assume it's just another argument between brothers.

THE NEW BARRACKS: Area B10 is known as the “new barracks,” even though they were built 20 years ago. Erected when the rangers grew concerned that Fort Rannick was going to outgrow its original barracks space, the wooden barracks (though spacious and less dank than the quarters in area B20 and B24) were abandoned after it was pointed out they were deathtraps: If fire were used during a siege, the barracks would go up like tinder and everyone inside would burn to death. The ogres are not so observant or knowledgeable, and a good number of their hulking brood make their quarters here—using fire on this building would likely kill several of them and distract the others long enough for an infiltration elsewhere. A character who spends an hour observing the fort from afar can make a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check to realize this.

LURE THE KREEGS OUT: While Jaagrath is not stupid, the same can't be said for most of the other ogres in the fort. If something provokes the ogres, they are likely to send out a sizeable force to attack (and could thus be easily lured into an ambush). Additionally, a distraction in one area of the fort might draw the brunt of the ogres to this area to investigate, leaving other key areas undefended.

SMOKE OUT! If the PCs ask about the creatures that infest the secret tunnels, the rangers can confirm that a large number of shocker lizards dwell down there. They keep to themselves in the tunnels, mostly, but during their mating season when they grow more aggressive, the rangers use bitterbark smoke to sicken and repulse them, keeping them from overrunning the castle. It takes a day and a DC 18 Knowledge (nature) check to harvest bitterbark from the surrounding region, but if the PCs do so and stage the smoke at the right places, they could possibly drive the shocker lizards up into the keep and into the ogres' midst, weakening them and allowing a greater chance to get at the leaders.

FORT RANNICK GENERAL FEATURES

The slovenly ogres have turned this battle-worn but well-run fort into a charnel house of slaughter and drunken debauchery. The Kreegs did their best to make their initial captives last, but recently, the last of their living playthings perished and the ogres have been spreading out, searching outlying areas for new victims to torment and eventually eat. Dozens of skulls and mangled corpses hang from trees near the fort, with gigantic rusty hooks spitting them like meat awaiting a butcher's block. The stench of sweat, urine, blood, and ogre-musk befouls the air for hundreds of yards around the fort. Hulking deformed brutes of the Kreeg clan roam the walls of Rannick and lurk within, fattening themselves on human



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

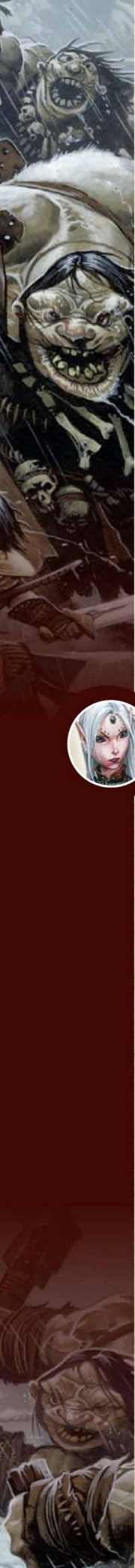
PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEAR

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK



FORT RANNICK
(GROUND FLOOR)

FORT RANNICK
(UNDERNEATH)

FORT RANNICK

FORT RANNICK
(FIRST FLOOR)

FORT RANNICK
(SECOND FLOOR)



flesh, slaking their thirst on the Black Arrows' stores of whisky and ale, and dancing their macabre skull-jigs.

In addition to the Kreeg leaders, there are a total of 32 ogres in Fort Rannick. Of these, 26 are typical ogres without class levels, but the remaining six are more powerful 5th-level fighters. While these six have different names and personalities, their stats are presented below for ease of reference.

OGRE FIGHTER	XP 4,800	CR 8	HP 104
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Ogre fighter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 220)

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 104 (9 HD; 4d8+5d10+59)

Fort +13, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 ogre hook +16/+11 (2d8+13/19-20/x3)

Ranged javelin +8/+3 (1d8+6)

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

Special Attacks weapon training (axes +1)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 12, **Con** 20, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 26

Feats Improved Critical (ogre hook), Improved Natural Armor, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (ogre hook), Weapon Specialization (ogre hook)

Skills Intimidate +11, Perception +5

Languages Giant

SQ armor training 1

Gear +1 hide armor, +1 ogre hook, 2 javelins

B1 APPROACH



Talons of lightning claw at the sky, casting pale light on the mountainside below. The lightning storm reveals a grim fortress of dark gray stone standing sentinel over the valley, huddled desperately at the base of two sheer cliff sides. Crumbling, fifteen-foot-high walls ring the citadel, the stone pitted and cratered from hurled boulders and ogre hooks. Like the face of a veteran with decades of winters under his belt, the fort's craters, cracks, and scars are testament to its battle-weary history. A stone keep, a stubborn shadow against the mountainside, rises from behind the worn walls, a single tower jutting up from its ramparts like an ugly broken tooth. Nearby, a rushing curtain of white water cascades down the mountainside into a large pool of water just outside the fort's walls.

It's a DC 15 Climb check to scamper over the fort's 15-foot-high wall; bits of rubble break free in the process, imparting a -5 penalty on Stealth checks made while climbing. The nameless creek that runs along the perimeter of the walls like a moat is 10 feet deep but relatively placid, requiring a DC 10 Swim check to cross.

B2 EAST GATE (CR 3)



A twenty-foot-tall gatehouse surrounds two battered double doors that look as if they're barely hanging on their hinges.

The ogres smashed this gate on their assault, but have since mounded up debris on the other side to fortify it. Until the rubble is cleared, these doors won't open.

CREATURE: Since the Kreegs assume they've completely blocked this gate, only one ogre is posted here, busily scrubbing at a freshly claimed skull to polish it to a fine sheen. He takes a -4 on his Perception checks as a result.

OGRE	XP 800	CR 3	HP 30
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(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 220)

B3 STABLE



A large wooden building sits against the cliff side here. The structure's southern facade is open, revealing an empty stable.

A proud herd of fine horses bred and kept by the Black Arrows was once stabled here. The brave animals detected trouble in the fort the night of the massacre and several smashed free of their stalls to rush to their masters' aid, only to be massacred by the ogres.

B4 OLD GUARD POST (CR 9)



This old guard post is falling apart. Most of the mortar has cracked or sloughed away, leaving stone to grind on stone. The structure itself is nearly thirty feet high.

The ogres don't realize how close to a catastrophic collapse this building is. The structure itself has a hardness of 8, but if any single attack manages to deal a mere 15 points of damage to it, the entire structure collapses. Any creatures inside take 10d6 points of damage when it collapses, while any creatures within 15 feet take 6d6 points of damage (DC 15 Reflex save for half). Collapsing the building brings all of the ogres from areas **B2**, **B6**, **B8**, and **B10** running, leaving those areas unguarded for 2d6 minutes.

CREATURES: The ogres, not known for their powers of observation, have stationed three of their number here.



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW


PART TWO: RETAKING RANNICK

MAP TWO: FORT RANNICK

PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK



Two are unexceptional ogre thugs, while the third is a sick, grunting thing with knees that bend in reverse like a goat and a host of angry red pustules covering his face and hands. This horror, Karly-Lop Kreeg, spends most of his time tormenting the other two ogres—all three of them take a –4 penalty on Perception checks as a result.

KARLY-LOP KREEG

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	104

Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

OGRES (2)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each


(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

TREASURE: Karly-Lop wears a necklace of shriveled women's hands about his neck, each adorned with shiny copper rings. Of the rings, 21 are worth 10 gp each, while the 22nd is actually a *ring of animal friendship* (though Karly-Lop has no idea it is magical).

B5 COLLAPSED TUNNEL



A huge pile of rubble slumps against the cliff face here, almost completely blocking a cave entrance.



The tunnel beyond winds up to a ledge that overlooks the fort, 120 feet up the cliff face above. This ledge rises a further 450 feet to a tor that once served as the nesting ground for a group of giant eagles allied with the Black Arrows. The eagles swooped down to aid the fort in defense against the ogres, but all were slain.

There's enough room for a Tiny creature to squeeze through the gap into the tunnel; a Small creature can do the same by succeeding at a DC 30 Escape Artist check. Clearing away enough rubble to make room for a Medium creature takes 3d6 minutes of noisy work.

B6 COOK HOUSE (CR 8)



This open-air structure contains several large racks for storing smoked meat. The ogres don't seem to have taken good care of the place, for everything is in a jumbled, broken ruin now. Several dead bodies lie haphazardly on the damaged smokers, slowly (and inefficiently) curing as the fires smolder. The smell is disturbingly flavorful.

Ogres love a good barbecue. The nine bodies slow-roasting here were all Black Arrows captured alive—they didn't last long once they were threaded onto skewers and left here to cook, though.

CREATURE: Jaagrath put his best cook in charge of this project, a constantly wheezing and sweating, obese ogre named Jolly Kreeg. With tiny little hands and feet and a grotesquely oversized head and rear end, the ogre almost

looks like a bulbous gourd. Jolly is currently making a big batch of dough to bake up the entrails he's just extracted from the smoking corpses in a huge "gutworm pie" for Pappy Jaagrath.

JOLLY KREEG

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	104

Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

B7 DRAINAGE DITCH



A vile pool of sewage sits at the base of a nook in the wall. The pool drains through a two-foot-wide sluiceway in the wall to the creek beyond, but a body is lodged headfirst inside it.

The body is one of the rangers of Fort Rannick; his head was claimed for Jaagrath's grotesque collection, and the rest of him was deposited carelessly here. The ogres never bothered to kick him through the sluice, and have taken to calling the bloating corpse "Spongy." The sluiceway is slick with reeking gore, algae, and waste. A Small creature can clamber through it easily, but a Medium creature must succeed at a DC 20 Escape Artist check to do the same. Pushing aside the body wedged in the opening requires a successful DC 18 Strength check. A character who attempts to enter the fort via this route must make a DC 12 Fortitude save to avoid catching filth fever (Core Rulebook 557).

B8 SOUTH GATE (CR 9)



This twenty-foot-tall gatehouse is protected by an iron gate.

The ogres left this entrance relatively undamaged, since this is the one they use to come and go from the fort. The mechanism to lift the portcullis is located atop the defense platform directly west of the gate—it takes 5 rounds to raise the portcullis, but a DC 28 Strength check allows someone to lift it from the ground in 1 round.

CREATURES: Since this gate is still functional, more ogres are on guard here. Four stand on watch in all—three average ogres led by Minktuck Kreeg, an unfortunate ogre who lost most of his lower jaw in a fight many years ago. He's taken to fixing freshly shucked minks (head, paws, and all) onto each jowl every few weeks, so the little dead animals dangle and bounce about freakishly as he slobbers out orders. Minktuck keeps his ogres focused and relatively alert; these ogres do not take distraction penalties on their Perception checks as a result.

MINKTUCK KREEG

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	104

Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

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OGRES (3)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

B9 POND



What once might have been a crystal-clear mountain lake has become an abattoir. Partially butchered and mutilated bodies—some human, some horse, some giant eagle—lie sprawled along the shore. A waterfall plummets from the cliffs to the west into the pool, which keeps much of the water clean save for near the shores where the dead lie thick.

This lake is the primary source of drinking water for the fort. The pool itself is 30 feet deep at its center. A cursory examination of the waterfall from afar (and a DC 30 Perception check) allows a character to see a cave behind the cascade 10 feet above the water. It's only a DC 10 Climb check to get up to the cave. The ogres are unaware of this cave entrance, since they generally just drink right out of the stream when they're thirsty.

B10 NEW BARRACKS (CR 10)



This wooden building seems to have been abandoned for some time; it's in fairly poor repair and seems almost to lean against the cliff wall behind it for support. A short flight of wooden steps leads up to the single door. The building itself sits on raised timbers over the uneven, sloping ground below—excess lumber is stored haphazardly in the space below.

These barracks were still called “new” by the older members of the order, though they were built 20 years ago. Constructed at a time when no sensible architect resided among the Black Arrows, the building is a deathtrap should it ever catch on fire. With the heavy rains, setting fire to the barracks from outside is a difficult task. A character who sneaks into the barracks, or who clammers under the building where all of the extra lumber is stored, however, can light a fire relatively easily. If the building burns, the ogres within panic at the single tiny exit, fight over who's supposed to escape first, and eventually cook inside.

The secret door in the base of the cliff wall behind this building can be found with a DC 25 Perception check.

CREATURES: Many of the ogres balked at sleeping in the main keep, opting instead to shack up in this nice unused barrack (“No man-stink! Who wants to smell food all night long while sleeping?”). The bulk of the raiding party's ogres can be found here, sleeping, eating, or arguing—a dozen in all.

OGRES (12)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

B11 ENTRANCE TO FORT RANNICK



A single set of double doors allows entrance to the central keep of Fort Rannick. The doors are made of oak and have been brutally battered and savaged. Crude repairs have been effected, but the doors still hang somewhat askew.

The ogres did their best to repair these doors, but until an actual skilled carpenter works on them, they'll remain in sad condition. They cannot be locked, but they don't open easily—it takes a successful DC 16 Strength check to pry them open. The entrance leads to area B16.

B12 WATERFALL CAVE



The floor of this cave is dotted with puddles. Patches of pale moss and fungus grow in sheets on the wall, while to the north, a five-foot-wide passageway angles up into darkness. A walkway of soggy planks leads from this opening southeast to a second opening curtained by cascades of falling water.

Apart from the wooden walkway, the floor in this cave is slippery, requiring a successful DC 12 Acrobatics check to navigate.

B13 SECRET ARMORY (CR 4)



The floor, walls, and ceiling of this cool, damp cave are coated from floor to ceiling in soft, dark gray fungus. Several crates are stacked in a nook to the northwest.

This cave was used by the Black Arrows to store weapons in the event of a prolonged siege. Unfortunately, the ogres' assault on the keep came with such sudden force that none of the Black Arrows were able to reach this armory in time to make use of the weapons kept in the crates. A passageway to the east leads to a secret door that opens out behind the new barracks. Just before this door, a side passage winds down under the central keep, connecting to area B37.

CREATURES: Two shocker lizards that wandered away from the larger colony in area B37 have come up here to look for more food. The creatures squeal in surprise when they see the PCs, and hang around only long enough to generate a lethal shock before they attempt to flee to the east and back to area B37.

SHOCKER LIZARDS (2)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	19 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 248)

TREASURE: Apart from a fair supply of mundane weapons (including two dozen longswords, shortswords, daggers, and longbows), one of the crates contains an oilcloth wrapped around six +2 *shocking burst* arrows.

B14 RAVINE (CR 3)



A deep ravine stretches across this cavern, splitting the room in half. Geodes and veins of glittering minerals shimmer along the walls of the chasm, which drops away into the dark. A ten-foot-wide wooden bridge spans the gulf.

The gems glittering along the walls of the chasm, while pretty and shiny, are relatively worthless rock crystal. They do make the walls of the 50-foot-deep chasm very slick and difficult to climb, though—a successful DC 25 Climb check is required to scale these walls.

TRAP: The bridge itself is in poor condition. If more than one Medium creature attempts to cross it at the same time, the bridge collapses.

COLLAPSING BRIDGE

XP	CR
800	3

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** repair

Effect fall (50 ft., 5d6, Reflex DC 20 negates); multiple targets (10-ft. middle section of bridge)

TREASURE: The skeleton of an unlucky halfling thief lies at the bottom of the ravine. His pack contains a broken flask, some prospecting tools, and a pouch with two large garnets, each worth 100 gp. His trusty +1 *mithral short sword* is still sheathed at his side.

B15 CRYPT (CR 7)



The walls of this fairly dry cavern contain twenty seven-foot-wide, two-foot-high niches, in each of which rests the ancient body of a long-dead humanoid. The skeletons bear ceremonial armor and weapons. One of the bodies has been pulled from its niche and lies in a jumble on the ground.

This is where the Black Arrows once interred the remains of their brothers and sisters. The crypt filled far more quickly than the Black Arrows anticipated, and rather than spend more time expanding the crypt, they began sending off their fallen kin in elaborate pyres and then scattering the ashes. No Black Arrow has been buried in this crypt for nearly 30 years—which is unfortunate,

since the last body they interred here has not rested peacefully. The armor and weapons the bodies are buried with are ceremonial only—ever thrifty, the Black Arrows recycle their members' weapons after death.

CREATURE: The last Black Arrow buried here was a bitter, brutal man named Lorgus Fenker. His "accident" while on patrol was rightly suspected of being an arrangement made between the others in his group, but since the leaders of the order at the time felt that his passing was for the best, there was little investigation into the particulars of his fatal fall from a ledge up on the Hook.

Fenker was indeed murdered by his brethren, and his bitter, surly soul rose from the dead a week after he was buried here (several days after the order decided to quit using the crypt). He exists now as a spectre, bound to this crypt by the presence of his bones. He cannot stray farther than the confines of this chamber, but anyone who dares intrude shall feel his wrath.

LORGUS FENKER

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	52

Spectre (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 256)

B16 MAIN HALL



What might once have been a well-maintained entrance hall is now swathed in horror. Dried blood cakes the stone walls; bits and pieces of armor, weaponry, and flesh litter the floor; and flies cloud the air. Tapestries that once bore the insignia of the Black Arrows have been torn from the walls and now lie on the floor in shreds, coated with filth.

The keep is old, its masonry battered by the elements for hundreds of years. The walls are worn and chipped in many places and significantly weakened. Ceiling height in the main keep averages 12 feet—high enough that most of the Kreegs within don't need to stoop.

B17 TOWERS

Each of these round rooms contains a ladder that can be used to access a trap door in the ceiling above (area B28). The ogres are too ungainly to navigate these ladders.

B18 WORKROOM (CR 8)



The lathes, sawhorses, and other tools in this workroom lie in scattered, shattered ruin on the floor. The walls are smeared with gore, in some places forming messy graffiti.

The graffiti, written in Giant, includes such phrases as: "Me Big-a-Big, You-Small-a-Small, I Eat Your Head!" and "You Never Think Me Write All Over with You Bloody Neck, I'm Holding You by Mig-a-Mug and Use You as Paint Brush! Har!"



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CREATURE: The happy painter of these verses is taking a break from his work to chew on the mangled, decapitated body of his latest “paintbrush.” One of the few literate Kreegs, Gragavan is an ogre who fancies himself something of a poet. Shortly after taking the keep, Gragavan found that one of the Black Arrows, a lanky mumbling simpleton named Petter, kept a diary of utterly inane “poetry” that proved even more puerile than his own. He promptly hooked off the ranger’s head and has been using the man’s putrefying corpse as a calligraphy brush ever since. He laughs and hurls Petter at the PCs when he notices them, then draws his weapon and goes to bloody work.

GRAGAVAN KREEG

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	104

Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

B19 ARMORY (CR 5)



This large room is filled with several heavy wooden racks, all bristling with pikes, longswords, and quivers of barbed arrows. The wall where the door once was has been smashed in.

CREATURES: Two ogres are at play here, trying on human-sized suits of armor and helmets, guffawing at each other’s “tiny man clothes” and then shuffling about in them. The two have also started their own collection of heads mounted on the pikes here. Every couple of days, Jaagrath stops by to examine the new additions, claiming the best of the skulls these two have gathered, much to their chagrin. If they hear battle in the keep, they run out, still bedecked in tiny clinging suits of armor and with silly miniscule helms balanced on their giant heads, to join the fray. Both ogres take a –2 penalty on all attack rolls and Reflex saves and to their Armor Class while wearing the awkward clothing.

OGRES (2)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

B20 GUEST QUARTERS

These rooms are where the Black Arrows quartered guests, trainees, and other visitors. The ogres have tossed all of these rooms but haven’t bothered to go out of their way to ruin the furniture—yet.

B21 LIBRARY



A long table with benches to either side sits in this room opposite a bookshelf filled with dozens of books, most of which have been torn from the shelves, mangled, and then messily stuffed back in place.

The rangers used this room as a place to keep important documents about their order, atlases, bestiaries, and other books that held their interest.

B22 STOREROOM



Crates, barrels, and a stack of firewood have been smashed apart and heaped in a tangled pile in the corner of this room. A flight of stairs leads down to the west.

Nothing of value remains in the ruined containers. The stairs double back on themselves after a landing before reaching area B36 below.

B23 INFIRMARY (CR 8)



Once used to house the wounded and sick, this chamber is now a slice of blood-drenched nightmare. Hacked pieces of bodies litter the sick beds. The floor is slick with gore, strewn with mangled organs and heaps of entrails. A dead fat man sits at one of the operating tables, arranged as if he were merrily spooning chunks of his own disembodied organs out of a brown bowl. His guts spill out of a large slash in his belly.

CREATURE: One of Jaagrath’s sons, an unfortunately handsome ogre named Silas, resides here. Although Silas’s body resembles his hulking father, his face was strangely symmetrical and free of warts, bonespurs, and gristle—far too pretty for Jaagrath’s liking. Jaagrath shaved off the entire right side of Silas’ face, leaving a pulped ruin with skull showing through in places. Every week or so, Jaagrath “fixes” his son’s face with his hook, keeping him looking “right.” Silas was the first over the wall on the night of the massacre, taking his own ogre hook to the necks of the sleeping rangers in the barracks before the alarm was raised.

Silas has a bit of a cruel artistic streak in him—his medium is death. The fat man, once a cleric of Erastil who dwelt here, is his latest masterpiece. Silas changes the dead cleric’s pose two or three times a day, often inviting other ogres in so he can make them admire his work and shower him with praise.

SILAS KREEG


XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	104

Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

B24 BARRACKS (CR 7)



These barracks were once comfortable and well-appointed, but they are now filled with nothing but splintered bunks, torn bedding, and smashed tables and chairs.



CREATURES: Four ogres squat and squabble here, constantly arguing over who gets to wear the hollowed-out horse head Grothrak made. Grothrak was murdered by his kinsfolk when he refused to share his “horsey-mask.” Five other ogres have since died in heated battles over the “funny” horse head. If the PCs find a way to exacerbate the argument (perhaps using stealth or magic to place the horse head into one ogre’s sack, or using magic to compel one to claim it for himself), the remaining ogres snatch up clubs and rusty hooks and murder each other with relish.

OGRES (4)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 220)

B25 MESS HALL



This ramshackle area is a mess of smashed tables, broken crockery, and rubble. No living thing stirs here.

Once where the rangers took their meals, this chamber is now just another demolished room.

B26 KITCHEN



This kitchen is in total shambles, as if a cyclone had moved through the room, smashed every bit of furniture, bent every bit of silverware, and partially collapsed the stone fireplace.

When they cook their food, the ogres prefer to use methods like those on display at the cook house (area B6). This room held their interest for a few hours, but now they’ve abandoned it.

B27 PANTRY



All that remains in this room is a half-smashed crate and an untouched barrel.

The ogres raided this pantry early in their stay, moving most of the food into the kitchen to sort. The barrel to the north contains pickled fish—a delicacy whose smell the ogres simply can’t stomach.

B28 RAMPARTS

These stone platforms are shielded by crenellations spaced at even intervals, offering those behind them cover against archer fire and a perfect killing angle on foes charging the keep below.

B29 CHAPEL (CR 10)



The walls within this enormous chamber are mounted with dozens of trophy antlers, some

taken from stags that must have stood as tall as dire bears. Most of the antlers are draped with bits of rotten flesh, strips of skin, or coils of viscera. To the west, a marble altar has been heaped with the mangled remains of at least a half-dozen dead men and women. A crude image of what might be a three-eyed jackal has been painted in blood on the wall above the altar’s alcove.

This chapel, once dedicated to Erastil, was a place of worship for the Black Arrows—the antlers on the wall being trophies offered up to the god of the hunt. The shrine has been thoroughly defiled in every way by the ogres, and converted into a makeshift altar to Lamashtu.

CREATURE: Jaagrath, the dread “pappy” of the Kreegs, doesn’t respond to the sounds of violence elsewhere, assuming his deranged brood can quell any threat. He quietly and calmly sits here, creating taxidermy terrors out of dead rangers, horses, bits of giant eagle, and the many antlers found here. His “masterpieces” hang about the room on bloody hooks—men with eagle heads sewn to their bodies, a horse with a woman’s face where its own face once drooped, dead men with huge sets of antlers jutting from their bodies, and men with stags’ heads and hooves.

Jaagrath Kreeg is “pappy” by blood but also by might. He stands easily 14 feet in height, and his arms are the size of the Mushfens’ largest boa constrictors. He squeezes the life out of foes face-to-face, casually gnawing off cheeks and lips so their screams resonate through his skull (he likes the funny buzzing their cries make in his head). He maintains dominance over the rest of his kin through a number of brutal means ranging from rape to mutilation. None dare disobey his commands.

JAAGRATH KREEG

XP	CR	HP
9,600	10	158

Male ogre barbarian 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 220)

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 7, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +5 natural, –2 rage, –1 size)

hp 158 (11 HD; 4d8+7d12+95)

Fort +16, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2;

DR 2/—

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 human bone ogre hook +20/+15 (2d8+16/19–20/x3)

Ranged javelin +9/+4 (1d8+10)

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

Special Attacks rage (21 rounds/day), rage powers (no escape, renewed vigor [1d8+9 hp], scent)

TACTICS

During Combat Jaagrath is perhaps a bit overconfident in his fighting prowess, but that certainly doesn’t mean he’s a pushover. He rages on the first round of combat, then focuses

his attacks on humans, saving other races for “clean up.”
Morale If Jaagrath is brought below 25 hit points, he attempts to flee to area **B30** to recruit aid, drinking both of his potions as soon as he gets a chance. Once at area **B30**, Jaagrath fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 10, **Con** 24, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 29

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (ogre hook),

Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Climb +16, Intimidate +19, Perception +9

Languages Giant

SQ fast movement

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 hide armor, +1 human bane ogre hook, belt of giant strength +2

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs defeat Jaagrath and use his head or ogre hook as a trophy to intimidate the ogres, they gain a +15 bonus on Intimidate checks. If an Intimidate check beats its required DC by 10, those ogres panic, and rather than taking a penalty on attack rolls, they flee Fort Rannick entirely. Once three groups of ogres flee, word spreads and the remaining ogres flee as well.

B30 COMMANDER'S QUARTERS (CR 11)



The walls of this room are decorated with finely crafted longswords, stuffed animal heads, and a map of the Hook Mountain environs. A large oak table surrounded by several chairs has been smashed to splinters, and an immense bed has similarly been ruined. An open cabinet that once contained several bottles of wine has been crushed as well, and broken bottles and the faint scent of wine lingers around its ruins.

CREATURES: This is where the commander of the Black Arrows, Lamatar, once resided. The current occupant is Jaagrath's mistress and seer, a sorcerer named Dorella. The ogress is attended in turn by one of her lovers, Harlock “Hookmaw” Kreeg. Hookmaw is Jaagrath's son and half-brother. Jaagrath tortured the boy day and night when he was young, and when he came of age, as a special rite of passage, papa pulled his teeth and replaced them with a specially forged set of metal teeth strapped to his face by a too-tight leather harness that squeezes his skull tortuously.

Dorella Kreeg herself is Jaagrath's daughter and wife. Dorella is the only spellcaster among the Kreegs, and is both feared and prized by her kin. The ogres believe she's got the “touch o' spirits,” granting her magic powers. Dorella had her head bashed in by one of her dozens of brothers when she was young. She “ain't never

been right” since, but the nearly fatal head wound seems to have granted her a strange magical gift.

DORELLA KREEG

XP
9,600

CR
10

HP
114

Female ogre sorcerer 8

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +6 natural, +4 shield, -1 size)

hp 114 (12 HD; 4d8+8d6+68)

Fort +12, **Ref** +3, **Will** +10

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee dagger +10/+5 (1d6+4/19-20)

Ranged javelin +6/+1 (1d8+4)

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

Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +10)

4th (3/day)—*confusion* (DC 18)

3rd (5/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 17), *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (DC 15)



JAAGRATH
KREEG



THE HOOK
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BACKGROUND

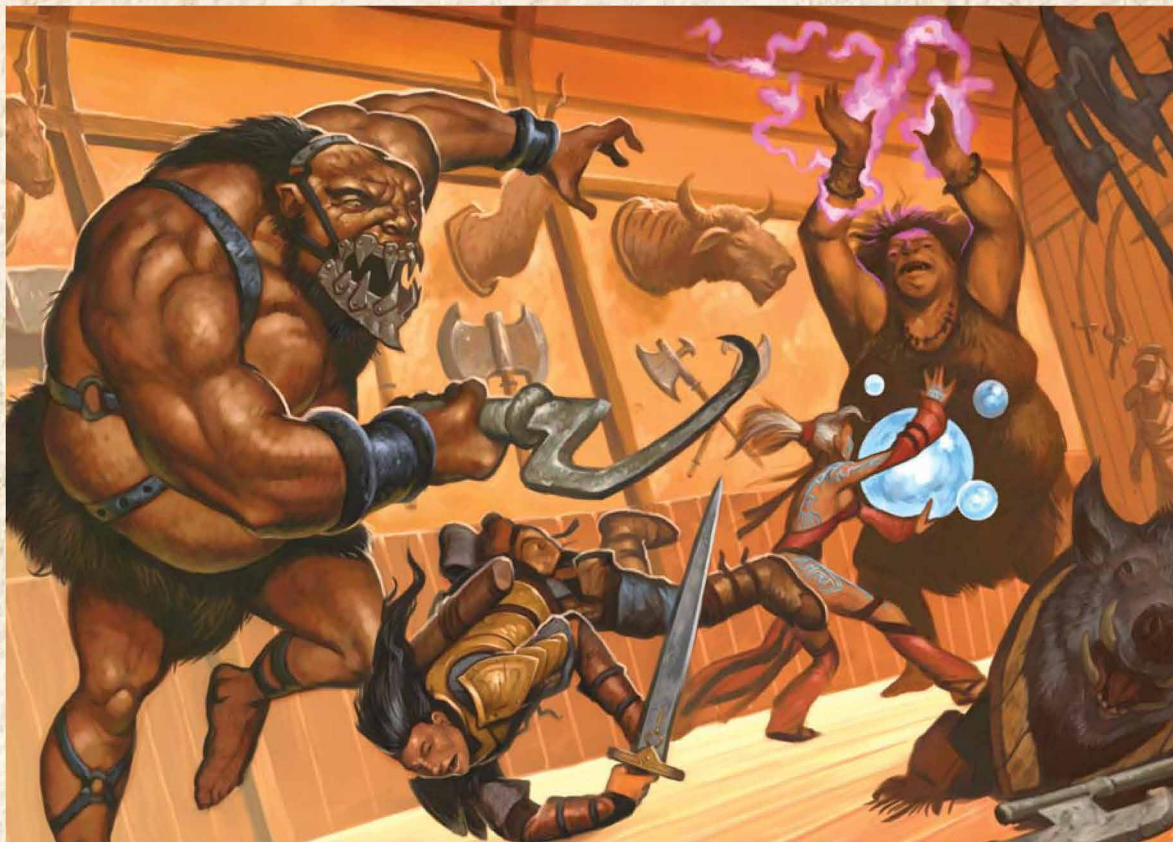
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2nd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 14), *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *mirror image*
 1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*
 0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 14), *ghost sound* (DC 12), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*
Bloodline arcane

TACTICS

Before Combat Dorella casts *mage armor* as soon as she suspects trouble's come to the fort.

During Combat While Hookmaw distracts the PCs, Dorella casts *shield* and *mirror image* before using her spells against them, letting Hookmaw block access to her in melee.

Morale Dorella attempts to escape if brought below 20 hit points, after casting *confusion* to delay pursuit.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 10, **Con** 19, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23

Feats Alertness, Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Iron Will, Spell Focus (enchantment), Toughness

Skills Climb +11, Knowledge (religion) +4, Linguistics -1, Perception +7, Sense Motive +3

Languages Common, Giant

SQ arcane bond (Tickles the rat), bloodline arcana (+1 DC for metamagic spells that increase spell level), metamagic adept (2/day)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *wand of acid arrow* (43 charges); **Other Gear** dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *ring of protection* +1

HARLOCK "HOOKMAW" KREEG

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	104

Male ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

TREASURE: Although the Kreegs have done a number on the contents of this room, they aren't quite observant enough to have noticed that the bottom of the wine cabinet contained a hidden compartment. The compartment is partially smashed open from the top, so only a DC 15 Perception check is required to notice—the latch to open it is broken, so the thin slats of wood above it must be pried away to expose what's hidden within: a flat wooden coffer, a pair of soft green leather boots, and a tiny jewelry box.

The coffer contains dozens and dozens of parchment sheets, all containing beautifully-written love sonnets to someone named "Myriana," who (if the sonnets are to be believed) is so beautiful that the moon itself was "blinded when it spied her dancing on the tarn," and who is "the truest grace to know Whitewillow's soft embrace." A successful DC 30 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check is enough to realize that "Whitewillow" is a section of the Shimmerglens said to be particularly close to one of the portals to the First World.

The boots are a pair of *boots of the mire*. The jewelry box contains a silver locket on a chain; inside the locket is a lock of silky golden hair. A successful DC 22 Knowledge (nature) check is enough to identify this as nymph hair.





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All three of these items are surprises to any of the surviving Black Arrows—none of them knew Lamatar had a creative side, much less a poetic side, and only Kaven knew anything about him having a mistress (although he'll deny knowing it as long as he can). After a few minutes of thought, both Vale and Jakardros agree that Lamatar did in fact leave Fort Rannick for 2 to 3 days at a time, once each month, on what he called his "communion walks," lone treks made through the region, supposedly to put him closer to the realm he had been charged to guard. Jakardros notes that the commander was on just such a walk the night the attack on Fort Rannick came, which further indicates that treachery was involved. How would the ogres have known when exactly to strike the fort unless one of the Black Arrows told them when their commander was leaving the fort for a night?

Both Jakardros and Vale become hopeful upon learning of Lamatar's affair, and cling to the possibility that their beloved commander may yet live, and is only hiding out in Whitewillow—perhaps preparing to strike back against the ogres. If the PCs don't come up with the idea on their own, either of these men can eventually suggest a journey into the Shimmerglens to determine their leader's fate—the results of this expedition are detailed in Part Four.

B31 TRIBUNAL (CR 5)



Smashed chairs and a ruined table sit in this once-regal chamber. Along the curved east wall hang tattered remnants of several regional maps.

CREATURES: Two ogres have hung three Black Arrow ranger corpses from the rafters here, and are in the process of bleeding them into grimy buckets. When they detect intruders, they kick aside the buckets and, with cries of rage, leap forward to attack.

OGRES (2)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

B32 MAP ROOM



Wood and glass cases lie in ruins; the hundreds of sheaves of parchment within are now spilled about, spattered in blood and torn to shreds.

TREASURE: This room contained dozens of maps of the Hook Mountain region and other Varisian locales. Now, only a few remain intact; one detailing several of the smugglers' tunnels beneath Riddleport (worth 50 gp to a smuggler), another detailing the first few poisonous levels of Viperwall (worth 400 gp to an interested party), and another of the hidden paths of Lurkwood's interior

(worth 700 gp to explorers set on investigating the mist-shrouded woods).

B33 STOREROOM

This room was used to store miscellaneous supplies and tools, but nothing of value remains now that the ogres are done with it.

B34 TOWER STAIRS

This flight of stairs ascends to area B35 above.

B35 WATCHTOWER



A cracked bell hanging from a huge oaken frame takes up most of this chamber's upper half. The ringer has been removed and replaced with an upside-down dead ranger, a steel helm strapped tightly to his skull. A broken worktable and three chairs sit below, stained with the dead man's blood.

The ogres loved to play up here, smashing away at the bell with hammers and clubs day and night, until finally Jaagrath killed a few of them to ensure an end to the racket. If the PCs ring the bell, Jaagrath flies into a rage and leaves area B29 to investigate, giving the PCs a good chance to catch the ogre commander off guard and perhaps corner him here where he can't easily escape.

B36 LUCRECIA'S RETREAT (CR 7)



This simple room might have once been a jailer's den, or perhaps even a torture chamber, but someone has gone through great pains to repurpose it. The air now smells of sweet exotic incense, and veils of multicolored silk drape from floor to ceiling throughout. Between the rustlings of the veils, glimpses of giant cushions are revealed. The floor is strewn with luxuriant red throw rugs and sheets.

CREATURE: After abandoning her pleasure barge *Paradise* on the evening of the assault on Fort Rannick, Lucrecia made her way north to the keep to seek temporary quarters here. Jaagrath and his ogres recognized the *Sihedron medallion* she wore and were quick to offer her lodging in the fort while she waited for the rains and coming flood to finish the work she had started in Turtleback Ferry.

Lucrecia prefers to spend her time in her humanoid form: an aristocratic-looking human woman with fire-red hair and alabaster skin. Her face is pure elegance—high cheekbones, demure but lust-stirring green eyes, and perfectly shaped eyebrows to accent them. Her true form is similar from the waist up, while from the waist down she has the body of an emerald green snake.

Lucrecia greets intruders with open arms and a smile—she has no confusion about the PCs being here to do her harm, but wants to offer them a chance to join her masters before she kills them—going so far as to say “Mokmurian would love to meet you!” If the PCs rebuff her, she shrugs coyly, assumes her true form, and attacks.

If Kaven is still with the PCs, Lucrecia can't resist twisting her dagger. When he reacts to her presence here with obvious guilt and shock, she sweetly compliments him on a job well done—“These oafish Kreegs would have had quite a lot of trouble taking Rannick without the lovely details you provided us. Well done, my love!” She hopes to see the PCs tear the man apart—party strife does Lucrecia's cold heart good.



LUCRECIA

LUCRECIA

XP	CR	HP
9,600	10	141

Female lamia matriarch sorcerer 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 175)
CE Large monstrous humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 141 (14 HD; 12d10+2d6+68)

Fort +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14

Immune mind-affecting; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *keen dagger* +18/+13/+8 (1d4+8/17-20 +1 Wisdom drain on first strike in a round), mwk dagger +18/+13/+8 (1d4+7/17-20) or touch +14 (1d4 Wisdom drain+10)

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

Special Attacks Wisdom drain

Lamia Matriarch Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +19)

At will—*charm monster* (DC 21), *ventriloquism* (DC 18)

3/day—*deep slumber* (DC 20), *dream*, *major image* (DC 20), *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 20)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +15)

10/day—laughing touch

Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +15)

4th (4/day)—*dimension door*

3rd (7/day)—*cure critical wounds*, *haste*

2nd (8/day)—*enthrall* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *invisibility*

1st (8/day)—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *sanctuary* (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*

Bloodline Fey

TACTICS

Before Combat Lucrecia casts *mage armor* as soon as she becomes aware of trouble in the keep above (or in the shocker lizard caves in area B37).

During Combat Lucrecia assumes her true form on the first round of combat, preferring to fight with her daggers and activating *false life* on the first round of combat. If faced with overwhelming odds or brought below 80 hit points, she attempts to flee, recover, and then attack the PCs again in an area where she has more room to move around so she can utilize her spells more effectively.

Morale Lucrecia attempts to flee to the Hook Mountain clanhold if brought below 40 hit points—if she escapes, she'll be encountered at Barl Breakbones' side in area D9.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 21, **Con** 19, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 36 (can't be tripped)

Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Critical (dagger), Inscribe Magical Tattoo, Power Attack, Still Spell, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills **Acrobatics** +19, **Bluff** +24, **Craft** (tattoos) +13, **Knowledge** (arcana) +20, **Knowledge** (local) +10, **Linguistics** +6, **Sense**

Motive +16, Spellcraft +20, Swim +17
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Giant, Sylvan, Thassilonian
SQ *bloodline arcana* (+2 DC for compulsion spells), *change shape* (fixed Medium humanoid form, *alter self*)
Combat Gear *wand of scorching ray* (22 charges); **Other Gear** +1 keen dagger, masterwork dagger, *lesser caster's tattoo*, *Sihedron medallion*, gold and pearl ring (worth 300 gp), silver necklace (worth 200 gp), scroll of *Sihedron sacrifices* (see *Treasure*, below)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Magic Tattoo Lucrecia used her *Inscribe Magical Tattoo* feat to give herself a *lesser caster's tattoo*. This magical tattoo looks like a *Sihedron* rune—tattooed on her left breast, it grants her the ability to enhance a 3rd-level or lower spell she casts with *Still Spell* and *Silent Spell*. She can do this once per day as a swift action. This feat and magical tattoo are detailed in full on page 16 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic*.

TREASURE: Lucrecia carries a single scroll in a small scroll tube on which she has listed every citizen of Turtleback Ferry who received a *Sihedron* tattoo from her as “favorite customers of *Paradise*.” Kaven’s name is on this list with a circle around it. The list itself bears only this intriguing header: “Those who have agreed to grant their greed to the master’s need.”

B36a – B36h CELLS



These grimy, blood-spattered cells are empty save some fetid straw mats and vermin-ridden blankets.

These cells were until recently occupied by captives and a few sorry, bedraggled rangers of the Black Arrows. Now, however, they are empty, their former occupants dead and eaten. If the PCs are having a particularly bad time retaking the fort or are severely overmatched, you can place additional surviving Black Arrows in these cells, waiting for rescue. They’ll need healing and gear, but once freed are eager to aid in retaking the fort. Some might be young trainees and rangers of the fort who, if armed, can aid the PCs.

B37 LIZARD WARRENS (CR 9)



These dank caves of dirt and stone wind and bend dizzily, narrowing to as small as three feet wide at points. In places, claws of exposed tree roots hang from the ceiling.

CREATURES: These winding tunnels are the nesting ground for a large pack of shocker lizards that have infested the place for decades. Introduced secretly to the caves years ago by a Black Arrow who had a soft spot for the cute little things, the lizards took to the environs with an unexpected tenacity. Since that ranger’s death, the lizards

have established a fairly stable ecosystem here, feeding happily on the grubs, cockroaches, and centipedes that scuttle around the caves. The fact that their presence keeps these vermin from infesting the keep above was enough (barely) for the rest of the Black Arrows to leave the lizards be, but during shocker lizard mating season the rangers took care to light stacks of bitterbark wood chips (the scent of which the lizards find repugnant) to keep them from swarming up into the castle.

The shocker lizards are relatively nonaggressive as long as intruders move slowly through the warrens, don’t approach too closely to any of the several egg mounds in the caves, and don’t hurt the lizards. If any of these conditions are broken, the dozen adult lizards in the warrens quickly rise to defend their home.

SHOCKER LIZARDS (12)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	19 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 248)

RANNICK RECLAIMED

With the ogres slaughtered to the last or driven back up the mountainside, the PCs liberate Fort Rannick. Yet the Order of the Black Arrows remains dead; Vale and Jakardros alone cannot carry the torch, as much as they might wish to—they’ll need help.

Although Fort Rannick was built by funds from Magnimar over 4 decades ago, it’s been under the jurisdiction of Turtleback Ferry for most of that time. When Mayor Maelin Shreed learns of the fate of the Black Arrows and that the PCs have defeated the ogres who claimed the keep, he is quite impressed and sends a new group of rangers to occupy the fort, placing them under Jakardros’s command. If you wish, Magnimar could even place the PCs in charge of Fort Rannick, although the repercussions of the party’s responsibility for the fort in such a case are beyond the scope of this adventure.

In any event, once the PCs reclaim the fort, where they go next is largely left up to them. If they simply decide to return to Magnimar to report on what happened to the fort in person, proceed with the events detailed in Part Three. Alternatively, you can use Jakardros and Vale to provide guidance to the PCs if they don’t take matters into their own hands and follow up on the clues they discovered in the fort. Based on what the PCs have learned and accomplished so far, the primary options can be summarized as follows. Note that the exact order in which the PCs tackle the remaining three parts of this chapter are largely irrelevant—they’re presented in this book in the most likely order for them to occur, but there’s no reason why the PCs can’t tackle *Barl* and the ogres at the top of Hook Mountain before they investigate *Skull’s Crossing* or the *Shimmerglens*. If they do attempt these parts out of order, though, they may



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

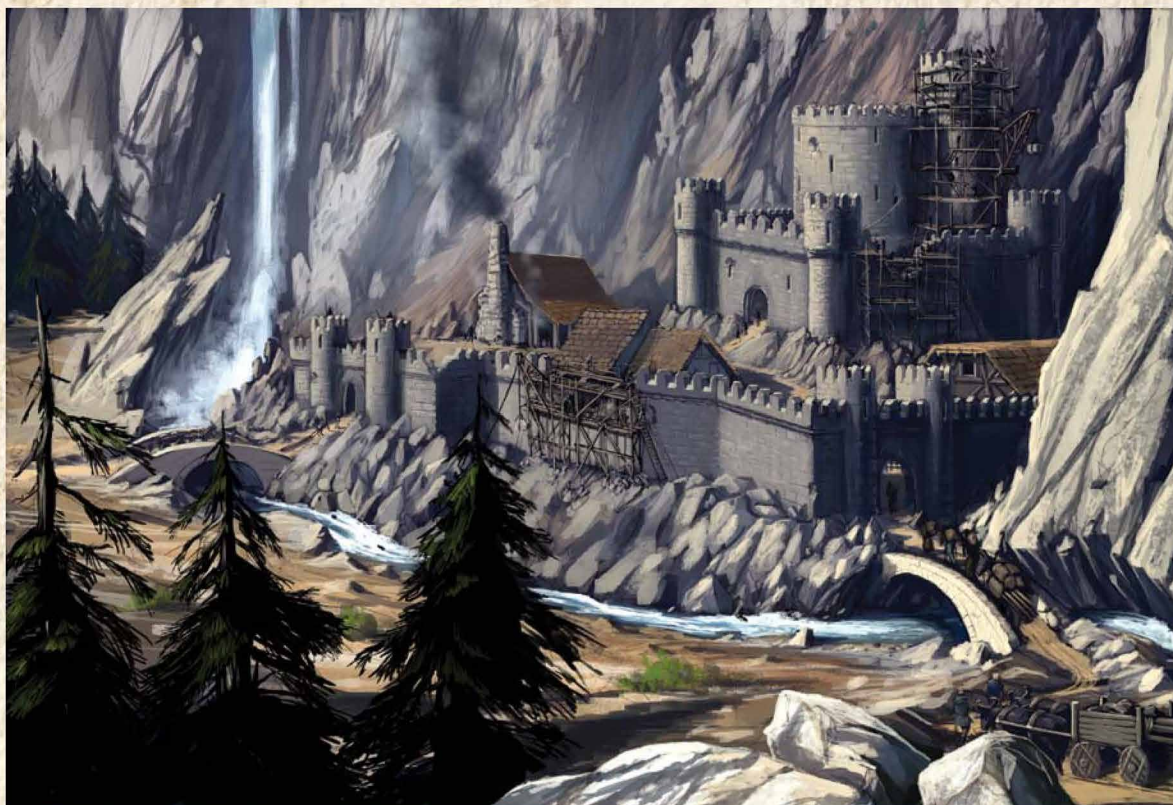
PART ONE: IN THE HOOK’S SHADOW

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well find themselves unprepared for the difficulty of the encounters that take place!

LUCRECIA'S LIST OF NAMES: This mysterious list can help lead players into wondering exactly why they've encountered so many instances of villains carving or tattooing the Sihedron onto their victims, and can also compel them to return to Turtleback Ferry to follow up on the tattoos. The list can also reveal Kaven as a traitor, if this revelation has not yet occurred. While there's relatively little to learn from the tattooed inhabitants of Turtleback Ferry, if the PCs head back to the village, you can immediately proceed with Part Three.

SEARCHING FOR THE COMMANDER: Finally, even if the PCs don't find the clues in Lamatar's chambers in the fort, Jakardros and Vale are eager to find out what happened to their commander. They can tell the PCs he'd made one of his "communion walks" into the Shimmerglens the night of the raid—if the PCs take the bait and head into the swamps, continue with Part Four.

EXPLORING HOOK MOUNTAIN: Whether it's simply out of curiosity, or whether the PCs are seeking to strike at the Kreeg clanhold immediately, if they wish to explore Hook Mountain, you can have them encounter a few wandering monsters before eventually discovering the clan's cave near the peak—continue with Part Five.

REBUILDING RANNICK

The remainder of *Rise of the Runelords* is destined to take the PCs even deeper into the wilds of Varisia, and as such they won't be spending much time in the

Hook Mountain region after this adventure—yet if the PCs display an interest in helping to rebuild Fort Rannick and get it back on its feet, the Black Arrows could certainly use the help! Full details and rules for how to build and maintain a castle are beyond the scope of this adventure, but one thing that you could do fairly easily is simply assume that the Black Arrows themselves are handling that part of Fort Rannick's recovery. In this case, as certain needs arise, the Black Arrows can contact the PCs for aid, requesting them to undertake small side missions. Magnimar soon sends Fort Rannick a healthy fund to help rebuild, and this allows the Black Arrows to offer cash rewards of 2,500 gp per mission accomplished by the PCs. Several example missions that the Black Arrows might send the PCs on are mentioned briefly below.

FOULED WATERS: The cascade at area B9 is the fort's primary source of fresh water, so when the waters become polluted, the Black Arrows send the PCs up the mountainside to defeat the source—a green hag alchemist named Tevexia who's allied with the Kreegs.

TROLL TROUBLES: When the Kreegs are pushed back, the trolls of several nearby tribes grow more aggressive to fill the gap—find their chieftain and kill him!

WE NEED A MASON! The PCs are asked to travel downriver to Ilurian to pick up and escort a talented dwarven stonemason named Vrankus to Rannick, but when they show up, Vrankus has problems of his own—a local gang of criminals has kidnapped his wife, and until she's rescued, he won't leave town.





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

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PART THREE: DOWN COMES THE RAIN

WINTER RISES, BUT BEFORE HER COLD BREATH DESCENDS ON THE HOOK, THE SKIES DARKEN LIKE BLOOD-MUDDIED WATER, AND OMINOUS CLOUDS WRITHE ON THE HORIZON, BRINGING THE NEAR-CONSTANT RAIN TO NEW HEIGHTS OF TORRENTIAL DOWNPOURS. STORMS GO ON FOR DAYS WITHOUT THE SUN SO MUCH AS PEEKING FROM BEHIND HER CLOUDY VEIL, AND THE RIVERS AND LAKES BEGIN TO SWELL. PURE MISERY REIGNS AS COLD AND WET BECOME THE ORDER OF EVERY DAY, AND MUD SEEMS TO BEFOUL EVERY SQUARE FOOT OF THE REGION... WILL THIS RAIN NEVER END?

These unnatural rains are all part of the evil design Mokmurian's minions have for the region. Barl Breakbones' primary goal on Hook Mountain is to push the Kreeg ogres to forge weapons for the army gathering on the Storval Plateau, and then to personally lead the ogres up to join that army. The destruction of Fort Rannick was merely an idle diversion for the stone giant. Less of a diversion are the plans Lucrecia has for Turtleback Ferry. With the aid of a coven of annis hags allied with the Kreegs, Barl and Lucrecia hit upon the plan to mark as many of the residents of Turtleback Ferry for Karzoug's *runewell* as possible and then flood the village, killing hundreds and giving their runelord a sudden and unexpected boost of soul energy. To engineer the flood, Barl sent a group of ogres to Skull's Crossing, the immense dam that holds back the waters of the Storval Deep, with orders to begin weakening the structure. At the same time, the annis coven used their *control weather* ability to ensure constant rain in the region so that the waters near the Storval side of the dam are properly swollen. The combination, Barl hopes, should soon result in a catastrophic flood. Of course, two factors Barl wasn't counting on were the PCs and a tribe of trolls who dwell in Skull's Crossing and didn't take lightly to ogres coming to break down their home.

As the ogres work at the dam, hammering at it with their picks and hooks, the rhythmic sounds sing through the massive stones of the dam and into the waters of the Storval Deep, where one of the lake's most notorious denizens takes notice. This is the monster Black Magga, and on this day, she arrives at the dam to investigate the strange sounds. Finding several ogres hacking away at the stone near the dam's eastern side, she attacks, eager to taste these large, juicy-looking morsels. As she surges up onto the dam to do so, her bulk proves the final straw and the ogre-weakened section collapses. Black Magga, several ogres, and hundreds of tons of stone fall down along the face into the valley below, followed by a deluge of water. It doesn't take long for the flood to reach Turtleback Ferry.

THE TURTLEBACK FLOOD

The timing of this chapter's initial events are left to you to stage—the best time to have the flood hit Turtleback Ferry is just before the PCs return to town for the first time after they finish Part Two, but you can have the flood hit at any time—even before the PCs are done clearing out Fort Rannick, if you wish.

If the PCs don't conveniently head back to Turtleback Ferry, you can have one of the panicked villagers come to beg help of them—this man is a hunter named Bran Fered who risked the weather and possible ogre attack to ride up to Fort Rannick to, hopefully, find the PCs and get their help in evacuating the village before the floodwaters swallow it whole.

There should be little time to prepare. Press upon the PCs that if they do not depart immediately, they stand little chance of saving the citizens of Turtleback Ferry. Unless the PCs can all fly, they must hurry if they wish to use the road to reach Turtleback Ferry, for it would seem that the floodwaters of the rising Skull River will swamp it within hours. In fact, the flooding won't reach the point where the roads are washed away quite yet (the damage Black Magga did to the dam wasn't quite that extensive), but it should spur the PCs on nonetheless. As long as they make haste, they should reach Turtleback Ferry in time to help. When the PCs arrive on the scene, read them the following.



The village of Turtleback Ferry is drowning. The muddy, surging waters of the Skull River tear through the center of the community to fill Claybottom Lake with a terrible fury—many of the buildings that once sat comfortably on the river's banks are already flooding and in danger of collapsing from the rushing water. A group of children and a woman huddle aboard one of the old turtleshell ferryboats, the tiny flood-bashed vessel lodged up against the general store and threatening to capsize at any moment. Beyond, the town's church stands solid, its foundations already three feet deep in floodwaters.

Frantic movement is visible in the upstairs windows as townsfolk trapped inside rush about in a desperate attempt to save scriptures, comfort the sick, and pray for deliverance.

The extent of the floodwaters is shown on the map of Turtleback Ferry on page 394 via the dotted line. The floodwaters themselves are swift and treacherous—it's a DC 25 Swim check to navigate them.

SAVING THE SCHOOLCHILDREN (CR 5)

When the flash flood struck, **TILLIA HENKENSEN** (NG female human expert 2) was instructing a class of young boys and girls in the schoolhouse. As the floodwaters poured into the front door of the riverfront building, Tillia and her class evacuated and sought out one of the ferries for shelter, but were then pinned to the side of the general store by the rushing water before they could reach safety on the shore. They have languished here for the past several hours, watching the waters rise. And as the PCs arrive, a new threat makes itself clear.

CREATURE: The villagers are not the only ones uprooted by the flood. A 16-foot-long nightbelly boa, one of the more dangerous predators to ply the river, was dislodged by the waters several miles upstream and has been carried by the current all the way to the village. As the PCs attempt to mount a rescue, the waters carry the snake up against the side of the ferry. The constrictor rises from the water with a loud hiss and attacks, attempting to constrict and swallow young Tabitha Kramm, pigtails, freckles, and all. Tillia Henkenson screams along with the rest of the children, powerless to stop the ravenous reptile. This task falls to the PCs.

NIGHTBELLY BOA

XP	CR	HP
1,600	5	59

Variant constrictor snake (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 255)

N Large animal

Init +3; **Senses** scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 59 (7d8+28)

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d8+10 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks constrict (1d6+10)

TACTICS

During Combat The boa immediately switches its attention to the PCs as soon as they attack, ignoring the schoolchildren.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, the boa flees.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +13 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 26 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +11 (+7 when jumping), Climb +15, Perception +14, Stealth +9, Swim +19

STORY AWARD: If the PCs rescue the children and the schoolmarm, award them 4,800 XP. In addition, Tillia Henkenson gushes all over them and sends fresh-baked pies to Rannick every week thereafter in gratitude.

BLACK MAGGA RISES (CR 15)

Not long after the PCs rescue the schoolchildren, something more harrowing develops. Black Magga herself, damaged from her fall and furious at the sudden awkward turn of events, comes into town.

Give the PCs a DC 20 Perception check. Those who succeed notice what at first appears to be a huge black tree being swept downriver on a collision course with the church. Moments before the "tree" hits, it submerges. A few moments later, the floodwaters surge violently, and with a thunderous roar, legendary Black Magga rises from the flood.

CREATURE: The sight of the immense monster—its primeval head rising as high as the church steeple—sends the villagers of Turtleback Ferry into a blind panic. No one even notices that the rains have stopped, and that perhaps the flood waters are already beginning to slow. For now, the spectacle of the lake monster seemingly preparing to destroy the church is all that matters.

If left to her own devices, that is precisely what Black Magga does. She takes less than 5 minutes to reduce the chapel to rubble, and when she's done, nothing remains—the two dozen villagers who had sought shelter within are either crushed to death or eaten by the ravenous menace.

It's unlikely that the PCs are much of a match for Black Magga, even in her current damaged state. Yet fortunately for them, they need not slay her to drive her off. If the PCs engage the monster, she fights back for only a few rounds before fleeing into Claybottom Lake (see her tactics below).

BLACK MAGGA

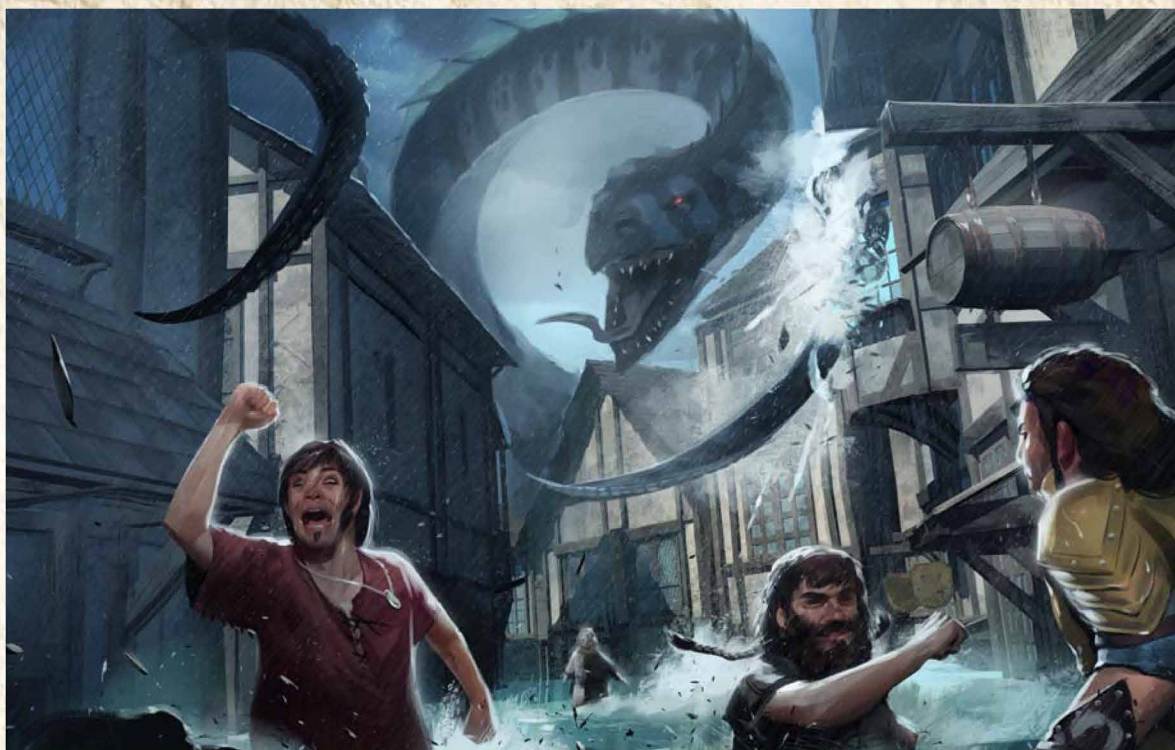
XP	CR	HP
51,200	15	232

hp 232 (currently 152; see page 406)

TACTICS

During Combat On the first round of combat, Black Magga uses her breath of madness ability on the PCs. On the second round, she attacks the PCs, moving up to one of them to bite. On the third round, she repeats this tactic, adding her tentacles if she wasn't able to make a full-attack action on the second round.

Morale Black Magga retreats on the fourth round of combat, dropping any foes she's currently grappling, and deciding that tangling with these unknown enemies is not currently in



her best interest. Alternatively, she retreats if the PCs bring her below 80 hit points before the fourth round. Abandoning Turtleback Ferry and the PCs (for now), she surges downriver (possibly destroying a few minor buildings as she crashes by) and vanishes into the depths of Claybottom Lake.

DEVELOPMENT: After Black Magga is forced to retreat, a cheer rises from the villagers who have gathered on the shores to watch. It takes only a moment longer for them to notice that the floodwaters seem to be receding.

It should be obvious that the villagers' initial fear that Skull's Crossing has burst has not been borne out, yet the sudden rush of water seems to indicate something dire has happened. Several locals certainly recognize Black Magga from local legend and can explain that the monster was said to dwell in the Storval Deep, not in Skull River.

All signs point north—something must have happened at Skull's Crossing. When, in the past, storms threatened to spill over the dam, the structure's floodgates opened automatically to release water pressure in a controlled flow. None in Turtleback Ferry know exactly how the mechanism for opening the floodgates works, as Skull's Crossing has long been the den of a tribe of trolls known as the Skulltakers. Yet as long as anyone can remember, the floodgates have functioned without fault. If the floodgates are malfunctioning, someone needs to brave the wrath of the Skulltaker trolls to determine what, if anything, can be done to repair the ancient Thassilonian structure before a cataclysmic flood washes the entire region away.

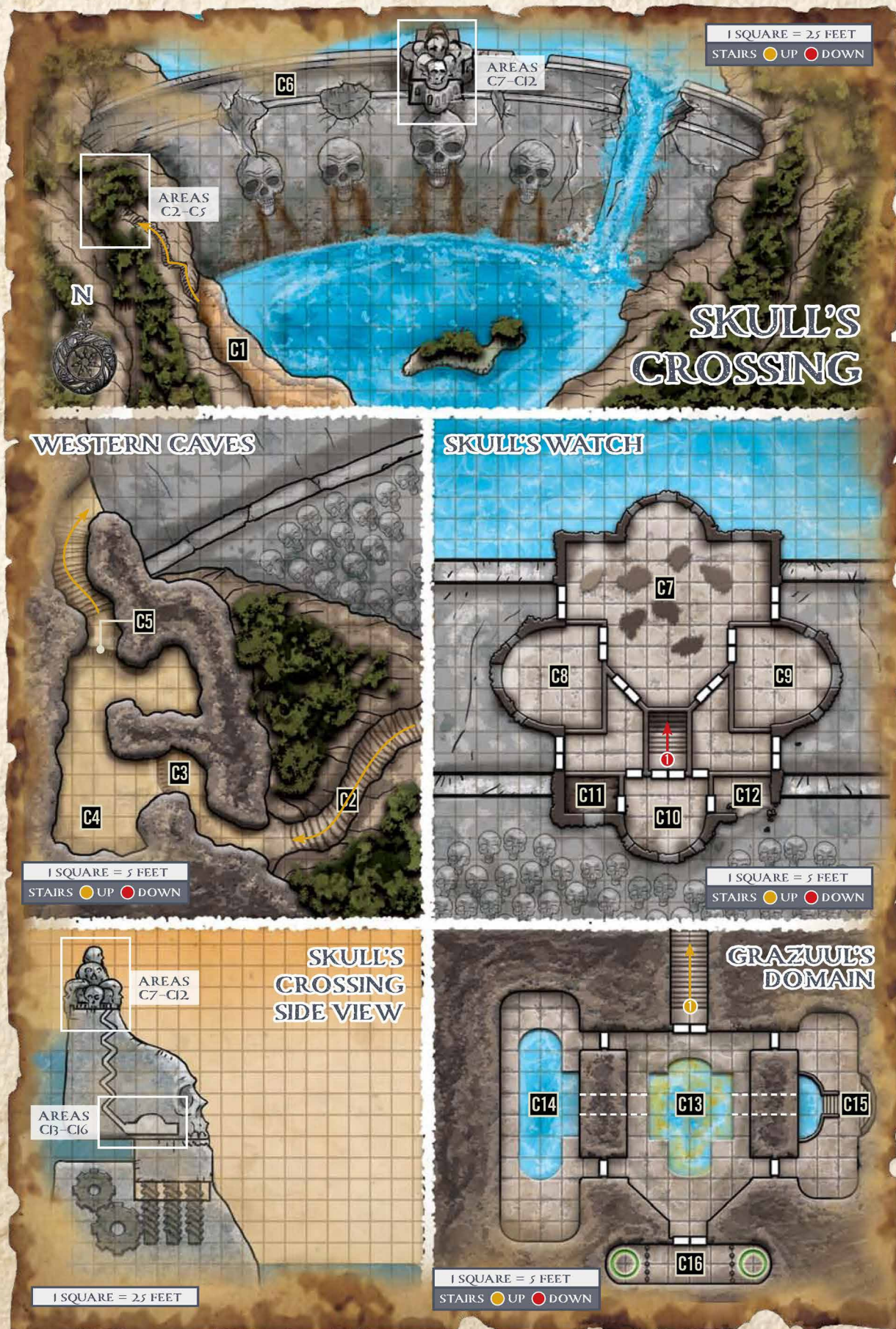
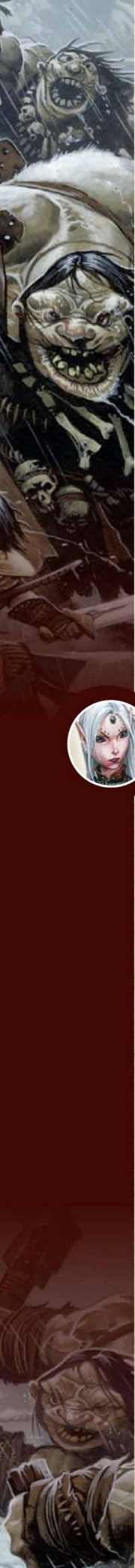
Turtleback Ferry is far from a rich village, but if the PCs can prevent a more deadly flood by opening the floodgates, Mayor Shreed promises the PCs a reward of 1,000 gp. He can be talked up to as high as 2,000 gp with a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check.

STORY AWARD: For driving off Black Magga, award the PCs 19,200 XP—unless they managed to kill the monster in the few rounds of combat for which it remained, in which case they instead earn the full XP award for defeating a CR 15 foe.

SKULL'S CROSSING

Skull's Crossing was one of the final—and perhaps most ambitious—projects Runelord Karzoug's giants erected. Much of the stone used to craft the towering monuments scattered throughout Varisia was taken from an immense quarry in the heart of the Storval Plateau. It took centuries, but near the end, the quarry finally played out and all that remained was a vast canyon. Karzoug had little use for or interest in the ugly scar, and so ordered the construction of Skull's Crossing at its southern end to transform the quarry into the region's largest lake.

As with many of his projects that didn't feature his own countenance, the dam incorporated one of Karzoug's favorite design elements—the human skull. The colossal dam is decorated with thousands of them. Five immense skulls adorn the center of the dam's face—ancient machinery built into the dam allowed the jaws of these skulls to be opened or closed to act as floodgates should the waters of the Storval Rise ever flow too high.





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This machinery still functions, but the source of power, a pair of pit fiends imprisoned in life-draining magic circles, has faltered. If the PCs hope to save Turtleback Ferry, they must not only defeat the ogres bent on destroying the dam and the trolls who have claimed it as their lair—they must also find a way to power the floodgates one more time, perhaps with the aid of a dying pit fiend who has powered Skull's Crossing for 10,000 years.

C1 WESTERN SHORE



Spanning the great breadth of the gorge is Skull's Crossing. The massive wall of stone holds back the waters of the Storval Deep—but only just. Thousands of skulls have been carved into the dam's face, with five larger ones decorating the middle length. The easternmost of these immense skulls is all but hidden by a steady flow of cascading water pouring through what appears to be a recent break in the dam. For now, the ancient dam seems to be holding its own against the Storval Deep, but unless these rains end soon, the recent flood looks to be but a minor precursor to a fantastic disaster.

The eastern slopes of the gorge are sheer and slick with rain, but to the west, a narrow stone stairway, its edge decorated with hundreds of poles bearing the skulls of as many different creatures, winds up to a cave mouth near the western rim of the dam itself.

The break in the dam was where Black Magga attacked the ogres and inadvertently finished the job that they started. Since then, the ogres have relocated to the other side of the dam at area C6 to continue their work. The rain starts again not long after the PCs arrive here, but before it does, a DC 20 Perception check is enough for them to notice several lumbering shapes moving about on the dam's upper reach.

C2 THE STAIRWAY OF SKULLS



A seven-foot-wide winding stairway of stone climbs the cliff face here, reaching a height of nearly two hundred feet before ending at a cave mouth above. Hundreds of stakes line the edges of the stairway, many of them decorated with skulls—some animal, some humanoid, all marked with a strange skull-shaped rune on the brow.

Anyone who speaks Giant recognizes the runes on the skulls as warnings—these are territory markers for the Skultaker trolls who dwell in the region. The stairs themselves are sized for Large creatures, and as such require a DC 7 Climb check for Medium or smaller folk to ascend. A fall results in a plummet of 1d10x10 feet before the victim reaches one of the many narrow ledges that line the cliff face.

C3 ETTIN'S DOORSTEP



The short passageway ends in a small alcove, but to the west, a fifteen-foot-high ledge provides access to a larger cave beyond.

It's a DC 15 Climb check to scramble up the ledge, since the surface is so crumbly. Worse, the crumbling pebbles impart a -4 penalty on Stealth checks—Gorger and Chaw is likely to hear anyone trying to get into his home via this route.

C4 GORGER AND CHAW'S LAIR (CR 6)



The air in this forty-foot-high cave is thankfully freshened by a brisk breeze whistling through from the north, yet the dozens of mostly eaten firepelts, deer, and even a few humans heaped along the walls fill the room with a stomach-turning stink.

CREATURE: This cave has long been the lair of an ettin named Gorger and Chaw. When the Skultaker trolls moved into the region, they formed an alliance with the ettin—as long as he left the dam itself to the trolls and served as a guard, protecting this approach to its heights from intruders, he would be allowed to remain in the region. Gorger and Chaw saw no problem with this arrangement, since there's nothing to interest him up on the dam anyway. Ever since that time, he's been regarded as an honorary member of the Skultaker tribe.

When the ogres arrived, Gorger and Chaw was initially inclined to kill them, but when the ogres offered the ettin a hefty bribe of several delicious smoked humans, Gorger and Chaw decided to look the other way. Now, the ettin is wracked with guilt about failing the Skultaker tribe, and is afraid to head up to the dam to help the tribe fight the ogres for fear that the trolls will smell his treachery. He sees the PCs' arrival as an opportunity to prove his loyalty to the tribe, and attacks them on sight with the battle cry "YOU NO BRIBE ME! I SMASH YOU FOR SKULTAKERS!"

GORGER AND CHAW

XP	CR	HP
2,400	6	65

Ettin (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 130)

TREASURE: The ettin keeps his treasure in a disorganized heap near his collection of sleeping furs in the northeastern cave. The loot consists of 693 gp; 1,240 sp; a velvet pouch containing six 100 gp pearls; a *phylactery of positive channeling*; and an ivory scroll tube inset with strips of jade (itself worth 300 gp) that contains a *scroll of cone of cold*, a *scroll of hold monster*, and a *scroll of telekinesis*.

C5 UPPER PASSAGE

As with the one in area C3, the 15-foot-high ledge at the southern end requires a DC 15 Climb check to scale. The stairs above lead up to the top of the dam itself.

C6 OGRE DEMOLITION CREW (CR 8)



The upper walk of Skull's Crossing is relatively clear of rubble, though a three-inch layer of water has pooled across much of its surface. Here and there, sections of the dam's surface have crumbled away, although this damage appears relatively old. A tower of skull-shaped domes sits at the center of the dam's walk. To the north surge the choppy waters of the Storval Deep, while to the south, the slope of the dam's face drops away nearly three hundred feet to a muddy lake below.

Anyone who walks along the dam's edge must make a DC 12 Acrobatics check, as the rock along the edges is particularly slippery with algae and water. A fall off the north side results in a short drop into the stormy water—fallers take no damage, but it's a DC 15 Swim check to stay afloat. A fall off the south side is a rough tumble down the steeply sloped surface into the water far below for 20d6 points of damage.

CREATURES: Sent by Barl Breakbones himself, the team of ogre demolitionists charged with weakening Skull's Crossing originally numbered two dozen. After several fights with the Skultaker trolls and the disaster to the east when Black Magga attacked, however, this group is down to only four miserable, tired, and sick ogres led by a fighter named Malugus. Jaagath's third son, Malugus initially viewed the task of destroying Skull's Crossing as a tremendous honor, but now he's close to giving up on the entire thing and fleeing east into the Wyvern Mountains. Malugus and his ogres have just recently reached this side of the dam after fighting their way through area C7, and while he takes a nice long break sitting on a block of stone in the rain, he has put his four remaining hench-ogres to work hammering their hooks against the stone.

All five ogres are exhausted from the work and conditions. They move at half speed and take a -6 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. Each ogre's CR has been reduced by 1 to account for this exhaustion.

MALUGUS

XP	CR	HP
3,200	7	104

Male exhausted ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

EXHAUSTED OGRES (4)

XP	CR	HP
600 each	2	30 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

C7 – C12 SKULL'S WATCH

The two northern sets of double doors that lead into this structure have been repeatedly smashed by the ogres, only to be hastily repaired by the Skultaker trolls who dwell inside. The doors no longer open, and must be pushed down with a DC 24 Strength check to access area C7. The two sets of southern doors are intact and barred from the inside—they can be forced open with a DC 28 Strength check. The "windows" into the structure are in fact the eye sockets of the skull-shaped facade; they're 5 feet in diameter and 10 feet off the ground. It's a DC 10 Climb check to scramble up to one of them, but entry through any of these windows is perhaps the simplest way into Skull's Watch.

C7 BATTLEFIELD (CR 9)



Piles of rubble dominate this large room, along with bits of flesh, broken weapons, splashes of blood, and a few dead ogres that have been torn limb from limb. Wind and rain howl through circular openings to the north that look out over the Storval Deep, and puddles of water have collected on the floor. Thick sheets of rosy green fungus grow along the walls here, winding in through the windows and through numerous cracks in the domed ceiling thirty feet above; behind the fungal vines, the walls are decorated with hundreds of skull-shaped carvings.

CREATURES: Although the trolls recovered quickly from the ogre attacks, several of them perished when the ogres hit on the idea of throwing trolls over the edge of the dam once they were beaten unconscious in battle, drowning the trolls before they regenerated back to consciousness. All that remain now are four trolls. They've taken the time to hide among the fungus hanging down along the walls, and while they're expecting ogres, they react to the PCs' intrusion with the same anger and shrieking wrath.

TROLLS (4)

XP	CR	HP
1,600 each	5	63 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 268)

C8 – C9 SKULTAKER DENS



The walls of this room are thick with green rosy fungus that hangs down over several windows, almost like curtains. Several large nests made of the stuff cover the floor.

These rooms were used by the Skultakers as lairs, but now that so few remain, they've been all but abandoned.

TREASURE: A DC 25 Perception check in area C9 reveals a loose stone near the base of the southern wall that hides a small cache of treasure one of the trolls hid from his

kin. The cache consists of a cracked emerald worth 400 gp, a bent gold comb that looks like a behir (with its legs comprising the comb's teeth) with tiny pearls for eyes worth 850 gp, and a pair of lacy pink *gloves of swimming and climbing* that were too small and effeminate for the troll to wear (but since they never grow dirty and always smell faintly of lilacs, the troll was strangely intrigued by them).

C10 OBSERVATION DECK



Three round windows in this room look out over the southern view from Skull's Crossing. Additional skull carvings decorate the walls, ceiling, and even the floor. In the middle of the north wall stand massive stone double doors, their smooth surfaces smeared with graffiti written in dried blood.

Though unlocked, the double doors are exceptionally heavy, and their hinges are old and gritty. A DC 22 Strength check is required to open them. The graffiti, written by the trolls in Giant, reads: "BELOW DWELLS WET PAPA GRAZUUL! ALL HAIL WET PAPA GRAZUUL!"

Beyond the doors, a flight of stone steps leads down into the darkness, descending 150 feet to area C13.

C11 STOREROOM



This room is nearly clogged with thick coils of the strange, vinelike fungal growths, transforming the chamber into a miniature jungle that reeks of damp mold and rot.

Although all of this fungus is harmless, the thickness with which the stuff grows in here may intrigue the PCs. The reason behind the thick growths is mundane—the trolls simply never used this room and never cleared the stuff out.

C12 COLLAPSED ROOM



The southeastern section of this ancient room has collapsed away, leaving a treacherous-looking gap in the wall overlooking the lake far below.

Although the collapse looks dangerous, the room itself remains stable. This unofficial entrance to Skull's Watch could be used by flying PCs to avoid encounters with the trolls to the north.

C13 OBSERVATION POOL (CR 10)



This cold, damp room features a large pool in the floor, the edges of which are caked with pale yellow slime and fungus. The surface of the pool bears a similar film. Additional carvings of skulls decorate the walls here. To the south, an impressive mound of skulls—mostly from humanoids—lies heaped against the wall, where they partially block a large stone double door.

The film of algae on top of the pool of water is foul-smelling but harmless. The pool itself is 15 feet deep. Submerged tunnels connect the bottom of this pool to the ones in areas C14 and C15.

The mound of hundreds of skulls to the south must be cleared away (a task that would take one person 10 minutes to accomplish) before the door to area C16 can be opened.



MALUGUS KREEG

CREATURE: This room is the lair of the Skultaker chieftain, an aquatic troll named Grazuul. Hardly more intelligent than an animal, Grazuul barely knows that the “dry ones” who live above think of him as their lord—all he knows is that he appreciates their regular offerings of skulls. Grazuul particularly enjoys the look and feel of a freshly polished skull, which is why he’s lived most of his life deep inside of Skull’s Crossing. One of his favorite pastimes, in fact, is to tear away the flesh of his own face so he can feel the cool water rushing against the raw bone of his own skull before the flesh regenerates back.

GRAZUUL

XP	CR	HP
9,600	10	147

Scrag troll fighter 5

CE Large humanoid (aquatic, giant)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 147 (11 HD; 6d8+5d10+93); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +17, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +1 *vicious adamantine trident* +18/+13 (2d6+14/19–20), bite +10 (1d8+3) or 2 claws +15 (1d6+7), bite +15 (1d8+7)

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

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d6+10), weapon training (spears +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Grazuul attempts to remain in the water throughout the entire combat so he can continue enjoying the effects of his regeneration, but once he’s brought below 50 hit points, he drops his trident and switches over to using his claws to let his regeneration catch up with all the damage he’d been doing to himself by using the *vicious* weapon. If facing characters wearing heavy armor, he clambers out of his pool to try to bull rush them into the water if the opportunity presents itself.

Morale Grazuul fights to the death, confident that his regeneration will save him if he’s defeated. If, on the other hand, the PCs use fire or acid against him, he abandons Skull’s Crossing once brought below 20 hit points and flees into area **C14** and thence north into the Storval Deep.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 18, **Con** 26, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 32

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (trident), Mobility, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (trident), Weapon Specialization (trident)

Skills Perception +6, Swim +23

Languages Giant

SQ amphibious, armor training 1

Gear +1 *vicious adamantine trident*

C14 FLOOD CHAMBER ACCESS



This narrow chamber is empty save for a long, ten-foot-wide pool.

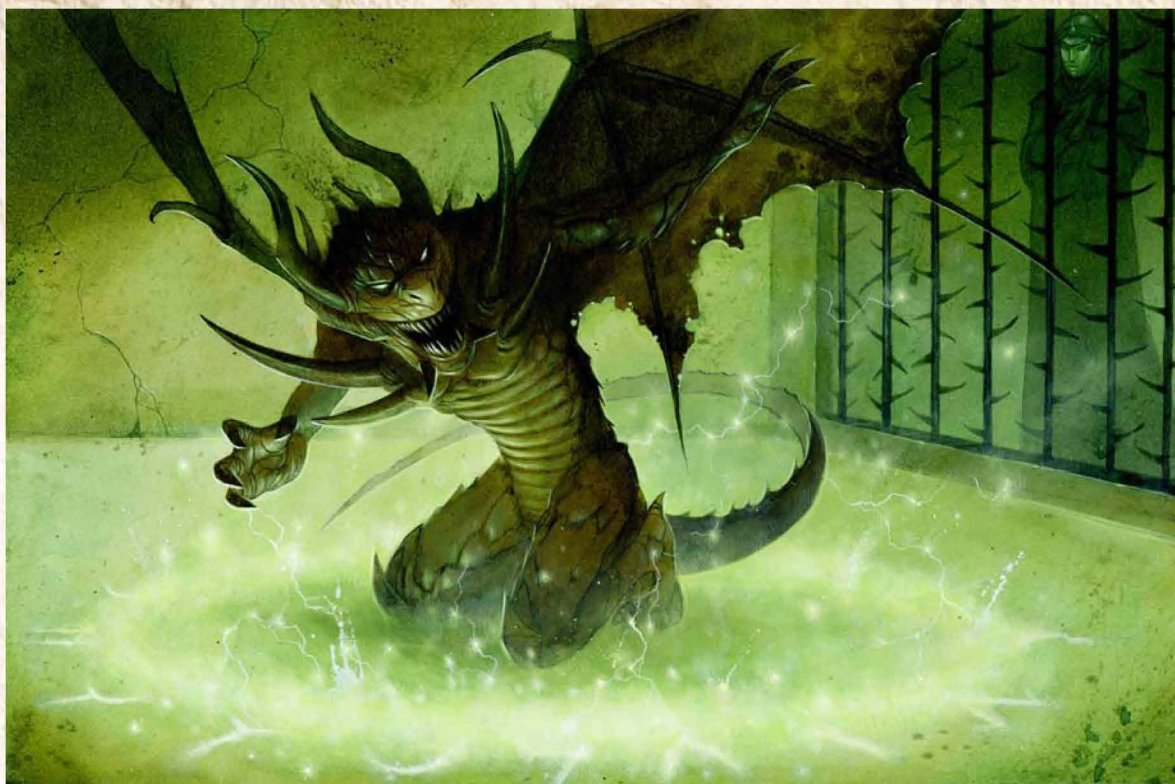
The pool in this room is 15 feet deep. A tunnel connects it to area **C13**. In the bottom of the pool (just under the “**C14**” tag) is a secret door that a DC 20 Perception check can locate. It leads through a series of several doors that can only be opened one at a time, and eventually to the underwater channel leading to the Storval Deep. It was through this route that Grazuul came to these chambers years ago.

C15 FLOODGATE CONTROLS (CR 9)



A pool of water sits against the wall to the west of this chamber, with a set of steps leading down into it along the pool’s east side. Opposite the steps is an alcove in which rises a fantastically detailed scale model of Skull’s Crossing. The five skulls along its face seem to be actual human skulls, the bone polished to a gleaming sheen.

GRAZUUL



This scale model of Skull's Crossing once served to help regulate the water level on the Storval Deep side of the dam. When the water rose to within 30 feet of the top of the dam, this device would automatically open the five floodgates to prevent a catastrophic failure. The floodgates themselves were powered by the lifeforce of the two pit fiends once trapped in area **C16**, but now that one of them is dead and the other is nearly so, not enough power remains to operate this fail-safe. An examination of the skulls reveals that the jaws of each can be pulled down like levers to reveal tubes leading into the wall. The scale model itself radiates strong transmutation magic (CL 20th). A DC 35 Spellcraft check is enough to deduce that the device is used to control the damn's floodgates, and that the source of its power seems to have waned to the point where the device no longer functions. Once the infernal engines that power the dam in area **C16** are recharged, the levers in the skulls automatically trigger here and open the dam's floodgates.

CREATURE: A remnant of the ancient past lingers on in this room—a lumbering, scorpionlike construct called a skull ripper. After a frightening initial encounter with this creature, Grazuul never returned to this chamber—and beyond that one visit, no creature has tested the skull ripper's power in thousands of years. Yet the construct has been patient—charged with guarding the floodgate controls, the monster has no intention of abandoning its post. It lurches to life as soon as anyone enters the room, and it fights to the death.

SKULL RIPPER

XP	CR	HP
6,400	9	112

(see page 415)

TACTICS

During Combat The skull ripper still obsesses over its ancient commands to guard the flood controls, and anyone who seems to be making a move toward those controls earns the full attention of the scorpionlike construct. It won't fall for simple attempts to lure it from the room—if the PCs attempt to engage it at range from area **C13**, the monster merely closes the doors or steps out of view, ready to start the fight again once the intruders return.


Morale The skull ripper fights until it is destroyed.

TREASURE: A DC 25 Perception check is enough to notice a long-forgotten pale lavender ellipsoid *ioun stone* (capable of absorbing up to six more spell levels) wedged in a crack in the model of Skull's Crossing.


C16 INFERNAL ENGINES



This narrow chamber ends at two curved alcoves, one to the east and one to the west. Each alcove is enclosed by a dull iron portcullis. A winch next to each provides a way to raise or lower the gates. Beyond each portcullis a circle of runes glows with a faint orange light on the floor. Inside the circle to the west is a pile of crimson ash, while inside the circle to the east is curled what appears to be a long-dead devil, its flesh taut and dry on its bones.



These two magic circles are powerful prisons that once held the energy source for Skull's Crossing's floodgates—a pair of pit fiends Karzoug captured. Whenever the floodgates needed to be opened, the magic circles drained life energy (inflicting a negative level on the pit fiend trapped inside) and used it to power the immense gears hidden deep within the dam that governed the use of the floodgates. Over the last 10,000 years, powerful storms caused the Storval Deep to rise to flood levels only 150 times. After most of those occurrences, the trapped pit fiends recovered from the energy drain, but as the years wore on, they began failing their saving throws to shrug off the negative levels and grew progressively weaker. When the last powerful storm wracked the region and triggered the dam's flood controls 54 years ago, one of the two pit fiends died, and its body crumbled to crimson ash. Today, there is simply not enough life force remaining to power the floodgates, and unless this changes soon, the Storval Deep will rise above the dam's level and flood the lands to the south.



The "dead" pit fiend in the eastern magic circle is not actually dead—it can be recognized as a pit fiend with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check. Once a powerful devil named Avaxial, the pit fiend currently suffers from 19 negative levels. His body now feeble, the devil has spent the last several decades in a comatose fugue, barely able to move. When the PCs enter this area, Avaxial rouses from his torpor to feebly reach for one of them, gasping in a raw whisper for freedom. As long as the pit fiend remains trapped in the magic circle, he can use neither his supernatural abilities nor his spell-like abilities, but he can still communicate. He begs the PCs to dispel the magic of the circle that traps him, or barring that, to destroy the runes so he may escape. The circle itself functions at caster level 20th, and if a *dispel magic* spell successfully affects it, the circle is only rendered nonmagical for 1d4 rounds—long enough for the pit fiend to use *greater teleport* to flee to a distant sanctuary to begin the long process of recovering from his 10,000-year ordeal. Destroying the circle is even more difficult, for the runes themselves are set in a ring of magical stone that must be physically destroyed by weapons or magic to render the circle inert (hardness 16, hp 120, Break DC 34).

Wise PCs instead take advantage of the pit fiend's plight to learn how to open the floodgates. Avaxial tries to bargain with the PCs, hoping to extract promises of release in exchange for what he knows, but he lacks the will and energy to press the deal too far. Over the millennia, the devil has gone somewhat insane. He knows nothing of Thassilon (as he was conjured into this trap from Hell itself) and remembers his captor only as a vague hatred and a name—Karzoug. Avaxial does know he's been used for the past age as an engine to power the floodgates—he can sense the shape of the

dam around him and can feel the gates open. He knows that the gates open automatically when the waters rise high enough, and can even feel those waters rising. He's felt the circle tugging at the last shards of his spirit for days, if not weeks now, but knows that since his onetime companion succumbed over 5 decades ago, there's simply not enough life force left to activate the floodgates.

Skull's Crossing requires only one level of energy in the west circle to trigger the floodgates. Both magic circles function as cages only for those they were designed to constrain—anyone else can step into and out of either circle with ease. As soon as a living creature is within each circle, the dam awakens with a rumble. The creature in each circle gains a negative level as the floodgates in the dam grind open, releasing waters from the Storval Deep in a constrained torrent into the valley below. A successful DC 20 Fortitude save is required to remove one of these negative levels. Back at Turtleback Ferry, the waters rise again, but this time the rise is more controlled and less destructive—the peril of the storms is averted.

Any creature (including summoned creatures) with only 1 Hit Die that gains a negative level from one of these circles is immediately reduced to ashes—if a creature steps into the west circle before Avaxial is released from his own circle, this is the demon's fate. The moral repercussions of destroying a pit fiend in this manner are left for philosophers to argue, but the act certainly fulfills the greater good of saving Turtleback Ferry.

No stat block is given for Avaxial, as the devil is in no condition to fight or defend himself.

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs fail to open the floodgates and relieve the pressure building on Skull's Crossing, the dam is fated to burst 1d4 days after the PCs reach this room and fail to reactivate the floodgates. This may be enough time to evacuate Turtleback Ferry, but the village itself is doomed to destruction when a surge of water washes down from the mountains. Note that once the floodgates open, they'll close automatically once the water level is no longer a danger—this does mean that at some point in the future, further volunteers to fuel the floodgates during new storms will eventually be needed, but such a requirement is unlikely to be necessary during the length of this campaign.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs open the floodgates, award them 9,600 XP. If they manage to accomplish this without killing a creature at all, award them an additional 4,800 XP. The PCs gain no additional experience for slaying the mostly dead pit fiend (since that award is technically a part of the 9,600 XP they can earn for opening the floodgate), but if they do release him, he may or may not return at some later point, healed and revitalized, seeking to murder the PCs in order to ensure those who saw him in such a humiliated state do not spread tales!



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER
BACKGROUND

PART ONE:
IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

PART TWO:
RETAKING RANNICK

PART THREE:
DOWN COMES THE RAIN

PART FOUR:
THE HAUNTED HEART

PART FIVE:
HARROWING THE HOOK

PART FOUR: THE HAUNTED HEART

ALTHOUGH SIMPLY MARCHING UP HOOK MOUNTAIN TO CONFRONT THE SOURCE OF THE OGRE PROBLEM IS ALWAYS AN OPTION, WISE (OR SIMPLY CURIOUS) PARTIES FIRST LOOK INTO THE MYSTERY OF WHAT HAPPENED TO FORT RANNICK'S COMMANDER. IF THEY DON'T HIT UPON THIS ON THEIR OWN, YOU CAN HAVE JAKARDROS OR VALE INFORM THE PCs THAT THEIR COMMANDER WENT OUT ON ONE OF HIS "COMMUNION WALKS" THE NIGHT OF THE OGRE ATTACK, AND THAT HE HASN'T BEEN SEEN SINCE. INVESTIGATING THE SHIMMERGLEN—THE LOCATION OF HIS WALKS—WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE TO START TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO COMMANDER BAYDEN.

The Shimmerglens have long been shrouded in mystery, for these trackless swamps are said to lie quite close to the First World, particularly where they border Sanos Forest. Capricious and sometimes malicious creatures are known to harass travelers in this domain. The Wicker Walk between Sanos Forest and the hamlet of Bitter Hollow was built expressly to offer travelers a way to cross through the swamps without annoying the area's denizens, but stories still abound of nixies laying traps to confuse and baffle travelers, of nymphs seducing men and women and leaving them besotted and lost in the marsh, and of sprites stealing supplies and replacing them with rotten fish, poison mushrooms, or disturbing little dolls made of clay and string.

But now, a darker horror holds court in the heart of the riverside swampland. A nymph named Myriana, the lover of Fort Rannick's former commander, Lamatar Bayden, has been brutally murdered. Her ghost now haunts the swamps, and this entire domain has become polluted with her restless hate. And the focus of this misplaced hate is upon those whom she once counted as her court.

MYRIANA'S FATE

The Kreeg attack on Fort Rannick was not staged randomly. Operating on critical information provided by the traitor Kaven, the ogres chose the exact night that Jakardros was leading many of the rangers on an extended patrol and the fortress's commander was out on a so-called "communion walk." In fact, Lamatar was visiting his lover, and in so doing, unknowingly doomed her.

As the ogres led by Jaagrath Kreeg assaulted Fort Rannick, the lamia matriarch Lucrecia led a smaller group into the Shimmerglens under the cover of magic. As they approached Myriana's domain, Lucrecia sacrificed some of her ogres, sending them out to savage and destroy a dryad's tree. Both Myriana and her lover Lamatar were quick to respond to this assault, only to discover the attack was an ambush. Even as they put down the ogres who had attacked the dryad, Lucrecia and the rest of her minions surrounded and overwhelmed them.


Lamatar was captured and made to watch while Lucrecia let her ogres have their way with the nymph. It may have been a blessing that the ogres were too enraged by their losses in the fight to do anything but tear the nymph limb from limb, yet the sight was enough to drive Lamatar mad. Lucrecia escorted Lamatar and the ogres back to the peak of Hook Mountain, where they handed the broken man over to the three annis hags for an even more horrific fate, while here in the Shimmerglens a terrible rage rose from the remains of the nymph's body. Her spirit, anguished and insane, became a ghost, and now her madness has twisted Whitewillow into a place of growing corruption. Many of her servants and minions have perished or become mad as well, but one loyal pixie, a normally chatty fellow named Yap, avoided this fate by fleeing into the Land of Big Folk in search of help.

A DESPERATE PLEA

If the PCs take it upon themselves to investigate the Shimmerglens, you can simply have them encounter Yap as one of their encounters in the swampland. But if the PCs don't seem interested in following up on what may have happened to the fort's commander, you can have Yap track them down and beg them for help. Yap looks like a typical pixie—a waifishly thin humanoid with gossamer wings, large expressive eyes, long pointed ears, and a diminutive 2-foot-tall stature. His rumpled clothes and eyes puffy from crying, though, indicate just how much things are out of place for the poor creature. Once Yap has the PCs' attention, he delivers his message and plea in a rapid, breathless speech, as if he's afraid at any moment the PCs will turn him away.



"My mistress, she is... ill. Very ill. Death would have been a kindness. The land sickens with her heart, and it cannot be cleansed until her misery is purged. I cannot do this myself. Please, you must help her! You are friends with her human lover, yes? He wouldn't want her left like this! I can take you to her—maybe you can do something. I have tried




everything to cure her forlorn heart, but to no avail. She wails and moans in Whitewillow, and the trees and plants and nixies and frogs and everything are dying or worse! I can take you there! Please!"

If the PCs agree to aid Yap, the pixie's mood brightens considerably as hope returns. He wants to leave immediately, but agrees to wait for the PCs to prepare for the journey if they need to. Yap insists on accompanying the PCs throughout their adventures in the Shimmerglens, and he'll even promise the PCs a reward (3 doses of pixie dust) if they let him come with them. Unfortunately, Yap is something of a liability. His manic attitude and desperate urge to reach Myriana and save her leads him to not only be an incessant chatterbox, but also to make poor tactical decisions. He may forget to turn invisible in combat, for example, or use mind-affecting attacks against undead foes. Despite this, he remains a good-natured (if desperate) creature, and keeping him alive until Myriana can be placated would be a kindness.

YAP

XP	CR	HP
1,200	4	18

Male pixie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 228)



STORY AWARD: If Yap survives this part of the chapter, award the PCs experience points as if they had defeated him in combat.

INTO THE SHIMMERGLEN

The Shimmerglens themselves quickly grow tangled and densely packed once one travels out of sight of the swamp's edge—the easiest way to get around is by rowboat, navigating via the narrow channels of water. This far from the mountains, the hag coven's control weather spells are far enough removed that the rains that have been plaguing the northern areas are thankfully absent—all that remains is the subtle chill of winter's approach.

WHITEWILLOW

Twisted black trees rise wretchedly from shallow pools, seeming to have lurched from the land, their arthritic branches curled into miserable tortured claws. The sun seems to scorn this place, and a cold, dark mist looms within the canopy of bone-bare branches above. Evil murmurs ride an unnatural wind that flows forth from the glens, and shadows dance in the dark mists within.

The trees of the swampy region of Whitewillow, once beautiful and mystic with drooping boughs of sparkling ivory leaves, have gone dark and twisted with Myriana's torment. Now, they shift and move when they should not. Shadows play cruel tricks on the sharpest eyes, and sanity-shredding whispers cause even the canniest woodsman to lose his way. As Yap leads the

PCs deeper into the depths of Whitewillow, the degree of the corruption grows. Spiders, languid and fat with poison, hang from trees. Dying birds twitch in the shallows. Slithering things with too many eyes squirt away through the water. Whitewillow is about a mile in diameter, and as the PCs march deeper and deeper into Myriana's madness, you can use some of the following mood-setting noncombat encounters to amplify the PCs' fears.

With the exception of a possible fight against Myriana herself, none of the moody, disturbing encounters the PCs have along the way should be combats—you can certainly add additional fights with wandering monsters if you wish, but by having the PCs encounter and interact with some or all of the strange manifestations of Whitewillow's curse listed below, you can impress upon them the fact that what haunts the swamp is not necessarily something that can be fought with weapons. Keep in mind, though, that not all players enjoy moody encounters that have little or no chance for retaliation—and if your players are the type who might get frustrated by the nature of these encounters, you can simply omit the game effects caused by each, or even just skip the encounters entirely and proceed directly with the Heart of Sadness section.

APPARITIONS OF DEATH: Nothing but chill silence surrounds the PCs, though they occasionally glimpse tall, dark-robed figures in their peripheral vision. The creatures' enlarged skeletal claws extend from their outstretched arms as if reaching toward the party. When the PCs look, they see these apparitions are nothing more than horribly twisted black trees. If attacked, the trees weep blood and seem to cackle in the wind. **GAME EFFECT:** *Each PC must succeed at a DC 15 Will save to avoid becoming shaken for the remainder of her visit to Whitewillow (this is a mind-affecting fear effect).*

DEAD POOL: A natural pool of water created by runoff from the hulking dark trees stands in a clearing ahead of the party. The water looks clear and refreshing enough, though a successful DC 20 Survival check notes that no algae or larval insects dwell in the pool, possibly indicating the water is poisoned. **GAME EFFECT:** *Anyone who gazes into the water too intently must make a DC 15 Will save. Failure indicates her own reflection is normal, but other party members appear reflected as decaying corpses. In addition, the other party members appear to be glaring hungrily at the PC gazing into the water as if they are about to attack and devour her. The PC immediately takes 1d4 Wisdom damage.*

GHOSTLY REVELS: All around the PCs, ghostly translucent forms emerge from the trees. Fey of all sorts—spectral satyrs, ghostly grigs, phantom nixies, and sprightly spirits float gently from the swamp around the party, followed by a parade of phantom animals. These were once the proud denizens of Whitewillow, now polluted by their mistress's unsettled soul. The fey cavort and frolic as they march, eventually washing over the PCs.

They caress, dance through, and embrace the PCs before passing. **GAME EFFECT:** The PCs must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or be caught in a ghostly party's path, riveted by the otherworldly spectacle. Affected creatures take 2d6 points of negative energy damage as the unnatural chill of the spectral fey burns them. The ghostly fey and their undead animals ignore the party; the unfathomable business of the dead draws them elsewhere in short order.

MYSTERIOUS DERELICT: Deep in the swamp, the PCs suddenly come upon a derelict ship inexplicably located hundreds of miles from the Varisian shore. The vessel is badly worn and covered in thick dark green moss, but is completely intact and is obviously of a seagoing model. The ship is deserted, but in his quarters belowdecks, the long-dead captain sits at a moldering darkwood harpsichord carved with demons battling angels. Still dressed in his rotten uniform, he clutches in one hand nautical charts that seem completely alien even to the most well-traveled PC, and a silver goblet inlaid with opals worth 100 gp in the other. A book of sheet music bearing several lyrical masterpieces never before heard by any of the PCs sits on the harpsichord. The songs contained in the book appear worthless unless a PC succeeds at a DC 20 Perform (any musical instrument or sing) check. The book and the wondrous music contained within are worth 5,000 gp to a collector, musician, or noble. When the PCs emerge from the ship, a white dog sits on deck watching them with milky blind eyes. The dog stares but does nothing else, eventually wandering off into the swamp and leaving behind no trace it was ever actually there. The source of this strange event is a true mystery—whether the wreck is anything more than crystallized dreams or an actual phantasm of a real wreck is left to you to decide. In any event, if the PCs return to the site of the mysterious derelict at a later date, they find that the ship has vanished without a trace, with only any sheet music they might salvage remaining as proof that the wreck ever existed in the first place. **GAME EFFECT:** The first time the music is played with a successful DC 30 Perform check (using sing or any musical instrument), whether or not the musician is still in the Shimmerglens, all creatures within a 30-foot spread become so enraptured by the beauty of the music that they gain a +2 morale bonus on all attack rolls and skill checks for 24 hours.

WHISPERS OF REGRET: The PCs come upon the mangled body of a beautiful dryad half protruding from a tree whose limbs have been smashed from the trunk by massive clubs. If the PCs approach within 10 feet, they hear soft feminine whispers in their ears—"She should not have fallen in love—her heart brought this upon us—why won't she let us go?" **GAME EFFECT:** Anyone who listens to the whispers is filled with regret, but also with an increased resolve to lift the curse that vexes the swamp. These creatures gain a +2 bonus on all Will saving throws made

against encounters like these, or against Myriana's attacks and spells as appropriate. If Myriana is defeated, these whispers fill the PCs with joy and life, immediately affecting each creature with the effects of a heal spell (CL 11th).

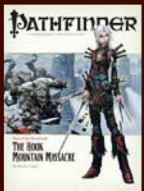
HEART OF SADNESS (CR 10)



The tangled swamp gives way to a relatively large clearing, a calm pool of unnaturally still water ringed by twisted, decayed willow trees. Wind blows, but the trees do not sway. It is as if the very land has died.



MYRIANA



THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

PART ONE: IN THE HOOK'S SHADOW

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If he's still with the PCs, Yap quails at the edge of the clearing. "We're here... my lady waits for you within. I dare not go any closer..." he says before stepping back to cower behind a gnarled tree.

CREATURE: Once soul-shakingly beautiful, the nymph princess Myriana is now a haggard, ghostly horror. Her disembodied arms float at her sides, exposed bone and sinew stretching toward her torso but ever too far out of reach. Her lower torso fades away to smoke, savaged too cruelly by the ogres for even her insane ghost to retain. But her most terrifying feature is her eyes: wells of hellish horror, crying out silently in an agony beyond anything a mortal creature could ever know. They reduce those who try to hold her gaze to gibbering children. She is beauty undone, and torment incarnate.

As the PCs enter her twisted glade, the ghostly nymph rises with a howl from the waters. Although she doesn't immediately attack the PCs, her blinding beauty is in full effect. In a shrieking, hate-filled voice, she accuses the PCs of failing Lamatar, of failing to protect Fort Rannick, and of allowing the Kreeg ogres to take him to their lair high on Hook Mountain. She allows the PCs a few minutes to state their case, and to explain why they have come to Whitewillow. If the PCs ask her what they can do to help, she simply bemoans the fact that her love Lamatar was taken by ogres and that she was unable to save him. She knows in her heart he is now dead, but when she tried to reincarnate him, foul magic prevented his soul from returning to his new body. She begs the PCs to find his remains and return them to her—she needs not the entire body. A lock of hair or a single finger will do.

If the PCs insist on the possibility that Lamatar can't be reincarnated due to the fact he may still live, Myriana grows increasingly agitated—for if he still lived, he would surely have returned to her by now. Further insisting Lamatar is alive, mocking the ghost, or simply not agreeing to seek out the commander's remains quickly spurs the undead nymph to attack.

MYRIANA

XP	CR	HP
9,600	10	135

Female advanced nymph ghost (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144, 217)
CN Medium undead (augmented fey, incorporeal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +24

Aura blinding beauty (30 ft., DC 26)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 24, flat-footed 19 (+9 deflection, +5 Dex)

hp 135 (10d8+90)

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

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +5 (10d6, Fort DC 24 half)

Special Attacks corrupting gaze (DC 24), stunning glance (DC 24), telekinesis

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +10)

4th—*reincarnation*

3rd—*call lightning* (DC 18), *dominate animal* (DC 16), *summon nature's ally III*

2nd—*chill metal* (DC 17), *flame blade*, *flaming sphere* (DC 17), *gust of wind* (DC 17)

1st—*charm animal* (DC 14), *entangle* (DC 14), *obscuring mist*, *produce flame*, *speak with animals*

0—*detect magic*, *flare*, *light*, *mending*

TACTICS

During Combat Although Myriana is undead, she was made so by despair, not hate. She would rather recruit the PCs than harm them. She prefers to use her stunning glance to defeat foes without causing lasting harm, but if pressed uses her magic and corrupting gaze to get her point across.

Morale As long as her lover remains atop Hook Mountain as an undead monster, Myriana cannot be slain forever. She fights until destroyed, then rejuvenates with the next sunset and sends Yap to gather the PCs to her side once again—if she's ignored, she may turn her wrath against Turtleback Ferry.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 29

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 29

Feats Ability Focus (blinding beauty), Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Diplomacy +22, Escape Artist +18, Fly +13, Handle Animal +19, Heal +13, Knowledge (nature) +16, Perception +24, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +26, Swim +13; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ inspiration, unearthly grace, wild empathy +25

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs defeat Myriana, she cries out, "Return my beloved to me! Return my commander to my heart, or I shall find him with my vines and my dark trees will eat the land and churn your people to bone and misery. Return Lamatar to my embrace!" With that, her shade fades back into the waters only to reform with the next setting of the sun.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs successfully put Myriana to rest, award them 9,600 XP. In addition, as she fades away forever, she picks one PC (preferring a bard, or barring that, the PC with the highest Charisma score) to gift with a lasting inspiration. This effect functions the same as the standard nymph inspiration ability, save that it lasts as long as the PC lives (even returning if he dies and is later brought back to life). Not only does this effect bolster the character's Will save, Craft checks, Perform checks, and bardic performances, but it can also aid him in negotiations with Myriana's older sister, the ice nymph Svevenka, in the final chapter of *Rise of the Runelords*.



THE HOOK
MOUNTAIN
MASSACRE

CHAPTER
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PART FIVE: HARROWING THE HOOK

THE GREAT RAINS TURN TO DRIVING SNOW AS WINTER COMES WITH A FURY UPON THE HOOK. AUTUMN IS A FORGOTTEN DREAM AS CUTTING WIND LANCES THROUGH WOOL AND LEATHER, AND TREACHEROUS ICE CRAWLS ALONG THE MOUNTAIN SIDE. LIFE IS CRUEL AND SHORT ON THE HOOK, MORE NOW THAN EVER AS WINTER SINKS HER TEETH INTO ITS CRAGS. AND NEAR THE TWISTED PEAK OF THE NOTORIOUS MOUNTAIN, THE FORGES OF THE KREEG OGRES RING OUT WITH RENEWED VIGOR—THEY HAVE LOST FORT RANNICK, BUT THEIR ANGER LIVES ON!

Reaching the base of Hook Mountain is no huge problem, but the last few miles include several frightening climbs. With a successful DC 20 Survival check, the PCs can follow hunting trails used by the Kreeg ogres and make the climb to the hold in 3 hours; otherwise the party must make DC 15 Climb checks once per hour or be delayed an additional hour in their journey as they find the ice-laced trails and steep cliffs insurmountable—after making four successful Climb checks, they reach their goal. Random encounters with mountain-dwelling monsters (see page 405) can also serve to liven up this journey.

Snow falls for the duration of their trip, and the temperatures are cold. Consult the section on cold dangers on page 442 of the *Core Rulebook* for more information on how the severe cold conditions affect the PCs.

HOOK MOUNTAIN CLANHOLD

As the PCs finally crest the last craggy outcrop about a half-mile from Hook Mountain's 10,000-foot-high peak, they find a gaping cave belching forth foul black smoke. The cave entrance looks out over a wide ledge of windswept stone, while the chambers within are prowled by ogres aplenty, clutching their rusty hooks and constantly looking out for anyone foolish enough to encroach upon their den.

The clanhold itself is a large cave. The Kreegs have lived here for generations, and the walls and ceilings are thick with the soot of their fires. The caves are roomy, even for ogres. Passageways average 25 feet high, while the caverns themselves tend to have vaulted domelike ceilings up to 50 feet tall.

This final retaliation against the ogres of Hook Mountain is meant to be not only the climax of this chapter, but also a turning point in the campaign. With the defeat of Barl (combined with the earlier defeat of the lamia matriarch Lucrecia), the PCs finally start to learn of the machinations of Karzoug and his imminent return. The remainder of the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path depends increasingly upon the PCs being self-motivated to take steps against Karzoug's

return, and as such you should make sure that they have the chance to learn about Mokmurian during this adventure. Whether or not they believe the stone giant to be the actual driving force behind the sudden increase in activity on the Storval Plateau is largely irrelevant at this time, though—they'll certainly learn the truth behind it all soon enough!

Finally, you'll note that the encounters here in the Hook Mountain Clanhold are relatively tough—the PCs themselves should be 10th level by this point, and should also not balk at bringing along help—Shalelu and any surviving Black Arrows certainly come along to aid in this final assault on the ogres of Hook Mountain. If the PCs retreat, the clanhold can replenish slain ogres at the rate of one Kreeg ogre and 1d3 typical ogres per day.

D1 ENTRANCE (CR 10)



Constant flurries of windborne snow and frost lash at a gaping hole in the side of Hook Mountain here. Smoke pours forth from the cave entrance, only to be instantly dispersed by the wind.

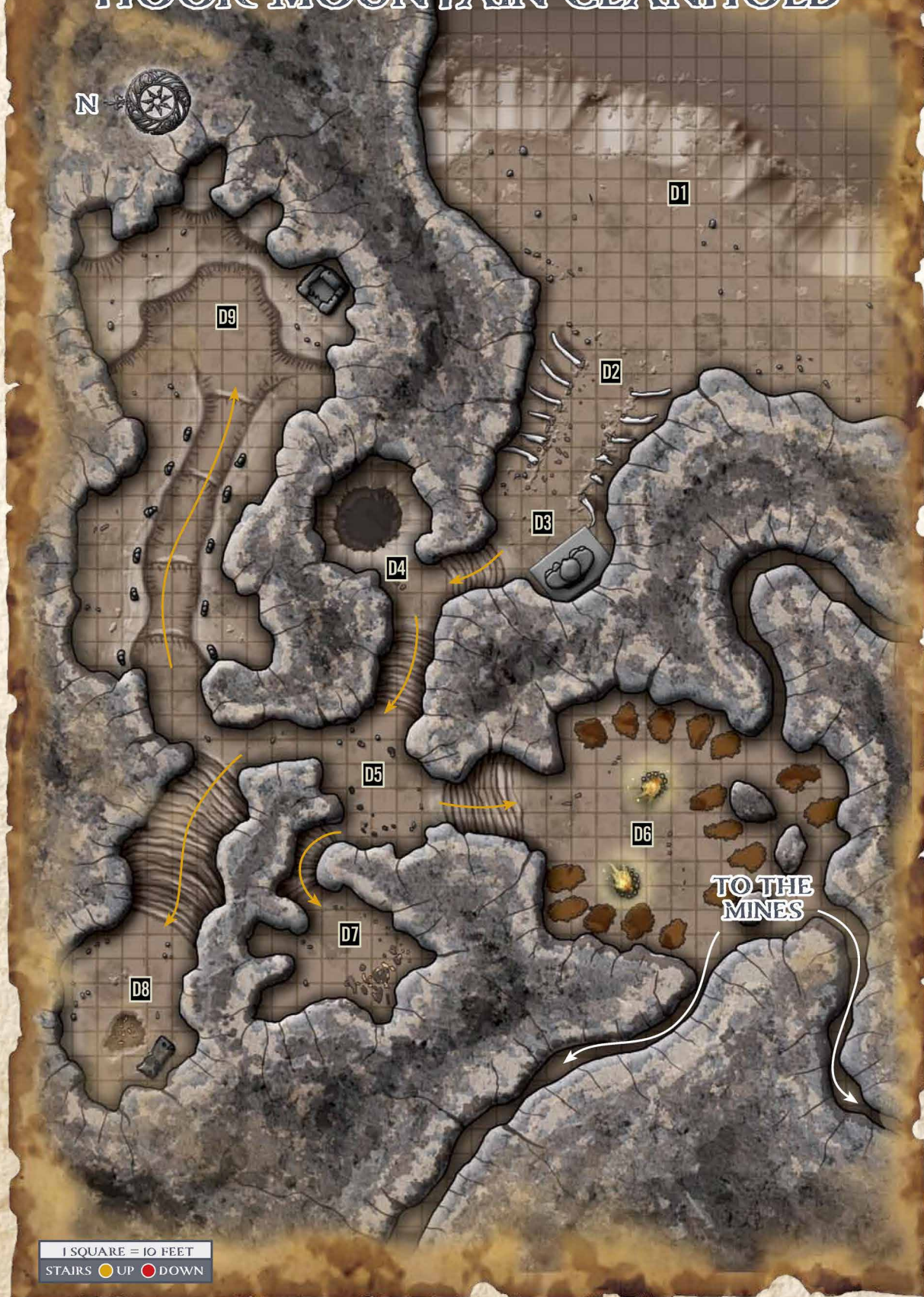
CREATURES: Two Kreeg fighters stand guard at the mouth of the clanhold, swathed in furs and leathers. Since news of Rannick's fall reached Barl's ears, things have been unpleasant in the hold, and these usually easily distracted ogres keep a sharp lookout. Another ogre was recently caught sleeping by Barl, and the stone giant tore off the lazy ogre's legs and left him rolling in the snow to bleed out before animating him as a zombie and turning him over to the three sisters for an eventual meal. These memories are enough to keep the Kreegs on alert for at least another week. Eager to prove to Barl that they can do a simple job like guarding the entrance, these two ogres don't think to raise an alarm until one is dead.

KREEG OGRES (2)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	104 each

Ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

HOOK MOUNTAIN CLANHOLD





THE HOOK MOUNTAIN MASSACRE

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MAP FOUR: HOOK MOUNTAIN CLANHOLE

D2 BONES OF THE BEHEMOTH



At the mouth of darkness, jagged spurs of bone protrude from the stone on either side of the cave entrance, each towering twenty feet in height—apparently the ribs of some monstrous behemoth.

The bones of a blue dragon (identifiable as such with a successful DC 25 Knowledge [arcana] check) laid low by Kreeg ancestors still adorn the clanholds' entryway, a testament to the ancient ogre overlords of Hook Mountain. The Kreegs have decorated the bones with crude scrimshaw carvings, incorporating the seven-pointed Sihedron Rune into the markings in many locations.

D3 THE RUNE-BOUND KING



An enormous statue stands here in frozen vigil—a forty-foot-tall giant with black skin covered by fissures and cracks, like the bed of a dried river. He wears majestic armor, gilded and encrusted with gems, and grips a towering glaive in his armored fists. The giant's face is hidden by a ferocious full helm forged into the sneering grimace of a fanged devil. Around the giant's neck hangs a medallion—a seven-pointed star.

This gigantic "statue" is in fact a preserved body—the remains of the rune giant Gargadros, a onetime general in Karzoug's army. In the chaos that followed the fall of Thassilon, Gargadros seized Hook Mountain and the surrounding environs as his own, becoming the first of the line of Dread Kings. The Kreegs' previous leader, Grolki Kreeg, claimed to be able to trace his heritage directly to this great warlord, a fact of which he was most proud. Draped around Gargadros's neck is a *Sihedron medallion*, its magic the sole thing that's preserved his flesh for the millennia the frozen corpse has stood here on display. When Barl arrived and revealed his own *Sihedron medallion*, Grolki fell to his knees in shock. The rune was once his family's mark, borne on their faces or arms in testament to their eternal servitude to the archmage Karzoug. Grolki immediately swore allegiance to Barl and offered no resistance when Barl executed him moments later. From that point on, the Kreegs belonged to Breakbones.

TREASURE: The *Sihedron medallion* around Gargadros's neck is sized for a Gargantuan creature and weighs 20 pounds, but still functions after all these years. It is far too large to be worn by a Medium creature, but can certainly be sold to a collector of ancient Thassilonian magic. The instant this medallion is removed from Gargadros, the ancient giant crumbles to dust and is gone; all that remains is his Gargantuan masterwork half-plate armor, which weighs in at 400 pounds and is worth 4,950 gp.

D4 THE BURNING PIT



A deep pit hewn from hard stone here descends into soot and darkness. The stale reek of decay wafts up from the depths below.

The Kreegs formerly offered up sacrifices to Lamashtu here, but now they burn the rune-marked corpses of captives for their new liege-lord, Barl Breakbones. The PCs might think to clamber down the pit (DC 20 Climb check) to search for Lamatar's remains within, but all that waits for them 100 feet below is a swath of ash and shattered bone. Lamatar's body is not here.

D5 CHOKEPOINT (CR 11)

CREATURES: A pair of Kreeg ogres and a dim-witted hill giant named Lunderbud guard the entryway here, under orders to raise an alarm if they detect intruders. If they do raise the alarm, they do their best to hold off intruders while the ogres in area D6 gather weapons and come to their aid in 1d6 rounds. The denizens of areas D7–D9 do not join battle here, preferring to face intruders in their lairs where they have stronger advantages. The hill giant himself is something of an idiot—he thinks of himself as an ogre, but the ogres themselves, though smaller, enjoy tormenting the dim-witted fool.

KREEG OGRES (2)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	104 each

Ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

LUNDERBUD

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	105

Advanced hill giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150, 294)

D6 THE CLANHOLD (CR 11)



Fire and thick black smoke reign here, spewing from black pits in the bedrock where forge fires glow. Anvils loom throughout this enormous cavern. The ring of steel on steel thunders here as giant hammers crash down again and again on glowing half-forged blades and axe-heads.

Once the Kreeg family den, this chamber was converted into a forge at Barl's order. Many more ogres toil deep in the bowels of Hook Mountain, in cave mines hundreds of feet below. These ogres are too distant and exhausted to be of any aid to those in the caves above when the PCs arrive, but could be used as reinforcements if the PCs retreat from the clanhold and come back later.

CREATURES: A work crew of 10 ogres slave away here, toiling endlessly at these forges to craft giant blades and other weapons from the obstinate iron they've carved from the mountain's innards. A single Kreeg taskmaster snarls, belches, guffaws, and roars incessantly as the

rank-and-file ogres toil away at the forges. The Kreeg orders the ogres to attack intruders, laughing as they stumble to their likely deaths. The Kreeg then snatches up a red-hot blade and goes to work as well (dealing an additional 1d6 points of fire damage with each hit for the first 3 rounds of combat).

KREEG OGRE

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	104

Ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

OGRES (10)

XP	CR	HP
800 each	3	30 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 220)

D7 CIRCLE OF THE SISTERS (CR 9)



This foul-smelling cave is cluttered with an appalling amount of body parts, dead animals, spoiled food, and filth, but most hideous is what bubbles and cooks in a huge cauldron over a sputtering fire in a nook to the north.

CREATURES: This cavern is the foul redoubt of the Sisters of the Hook—a coven of annis hags who have long served as allies of and consorts to the Kreeg clan. Now that Grolki is dead, the hags aren't sure what to make of Barl, who appreciates their skills, if not their appearances. For now, they work with the stone giant, but suspect he doesn't have their best interests in his heart. The sisters know all too well that they are short on allies.

Kreeg lore holds that these three annis hags were once related to Princess Myriana before envy and jealousy polluted them and they engaged in monstrous acts and vile rites in hopes of improving their beauty to outshine their sister. Briselda is a hulking, humpbacked hag with oversized talons sprouting from her stumpy arms. Grelthaga is tall and thin, like a skeleton wrapped in ugly purple flesh and a sagging white robe. Larastine's face is a mass of pustules, warts the size of gold pieces, and craters that weep ooze. She is squat and fat with bulbous breasts that hang almost to her knees. The sisters see each other for the horrors they are, but in their madness, they see their own reflections as pure loveliness.

BRISELDA, GRELTHAGA, AND LARASTINE

XP	CR	HP
2,400 each	6	66 each

Annis hags (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 16)

TACTICS

Before Combat All three hags are protected by *mind blank*, cast as part of their coven spell-like abilities.

During Combat The hags are nearly ready to abandon the Kreegs, but if intruders confront them here, they put up a fight for a few rounds, favoring their more powerful coven spell-like abilities like *bestow curse* and *forcecage* at the start of the fight before finishing things off with their melee attacks.

Morale If any of the hags are dropped below 15 hit points, all three attempt to flee the clanhold. If prevented from doing so, they beg for their lives and might even be convinced to aid the PCs in a fight with Barl.

D8 ABANDONED SHRINE (CR 10)



A shrine bearing the feral visage of a brutally beautiful monstrous maiden with the head of a three-eyed jackal and the belly of a pregnant young woman leans against the far wall.

This was once the Kreegs' well-tended shrine to Lamashtu, but now that Barl has arrived and their old leader Grolki is dead, no Kreeg has visited this shrine recently. Instead, the twisted and vile remains of what was once the commander of Fort Rannick holds a lonely post as guardian here.

CREATURE: Barl was quite pleased after he finished torturing the onetime commander of Fort Rannick with necromantic techniques he learned from his master Mokmurian. He gave Lamatar over to the three hags as a servant in reward for their aid in bringing the rains to the region, but the hags were worried the undead ranger was a spy sent by Barl to watch over them. They've ordered the powerful but pitiful creature into this chamber to serve as a guardian. Lamatar's body is caked with ice; his left hand looks almost to be a claw made of icicles and his brow is decorated with a crown of the same.

LAMATAR BAYDEN

XP	CR	HP
9,600	10	130

Male frost wight ranger 8 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 276)

LE Medium undead (cold)

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 23 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 130 (12 HD; 4d8+8d10+68)

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

Immune cold, undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

Weaknesses resurrection vulnerability, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +14 (1d4+4 plus 1d6 cold plus energy drain)

Ranged +1 icy burst composite longbow +16/+11/+6 (1d8+4/x3 plus 1d6 cold)

Special Attacks create spawn, energy drain (DC 16), favored enemy (giants +4, humans +2)

Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +7)

2nd—*barkskin*

1st—*longstrider*, *resist energy*

TACTICS

Before Combat Lamatar casts all three of his spells on himself if he has a chance.

During Combat Lamatar retains no trace of his living personality, and follows the orders of his three mistresses without question.

Morale Lamatar fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 29

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +11, Handle Animal +19, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +17, Stealth +20, Survival +21

Languages Common, Giant, Varisian

SQ favored terrain (cold +2, mountain +4), frost wight qualities, hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track +4, wild empathy +12, woodland stride

Gear +1 chain shirt, +1 icy burst composite longbow with 20 arrows

D9 AS THE DREAD KINGS OF OLD (CR 12)



This gigantic chamber extends into darkness to the east, sloping upward between two wide ledges on which loom statues with angular faces, stern brows, and strong jawlines. Above, the ceiling opens to the slate gray sky above. The ramp leads up in tiers, finally coming to an end before an immense stone throne.

CREATURES: Once the throne room for Grolki Kreeg, this open-air cleft in the lee of Hook Mountain's summit has become Barl Breakbones's den. He has taken to the role of overlord with excess, and has delayed the gathering of weaponry for Mokmurian simply to extend his time here as king. Originally, Barl was attended by two bodyguards, but when one of them commented that perhaps Barl needed to step up his schedule and get this army of ogres back to Mokmurian, Barl had that one executed. The remaining stone giant guard has held his counsel to himself.

When encountered, Barl sighs wearily before waving an arm at his remaining bodyguard (and Lucrecia, if she fled earlier) and saying (in Giant), "Deal with these mites. They've caused enough problems for me."

BARL BREAKBONES

XP	CR	HP
12,800	11	152

Male stone giant necromancer 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151)
NE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+5 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 152 (19 HD; 12d8+7d6+74)

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

Defensive Abilities improved rock catching

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk earth breaker +22/+17/+12 (2d8+13/19-20/x3) or 2 slams +20 (1d8+9)

Ranged rock +18/+13/+8 (1d8+13)

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

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 13, 6/day), rock throwing (180 ft.)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10)
6/day—grave touch (3 rounds)

Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +10)

4th—*animate dead*, *fear* (DC 19, 2)

3rd—*fireball*, *fly*, *ray of exhaustion*, *vampiric touch* (2)

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17, 2), *command undead*



LAMATAR
BAYDEN

BARL—
 LATEST CONTACT WITH TERAKTINUS
 INDICATES HE HAS NARROWED THE
 SEARCH—HE BELIEVES A HUMAN TOWN
 CALLED SANDPOINT COULD HIDE WHAT
 MY LORD SEEKS. TERAKTINUS WILL LEAD
 SEVERAL OF THE PEOPLE, AS WELL AS
 THE DRAGON, ON A RAID INTO THE TOWN
 SOON. WHEN THEY RETURN, THEY MAY BE
 PURSUED, AND I MAY NEED YOUR OGRE
 SLAVES TO AID IN TERAKTINUS'S RETREAT
 TO JORGENFIST. BE READY TO RETURN AT MY
 COMMAND!

M

(DC 15), *ghoul touch* (DC 17, 2), *spectral hand*
 1st—*chill touch* (DC 16), *magic missile* (4), *ray of*
enfeeblement (DC 16, 2)
 0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read*
magic, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

Opposition Schools Abjuration, Enchantment

TACTICS

Before Combat If Barl hears the sounds of combat nearby, he stations his stone giant bodyguard near the entrance. Once that guard notices the PCs approaching, he calls out to Barl, who casts *fly* and *spectral hand* if he has the chance.

During Combat Barl activates his *Sihedron medallion's false life* on the first round of combat. He would rather let his bodyguard fight his fights while he remains seated on his throne, casting spells from there. If the PCs manage to reach him in melee, he sighs heavily, lifts his earth breaker, and responds in kind. If one of the PCs is killed, Barl gets a gleam in his eye and casts *animate dead* on the body the first chance he gets, more to see the anguish of the new zombie's onetime allies than out of any real sense of tactics.

Morale Barl is no stranger to death, but does not want to die himself. If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, the giant drops his weapon and begs for his life. He's willing to reveal much of what Mokmurian has planned for the region if the PCs are willing to grant him mercy (see Concluding the Adventure, below).

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 20, **Con** 17, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 37

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Craft Wand, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (earth breaker), Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Focus (earth breaker)

Skills Climb +22, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +21, Spellcraft +25, Stealth +20

Languages Common, Giant, Shoanti, Terran, Thassilonian

SQ arcane bond (*Sihedron medallion*), Thassilonian specialist

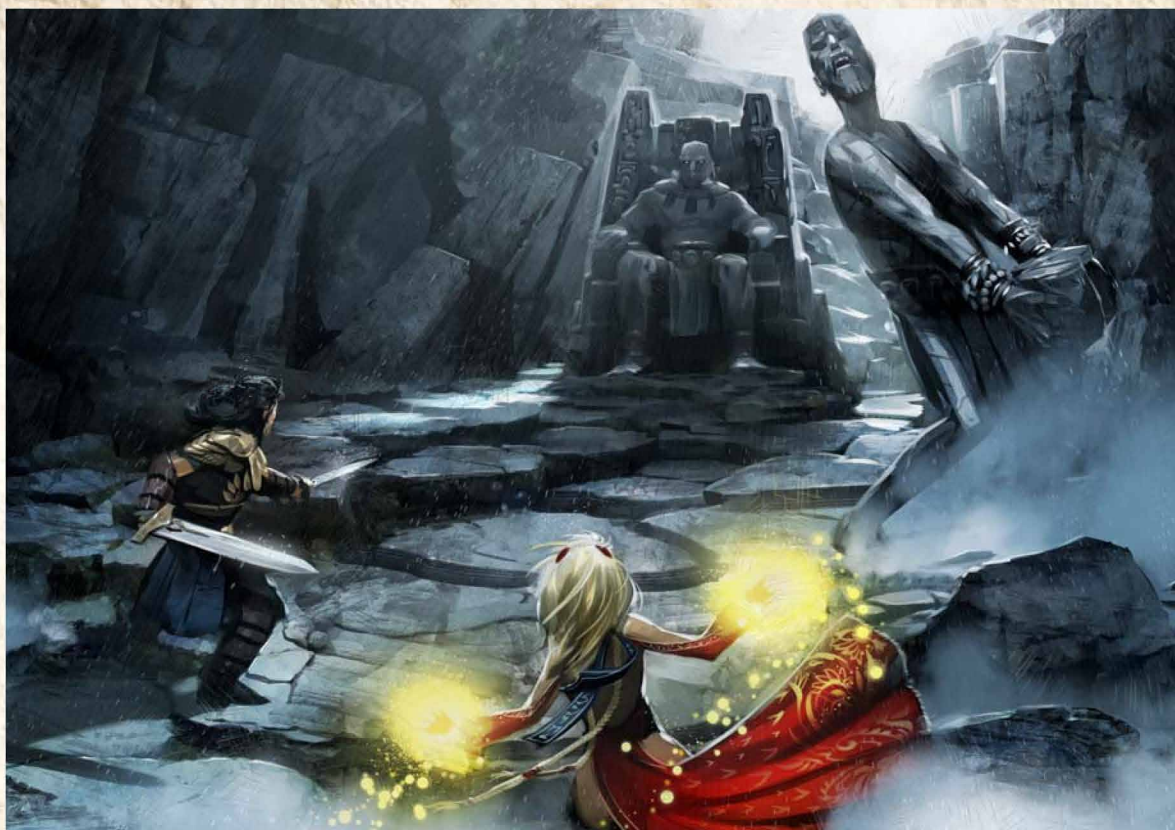
Combat Gear *wand of enervation* (12 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork earth breaker, *headband of vast intelligence* +2 (enhances Knowledge [arcana]), *Sihedron medallion*, 650 gp in black onyx gems, spellbook (contains all prepared spells, plus all other necromancy spells of 1st–4th level)

STONE GIANT

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	102

hp 102 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151)

TREASURE: While Barl Breakbones has shipped a fair amount of the Kreeg clan's treasures to Jorgenfist, some still remains here, heaped haphazardly behind his throne. The bulk of this stash of treasure is worth 9,200 gp, and consists of various weapons, art objects, gems, trade goods, and other treasures weighing just over 300 pounds in all. Mixed in with all of this treasure,



though, are a few magic items—most of them taken from defeated Black Arrows. These include 32 *+1 arrows*, 12 *+1 giant bane arrows*, a suit of *+2 light fortification studded leather*, a *+1 longsword*, a *+1 composite longbow*, a *belt of incredible dexterity +2*, a *cloak of elvenkind*, and a pair of *boots of the winterlands*.

DEVELOPMENT: If the PCs capture Barl Breakbones alive, it shouldn't take much to convince the craven stone giant to talk. Barl's eagerness to tell the PCs about his lord Mokmurian, and how he is gathering an army of giants to march on Sandpoint, could be mistaken for pride in his master's plot, when in fact Barl is simply desperate to please the PCs so that they'll let him live. Barl can even provide the PCs with the location of Jorgenfist if they press; although he's only been into the caverns below the fortress once and can't recall the layout, he does remember there being a particularly ancient library on the second level. If the PCs defeat Barl without giving him a chance to talk, they can learn of the imminent raid on Sandpoint from a missive written upon mammoth hide that was delivered to him via roc some days ago, but they miss out on the giant's other insights into Jorgenfist. This missive is reproduced as Handout 3–2.

STORY AWARD: If the PCs return all of the treasure to the Black Arrows and don't claim any of it for themselves, award them 12,800 experience points. At your discretion, if the PCs do so in a gracious and

charitable manner, the surviving Black Arrows might allow them to keep a few of the magic items.

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

With the defeat of Barl Breakbones, the PCs not only free the Kreegs from being enslaved and pressed into war but also prevent further assaults on the region—now leaderless, the Kreegs themselves are weak and vulnerable. Those who survive the PCs' visit scatter into the wilds of Hook Mountain. The lucky ones find new homes with other ogre tribes, but most fall prey to these same tribes as there is no love lost between the ogres of the Hook.

If the PCs defeat the undead Lamatar and return with his body (or even just a portion of it) to Myriana, the nymph is overjoyed and casts *reincarnate* upon him. Normally, this spell would not work on Lamatar—not only has he been dead for longer than a week, but his body and soul have been tainted by undeath. Yet such is Myriana's love that her spirit infuses the spell with power—although it causes her ghostly form to fade away, it enhances the reincarnation such that it can restore Lamatar to life in a new body. Whatever form he returns to life in, Lamatar is at first shamed by his failure to protect both Fort Rannick and his lover, but decides not to waste the new life she gave him. He becomes the new guardian of Whitewillow and does not return to civilization.



4

FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

BY WOLFGANG BAUR





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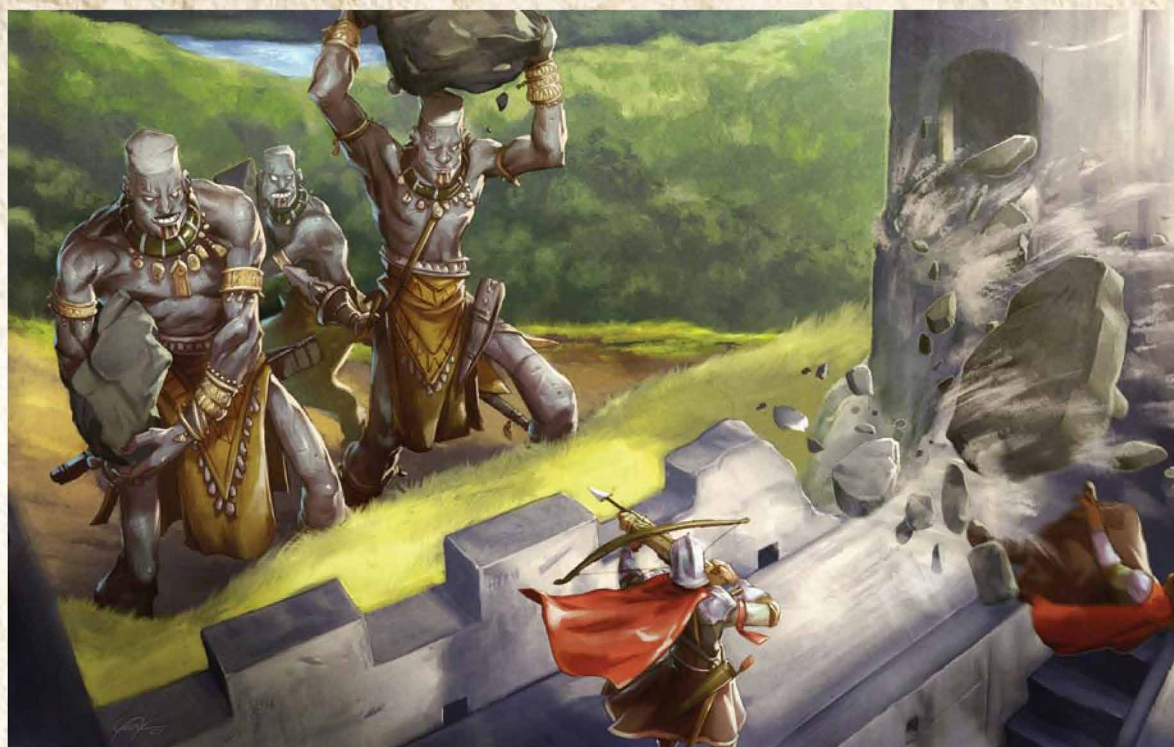
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This Thassilonian ruin held ancient memories of his people's slavery, and the giants avoided it as a result. Mokmurian found the place to be strangely soothing, and when he discovered not only a network of caves below the site, but also an ancient library of Thassilonian lore as well, he knew he had finally found home.

Mokmurian spent several years more studying the magic of the library, organizing its holdings, and translating the ancient texts. All the while, as he grew more powerful, the seething seed of humiliation festered. His need to return to his tribe and show them just how powerful he had become entangled with a growing sense of entitlement to all of Varisia. He had learned that most, if not all, of the land's mighty monuments had been built by his enslaved ancestors, yet now, much of the land was infested with humanity—insects who cared little for the land's history and who treated his ancestors' stony triumphs as curiosities at best or foundations for their cities at worst.

In his studies, Mokmurian also learned of the runelords and their mighty cities. Most of these cities were gone, sunk under the seas or destroyed by the catastrophe that laid low Thassilon so long ago. Yet rumors persisted that one of these ancient cities had survived through the ages—Xin-Shalast, the city of greed. Mokmurian grew obsessed with it. If he'd found such power and secrets in this one remote Thassilonian ruin, how much treasure and lore might await him in a lost city? Mokmurian devoted the next 10 years of his life to the search for Xin-Shalast, and when he finally discovered the site of the ancient city, he was not disappointed.

Yet Xin-Shalast was not abandoned. Where once dwelt the armies and artisans of Runelord Karzoug now lived monsters—cruel and bickering factions of lamias, flights of dragons, degenerate tribes of skulking humanoids, pockets of immortal devils bound to ancient ruins, and even bands of bitter giants. Relying on his now-considerable wizardly power, Mokmurian undertook the dangerous journey to the spires of Xin-Shalast, high on the face of the mountain called Mhar



Massif. Following upon fragments and legends he'd gleaned from his studies, he made his way to Runelord Karzoug's tomb. Hoping to find the greatest treasures and magic of Xin-Shalast, Mokmurian opened the ancient tomb, and in so doing, sealed his own fate.

Karzoug was unable to fully awaken simply because of one ambitious giant's tinkering—the runelord's release from hibernation required much more elaborate and complex magical rituals. Originally, these rituals were to be performed by Karzoug's surviving apprentices and minions, yet the fall of Thassilon left none to undertake these tasks. In Mokmurian, Karzoug had his first window to reality in 10,000 years, and the slumbering wizard struck with fierce and desperate power. Mokmurian felt Karzoug enter his mind and soul, and his fate from that point on was no longer his own—his one driving goal became Karzoug's revival.

Mokmurian found himself in command of even more power as the lamias of Xin-Shalast joined him. Mokmurian returned to the Vale of the Black Tower. He and his lamias claimed the tunnels below as their lair, fortified the land above, and called it Jorgenfist. Over the course of several years, Mokmurian united the stone giants of the plateau under his banner. His rallying call of taking back the lands of the ancestors and claiming the stolen treasures of Thassilon found fertile soil in the minds of these tribes' young soldiers, and those elders who opposed Mokmurian's near-heretical call were too slow and mired in tradition to react quickly enough to stem his recruitment. Before they realized the scope of what he was doing, their tribes had abandoned their traditions for the siren call of glory and riches.

Today, Mokmurian has gathered hundreds of giants to his side in Jorgenfist—giants ready and eager to take back the treasures of Thassilon for themselves, yet unknowingly little more than components for Karzoug's return. For all of these new recruits have been branded with the Sihedron Rune, and even if they fall in combat in the coming war, their souls will be put to the runelord's use.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter begins with the party turning aside a giant raid on Sandpoint. After the PCs repulse the giants, they must undertake an arduous journey into the wilderness to reach Jorgenfist-controlled lands on the Storval Plateau. Once there, they discover that the giants are readying the tribes for a massive attack on the human-dominated lands to the south. Only by defeating Mokmurian, the eldritch leader of these giants, can they disrupt these plans.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

11TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 11th level during (or just after) the attack on Sandpoint.

12TH LEVEL: The PCs should reach 12th level by the time they're infiltrating the interior of Jorgenfist.

13TH LEVEL: The PCs should be 13th level as they finish exploring the pit and caverns below Jorgenfist.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: The PCs should be close to (but not quite) 14th level at the conclusion of this chapter.



PART ONE: STONES OVER SANDPOINT

AS THIS ADVENTURE BEGINS, RUMORS OF INCREASED GIANT ACTIVITY IN THE LOWLANDS OF VARISIA ARE ON EVERYONE'S TONGUE. THE GROWING NUMBER OF SIGHTINGS AT THE FRINGES OF CIVILIZATION ARE ENOUGH TO CAUSE MAGNIMAR'S STANDING ARMY TO TAKE NOTICE. SIGNS OF GIANTS ARE EVERYWHERE—IMMENSE FOOTPRINTS, HOUSES CRUSHED TO SPLINTERS, AND SECONDHAND TALES OF SIGHTINGS BY HERMITS AND HUNTERS. SO FAR, THE GIANTS HAVE NOT ENGAGED IN A FULL-ON ATTACK—BUT IT SEEMS LIKE THAT RESPITE MAY SOON BE AT AN END.



The giants have avoided large confrontations for a purpose—they're on preliminary scouting missions in Varisia to gauge the lay of the land, not to take prisoners and raze towns. In all, there are fewer than a dozen scouting parties of giants active in western Varisia, spread from the Chavali River to the north and along the Malgorian Mountains to the east. Charged with determining the basic defensive capacities of Varisia's settlements as well as with seeking out allies among the lowland ogres and goblinoids, the scouting parties purposefully avoid encounters with patrols. Perhaps the most successful scouting parties are those composed primarily of stone giants—their skill at hiding among rocky terrain allows them to use the Malgorian Mountains and the Fogscar Mountains as blinds to move deeply into Varisia without being seen. Lord Mokmurian hopes to gather much intelligence about the region before he marches his armies down from the Storval Plateau and into Varisia, and he has expressly forbidden most of the scouting parties from interacting in any major way with the natives in hopes of minimizing chances that the people of Varisia catch wind of what's in store for them. Yet one scouting party in particular is poised to break that silence.

Sandpoint has a special place in Karzoug's (and thus Mokmurian's) plans, for thousands of years ago, one of Karzoug's greatest spies was stationed there at a structure known as a Hellstorm Flume—a double agent in Runelord Alaznist's army. This spy was a man named Xaliasa, and in life was one of Karzoug's closest confidants. Yet as Thassilon's rule waned, the pressure of Xaliasa's mission drove him mad and, in the end, this madness betrayed Karzoug. The runelord did not divulge to Mokmurian details beyond hints that Xaliasa had something to do with a place called "Runeforge." Karzoug did make clear, however, that Mokmurian should reduce the site to nothing more than dust and ashes.

Yet first, Mokmurian needed to determine which of the numerous Hellstorm Flume ruins along the Lost Coast was the right one. After much research, Mokmurian narrowed the possibilities down to four different sites.

He ordered the leader of one of the raiding parties, a giant named Teraktinus, to gather stones from the hearts of these four ruins, one of which happens to be the Old Light of Sandpoint. Once these four stones are secured, Mokmurian hopes to have a stone giant elder named Conna use *stone tell* on them, and in so doing determine which ruin marks Xaliasa's grave so that, when his army marches, he can take special care in destroying this particular site for his master.

Of course, Teraktinus doesn't intend to simply rob Sandpoint of one simple stone block—he's already whipped his giants into a frenzy of greed with promises of wealth awaiting plunder.

RETURN TO SANDPOINT

At the end of the previous chapter, the PCs are in the shadow of Hook Mountain, well over 200 miles away from Sandpoint, when they learn of the impending raid on the town. Whether they learn of the giants stealthily approaching Sandpoint by interrogating Barl Breakbones or simply reading the message in his lair, the news should come as a shock. Fortunately, the giants aren't quite ready to launch their assault yet, and if the PCs make haste back home to warn their friends, they can arrive in Sandpoint in time to aid in the city's defense.

If the PCs seem eager to press on to Jorgenfist, or are otherwise distracted, you can do one of two things—you can simply delay the assault on Sandpoint to occur at the end of this adventure instead of at the beginning (in this case, Teraktinus's raid is as much one of revenge for Mokmurian's death as anything else), or you can run the raid without the PCs being present at all. In this case, allow the PCs to take the roles of some of Sandpoint's higher-level locals, like Ameiko, or Sheriff Hemlock. If they fail to repel the giants, these NPCs can then be captured, and the PCs may need to rescue them before Teraktinus can return to Jorgenfist to offer them up to his master for sacrifice or worse!

Alternatively, the PCs could try to recruit additional aid in defending Sandpoint from the coming raid, perhaps by appealing to Magnimar's government. After the services



FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

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the PCs have provided the city in reclaiming Fort Rannick, Magnimar's government certainly agrees to send forces north to Sandpoint to aid in the town's defense—they'll also increase the presence of patrols in the region as well. Unfortunately, as eager as Magnimar might be to help Sandpoint, the logistics of organizing even a small army are such that these reinforcements are unlikely to arrive at Sandpoint in time to provide much help. This adventure assumes that the defense of Sandpoint falls primarily to the PCs—but if you want to expand the raid to include additional forces from Magnimar or elsewhere, you can do so if you wish. Exact details on such an expansion, though, are beyond the scope of this adventure.

SANDPOINT TODAY

Before you begin the raid itself, give the PCs some time to visit Sandpoint if they've been away for a while. This is a great moment to let the PCs feel like heroes—while the citizens of Sandpoint have gone on with their lives, the PCs have broken up cults of murderers, defeated a clan of deadly ogres, explored Thassilonian ruins, and tangled with legendary monsters from the deep. They've become legends to the folk of Sandpoint—but that doesn't mean that everyone in town is friendly to them. Feel free to have old rivalries and feuds with locals like Ven Vinder or the Scarnettis flare up during this visit.

Of course, if the PCs know the giants are about to launch a raid, they likely wish to prepare the town for an assault. How much time you want to give the PCs depends on your preference—this adventure assumes the PCs have less than a day. Time enough, perhaps, to erect some magical defenses or organize the town militia, but not enough to orchestrate an evacuation of the town.

MARCH OF THE GIANTS

The stone giant Teraktinus and his allies spend their days hiding in the plentiful tors and rock outcroppings that dot the Lost Coast, slowly moving farther south night. When the patrol finally nears Sandpoint, Teraktinus prepares to raid the town. The giants arrogantly plan to launch their assault on Sandpoint at dawn, so the humans can behold their fury and glory in perfect clarity.

Mokmurian has remained in contact with Teraktinus via *sending* spells, and when he learns the giants have neared Sandpoint, he sends his red dragon ally Longtooth out to aid Teraktinus. Longtooth reaches Teraktinus's camp the night before the raid on Sandpoint is scheduled to begin.

On the morning of the raid, any PC who is out and about at sunrise can make a DC 30 Perception check—success indicates that she spots several humanoid silhouettes standing atop the nearest tors of Ravenroost, lit by the rising sun. The size of these shapes should leave little doubt to any PCs who spot them—the giants are here!

Once the sun rises, the giants move quickly down from Ravenroost and approach Sandpoint, using the woods and the cliffs along the Turandarok River to mask their approach.

If the PCs don't spot the giants on the tors, no one else in town does either, and the raid begins as outlined below. If the PCs do notice the giants, they have about 10 minutes to prepare. Depending on the nature of these preparations, they might be able to prevent even more citizens of Sandpoint from being taken.

THE RAID BEGINS

If the PCs are caught unprepared for the attack on Sandpoint, they first notice the giants' proximity when a thunderous crack of stone against stone rings through the air—one of the more exuberant giants throwing a boulder at Sandpoint's north wall. As Sandpoint wakes and discovers itself under attack, screams and cries of terror mingle with the growing howls and roars of the attacking giants. By the time anyone makes it to the cathedral and rings the bells in warning, the raid is fully underway.

The attacking warband consists of 12 stone giants, three dire bears, the red dragon Longtooth, and Teraktinus. If Teraktinus were a better tactician, or if the giants worked together in this raid, they'd likely be unstoppable. Fortunately for Sandpoint and the PCs, the impulsive young giants split along tribal lines, falling into small groups that assault the town with little attempt at coordinating the timing of their efforts with one another. Since the giants approach initially from the northeast, the first events of the raid occur there, while additional attacks begin to appear farther south soon thereafter.

Each of these incursions on Sandpoint is detailed on the following pages. The first assault occurs at the northern wall—the giants there take several rounds to taunt and harass the guards frantically trying to defend the wall. You can assume that when the PCs arrive at that location, that's Round 1 of the raid. Each new development during the raid occurs at a set round sometime later. If the PCs are fast and efficient, they should be able to keep up with each new development, handling each one as it occurs. If they end up getting distracted or take too long at one event, they could find that two or three more have begun and might have to pick and choose which threat to answer and which to allow to run its course. Repercussions of any raid events the PCs don't respond to properly are summarized in the development section for each event.

During any of these battles, the PCs might wish to recruit the aid of some of Sandpoint's guards. Unfortunately, these brave souls are ill prepared to face foes as deadly as giants. A few of Sandpoint's locals actually have class levels (such as Sheriff Hemlock, Father Zantus, Shalelu Andosana, or Ameiko Kaijitsu)—if the PCs have befriended any of them, they might come to the PCs' aid. Since there's no way to really predict which of these NPCs might be allies in your campaign (or indeed, which are even still alive), this adventure assumes the PCs receive no real aid from the town of Sandpoint in the following encounters.





FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

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MAP ONE: RAID ON SANDPOINT

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PART THREE: INTO THE VALLEY OF THE BLACK TOWER

PART FOUR: UNDER JORGENFIST

PART FIVE: THE ANCIENT LIBRARY

ROUND 1: THE NORTHGATE SIEGE (CR 11)

Three giants dressed in thick pelts heft huge rocks pulled from the ground. Periodically, one hurls a rock against Sandpoint's northern gate. The iron-reinforced oak timbers splinter and crack as the stones hit it, but so far, the gate holds. A tactical map of this encounter area appears as part of *Flip-Mat: Town Square*.

CREATURES: Although Teraktinus warned these three young giants to wait for Longtooth's initial flight over Sandpoint to launch their attack, the giants were too excited about the raid, and once the youngest of the three saw a human moving around on the wall, he tossed a rock. Although they've revealed their presence now, the three giants wait until they see Longtooth's opening strafe of the town before they make any real attempt to take the wall.

When the PCs arrive, the giants are about 200 feet up the road from the gate, calling out taunts and jeers in broken Common to the terrified guards who cover behind the wall and frantically move wagons into place to help barricade and reinforce the gate.

STONE GIANTS (3)	XP 4,800 each	CR 8	HP 102 each
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(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

TACTICS

During Combat As soon as the PCs bring any sort of significant force against these three giants, their taunts end immediately and they move forward to fight.

Morale Once one of the three giants is slain, the survivors panic and flee back to their base camp in the Ravenroost tors.

DEVELOPMENT: This encounter is, in a way, intended to be a distraction. Fighting the giants here does little to help the city itself, since the giants, if left to their own devices, waste a lot of time demolishing the gate and walls. By the time the raid is over, they've only barely begun to raid the town and are forced to retreat before taking any prisoners or doing much more damage than destroying the wall itself. The PCs can break off combat with this group or ignore them entirely without much impact on the rest of town.

ROUND 3: CHAOS AT TANNER'S BRIDGE (CR 12)

The east side of the town is poorly arranged for defense against giants, with no city wall to speak of and only the languid flow of the Turandarok River to slow attackers. The river itself is only 10 feet deep here, shallow enough for stone giants and dire bears to wade through just south of the northernmost bridge into town.

CREATURES: When the giants to the north start throwing boulders, a pair of stone giants using the trees in the swamp on the north side of the Mill Pond as cover emerge onto the road at the east side of Tanner's Bridge, assuming that they just couldn't see Longtooth's initial flight over Sandpoint due to the intervening rise of the river's northern bank. Unless someone opposes them,

this group storms over Tanner's Bridge, driving their trained dire bears before them, and sets to gathering prisoners at once.

STONE GIANTS (2)	XP 4,800 each	CR 8	HP 102 each
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(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

DIRE BEARS (3)	XP 3,200 each	CR 7	HP 95 each
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(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 31)

DEVELOPMENT: This group of giants and bears has orders to rove down River Street and prevent anyone from escaping town to the east. At the same time, they do what they can to rob riverfront businesses and catch locals as prisoners. Each giant carries a large leather bag in which he can carry up to three human-sized prisoners slung over his back (in which case at least one of the prisoners should be a named NPC like Das Korvut or Larz Rovanky). Defeating the giants before Round 25 prevents these prisoners from being taken and allows bucket brigades to form and help contain the spread of fires.

ROUND 8: DRAGONFIRE INFERNO (CR 10)

CREATURE: Longtooth doesn't follow the giants on foot as they approach Sandpoint; his greater speed in the air affords him the luxury of waiting for the visual signal of the giants being in place to swoop down to attack. His keen eyesight allows him to see the premature assault on the northern gate, and he launches into the air at once—it takes him 8 rounds to reach Sandpoint.

Once he arrives in town, Longtooth gleefully swoops and flaps over Sandpoint. This is his first real attack on a human settlement, and he spends as much time roaring and periodically landing on the roofs of sturdy buildings to glower and menace as he does actually breathing fire or gulping up fleeing citizens. On Round 8 of the raid, he swoops in from the north and breathes fire on the Sandpoint Garrison—the building is mostly stone, so it weathers the attack better than Longtooth's targets in the succeeding rounds.

The dragon wheels and circles, swooping in to breathe fire on a new building once every 4 rounds. A list of his most likely targets during the rest of the raid is detailed below.

ROUND 12—SANDPOINT CATHEDRAL: While the northern wings of the cathedral catch fire quickly, the southern section is relatively fireproof. Longtooth alights on the roof of the cathedral for 2 rounds to roar and mock the town before taking to the air again.

ROUND 16—SANDPOINT THEATER: The bright colors of this building prove too tempting a target; once Longtooth breathes on it, the building catches fire quickly. Cyrdak Drokkus uses his magic and bardic performances to aid

attempts to quell the fire, but without assistance, the theater is doomed.

ROUND 20—THE HAGFISH: Longtooth lands on the beach just west of the Hagfish and lights both it and the nearby docks (and a ship, the *Wistful Widow*) on fire, then spends the next 3 rounds catching and eating people trying to escape from the burning buildings.

ROUND 24—SALMON STREET: Longtooth strafes southern Sandpoint, setting fire to the Sandpoint Mercantile League, Fatman's Feedbag, and all of the buildings surrounding Shark Alley.

Once a wooden building is on fire, the chances of it burning to the ground are strong. The citizens of Sandpoint can organize bucket brigades that can contain the fire, but they can do little to save the buildings the dragon targets directly with his breath weapon. Saving a building from burning down requires PC intervention in the form of magic. *Quench* is the most efficient

way of stopping a fire. *Gust of wind* can extinguish a fire if applied within a round of the dragon's initial breath weapon attack. *Pyrotechnics* can convert a fire to harmless smoke and light if cast on a burning building within 4 rounds of the fire starting—each 4 rounds (or fraction thereof) the fire continues to burn requires an additional *pyrotechnics* spell. *Cone of cold* or *sleet storm* can extinguish any fire, provided the spell's area of effect can encompass the entire building. Additional spells and effects might work, subject to GM approval.

Of course, the best way to prevent Longtooth from lighting these devastating fires is to kill him or drive him off. His flight gives him superior mobility, but at several points during the raid he lands on the ground to eat a few victims—these are excellent times for PCs who lack the ability to fly to attack the dragon. Longtooth is proud and arrogant, and if a PC can taunt him effectively (with a successful Intimidate check or a DC 30 Bluff check) or attract his attention with an attack that deals more than 20 points of damage with a single shot, he swoops down to breathe fire on the PC and then fight in melee.

LONGTOOTH

XP	CR	HP
12,800	11	149

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

CE Large dragon (fire)

Init +5; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., dragon senses, low-light vision, smoke vision; Perception +18

Aura frightful presence (120 ft., DC 18)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 10, flat-footed 28 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +15 natural, -1 size)

hp 149 (13d12+65)

Fort +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10

Immune fire, paralysis, sleep

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor)

Melee +1 bite +22 (2d6+9/19–20), 2 +1 claws +22 (1d8+9), +1 wings +16 (1d6+5), +1 tail slap +16 (1d8+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (40-ft. cone, 8d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 21 half, usable every 1d4 rounds)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +15)

At will—*detect magic*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 14)

Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

1st (6/day)—*mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 12), *mage hand*, *open/close*

TACTICS

Before Combat Longtooth casts *mage armor* before he flies down to join the raid.

During Combat If forced into melee, Longtooth is fond of using

LONGTOOTH

true strike followed by Power Attack to maximize damage against a single foe. He uses *ray of enfeeblement* against foes who seem able to hit him particularly hard.

Morale Longtooth abandons the raid and flees back to Jorgenfist to lick his wounds in area **A5** if reduced to fewer than 50 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 12, **Con** 21, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 33

Feats Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claws)

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+18 when jumping), Appraise +18, Bluff +18, Fly +11, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Perception +18, Spellcraft +18

Languages Common, Draconic

Gear *amulet of mighty fists* +1, gold-and-amber ring (worth 500 gp), silver armband (worth 2,500 gp)

DEVELOPMENT: If the party kills or drives away Longtooth, Sandpoint avoids a serious fire that burns half the town, which would leave much of the population without shelter and its dock district in ruins. Instead, the town suffers only a few burnt-out houses, all quickly extinguished by quick-acting citizens and bucket brigades from the river and harbor.

ROUND 9: MILL POND (CR 12)

CREATURES: As giants with huge tree-trunk clubs reach through second-story windows and pull citizens out of their homes, knocking some over the head and shackling others together with leg irons, a pair led by Teraktinus lumbers through the streets toward the Old Light. "More prisoners!" they yell as they make their way through the town. "Bring us your fat, greedy merchants, and we will spare your miserable lives! Ignore us and you'll burn in dragon fire!"

TERAKTINUS	XP	CR	HP
	9,600	10	151

Male stone giant ranger 2

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 12, flat-footed 27 (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 151 (14 HD; 12d8+2d10+86)

Fort +17, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities improved rock catching

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 dwarf bane heavy pick +20/+15/+10 (1d8+11/19-20/x4), +1 light pick +20/+15/+10 (1d6+6/x4)

Ranged rock +13/+8/+3 (1d8+15)

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

Special Attacks favored enemy (dwarves +2), rock throwing (180 ft.)

TACTICS

During Combat Teraktinus wastes no time in carrying out his own mission. He and his two bodyguards make their way through Sandpoint toward the Old Light—if no one stands in their way, they reach the ruins on Round 20. Teraktinus spends 5 rounds digging through the ruins for a good-sized stone for Mokmurian, then sounds the call for retreat with his war horn. If anyone gets in his way, he proves quite creative at finding things to throw at his enemies—chimneys, pieces of buildings, and wagons work as well as thrown rocks in a pinch. In any event, foes brave enough to stand in his way annoy him to such a degree that he abandons his mission long



TERAKTINUS



enough to try to kill them. If faced with particularly powerful foes, he uses his war horn to summon aid (Longtooth if the dragon's still available; or the closest group of giants otherwise).

Morale Teraktinus fights to the death if challenged.

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 15, **Con** 23, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 35

Feats Improved Critical (heavy pick), Lunge, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Fighting, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (heavy pick), Weapon Focus (light pick)

Skills Linguistics +0, Perception +12, Stealth +6 (+10 in rocky terrain), Survival +12

Languages Common, Dwarf, Giant

SQ track +1, wild empathy +3

Gear +2 hide armor, +1 dwarf bane heavy pick, +1 light pick, ring of protection +1, war horn

STONE GIANTS (2)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	102 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

ROUND 12: BEER OR DEATH (CR 10)

Two giants shout threats at Two Knight Brewery, their voices booming and insistent. "If you don't give us all the beer, we'll smash you flat!" shouts one of them. Another throws a stone at the building. "Beer or death! Your choice!"

CREATURES: These two stone giants are late to the raid after they stopped to chase a farmer heading into town. When they arrive, they approach from the southern Lost Coast Road. Seeing the raid in full swing, they barrel across the bridge but are immediately distracted again—this time by the delicious smell of beer wafting out of Two Knight Brewery.

Their voices, booming and insistent, carry well over the chaos of the raid. As one shouts, the other rips up from the ground the "Welcome to Sandpoint" sign—mirror and all—and flings it at the brewery.

STONE GIANTS (2)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	102 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

DEVELOPMENT: These giants waste all their time at the brewery, and if the PCs ignore them, the building is destroyed. On Round 25, the giants catch Gaven Deverin and, recognizing his holy symbol of Abadar as one of the signs they've been told to look for when harvesting greedy prisoners, gleefully stuff him into a barrel and flee back to Jorgenfist.

ROUND 16: LOOTING SCARNETTI MANOR (CR 11)

On this round and each succeeding round, have all of the PCs who are outside and have a view of Schooner Gulch Bluff make DC 25 Perception checks. With a success, a character notices smoke rising from what can only be Scarnetti Manor.

CREATURES: Three stone giants have swung wide so as to approach Sandpoint from the south—the approach resulted in their late arrival, but should allow them relative freedom in looting the manor houses and capturing nobles. Two of the giants pull a large wagon between them that they intend to fill with prisoners and loot, and while they actually arrive at Scarnetti Manor on Round 10 of the raid, the smoke rising from a tipped-over wood-burning stove that starts a fire doesn't alert characters in town to the attack until Round 16, at the earliest.

STONE GIANTS (3)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	102 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

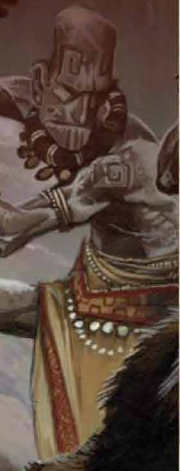
TREASURE: These giants have already loaded a lot of treasure into their wagon, including four woven silk tapestries worth 1,200 gp each; three chests of silver- and gold-inlaid tableware worth 1,000 gp in all; barrels of wine, brandy, and olive oil worth a total of 1,400 gp; and a teakwood desk inlaid with silver and gold worth 600 gp. All of this belongs to the Scarnetti family. Even if the Scarnettis have become the PCs' enemies, they'll gratefully reward the PCs if the party can prevent these giants from kidnapping the entire family, paying a reward of 1,000 gp.

If the PCs bother to search the teakwood desk and make a DC 30 Perception check, they find a hidden compartment that contains several letters addressed to Titus Scarnetti from local crime lord Jubrayl Vhiski that reveal not only that Titus hired Jubrayl to burn down several mills in the region (ensuring Scarnetti's own mill in town would gain more business), but also that Jubrayl has reversed the attack and is now blackmailing the Scarnetti family for regular payments, lest he reveal to Sheriff Hemlock that Scarnetti paid one of his boys to light those fires. If the PCs present this evidence to Sheriff Hemlock and Mayor Deverin, the Scarnetti family is all but ruined and the grateful town of Sandpoint scrapes up a reward of 2,000 gp for the PCs for the resolution to the troubling arsons. Alternatively, the Scarnettis themselves would pay up to 3,000 gp to the PCs to keep them quiet if the PCs come to them first with this evidence.

DEVELOPMENT: If the party defeats the warband raiding the nobles' homes, they save the Scarnetti family from being carried off and stop the looting of the manor house. Such an event might be the only thing to patch up any longstanding feuds the PCs might have with the surly and cantankerous nobles.

ROUND 25: RETREAT!

From the giants' point of view, the raid is a success if it continues for 25 rounds. At this point, Teraktinus blows his horn to signal the retreat. The surviving giants flee back into the tross and, over the next several days, make their way back to Jorgenfist with their prisoners and treasure.





The PCs might be able to track them down and defeat them before the giants can return, of course.

If Teraktinus makes it all the way back to Jorgenfist with the stone harvested from the Old Light, Mokmurian (with Conna's aid) soon confirms his suspicion that the traitorous Scribbler still dwells in the chambers below, and begins to organize a much larger raid on Sandpoint with the goal of destroying the site completely. Organizing this attack takes some time, though, so as long as the PCs don't delay too long (more than a month) in taking the fight to Jorgenfist, they can still catch Mokmurian and his minions at the fortress.

The raid fails if the giants are all slain or if their morale is shaken enough that they rout. Not every giant needs to be slain to force a rout. In fact, as soon as any two of the following three conditions are met, the remaining giants drop everything and flee back into the tors, abandoning the raid entirely.

- Teraktinus is slain.
- Longtooth is slain or forced to flee back to Jorgenfist.
- At least eight giants and dire bears (in any combination) are slain.

THE PRISONER

Once the raid is over, the question on everyone's mind is, "Why did the giants attack Sandpoint?" Answers can come most easily from a captured giant—perhaps one reduced to negative hit points who stabilized before bleeding to death, or maybe one the PCs charmed, incapacitated, or otherwise defeated without killing.

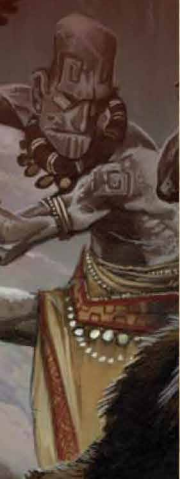
A lone, captured stone giant with only a few hit points left quickly loses much of his stoic pride—the shame at having been defeated by humans coupled with the pain of his wounds makes him quick to talk. Prisoners remain belligerent and insulting unless their attitudes are compelled into a friendlier nature.

If the PCs capture one or more stone giants, they might learn some information from their prisoners. Intimidate won't work here, as the stone giants' natural arrogance makes them believe that all smaller creatures are to be pitied and despised. A clever story and a successful DC 25 Bluff check gets a giant to say more than it intended, and a DC 30 Diplomacy check wins over a giant completely. If a giant can be convinced to talk, read the following text.



The injured giant squints, frowns, and then chuckles to itself. "Defeated by nosy little humans," it says. "Never thought this would happen to the Plateau People. Well, I can tell you this: My lord is mighty Mokmurian, one of the dark giants of old come again. His magic, the things he has made... He has convinced the tribes that they will rule all the lowlands again, down to the sea. He has mastered the ancient arts.

"He will certainly kill you all, run rough over your tiny homes with the army he has called. The fortunate few will become his slaves. You beat us today, but you won't beat us when there are a hundred or a thousand of the Plateau People marching together. Lord Mokmurian will make it happen.



He's almost as smooth a talker as you are, little one." He scratches his nose. "Teraktinus—he was the leader of our scouting party. He convinced us that you'd be easy pickings and we'd all get rich. He obviously underestimated you, and he paid for his mistake. I've no interest in paying for that mistake as well—grant me safe passage out of your lands, and I'll tell you everything you wish to know."

The PCs doubtless have plenty of questions for the prisoner—likely questions (and the prisoner's answers) are given below.

WHO IS MOKMURIAN? "I already told you—he's our lord and leader. He promised us glory and riches, and although our raid on your town didn't go so well, that's because Teraktinus was a fool. When Lord Mokmurian marches down from the Storval Plateau, he will take from you everything."

WHAT IS MOKMURIAN? "I have only heard him speak from afar, and have only heard from others of the power of his magic. He is the rarest of us all, a child of the stones who has mastered the magic of the Ancient Lords. They say he can turn the living into immobile stone and can turn his own flesh into granite armor. I've even heard he can cause the very stones of the world to quicken and pull those who stand atop them into a tomb below the earth. And I'm sure he can do much more than that."

WHO ARE THESE ANCIENT LORDS? "They are gone now, but our elders tell us they once ruled over our ancestors, enslaved them, forced them to build the monuments that grace Varisia even today. Many of my brothers believe that Mokmurian is one of these Ancient Lords risen from the past to rebuild his empire."

HOW MANY GIANTS DOES MOKMURIAN COMMAND? "He has at least seven tribes of under his command, with each tribe numbering in the dozens. The number of lesser kin he's conscripted—ogres, hill giants, ettins, trolls—is not insignificant. He also enjoys the support of several lamias—degenerate followers of the Mother of Monsters."

WHEN IS HE GOING TO ATTACK VARISIA? "I am not sure. He sent several scouting parties, of which my band was but one, into these lowlands to gather intelligence. He does this to prepare for his coming attack. His fury will come soon. Perhaps even by month's end."

WHERE IS HE BASED? "Mokmurian has claimed a place taboo to my people: the Valley of the Black Tower in the Iron Peaks. He calls his fortress Jorgenfist, after the name of the fortress that guards the entrance to the afterlife. Our elders found the name blasphemous, but Mokmurian is powerful enough not to fear blasphemy."

WHERE IS JORGENFIST? "Jorgenfist lies within the Valley of the Black Tower in the Iron Peaks. It overlooks the waters of the Muschkal River, but can also be approached by heading east from the Storval Stairs. Lord Mokmurian himself dwells deep below Jorgenfist—in hidden places he does not allow us to visit."

WHY WAS YOUR LEADER TRYING TO STEAL A PIECE OF THE OLD LIGHT? "I can't say. He mentioned having a special mission from Lord Mokmurian, but didn't tell me what it was. Didn't tell any of us. My people's elders have ways of prying secrets from the stones—perhaps that stone knew something that Lord Mokmurian needed to learn?"

STORY AWARD: For each significant bit of information the PCs learn from a prisoner, award them 1,200 XP, to a maximum award of 9,600 XP.

ALTERNATE INTELLIGENCE

The PCs can learn much of what they need to know about Mokmurian, his army, and the location of his fortress from a captured stone giant. If they didn't manage to take any of the raiders prisoner, though, they'll need to discover much of that information in another way. Spells like *commune*, *divination*, and *contact other plane* can certainly aid in this regard—skew your answers to these spells so you can provide bits and pieces of the information given above to the PCs. Alternatively, if any of Teraktinus's giants escaped, they could return to Sandpoint to try a second raid, or maybe even hole up on Devil's Platter or in Mosswood and begin making regular raids into the farmlands. The PCs might then be called upon to defeat these giants, and one of them might well fall to his knees and beg for his life in trade for telling the PCs what he knows about Mokmurian.

CATCHING UP IN SANDPOINT

Although there could well be a sense of urgency in the air (especially if citizens of Sandpoint have been taken prisoner by giants!), if you get the chance, you should encourage the PCs to take a day or two to rest in town before they head back out. While they'll be returning home once again at the start of the next chapter, after spending an entire adventure away from town over in the Hook Mountain region, the PCs are probably eager to have some time to catch up with old friends and allies. In particular, if the PCs stopped the raid on Scarnetti Manor but discovered evidence that laid bare that family's secrets, the town may all but demand the PCs stick around, at least long enough to ensure that the Scarnettis face justice. Mayor Deverin prefers to have them arrested, and may ask the PCs to help escort Sheriff Hemlock the Scarnettis down to Magnimar to have them brought before that city's justices. If you do so, you can have the PCs encounter another band of stone giants along the way, skulking around near the Lost Coast Road.





FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

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PART TWO: JOURNEY TO JORGENFIST

THE STONE GIANT FORTRESS OF JORGENFIST IS LOCATED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE IRON PEAKS, ALMOST IN THE CENTER OF THE ENTIRE REGION THAT ENCOMPASSES VARISIA AND THE STORVAL PLATEAU. FROM HERE, MOKMURIAN HAS GATHERED SEVERAL TRIBES OF GIANTS—MOSTLY STONE GIANTS, BUT ALSO SOME TRIBES OF HILL GIANTS AND GROUPS OF OGRES (WITH A TRIBE OF FROST GIANTS EN ROUTE TO THE FORTRESS IN THE NEAR FUTURE), AND AS THESE TRIBES GATHER IN THE VALLEY SURROUNDING THE FORTRESS ITSELF, THOUGHTS TURN INCREASINGLY TO THE PROMISE OF WAR...

The PCs might have access to some exotic methods of travel—let them plan their journey to Jorgenfist however they wish. This adventure assumes they make the journey on foot (or perhaps on horseback) from Sandpoint, up the Lost Coast Road, over to Ember Lake, then up to Galduria, Wolf's Ear, Ravenmoor, and finally the Storval Stairs. Once they reach the top of the stairs, they can head directly east into the Iron Peaks and the Valley of the Black Tower. Up through Ravenmoor, this journey travels along roads and tracks and trails, but beyond Ravenmoor it's open country. The journey is about 320 miles long—230 along roads, 60 along open grasslands, and 30 through broken hills and low mountains. At a speed of 30 feet, the journey takes just over 15 days. During the journey, you can liven things up with wandering monsters rolled from the tables on page 404 of this book. The rest of Part Two gives several optional encounters you can run as you see fit—each of these encounters is presented in rough detail only, so you can customize details and maps to your campaign.

OGRE CATTLE RUSTLERS (CR 11)

Although most of the scouting parties are well on their way back to Jorgenfist by the time the PCs begin their own journey, a few deserters have struck out into the lowlands to make their own fortunes. One such group of deserters is a band of three ogre fighters who sneaked away from their scouting party a month ago. They spent a few weeks hiding out, and now that they're sure the giants have returned to Jorgenfist, they have emerged from hiding to begin raiding small outlying farms. The PCs could hear about these ogre cattle rustlers while passing through a town like Galduria, or perhaps they have the good fortune of stumbling across the latest ranch to attract the ogres' attention, and the PCs see them grabbing up livestock for supper. They could even encounter the three ogres after such a raid, in which case a successful DC 15 Perception check is enough for the party to notice the sound of the approaching ogres and their panicked, mooing catch. Once the ogres

notice the PCs, they put down their captured cows and loot, take up their weapons, and attack.

OGRE CATTLE RUSTLERS (3)	XP 4,800 each	CR 8	HP 104 each
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Ogre fighter 5 (see page 149)

TACTICS

During Combat The ogres wade into battle without much care for anything except getting to melee as quickly as they can. Once in the thick of it, they go all out to destroy their opponents one at a time. They gang up on the same foe, using flanking to gain advantages and not splitting attacks unless they must for space reasons.

Morale If two ogres are defeated, the remaining ogre panics and flees into the wilderness, eventually heading back to Jorgenfist to rejoin Mokmurian's armies. Canny PCs can follow an ogre fleeing in this manner right into the Valley of the Black Tower.

TREASURE: The ogres have accumulated a few bits of treasure from their raid apart from the cattle: a chest filled with 6,000 sp and three barrels of fine brandy worth 400 gp each (each barrel weighs 300 pounds).

DEVELOPMENT: If any of the scouts escape to Jorgenfist, their reports of the PCs eventually reach Mokmurian's ears, and the keen-witted giant realizes that heroes are coming for him. For 2 weeks after this encounter (starting 1d6 days after the ogres flee), all of the Iron Peak patrols and guards at Jorgenfist are both forewarned and exceptionally diligent, gaining a +4 circumstance bonus on Perception checks made to notice intruders.

SIGNS OF GIANTS

As the PCs head toward the Storval Plateau, mention things that foreshadow the giants they'll be fighting soon. The scouting parties that have plagued the Varisian lowlands over the past several weeks have left their mark everywhere—some examples follow.

BATTLE SITE: Although the scouting parties avoided direct confrontations with settlements, they did attack many caravans and lone hunters they encountered



along the road. These battle sites should bespeak a terrible fury, littered with shattered stones and pulped bodies left for the scavengers after every bit of valuable loot had been stripped away.

CAMPSITE: The PCs come across an enormous campsite. At the center, a campfire made of tree trunks sits in a ring of boulders, the mostly eaten carcass of a roasted 14-foot-long aurochs in the ashes.

DEAD GIANTS: Although the giants are strong, there are monsters like wyverns, manticores, and flame drakes that can cause even these enormous creatures problems. The PCs could come across a cairn of stones under which the body of a slain stone giant has been laid to rest.

RUMORS: Stopping at any town along the way, the PCs can hear all manner of horror stories. Every third person seems to have either sighted a giant in the last few days or knows someone who has, and of these, at least half can tell stories of a friend or acquaintance who's gone missing. In almost every case, the missing folks are merchants, soldiers, hunters, or travelers, and it's feared they've been caught and killed by the giants.

THE STORVAL STAIRS (CR 12)

The Storval Rise is one of the most unique and infamous landmarks in Varisia; the change in terrain from the fertile lowlands to the rugged and stony scrublands of the plateau above marks the lands of giants and barbarians with an unmistakable boundary. The rise itself often reaches dizzying heights of 1,000 feet or more, but at the location known as the Storval

Stairs, the cliffs are only 400 feet high, and feature an ancient Thassilonian monument once used by armies of enslaved giants for easy foot travel between the lowlands and the plateau.

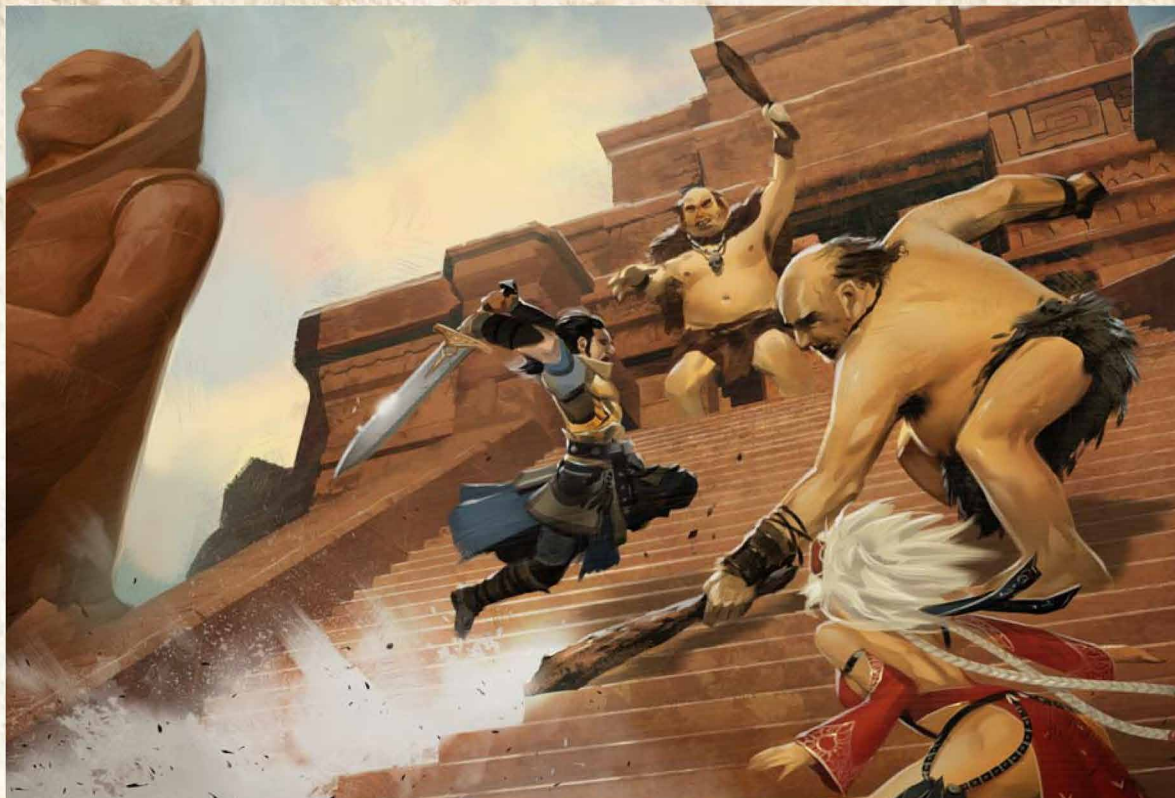
The Storval Stairs rise in 2-foot steps, and are flanked on either side by immense statues of Runelord Karzoug (although the southern statue has finally begun to crumble and erode) and walls of ancient towers, buildings, and dwellings. Until recently, harpies and trolls dwelt in the area, but Mokmurian intends to use the stairs as a convenient invasion point, marching his army down into Varisia when he is ready. To prepare for this time, he sent one tribe of hill giants here to "clean it out." The place is now all but abandoned, with six hill giants remaining as sentinels to keep the harpies, trolls, and other undesirables from returning and complicating Mokmurian's plans for the stairs.

Walking up the stairs takes 2 squares of movement per square for Medium or smaller creatures.

CREATURES: The six hill giants who stand guard here have moved into one of the buildings at the top of the stairs. One of the six watches from a post atop the shoulder of the northern statue of Karzoug at all times—if he spots anyone approaching the stairs, he alerts his kin by throwing a boulder onto the roof of their building. All six giants then arrange themselves at the top of the stairs, where large piles of throwing boulders have been stacked.

If the PCs attempt to climb the stairs, the giants abandon rock throwing in favor of a controlled landslide—they





can kick and push and drop boulders down the stairs at an alarming rate. Any characters climbing the stairs must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save each round or take 3d6 points of damage from the tumbling stones.

HILL GIANTS (6)	XP	CR	HP
	3,200 each	7	85 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 150)

TACTICS

During Combat All six giants abandon their landslide attack as soon as any PC manages to engage them in melee. The giants do their best to prevent any PC from fleeing into the plateau itself.

Morale If five giants are slain, the last tries to escape back to Jorgenfist to report to Mokmurian—repercussions are the same in this event as for the Development section for the Ogre Cattle Rustlers on page 195.

TREASURE: The giants have gathered a fairly respectable stash of treasure for themselves, mostly taken from the harpies and trolls they defeated over the past month. They keep this treasure in a mound in the back of their temporary home, and one giant is always on guard there except when they're defending the stairs. The treasure consists of 3,306 sp, a carved mammoth bone statuette of a much smaller mammoth worth 700 gp, an eye patch with a mock eye of black star sapphire and moonstone worth 900 gp, a mithral anklet worth 1,000 gp, a jeweled gold crown worth 4,000 gp, a +2 *defending bladed scarf*, a leather pouch containing seven *potions of cure moderate*

wounds and a *potion of remove disease*, and an efficient quiver containing 16 +1 *undead bane arrows* and one *greater monstrous humanoid slaying arrow*.

A DC 25 Knowledge (nobility) check reveals that the crown is in fact the Lost Crown of the Pallgreaves clan, one of the oldest noble families of Janderhoff. The dwarves would gladly pay 10,000 gp for its return.

IRON PEAK PATROLS (CR 11)

Once the PCs enter the Iron Peaks, the chances of encountering hunting parties of stone giants increase dramatically—these giants are charged with catching game to feed Mokmurian's growing army. A hunting party consists of two stone giants and three trained dire bears used to track prey. It's unusual to encounter groups of humanoids in the Iron Peaks, and the giants aren't stupid—they quickly come to the conclusion that the PCs are "heroes" come to confront Mokmurian and his army, especially when the PCs don't immediately die in the first round of combat. The giants order the bears to fight the PCs and then try to flee back to Jorgenfist to alert Mokmurian on the second round of combat when this becomes clear.

STONE GIANTS (2)	XP	CR	HP
	4,800 each	8	102 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

DIRE BEARS (3)	XP	CR	HP
	3,200 each	7	95 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 31)



FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

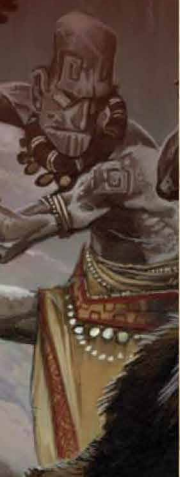
PART ONE: STONES OVER SANDPOINT

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Part Three

PART THREE: INTO THE VALLEY OF THE BLACK TOWER

SO NAMED FOR THE OMINOUS SPIKED EDIFICE THAT STANDS AS A LONE SENTINEL OVER THE VALLEY'S RIVERSIDE BOUNDARY, THE VALLEY OF THE BLACK TOWER HAS LONG BEEN VIEWED AS TABOO BY THE STONE GIANT TRIBES THAT DWELL IN AND AROUND THE IRON PEAKS. THEIR TALES SPEAK OF HOW THE MAGIC OF THE ANCIENT LORDS STILL FUNCTIONS WITHIN THE BLACK TOWER, AND HOW ONE OF THE ANCIENT LORDS' MINIONS STILL "LIVES" BEYOND DEATH INSIDE.

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Mokmurian was not deterred by the rumors surrounding the Valley of the Black Tower, and he came to the valley not long after he was exiled. Here he discovered that the stories were true—an ancient mummy from Thassilon dwelt below the Black Tower, and had even become the patron of a small flock of particularly devout harpies. Mokmurian used his magic to impress the harpies and his silver tongue to forge a tenuous alliance with them, enough that they allowed him to explore the caves below the tower's foundation. Therein, Mokmurian discovered an ancient library, and its stores of knowledge set him along the path to Xin-Shalast.

When Mokmurian returned from his journey, the harpies and their undead master could sense Karzoug's influence on him and their alliance became more solid. They even helped Mokmurian build a fortress around the cave entrance and incorporated the Black Tower into the surrounding wall. Mokmurian's army came to populate the fortress soon thereafter—he houses his favored troops in the buildings within its walls and has directed other tribes to set up camps in the valley beyond as they arrive.

The Valley of the Black Tower is relatively small, and Jorgenfist dominates the view within. When the PCs first arrive, read or paraphrase the following as they take in the view for the first time.



The mountains give way here to a wide valley perched on the upper edge of a cliff overlooking the Muschkal River. At the western edge of the valley entrance, a lone watchtower stands upon a low hill, but this structure is overshadowed by the larger one that looms in the valley proper. Here stands a ring-shaped stone wall, fifty feet in height and surrounding several buildings, the most impressive of which is a looming black tower with bladelike crenellations that overlooks the river gorge. Within the ring, a one-hundred-fifty-foot-tall stone spire rises, surrounded by three low buildings. Apart from the black tower, five smaller

towers are built into the fortress wall—one of these towers is wider than the others and seems to be the only gateway into the courtyard within.

The fortress is not the only sign of life in the valley, for surrounding it are seven large camps of towering tents, yurts, and stone shelters. Smoke rises from campfires and the sound of grating laughter and the clash of weapon training fills the air, competing with the periodic trumpeting of large and angry-sounding animals from somewhere within the fortress itself.

Stone giants are not normally warlike, mostly due to the calming and stable influence of the wise and patient elders who traditionally shape their societies. The giants Mokmurian has called to his side, however, are young and impetuous. In many cases, he gained their favor through force by publicly challenging elders to open duels and then, one by one, striking them down with his potent magic. In other cases, displays and promises of wealth (Karzoug made sure Mokmurian was loaded up with plenty of treasure from his numerous vaults before sending him back to the Storval Plateau to build an army) were all that was needed to lure the younger generation away from tradition.

Today, the seven tribes encamped around Jorgenfist follow Mokmurian's commands. Deprived of the stabilizing influence of their elders, and with little but fear and awe to lead them, these giants have grown cruel and violent. Only one elder remains in the region: Conna the Wise, once Mokmurian's tribal mother and, ironically, the only elder who didn't support the call to exile him once his lack of true sorcerous skill was found out. Forced into servitude after Mokmurian slew her husband, Conna rarely leaves Jorgenfist these days. She quietly hopes for someone to rise up against Mokmurian so she can try to return her wayward children to their traditional ways and keep them from what she believes is a suicidal and reckless plan to wage war upon Varisia.

Mokmurian has other methods to control his tribe. He has branded each giant with the Sihedron Rune.





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Although the giants believe this to be Mokmurian's personal rune and wear it proudly to display their allegiance to him, in fact, the rune completes the ritual of binding—when any of these stone giants dies, any elements of greed in his soul are siphoned directly into Karzoug's *runewell* high in Xin-Shalast. Mokmurian also counts among his allies numerous other powerful creatures, including Longtooth, the red dragon; several lamias (of which only two priests of Lamashtu remain in the region); troll thugs; and the ancient horrors whose servitude he has mastered through research in the library deep under the Valley of the Black Tower. His most compelling method of controlling the tribe is via an ancient magic item he discovered in the library—the *Runeslave Cauldron*. With this ancient Thassilonian artifact, once used to punish workers and ensure loyalty, Mokmurian has a powerful tool to handle any giant he discovers harboring doubts about the coming war. The cauldron unmakes giants placed inside it, then returns them to life as creatures called runeslaves—near-mindless minions to the ancient magic of Thassilon. It's a very effective deterrent to other giants who might harbor thoughts of rebellion against their new and cruel lord. With these tactics, Mokmurian has turned his giants further and further toward evil—and all his resources will soon be directed toward the utter destruction of all of Varisia.

A1 WATCHPOST (CR 10 OR 13)



Despite being only two stories, this stone watchtower's proportions are immense—scaled for humans it could contain up to five floors, but the sixteen-foot-tall door at the tower's base indicates that the beings that use it are anything but human.

CREATURES: This watchpost is run by a taiga giant named Cinderma. Exiled from her tribe several years ago after she tortured and murdered a group of dwarves who sought to forge an alliance with her tribe, Cinderma wandered the Storval Plateau before hearing rumors of an army gathering in the Iron Peaks. She presented herself and her skills to Mokmurian, and he accepted her readily enough, assigning her to this watchtower after the previous tenant was slain in an attempt to capture a young blue dragon for sacrifice to Karzoug.

Although Mokmurian often sends fresh runeslaves (giants punished and transformed by the powerful artifact known as the *runeslave cauldron* kept in area C3), Cinderma prefers to keep the day shift to herself, watching over the path leading out of mountain valley from the roof of this tower. If she sees intruders coming, she calls out a warning to the runeslaves below, who quickly throw wet wood and greenery onto a watch

fire that burns just outside the entrance to the tower, sending up a plume of smoke to warn the fortress of visitors, either friendly or hostile. In the evening, Cinderma turns over the task to her runeslaves and spends her time carousing in one of the camps to the east, retiring to this tower late in the night to catch a few hours of rest.

Most of the visitors arriving lately are friendly—more tribes rallying to Mokmurian's cause—so the signal smoke alone won't create a sense of alarm at the fortress. If smoke is seen but neither Cinderma nor friendly visitors arrive by nightfall, however, the fortress grows concerned, and a patrol of two adult stone giants is sent to investigate. If the patrol finds evidence of a fight, the fortress goes on alert for 2 weeks, or until the PCs are caught.

If this or any other circumstance alerts the majority of Jorgenfist's forces to the presence of intruders, wandering pairs of stone giants begin to actively scout the area looking for the PCs. The GM should place these roaming guards wherever she deems appropriate. In addition, several creatures in the fortress might change their locations or tactics, as noted in their individual descriptions.

CINDERMA	XP	CR	HP
	19,200	12	157

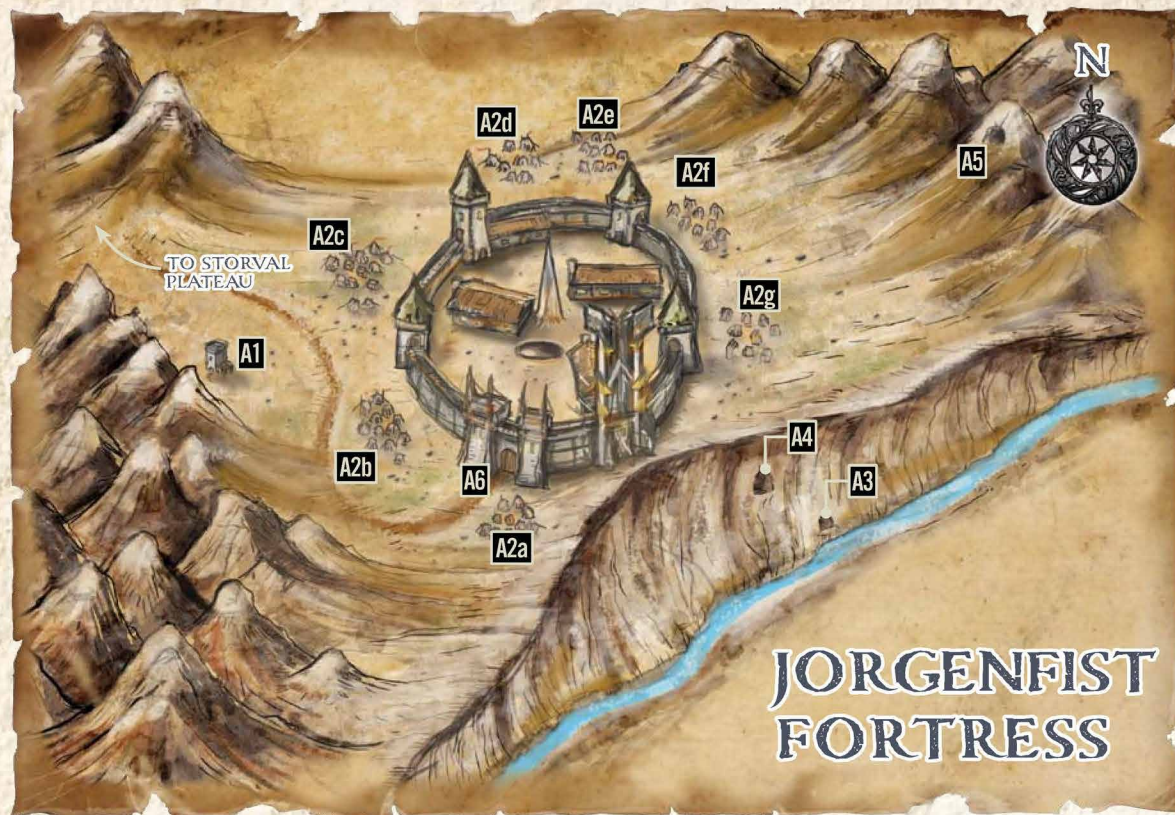
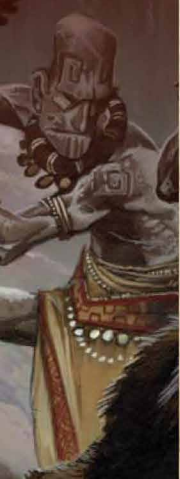
Female taiga giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 131)

HILL GIANT RUNESLAVES (2)	XP	CR	HP
	4,800 each	8	95 each

(see page 412)

A2 THE JORGENFIST ARMY

Jorgenfist is not nearly large enough to house the multiple tribes of giants who have answered Mokmurian's call for war—and even if it were, the taboo nature of the fortress would keep most of the giants from wanting to camp within the fortress walls. Instead, these giants are scattered in seven camps placed around the fortress, each corresponding to one of the major giant tribes that have thrown in their lot with Mokmurian. The sheer number of giants dwelling within each of these camps should discourage the PCs from considering a direct and open assault on Jorgenfist—fortunately for the PCs, Mokmurian has forbidden any of these giants from entering the stone ring that constitutes Jorgenfist's walls, for fear that if they knew the true nature of his plans, allies, and dealings, they would desert his army. If the PCs can make it through these camps and into the fortress itself, they have little to worry about from these giants. Stealth, flight, and even entrance into the fortress via the deathweb cave (area A4) are all fine methods of avoiding direct confrontations with the giants in the surrounding camps.



JORGENFIST FORTRESS

Nevertheless, should the number of giants and their leaders become important, they are summarized below. Many of the stone giant groups have a single leader, having broken from their people's traditions of rulership. Note that only the leaders of these tribes have had any direct contact with Mokmurian, so few of these giants have any reliable information about what lies within Jorgenfist's walls. They all bear the Sihedron Rune either between their shoulders or at the small of their backs, branded there during the ritual of empowerment by one of the two lamia priests (known to most of the giants out here as the Lion Sisters) when they joined Mokmurian's armies.

A2a BLACK FIST: This tribe consists of 32 hill giants led by a beady-eyed chieftain named **DOACH** (CE male hill giant fighter 2). These hill giants are completely loyal to Mokmurian and hope that the wealth and power they'll gain during the war will allow them to return to their ancestral lands on the shores of Lake Skotha and wrest control of a prime site from an established clan of more peaceful stone giants.

A2b RED SHIELD AND NIGHTSHADE: These two allied ogre clans have banded together to form one tribe led under **PAPA BESHK** (CE male ogre barbarian 4). Much of their time is spent bickering and fighting among themselves—Mokmurian has been forced to send his own giants into this camp no less than five times to

officiate disputes and keep fighting to a minimum. In all, 46 ogres dwell here.

A2c MAIDENS OF MINDERHAL: This tribe of 11 stone giants is unusual for its composition. Entirely female, this tribe has a reputation for being among the cruellest and most excessive in its vile ways. Many other giants have tried to woo members of the Maidens only to be rebuffed (at best) or mutilated (at worst). This group is led by an exceptionally tall giant woman named **HALVARA** (LE female stone giant oracle 5).

A2d JORMUNSIR: Led by a one-eyed, grizzled old giant named **VLORIAN** (NE male stone giant ranger 3), the Jormunsir number 20 stone giants strong. Their secret hope is to use the wealth and power gained from conquering Varisia to claim the lands near Minderhal's Anvil as their own.

A2e VALISSGANDER: This tribe of stone giants numbers 18 strong—their leader is a loud and abusive thug named **ZINDERALL** (CE male stone giant fighter 1), whose followers are days away from implementing a swift and brutal coup. They plan on feeding their chieftain (who still doesn't suspect his minions are planning his doom) to Longtooth, but haven't yet decided on who among them will replace him—the only thing that's currently keeping Zinderall alive, unknown to him.





FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

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A2f CRANNOCH: The 22 stone giants of the Crannoch tribe are the most efficient hunters in the region—as a result, this camp is usually empty save for a few giants while the rest are out hunting. A dozen dire bears round out this tribe's inhabitants—they are led by a giant of few words named **ORIANDIAN** (CN stone giant ranger 4).

A2g KAVARVATTI: This was the tribe that once counted Mokmurian as its own. Until his return, the Kavarvattis were led by two elders, a couple named Vandarrec and Conna. When Mokmurian returned from Xin-Shalast, he challenged his tribe father Vandarrec to battle and defeated (but did not yet kill) him. He seized control of the tribe and led them here, then brought the broken-spirited Vandarrec and Conna down to the Shrine of the Ancestors in area **B6**, where he murdered the old giant before his wife's shocked eyes. Conna knew it would be foolish to openly oppose Mokmurian at the time, both because he had wrested control of the tribe and because his own powers far exceeded hers, so she swallowed her rage and pride and pledged her service to him, secretly vowing to do what she could to engineer a revenge.

Mokmurian ceded the day-to-day rule of the Kavarvatti tribe to Barl Breakbones, a giant who soon became Mokmurian's wizardly apprentice. After Barl's defeat at Hook Mountain, rulership of the Kavarvattis fell to one of Barl's bodyguards, a hulking brute named **DROGART** (CE male stone giant fighter 3). Drogart recently discovered Barl's fate, and while he's disappointed that his tribe won't be augmented by the Kreeg ogres, the unexpected windfall of becoming chieftain has gone a long way toward soothing his spirits. Barl was a cruel chieftain, but Drogart might be worse—what he lacks in Barl's magical power, Drogart more than makes up for in brute sadism. He often has his giants scouring the Storval Plateau for Shoanti to torment.

A3 WYVERN CAVE (CR 10)



A musky smell lingers near the entrance to this cave—a thick, almost reptilian stink. Dozens of bones, many immense mammoth or aurochs remains, lie scattered on the ledge overlooking the river fifty feet below.

CREATURES: This cavern overlooks the Muschkal River at a height of 50 feet, and has long been home to a nest of particularly hearty wyverns. Mokmurian secured the aid of these three wyverns for his imminent attack, but for now the wyverns are content to leave the giants living in the valley above alone.

ADVANCED WYVERNS (3)

XP	CR	HP
3,200 each	7	87 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 282, 294)

TACTICS

During Combat The wyverns fight as a group, one distracting and flanking a foe while the others use Improved Grab to grapple and sting opponents.

Morale A wyvern flees into the mountains if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points.

TREASURE: The wyverns have a fire opal that fascinates them endlessly—they've placed the sparkling gemstone atop a low mound of sand in the center of their cave, where they can watch it as the sun rises and they drift off to sleep. The fire opal is worth only 200 gp, a paltry sum compared to the value of the rest of their treasure that lies heaped, almost forgotten, in the southwest spur cave. Buried under a collection of favorite skulls, horse and elk thighbones, and well-gnawed bits of hide is a chest containing 1,435 gp and 2,987 sp. Behind the chest lies an ancient *staff of heaven and earth* the wyverns found in a Thassilonian ruin.

A4 DEATHWEB CAVE (CR 9)



This cave crawls. Countless bloated, many-legged insects trample one another as they carpet the floor and climb the walls, creating a susurrus of a million clicking bug legs. The deepest part of the cave seems to be unnaturally thick with darkness and fallen webs.

This cave's entrance is 250 feet above the narrow beach below. The insects covering the floor are disgusting but mostly harmless, attracted to the cool darkness and the bodies left by the creatures that lair deeper in. The innermost reach of the cave is thick with webs spun by the undead denizens of the cave. As long as these webs remain, a successful DC 40 Perception check is required to notice the secret door in the cave's northern wall. If the webs are cleared, this drops to a DC 20 Perception check. The tunnel beyond leads on a winding route into a mazelike system of narrow tunnels infested with redcaps. One route through this maze leads into the caves below Jorgenfist—see area **B7b** for more details.

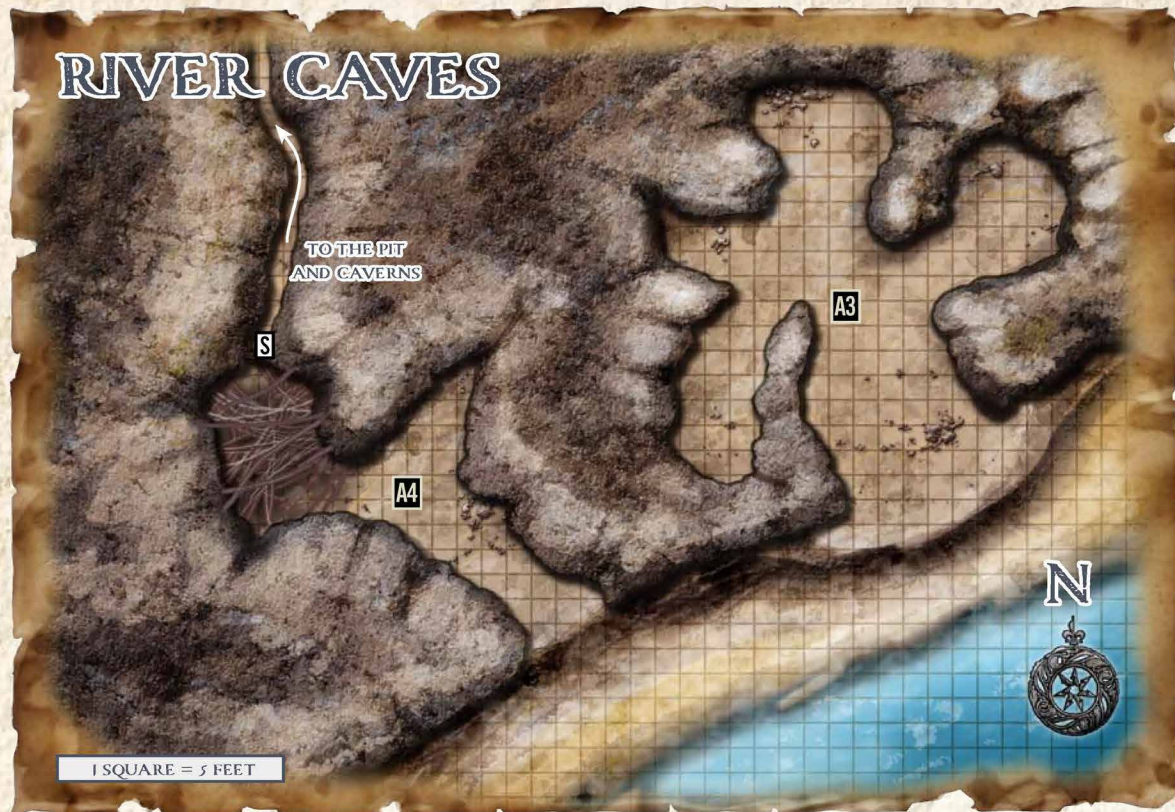
CREATURES: This cave was the nest of several giant funnel web spiders years ago, but Mokmurian used them to test out a vile ritual he learned from several books on necromancy in the Library of Thassilon (see area **C7**), turning them into undead monsters called deathwebs. These creatures resemble stocky, partially decayed spiders the size of horses, yet closer inspection reveals the horrid truth—they are animated shells of giant spiders that are infested with swarms of equally undead arachnids.

DEATHWEBS (3)

XP	CR	HP
2,400 each	6	71 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 65)

RIVER CAVES



TACTICS

During Combat The deathwebs attack all creatures save for Mokmurian that dare to enter this cave, but they wait a few rounds for intruders to make their way into the cave before they strike. If visiting creatures do not enter the cave, the deathwebs use their web ability to capture living things up to 50 feet away.

Morale The deathwebs fight until destroyed.

TREASURE: Although the deathwebs don't collect treasure deliberately, over the years many foolish adventurers have come into their clutches (as have a few wyverns and giants). As a result, the cave is cluttered with old webs, withered skins, and old bones, along with a dozen longswords (one of them a Large +1 *longsword*), a +2 *halberd*, three Large warhammers, a set of full plate armor, and a druid's staff with a *spellstaff* spell still in effect on it (the staff contains a *rusting grasp* at CL 12th).

A5 LONGTOOTH'S CAVE (CR 11)

This cave entrance is difficult to reach except from the air: The entrance is 450 feet up the side of a near-vertical mountain face. Shattered skeletons of dozens of animals, wyverns, and even a few rocs litter the ground far below the cave entrance. Within, the cave is a simple affair, 200 feet deep and 50 feet wide. The final 50 feet of depth are strewn with thousands and thousands of coins (mostly copper). Footing here is treacherous, as the coins slip and slide underfoot for Medium or smaller creatures. For such creatures, the DC of Acrobatics checks increases by 5.

CREATURE: This cave is the lair of one of Mokmurian's allies, the juvenile red dragon Longtooth. The giant battled the dragon on his journey back from Xin-Shalast, but rather than slay the dragon after their fight (even though Longtooth killed a half-dozen of the lamias that were traveling with him), Mokmurian offered Longtooth a job. In return for his life, Longtooth agreed to serve Mokmurian as a hero in his army. The prospect intrigued the dragon, and now, years after his initial defeat, he and Mokmurian have become grudging friends. Longtooth has been instrumental in the capture of dozens of younger dragons over those years—dragons that Mokmurian sacrificed to Karzoug—as few creatures on Golarion yield greedier souls than dragons.

If Longtooth survived the raid on Sandpoint and managed to make it back to this cave, he is bitter and foul-tempered about his failure and nurses a grudge against the PCs. When he sought out aid from Mokmurian, the stone giant was enraged that Longtooth fled the battle and forbade his lamias from providing the dragon with any healing. Sullen and cantankerous, Longtooth retreated to this cave to recover naturally, and does not come to the aid of Jorgenfist if the alarm is raised. Memories of his initial defeat at Mokmurian's hands have returned to his thoughts, and although he has gathered much treasure for himself since joining the giant, he's seen how much more Mokmurian has claimed for himself over the years. Longtooth has grown discontented with his role



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as Mokmurian's minion, and this latest development has pushed him over the edge.

If the PCs confront the bitter dragon in his lair, Longtooth recognizes them at once but does not attack. He's not eager to try his luck against the PCs again so soon after they've defeated him, and he instead offers them a truce. He'll tell them everything he knows about Jorgenfist and Mokmurian, if in return the PCs promise to leave him alone and grant him a share of any treasure they take out of Jorgenfist. His initial attitude toward the PCs is unfriendly, but if they can make him helpful, he'll even volunteer his aid in fighting against the stone giants (although in this case he demands two shares of the treasure).

Longtooth knows quite a bit about Mokmurian. Feel free to tailor what he knows to your group—if they're doing well so far, you might only want to reveal to the PCs a rough estimate of the creatures dwelling in Jorgenfist and the caverns below. If they're having some trouble, you might want to have Longtooth sketch out a map of the cavern level for them. Longtooth has never been into the library level below the caverns, but he does suspect that a deeper level exists.

LONGTOOTH

XP	CR	HP
12,800	11	149

Male juvenile red dragon (see page 190)

TREASURE: Although a carpet of coins covers the innermost section of Longtooth's cave, most of these coins are copper pieces. In all, the coins consist of 360,055 cp, 23,145 sp, 3,403 gp, and 23 pp. In addition, the collection of treasure includes several gemstones: a water opal worth 1,000 gp, a rich blue diamond worth 1,600 gp, and a black opal worth 8,000 gp are Longtooth's favorites, though there are 53 additional gems worth a total of 3,500 gp. A fine linen tapestry depicting monks sparring in a courtyard is rolled up and leans against the wall—this tapestry weighs 50 pounds but is worth 600 gp. Finally, a set of solid silver idols sits on a ledge on the innermost wall. These idols are each worth 600 gp—they depict a wyvern with a human rider, a human warrior trampling a demon underfoot, a centaur dressed in plate mail armor, and a leaping fish with a wide mouth filled with teeth. A sixth idol is in fact made of platinum. It depicts Runelord Karzoug, and is worth 5,000 gp.

A6 THE STONE GATE (CR 10)

The fortress has a solid stone gate—two doors that tower 20 feet high and 10 feet wide apiece. It fits neatly into the wall between two of the 70-foot-high towers, and looks very difficult to open (hardness 8, hp 300). A successful DC 22 Strength check is required to push open the gate, so long as the stone bar inside is not lowered in place. If the bar is lowered, a successful DC 50 Strength check is required to smash down the door).

CREATURE: The guardians of this gate are a trio of unusual harpies—students of the Black Monk (see area A14). These harpies were living in nests atop the Black Tower when Mokmurian first visited, and they were intrigued enough by the giant to agree to an alliance. They forbade him from entering the Black Tower itself, but had no cares about him exploring the caves below.

These harpies are students of the ancient undead monk that dwells within the Black Tower. After thousands of years of solitude, even the undead can grow lonely and ache for companionship—when six harpies entered the tower nearly 2 decades ago, the Black Monk only killed three before offering the surviving three the opportunity to train as its pupils. Seeing this as a way to escape the mummy's wrath, the harpies agreed, but soon found that the ancients' lore suited them well. Today, the harpies see themselves as the guardians of the Black Tower, the lair of their undead master. It was the Black Monk's decision to allow Mokmurian to use the site as a base, for reasons the harpies don't care to know.

In daylight or at night, the harpies keep the bargain they made with the giants; they sing softly, with just a 75-foot range, and the giants leave them be in exchange for their help in guarding the gate from intrusions. The harpies draw creatures away from the fortress, over the cliffs. Though the giants sometimes hear snatches of the song, they are largely immune to it (though ogres and young giants do sometimes fall from the cliffs in suspicious accidents).

HARPY MONKS (3)

XP	CR	HP
3,200 each	7	91 each

Female harpy monk 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 172)

LE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +2 Wis, +1 natural)

hp 91 each (13 HD; 7d10+6d8+26)

Fort +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** disease

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

Melee flurry of blows +14/+14/+9/+4 (1d8+3), 2 talons +9 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks captivating song, flurry of blows, stunning fist (7/day, DC 15)

TACTICS

During Combat These harpies are fond of using their captivating song to attract prey, flying out over the river, and luring victims into walking off the edge of the cliff. They prefer to enter melee only when they can all gang up on a single foe at a time.

Morale A harpy flees into the mountains if she is reduced to 20 hit points or fewer.



HARPY MONK

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 7, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 34

Feats Ability Focus (captivating song), Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Hover, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +9, Fly +14, Linguistics +0, Perception +12, Perform (sing) +14

Languages Common, Giant, Thassilonian

SQ fast movement, high jump, *ki* pool (5 points, magic), maneuver training, purity of body, still mind, slow fall 30 ft.

Gear ring of protection +2

A7 JORGENFIST WALLS (CR 8 PER TOWER)

The walls surrounding the fortress are made of enormous blocks of stone sealed together via countless

stone shape spells. They are 30 feet wide at the base and not entirely vertical; they slope inward slightly and become about 15 feet wide on the battlements, which are 50 feet high. Having poor handholds, the walls require a DC 30 Climb check to ascend.

The four towers are 45 feet square and 70 feet tall, with at least one wide rock-throwing slot on each side. The tops are conical, and the interiors have stairs going from ground level (which is dark and used for storage) to a single interior floor 40 feet up.

CREATURES: A single stone giant watches the approach to Jorgenfist from each of the rooms atop the four towers. Each has a stack of 50 rocks at hand to throw at approaching enemies.

STONE GIANTS (1 PER TOWER)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	102 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

A8 JORGENFIST COURTYARD (CR 11)

A large area of hard-packed earth fills the southwestern quadrant of Jorgenfist—a courtyard used by those giants who are allowed to dwell within the compound for public gatherings.

CREATURES: The courtyard's lack of cover presents a challenge to anyone attempting to move stealthily through the area. Further complicating movement through the area during the day is the 75% chance that a single stone giant is in the final steps of breaking a recently caught mammoth in the yard. The mammoth remains wild and angry enough that when it spots the PCs, it issues an indignant trumpeting and charges—much to its stone giant rider's shock!

STONE GIANT

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	102

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

MAMMOTH

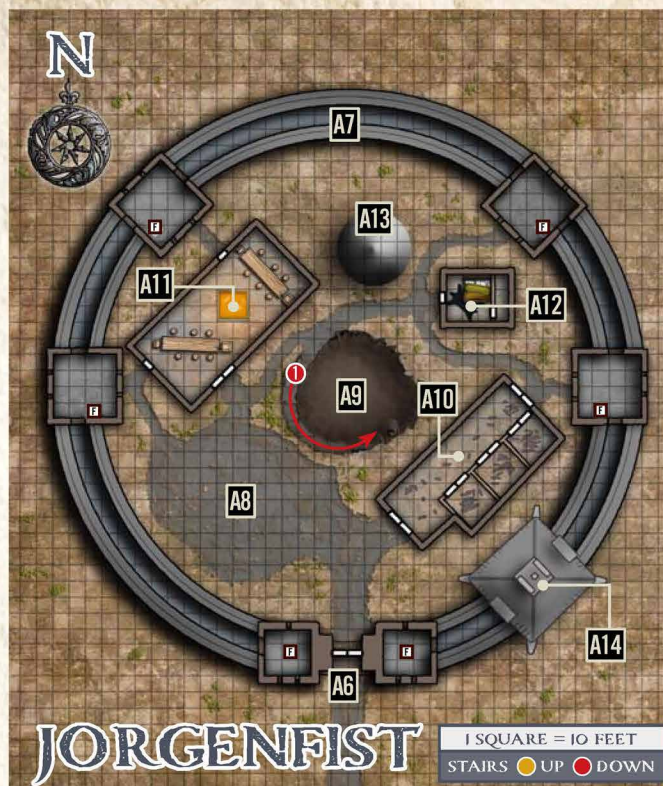
XP	CR	HP
6,400	9	133

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 128)

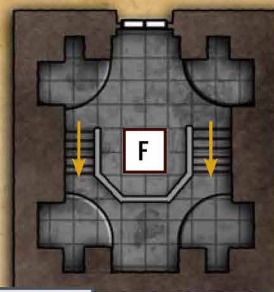
A9 THE PIT

A pit at the center of the fort serves as the primary entrance into the underground portions of the stone giants' fortress. The ramp leading down into the pit winds down to area B1 in the caverns below Jorgenfist. Characters who descend without stealth into the pit quickly attract the attention of the dire bears in area B1 and the stone giant champion in area B3, and may even draw retaliation from giants still active in the surrounding areas inside of Jorgenfist's walls.

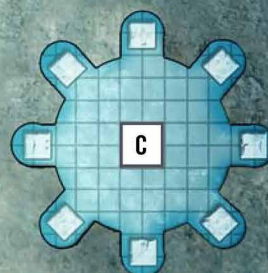
The pit itself is 80 feet deep. The pit floor is a tangle of bones and broken bodies, a combination of humanoid, giant, and even four dragon corpses (three blues and a red, all Large). Flocks of crows, buzzards,



A14: THE BLACK TOWER



A14: BLACK TOWER CRYPT



and other scavenging birds swarm over the bodies, picking at the flesh until only bones remain. An investigation of the uneaten carcasses reveals that they all have the Sihedron Rune carved crudely on their torsos in the case of the humanoids and dragons, or branded on the small of the back in the case of giants. The bodies are all that remain of those Mokmurian and his lamia priests have sacrificed to Karzoug's *runewell*. These sacrifices draw large crowds to the pit edge, and constitute the only instances in which giants other than those favored by Mokmurian are allowed inside the fortress walls.

A10 THE MAMMOTH STABLES (CR 12)



The air in this building is close, warm, and thick with the smell of manure. Three enormous stalls sit against the southeast wall—each is sized to house something incredibly large.

CREATURES: This stable is used to house several woolly mammoths, mounts used by stone giant cavalry. The three stalls in the stable are each occupied by a single foul-tempered woolly mammoth.

A DC 20 Handle Animal or wild empathy check is enough to keep the mammoths from trumpeting a warning that brings giants to investigate within 1d4+1 rounds. If the mammoths are attacked, they fight back with an unexpected rage, crashing out of their pens with ease.

MAMMOTHS (3)

XP	CR	HP
6,400 each	9	133 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 128)

TACTICS

During Combat The mammoths fight separately, trumpeting and bull rushing any character they catch in their tusks in the direction of the stable exit or, if the fight proceeds into the courtyards, into the pit at area A9. The mammoths trample as a group if the party succeeds in killing one of them.

Morale The mammoths fight to the death.

TREASURE: The mammoths have no treasure, though their tack and harness is worth 300 gp per set.

A11 THE FEASTING HALL (CR 10)



This huge hall is well stocked with smoked meat, bread, casks of ale, and long benches and tables built for giants. It's hard to see in the hall's dim light; the only illumination comes in through the doors and through smoke holes in the ceiling. A large, crackling firepit burns eagerly in the middle of the large hall.

CREATURE: This hall is filled with supplies for the coming war, stocked over the past several months by hunters and gatherers and guarded by one of Mokmurian's favorite pets, a grizzled cave bear that stands nearly 14 feet tall at the shoulder. Named Embers, the bear knows that anyone shorter than 8



feet in height has no business in here, and he roars a challenge to any such intruders a second before he lumbers to the attack. If Jorgenfist isn't on alert already, the bear's roars certainly do the trick and rouse the giants to defend the fortress.

EMBERS

XP	CR	HP
9,600	10	172

Male advanced dire bear (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 31, 294)

N Huge animal

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 8, flat-footed 19 (+11 natural, -2 size)

hp 172 (15d8+105)

Fort +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +20 (2d6+11), 2 claws +21 (1d8+11/19-20 plus grab)

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

TACTICS

During Combat Embers prefers to attack Small foes rather than Medium ones. He uses Power Attack on all attacks, gaining a +6 bonus on damage rolls while taking a -3 penalty on attack rolls. The bear knows better than to attack Large humanoids, and only attacks them in self defense.

Morale Embers fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 11, **Con** 25, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 34 (38 vs. trip)

Feats Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (claws), Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (claws)

Skills Perception +24, Swim +19

TREASURE: Embers has no treasure, but his pelt is worth a great deal, even marked with cuts and scars (but not if burnt or destroyed by fire or acid). If the hide is treated carefully with a DC 25 Survival check or a DC 12 Craft (leather) check, it is worth 1,200 gp.

A12 THE BEAR'S HALL (CR 11)



The inside of this stone building is very dark; there are no windows, and just one smoke hole far above. The space is dominated by an immense bed, its mattress heaped high with numerous furs. Inside, hundreds of bear skulls are neatly arranged on large shelves, as well as a golden bear pelt, a black bear pelt, and even a white bear pelt, all presented with an almost religious significance.

In older days, the stone giants and ogres of the Storval Plateau worshiped bear totems, and their berserkers and shamans found strength in the physical example of the dire bear. While the tribes still keep bears as watch animals and hunting companions, since the coming of Lamashtu's missionaries they are no longer worshiped. Mokmurian initially had this hall built and decorated





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to satisfy tribal traditions, but his army now openly worships Lamashtu or has lost interest in matters of faith entirely.

Since the loss of interest, Mokmurian has used this building as guest quarters to house giants whose allegiance and tribes he is courting. For hill giants, ogres, and even most stone giant tribes, Mokmurian doesn't bother with this stage—he simply enters the camp, demonstrates his power by killing the tribe's elders or most powerful champions, then takes their warriors and malcontents away to join his army. But with the more dangerous giant tribes—notably frost giant tribes—Mokmurian has opted to use more diplomatic tactics.

CREATURES: A pair of frost giants, emissaries from the northern reaches of the Kodar Mountains that overlook Irrisen, have been staying in this building for the last week, after securing an allegiance with Mokmurian. Their tribe, 30 strong, is on the march south and is scheduled to arrive at Jorgenfist in several weeks—the arrival of these frost giants will signal the time for the attack on Varisia. Until then, Isvig and Jaansk, frost giant brothers, have passed the time waiting here, sullen and cranky in the too-warm-for-them weather and uninterested in mingling with the other giants of the area. The frost giants do not join in the defense of the fortress, but if intruders dare enter this room, they attack at once, grateful for something to take out their frustration on.

ISVIG AND JAANSK

XP	CR	HP
6,400 each	9	133 each

Male frost giants (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 149)

TREASURE: The brothers keep their personal stores of treasure in a large hide sack between their sleeping furs. This includes 998 gp, 1,082 sp, three brown-green garnets worth 100 gp each, a platinum ewer worth 700 gp, and a solid mithral idol of a rearing bear worth 500 gp.

A13 THE SPIRE (CR 10)



White streaks cover the sides of this stone spire and the surrounding ground, thick as paint. Among these immense bird droppings are splintered elk bones and scraps of hide. The spire rises to a needle point one hundred and fifty feet above, but at a height of fifty feet an opening in the northern face allows access to a round chamber within which has been built an enormous nest.

CREATURES: The tall central spike monolith of the castle is not the most important structure, but at 150 feet high, it towers over the walls and watchtowers. The spike is an ancient Thassilonian watchpost that has become the preferred nesting site for two partly

tamed rocs. They nest in the 25-foot-diameter chamber partway up the spire's height. The rocs serve the stone giants as messengers, mounts, and guardians, but they are still violent and ill-tempered.

During daylight hours, they are likely to spot intruders approaching the castle. At night, they sleep in their nest, but squawk at the sound of intruders or combat on the spike, waking the entire fortress.

The two rocs do not attack giants, but if they spot any Medium or smaller humanoids (or any Large or smaller animals), they shriek and launch out of the spire nest to swoop down and attack, likely alerting the surrounding areas to the intrusion as well.

ROCS (2)

XP	CR	HP
6,400 each	9	120 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 236)

TACTICS

During Combat The rocs prefer to attack creatures on the ground with snatch flyby attacks, staying well out of reach of melee. With their 80-foot flying movement, they can certainly make it work.

Morale If one roc is killed, the other immediately retreats to its nest, regardless of its current hit points. If confronted there, it fights to the death.

A14 THE BLACK TOWER (CR 13)



This tower is not like the others that compose the fort—its architectural style is far more intricate and ancient in appearance, bearing similarities to many of the other ancient monuments that dot the Varisian landscape. Made of black stone and decorated with gargoyles, the tower's walls are streaked with thick lichens and moss. It soars twice as high as the other towers, its facade effectively dominating the view.

The Black Tower is part of an ancient building from Thassilon's time, once known as the Therassic Monastery. The tower itself served as a bell tower and lookout location for an order of evil monks devoted to the worship of the Peacock Spirit, a mysterious faith whose rituals were kept secret from all but the initiated. The tower's gargoyles depict saints and demons of the Thassilonian pantheon, though they are so weathered that they are unrecognizable today save as vaguely demonic forms.

The Black Tower has one entrance, a large stone door that swings open easily at a touch on the northwest facade. The tower interior seems much colder than it should be, even so high in the mountains. The stone walls and floor glitter with a thin coat of frost, making movement in the largely empty chamber treacherous (see the rules for ice sheets on page 430 of the *Core Rulebook*).

A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals that a trap door is set in the floor in the middle of the room, its face

coated with ice as well. Like the entrance doors, the trap door swings open easily with the slightest tug to reveal a 5-foot-wide circular shaft that drops into the darkness below. This shaft is 50 feet deep, and opens into a circular crypt with a domed, 20-foot-high ceiling. The floor here is icy as well, and the air cold enough to qualify as severe cold (*Core Rulebook* 442).

CREATURE: The single denizen of this chamber is an ancient Thassilonian monk, wrapped tightly and preserved as an undead guardian by his order in the final days of the empire. Over the next 10,000 years, the Black Monk (as he took to calling himself as his undead flesh darkened) remained here, guarding the monastery grounds. As time consumed the complex, the Black Tower eventually became the only part of the building to survive above ground, protected by the same preservative magic that enhanced all of Thassilon's great monuments. Ironically, the Black Monk was not an initiate authorized to enter the library that the Therassic Monastery was built to protect, and for the past several thousand years his charge has dwindled to this tiny room, more than a metaphor for his constricting mind and personality.

The Black Monk is tightly bound in linens—having perfected an ancient secret of mentally powered supernatural flight, he no longer needs his legs. Although he was not high enough in rank to peruse the library's lore, his brothers did grant him the great honor of protecting 18 sacred scrolls from the library. These scrolls are kept in a large iron scroll tube the monk never releases his grip on.

The Black Monk is quite insane after all this time, and any character who makes a successful DC 29 Perception check can hear him speaking in Thassilonian, muttering, "The green light! The green light! The green light!" over and over again. His eyes burn green, and he sees only the pain and rage of his order's disbanding and decay. Once or twice per century, the Black Monk experiences periods of lucidity—it was during one of these that he took the harpies under his tutelage, and when he felt his insanity creeping back, he ordered them out of his lair and forbade them ever to return. Now, he views any who dare enter his tomb as thieves searching for the scrolls he so fervently guards.

THE BLACK MONK

THE BLACK MONK

XP	CR	HP
25,600	13	152

Male Azlanti dread mummy monk 11 (*Advanced Bestiary* 210)

LE Medium undead (augmented human)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

Aura despair (30 ft., paralyzed for 1d4 rounds, Will DC 22 negates)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 21, flat-footed 24 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 monk, +8 natural, +4 Wis)

hp 152 (11d8+99)

Fort +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11; +2 vs. enchantment,

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, improved evasion; **DR** 5/—; **Immune** cold, disease, poison, undead traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed fly 50 ft. (perfect)

Melee flurry of blows

+19/+19/+14/+14/+9/+9 (1d10+10/19–20 plus mummy rot)

Special Attacks breath of death, command undead, flurry of blows, mummy rot, stunning fist (11/day, DC 19)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +18)

At will—*animal messenger*, *calm animals*

(DC 18), *command undead* (DC 19), *heat metal* (DC 19), *summon swarm*

2/day—*commune with nature*, *control winds*,

dominate animal (DC 20), *insect plague*

1/day—*control weather*, *creeping doom*, *earthquake*, *sunbeam* (DC 24)

TACTICS

During Combat The Black Monk uses Improved Trip and Stunning Fist against foes in melee to keep them off balance. He uses his spell-like abilities against foes who can remain out of reach of his melee attacks or who prove too canny to trip, but never uses *earthquake* for fear of damaging the Black Tower itself.

Morale The Black Monk fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 41

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Toughness, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +18, Fly +15, Knowledge (arcana) +12,

Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +18, Spellcraft +12

Languages Thassilonian

SQ diamond body, fast movement, high jump, *ki* pool (9 points, lawful, magic), maneuver training, purity of body, still mind, slow fall 50 ft., wholeness of body

Gear *belt of giant strength* +4, *ring of the ram* (45 charges)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath of Death (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action, the Black Monk can exhale a 30-foot cone of tomb gas. Living creatures in this area must make a successful DC 22 Fortitude save or gain 1d4 negative levels. A creature killed by these negative levels rises as a juju zombie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 291) in 1d4 rounds. A juju zombie



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Writ of Entrance and Access

To be presented to the clockwork librarian of the Therassic Library for the securing of full access to all archives held within.

Ware the shining guardians, for they guard the library without bias, and any who would enter are counted thieves and vandals to be slaughtered.

Speak aloud the name of the Master Architect, Viosanxi, afore entry is attempted via the bronze doors, if thou wouldst avoid their blinding wrath.

created in this manner is under the Black Monk's control and remains so until it or the Black Monk is destroyed. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Despair (Su) This functions as a typical mummy's despair, save that once a paralyzed creature recovers from the effect, it remains staggered for 1 additional round. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

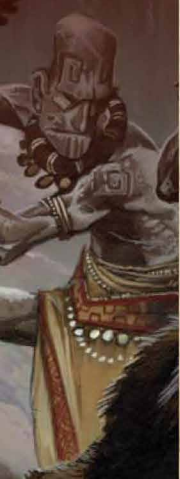
Mummy Rot (Su) This functions as the typical mummy rot curse and disease, save that the Black Monk can afflict foes with it via his flurry of blows.

TREASURE: The scrolls the Black Monk guards are an incredible treasure. Even the monk himself doesn't actually know what the tube contains—only that he was commanded to guard the container and what lies hidden within with both his life and undeath. The scroll tube is made of adamantite and is cleverly locked by a series of interconnected spinning discs that function almost like a combination lock. With five consecutive DC 40 Disable Device checks, this lock can be picked. Alternatively, a character who can read Thassilonian (or who can keep track of the dozens of runes with a DC 30 Linguistics check) can use the runes on the scroll case to puzzle out the combination with five successful DC 20 Intelligence checks in a row. Or, of course, the tube can be forced open (hardness 20, hp 60), but doing so destroys 1d4+5 of the non-artifact scrolls inside (determine which ones are ruined randomly—the

resulting fragments of parchment can be repaired with no less than 3d6 separately cast *mending* spells or 1d4 separately cast *make whole* spells for each damaged scroll). A *knock* spell unlocks two of the locks, so it'll take three castings of this spell to open the tube. The scroll tube itself is worth 1,200 gp intact—if destroyed to force it open, it's still worth 200 gp as a curiosity.

The scrolls kept inside were known, collectively, as the Emerald Codex of the Therassic Order, a compilation of spells and enlightened rituals related to the worship of the Peacock Spirit, a once-powerful faith of the Thassilonian Empire. The codex consists of 18 large scrolls prepared on wyvern hide—they must be handled with extreme care to avoid fragmentation. A successful DC 20 Sleight of Hand check is required to prevent damage to a scroll; otherwise, it falls apart. All 18 scrolls are written in Thassilonian. The first nine comprise a minor artifact called the *anathema archive* (see page 420—these pages are never destroyed by mishandling or damage to the container). The next eight scrolls contain one divine spell each: *greater restoration*, *heroes' feast*, *order's wrath*, *regenerate*, *resurrection*, *scrying*, *symbol of stunning*, and *true resurrection* (all at CL 17th).

The final scroll describes the entrance to the library (area C7) and even gives the password required to bypass the guardian bound to the entrance. This scroll is reproduced above as Handout 4-1.



PART FOUR: UNDER JORGENFIST

THE CAVES UNDER JORGENFIST MIGHT LOOK NATURAL TO THE UNTRAINED EYE, BUT THEY ARE IN FACT ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE UPPER SUBTERRANEAN LEVEL ONCE HIDDEN UNDER THE THERASSIC MONASTERY—ONLY ONE CHAMBER ON THIS LEVEL STILL BEARS A PASSING RESEMBLANCE TO ITS ORIGINAL SHAPE (THE CHAMBER OF THE SIHEDRON IN THE NORTHEASTERN CORNER OF THE COMPLEX). THE OTHERS HAVE CRUMBLLED AWAY INTO THE MORE NATURAL-APPEARING CAVERNS THEY ARE TODAY. FEW OF THE COMPLEX'S CURRENT INHABITANTS KNOW THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE PLACE THEY CALL HOME.



The air in these caves is a bit warmer than that outside, but numerous tiny ventilation tunnels keep the caves from growing too stale. Most of the stone giants Mokmurian recruited from his old tribe live on the surface in area **A2g**—these caves are used primarily for workshops, worship, and barracks for commanders in his army.

The caves themselves have high ceilings, averaging 20 feet in height in the tunnels, while in caverns they generally arch to heights of 40 feet. The walls, floor, and ceiling are rough and laced with furrows and air vents, but despite their almost wrinkled look remain quite strong—stone giants are particular about their lairs, and there's little chance of cave-ins within these halls.

Although Mokmurian has forbidden most of the rank-and-file giants of his army (including those from his old tribe) entrance into these caves, he did select four loyal stone giants as guardians. These “pit guardians” report to Galenmir, the general of Mokmurian’s army. When Jorgenfist is not on alert, these giants can generally be found relaxing in the great cave in area **B4** during the day or sleeping in their barracks in area **B10** at night. When the caves are on alert, though, these giants lie in wait in area **B2**, ready to defend the caves from invaders or to respond to sounds of combat elsewhere in the complex.

B1 CAVE OF THE DIRE BEARS (CR 10)



The floor of this cavern is a bone-strewn mess. What appear to be three dens of bones, bits of cloth and leather, and swaths of matted fur line the walls to the east. The air in here is thick with the scent of animal dung and spoiled meat.

CREATURES: Three dire bears live in this cave. Trained, in theory, to guard the entrance, the bears actually spend much of their time sleeping. If the alarm is raised, a giant makes sure to rouse the bears—otherwise, the sleeping animals take a –10 penalty on Perception checks to hear intruders passing by the entrance of their cave.

DIRE BEARS (3)

XP	CR	HP
3,200 each	7	95 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 31)

TACTICS

During Combat The dire bears fight to defend the entrance to the caverns and nothing else. They use their claws at first and might try to bull rush a foe off the ramp if position allows it. If the PCs retreat out of the caves to the surface above, the bears let them escape after spending a few rounds roaring and huffing at the top of the ramp.

Morale The dire bears fight to the death.

DEVELOPMENT: If a fight here spills out onto the ramp in area **A9**, Galenmir emerges from his lair in area **B3** onto the pit floor of area **A9** to hurl boulders at anyone in sight on the ramp above.

B2 THE ELDERS' ENTRYWAY (CR 12)



The ramp ends here at a cave entrance that leads underground, while the bone-strewn floor of the pit sprawls before it. A smoldering brazier sits in an alcove just to the right of the entrance.

CREATURES: If the fortress is on alert, the caverns' four stone giant pit guardians are stationed here, two in the western tunnel and two to the north. Otherwise, this entrance might at first seem empty, but in fact the stone giant elder Conna waits to intercept the PCs here, hidden in the side cave near the brazier.

Conna is an old, angular giant. She wears heavy bearskins over her shoulders, and a spear rests by her side. When she spots the PCs, she steps out of hiding and holds out her hands to them, palms up.

Conna is observant, and since she bowed before Mokmurian, she's made sure to speak only when spoken to and to take care of Mokmurian's infrequent demands with swift efficiency. As a result, Mokmurian has grown used to her presence, and lax in what he says when she is in earshot. She's doubtless heard about the raid on Sandpoint by now, and if the PCs are known to



be approaching Jorgenfist, she awaits their arrival with anticipation.

When she sees the PCs, she furtively attempts to contact them, speaking first in Giant, then in Common. If the PCs attack her, she sighs heavily and fights defensively until she can escape out of the pit to reconsider her options. If the PCs agree to hear what she has to say, she's quick and to the point.



"I don't have much time, but know that if you are here to slay Mokmurian, I am your ally. Come with me to a place we can speak in peace, for I would aid you in your quarrel here—without my assistance you might find only your graves below Jorgenfist."

If the PCs accompany her, she leads them to area B6 to finish her conversation with them in the presence of her ghostly husband.

CONNA THE WISE

XP	CR	HP
19,200	12	171

Female stone giant elder sorcerer 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151)

N Large humanoid (giant)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 14, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 171 (18 HD; 12d8+6d6+96)

Fort +15, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities improved rock catching; **Resist** acid 10

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 shortspear +19/+14/+9 (1d8+8)

Ranged rock +14 (1d8+10)

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

Special Attacks rock throwing (180 ft.)

Stone Giant Elder Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +14)

1/day—stone shape, stone tell, transmute rock to mud (DC 19)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +10)

7/day—elemental ray (1d6+3 acid)

Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +10)

3rd (4/day)—fly

2nd (6/day)—blur, glitterdust (DC 16), scorching ray (acid)

1st (7/day)—burning hands (DC 15, acid damage), charm

person (DC 15), mage armor, obscuring mist, shocking grasp

0 (at will)—dancing lights, daze (DC 14), flare (DC 14), ghost

sound (DC 14), light, mending, prestidigitation

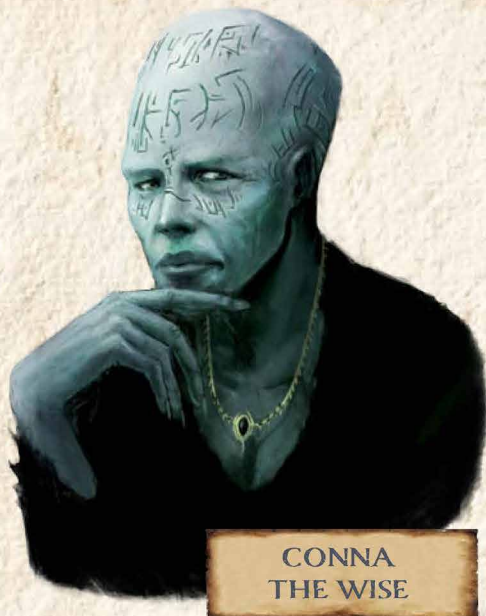
Bloodline Elemental (earth)

TACTICS

Before Combat Conna casts *mage armor* twice a day, so it's always in effect during her waking hours.

During Combat Conna's main tactic is to stall. She uses Combat Expertise to increase her AC when she can. If she has time to prepare, she casts *fly* on herself.

Morale Conna doesn't want to fight the PCs. Her tactics focus on escape so she can recover in hiding and plan a new method of contacting the PCs and once again try to plead her case and recruit them in her plans against Mokmurian.



STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 15, **Con** 21, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 35

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack

Skills Climb +28, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Perception +20, Spellcraft +23

Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Terran

SQ bloodline arcana (change energy damage spells to match bloodline energy)

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +4; **Other Gear** +1 *shortspear*, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *ring of minor acid resistance*, *ring of protection* +2

STONE GIANTS (4)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	102 each

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151)

B3 THE GENERAL'S LAIR (CR 12)



This cavern opens out to the east onto the bony tangle of the pit floor; a hanging dire bear fur over this exit is drawn open but can be pulled shut to keep out the draft. The rest of the walls are lined with furs as well, including the floor—they're piled particularly high to form a mattress to the south.

The hanging furs conceal an exit to the west that leads deeper into the tunnels (marked "S"). Noticing this exit from inside the room requires a DC 15 Perception check.

CREATURE: The cavern is the home of Galenmir, Mokmurian's general and second-in-command of his army. One of the oldest giants to submit to Mokmurian's rule, Galenmir cares little whom he follows as long as he

has the opportunity to lead others in battle and to gain more glory for himself.

When Mokmurian assigned Galenmir to this cave, the proud giant rankled a bit at what he interpreted as "door guard" duty. Given those are his orders, though, Galenmir performs them admirably, rewarding himself in the hours before sleep by generating attack plans for every possible contingency and situation once his army marches on Varisia.

GALENMIR

XP	CR	HP
19,200	12	160

Male stone giant fighter 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151)

N Large humanoid (giant)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 10, flat-footed 30 (+8 armor, +1 Dex, +11 natural, +2 shield, -1 size)

hp 160 (16 HD; 12d8+4d10+84)

Fort +19, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, improved rock catching

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +3 *heavy pick* +24/+19/+14 (1d8+24/19-20/x4) or 2 slams +21 (1d8+19)

Ranged rock +16/+11/+6 (1d8+16)

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

Special Attacks rock throwing (180 ft.)

TACTICS

Before Combat Galenmir drinks his *potion of heroism* and uses *oil of darkness* on his pick (unless the PCs don't seem to be relying on light, in which case he does not use this tactic).

During Combat Galenmir has stacked several rocks next to the pit entrance to his lair and uses these against intruders. If confronted in close quarters, he uses Improved Bull Rush to keep his enemies from surrounding him and to set himself up for tactical advantages. He always uses Power Attack (these bonuses are included in his stats above).

Morale Although Galenmir is no coward, he realizes when he's been beaten. If reduced to 30 hit points or fewer, he drinks his *potion of gaseous form* and seeps into the cracks and crevices of the caves, working his way up and out of the pit to gather a group of eight stone giants to then lead back into the pit to seek out the PCs. While he's aware that Mokmurian will likely be furious at this breach of edict, Galenmir assumes his lord will be even more furious if the PCs are allowed to explore the caves uncontested.

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 13, **Con** 21, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 36

Feats Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (heavy pick), Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (heavy pick), Weapon Specialization (heavy pick)

Skills Climb +22, Handle Animal +15, Intimidate +15, Perception +9, Ride +12, Stealth +10





FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

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Languages Common, Giant

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of heroism, potion of gaseous form, oil of darkness*; **Other Gear** +2 breastplate, +1 light steel shield, +3 heavy pick, cloak of elvenkind, 19 pp, 18 gp, 13 sp

TREASURE: Galenmir's wealth is mostly invested in his gear, but he also has an impressive collection of scalps and war trophies, including the preserved head of a frost giant jarl, the beards of 100 dwarves (each neatly bundled and secured with a silver ring worth 10 gp), part of a marsh giant's grossly elastic but impressively tattooed hide, and bits of broken and dented breastplates from the plate armor of a dozen different warriors (worth 20 gp each).

Galenmir's favorite collection is a neatly sorted grouping of 33 shields, each marked with the name of a human, elf, or dwarf hero Galenmir defeated in combat. He remembers each one; anyone who makes a DC 25 Knowledge (nobility) check recognizes that one of the shields belonged to Anstan Jeggare, an exiled bastard from the affluent Jeggare family of Korvosa. This shield alone is magical—a +1 *arrow catching heavy steel shield*. If it's returned to the Jeggare family, the nobles pay full price as a reward (rather than the standard half price if the shield is sold on the market).

B4 THE GREAT CAVE OF JORGENFIST (CR 12)



This huge cavern contains four large tables set up around a central platform on which sits an immense stone throne. From the ceiling above hang carved stalactites, some fashioned to look like dangling spears, others like dragon's teeth. The flickering light of a large fire burns behind a row of stalagmites to the south.

CREATURES: If Jorgenfist is not on the alert, during the day, the caverns' four pit guardians can be found here relaxing, eating, wrestling, or telling slow stories. They aren't paying particular attention and take a -4 penalty on Perception checks.

STONE GIANTS (4)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	102 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

B5a KITCHEN (CR 8)



A large firepit burns and crackles in the eastern part of this cave, with an iron cauldron hanging over the flames from a frame of tree trunks. Kitchen supplies sized for giants sit along the southern wall, including buckets of water, wooden trenchers for food, and gallon-sized mugs.

CREATURES: This room is always occupied, even late at night, by Grumelda the watcher, a female stone giant with a particular knack for preparing bland food. She keeps the fire burning at all hours, ready to prepare whatever meals Mokmurian may demand. Grumelda has little interest in war and fighting, but if she spies trouble in the great cave to the north, she races into the room, wielding a long iron ladle as a club.

GRUMELDA

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	102

Female stone giant (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)



GALENMIR

B5b LARDER



This room is a carnivore's paradise: The cave is packed with entire sides of elk, smoked haunches of deer and wild boar, and massive slabs that can only be mammoth ribs. The room is filled with stacks of meat of all kinds, smaller quantities of spices and roots, and many sacks of grain.

A closer search of the smoked meat here reveals some gruesome human, elfen, and dwarven remains. One small barrel is labeled "CANDY" in Giant—inside are hundreds of human, elf, and dwarf eyes floating in a thick suspension of foul-smelling brine.

B6 SHRINE OF THE ANCESTORS (CR 8)



The walls of this cave are painted with red, yellow, brown, and black figures, among which are apparent images of giants, mammoths, elk, deer, and wyverns. Others are harder to figure out: ogres, perhaps, or giant children, or even humans. The dwarves are very clear, with beards and tiny axes being crushed under enormous giant feet. A simple oil lantern lights a small altar at the far end of the cavern. A modest offering of antlers, hooves, and patches of fur has been piled in front of the altar.

When Mokmurian first came to these caves, he set up this small shrine dedicated to his people's ancestral spirits. As he became more and more obsessed with Thassilon, his interest in religion waned, and after he returned from Xin-Shalast, his first act in this chamber was to sacrifice Vandarrec, the father of his old tribe. The now-deposed mother of his tribe, Conna, has tended to this shrine since Mokmurian's blasphemous sacrifice, and only she knows that it is her husband's spirit that haunts this chamber. The other giants have learned to avoid this cave due to the haunt.

If the PCs enter this cave without Conna, the haunt plays out as detailed later in this encounter. Conna's presence soothes the angry spirit, and as long as she is in the room, the haunt does not manifest beyond periodically animating one of the cave paintings so that it appears to dance just at the corner of the viewer's eye.

Conna explains to the PCs what happened to her husband here several years ago, then goes on to explain that Mokmurian's minions avoid this cave because of the haunting. Since Vandarrec's spirit remains quiet in Conna's presence, this is a perfect place to have a brief meeting with the PCs about their common problem—Mokmurian.

Although few visit here, Conna remains nervous and rushed. She asks the PCs why they have come to Jorgenfist, but regardless of their answer does her best to convince them that slaying Mokmurian is the solution to

their problems. She can tell the PCs that Mokmurian has spent almost all of his time in the library level below this one, and she can even draw the PCs a rough map of the caves, suggesting they approach area B14 from the west rather than the north—even though that route is longer, there are fewer perils along the way. She requests that if the PCs encounter any more stone giants, they defeat the giants without killing them, if possible, but understands if the PCs have little interest in complying—her kin, in her mind, have brought this doom upon themselves through their own actions.

Conna will not accompany the PCs, mostly out of stubborn respect for her traditions—once a giant elder has been deposed, that elder must not directly oppose the new ruler. Yet she is comfortable answering questions about the surrounding caverns, and she agrees to cast spells on PCs if they wish.

Before she parts ways with the PCs, Conna grudgingly tells them one more thing. She fears that Mokmurian has fallen under the influence of a powerful evil spirit indeed—one of the Ancient Lords themselves. She has heard him whisper a name when he felt he was alone. The name is "Karzoug," a name Conna recognizes from secret myths shared by the elders. Karzoug was one of those who enslaved her people, and if Mokmurian has fallen victim to this Ancient Lord's influence, the danger facing her people and all of Varisia may be greater than anyone knows.

HAUNT: Vandarrec's blasphemous sacrifice has bound him to this world—his soul cannot move on to the afterlife until the one who performed this profane act is himself slain. Until then, Vandarrec's tormented spirit haunts this chamber. 1d4 rounds after any creature enters this room, the cave paintings on the wall suddenly animate into a display of violence. A heartbeat later, the largest giant in the mural seems to rise up out of the wall, taking the shape of an enormous stone giant. With shocking speed, unseen knives flay the giant's stony flesh and cut deep into the phantom's belly so its exposed guts drip with black blood. It moans in terrible pain and reaches out to crush anyone within 20 feet of the altar with its bloodstained hands.

FLAYED GIANT

XP	CR	HP
4,800	8	16

CN haunt (20-ft. radius hemisphere from center of altar)

Caster Level 8th

Notice Perception DC 15 (to notice the paintings on the walls begin moving)

hp 16; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect All creatures within 20 feet of the altar must succeed at a DC 18

Will save to resist being paralyzed with fright for 1d8 rounds at the gruesome sight of the flayed giant. Those who become paralyzed must then make a successful DC 18 Fortitude save to avoid being reduced to 0 hp and then taking 2d4 points of additional damage as the ghostly giant seems to crush their bodies to pulp.



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STORY AWARD: If the PCs secure an alliance with Conna, award them 24,000 XP (this equals the amount of XP awarded for defeating Conna and the Flayed Giant haunt).

B7a ENGA'S CAVE (CR 11)



This cave is cluttered by tiny mounds of carefully sorted junk—bones, scraps of armor, broken weapons, stones, dead rats, and sections of chitin harvested from large vermin. A net hammock hangs from a pair of stalagmites to the southwest near a four-foot-wide crack in the wall that winds deeper underground.

CREATURE: During his travels through the Storval Plateau, not long after he returned from Xin-Shalast, Mokmurian encountered a curious creature—a kobold barbarian named Enga Keckvia. Mokmurian initially ignored the brave little kobold when she demanded payment from him for using her territory (a dried riverbed) as a road, but when she stabbed him in the ankle, he realized there was more to her than he thought. He was intrigued and offered her a place in his army, figuring he might need a brave, powerful, little thing like Enga for special missions. Enga, a wanderer from distant Andoran, had seen enough hardship during her travels and liked the idea of a paying job.

Enga's role these days is twofold. Her primary job is to guard this passage from vermin or other intrusions. Two or three times a week, she makes forays into the tunnels to hunt down and kill the vermin that grow within. Her other job is to serve as a liaison between the giants and the tribes of redcaps that dwell deep in the caves (see area B7b). Neither the giants nor the redcaps enjoy each other's company overmuch, but although they live in close proximity, they don't have overlapping territories. Periodically, Mokmurian demands tributes and favors from the redcaps, and at these times, Enga becomes his messenger and collector.

The arrival of humans and other non-giant visitors in the cave puzzles Enga, particularly if they don't enter her lair from the southwestern entrance, but she recovers quickly enough to fly into a frothing frenzy just before she attacks. She doesn't stop to double-check whether the PCs should be here or not—and even if the PCs attempt to distract or trick her with attempts to pass themselves off as allies of Mokmurian, the eager-to-fight barbarian still attacks. Being able to present humans to Mokmurian is certain to get her a bonus to her pay, after all—making new friends doesn't really interest her at all.

ENGA KECKVIA

XP	CR	HP
12,800	11	155

Female kobold barbarian 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 183)
CE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural, -2 rage, +2 shield, +1 size)

hp 155 (12d12+72)

Fort +14, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +4;

Weaknesses light sensitivity; **DR** 5/—

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +3 *shortspear* +22/+17/+12 (1d4+8)

Ranged sling +15/+10/+5 (1d3+5)

Special Attacks greater rage (27 rounds/day), rage powers (guarded stance [+3 dodge vs. melee], increased damage reduction +3, quick reflexes, renewed vigor [3d8+7 hp])

TACTICS

During Combat Enga is brave and fearless, despite (or perhaps



ENGA KECKVIA



due to) her small stature. She rages on the first round of combat and focuses her anger on healers first and foremost.

Morale Enga flees to the southwest if reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, hoping to lose her tormenters in the mazelike region. If she's got a few rounds, she rigs a quick but deadly trap by removing her *necklace of fireballs* (but keeping one bead) and leaving it on the ground. She then moves about 60 feet away and waits; once she sees someone reach the necklace, she throws her bead and detonates the entire necklace at once. She then doubles back to area **B7a** via a different route and seeks out one of the lamias in area **B13** for aid.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 26

Feats Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (shortspear)

Skills Craft (trapmaking) +17, Perception +18, Stealth +18, Survival +10, Swim +11

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ crafty, fast movement

Combat Gear *necklace of fireballs* (type IV); **Other Gear** +1 breastplate, +1 buckler, +3 shortspear, 11 gp, 12 sp, 12 cp

B7b THE SMALL TUNNELS (CR 11)

The narrow crack in the southwest wall connects to a tangled maze of caves the giants refer to as the River Caves. These tunnels lead a winding route south, eventually ending at a secret door that opens into area **A4**. Along this way, dozens of other tunnels intersect the primary passage, sloping ever downward in an increasingly vexing maze. These tunnels are infested with all manner of vermin, rats, slimes, and other creatures, but the most dangerous are a large clan of violent redcaps.

Navigating the small tunnels is a claustrophobic ordeal. The tunnels vary between 3 and 5 feet wide and wrap over and under each other in a tangled three-dimensional maze riddled with dead ends. You can expand these tunnels as you wish, but little beyond their possible use as an alternate entrance into the caverns has any impact on the adventure.

CREATURES: The redcaps have lived in the small caves for decades—they once had full run of these caverns, but when Mokmurian moved in and the giant killed several of their number, the fey were forced to remain in the River Caves. They've grudgingly ceded the caves to the giants, hoping that Mokmurian will eventually get tired and move on, but for now the redcaps are making do with their new lot in life. The redcaps are diminutive, gnomelike creatures who wear spiked iron boots and blood-soaked pointy caps, and wield scythes much larger than their size might suggest they're capable of wielding.

Characters who spend much time in these caves are guaranteed to encounter a murder party of five redcaps—the redcaps take intrusions into these tight caves very personally and very violently.

REDCAPS (5)

XP	CR	HP
2,400 each	6	60 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 233)

B8 TANNERY (CR 11)



This room reeks of vinegar, rotting hair, and worse. A single large stone basin sits in the middle of the room, about ten feet square and filled with foul-looking fluid upon which float patches of wet fur. Around the basin stand a dozen wooden frames over which leather and hides are stretched. At the far end of the cave, a stinking mound of hides and furs awaits tanning.

The wet fur belongs to bear hides currently being tanned; additional hides are stretched on racks here, ready to be taken up to the surface for softening and further working. These hides and leathers will eventually be turned into tabards and patches for giants to wear over their armor to further enhance their fearsome natures. The liquid in the vat is particularly foul—a character who falls into the stuff must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d4 rounds.

CREATURES: A trio of ogre fighters, kept docile and loyal via a combination of threats and abuse from the lamia priests and, periodically, Mokmurian himself, toils here daily to supply leather and furs for the growing army above. They look upon an intrusion by the PCs as an excuse to quit work for at least a few minutes to take part in a fight, and do so with great guffaws and chortles.

OGRE FIGHTERS (3)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	104 each

(see page 149)

TACTICS

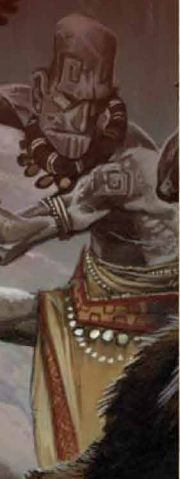
During Combat These ogres are as interested in humiliating the PCs as they are in hurting them, and often attempt to knock PCs into the tanning vat using bull rushes.

B9 ARMORY (CR 10)



The walls of this room have been chiseled away and made almost regular. Four anvils stand in the middle of the room, while to the south burns a bright forge fire. Immense bellows stand near a row of low iron cages, each featuring a filthy mound of straw. The bellows' handles extend through the cages, allowing anyone imprisoned within to work the bellows without the necessity of leaving their confines. To the north, mounds of steel and the broken and bent pieces of a dozen weapons await work.

Most of the weapons and armor being forged for the coming war are created elsewhere, either in the surrounding camps or at tribal forges in the Iron Peaks





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(as in the case of the Kreeg clan). This forge is concerned mostly with repairing broken or damaged weapons.

CREATURES: Two stone giant smiths work here, repairing the broken weapons almost as fast as they're coming in. The cages near the bellows contain five dwarven prisoners (all 1st-level warriors), all of whom might not be immediately recognizable as dwarves, as the giants have shaved off their beards for the sport of it. If the giants managed to capture any unnamed NPCs from Sandpoint and made it all the way back here, they have joined the dwarves in these cages. The prisoners are all exhausted, but if freed, they grab up broken weapons and eagerly (if foolishly) join any fight against the giants.

STONE GIANTS (2)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	102 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

STORY AWARD: Each prisoner whom the PCs rescue and whose safe return home they ensure earns the party a reward of 800 XP, to a maximum award of 4,800 XP.

B10 PIT GUARDIAN BARRACKS



The tunnel widens here into a gallery, the walls of which are streaked with glittering veins of mica. To the north, four large mounds of furs have been arranged—a nimbus of bones and bits of half-eaten food lies strewn around each.

CREATURES: The four pit guardians sleep here—if the alarm isn't raised and it's night, the PCs find the four giants snoring loudly in these makeshift beds.

STONE GIANTS (4)

XP	CR	HP
4,800 each	8	102 each

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 151)

B11 CHAMBER OF THE SIHEDRON (CR 11)

The doors to this room are made of stone and carved with an immense seven-pointed star—the Sihedron Rune. The doors themselves are unlocked but quite heavy and require a successful DC 20 Strength check to push open—causing them to grind on their ancient stone hinges, announcing the PCs loudly to the room's caretaker.



This immense hall is an unexpected break from the rough stone walls of caverns and caves. The rectangular chamber is fifty feet wide and a hundred feet long, with riblike spines arching up to a vaulted ceiling fifty feet overhead. The room's floor is loose soil, while the wall opposite the doors is carved with an immense bas-relief of a seven-pointed star. Throughout the room, seven fifteen-foot-tall tree trunks have been driven into the ground like immense stakes, their sides carved

with countless more stars. Each trunk has been fitted with an iron ring from which dangle chains affixed to manacles. Next to each trunk stands an iron brazier filled with smoldering coals. A long branding iron, its tip also featuring the seven-pointed star, leans against each brazier.

Although the original purpose of this room is lost to the ages, the carvings of the Sihedron Rune made it a perfect place for Mokmurian to use as an indoctrination chamber. When he returned to Jorgenfist, he, his lamia minions, and a particularly vile giant named Lokansir took time to run each of his new recruits through a grueling ritual in which their minds were assaulted, their bodies purified, and their flesh branded with the Sihedron Rune. While these giants believe this ritual is merely symbolic of joining Mokmurian's army, it has a hidden purpose—it is the same ritual used by other agents of Karzoug to prepare souls for his *runewell*. When any of these giants die, their souls power Karzoug's imminent freedom as surely as any other sacrifice.

The soil on the floor of this room was brought in by the chamber's guardian so even here, underground, he could feel more at home.

CREATURE: Among the giants of the Storval Plateau periodically rise those who are greater than their kin. In these giants, the ancient magic of Thassilon still runs strong in their thews and blood, resulting in particularly powerful members of an already mighty race.

As he was escorting his new lamia allies back from Xin-Shalast to Jorgenfist, Mokmurian encountered one of these Thassilonian scions, a nomadic hill giant named Lokansir. Mokmurian sensed the greatness in Lokansir and made an offer: join his army and take part in the looting of Varisia, and Mokmurian would make Lokansir rich and powerful. The two spoke often during the remainder of the journey, and by the time they'd reached Jorgenfist, Lokansir had become Mokmurian's closest and most trusted ally. Lokansir was particularly enthralled by Mokmurian's stories of Xin-Shalast, and the Thassilonian hill giant became one of the few to whom Mokmurian confided his true goal of awakening Karzoug by offering up an incredible number of specially prepared souls of greed.

Since then, Lokansir has grown ever more obsessed with Thassilon, particularly the stories of how the ancients used rune giants to control other giants. He's made a few trips into the Library of Thassilon (area C7) but is far too dim-witted and impatient to learn much from the tomes there. Instead, he decorated his shoulders and arms with Thassilonian runes in an attempt to focus this magic, but so far, these experiments have had no real results. His current desire is to make the journey to Xin-Shalast himself, but he's contented himself with the coming war for now—there will be plenty of time for visits to the Kodar Mountains once Varisia is conquered.

Lokansir is likely in this room meditating when the PCs first enter, melded with the soil and earth on the floor and thus hidden completely. If he notices intruders, he waits for them to draw near to his hiding spot in the earth before emerging with a roar to strike with his greatclub. If during the raid on Sandpoint any of the giants made off with named NPCs, they are found here, barely conscious and hanging by the arms from manacles. Badly tortured and at 0 hit points, each prisoner has been branded on the chest with the Sihedron Rune. The ritual of preparation complete, they await sacrifice at the Pit—an event scheduled for some point only a few days after the PCs first arrive in the region.

(Note that while Lokansir's statistics were generated using the jotunblood template from the *Advanced Bestiary*—these powerful ancient giants are not referred to on Golarion by a single name.)

LOKANSIR

XP	CR	HP
12,800	11	147

Male jotunblood hill giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150, *Advanced Bestiary* 155)
CE Huge humanoid (giant)
Init -2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +13



Defense AC 24, touch 6, flat-footed 24 (-2 Dex, +18 natural, -2 size)

hp 147 (14d8+84)

Fort +15, **Ref** +2, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities rock catching; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee +3 *greatclub* +22/+17 (3d8+19/19–20)

Ranged rock +7 (2d6+16)

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

Special Attacks earth-shaking bellow, meld into earth, rock throwing (120 ft.)

TACTICS

During Combat Lokansir isn't too bright, and his combat tactics reflect that. He rarely bothers moving around much in combat except to get in reach of enemies to crush them with his favorite club. He avoids using his earth-shaking bellow while underground, but if brought below 50 hit points and unable to merge with earth, he'll use this ability in desperation.

Morale Lokansir melds into earth if reduced below 50 hit points and waits for his fast healing to heal him completely before emerging. If somehow prevented from using this tactic, the desperate giant tries to flee out of the caves up into Jorgenfist to find more earth to hide in. If he manages to heal back to his full hit points, he tracks down the PCs for revenge.

STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 6, **Con** 23, **Int** 6, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 31

Feats Cleave, Critical Focus, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greatclub), Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Staggering Critical

Skills Climb +21, **Perception** +13

Languages Giant

Gear +3 *greatclub*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Earth-Shaking Bellow (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, Lokansir can loose an earth-shaking bellow that functions like an *earthquake* spell, affecting a 40-foot-cone.

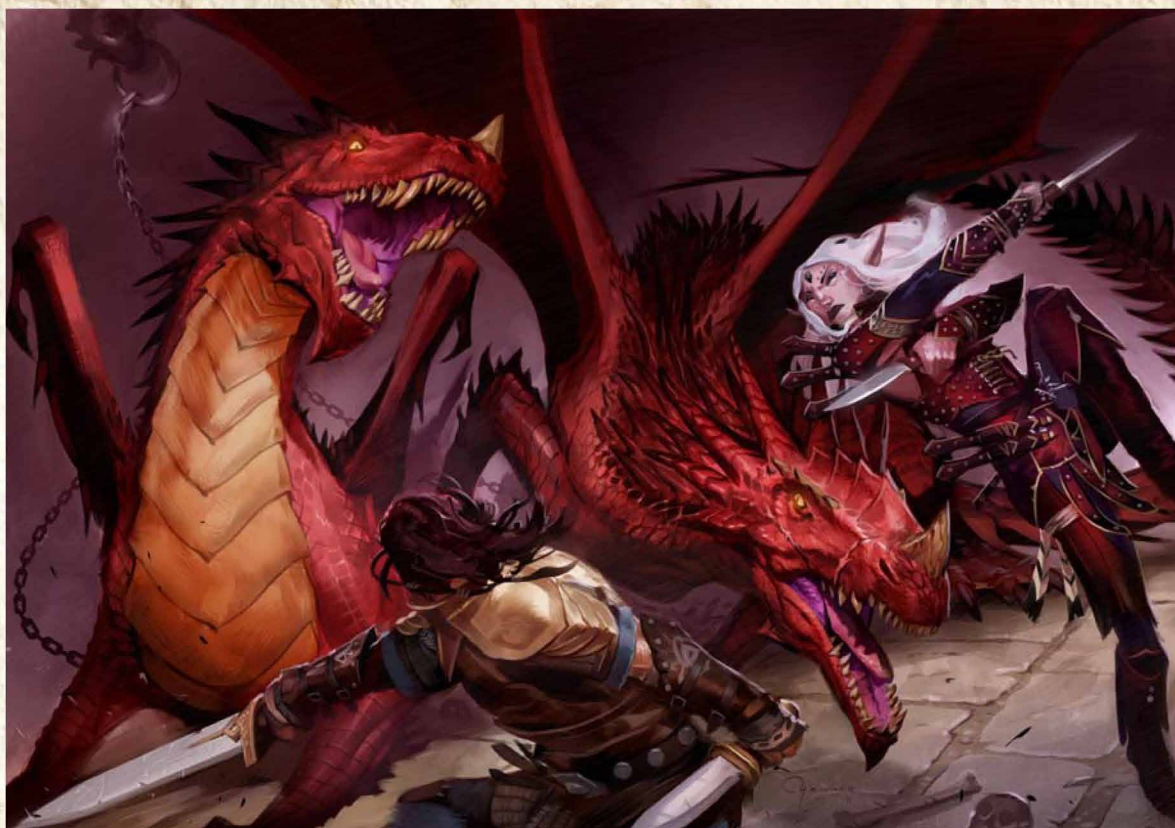
Meld Into Earth (Su) At will, Lokansir can meld into earth (not solid stone) as if using the *meld into stone* spell, except that he may remain in the earth as long as he wishes. A *move earth* spell cast upon his location causes him to be expelled from the earth and take 5d6 points of damage. While melded with earth, he gains fast healing 1.

B12 DRAGON CAPTIVES (CR 12)



The passageway widens here into a cylindrical cavern, the walls black with soot and scorch marks.

CREATURES: Two young red dragons are being kept here for eventual sacrifice to Karzoug—each dragon has already been marked with the Sihedron Rune. Since branding works poorly on creatures immune to fire, Mokmurian marked the dragons



by etching the star into a large scale on the back of each of their heads.

When they were first captured by Mokmurian and Longtooth, these two young dragons fought tenaciously. They were subdued nonetheless, bound in iron, and hauled back here, where Lokansir aided in preparing the dragons for sacrifice. The lamia priestesses then used their *charm monster* abilities to befriend the dragons, and have repeated this process every few days for several weeks. The dragons now view the lamias as their mistresses and wear the Sihedron Rune with pride. They take quick offense to intruders, roaring warnings to their lamia mistresses and quickly attacking with their fiery breath weapons.

Both dragons are still under the effect of the lamias' *charm monster* spell-like abilities. If a dragon is released from this charm effect, it quickly realizes what's been done to it and flies to area **B13** for vengeance, abandoning its fight against the PCs and attacking with fury any lamias it finds there before attempting to escape the caverns entirely. The dragons have no interest in rewarding PCs for being released—in a way, they view their not attacking the PCs as reward enough. Any PC who try to force a freed dragon to reward him quickly finds himself in combat with it.

ECONTREDOR AND SULAMINGA	XP	CR	HP
	9,600 each	10	115 each

Young red dragons (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 98)

TACTICS

During Combat The two dragons attempt to intimidate foes first, swearing to roast their foes in twin streams of fire, but if actually forced to fight, they use all their melee attacks first, both dragons flanking a single fighter or other dangerous-looking foe.

Morale While charmed, the dragons fight to the death. If freed from the charm, they attempt to escape into the wilds if reduced to 40 hit points or fewer.

B13 CAVERN OF THE LAMIA PRIESTS (CR 13)



Incense smoke hangs heavy in the air of this cavern, thick enough to give the cave a gauzy, almost dreamlike feel and scenting the place with a vaguely metallic tang. Soft chanting fills the air as well—the voices' rich, modulated tones are strangely soothing. The cavern's walls are painted on all sides in spiraling patterns of vivid blue and purple, while here and there the angular symbol of a three-eyed, jackal-like visage leers out of these dark colors in vivid reds. Elsewhere, depictions of snarling hyenas with mouths full of bones and horned rats with long tails glower from the walls. A large block of stone sits against one wall, its top and sides slick with fresh blood.

This cavern has been claimed by the lamias—although most of Mokmurian's lamia allies are out in



the world preparing Varisia for Karzoug's awakening, two priestesses of Lamashtu have remained behind to serve Mokmurian as advisors and to aid him in whatever way they can. Unknown even to Mokmurian, these lamias are in regular contact with their own sinister masters and mistresses in Xin-Shalast via *sending* spells, and offer regular but brief reports on Mokmurian's progress.

In the meantime, the lamia priests have transformed this cavern into a cathedral dedicated to the Mother of Monsters, Lamashtu. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the three-eyed jackal as Lamashtu's symbol, while the images of fanged bats and horned amphisbaena snakes can be identified with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check as the symbols of Daclau-Sar and Murnath, nascent demon lords that serve Lamashtu in her Abyssal realm.

CREATURES: Two lamia clerics dwell here, Seleval and Zaelsar. They react to intrusions into their temple with cold amusement, as if it were some only slightly humorous attempt at a joke that the PCs would even consider treading upon this holy ground. Seleval asks if the PCs are here to pledge their souls to Lamashtu, a sneer on her beautiful face, while Zaelsar scratches her claws along the stony floor, creating a discordant sound not unlike fingernails on slate. Neither lamia expects the PCs to talk for long, which is fine with them—they've gone without dining on humanoid flesh for too long and are eager to rectify that lapse.

SELEVAL AND ZAELSAR

XP	CR	HP
12,800 each	11	161 each

Female lamia clerics of Lamashtu 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 186)

CE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural, -1 size)

hp 161 each (17 HD; 9d10+8d8+76)

Fort +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +21

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *falchion* +22/+17/+12 (2d6+11/15-20), 2 claws +15 (1d6+3) or

touch +18 (1d4 Wisdom drain)

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

Special Attacks channel negative energy 6/day (DC 17, 4d6), might of the gods (+8, 8 rounds/day), scythe of evil (4 rounds, 1/day)

Lamia Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +12)

At will—*disguise self*, *ventriloquism* (DC 14)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 16), *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 16)

1/day—*deep slumber* (DC 16)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +15)

10/day—*strength surge* (+4), *touch of evil* (4 rounds)

Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +15)

4th—*freedom of movement*, *poison* (DC 21), *sending*, *unholy blight*^o (DC 21)

3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *cure serious wounds* (2), *dispel magic*, *magic vestment*^o, *stone shape*

2nd—*bull's strength*^o, *cure moderate wounds* (3), *death knell* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19)

1st—*command* (DC 18), *cure light wounds* (3), *divine favor*, *protection from good*^o, *sanctuary* (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *mending*, *read magic*

D Domain spell; **Domains** Evil, Strength

TACTICS

Before Combat Each lamia casts *magic vestment* at the start of her day—if the PCs arrive at this room after sundown, that spell has expired. If the lamias hear the dragons or trolls fighting to the north or south, they take several rounds to cast preparatory spells (*freedom of movement*, *bull's strength*, *mirror image*, and finally *protection from good*) before moving into the neighboring room to join the battle.

During Combat Each lamia casts *divine favor* on the first round of combat, then moves in to fight the enemy in melee. They focus their attacks on the same target, one lamia attacking with her melee attacks while the other casts spells at the target, then they switch off the next round. These lamias are merciless, and if one of them drops to negative hit points, the other doesn't hesitate to use *death knell* on her dying sister.

Morale If a lamia is reduced to 40 hit points or fewer, she tries to cast *sanctuary* and then uses her healing magic on herself while attempting to put some distance between her and the PCs. If reduced to 20 hit points, a lamia casts *sending* to warn Mokmurian before she attempts to flee to another room in this complex, where she can find an ally to aid her.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 39 (43 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Critical (falchion), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Selective Channeling, Spring Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +20, Knowledge (religion) +12, Linguistics +4, Perception +27, Spellcraft +11

Languages Abyssal, Common, Giant

SQ undersized weapons

Gear masterwork leather armor, +2 *falchion*, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *ring of protection* +2

TREASURE: The two incense burners on the altar are made of silver chased with mithral—each is worth 400 gp.

A successful DC 25 Perception check is enough to notice that the altar has been slid across the stone floor several times. A successful DC 20 Strength check allows a PC to push it aside to reveal a small hollow in the ground below, within which sit several vile books full of descriptions on how to disembowel, decapitate, drown, and otherwise slaughter all major types of giants and humanoids, especially in ritual killings and sacrifices. Many of these





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horrific sacrifices involve the opening of a victim's belly, inserting a small but ravenous creature like a rat, and then magically healing the belly wound shut so that the creature is forced to gnaw its way to freedom in a mock birth. While horrific, these scrolls are lavishly illustrated by a talented (but demented) artist, and are worth 500 gp in all. Anyone who looks through all of the scrolls discovers one near the end is in fact a *scroll of remove curse*.

B14 TYRANT TROLLS (CR 12)



The walls of this passageway are hung with furs. To the southeast the tunnel constricts and slopes down sharply.

A DC 20 Perception check is enough to notice that behind these hanging furs, the walls are riddled with 1-foot-wide openings that look into larger caves beyond. If the furs are pulled aside, these gaps are plainly visible.

CREATURES: A pair of rather violent, stupid trolls stand guard here. They were once servants to the stone giant tribe of Kavarvatti, and Mokmurian now pays them poorly (but enough to keep their interest) to guard the entry tunnel to the Library of Thassilon itself. They keep guard in shifts, with one always peering through the cracks between the walls and hanging furs while the other one sleeps. If a troll spots the PCs, he waits for one to come within 10 feet of his wall before stabbing at her with his +2 *ranseur*, roaring in excitement as he does. The other troll wakes and attacks in the same way from the opposite wall 1 round later, likely being able to easily reach PCs who have backed away from the first wall.

HUREK AND DUREK

XP	CR	HP
9,600 each	10	136 each

Male troll fighter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 268)

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+8 armor, +3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 136 each (11 HD; 6d8+5d10+82); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +16, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +17 (1d8+9), 2 claws +18 (1d6+11) or +2 *ranseur* +19/+14 (2d6+12/x3)

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

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d6+7), weapon training (natural +1)

TACTICS

During Combat The trolls fight with their +2 *ranseurs* through the narrow windows as long as they can, gaining a +4 cover bonus to their AC and on Reflex saves against foes attacking

them from the central passageway. As soon as anyone manages to get into one of the side caves, they drop their *ranseurs* and continue the fight with their claws and teeth. The trolls do not coordinate their attacks in any way, simply fighting as long as they can.

Morale These brutish trolls trust their regeneration implicitly to keep them alive. They fight to the death, even in the face of foes who use acid and fire.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 16, **Con** 25, **Int** 6, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 31

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (claws), Weapon Focus (*ranseur*), Weapon Specialization (claws), Weapon Specialization (*ranseur*)

Skills Climb +14, Perception +10

Languages Giant

SQ armor training 1

Gear +2 *breastplate*, +2 *ranseur*

TREASURE: Each disgusting guard carries a bag of filthy, troll-groped treasure at his belt—payment from Mokmurian for his work here. Hurek's bag contains a large collection of colorful, striped, shiny, but ultimately worthless stones weighing 100 pounds in all. Without a DC 15 Appraise check to note the differences, the stones could easily be mistaken for valuable agate, onyx, and mithral ore of various kinds. Durek carries the real treasure—assorted bits of armor and helmets and a dire bear skull. The armor includes a suit of Small half-plate, a masterwork breastplate, six chain shirts, and a +1 *ghost touch gauntlet*. Unknown to either troll, one of the chain shirts has a hidden pouch in its lining that can be found with a DC 30 Perception check—it contains an *air elemental gem*.

B15 LIBRARY TUNNEL



The tunnel walls wind deeper into the ground here, yet the presence of rough contours along the cave walls seems to lessen every several paces—the deeper the cave goes, the more like worked stone the passageway seems.

From area B14, a 10-foot-wide tunnel winds down through the bedrock in a corkscrew for several hundred feet before the walls change to regular worked stone and the tunnel arrives at area C1—the entrance to an ancient library that has survived since Thassilonian times. Located about 800 feet below the Black Tower, this hidden library was once accessible from that tower, but the tunnels that connected them have long since collapsed. Fear of Mokmurian and the strange monsters that guard the lower level prevents the denizens of the pit and caverns from pursuing foes down this tunnel.



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## PART FIVE: THE ANCIENT LIBRARY

THE THERASSIC WIZARD-MONKS WHO ATTENDED THIS LIBRARY WERE NOT DIRECTLY AFFILIATED WITH RUNELORD KARZOU, ALTHOUGH THEY PAID REGULAR TITHES TO HIM. THEIR TRUE LOYALTIES LAY WITH THE PEACOCK SPIRIT, A GOD OF SCHOLARS WHOSE PURPOSE WAS A CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET EVEN FROM MANY OF HIS WORSHIPERS—ONLY THE MOST DEVOUT KNEW HIS TRUE NAME. THE MONKS, SCHOLARS, AND WIZARDS WHO DWELT IN THE THERASSIC MONASTERY TRAFFICKED WITH DEVILS, CREATURES OF ABERRANT APPETITES, AND OTHER STRANGE BEINGS NOW LOST TO ARCANES KNOWLEDGE.

5226W3E1-RTD 5226W3E1-RTD

This surviving section of the Therassic Monastery, hidden within walls warded by the same preservative magic that protects all of Varisia's Thassilonian monuments from erosion and decay, has remained intact for centuries. Now and then, the works here are discovered again by explorers and tomb robbers, but most intruders perish to the menacing guardians that still occupy the halls. It wasn't until Mokmurian that someone demonstrated sufficient wizardly power to claim the priceless wisdom held within these halls.

The workmanship of these tunnels is distinctly different from that of the tunnels above or the giantcraft of Jorgenfist itself. Characters who succeed at a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check and who have been in Thassilonian ruins before (such as the Catacombs of Wrath or the lower level of Thistletop) realize that the style of the architecture in these tunnels is distinctly Thassilonian. A further unusual element of the architecture here is the fact that all corners are curiously rounded off to prevent the formation of hard angles—this mystery is explained in area C1 below.

Ceiling heights in the library average 20 feet in the hallways but rise to vaulted roofs 30 feet high in the chambers themselves. There is no illumination down here at all, unless otherwise noted in the text. In several places, the ancient preservative magic has faded, causing sections of the library to crumble and cave in. Attempts to dig out these sections should be dangerous and intensive—strive to make the PCs realize it's probably easier to follow the path of least resistance, but if they insist on digging out tunnels, the noise certainly attracts guardians and monsters from other areas.

### C1 ENTRANCE



The gradual change from natural cavern to worked stone is finally complete after the long, spiraling descent into the depths. Where the walls meet,

hard angles have been polished away to smooth but tight arcs that somewhat soften the transitions from wall to wall or to floor or ceiling. With no hard lines defining edges of rooms, the place seems subtly alien.

The walls of this complex have been rounded to protect the place from a specific type of dangerous outsider the Therassic wizard monks often dealt with—an enigmatic species that inhabits the angles of time, quite unlike the bulk of all other life (who inhabit its curves). These are the hounds of Tindalos. By rounding the angles and corners of these rooms, even to a small degree, the ancients protected themselves from retribution should their dangerous dealings with these monsters ever go awry.

The forgefiend that dwells in area C5 constantly moves through the stone walls of the library. Although its initial encounter with the PCs is scripted in C5, it can theoretically attack the PCs at any point once they begin exploring the library. Use the forgefiend to keep them on their feet.

### C2 CHAMBER OF REDUCTION (CR 11)



A pair of double doors stands in the southern wall of this room. The floor is made of glossy, polished black-and-gray marble. To the east, what might have once been another exit has long since caved in. Yet nothing in the room compares to the curious effect that its walls have—looking into the room, it's bizarrely impossible to judge the chamber's exact dimensions. Any wall looked at directly remains stable, but through peripheral vision the walls everywhere else seem to stretch away into impossibly infinite gulfs, as if the room itself were somehow “unhooked” from its own physicality. The sheets of pale light that flicker across the walls only add to the disorienting effect.

The strange glowing energy on the walls is a manifestation of the powerful trap that wards this







room. The energy provides dim illumination in the room, but is disorienting enough to impart a  $-2$  penalty on all Perception checks made in the chamber.

**CREATURE:** This chamber is the guardpost of a single obese giant, his body covered with scars in the shape of Thassilonian runes. Once a hill giant soldier, he attempted to desert the army when he grew suspicious of Mokmurian's true motives. When the traitor was turned over by his own brothers, Mokmurian punished him by using the *runeslave cauldron* to ensure his loyalty and eventual death.

The runeslave giant wears a heavy hide breastplate and has a slightly hunched back and pale lanky hair. His arms and legs are twisted and monstrosly overdeveloped muscles bulge and strain against his seemingly too-tight skin. Unaffected by the room's trap, the giant remains out of immediate sight from the northern hallway against the north wall and quickly moves to attack the first person to notice his presence. Note that the runeslave has already been subjected to the effects of the trap in this room and has long since recovered—but if it leaves this room and reenters, it could well become affected again.

### RUNESLAVE HILL GIANT

| XP    | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 3,200 | 7  | 95 |

(see page 412)

**TRAP:** This entire room is in fact a cunning trap—the warped dimensions of the chamber are the only

warning that something inside isn't quite right. Anyone who sets foot in the room must immediately succeed at a DC 23 Will saving throw or become disoriented as it becomes difficult to judge distance—those who fail become nauseated for 1d4 rounds. Worse, any humanoid in the room must also make a DC 23 Fortitude save to resist being reduced in size to the next smaller size category down from his actual size, as if by *reduce person*. This effect persists for 24 hours, but can be dispelled by *enlarge person* or a successful dispel magic.

### CHAMBER OF REDUCTION

| XP    | CR |
|-------|----|
| 9,600 | 10 |

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

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** proximity; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** spell effect (*mass reduce person* heightened to 9th level; DC 23 Fortitude negates; CL 20th) plus nausea for 1d4 rounds (DC 23 Will save negates); affects all creatures in the room (to a maximum of up to 20 creatures at a time).

### C3 THE CAULDRON OF GIANTKIND (CR 11)



Runes are carved in bands along the walls of this chamber, which is unnervingly lit by a reddish glow from the slowly burning flames in a shallow firepit in the center of the room. An immense iron cauldron, its side emblazoned with an etching of a seven-pointed star, stands above these flames.





Smoke rises from the cauldron's unseen bubbling contents, and a halo of human bones and scraps of what might be dried flesh lie scattered around the cauldron's three-pronged base.

This 12-foot-tall cauldron is a powerful magical artifact Mokmurian found here on his first journey into the library. It wasn't until after he returned from Xin-Shalast that he deciphered the cauldron's secret. Known as a *runeslave cauldron*, this was an ancient device created by Thassilonian wizards to transform unruly giants into loyal slaves who would make even better monument builders. The wizard-monks of the monastery had just completed the construction of this one and were preparing to send it to Karzoug as a gift when their world came to an end.

Now that Mokmurian knows how to use the *runeslave cauldron*, he's been researching ways to use it to augment his army. His current plans are to carry the cauldron with him on his march and use it to resurrect fallen giants and recycle them back into the war.

The cauldron is an evil artifact and the smoke it produces has debilitating effects on good-aligned characters—see page 424 for more details.

**CREATURE:** One of the treasures Mokmurian discovered in the library was a *stone golem manual*—a rare treasure indeed, for Mokmurian had long wished he could create constructs like these. The stone golem he created guards this chamber—a hulking brute with

a skull-like face and glowing blue runes carved into its forehead. The golem attacks any non-giant that enters the room. Humanoids enlarged to 8 feet tall or more qualify as giants by its reasoning—it allows creatures disguised in this manner to pass unmolested.

#### STONE GOLEM

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 12,800 | 11 | 107 |

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 163)

#### C4 THE HEADLESS LORD'S GALLERY (CR 12)



The chill in this room isn't quite enough to frost the floors and walls, but it's certainly enough to frost the breath. The room itself contains several large suits of armor mounted on what appear to be frozen or preserved ogres, trolls, and hill giants, all staged as if rallying for war.

**CREATURES:** Five of the suits of armor in the room are in fact worn by undead guardians posted here by Mokmurian. The leader of these undead is a headless zombie lord Mokmurian created from the body of a powerful ogre warlord. This figure is nearly 11 feet tall, dressed in plate armor and wielding a wicked-looking hatchet in each gauntleted hand. The figure's most horrifying feature, though, is the fact that it has no head—only a raw, ragged stump of a neck. This ogre



is called the Headless Lord, and Mokmurian keeps its head in area C9, where it can speak to him and keep him alerted and appraised of events experienced by its body. If Mokmurian holds the head in his hand and stares into its undead eyes, he can even observe events as if viewing them through where the Headless Lord's eyes should be atop its decapitated body. The four figures around the Headless Lord were hill giants whom Mokmurian set against the lord one at a time to see how it fared in battle—when these giants perished by the lord's wrath, they rose as zombies under his control.

The Headless Lord stands guard over the western entrance to the room. If any trespassers approach, it waits patiently for them to make the first move as its head alerts Mokmurian and describes the intruders to him in crude detail.

## THE HEADLESS LORD

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 12,800 | 11 | 126 |

Male fast ogre zombie undead lord fighter 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 289, *Tome of Horrors Complete* 748)

NE Large undead

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

**Aura** desecration (20-ft. radius)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 11, flat-footed 26 (+10 armor, +2 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 126 (12 HD; 6d8+6d10+66)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10; +2 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2; channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** undead traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** *runechill hatchet* +21/+16 (1d8+15/19-20/x3), *runechill hatchet* +21/+16 (1d8+10/19-20/x3)

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

**Special Attacks** create spawn, quick strikes, weapon training (axes +1)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +14)  
1/day—*darkness*, *fear* (DC 18), *summon* (level 5, 9 human fast zombies)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The Headless Lord orders its four hill giant zombies to attack as soon as foes enter this room, or if it sees someone outside preparing to use ranged attacks. The Headless Lord casts *fear* on the PCs once it can catch at least three of them in the area of effect. It summons nine fast zombies to help flank foes, block charges, or provide cover, keeping as many as it can within its aura of desecration.

**Morale** The Headless Lord fights until destroyed.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 31, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 33

**Feats** Cleave, Command Undead, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (handaxe), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (handaxe), Weapon Specialization (handaxe)

**Skills** Climb +21, Intimidate +19, Perception +17

**Languages** Giant; undead telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** armor training 1, headless

**Gear** +1 full plate, *runechill hatchets* (2)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Command Undead (Su)** The headless lord can use its Command Undead feat seven times per day to command any type of zombie as if it were a 12th-level cleric.

**Create Spawn (Su)** A creature slain by the Headless Lord rises in 1d4 minutes as a fast zombie under the Headless Lord's control.

**Desecration Aura (Su)** The Headless Lord constantly projects a 20-foot-radius aura that functions as a *desecrate* spell.

**Headless (Ex)** Although the Headless Lord lacks a head, it can still hear and see and speak as if it had one.

**Undead Telepathy (Su)** The Headless Lord can communicate telepathically with any other undead creature within 100 feet. It can use this telepathic communication to direct mindless undead as a free action.



**THE HEADLESS  
LORD**





## ZOMBIE HILL GIANT (4)

| XP         | CR | HP      |
|------------|----|---------|
| 2,400 each | 6  | 71 each |

Male zombie hill giant

NE Large undead

**Init** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

### DEFENSE

**AC** 10, touch 7, flat-footed 10 (-2 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 71 each (13d8+13)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9

**DR** 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 slam +17 (1d8+13)

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

### STATISTICS

**Str** 27, **Dex** 6, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Toughness

**SQ** staggered

**TREASURE:** The seven suits of armor on display here are all Large. Four are masterwork half-plate, while the remaining three are masterwork full plate.

## C5 FORGEFIEND'S LAIR (CR 10)



This twenty-foot-square room is shaped almost like a silo—its ceiling arches up to a vaulted height of one hundred feet.

**CREATURE:** One of the guardians of this complex that dates from ancient Thassilon is a creature called a forgefiend—known also as a scanderig. This subtle and tricky creature can move through the stone surrounding the library like a fish swims through water, and for some time after Mokmurian's first visit here, the forgefiend was the stone giant's greatest annoyance. Eventually, Mokmurian managed to catch the outsider in a magic circle of *protection against law* and, through several weeks of magical torture, convinced the creature to serve him as it once served its ancient Thassilonian masters.

The forgefiend is highly mobile, and while this chamber serves it as a lair, it's usually on the move through the walls of the entire complex. It prefers to wait to make its first attack against the PCs on rounds just after they've finished battles with other creatures, fighting for only 1 or 2 rounds before slipping back into the walls. If the PCs haven't given up by the time they near this chamber, the scanderig decides to launch a more substantial attack on them, fighting to the death rather than risking more torture at Mokmurian's hands for letting the PCs get too close to him.

## FORGEFIEND

| XP    | CR | HP  |
|-------|----|-----|
| 9,600 | 10 | 137 |

(see page 409)

## C6 LIBRARY ENTRANCE (CR 12)



This long hallway has a looming ceiling forty feet above and is decorated with an intricate display of stone supports and beams. The walls are carved in long swaths of densely scribed runes—the seven-pointed star is repeated often. To the east, the hallway has caved in entirely—a battered door protrudes from the rubble, but the hall beyond is completely filled with detritus. To the west, the hall ends at an immense bronze double door that bears a huge mirrorlike silver inlay of the ubiquitous seven-pointed star. This set of doors has no obvious hinges, handles, or locks, save for a single tiny star-shaped indentation at the center of the larger mirrored star.

Anyone who can read Thassilonian can decipher the runes on the walls as meditative prayers to the Peacock Spirit meant to calm and prepare the minds of any who seek to use the library. Anyone who reads one of these prayers becomes affected by a *calm emotions* spell (CL 20th) for 10 minutes.

The bronze doors that lead to area C7 are locked by a persistent *arcane lock* spell (CL 15th)—even if it is dispelled, the *arcane lock* remanifests 1d4 rounds after the doors are closed again. The doors can be opened safely with the key that Mokmurian carries (he took the key from the clockwork librarian inside area C7 after using *knock* to bypass the doors). The doors are magically reinforced and difficult to damage or break down (hardness 20, hp 120, Break DC 45). Worse, a deadly outsider bound here not long after the Therassic wizard-monks finished building the library itself wards the doors—it is summoned to attack anyone who attempts to open the doors without the key. A password (“Viosanxi,” indicated on the final scroll of the Emerald Codex in area A14) uttered during any attempt to force open the door prevents the monster from being summoned.

**CREATURE:** Any attempt to force open the doors to area C7 without uttering the password causes the door's surface to become suffused with a dull gray glow. The glow rapidly brightens to a near-blinding intensity, and then a strange figure floats out of the door's surface. It seems humanoid, but it's hard to tell since the entire thing sheds harsh, blinding light. The creature begins screaming, not stopping even to catch its breath as it drifts forward to attack. This alien monster is a shining child, a creature conjured from a distant, insane corner of reality. It remains for 20 rounds before vanishing once again, spending those 2 minutes attacking anything in sight. The door can summon an endless number of shining children, but only one may be summoned at a time.







## FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

#### PART ONE: STONES OVER SANDPOINT

#### PART TWO: JOURNEY TO JORGENFIST

#### PART THREE: INTO THE VALLEY OF THE BLACK TOWER

#### PART FOUR: UNDER JORGENFIST

#### PART FIVE: THE ANCIENT LIBRARY

## SHINING CHILD

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 19,200 | 12 | 152 |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 245)

**Story Award:** If the PCs enter the library without summoning the shining child, award them XP as if they had defeated it in combat.

## C7 LIBRARY OF THASSILON (CR 6)



Numerous glowing crystal lanterns hang on fine chains from the domed ceiling sixty feet above, filling this circular room with bright light. The walls of the room are carved with more runes and sigils, while overstuffed wood-and-leather chairs and polished oak tables surround a thirty-foot-wide shaft in the floor.

This room contains the collected lore of the Therassic wizard-monks, one of Thassilon's greatest and most respected orders of scholars. The wizard-monks went to great effort to protect the monastery above this chamber and the rooms that surround it, but the bulk of these preservation efforts were focused on this chamber. In this room, the passage of time has no effect upon inanimate objects. Living creatures still age, but paper, leather, wood, stone, and even dead bodies do not decay—they remain forever pristine and new. The same effects constantly recycle and purify the air and sustain creatures without the need for food or drink. These effects apply only as long as those objects remain in this chamber, though—if they're brought out, the delay of time catches up with them immediately. Bodies corrupt and skeletons crumble to dust, wood turns brittle and rots, books flake away and disintegrate into powder, and even stone grows weathered and aged, all in the course of a few heartbeats.

Furthermore, extradimensional travel does not function in this chamber—the entire place is warded by a permanent *dimensional lock* effect (CL 20th).

The central shaft contains the library's holdings. The walls of the shaft, 30 feet wide and 50 feet deep, contain shelf after shelf of books, scrolls, tablets, and other means of storing information. All of these books are written in Thassilonian, and thanks to the chamber's preservative effects, all are in excellent condition. The subjects cover all facets of Thassilonian life—this chamber represents perhaps the single greatest repository of lore from this nearly forgotten age on all of Golarion, and as such, if its existence were made public, it would become a magnet for all manner of scholars, arcanists, and thieves from around the world. There are no ladders or stairs provided for those who wish to peruse the stacks—the wizard-monks used flight and levitation to sort the holdings and saw no need to make their collection easier for lesser folk to examine.

The PCs can certainly use this library to research all manner of subjects relating to Thassilon. The end of this chapter provides some several key bits of information that pertain directly to the remainder of the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path. If the PCs wish to learn more about other parts of this ancient empire, feel free to give them as much or as little information as you desire.

**CREATURE:** One remnant from Thassilon remains “alive” in this chamber—a curious clockwork creature built by the wizard-monks to serve as a caretaker, sorter, and assistant for those who wished to use the library. Unfortunately, while the clockwork librarian does not age, as an animate creature it is not subject to the preservative nature of the magic in this chamber. Over the 10,000 years it spent here, alone, it became relatively adept at repairing itself, but with each bout of self-repair, it grows a little more unhinged and confused. Today, parts of it constantly smoke, its limbs creak and whirl, and it has grown increasingly paranoid about losing the key that winds it up.

The clockwork librarian clatters and smokes to life when it notices any newcomers entering the room and hobbles over to greet them in an ungainly lurch (one of its three legs doesn't quite work right any more). It addresses the newcomers in Thassilonian, asking, “Which volume of lore would you like me to retrieve for you? There are currently 24,491 volumes, scrolls, pamphlets, and unbound manuscripts available. Please indicate your wish by author, title, subject, or date of acquisition by the Therassic Monastery.” The librarian waits patiently for requests—if no one addresses it in Thassilonian, it wordlessly follows visitors around, waiting for requests and hoping no one tries to damage any of the books. The librarian isn't a very effective combatant, but if it must, it fights to the death to defend the library.

## CLOCKWORK LIBRARIAN

| XP    | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 2,400 | 6  | 67 |

Awakened clockwork servant expert 8 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 56)  
LN Medium construct (clockwork)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +3 dodge, +2 natural)

**hp** 67 (10 HD; 2d10+8d8+20)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

**Immune** construct traits

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to electricity

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +11 (1d4+4).

**Ranged** net +10

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The clockwork librarian is not a war construct and only fights to defend itself or the library.



**Morale** Although relatively ineffectual in combat, the clockwork librarian defends the library until it is destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility

**Skills** Appraise +14, Craft (bookbinding) +14, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (geography) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +14, Linguistics +14, Perception +13

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Azlanti, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Terran, Thassilonian

**Gear** ring of levitation (as boots of levitation), net, windup key

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Awakened Clockwork (Su)** The methods by which the clockwork librarian's long-dead creators granted it intelligence have long since been lost.

**DEVELOPMENT:** There is a staggering amount of information awaiting discovery in this library—see the section entitled “Researching the Ancient Past” on page 232 for further details on what the PCs can learn through studying this chamber's treasures.



CLOCKWORK  
LIBRARIAN

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs secure the clockwork librarian's aid, award them 4,800 XP.

## C8 LEAN AND ATHIRST (CR 10)



This strange, empty room has been smoothed over to an even greater extent than the other chambers in this complex—every angle of the walls has been modified into a gentle arc, removing any element of harsh regular lines entirely from view. Patches of what appear to be scorch marks stain the walls and floors here and there, especially to the south, where part of the wall has fallen away.

Mokmurian is no fool and he does not entirely trust even his closest allies among his army, to say nothing of the rank-and-file giants themselves. Inspired by the text in a particularly ancient book he studied in the library, he altered this room to serve as an anchor for the conjuration of a trio of dangerous entities from the incalculable depths of time: hounds of Tindalos.

Mokmurian takes pains to keep a silent mental *alarm* spell on the doors leading into area C9 active at all times.

**CREATURES:** These alien outsiders were initially bound to this chamber by several *planar binding* spells. By reducing the number of angles in the room, Mokmurian was able to greatly extend the length of service from the three creatures. Since they inhabit time in a different way from other life, dwelling upon its angles rather than flowing along its curves, the smoothed architecture acts almost as a hedge to keep the hounds bound for months rather than the normal maximum of weeks that *planar binding* can grant.

The hounds loathe being bound like this, yet the *planar binding* spell prevents them from acting against Mokmurian. They have been ordered to guard this chamber, and to come to Mokmurian's side if he calls for them. The hounds lurk in the room, eager to vent their frustration upon anything that moves. Each of the monsters is a gaunt, long-limbed quadruped with huge, soulless eyes and a toothy maw.

### HOUDS OF TINDALOS (3)

| XP         | CR | HP      |
|------------|----|---------|
| 3,200 each | 7  | 85 each |

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 158)

## C9 MOKMURIAN'S LAIR (CR 15)



This vast chamber might have once been a lecture hall, but now the place is empty of furniture. Six five-foot-wide pillars, each carved with spiraling patterns of runes, rise up to support the hundred-foot-high ceiling. Spread through the hall in neatly organized stacks and piles are arcane trappings, candles, books, scrolls, knives, and bundles of





## FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

CHAPTER  
BACKGROUND

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STONES OVER SANDPOINT

PART TWO:  
JOURNEY TO JORGENFIST

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powders and ingredients—the entire place looks like an arcanist's laboratory or storeroom. At the west end of the room, a wide flight of stairs rises up to a stone door in the wall, just north of a twenty-foot-wide stage. Here sits a large mound of furs, an immense chair, and a table stacked high with more book and scrolls. An ironbound chest sits under the table against the far wall.

This room was once a lecture hall in which the Therassic wizard-monks expounded on their theories, debated the finer points of magic, and held symposiums to further their research; all of the furniture has long since crumbled to dust, leaving behind an immense chamber and a perfect fit for Mokmurian's inflated ego.

Mokmurian converted this entire room into his personal lab, workshop, library, and bedchamber. Rubble blocks the western approach. Mokmurian used a few *wall of stone* spells to block off the southern entrance and has been considering doing the same to the eastern one, but he prefers the convenience of a physical exit over being forced to keep several *dimension door*, *passwall*, and *teleport* spells prepared at all times.

**CREATURE:** Mokmurian is a powerful giant, though one would not initially come to this conclusion from his stature. At just over 10 feet tall, he towers over humans, but in stone giant circles, he's one of the worst things a giant can be: a runt. In many ways, it was his height and the ridicule it provoked from his people that doomed him to his journey into the Kodar Mountains, where he became enslaved by Karzoug.

Mokmurian has spent most of his time here of late, and on the first attempt by the PCs to investigate this room, he is encountered here. If the PCs are forced to retreat from this encounter and return later for a second fight, feel free to have Mokmurian be much more mobile—he may be encountered in the library (area C7), in the temple to Lamashtu (area B13), or even up on the surface.

Mokmurian has several advance warning systems set up to warn him of trespassers and invaders. If the PCs encountered and fought the Headless Lord in area C4, the undead ogre's head (which Mokmurian keeps in a gold birdcage on his desk) reports the presence of intruders, and Mokmurian uses the ogre's head to gather intelligence about their capabilities. Likewise, the door to this room from area C8 is warded with an *alarm* spell, which alerts him to trouble in that room even if the sounds of combat don't.

### MOKMURIAN

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 51,200 | 15 | 287 |

Male stone giant transmuter 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151)  
CE Large humanoid (giant)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *see invisibility*;  
Perception +25

### DEFENSE

**AC** 32, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +11 natural, +4 shield, -1 size)

**hp** 287 (23 HD; 12d8+11d6+195)

**Fort** +19, **Ref** +10, **Will** +15

**Defensive Abilities** improved rock catching; **DR** 10/adamantine (against first 110 points of damage); **Resist** fire 30 (or an energy type favored by the party)

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** +2 *defending spell-storing (vampiric touch) club*

+22/+17/+12 (1d8+9) or

2 slams +20 (1d8+7)

**Ranged** rock +17/+12/+7 (1d8+10)

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

**Special Attacks** rock throwing (180 ft.)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th; concentration +16)

At Will—change shape (*beast shape II/elemental body I*, 11 rounds/day)

8/day—telekinetic fist (1d4+5 bludgeoning)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 11th; concentration +16)

6th—*disintegrate* (DC 21, 2), quickened *scorching ray*

5th—*cloudkill*, quickened *shield*, *telekinesis* (DC 20, 2), *wall of force*

4th—*dimension door*, *fire shield*, *mass reduce person* (DC 19, 2), *solid fog*, *stoneskin*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 18), *fly*, *greater magic weapon*, *slow* (DC 18, 2), *stinking cloud* (DC 18)

2nd—*fog cloud*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), *resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*, *whispering wind* (2)

1st—*alarm*, *enlarge person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *reduce person* (DC 16, 2)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

**Thassilonian Specialization** Transmutation; **Opposition**


**Schools** Enchantment, Illusion

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Mokmurian casts *mage armor* and *greater magic weapon* on his club every morning after he prepares his spells. Once he learns that the PCs are coming (likely via the headless ogre's head), he casts *resist energy* (to resist a type of energy he knows the PCs favor, or otherwise fire), *see invisibility*, and *stoneskin*. If he suspects the PCs are very close, he casts *fly* and uses his *wand of bear's endurance*. All of these effects are incorporated into his stats above. He then casts *fog cloud* near the entrance to the room and waits to ambush the PCs.

**During Combat** Mokmurian's first action when the PCs enter his room is to cast *solid fog*, catching as many of them as possible in the spell's area of effect. He uses his *fog-cutting lenses* so he can target the PCs with ease with his ranged attack spells. As soon as someone emerges from the fog, he casts *cloudkill* on that area, followed by *stinking cloud*. If a PC gets too close to him, he uses *telekinesis* to hurl her across the room and hopefully back into one of the fog spell effects. His goal is





to maintain range superiority on his enemies, but if melee seems inevitable, he casts *mass reduce person* first to shrink down foes, coupling that with his quickened *shield* spell. Then, on the first round of actual melee, he casts *enlarge person* on himself and begins making melee attacks. If any hounds of Tindalos survive, he calls on them to aid him in battle as well.

**Morale** Mokmurian fights until reduced to 40 hit points or fewer, at which point he uses *dimension doors* to retreat to area **B13**, hoping to get healing from his lamia minions. If they're dead, he flees up to the surface and gathers a group of a dozen stone giants and any of the named giants who still live to mount an attack on the library to finish off the PCs. If the PCs have secured an alliance with Conna and she still lives, she's among the giants whom Mokmurian recruits—when and if this patrol encounters the PCs, Conna switches sides to aid them, a move that throws the other

stone giants into chaos. The next round, half of those giants defect as well, renouncing Mokmurian as an unworthy runt and joining Conna and the PCs against him. In this event, Mokmurian fights again until reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, then tries to use his *scroll of limited wish* to teleport to Xin-Shalast. Yet unfortunately for him, Karzoug, who has been watching his actions through the link their souls have shared ever since Mokmurian's trip to the City of Greed, has other plans for him (see Development, below).

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 17, **Con** 27, **Int** 20, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 36

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spring Attack, Vital Strike, Whirlwind Attack

**Skills** Climb +33, Fly +10, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (engineering) +31, Knowledge (geography) +31, Perception +25, Spellcraft +31, Stealth +22

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Draconic, Giant, Orc, Terran, Thassilonian

**SQ** arcane bond (club), physical enhancement +3

**Combat Gear** *scroll of limited wish*, *wand of bear's endurance* (13 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *defending spell-storing* (vampiric touch) club, bag of holding (type II), fog-cutting lenses, robe of runes, key to area **C7**, 500 gp in diamond dust, spellbooks

**Spellbooks** Mokmurian keeps his spellbooks in his *bag of holding*.

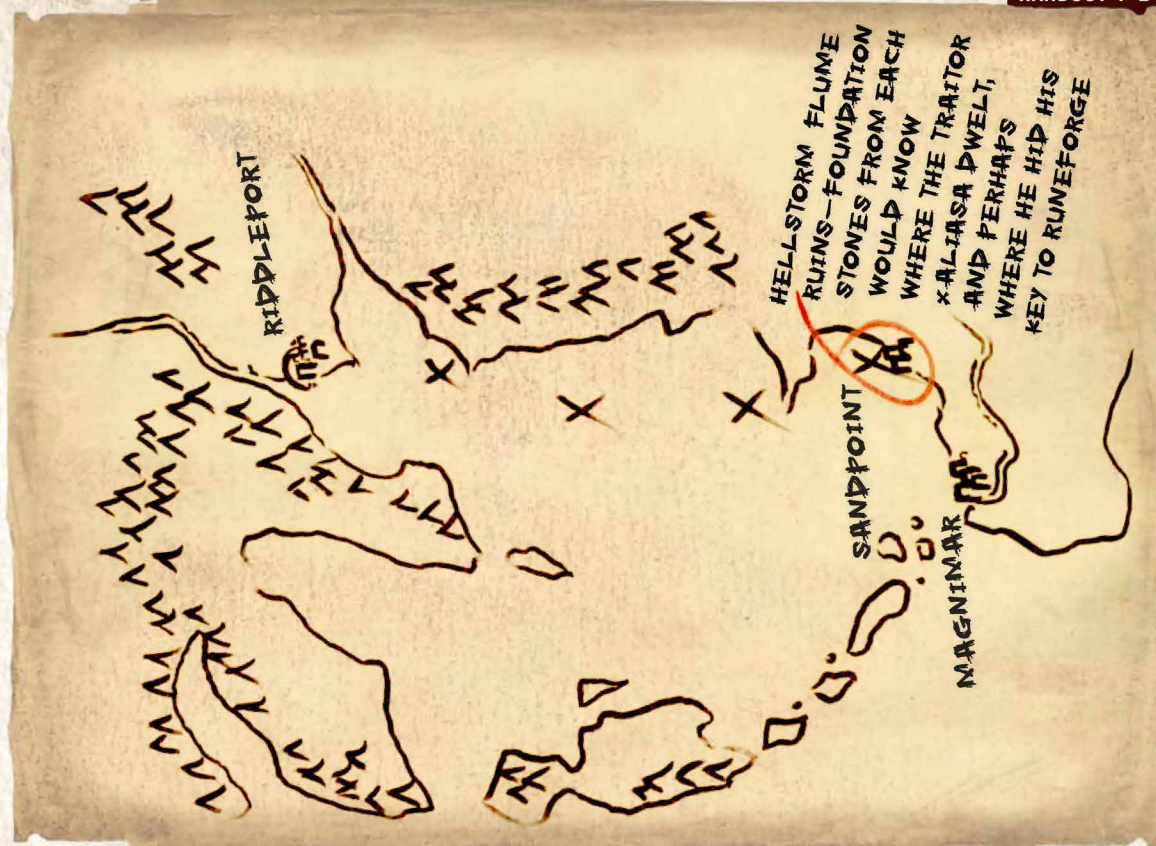
Apart from containing all of the spells he has prepared, this extensive collection also contains most of the spells in the *Core Rulebook*, up through and including 6th-level spells. Feel free to introduce new spells from other sources via these books—if you do, you should also consider swapping some of these spells in for those he normally prepares.

**TREASURE:** Much of the treasure Mokmurian has gathered over the past several years (in particular, the riches he gained from his trip to Xin-Shalast) have long since been distributed to his minions and army as payment. Still, a relatively impressive collection of loot remains here as his personal wealth. Apart from his impressive collection of books on spellcraft and all of the spell components and laboratory equipment scattered throughout the room (which is worth a collected total of 1,500 gp, but weighs several hundred pounds), the chest under his desk contains the bulk of his remaining wealth, including 12,000 gp, 1,100 pp, an amber and sapphire necklace worth 4,000 gp, a set of ivory runestones worth 1,400 gp, and a *scroll of contact other plane*.

In addition, scattered among the stacks of Mokmurian's invasion plans, battle tactics, and research notes is a single piece of paper depicting a map of the Lost Coast region of Varisia (see Handout 4–2). Four points along the coast have “X” marks on them—three are placed some distance out to sea along the coast, but one is right over Sandpoint. A note

MOKMURIAN





on the map, written in Giant, reads “Hellfire Flume ruins—foundation stones from each would know where the traitor Xaliasa dwelt, and perhaps where he hid his key to Runeforge.” This cryptic note has considerable importance to the next chapter of the adventure.

**DEVELOPMENT:** Although Karzoug does not magically control Mokmurian, and the giant is not under any magical compulsion to do the runelord’s will, Karzoug still maintains a link with the giant, a connection of the soul established when Mokmurian triggered Karzoug’s awakening. As soon as Mokmurian fails him, Karzoug’s anger and impatience gets the better of him. He sends his mind down from the Spires of Xin-Shalast, out across the Storval Plateau and, from this vast distance, seizes control of Mokmurian. This effect occurs just before Mokmurian has a chance to use his *scroll of limited wish* if he is attempting to escape. This control is such that, if Mokmurian were dying or in the process of being disintegrated or plane-shifted to another reality, those effects are, for a moment, delayed.

When Karzoug takes control (whether because of Mokmurian’s death, magical banishment, or merely his attempt to teleport away), Mokmurian’s body suddenly goes rigid. He spasms a few times, and then his head turns to face the PCs, mechanically and clumsily, as if being forced to move by massive invisible hands. In a strangely accented voice, a voice that sounds almost human, he speaks, his eyes flaring with a soul-searing emerald radiance.



“So these are the heroes of the age. More like gasping worms to me—worms to be crushed back into the earth when I awaken the armies of Xin-Shalast, when the name Karzoug is again spoken with fear and awe. Know that the deaths of those marked by the Sihedron—the giants you have so conveniently slain for me—hasten my return, just as yours soon will. Fools, all of you. Is this all you could manage in ten thousand years?”

At that, Karzoug laughs a cruel, mocking laugh that echoes and fades—as powerful as he is, Karzoug can only maintain this long-distance control over Mokmurian for a few moments. Mokmurian dies, his soul snuffed out as the link between him and Karzoug ends. Characters who heard Karzoug’s voice in area E8 of Thistletop can make a DC 15 Wisdom check—success indicates that they realize the two voices are the same.

## CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

The PCs need not slay Mokmurian in order to disrupt the stone giant army—remember, most of the stone giants gathered at Jorgenfist aren’t evil. If the PCs can force Mokmurian to flee, or even convince Conna and a group of giants to rebel against their cruel overlord, that’ll be enough to save Sandpoint and the rest of Varisia from an invasion. The tribes around Jorgenfist break up and return to the Storval Plateau with surprising speed, the





giants eager to seek forgiveness from their abandoned elders or to put some distance between themselves and the mighty heroes who slew their fearful lord.

Yet the eerie words spoken by Karzoug should leave little doubt in the PCs' minds that Mokmurian was but a pawn in some greater game, and that the threat to Varisia is, if the voice is to be believed, even greater than before. Something more must be done, and now, for the first time, the PCs have the resources to learn what that is. The Library of Thassilon is theirs to explore, and within its collection of ancient books, scrolls, maps, tablets, and tomes, the secret to defeating Runelord Karzoug awaits.

## RESEARCHING THE ANCIENT PAST

Until this point, very few in Varisia knew much about Thassilon apart from the fact that the mysterious monuments that dot the land came from this ancient empire, and that the rulers of the land were despots and tyrants of the worst possible order. With the discovery of the Thassilonian Library, the PCs have a window into the ancient times of Thassilon, and with this window they can learn much of this time. Given on the facing page are the two most relevant Knowledge (history) checks that a character might use to learn more about Xin-Shalast (their eventual goal) or Runelord Karzoug (their eventual foe). Note that while the DCs are high, using the library to aid in the research grants a +20 bonus on the check (and enables even PCs who do not normally possess ranks in the skill to make checks).

Further, recruiting the aid of the clockwork librarian adds an additional +10 bonus on the roll.

The books in the library can certainly help introduce the PCs to the concept of Thassilon itself—anything they could have learned about the ancient empire in previous chapters but, for whatever reason, did not should be things they can quickly learn here. They might even simply learn these earlier tidbits through casual conversation with the clockwork librarian. Mokmurian's dying words, though, should encourage them to focus the bulk of their investigations on two topics in particular—Xin-Shalast and Karzoug.

As the PCs' investigations turn to Karzoug and the empire of Shalast, take the time to add flavor to their research. The following list provides a number of book titles you can choose from as the PCs find bits of information during their research—you can use these titles as inspiration in naming additional tomes as the need arises.

- *An Accounting of the Holdings of Greater Shalast*
- *A Sculptor's Guide to the Fleshpots of Xin-Shalast*
- *Lord of Wealth: Karzoug's Trade and Conquests*
- *Tributes of Vadan, with Accountings and Predictions*
- *Whispers from Leng: A Guide to the Beyond*
- *Spires of Gold—The Rise of Xin-Shalast*
- *Karzoug: Lord of Lords and Master of All*
- *The Face above Xin-Shalast—A Lord in Primal Stone*
- *A Traveler upon the Golden Road*
- *The Golden Legion: A History of Auric Fleshworks*
- *Life's Price: Speculations on Interplanar Soul Trade*







## FORTRESS OF THE STONE GIANTS

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

#### PART ONE: STONES OVER SANDPOINT

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#### CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

## XIN-SHALAST

Results of Knowledge (history) checks about Xin-Shalast are as follows.

| DC    | RESULT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DC 20 | Xin-Shalast is a legendary lost city, rumored to be hidden somewhere in the Kodar Mountains. Stories hold that Xin-Shalast had gold streets and gemstone buildings, and sat under the gaze of a mountain that could see.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| DC 30 | Xin-Shalast was the capital city of an empire called Shalast, one of seven that composed the ancient empire of Thassilon. Legend holds that Xin-Shalast lay at the headwaters of the sacred River Avah—which Varisian folklore says leads to an earthly paradise sacred to Desna. Unfortunately, no record of where this river may have once flowed exists today, and most scholars believe the river itself to have been destroyed during Earthfall. |
| DC 35 | In the final centuries before Earthfall ended Thassilon, Xin-Shalast was ruled by Runelord Karzoug, one of the lords of the Thassilonian Empire. The primary architects of the immense city were tribes of giants, themselves ruled by powerful beings known as rune giants.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| DC 40 | The Spires of Xin-Shalast stand upon the mythical mountain of Mhar Massif. This mountain of legendary proportions pierces the skies above the Kodars, and is said to be the highest peak in the entire range of stupendously inhospitable mountains.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| DC 50 | Mhar Massif is said to serve as a bridge to strange realms beyond Golarion—notably, to the nightmare dimension of Leng. The connections with the nightmare realm of Leng were said to have infused the region around the peak of Mhar Massif with dangerous eldritch and otherworldly energies.                                                                                                                                                       |

## KARZOG

Results of Knowledge (history) checks about Karzoug are as follows.

| DC    | RESULT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DC 35 | Karzoug was the Runelord of Greed. While he was, himself, an Azlanti human, he was a powerful man indeed—said to be the most gifted manipulator of Transmutation magic in all of Thassilon, and to have lived for hundreds of years. He ruled a region called Shalast, part of the ancient empire of Thassilon, over 10,000 years ago.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| DC 40 | Karzoug's armies were composed primarily of giants who followed his every command—the giants were ruled by towering monsters known as rune giants, who were themselves runelord pawns. Karzoug counted other powerful creatures as his allies as well, such as blue dragons, eerie denizens from the nightmare realm of Leng, blood-drinking outsiders known as scarlet walkers, and immense lamia haridans who towered over most giants.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| DC 45 | Karzoug focused his magic on the school of transmutation, magic associated in Thassilonian times with the virtue of wealth. Under his reign, though, this virtue of rule became more associated with the sin of greed. Among the runelords, his mastery of greed magic was uncontested, yet in the schools of illusion and enchantment (related to the sins of pride and lust), his skills had atrophied greatly. Many believed that weapons infused with illusion and enchantment magic, known as “dominant weapons,” would be particularly potent against Karzoug, yet no record of someone attacking the runelord with such a weapon exists within the library. |
| DC 50 | Karzoug warred with his neighbors, but none more so than Alaznist, the Runelord of Wrath and ruler of Bakrakhan. Between their nations, along a ridge known as the Rasp, Karzoug built immense sentinel statues to watch over Bakrakhan, while Alaznist built towers called Hellfire Flumes to prevent Karzoug's armies from invading. Citizens of both nations worried that the war between Karzoug and Alaznist would soon escalate to the point where they could bring about the end of the world.                                                                                                                                                              |
| DC 55 | As Karzoug and Alaznist's war intensified, and as wars between other runelords threatened more than just their armies, the runelords devised methods in which they could escape the world and enter a state of suspended animation, so they could ride out cataclysms. In theory, their surviving minions would then waken them to reclaim their empires once the cataclysms had ended.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |





5

# SINS OF THE SAVIORS

BY STEPHEN S. GREER







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## CHAPTER BACKGROUND

HIDDEN IN A REMOTE MOUNTAIN, ITS DOORSTEP DOUBLING AS A DRAGON'S LAIR, AN ANCIENT AND MYSTERIOUS DUNGEON CALLED RUNEFORGE LIES HIDDEN. DURING THE HEIGHT OF THASSILON, RUNEFORGE SERVED AS A PLACE FOR THE EMPIRE'S MOST CREATIVE AND GIFTED WIZARDS TO COME TOGETHER AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE. WITH THE EMPIRE'S CATAclySMIC FALL, RUNEFORGE WAS CUT OFF FROM THE WORLD. FOR TEN THOUSAND YEARS, IT REMAINED ISOLATED WITHIN A POCKET OF ITS OWN REALITY, AND IN THAT TIME, STRANGE AND SINISTER THINGS HAVE GROWN WITHIN ITS ARCAN E HALLS. NOW, WITH KARZOU G'S IMMINENT RETURN, THE SECRETS OF RUNEFORGE ARE ABOUT TO RETURN TO THE WORLD.



**T**hat Thassilon ushered in an age of wonder is evident in the monuments that survived the passage of thousands of years, yet these monuments were but the creations of the slaves of this empire. Even mightier were the runelords' works of magic—the transmutation of flesh into gold, the conjuration of creatures akin to mountains, and the transformation of the landscape of Golarion itself according to their whims being but samples of their might. Yet on their own, the seven runelords did not command every aspect of magic. Their focused studies granted them great power in their chosen areas of specialization, but at the cost of two opposing schools of magical thought. No one runelord could grasp the entirety of magic, and thus their works were limited by their own inadequacies.

In response to this failing, the runelords agreed to the construction of a shared laboratory in a region held neutral by their seven nations. They named this place RuneForge, and here, practitioners of each of their seven specialties could work in tandem with one another, with little fear of sabotage, mockery, or interference, in an environment untainted by rivalries and grudges. It was intended to be a place of pure magic, where masters of each Thassilonian specialty could work and confer and create. The seven runelords bound themselves by edict that they themselves would never directly interfere with or even enter RuneForge, for fear that their presence would hamper the work being performed there. Each runelord chose from among his servants those who best represented his desires and goals, then sealed those servants in RuneForge using their own magic. RuneForge provided nourishment, comfort, and shelter for those within—servitude in RuneForge was a great honor, and a post held for life. Once a season, the inhabitants convened in the central chamber, around a well of power at the heart of the Sihedron Rune, and there they reported to their runelords the natures of their discoveries and advancements in magic. The well

could even function as a portal, allowing the transport of discoveries and creations to their masters in the seven distant capitals of Thassilon.

The work done in RuneForge was anything but safe, and often the wizards within its walls succumbed to madness or were slain by errors in judgment or experiments gone tragically awry. Although there was no shortage of replacements, the runelords had little interest in allowing just anyone into the complex. Only those of keen wit and quick mind could learn the ritual of opening required to enter RuneForge—a restriction that ensured that only the most gifted wizards were chosen for the honor.

Within months of the arcane laboratory's foundation, the runelords were hard at work, searching secretly for ways to influence RuneForge without revealing their interests to each other. Unfortunately for them, they had been too thorough in their initial magic, for fear that the other runelords would do precisely the same thing. For many decades, then, RuneForge functioned as intended: neutral ground for masters of Thassilonian magic to learn and study.

Some of the final works to come out of RuneForge were various methods of hibernation—the runelords knew the end was nigh and tasked their RuneForge factions with devising methods of surviving even the greatest catastrophes. Each faction came up with a different solution, and when Thassilon did finally collapse, RuneForge's discoveries served the runelords well. As they went into hibernation, RuneForge carried on—its inhabitants had already divorced themselves from the world to the extent that even the fall of their homeland barely fazed them. They carried on their work while chaos reigned outside. As the years wore into centuries, some of the groups in RuneForge died out, while others grew more powerful. And as those centuries stretched into millennia, the complex's denizens succumbed to madness, dementia, and depression. With the end of Thassilon, no new blood came into RuneForge, and nothing came out.







Today, the remaining denizens of Runeforge are as much its prisoners as its caretakers—the once-grand laboratory is now little more than an asylum. Those few who have survived do so by embracing the darker side of magic, while others gave up, leaving their ageless minions to carry on the work. Vital clues preserved in the notes and workings of the complex hint at not only how each of the runelords planned on surviving the fall of Thassilon, but also how to undo the magic that has preserved them for the past 10,000 years.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

When a mysterious sinkhole appears in Sandpoint, the PCs investigate and find deeper Thassilonian ruins below their hometown—ruins that contain clues to the location of Runeforge, the site of many Thassilonian discoveries and inventions, including the various methods the runelords used to enter hibernation as their empire collapsed. Unfortunately, these ruins are also the lair of an ancient, insane Lamashtan cultist known as the Scribbler. By interpreting clues within the Scribbler's demented rhymes, the PCs can learn the location of the ancient dungeon known as Runeforge.

Armed with this knowledge, the PCs must travel north and enter Runeforge itself. Once inside, they find the place is still inhabited, tended by Thassilonian wizards who have carried on the traditions of their masters for thousands of years. By exploring Runeforge, the PCs can uncover the method by which Karzoug intends to return to the world of the living—and in so doing, find the secret to his defeat.

Runeforge consists of seven different wings, each replete with its own denizens, traps, strange magics, and treasures. Furthermore, numerous hints and clues about the nature of their eventual foe, Karzoug, can be learned by exploring these wings. The PCs' primary goal here should be the gathering of two components they can use in the dungeon's central chamber to forge *dominant weapons* to help them defeat Karzoug (items found in the Iron Cages of Lust and in the Shimmering Veils of Pride, two of Runeforge's more dangerous wings). Wise parties, however, will explore the entire dungeon, for the experience and treasures waiting to be claimed within will aid them in *Rise of the Runelords*' final chapter as surely as the dominant weapons themselves.

## ADVANCEMENT TRACK

**13TH LEVEL:** The PCs should be 13th level when they begin this chapter.

**14TH LEVEL:** The PCs should reach 14th level after defeating the white dragon Arkrhyst.

**15TH LEVEL:** The PCs should reach 15th level by the time they begin exploring the sixth wing of Runeforge (since the exact order in which they explore the wings of this dungeon is fluid, they may hit 15th level earlier if they manage to explore and survive the more dangerous wings of Runeforge earlier than expected).

**CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE:** The PCs should be well into 15th level by the time they finish this chapter.



## SINS OF THE SAVIORS

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

#### PART ONE: THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME

#### PART TWO: SEEKING RUNEFORGE

#### PART THREE: RUNEFORGE AND THE ABJURANT HALLS

#### PART FOUR: THE RAVENOUS CRYPTS

#### PART FIVE: THE VAULT OF GREED

#### PART SIX: THE IRON CAGES

#### PART SEVEN: THE SHIMMERING VEILS

#### PART EIGHT: THE FESTERING MAZE

#### PART NINE: THE HALLS OF WRATH

#### PART TEN: WEAPONS OF POWER





## PART ONE: THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME

CONSIDERING ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED—THE BLOODSHED, THE LIVES LOST, AND THE MILES UPON MILES OF VARISIAN SOIL JOURNEYED ACROSS TO STOP THE MACHINATIONS AND MINIONS OF AN ANCIENT TYRANT—IT MIGHT SEEM IRONIC THAT THE KEY TO DEFEATING THE RISE OF RUNELORD KARZOUG HAS LAIN DORMANT BELOW SANDPOINT THE WHOLE TIME. YET IN THE RUINED TEMPLE OF LAMASHTU ONCE HIDDEN BELOW SANDPOINT LIES A MANIACAL MIND WHO KNOWS THE ROUTE TO THE RUNEFORGE—A HIDDEN ARCAN E LABORATORY WHOSE WEAPONS WILL BE INVALUABLE IN DEFEATING KARZOUG.



Sandpoint has been through a lot, including a goblin raid, slaughter at the local Glassworks, several grisly murders, and most recently a full-blown assault by giants and a dragon. It's certainly a testament to the townsfolk's resilience that they have carried on as hardily as they have. Of course, they've had protectors at hand to help them through these times of peril, and when trouble stirs anew in the region, it's to these protectors the good folk of Sandpoint turn.

This new development is something altogether more subtle and disturbing than invasions by goblins or giants. Had this development come before the events of Goblin Day (as it has come to be called), it's likely it would have been ignored. In light of all the recent troubles, though, several of Sandpoint's leaders—in particular a worried Father Zantus—fear that it portends something dire.

This new development began after the giants raided Sandpoint and were repulsed by the PCs. Several days after the PCs left town to take the fight to Jorgenfist, an earth tremor shook the Lost Coast. No stranger to earthquakes, the folk of Sandpoint weathered the minor temblor with ease, but then, at the earthquake's climax, a sinkhole suddenly yawned in the middle of Tower Street, just north of the Garrison. A few guards were injured and the sinkhole swallowed a chunk of the Garrison's north wall, but fortunately, the cells in the north side were all vacant. It wasn't the sudden sinkhole that alarmed the leaders of Sandpoint, though. What worries them are the sounds that come from the pit's rubble-choked depths every night. After a group of guards sent into the sinkhole's depths vanished, Sheriff Hemlock roped off the pit's perimeter, established sentries, and forbade anyone else from entering the hole. This would be a job for folk better equipped to deal with danger—folk like the PCs.

The sinkhole appears at about the time the PCs defeat Mokmurian, for with this final decisive blow, Karzoug's *runewell* (already gorged on the greedy souls of all the giants the PCs slew on their journey through Jorgenfist) achieved a new level of potency. The well is now charged

enough that Karzoug can begin the final stages of his wakening. Just as the initial activation of the *runewell* several years ago caused ripples in other *runewells* scattered throughout Varisia, this one produced a much stronger burst of magical power. Even the *minor runewell* below Sandpoint (area B13 of the Catacombs of Wrath; see page 219) erupted with power, and it was this eruption that caused the destruction of the rock above and the eventual sinkhole in Sandpoint.

The eruption did not go unnoticed by the gods, either. When the sudden rush of magic surged through a site once sacred to her worship, Lamashtu reacted instantly. From her lair in the Abyss, she was able to use the rush of energy as a beacon for her own powers—and when she cast her gaze over the region, she saw the unquiet spirit of one of her greatest (and most ancient) minions—the Thassilonian thaumaturge Xaliasa, known in his final days as the Scribbler. As Lamashtu sensed his troubled spirit haunting the region, the magical eruption began to abate, but before the link vanished, Lamashtu infused the Scribbler with her divine grace. She resurrected him as a divine guardian of her ancient temple, charging the Scribbler not only with its protection, but also with its reawakening.

The Scribbler rose from a pool of unholy water in an ancient shrine to Lamashtu deeper still than the Catacombs of Wrath. Although his resurrection granted him new powers, as a divine guardian he was unable to travel far from the site of his rebirth. He has therefore busied himself with alternative methods of sanctifying the ancient temple, calling forth from Lamashtu's court terrible monsters to serve as the seeds of a new cult.

Of course, the people of Sandpoint know none of this, yet—they know only that a sinkhole has consumed a portion of town, and that the noises coming from that pit indicate something sinister lurks deep within. If the PCs don't return to Sandpoint shortly after their triumph at Jorgenfist, they are contacted by a representative of the town as quickly as possible. If it comes to it, Father Zantus scrapes together enough money to pay for a *sending* spell to invite them back to town.



It's likely, however, that the PCs head back to Sandpoint soon enough on their own, particularly if they found the notes in Mokmurian's lair that spoke of his concern about the chambers below Sandpoint housing a "traitor to Runelord Karzoug." This traitor is, of course, the Scribbler, and while the PCs might hope to find in him an ally against Karzoug (certainly the Scribbler possesses information key to the PCs' success against the runelord), they'll find that in this case, the enemy of their enemy is not necessarily their friend.

## MEETING WITH FATHER ZANTUS

Whatever the cause of the PCs' return to Sandpoint, they are greeted by throngs of excited hero-worshippers and grateful citizens. The talk of the town is the Tower Street Sinkhole, although the PCs' return eclipses some of that—most of the citizens assume the PCs have returned to investigate the sinkhole, in any event. Once the initial hubbub of the heroes' welcome wears off, the PCs are approached by a bashful-looking acolyte of Desna who gives them a message: Father Zantus wishes to speak to them about the sinkhole as soon as possible at the Sandpoint Cathedral.

Both Sheriff Hemlock and Mayor Deverin are there waiting for the PCs at the cathedral with Zantus. They ask for a quick recounting of the PCs' adventures in Jorgenfist if they haven't learned of them already, listening wide-eyed to tales of giants, dire bears, headless ogres, and horrors from beyond time itself. Soon enough, Father Zantus clears his throat and speaks upon the matter at hand.



"Of course, we're all very pleased to hear of your successes. Sandpoint owes you a huge debt of thanks for ensuring its safety yet again. And while I'd like nothing better than to let you relax and enjoy a well-earned break from your adventures, you've doubtless heard about our newest problem. A few days ago, the ground collapsed just north of the Garrison, right in the middle of Tower Street. The north wall of the Garrison took some damage, and while fortunately no one was seriously hurt when the sinkhole appeared, that's not the case anymore. The guards Sheriff Hemlock sent into the pit to investigate never returned. That very night, we all heard something horrible down there: dogs howling—like no dogs I've heard before—and bloodcurdling screams. Sheriff's roped the sinkhole off, and so far nothing's come up out of it, but those sounds are growing every night. Whatever's trapped in there wants out, and by the sounds of it, whatever it is isn't too keen on emerging friendly."

The three look at the PCs with hope and expectation—if the PCs don't volunteer to explore the sinkhole and

deal with whatever's awakened in its depths, Mayor Deverin comes right out and asks them to. If the PCs have already set a precedent for asking for payment for saving Sandpoint, Deverin offers a reward of 2,000 gp to be paid to the PCs if they can quiet the howls and screams—a relatively paltry sum for high-level characters, but a fortune for the town of Sandpoint. With a DC 30 Diplomacy check, Deverin can be talked up to a reward as high as 5,000 gp, but if the PCs hold out for more, Sandpoint is likely to look to less expensive adventurers for protection.

## BACK INTO THE CATACOMBS

The sinkhole itself stabilized at a width of 30 feet, reaching the diameter of the street and consuming a portion of the Garrison wall to the south—several basement jail cells hang open in the sloping southern wall of the sinkhole. The sinkhole is 15 feet deep—a successful DC 12 Perception check is required to see a narrow opening along its northwest side at the deepest point, which seems to be a tunnel leading underground. Clambering down the steep slopes of the sinkhole requires a successful DC 15 Climb check, unless the route from the exposed jail cells is used. That is the route the first group of guards took into the hole—it's only a DC 10 Climb check there.

Exploration of the tunnel accessed from the sinkhole's depths reveals a short flight of stairs down and a 5-foot-wide passageway beyond. The sinkhole's collapse caused most of area **B13** of the Catacombs of Wrath (see page 219) to cave in. All that remains is a narrow passage that runs along the northeastern wall. The double doors to area **B12** have fallen, allowing easy access to the rest of the catacombs beyond. Eventually, the PCs should reach the stairs at area **B10** of the Catacombs of Wrath—stairs that until recently were blocked with rubble, but have now been cleared by the efforts of the catacomb's new caretaker.

The strange and disturbing sounds that emanate from the sinkhole generally start an hour before midnight and persist for several hours before abating. The sounds consist primarily of eerie doglike howls that seem to echo a bit more than expected, but mixed in with these howls are periodic shrieks of a much more humanoid feel. These howls are mostly from the pack of unusual yeth hounds the Scribbler has called into this world to guard the shrine (using *planar ally* spells)—the more humanoid cries are the shrieks of the Scribbler himself. His screams seem to be nonsensical cries of rage and hatred, amplified by his supernatural fury and distorted by the distance so as to be unintelligible. The howls themselves can be identified as coming from yeth hounds with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (planes) check. As the howls must navigate some winding tunnels, the effects of the yeth hounds' bay only extends to about a 20-foot radius around the sinkhole's upper rim—see the Hound of Lamashtu stat block on page 246 for the effects of this supernatural baying.



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## XALIASA'S STORY

Near the end of the Thassilonian Empire, a man named Xaliasa commanded one of Alaznist's Hellstorm Flumes—one of several defensive fortifications along the border between her empire and that of Karzoug. Xaliasa was given much freedom in how he ran his Hellstorm Flume, as long as he continued researching methods of producing and perfecting sinspawn for Alaznist's army and maintained the defensive line against invaders from Shalast to the east. Yet Xaliasa served another—he had succumbed to greed and, in secret, Karzoug bought his allegiance, transforming him into a double-agent of sorts. In his role as defender of the Hellstorm Flume, he also served Karzoug with regular reports on Alaznist's troop movements.

Further complicating Xaliasa's life was his devotion to a third master—Lamashtu herself. As his role as a double-agent grew more demanding, Xaliasa grew more distressed and more insane. His true loyalties increasingly lay with Lamashtu, and he foresaw a point in the near future when his treason between Alaznist and Karzoug would place him in great danger.



Xaliasa's answer was to use, in secret, his contacts with both runelords to discover the way to Runeforge, perhaps the only safe place where he could retreat if either runelord decided he was no longer of use. Discovering the secret to entering Runeforge was no easy task, but only a few days before the empire was destined to fail, Xaliasa made the discovery. When Thassilon collapsed and the world shook and the oceans swallowed Alaznist's empire, Xaliasa's plans for escape proved inadequate. He had planned for the wrath of one, perhaps two runelords, and was ill-prepared for the rage of an entire world. The supportive wards that protected all of Thassilon's monuments and attendant complexes from erosion and decay kept many of the chambers below the Hellstorm Flume intact, but only barely. Xaliasa had the misfortune to be in one of the rooms that collapsed—and with his death he took from the world one of the secret ways to enter Runeforge.

Ten thousand years later, Xaliasa's insane spirit awakened again with the surge of magical energies from the *minor runewell* near his lair. And now that Lamashtu has brought him back fully, the resurrected thaumaturge is eager to reestablish his rule in a world seemingly emptied of runelords. Only the fact that his life is now bound to this shrine has kept him from emerging into Sandpoint above to claim it for his own. Given a short amount of time, however, he can build enough minions to do that job for him.

In his new manifestation as a divine guardian, Xaliasa has become something more than human. Now closely attuned to Lamashtu herself, his mind has become even more warped and twisted. He no longer sees himself as an independent agent of Lamashtu, but instead as her incarnation. His voice speaks her will and his

hands scribe her laws and desires. Yet over the 10,000 years his soul has lain dormant, Xaliasa has fallen far behind on his patron's wishes. He now spends nearly all of his time recording the wisdom of Lamashtu on any surface available. Given his limited mobility and lack of empty pages, Xaliasa has turned to the walls of his shrine, decorating them with countless scriptures and prayers and invocations to the Mother of Monsters. He is transforming her shrine into her holy text, and when he has completed this task, he will turn his attention to the world above.

In his new incarnation, he has become the Scribbler.

## THE SCRIBBLER (CR 14)

The Scribbler's ability to use *dimension door* at will in the shrine gives him incredible mobility—as a result, he is not simply encountered in one room in the dungeon, but in many. The Scribbler uses the same hit-and-run tactics against the PCs as he used on the guards Sheriff Hemlock sent into the shrine, but against the party he quickly realizes he'll need more than just a few seconds of combat to defeat them.

At the same time, the Scribbler knows the world above has moved on. He desperately wants to “catch up” so he can more ably direct his minions into the world. He knows that knowledge is power. To that end, he attempts to extract information about the world above from the PCs before attacking them. He becomes aware of their intrusion into his domain as soon as they pass through the secret door in area A1, and immediately contacts them. The Scribbler relies on *invisibility*, *nondetection*, *obscuring mist*, and natural darkness and shadows to remain hidden while he speaks to the PCs. Perhaps his greatest defense in this arena is *guards and wards*, which he uses daily to protect the shrine.

The Scribbler's questions should follow along these lines: “What happened to Thassilon?” “What nation has replaced it?” “Who rules the lands above today?” “Where is the seat of their power?” “What became of Runelord Karzoug and Runelord Alaznist?” “Who wields powerful magic today?” Keep asking questions along these lines—if the PCs seem resistant to answering them, or if they demand questions in return, the Scribbler willingly plays along. He answers what questions he can, proposing a one-for-one exchange of information. You can use the Scribbler to fill in the PCs on a lot of the background of Thassilon and Karzoug's role therein and to impress upon them just how powerful and evil the runelords were. The Scribbler obviously knows very little about what caused the fall of Thassilon, but if asked how the runelords can be defeated, he grows coy. He mentions Runeforge, calling it “a place of learning created by the runelords but grown beyond their control.” He admits it was the one place in Thassilon over which the runelords had no direct influence—the one place they could not



visit, for fear of enraging the other six and causing an immense war. He postulates that a runelord's entrance into Runeforge might have prompted the event that brought Thassilon to an end. Certainly, if any secrets to defeating them existed in ancient Thassilon, those secrets would be hidden still within Runeforge's walls. The Scribbler is eager to brag about how he discovered the key to entering Runeforge, as well as its location, but this is one piece of information he's unwilling to directly share with the PCs. He might, however, note that he has hidden the map to Runeforge and the key to its door in the writings on the walls of this shrine. While this is true, the Scribbler tells the PCs this primarily to lure them deeper into the shrine, so when he feels that he has learned everything he can from them, he'll have an even greater advantage in combat.

Once the Scribbler has satisfied his need for information or the PCs prove unhelpful, he turns his attention to the second stage of his plan—killing them, harvesting their magic and gear, and turning their bodies into undead minions. He announces this shift by declaring, "The time for talk has come to an end, my sucklings!" He prefers to strike at the PCs in area A6, as this room provides him and his minions the most space for moving around in combat, but he certainly won't limit himself to just there. In each of the following rooms, brief notes on the Scribbler's battle tactics (as well as the effects of his *guards and wards*) are given. Since he can be encountered anywhere in the dungeon, his stat block is given below.

## THE SCRIBBLER

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 38,400 | 14 | 150 |

Male divine guardian Azlanti human cleric of Lamashtu 12/  
fighter 2 (*Advanced Bestiary* 60)

CE Medium humanoid (chaotic, evil, human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** Perception +20

### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 18, flat-footed 23 (+9 armor, +4 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 150 (14 HD; 12d8+2d10+82); fast healing 5

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +7, **Will** +18; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** ability healing, bravery +1, freedom of movement; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** disease, mind-affecting effects, poison; **SR** 26

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft. (60 ft. base)

**Melee** fanged falchion +19/+14/+9 (2d4+9/15–20)

**Ranged** +1 cold iron returning dagger +15/+10/+5 (1d4+5/19–20)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 5/day (DC 18, 6d6), might of the gods (+12, 12 rounds/day)

**Divine Guardian Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +16)  
At will—*dimension door* (limited to Lamashtu's shrine)  
3/day—*alarm*, *knock*

1/day—*arcane lock*, *augury*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *commune*, *dismissal*, *forbiddance*, *guards and wards*, *hold portal*

**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +20)

At will—*master's illusion* (12 rounds/day)

11/day—*copycat* (12 rounds), *strength surge* (+6)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 12th; concentration +20)

6th—*heal*, quickened *spiritual weapon*, *stoneskin*<sup>o</sup>, *summon monster VI*

5th—quickened *divine favor*, extended *greater magic weapon*, *righteous might*<sup>o</sup>, quickened *shield of faith*, *spell resistance*

4th—*confusion*<sup>o</sup> (DC 22), *cure critical wounds*, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, extended *magic vestment*, *poison* (DC 22)

3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 21), *cure serious wounds* (2), *dispel magic*, *nondetection*<sup>o</sup>, *protection from energy*, *summon monster III*



THE SCRIBBLER



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2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds* (2), *gentle repose*, *hold person* (DC 20), *invisibility*<sup>o</sup>  
1st—*command* (DC 19), *cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self*<sup>o</sup>  
(DC 19), *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*, *sanctuary*  
(DC 19)  
0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 18), *light*, *guidance*, *read magic*  
**D** Domain spell; **Domains** Strength, Trickery

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Every day, the Scribbler wards the complex by casting *alarm* and *guards and wards*. He also casts *nondetection*, extended *magic vestment*, and extended *greater magic weapon* every day after finishing his daily prayers to Lamashtu. If he has time just before combat begins, he casts *stoneskin*, *spell resistance*, *freedom of movement*, *bull's strength*, and *bear's endurance*.

**During Combat** The Scribbler starts combat by casting *summon monster VI* to summon 1d3 babaus. While these summoned monsters engage his foes, he casts *righteous might* and quickened *divine favor*. He then enters combat, casting a quickened *spiritual weapon* on that round to attack a spellcaster or healer.

**Morale** The Scribbler uses *dimension door* to retreat to the hallway outside of area **A10** if brought below 10 hit points, then hides inside his lair and heals his wounds before returning to continue a fight with intruders. If confronted in area **A10**, he fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 26, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 33

**Feats** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Dodge, Extend Spell, Improved Critical (falchion), Iron Will, Power Attack, Quickened Spell, Skill Focus (Bluff), Toughness, Weapon Focus (falchion)

**Skills** Bluff +15, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana, planes, religion) +11, Perception +20, Perform (oratory) +9, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +11

**Languages** Abyssal, Thassilonian

**SQ** blessed life, sacred site

**Gear** +1 breastplate, fanged falchion, +1 cold iron returning dagger, headband of inspired wisdom +2, 750 gp in diamond dust

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Ability Healing (Ex)** The Scribbler heals 1 point of ability damage per round in each damaged ability score.

**Blessed Life (Ex)** The Scribbler does not age or breathe and does not require food, drink, or sleep.

**Divine Swiftmess (Ex)** The Scribbler gains a +4 bonus on initiative checks and his base speed is 60 feet (or 40 feet when wearing his +1 breastplate).

**Sacred Site (Ex)** The Scribbler is bound to the shrine of Lamashtu (areas **A1–A10**), and has been charged by the goddess of nightmares herself with keeping the site sacred and free from intruders and heretics. Should the Scribbler ever move beyond these areas, he loses the divine guardian template and his spellcasting ability until he atones and reenters the site within 1 week. Otherwise, he loses the template permanently and takes 6d6 points of Constitution drain as his body adjusts to the loss.

## LAMASHTU'S SHRINE

The shrine itself has the same architectural style as the Catacombs of Wrath above, since these chambers were engineered and constructed by the same sources. Ceiling height averages 8 feet in hallways and 15 feet in chambers. There is no illumination in the shrine itself (with the exception of area **A6**), as the Scribbler relies on light spells and his own memory of the place to get around, and all of his minions can see in the dark. Time has not been kind to many chambers of the shrine, and in several areas rubble has blocked off passageways or parts of rooms. What lies past these collapsed chambers is left to the GM—there could be numerous other chambers farther in, deep below Sandpoint and awaiting discovery, but those chambers are beyond the scope of this book.

The Scribbler maintains silent *alarms* at areas **A1**, **A6**, and **A9**, and has locked every door in the shrine with an *arcane lock* (with the exception of the secret door in area **A1**—he knows well that a magic aura on a secret door ironically makes it easier to discover if any intruders have the ability to use *detect magic*). He's avoided using *forbiddance* in his shrine, since that reduces his ability to use *dimension door* to move about the place, but he has placed an alarm in area **A10** to protect it from intrusion.

The entire shrine is protected by *guards and wards* at all times, warding the complex as follows:

**CONFUSION:** Every time a character comes to an intersection, there's a 50% chance he takes the route opposite from the one intended.

**FOG:** Thick fog fills all corridors, reducing vision (including darkvision) to 5 feet and providing all creatures with concealment.

**LOST DOORS:** All of the doors in the complex (with the exception of the secret door in area **A1**) are covered by *silent images* to make them appear to be plain walls. A creature that interacts with this image can attempt a DC 22 Will save to see through the illusion.

**SUGGESTION:** The Scribbler has placed a potent *suggestion* beyond the door leading from area **A9** to area **A10**—see area **A9** for more details.

**WEBS:** Area **A1** is clogged with *webs* from this spell.

The entire dungeon radiates a strong abjuration aura as a result of the *guards and wards* spell—*dispel magic* can remove only one specific effect at a time.

## WRITING ON THE WALLS

Thassilonian writing covers nearly every available surface in the shrine—floors, ceilings, and walls. These are the result of the Scribbler's obsession, and most of the words recount prayers, scriptures, and invocations associated with Lamashtu. Among these scribbles are hidden the stanzas of the Scribbler's Rhyme. In his pride over discovering the location of Runeforge, the Scribbler recorded the route to this



IF MAGIC BRIGHT IS YOUR DESIRE, TO OLD RUNEFORGE MUST YOU RETIRE!  
 FOR ONLY THERE DOES WIZARDS' ART RECEIVE ITS DUE AND PROPER START.  
 ON EASTERN SHORES OF STEAMING MIRROR, AT END OF DAY WHEN DUSK IS NEARER,  
 WHERE SEVEN FACES SILENT WAIT ENCIRCLED GUARDS AT RUNEFORGE GATE.  
 EACH STONE THE GRACE OF SEVEN LORDS, ONE PART OF KEY EACH RULER HOARDS;  
 IF OFFERED SPELLS AND PROPER PRAYER, TAKE SEVEN KEYS AND CLIMB THE STAIR.  
 ON FROZEN MOUNTAIN XIN AWAITS, HIS REGAL VOICE THE YAWNING GATES  
 KEYS TURN TWICE IN SIHEDRON- OCCULTED RUNEFORGE WAITS WITHIN.  
 AND NOW YOU'VE COME AND JOINED THE FORGE UPON RARE LORE YOUR MIND CAN GORGE—  
 AND WHEN YOU SLOUGH THE MORTAL WAY IN RUNEFORGE LONG YOUR WORK SHALL STAY.

location among his writings. In order to determine the route to Runeforge and the means for its entrance, the PCs must discover all five stanzas and arrange them in the proper order. These five stanzas are presented in Handout 5-1. If the PCs can't read Thassilonian or don't have access to magic like *comprehend languages*, they may have to return to these chambers with an expert on the language, such as Sandpoint's local Thassilon expert, Brodert Quink.

## DECIPHERING THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME

In order to understand the Scribbler's Rhyme, the players should puzzle out things on their own. If this becomes problematic, a successful DC 25 skill check can reveal a stanza's correct interpretation. This skill check can be anything associated with poetry, such as Craft (poetry) or Perform (act, comedy, oratory, or sing), Profession (poet). A DC 20 check can arrange the stanzas in their proper order.

The correct interpretation is as follows.

**FIRST STANZA:** This stanza establishes what the rhyme in total is about, introducing the idea of Runeforge as a place for wizards to perfect and hone their craft.

**SECOND STANZA:** The word "mirror" is a metaphor for lake (a somewhat common usage in ancient Thassilonian poetry); succeeding at a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check is enough to note that in Varisia, Lake Stormunder is known for its plentiful hot springs and geysers. The stanza further mentions "seven faces" that are "encircled." A successful DC 20 Knowledge

(geography) check reveals that a mysterious circle of seven stone heads stands upon the western slope of Rimeskull on Stormunder's eastern shore.

**THIRD STANZA:** The seven stone heads each represent a school of Thassilonian magic, and by extension one of the seven runelords and realms of Thassilon. Casting a spell of the correct school on the correct stone causes a key to manifest in that stone's mouth. This stanza directs the character to gather a key from each stone head in this manner, and then to ascend Rimeskull via an ancient set of stairs.

**FOURTH STANZA:** After ascending Rimeskull, the PCs are directed to enter the cave and, in a chamber beyond, encounter a similar ring of seven stone faces arranged around the seven-pointed star of the Sihedron. Using the keys in these stones opens a portal to Runeforge, which exists in a pocket dimension of its own existence.

**FIFTH STANZA:** This stanza simply promises that those who reach Runeforge will be richly rewarded with lore.

## A1 SHRINE ENTRANCE



Thick webs clog these stairs. Visible here and there through gaps in the unusually thick webbing are deep scratches along the walls and floors—this, along with the absence of any mold or mildew, suggests the stairway has recently been cleared.

The cobwebs in this stairwell were created by the Scribbler's *guards and wards* spell. The stairs themselves



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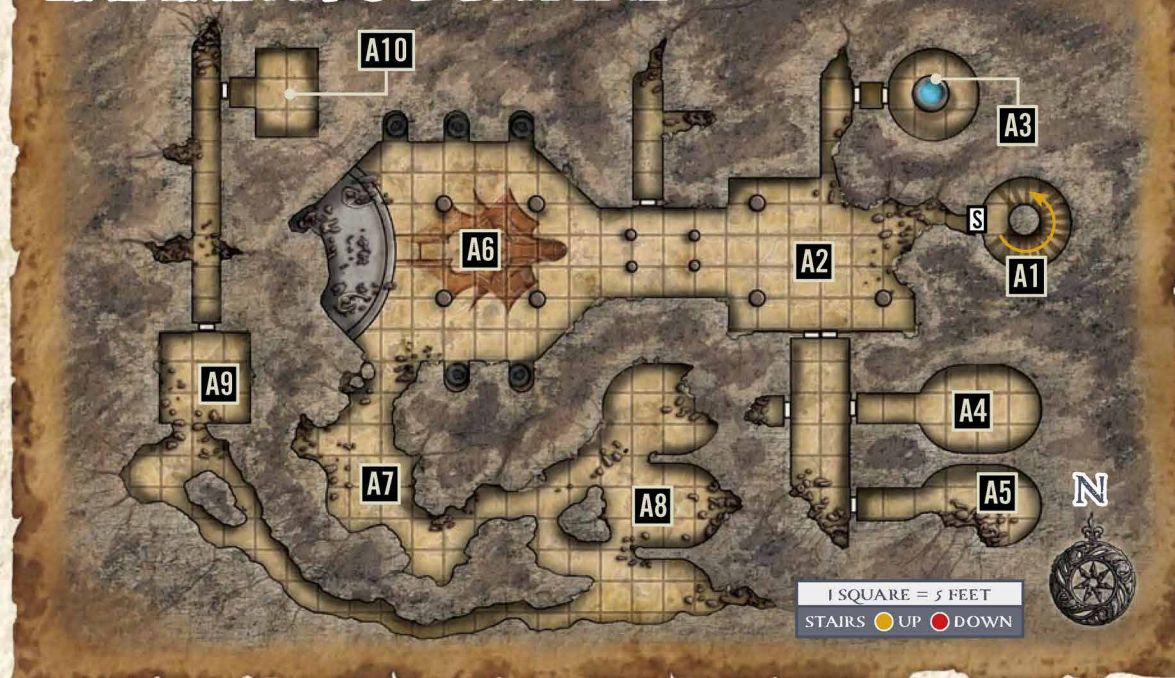
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# LAMASHTU'S SHRINE



descend 50 feet from the abandoned Catacombs of Wrath above. They appear to end at a dead end, but a successful DC 30 Perception check of the western wall here reveals a secret door. The door itself is also warded with an *alarm* spell cast by the Scribbler that, if triggered, silently alerts him.

The passageway beyond the door has collapsed, but a narrow tunnel has been cleared through into area **A2**.

## A2 ANTECHAMBER



The walls, floor, and even the arched ceiling of this place are covered with writing, the words spiraling and trailing in the ancient language of Thassilon. Some of the phrases are immense, with words nearly three feet high, while others are written in tiny, spidery script. The medium for the writing varies as well—sometimes dark ink, sometimes blood, sometimes carved into the stone itself. Passageways to the north and east lead into fog-filled tunnels, and a pair of stone doors, their faces carved with an immense image of a three-eyed jackal's head, stand to the south. To the west, light flickers in what appears to be an immense cathedral.

Anyone moving around in this room is very likely to be noticed by the guardian of area **A6**, but that creature does not attack immediately upon sensing intruders here, giving the Scribbler time to make his first contact with the PCs. The Scribbler asks them a few questions, likely while invisible or hiding in the fog to the north,

then uses *dimension door* to travel to area **A9** to ruminate for a bit about their answers before seeking them out again elsewhere in the dungeon to ask more questions.

Anyone who can read Thassilonian can quickly deduce that the writing on the walls consists of prayers and scriptures to Lamashtu. A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals four lines of what seems to be a larger poem that has nothing to do with Lamashtu. This is the first stanza of the Scribbler's Rhyme.

## A3 BIRTHING POOL



A low stone rim surrounds a shallow pool of water that seems to glow with a soft radiance. The walls around the room are carved with large runes, and the ceiling rises to a dome above.

The pool of water in the middle of the room looks pure but is foul-tasting. This is where those carrying the spawn of Lamashtu were taken to birth their deformed, monstrous children 10,000 years ago, and it was from this pool that Lamashtu returned the Scribbler to life as a divine guardian.

## A4 MEDITATION CELL



Small dunes of rubble and dust lie on the floor of this room, disturbed as if by the passage of pacing feet. The walls and ceiling are densely crowded with scribbles and markings. An image of a three-eyed jackal glares from the wall to the east.



As in area **A2**, the walls here bear prayers to Lamashtu. In the center of the eastern wall, just under the image of the symbol of Lamashtu, is the second stanza of the Scribbler's Rhyme.

## A5 COLLAPSED MEDITATION CELL



This room has partially collapsed. Cracks radiate along the walls and ceiling here. An image of a three-eyed jackal glares from the eastern wall, one of the cracks running right across its snout.

This room might seem unstable, but it has done all the collapsing it will do for the time being—there's no real danger of further collapse unless someone attempts to clear the rubble along the southern wall.

## A6 SHRINE OF MONSTERS AND MADNESS (CR 13)



Although portions of this cathedral have collapsed, leaving mounds of rubble on the floor and crumbling walls, the chamber retains its sense of menacing awe. Four black stone pillars support the arched roof forty feet above, and on the floor between them the image of a three-eyed jackal seems to glower from striations in the stone itself. This image glows with a soft rusty light that illuminates the entire room from below. Alcoves to the north and south contain statues of a jackal-headed pregnant woman. Each clutches a pair of kukris crossed over her chest, and a reptilian tail winds down around her taloned feet. To the west, what once might have been a stone pulpit featuring other statues seems to have been partially buried under an ancient collapse. The walls of this room are densely decorated with hundreds of scribbles and sprawling runes.

Once the centerpiece of the Scribbler's Lamashtu cult, this shrine now stands empty and apparently deserted. The Scribbler has spent more time decorating the walls here with his prayers and invocations than elsewhere in the complex, and it shows in the more intricate and careful calligraphy he's used for his work. The third stanza of his rhyme is inscribed at the base of the middle statue of Lamashtu in the northern wall.

The Scribbler likely returns here to question the PCs, since if they lash out at him, he can use *dimension door* to retreat while letting the glabrezu demon take care of them.

**CREATURE:** When the Scribbler first woke from his 10,000 years of death as a divine guardian of Lamashtu's shrine, he knew, as soon as he discovered that leaving the shrine caused him pain, that he needed to build up guardians and minions who were not so hindered. His first attempt to summon such a minion was via a *planar ally* spell—to his great surprise and delight, Lamashtu answered his request for aid by sending a

glabrezu named Yerrin-Ku. The Scribbler took this as a sign that Lamashtu's designs on the region are of great importance, and rightly so, but for now the Mother of Monsters has chosen to keep her ultimate plans for the Lost Coast a secret.

### YERRIN-KU

|        |    |     |
|--------|----|-----|
| XP     | CR | HP  |
| 25,600 | 13 | 186 |

Male glabrezu demon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 61)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Yerrin-Ku's first act in combat is to attempt to summon another glabrezu—he does not try to summon vorks, since they're more closely allied with Lamashtu's enemy Pazuzu. On the first round of combat, he uses *reverse gravity* to strand characters who can't fly, then hits whomever looks like the strongest healer with a *power word stun*. He then engages the remaining PCs in melee, saving *confusion* for parties who seem to be working together too well. Yerrin-Ku pursues foes throughout this complex, but does not follow them out of the shrine if they make it that far.

**Morale** Yerrin-Ku is bound to this shrine for several more days and cannot leave—as a result, he fights to the death, regardless of his own desire to flee when things turn bad.

## A7 BATTLEGROUND



Blood is this cavern's decor; swaths of it lie spattered on the wall, and pools have congealed and begun to rot on the ground. Bits of flesh lie scattered as well—whatever happened here, it ended poorly for many.

When the guards sent by Sheriff Hemlock reached this shrine, the Scribbler hadn't yet begun to shore up his defenses. He was also more curious than enraged about these intruders, and invisibly watched their tentative exploration of the shrine with amusement. By the time the guards reached area **A6**, they'd realized the scope of their discovery and prepared to retreat and report to Hemlock. That was when the Scribbler struck. The yeth hounds have eaten most of the bodies—what remains scattered in this room isn't enough to be subjected to *speak with dead* or *raise dead*, but if the PCs resort to *resurrection* or more powerful magic, they can restore the guards to life. If the PCs do so, you should reward their kindness by having the resurrected guards provide additional information about the denizens of the shrine.

## A8 THE SCRIBBLER'S KENNEL (CR 11)



Here three once separate chambers have become one, joined by collapsed walls and the erosion of ages. Bloodstained fragments of chain shirts, shields, swords, and clothing lie strewn about this room haphazardly. The walls are decorated with countless scribbles written sloppily in blood.



SINS OF THE  
SAVIORS

CHAPTER  
BACKGROUND

PART ONE:  
THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME

MAP ONE:  
LAMASHTU'S SHRINE

PART TWO:  
SEEKING RUNEFORGE

PART THREE:  
RUNEFORGE AND THE  
ABJURANT HALLS

PART FOUR:  
THE RAVENOUS CRYPTS

PART FIVE:  
THE VAULT OF GREED

PART SIX:  
THE IRON CAGES

PART SEVEN:  
THE SHIMMERING VEILS

PART EIGHT:  
THE FESTERING MAZE

PART NINE:  
THE HALLS OF WRATH

PART TEN:  
WEAPONS OF POWER





The fourth stanza of the Scribbler's Rhyme is inscribed on the northern wall of the southernmost chamber here. The fragments of armor and weapons are all that remain of the Sandpoint guards after the Scribbler fed them to his pack.

**CREATURES:** A pack of six powerful yeth hounds known as hounds of Lamashtu dwell in these caves. Unlike the more common yeth hound, a hound of Lamashtu is black and has a poisonous stinger at the end of its ratlike tail. As outsiders, they have no need to feed—their consumption of the guards was purely an act of malice. The baying and howling of this pack can be heard throughout the complex (as detailed above) but unless they hear or see intruders, they're content to remain here. Alone among the current denizens of the shrine, these hounds can pursue prey beyond these walls.

### HOunds of LAMASHTU (6)

| XP         | CR | HP      |
|------------|----|---------|
| 2,400 each | 6  | 76 each |

Variant yeth hound (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 286)

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +15

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

**hp** 76 each (8d10+32)

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

**DR** 5/silver

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +13 (2d6+5 plus sinister bite and trip), sting +13

(1d6+5 plus poison)

**Special Attacks** bay (DC 16), sinister bite (DC 18)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The hounds of Lamashtu prefer to surround enemies and attack the same foes. They eagerly attack PCs bearing the symbols of good-aligned deities in favor of other less obviously devoted individuals.

**Morale** The hounds are relentless and fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 19, **Con** 19, **Int** 10, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Fly)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12 (+16 when jumping), Fly +22, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +15, Survival +12

**Languages** Abyssal (cannot speak)

**SQ** flight

### A9 OUTER SANCTUM (CR 7)



The walls, ceiling, and floor of this otherwise empty room are densely packed with writing, in many cases overlapping and tangled to near the point of illegibility. Four short lines stand out on the northern door, carved into the stone but otherwise alone on its face.

The lines of text decorating the door are the fifth stanza of the Scribbler's Rhyme. This room was once a robing chamber for priests preparing for rituals in the shrine itself, but little remains today to denote that



use—currently, the room serves no other purpose but as a trap.

**TRAP:** Anyone who passes through the northern door into the foggy hallway beyond hears a whispering voice in his mind suggesting that Lamashtu's influence has tainted his friends, and that they are preparing to capture the victim to sacrifice him to Lamashtu. The *suggestion* encourages the character to do everything in his power to defend himself, hopefully by first finding a safe place where he can escape his supposed allies, and to fight back against them if they try to restrain him. The Scribbler placed this *suggestion* here via his *guards and wards* spell, hoping to sow discord in the ranks of an intruding group. If someone does manage to hide somewhere in the shrine alone, the Scribbler seeks him out as soon as possible to kill him.

### THE SCRIBBLER'S SUGGESTION

XP  
3,200

CR  
7

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** proximity; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** spell effect (*suggestion*; Will DC 22 negates)

### A10 THE SCRIBBLER'S LAIR

This entire chamber is warded by a *forbiddance* spell (DC 22 Will save), placed here by the Scribbler. The *forbiddance* is keyed to chaotic evil and does not have a password to bypass its damage.



The walls of this room are decorated with flowing script and runes. To the north slumps a bloody human body, its limbs apparently broken in a dozen places. A low table against the east wall is covered with vials of colored liquid, and sitting in an inkwell is a quill made from a peacock's feather.

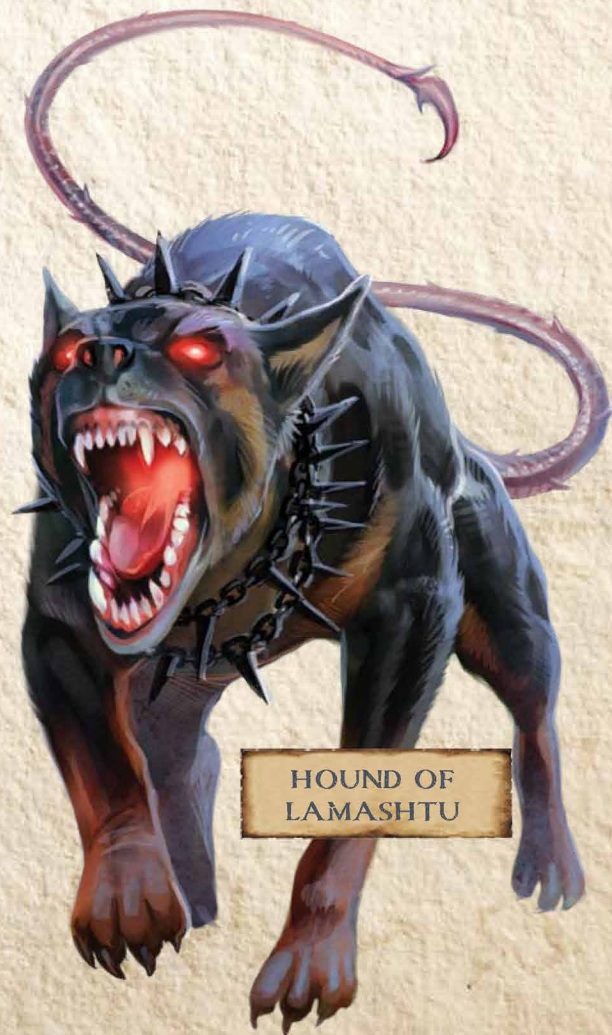
This once served as a guard chamber, and the Scribbler chose it as his lair for its defensibility. As a divine guardian, he has no need for rest or food, and so he uses this room to meditate and as a safe place to retreat to.

The scribbles on the wall of this room contain more than merely invocations to Lamashtu—they consist of notes the Scribbler has taken regarding the state of the world beyond, as reported to him by the various spirits and outsiders he's conjured, as well as via *commune*, *divination*, and *speak with dead* spells that he cast on the dead body he keeps here. The notes impart a feeling of someone from out of time doing what he can to gather intelligence on a world that has moved on. Runeforge is mentioned several times—the Scribbler very much wants to send agents to the dungeon in order to gather supplies and raid it for magic items and texts, since he has grown convinced that the complex has long since been forgotten and abandoned. In particular, his

notes speak of something called *runeforged* weapons—items that the Scribbler believes could be quite useful against the runelords and their allies, yet the methods of creation of which seem to have been lost somewhere in Runeforge itself.

The dead body is that of Jaren Basvear, who in life was a corporal in the Sandpoint militia and who served as the leader of the group of guards Hemlock sent into these chambers. The Scribbler keeps his body fresh with *gentle repose* spells and has been using it as a source of information about the world above via *speak with dead*.

**TREASURE:** The ink and quill are possessions the Scribbler valued in his previous life, and were returned to him (like his gear) by his patron Lamashtu as a payment for serving her as this temple's guardian. There are 17 vials of ink in all, each worth 8 gp, but the real treasure here is the Scribbler's most valued possession: a *revelation quill*.



HOUND OF  
LAMASHTU



## SINS OF THE SAVIORS

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

#### PART ONE: THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME

#### PART TWO: SEEKING RUNEFORGE

#### PART THREE: RUNEFORGE AND THE ABJURANT HALLS

#### PART FOUR: THE RAVENOUS CRYPTS

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#### PART TEN: WEAPONS OF POWER





## PART TWO: SEEKING RUNEFORGE

IF THE PCs HAVEN'T ALREADY BECOME INTRIGUED BY RUNEFORGE BY THE END OF CHAPTER FOUR, WHEN THEY DISCOVERED MOKMURIAN'S CRYPTIC NOTE ABOUT THE LOCATION, THE RIDDLE POSED BY THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME SHOULD DO THE TRICK. OF RUNEFORGE ITSELF, VERY LITTLE IS WRITTEN. A SUCCESSFUL DC 35 KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA OR HISTORY) CHECK REVEALS THAT RUNEFORGE WAS ONCE A LEGENDARY PLACE OF LEARNING AND DISCOVERY FOR STUDENTS OF THE ARCANES, BUT THAT ITS LOCATION HAS REMAINED A MYSTERY—THASSILONIAN SCHOLARS BELIEVE IT TO HAVE BEEN LOST DURING THE EMPIRE'S FALL.



**M**ore information about Runeforge can be divined via spells like *commune* or *contact other plane*—or alternatively, by researching the topic at the Thassilonian library under Jorgenfist. Knowledge (arcana or history) checks made with the library's resources at hand reveal more information, as detailed at the bottom of the page. The table below summarizes the information one can gain by succeeding at such Knowledge checks—remember that using the Jorgenfist library grants a +20 bonus on Thassilon-based Knowledge checks!

The one bit of information missing from this is Runeforge's location. This was one of the most closely guarded secrets of the Thassilonian Empire, and it's why the Scribbler's rhyme is so important. Divination spells can't reveal Runeforge's location due to the potent wards woven into its walls so long ago by the runelords. Once the PCs have uncovered the Scribbler's masterpiece, these same divination spells can be incredibly helpful in deciphering its riddle, organizing its stanzas into the proper order, and verifying theories and interpretations of the poem.

The method by which the PCs travel to Rimeskull is irrelevant—by this point, the PCs should be high enough level that they'll be able to utilize options like *wind walk* or *greater teleport* to reach the shores of Lake Stormunder. As they approach the Sihedron Circle, proceed with the following section.

### THE SIHEDRON CIRCLE (CR 15)



From the rocky eastern shoreline of Lake Stormunder, the ground rises into the craggy snow-dappled roots of Rimeskull, casting its long shadow over this area. Yet not all of the ground here is rugged and mountainous. Several hundred feet from the lake's edge, the land suddenly levels off to create a circular hill. Rocks and tenacious shrubs poke through the scattered clumps of snow here, but they are dwarfed by the ring of seven ten-foot-tall stone heads that circle the hill's edge, their faces angled inward at each other, mouths agape. To the east, the sheer mountainside of Rimeskull rises,

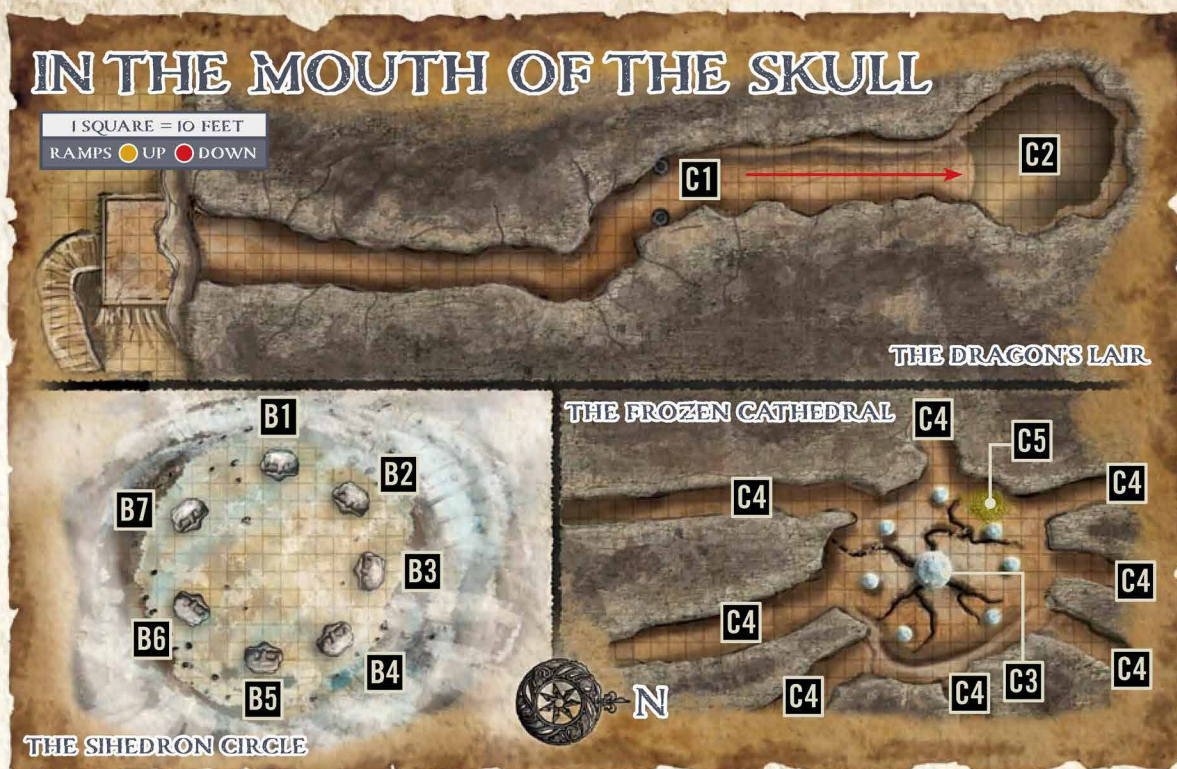
### RUNEFORGE LORE

| CHECK DC | RESULT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DC 33    | Runeforge was created as a place where agents of the seven runelords could gather to study magic.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| DC 37    | The runelords wove wards around Runeforge that barred entrance into the complex to any runelord or his direct agents, in order to keep the research within free from sabotage at the hands of an enemy.                                                                        |
| DC 40    | Runeforge's magical enhancements sustained those within without the need to eat, drink, or even sleep.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| DC 43    | The Spires of Xin-Shalast stand upon the mythical mountain of Mhar Massif. This mountain of legendary proportions pierces the skies above the Kodars, and is said to be the highest peak in the entire range of stupendously inhospitable mountains.                           |
| DC 50    | The final project the runelords set Runeforge on was the development of ways the runelords could escape the imminent fall of their empire. Each faction developed a unique answer for its runelord, based upon the underlying principles of that faction's magical traditions. |



# IN THE MOUTH OF THE SKULL

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET  
RAMPS ● UP ● DOWN




icy and windblasted—two hundred feet above leers a carving of an ancient face, its gaping mouth forming a large cave entrance in the mountainside. A ten-foot-wide stairway of stone descends from this cave to a ledge only fifty feet to the east of the circle of stone faces.

Looming nearly 16,000 feet above Lake Stormunder at the western tip of the Kodar Mountains, the mountain called Rimeskull gains its fearsome name from a vaguely skull-shaped formation near the mountain's peak, visible for many miles on a clear day. Few know the true story of Rimeskull, and even those sages who claim expertise in the history of Thassilon often have their facts wrong. A DC 40 Knowledge (history) check is enough to note that in Thassilon, the runelords often carved depictions of their visages upon mountaintops or towering statues that watched over their cities. Rimeskull's face, however, overlooked the site of Runeforge itself, and to symbolize that all seven runelords shared this territory, they agreed to mark the location with a carving of the face of their empire's first emperor, Xin. Yet rather than depict the emperor as he appeared in life, the runelords, who overthrew Xin in a violent rebellion, immortalized him in the way they preferred to remember him—as a dead emperor. Furthermore, this monument did not receive the protective wardings most other Thassilonian monuments received, and over the last 10,000 years, the original visage has eroded away to little more than the vague skull shape that remains today.

**IDENTIFYING THE STONE HEADS:** The seven stone heads have all been warded with protective magic, staving off the effects of erosion as they march through the years. Each night at sunset, the magic infusing these stone heads grows more potent, to the point where it can be observed with *detect magic* or *arcane sight*. In order to manifest a key, a character must subject the stone head to a spell effect of a school identical to the aura shed by the stone. *Detect magic* and *arcane sight* are the simplest methods of determining what schools of magic the stone heads radiate. A successful DC 35 Knowledge (arcana or history) identifies each of the stone heads, correlating them to the visages of the seven runelords (a character who has spent at least a week studying in the library under Jorgenfist receives a +15 circumstance bonus on this check), and thus which school of magic each head relates to.

**SECURING A RUNEFORGE KEY:** Each stone head guards one of the seven keys needed to enter Runeforge—the proper way to extract each key involves casting specific types of magic on the stone heads. A spell effect need only be cast within 5 feet of a stone head in order for the head to absorb the spell; this occurs whether or not the caster intends the spell to be absorbed by the head. An absorbed spell does not create the desired effect—instead, the head that absorbed the spell glows with energy for a moment and the ground vibrates as a piercing trill emanates from the head. The glow and the sound fade completely after several seconds, at which point a gold key appears in its mouth. These keys are stored on the Ethereal Plane, and are simply brought back into





phase with the Material Plane when the stone head is properly triggered. A character using *true seeing* can see a phantom key sitting in a stone head's mouth while it is still ethereal, and an ethereal creature can easily take the key without repercussion—upon returning to the Material Plane, the key remains with him.

Casting spells of the appropriate school into a stone head or traveling to the Ethereal Plane aren't the only ways to secure keys. A successful DC 35 Use Magic Device tricks the stone into thinking it has been triggered with an appropriate spell. A successful DC 40 Disable Device check can also free the key and cause it to manifest inside the statue's mouth.

**DESTROYING A STONE HEAD:** Each stone head has hardness 16 and 1,440 hit points. Alternatively, a successful DC 68 Strength check breaks a stone head in a single blow. Each head weighs more than 40 tons and is 10 feet tall. Whenever a stone is destroyed, the resulting explosion of magical energy and light deals 20d6 points of electricity damage in a 60-foot burst. A DC 20 Reflex save halves this damage, but those who fail are also permanently blinded by this blast of searing magic. Note that this explosion could finish the job on nearby stone heads, creating a chain reaction of explosions.

In any event, once a stone head is destroyed, the

link to the Ethereal Plane vanishes and that head's key appears in the smoking crater its head once occupied.

The heads and keyed magic are as follows:

- B1:** Karzoug (transmutation)
- B2:** Krune (conjunction)
- B3:** Belimarius (abjuration)
- B4:** Sorshen (enchantment)
- B5:** Xanderghul (illusion)
- B6:** Alaznist (evocation)
- B7:** Zutha (necromancy)

**CREATURE:** When the first of the stone heads is activated and its sonic pulse echoes through the ground and air, the lord of Rimeskull takes notice. This is Arkrhyst—called Freezemaw by the Shoanti—an ancient white dragon who has lived on Rimeskull for 500 years. In his youth several centuries ago, Arkrhyst was a great and hated enemy of the Shoanti; his raids on the nomads of the Velashu Uplands and the western Storval Plateau were legendary, and many of those tribes still sing of these dark times, and of the countless heroes who sought out his home on Rimeskull to defeat him. None accomplished this goal, but as Arkrhyst grew older, his urge to raid grew less.

Succeeding at a DC 25 Knowledge (history) check allows a character to recall stories of Arkrhyst's raids on the Shoanti, and that 200 years ago, the dragon's raids ceased. Many thought he had been slain, but no sign of his supposedly vast treasure ever appeared—wiser scholars of things draconic believe that Arkrhyst has simply been sleeping for many, many years.

After shaking the sleep from his eyes, Arkrhyst clambers up from his cave and spies the PCs below. Allow the PCs Perception checks to notice him—but in addition to the modifier for the 200-foot distance (+20 to his Stealth check), cover from the cave entrance gives him a further +8 bonus to his Stealth check against anyone observing from below.

## ARKRHYST

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 51,200 | 15 | 283 |

Male ancient white dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 101)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** As soon as Arkrhyst sees the PCs approach, he casts *resist energy* (fire), *bull's strength*, *displacement*, *see invisibility*, and *shield*. He casts *invisibility* on the round before he enters combat.

**During Combat** Arkrhyst flies low over PCs (or just above the standing stones) and uses his breath weapon, at the same time relying on his frightful presence to weaken his enemies' morale. If his opponents scatter, he singles a random opponent out in between rounds when he can breathe and makes either a flyby tail slap or a bite so that he can snatch an opponent, carry it aloft, breathe on it, and drop it from at least 200 feet up onto the rocks below. If confronted



ARKRHYST



with flying foes, Arkrhyst uses *gust of wind* to send smaller foes reeling and retreats to his cave above if he finds that their greater mobility is causing him too much trouble.

**Morale** If Arkrhyst is reduced to fewer than 100 hit points, he returns to his mountain lair in Rimeskull to heal and rethink his tactics based on the combat abilities displayed by his enemies.

**DEVELOPMENT:** It's possible that Arkrhyst escapes from the PCs before they enter Runeforge. In this case, the white dragon, intrigued by the portal the PCs opened in his lair and burning with hatred and a need for revenge against them, follows the PCs into Runeforge. In this event, you can use Freezemaw as a fly in the ointment. Most of the tunnels in Runeforge are wide enough that he can navigate them by squeezing, and if the dragon explores the chambers, chances are good that he'll meet up with one of the factions in Runeforge before the PCs do. You can have the dragon ally with this faction, giving one of the groups an additional powerful ally. Alternately, you can have Arkrhyst stalk the PCs and spring him when they're recovering from a particularly harrowing battle. You can even save Arkrhyst for the final battle when the PCs trigger the statue of Karzoug in area D (see page 254). Use him as you will to inflict an extra dose of draconic mayhem on your group.

## XIN'S STAIRWAY (CR 13)



A massive stairway that looks like it must have been built by giants and taken years, if not decades, to complete is chiseled out of the side of the mountain. A twenty-foot-wide and thirty-foot-tall stone arch frames the first steps, while the final steps lead directly up to a carving of an ancient face, its open mouth a cave entrance. The familiar seven-pointed star is etched deeply into its surface, prominently positioned at the highest section of the arch. Bones lie in iced-over heaps along the visible areas of the stairway.

Each step is approximately a foot and a half high and 3 feet deep, with an average width of 20 feet. The stairway winds back and forth, rising up 200 feet to the entrance to the cavern above (area C1). Icy bones litter the long stairway, cast-off remains of the meals consumed by the white dragon lurking near the top of the mountain over the hundreds of years since it began its stewardship. For the most part, the skeletal debris is frozen to the steps, the bones and random equipment of ancient passersby brittle from ages of frost and chill wind.

The landing is approximately 60 feet wide and 50 feet long from the top of the steps to the cave mouth. The strong winds blowing across the mountain at these heights impose a -2 penalty on ranged attacks and Perception checks. Additional effects of strong winds are summarized on page 439 of the *Core Rulebook*. The

surface of the landing is coated in places by a thin layer of rime, but this does not affect movement.

Beyond the stairway is a small cavern that contains not only Runeforge's entrance, but that also serves as the dragon's lair.

**CREATURES:** A pair of ancient guardians still watches over the stairs leading up to the cave entrance. Anyone who climbs these stairs immediately attracts their attention. These guardians are two elder earth elementals, bound to the stairs by ancient magic. The elementals know to allow anyone openly wearing the Sihedron (whether a tattoo, a *Sihedron medallion*, or whatever) free passage, but all other intruders on the stairs are attacked on sight. Note that those who fly or otherwise avoid setting foot on the stairs can avoid the elementals' wrath entirely.

| ELDER EARTH ELEMENTAL (2) | XP<br>12,800 each | CR<br>11 | HP<br>168 each |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 123)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Each elemental uses Awesome Blow and Improved

Bull Rush to knock opponents back from the cave mouth.

Weapons that cause them significant harm are targeted for Improved Sunder attacks. With each attack, the elementals use Power Attack (-5 on attack rolls, +10 damage). If possible, the elementals push opponents off the landing, either over the stone railing (this gives PCs a +2 on their opposed rolls) or down the steps. PCs pushed down the steep stairs takes 1d6 points of damage and the distance pushed might send them plummeting over the edge—a fall of up to 200 feet, depending on how high up the stairs the victim was.

**Morale** The earth elementals fight to the death.

## C1 DEADLY SLIDE



Two twelve-foot-tall statues flank the large tunnel here. Each holds a hand upraised as if to ward away intruders, and clutches a heavy sword with the other.

The statue on the west side of the tunnel is a *permanent image* (CL 20th, Will DC 19 to disbelieve) that marks the start of an invisible ledge that can be used to safely bypass the dangerous slope and descend into the cavern beyond. Although the ledge is invisible, bits of dust and snow and rubble on its length make it easier to notice with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The slope itself is icy, and any attempt to proceed further to the north on it requires a DC 15 Acrobatics check. Failure by 5 or more indicates a fall, sending the victim sliding down to the north at a speed equal to his land speed and eventually into the open gulf in area C2.

**DEVELOPMENT:** If Arkrhyst flees to his lair to escape the battle outside, he places a *freezing fog* in the tunnel at this point, then casts *alarm* on the fog's eastern edge. He then continues on to area C3 and awaits the party as detailed in that area's development.



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## C2 THE ICE FALLS



The slope ends at the edge of a gaping chasm of darkness. Huge icicles hang from the ceiling and coils of mist rise up from below.

The hidden ledge that started at area C1 becomes a ramp winding around the walls of this chasm, providing a safe route down into area C3 below. The gulf itself is 300 feet deep, eventually opening into area C3. A character sliding down the ramp from area C1 can make a single DC 20 Reflex save to grab onto the edge of the gulf before falling in.

## C3 FROZEN CATHEDRAL



The walls of this cavern glitter and sparkle with sheets of ice. Seven twenty-foot-tall pillars, their sides encrusted with ice and engraved with ancient glyphs and runes, surround an eighth pillar twice the size. Tunnels exit the central cavern, winding deeper into the mountain. Yet perhaps the most notable feature is the sparkling mound of coins, works of art, gemstones, jewelry, weapons, armor, and other things poking up from the pile that occupies the northwestern section of the cavern.

This cavern was once the central hub for the original construction of Runeforge, before the wardens completed the last ritual and whisked the complex and much of the surrounding stone away into its own demiplane. All they left behind were the stone pillars—the entrance into Runeforge. Of course, for the last several centuries, the chamber has also served as Arkrhyst's lair.

The seven pillars surrounding the central pillar are each marked with hundreds of Thassilonian runes—arcane formulae describing the basic tenets of one of the seven Thassilonian schools of magic. The seven pillars form the points of a huge Sihedron, and a successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a small keyhole hidden four feet off the ground on each pillar, facing the central monolith. If the proper key from the Sihedron Circle outside is placed in the proper pillar's keyhole and then turned in two complete revolutions (the direction doesn't matter), the pillar begins to hum and glow softly. Once the pillar is glowing, its key vanishes (returning to the Ethereal Plane at a point corresponding to the correct face in the Sihedron Circle outside). The pillar continues to glow for an hour before it fades, at which point the key must be retrieved from its statue again to reactivate it.

If all seven pillars are active at the same time (the order of activation does not matter), the central pillar begins glowing and ripples with a vortex of light that combines all seven of the surrounding colors.

At the pillar's base, the vortex whirls in on itself like a vertically aligned whirlpool, opening into a 7-foot-wide circular portal through which can be faintly seen a long tunnel. Anyone who steps through this portal steps into Runeforge, appearing in area D.

**DEVELOPMENT:** If Arkrhyst retreats to his lair after a fight with the PCs, he knows they're probably not far behind. He spends several rounds drinking potions from his treasure to heal his wounds. When his *alarm* in area C1 is triggered, he abandons his treasure and retreats down one of the side tunnels to hide and watch. He's barely able to restrain his rage if he sees the PCs looting his treasure, but realizes that it's better to wait for now, recover from his wounds, and ambush the PCs later to regain his hoard. If he sees the PCs activate the portal to Runeforge and enter, he waits for several minutes before following them inside.

## C4 TUNNELS

These large and numerous interconnected tunnels once led to dozens of smaller chambers chiseled out of the rock before the Runeforge was whisked away into its own distant demiplane. The chambers beyond are little more than vast, empty caverns that once held the individual Runeforge complexes. Arkrhyst's presence in area C3 has kept other creatures from moving into these empty caverns, but if you wish, you can have some of the further tunnels populated by monsters like purple worms or black puddings.

## C5 DRAGON HOARD

**TREASURE:** This massive pile of treasure consists of 39,500 cp, 9,410 sp, 3,500 gp, and 250 pp. Mixed in with the coins are tapestries, small items of furniture made of precious woods, delicate pieces of jewelry and fine works of art, silverware and candelabras, six everburning torches, and several decorative boxes spilling pieces of jewelry worth an additional 16,000 gp in all. Buried in the coins is a quiver of 14 masterwork arrows and two *greater dragon slaying arrows*, a *belt of giant strength* +4, a teak box holding a felt cushion with six round depressions each containing a thunderstone, an ivory set of *lesser bracers of archery*, a +3 *darkwood buckler* carved with the symbol of Kyonin on its face, a *chime of opening* (5 charges), a *cloak of resistance* +3, a *flametongue*, a masterwork suit of full plate decorated with onyx ravens perched on the shoulders (each raven is worth 200 gp), a suit of +3 *half-plate* with a wolf motif, 6 vials of frozen holy water, a *pearl of power* (1st-level spell), 17 *potions of cure light wounds*, 6 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, 3 *potions of cure serious wounds*, 2 *potions of resist energy* 20 (cold), two Small +1 *mithral shirts*, a *scroll of globe of invulnerability*, a *scroll of heal*, a *scroll of remove blindness/deafness*, a *wand of bear's endurance* (38 charges), a *wand of cure light wounds* (46 charges), a *wand of magic missile* (CL 5th, 8 charges), and a +1 *adamantine warhammer*.





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## PART THREE: RUNEFORGE AND THE ABJURANT HALLS

RUNEFORGE IS CONSTRUCTED AS A CENTRAL HUB SURROUNDED BY SEVEN WINGS, EACH OF WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH ONE OF THE SEVEN THASSILONIAN SCHOOLS OF MAGIC. OF COURSE, IN THE 10,000 YEARS RUNEFORGE HAS BEEN CUT OFF FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD, THE KEEPERS AND DENIZENS OF THESE WINGS HAVE DESCENDED FURTHER INTO THE SINS ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE SCHOOLS OF MAGIC. RUNEFORGE IS NO LONGER A PLACE OF LEARNING. IT IS A BATTLEGROUND.

The approach from the portal is along a 10-foot-wide stone tunnel. When the portal closes, this tunnel becomes a dead end, with nothing to indicate an exit—the portal cannot be opened from this side. In order to escape, the PCs need to rely on their own magic (*plane shift* and *gate* both work, in this case, as do spells like *dismissal* or *banishment*) or find one of the deactivated return portals in Runeforge, reactivate it, and use it to return to Varisia.

### RUNEFORGE FEATURES

Runeforge was created on the Material Plane, yet it does not actually exist there—the complex is a self-contained demiplane. Nonetheless, Runeforge follows many of the “rules” of the Material Plane as if the complex were still a part of it. Gravity works the same, time passes at the same rate, and there are no dominant planar traits. Although the demiplane is not part of the world of Golarion, it retains a shadowy sort of “echo” of the world’s magnetism, and thus compasses still detect and point toward a phantom north pole that doesn’t really exist in this realm. You cannot reach Runeforge from the Material Plane via teleportation, nor can you escape it in that way. There are no wards against planar travel to and from Runeforge, but the tuning fork material component required to travel here using *plane shift* is unknown outside of its walls.

Attempts to move through the surrounding stone, either by magic or legitimate tunneling, reveal that Runeforge is contained in a void of dangerous entropy. The sphere of stone that holds Runeforge has a radius (from the center of area D) of a mile. Beyond is a maelstrom of nothingness, a black void that extends forever and contains nothing but air. A creature incapable of flight falls into the void and continues falling forever. Teleportation can save a PC from this fate as long as she teleports back into Runeforge.

**MAGICALLY TREATED STONework:** The walls, floors, and ceilings of Runeforge are made of stone that has been magically treated (hardness 16, 1,080 hp per 3 feet, Break DC 70, Climb DC 20).

**SUSTENANCE:** Runeforge sustains those within its walls constantly, keeping them nourished and reviving the body and mind. No creature needs to eat, drink, or sleep in Runeforge, except for pleasure. (Spellcasters are still limited to once per day when replenishing their spellcasting potential, even though they do not need to sleep beforehand.) Air is constantly refreshed in Runeforge (with the exception of the air in the Festering Maze)—any spell or effect that creates tainted air (such as *stinking cloud* or a gha’st’s stench) still functions normally, but the air supply in the complex never runs out despite the fact that the dungeon is entirely enclosed.


**NO ESCAPE:** Visitors to Runeforge today can leave the demiplane by using spells like *plane shift* or even by being subjected to the effects of spells like *holy word* or the violet color of a *prismatic ray* spell. All of the denizens encountered within Runeforge, however, have dwelt so long in this curious realm that they cannot escape via these methods—Runeforge holds them tight, and as a result they all treat Runeforge as their home plane. (Outsiders do not gain the native subtype, though, as a result of this effect.) Spells like *teleport* or *ethereal jaunt* function, and even something like *shadow walk* works, provided at the spell’s end the subjects return to Runeforge. *Astral projection* allows an inhabitant to explore beyond Runeforge’s boundaries, but otherwise a denizen of Runeforge can only escape via *gate* or a freestanding portal (like the one in area K6).

### SINNERS IN RUNEFORGE

In addition to being able to ignore some effects and being more susceptible to others, sinners in Runeforge feel more welcome and inspired in an associated wing of the dungeon. Unfortunately, that also means that in two other wings, they feel unwanted and oppressed. Consult Appendix Seven to determine each PC’s sins and opposition sins.

In an allied wing (such as the Vault of Greed for a greedy character), characters gain a +1 bonus on all skill checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. These bonuses are included in all appropriate NPCs encountered in





that area, save for mindless creatures (like golems), who do not gain these bonuses at all (nor do they take penalties in opposition wings, if they move to a different area of the complex).

In an opposition wing (such as the Iron Cages of Lust or the Shimmering Veil for a greedy character), characters gain a -2 penalty on all skill checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. As written, no NPCs are encountered in opposition wings in this adventure, but in the case one moves (such as Delvahine pursuing foes from the Iron Cages of Lust into the Ravenous Crypts), don't forget to remove the bonus and apply the penalties to that NPC as well.

## LOOTING SPELLBOOKS

Throughout the various branches of Runeforge, the PCs are destined to encounter a lot of wizards, most of whom are specialists. That equates to a lot of spellbooks. Cataloging the contents of each spellbook found in this adventure would simply take up too much space. Thus, all spellbooks found in Runeforge are left up to you to customize as you see fit. Two simple solutions are to just assume that the spellbooks contain all their authors' prepared spells plus 1d4 additional spells per level, or to assume that the spellbooks have all of the spells from the core rules, excepting those from prohibited schools. The best solution is to take some time to customize each spellbook—this gives you the opportunity to provide your players with exactly the spells you want them to have and add some new spells taken from other sources.

## D THE RUNEFORGE



This domed chamber is nearly two hundred feet across. A large pool of bubbling prismatic liquid occupies the center of a raised dais in the middle of the chamber. The spiky flanges of the seven-pointed Sihedron are engraved into the marble floor. Each tip of the enormous rune points at a twenty-five-foot-tall statue facing the pool with its back approximately ten feet from a partially concealed arched opening in the wall directly behind it. Each statue depicts a different figure, but all are imperious and finely detailed.

This is the central hub of Runeforge and the location of its namesake—the runeforge pool. The inhabitants of Runeforge used the runeforge pool as a method to communicate with the runelords, but the pool's primary use was to temper newly created magic items. With the runeforge pool, the wizards could create magic items much more efficiently and rapidly.

The seven statues surrounding the pool are of the seven runelords. When used to contact a runelord, the waters of the runeforge pool flowed out to anoint

the appropriate statue, which could then animate and speak to those gathered within the room. The statues themselves are made of the same magically enhanced stone as Runeforge's walls, and if destroyed are reformed 24 hours later by the runeforge pool.

When Mokmurian woke Karzoug several years ago, the waters of this pool reacted by flaring and bubbling with greater vitality, alerting the occupants of Runeforge that something was afoot. After spending the last several thousand years in growing states of languishing doldrums, the denizens have been revitalized and began carrying out schemes and plots hundreds of years in the making in anticipation of what they believe to be Runeforge's second coming. The scheming began in earnest when the masters of the Abjurant Halls of Envy attempted to claim control of the runeforge pool, an act that mobilized the coordinated retaliation of the other surviving factions. This resulted in the complete eradication and collapse of the Abjurant Halls. The short-lived truce was swiftly broken thereafter, and since then these powerful minions have focused on bolstering their defenses and increasing their power.

The bubbling, prismatic waters of the runeforge pool are alternately painfully hot and freezing cold to the touch, yet not enough to cause damage. Additionally, those who touch the waters receive a tangled collage of memories and visions of events yet to come. All five senses are assaulted by the magical potential of the pool, and each round a person remains in contact with the waters he must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or be nauseated for 1d6 rounds. This is a mind-affecting effect. The waters of the pool have further uses, primarily in the creation of magic items; these details are presented in Part Ten of this chapter.

The seven statues in area D are as follows.

**D1 KARZOUG:** A towering man with gems set in his forehead and hands, dressed in robes and wielding a burning glaive.

**D2 KRUNE:** A short smiling man with a hooked nose and beady eyes, wearing robes and wielding a spear.

**D3 BELIMARIUS:** A heavyset woman with a sneering visage and an imperious stance, dressed in a flowing dress and wielding a halberd.

**D4 SORSHEN:** A voluptuous woman with a seductive look, large eyes, and long flowing hair; this statue is nude and wields a double-headed guisarme.

**D5 XANDERGHUL:** A strikingly handsome man adorned with a close-cropped beard and a charming expression; his form is dressed in extravagant clothes and wields a lucerne hammer.





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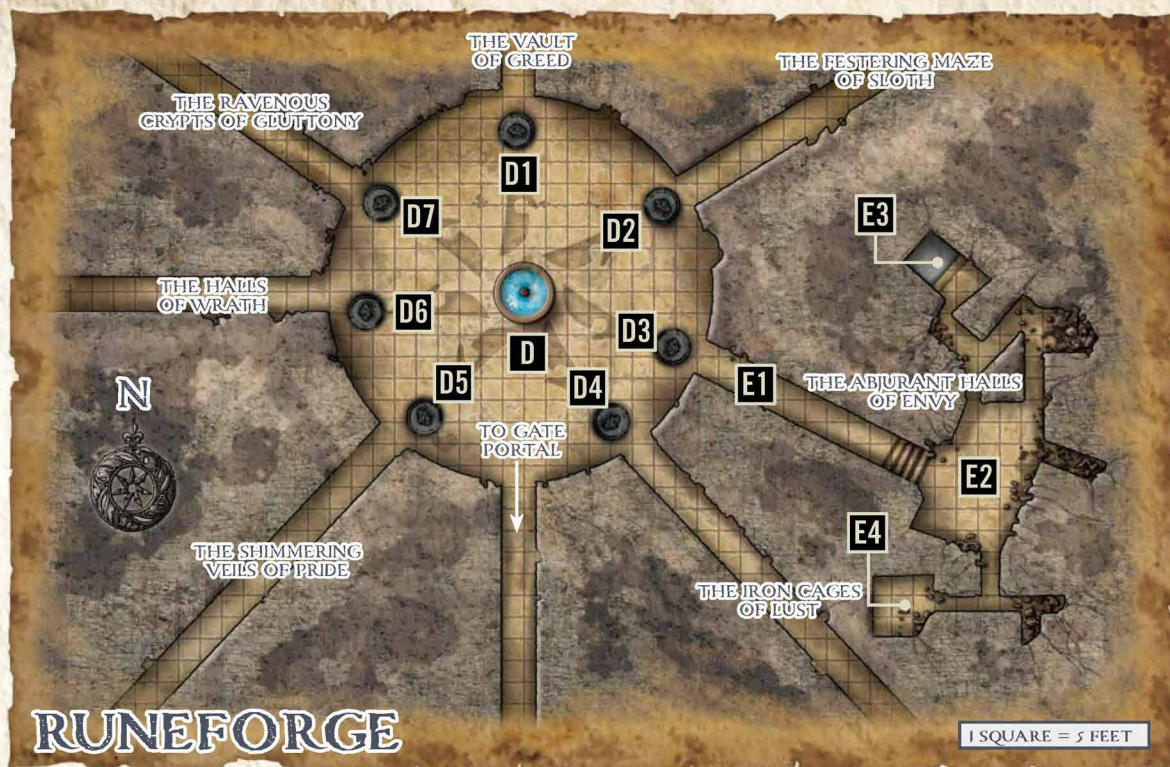
#### PART SIX: THE IRON CAGES

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**D6 ALAZNIST:** A gothic beauty with wild hair and a somewhat insane expression, this woman wears a long flowing dress and wields a thorny ranseur.

**D7 ZUTHA:** An obese man, his flesh rotten in places so that the bones show through, wearing a ragged robe and wielding a scythe.

## REACHING THE SEVEN WINGS

The seven wings of Runeforge radiate out from the central chamber in the same orientation as the Sihedron. An eighth tunnel extends back to the portal linking Runeforge to the Material Plane, although once that portal closes on the Material Plane, it cannot be opened again from this side. Each of these tunnels extends for 150 feet from the edge of the central chamber before reaching the Runeforge wing located at the far end of the 10-foot-wide tunnel. The one exception to this was the tunnel that once led to the Abjurant Halls of Envy—this tunnel is only half as long before it reaches the first chamber of that wing of Runeforge. This wing's associated runelord who wanted her wing to be “closer” to the central chamber, and the other runelords allowed it if only because the runelord of Envy was traditionally one of the least powerful, and the others thus felt no worries about conceding this demand.

## SIN TRIGGERS

Before your players pass beyond the Runeforge hub into the surrounding wings, take a few moments to jot down some notes about each player character's sins on

a piece of paper. Several traps, effects, and creatures in Runeforge have the uncanny ability to detect sin on an intruder, and in so doing recognize such intruders as possible allies. Originally, these wards were designed to detect a character's powers in each school of magic, so that, for example, someone skilled in evocation magic would feel welcome and safe in that area whereas others would find the going difficult.


Over the course of the campaign, you've had a chance to get to know your PCs quite well. If you've been keeping track of sin points (see Appendix Seven), determining what each PC's strongest sin is should be simple. On your piece of paper, jot down the name of each PC and, next to his name, record which of the seven deadly sins that character's personality most strongly typifies. These characters gain certain bonuses and penalties while in specific wings of Runeforge. In addition, certain traps don't affect those of allied sins, and some of the creatures herein are likely to react more favorably to those they believe are allies.

It's certainly likely you have characters who aren't sinners, or who are honestly virtuous. In either of these events, simply leave their sins blank—these characters find that while there isn't a wing of Runeforge where they feel particularly welcome, neither do they take penalties for being in a wing that opposes their sin.

## THE ABJURANT HALLS

The majority of this area has been destroyed, ruined during a relatively recent war when the Wardens of Envy attempted to seize control of the newly awakened






runeforge pool. The surviving walls of this complex are decorated with murals, and where they are not horribly scorched and soot-stained, they reveal scenes of bejeweled wizards in blue-gray robes adorned with ancient runes quelling magical energy, countering the spells of rival wizards, and combining their powers to tame great scaled dragons and giants.

A PC who studies the murals may make a DC 20 Spellcraft check to identify the somatic gestures of the robed wizards depicted in the murals as components of powerful abjuration spells. If the PCs do not recognize the rune of Envy depicted in the murals, they may make a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) or bardic knowledge check to identify it.

The surviving tunnels and chambers here are of hewn stone. Those portions of the complex that have collapsed have been absorbed and recycled into the stone surrounding the demiplane—attempts to dig out the collapsed rooms are destined to fail, as these rooms no longer exist.

### E1 A WARNING MESSAGE

The approach of a non-envious character triggers a permanent *magic mouth* spell when entering this square from the direction of area D, whether flying or on foot. If the spell is triggered, read or paraphrase the following.



A voice booms out a resounding command: “Stop!” The source is a large disembodied human mouth stretched across the ceiling of this section of the tunnel. It continues, “These are the Abjurant Halls of Eager Striving. Know that your powers will be crushed and you shall die! You are not worthy!”

The Abjurant Lords of Envy despised anyone who had even a hint of personal power that might be construed as a threat to their own. They strived to crush all such beings with powerful abjurations and disjoining spells if they could not wrest their enemy’s power from them. Unsurprisingly, these practices earned them the joint ire of the rest of Runeforge.

### E2 THE CHAMBER OF VENGEFUL DISJOINING (CR 10)



A wide staircase of stone descends into a large, partially caved-in chamber. The murals and decorative bas-reliefs on the walls have been blasted and fractured from what must have been a titanic war of magic. Sooty humanoid bones are scattered here and there, and flames sporadically flicker along the walls and floor as if the room still resonates with the power unleashed here. Electrical discharges spark from a silver rod protruding from the floor in the center of the room—it almost looks like the metal rod has fused with the stone of the floor.

**TRAP:** The silver rod was one of the standard weapons carried by the Abjurant Lords of Envy: a *rod of cancellation*. Unfortunately, this *rod of cancellation* is badly damaged, and the other denizens of Runeforge have learned to avoid this room as a result. The powerful magic stored within it and the energy resonating in this chamber made it unstable and beyond repair. Every 5 minutes, the rod generates a pulse of abjuration energy. This pulse is preceded for 1 round by humming and angry crackling, popping sounds. When the stored energy is released, a *mage’s disjunction* bursts in the room. This disjunction blast radiates from the malfunctioning rod and has no effect upon the surrounding magical qualities of Runeforge itself.

When the PCs first visit this room, the rod is 1d6+4 rounds away from releasing a disjunction pulse. If the malfunctioning rod is disarmed, the magic fades away from the trap harmlessly, but if the Disable Device check fails by 5 or more, it triggers its pulse early. Likewise, the rod triggers a pulse every time it is roughly jostled or targeted by a spell or other effect. *Dispel magic* can render it inert for 1d4 rounds if the roll is successful, otherwise the attempt causes a disjunction pulse. If the trap is triggered before it’s had time to store a charge, all saving throws made to resist it gain a +4 bonus.

#### DISJUNCTION PULSE

| XP    | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 9,600 | 10 | 30 |

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

**AC** 7 (–5 Dexterity, –2 object, +4 Size)

**Hardness** 10; **Break** DC 30

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** timed and touch; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** spell effect (*mage’s disjunction*, 17th-level wizard, DC 23

Will save negates); multiple targets (all magic items or spell effects in area E2)

### E3 THE ETHILLION POOL



Decorative lanterns illuminate this otherwise mostly bare room. A tiled path in the granite flagstones leads from the entrance to three steps leading down to a mirrored surface.

The circular depression forms a ring of steps descending to what appears to be a large pool filled with quicksilver. This metallic liquid is a rare substance invented by the Abjurant Lords—they called it ethillion. When properly tended (a process that requires several skilled abjurers and lots of time), ethillion leeches away magic from any object it contacts, storing that magic for harvesting at a later date to aid in the creation of magic items.

Ethillion is also one of the components required to create a *runeforged* weapon in the runeforge pool—see Part Ten for more details.





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**TREASURE:** The tiny amount of ethillion remaining in the pool can be a potent boon to the PCs. Enough doses of ethillion remain in the pool to fill a dozen flasks—ethillion can be safely transported in anything that can transport water. A character who drinks a flask of the stuff becomes infused with magical potentiality, and gains a +2 bonus on his next skill check made to craft a magic item. In addition, the time required to create the item is reduced by 1 day (to a minimum of 1 hour). Multiple doses of ethillion stack; the effects persist until the first time the drinker attempts to craft a magic item.

Alternatively, a character can use a flask of ethillion as an additional material component for any abjuration spell. Doing so causes that spell to resolve at a caster level 2 higher than the user's actual caster level.

Since the remaining ethillion in this pool has already been "charged," it no longer possesses the capability to drain magic from items it contacts. The secret of creating ethillion died with the Abjurant Lords, but if it could be rediscovered, uncharged ethillion drains magic from an item placed in it over the course of 24 hours. Up until this time passes, an item removed from contact quickly recovers. An item allowed to be drained becomes nonmagical, and results in the creation of 1 use of ethillion per 5,000 gp in the drained item's total value. Items worth less than 5,000 gp must be combined with additional items to bring the cost up to a minimum combined value of 5,000 gp before they can be used to create a dose of ethillion.

A single dose of ethillion is worth 2,500 gp.

## E4 BEFOULED CHAMBER (CR 14)



Thick sheets of ooze lie in pools along the floor of this room, and the air carries on it an overwhelming stink of eye-watering mustard and vinegar.

**CREATURE:** Originally a guardroom, this chamber has become the den of a deadly and vile ooze that slithered up and out of a neighboring wing—the Festering Maze of Sloth. Oozes crawling into other wings of Runeforge from that maze are not an unusual occurrence, but most of them are relatively weak and are quickly slain. The denizen of this room, however, is not only a deadly mustard jelly (a more dangerous and more poisonous variant of the ochre jelly), but one infused with the Abyssal energies that lay so thickly in the Festering Maze itself. The fiendish mustard jelly is much more intelligent than most oozes, yet it isn't particularly ambitious—it desires little more than to wallow and slop in this chamber. The ooze and sludge in this room is waste excreted from the jelly's periodic meals—while Runeforge itself helps to keep the jelly alive, it does enjoy hunting other food now and then—particularly in semi-cannibalistic manners where it hunts other oozes in the Festering Maze of Sloth.

## FIENDISH MUSTARD JELLY

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 38,400 | 14 | 230 |

Fiendish variant mustard jelly (*Tome of Horrors Complete* 385, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294)

CE Large ooze (extraplanar)

**Init** +5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +24

**Aura** toxic gas (10 ft., DC 23)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 230 (20d8+140)

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

**Defensive Abilities** divide, energy absorption; **DR** 10/good;

**Immune** ooze traits; **Resist** cold 15, fire 15; **SR** 22

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**Melee** 4 slams +22 (2d6+7 plus 1d6 acid and grab)

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

**Special Attacks** acid, constrict (2d6+10 plus 1d6 acid), smite good 1/day (+3 attack, +20 damage)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The fiendish mustard jelly waits until someone tries to step more than 5 feet into the room to attack.

**Morale** The fiendish mustard jelly fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 20, **Con** 24, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +23 (+27 grapple); **CMD** 39 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (slams), Improved Natural Attack (slams), Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (slams)

**Skills** Climb +28, Perception +24, Stealth +22, Swim +36

**Languages** Abyssal (cannot speak)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Divide (Ex)** As a standard action, a mustard jelly can split into two identical jellies, each with half the original's hit points (round down). A mustard jelly with 10 hit points or fewer cannot divide itself. When divided, each jelly moves at a speed of 40 feet.

**Energy Absorption (Ex)** A mustard jelly is immune to electricity and *magic missiles*. If targeted by such an effect, it gains temporary hit points equal to the damage that attack would have normally done. These temporary hit points last for 1 hour.

**Toxic Gas (Ex)** A mustard jelly exudes an aura of toxic gas in a 10-ft.-radius spread. A creature in this area must succeed at a DC 23 Fortitude save each round or be slowed (as per *slow*) for as long as it remains in the area plus an additional 1d4 rounds. This is a poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**TREASURE:** Before the fall of the Abjurant Halls, this room served as a guard chamber for a small contingent of highly trained soldiers. A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals a hidden panel in the northern wall—behind is a lever and a small stash of potions. The lever was used to trigger an alarm throughout the Abjurant Halls (it no longer works), while the potions were kept for emergencies. Many were imbibed, but 3 *potions of cure serious wounds* and a *potion of haste* still remain.





## PART FOUR: THE RAVENOUS CRYPTS

THE RAVENOUS CRYPTS OF GLUTTONY WERE COMMISSIONED BY THE RUNELORD OF GASTASH TO SERVE TWO PURPOSES. FIRST, THE CRYPTS WOULD CREATE A PLACE FOR THE GREATEST OF THAT LAND'S NOBLES AND NECROMANCERS TO LIE IN REST. SECOND, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT WOULD SERVE AS A PLACE FOR AGENTS OF THE RUNELORD OF GLUTTONY TO RESEARCH AND PERFECT STRANGE NEW METHODS OF NECROMANCY. DURING THASSILON'S HEIGHT, THE DEAD NOBLES AND NECROMANCERS SENT HERE WERE, IN FACT, ALSO USED AS RAW MATERIALS, YET WITH THASSILON'S FALL, THESE SUPPLY LINES WERE SUDDENLY CUT OFF.



**I**n the thousands of years since the fall of Thassilon, the necromancers of the Ravenous Crypts ran into a problem—without a constant inflow of new bodies, they quickly ran out of fresh dead to work upon. The necromancers initially turned to the other wings, assaulting them and attempting to harvest other students for necromantic supplies, but the other wings proved too well defended. In the end, the necromancers succumbed to their own sin of gluttony and effectively became cannibals, turning on each other for raw materials. It didn't take long for one necromancer to win this war—this was the lich Azaven. Over the past several thousand years, Azaven's advances in necromancy have slowed to a near standstill and the crypts have long since emptied of the dead. His greatest necromantic triumphs dwell in the crypts now, but Azaven himself spiraled into introspective oblivion.

That changed with the wakening of the runeforge well. After taking part in the destruction of the Abjurant Halls, Azaven managed to harvest a fresh supply of dead and is in the process of revitalizing his experiments. He spends all of his time in his laboratory, but the crypts beyond are far from safe.

The Ravenous Crypt is exquisitely crafted. Arches are elaborately carved with stunning artistic patterns. Ceilings are 10 feet high in corridors, all of which are adorned with decorative moldings inlaid with silver angels. Chambers are usually arched or domed to a height of 20 feet and covered with beautiful frescoes and mosaics depicting sleeping men and women tended by cherubim and soothed by angelic singers and musicians. The floors are covered in smooth, fitted flagstones with inlaid ceramic tiles in various decorative patterns. All doors are made of iron.

The extent of the Ravenous Crypts are under the effects of a permanent *desecrate* effect (CL 20th); all undead within the crypts were created here, and thus all gain a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws, and have +1 hit points per Hit Die. These bonuses are included in their stat blocks. This aura is provided by hundreds of wraiths that have been bound into the walls,

ceiling, and floor of the crypts. All stone surfaces in the crypts are cold to the touch as a result. Whenever any effect damages or breaches the stone walls of these crypts (such as *meld into stone*, *passwall*, *transmute rock to mud*, or simple damage applied directly to a wall in an attempt to breach it), 1d6 wraiths are released into the area and immediately attack any living creatures they sense. Note that area effect damaging spells are not enough to trigger the release of wraiths—only spells directly targeting the walls in an attempt to destroy them or bypass them trigger the release of these undead guardians.

### WRAITHS (1D6)

| XP         | CR | HP      |
|------------|----|---------|
| 1,600 each | 5  | 47 each |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 281)

### F1 CRYPTS OF THE BUILDERS (CR 12)



The ceiling of this circular domed chamber rises to a height of thirty feet. The walls are decorated with ten grinning skulls, each gripping what appear to be bits of flesh in their teeth. A flight of steps leads up via a corridor in the far wall.

Each of the carved skulls is in fact a secret door that hides a narrow burial bier—all are empty save for a few silk funeral shrouds and scented herbs, preserved by Runeforge for eternity. These chambers once contained the bodies of the laborers responsible for the creation of these crypts. When their jobs were completed, the laborers were sealed alive into these biers, while the architects were animated as mummies and set to guard the entrance. These mummies remain to this day.

**CREATURES:** The six Thassilonian mummies that stand eternal guard in this room are desiccated and dried monsters clad in strips of ragged linen and silk. Their undead flesh is black and shiny, and shiny black beetles clatter over (and in places through holes in) their frames—these beetles are a physical manifestation of these mummies' more potent despair auras, constantly dropping off and turning to dust and being reborn in





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#### MAP FOUR: THE RAVENOUS CRYPTS

#### PART FIVE: THE VAULT OF GREED

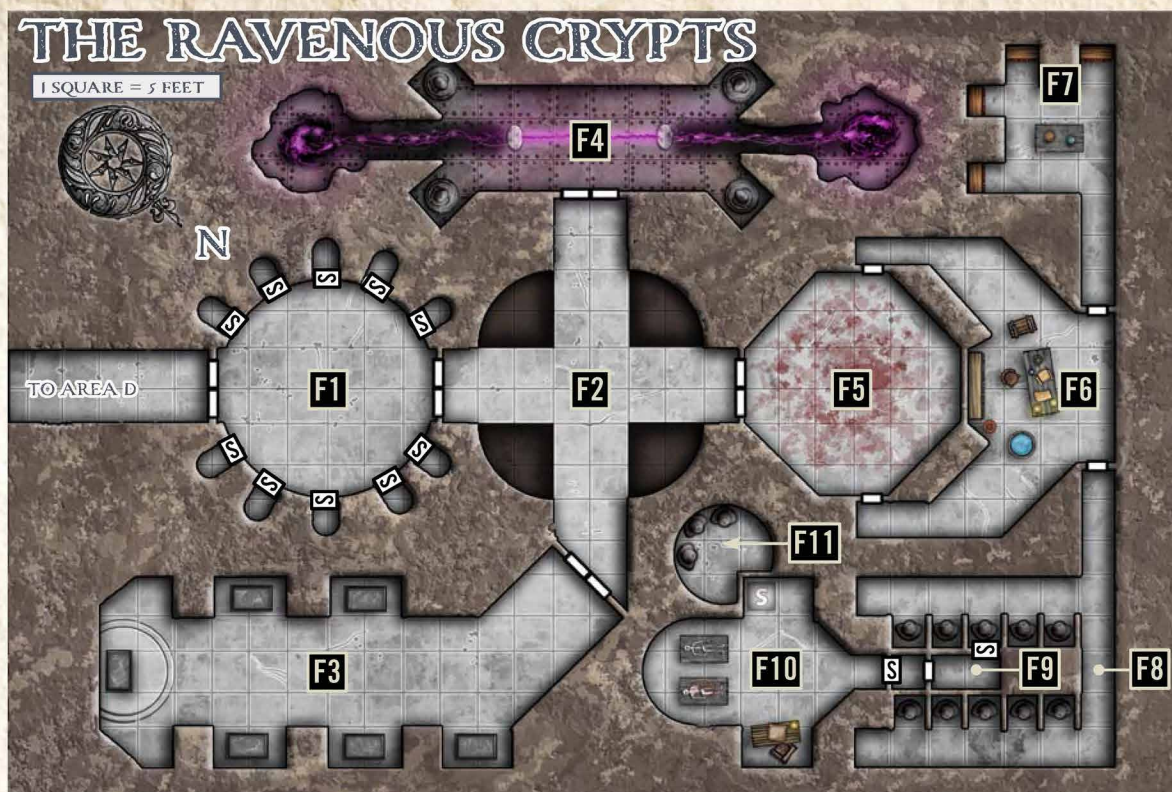
#### PART SIX: THE IRON CAGES

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the desiccated flesh, but are themselves harmless. The mummies rise up to attack most intruders on sight, but allow those who are gluttonous free passage.

One of these mummies bears a permanent *telepathic bond* with Azaven and immediately notifies the lich if intruders enter the room, going as far as to provide the lich up-to-the-second reports on the PCs' tactics and apparent weaknesses. In this manner, the lich should have plenty of time to prepare for the PCs' arrival.

| THASSILONIAN MUMMIES (6) | XP         | CR | HP      |
|--------------------------|------------|----|---------|
|                          | 3,200 each | 7  | 95 each |

Variant mummy (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 210)

LE Medium undead

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception 18

**Aura** despair (30 ft., paralyzed for 1d4 rounds, Will DC 19 negates)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +10 natural)

**hp** 95 each (10d8+50)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +13

**DR** 5/—; **Immune** undead traits

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +19 (1d8+14 plus mummy rot)

**Special Attacks** mummy rot (DC 19)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** These mummies focus their wrath on any envious or lustful characters in the group. They do not attack gluttonous characters unless such characters attack them first.

**Morale** The mummies fight until destroyed, pursuing foes throughout the crypts but not back into the Runeforge hub.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 28, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 30

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (slam)

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +16

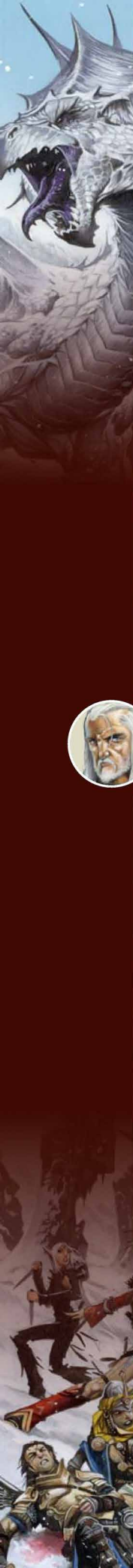
**Languages** Thassilonian

## F2 THE HOUSE PATRIARCHS



The ceiling rises to a dome thirty feet above, while the floor drops away into a dizzying pit. A cross-shaped bridge of marble stretches across this pit, allowing access to four sets of iron double doors. Four bas-relief carvings of incredible detail have been carved into the curved walls in the four corners of the room, each under a word written in spiky runes. One holds aloft a sprig of grapes and a loaf of bread, one holds a wedge of cheese and a huge haunch of meat, another wields a platter heaped with candies, and the last simply stands with arms crossed, his mouth wide and grinning to display teeth that have been filed to points. Below each carving, the wall drops away into darkness, yet along these depths dozens of burial niches containing stone sarcophagi are visible.






In ancient Gastash, four noble houses counted themselves as senior among the aristocracy. These four bas-reliefs symbolize those families. Each of these families had a different specialty, as indicated by their carving's adornments and pose. The names of the patriarchs are etched in Thassilonian above each carving. These names are Inib (wine makers and bakers, east), Gorryan (cheesemakers and butchers, south), Aanstrin (confectioneries, west), and Xerriock (cannibals, north). Each embraced the sin of gluttony in his own way.

The walls of the pit below contained the dead of nobles rich enough to be buried here—or at least, they did once upon a time. The hundreds of sarcophagi that line the walls of this 150-foot-deep shaft are all now empty, their contents long ago scavenged for necromantic supplies.

### F3 THE CRYPT OF LORD MANKRAY (CR 11)



A single sarcophagus of gold sits atop a white marble plinth at the far western end of this wide hall. The bas-relief lid depicts a handsome man holding a sprig of grapes and a bottle of wine crossed over his chest. The eyes are large star sapphires and the grapes appear to be individual gemstones that could be worked free with the right tools. Five wide alcoves in the room are carved with dozens of narrow niches, each of which contains a different bottle of what appears to be wine.

An investigation of the marble plinth reveals an engraved inscription written in Thassilonian: “Lord Anklerios Mankray Inib of the House of Inib: master vintner and beloved husband and father. An assassin’s blade accomplished what hundreds of duels could not.” Of course, the sarcophagus itself is empty, Anklerios’s body long since taken away for necromantic needs. Anklerios Mankray was Inib’s greatest winemaker, and the bottles buried in these walls constitute a sample of each vintage produced under his direction.

**CREATURE:** The Inibs did not want to send their greatest patriarch into the Ravenous Crypts unprotected and paid to have a clay golem, crafted by a sect of allied clerics of the rune goddess Lissala, installed as the crypt’s guardian. Unfortunately for Anklerios’s body, the golem was programmed to protect only against intruders to the crypts themselves, and thus did nothing when Azaven himself came to take the body away for his work. The golem remains, eternally guarding an empty sarcophagus.

The golem itself resembles a woman with the lower torso of a serpent and a Sihedron rune for a head, identifiable with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check as the image of Lissala, goddess of runes. Indeed, countless runes (prayers to the goddess)

are etched on its red clay body. The golem is also plated in iron—it’s effectively wearing full plate armor, and its CR is 1 higher than normal as a result.

#### ARMORED CLAY GOLEM

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 12,800 | 11 | 101 |

Variant clay golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 159)

**AC** 30, touch 8, flat-footed 30 (+8 armor, -1 Dexterity, +14 natural, -1 size)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The golem does not attack gluttonous characters, even in self defense, but attacks all others on sight.

**Morale** The golem fights until destroyed but does not pursue foes from this chamber.

**TREASURE:** The sarcophagus itself is only gold plated—with 8 hours of work, a dedicated thief can scrape 800 gp of gold off the stone. Of greater value are the two star sapphire eyes (each worth 1,000 gp) and the dozen amethyst grapes (each worth 300 gp). The wine stored in the alcoves remains delicious to this day, preserved by Runeforge’s aura. In all, there are 68 bottles in this room, each of which is worth 100 gp—and each of which could serve as components to make gluttonous *runeforged* weapons.

### F4 INFUSION CHAMBER (CR 14)



The walls of this room have been plated in iron, each plate of which bears a single rune—the upside-down, hooked “U” shape. What appear to be two ten-foot-tall smooth crystal pylons stand in the middle of the room. A rippling curtain of blackness shimmers between these crystals. On the opposite side of each crystal, strange tendrils of black energy—reverse lightning crackling in extreme slow-motion—extend out from the crystals into spheres of roiling blackness in circular caverns to the left and right of the entrance. The air in the room is shockingly cold.

This chamber is where the wardens of gluttony opened a portal to the Negative Energy Plane to infuse this wing of Runeforge with the wraiths that suffuse the walls. The portal itself manifests as the curtain of black energy between the two crystal pylons—this portal allows only negative energy from that plane to pass—creatures (be they living or undead) cannot travel to the Negative Energy Plane via this portal. Anyone who touches the portal immediately takes 10d6 points of damage from negative energy and gains 1 negative level—a successful DC 20 Fortitude save halves the negative energy damage and negates the negative level. An undead creature that touches the curtain instead heals 10d6 points of damage. The effects of contact with this curtain of negative energy happen no more than once per round per creature. The negative energy





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sparkling to the left and right of the pylons is less potent—these only deal 5d6 points of negative energy damage (or healing to undead) and do not impart negative levels (Fort DC 15 half).

The crystal pylons themselves are powerfully infused with negative energy—any living creature that touches a pylon gains a negative level (no save). A successful DC 15 Fortitude save removes this negative level 24 hours later.

The portal can be destroyed by shattering one of the crystal pylons. Each pylon has hardness 10 and 100 hit points. A DC 32 Strength check is enough to break one of the pylons as well. Positive energy damages these pylons as if they were undead creatures—the pylons gain no saving throw to resist or reduce damage caused by positive energy, and such damage bypasses the crystal's hardness. When a crystal pylon is destroyed, it explodes, dealing 8d6 points of piercing damage to all targets within a 30-foot burst (Reflex DC 15 half). Note that this damage could be enough to cause the second crystal to explode as well if it's taken enough damage from other sources. Once either crystal is destroyed, the negative energy portal vanishes.

Destroying this portal immediately negates the negative energy that infuses the walls—this has two effects. First, it immediately slays the wraiths bound in the walls—from this point onward, any attempt to manipulate the walls of the Ravenous Crypts may be attempted without fear. Second, it negates the *desecrate* aura that infuses the crypts—all undead creatures lose the +1 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws this aura granted (they retain bonus hit points, though).

**CREATURE:** If this portal is destroyed, it yawns open into the negative energy plane for a brief moment—this doesn't directly harm any creatures in the room, but it does allow a powerful monster from that deadly realm to manifest in this chamber—a nightwing nightshade. This creature looks like an immense bat made of roiling blackness with two glowing red eyes. The nightwing is furious at being siphoned into this world, and immediately attacks any living creatures it can. Note that this room's dimensions don't allow the nightwing a large amount of mobility—something the PCs can capitalize upon.

### NIGHTWING

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 38,400 | 14 | 195 |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 203)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The nightwing has a hard time moving around in the confines of this dungeon, and that makes it particularly foul-tempered. It focuses its wrath on those who wield positive energy (be it healing or channeled energy) first, trusting its defenses to protect it from foes who wield weapons or use other forms of magic.

**Morale** The nightshade fights until destroyed.

**TREASURE:** A secret niche in the westernmost alcove of this room can be discovered with a successful DC 30 Perception check. In the small area beyond is a tiny cache of books and magical supplies geared toward the process of infusing a complex with wraiths and negative energy. The books here are similar in nature to those found in area F6. In addition, there are two *scrolls of plane shift* and a *scroll of binding* sitting near the back of the cache, held down by a slender wooden box. Within this box rests a tuning fork attuned to Runeforge—the material component necessary to *plane shift* into this demiplane.

### F5 ABATTOIR



The scene in this room is appalling—a half-dozen brutally savaged human bodies dressed in light blue, bloodstained robes lie sprawled about the place. Several of the bodies seem to have had limbs or organs removed.

These six bodies are all that remains of the 15 that Azaven managed to claim for his research after the raid on the Abjurant Halls. The magical gear possessed by these dead wizards was mostly destroyed in the battle—Azaven was happy to take just the bodies under his care. The bodies themselves are preserved from decay by the crypt's aura, and although it's been years, Azaven works slowly and carefully. He's unsure when another boon like this might arrive and has rationed the bodies accordingly.

A character who examines the bodies and succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes the work of a skilled necromancer in the patterns and methods of missing limbs and organs.

### F6 RESEARCH ROOM



This chamber appears to be some sort of laboratory. Tables made of stacked sarcophagi support alchemical apparatuses, books, carved bones, scrolls, and various pieces of anatomy that have been dissected and preserved in dozens of ways.

This well-stocked research room is capable of supplying a gifted necromancer with all of the base materials necessary to craft magic items, research spells, or create undead creatures. Since Azaven prefers to use his own laboratory (area F10), this chamber has gone unused for thousands of years, but the supplies remain fresh thanks to Runeforge's preservative aura.

**TREASURE:** An alchemist's lab sits atop one table. The books are both interesting and horrifying in their subject matter of the dead, and the collection grants a +2 circumstance bonus on a Knowledge (religion) check made about undead. The collection is worth 400 gp and weighs 100 pounds.



## F7 XYODDIN'S LABORATORY (CR 13)



The bookshelf-lined walls of this room contain a large collection of dog-eared tomes, manuals, and scrolls, as well as jars of fluid in which float humanoid organs and bits of flesh. A dissected human torso sits atop the room's stone table.

**CREATURE:** This room is inhabited by an undead monster fashioned from a man named Xyoddin—once the Xerriock family's most esteemed patriarch. His appetites were matched by few, making him one of his nation's most reprehensible members, for the Xerriocks were cannibals.

Azaven's success with Xyoddin resulted in a ravenous undead monster who could not only serve the lich as a laboratory assistant but who retained enough charm to engage the lich in conversation—what Xyoddin lacks in wits and intellect, he more than makes up for with the gift of telling Azaven what he wants to hear. In many ways, the ravenous dread zombie is the perfect necromantic sycophant.

Currently, Xyoddin is in the process of meticulously dissecting one of the wizards harvested from the Abjurant Halls. In life, this wizard had treated his own flesh with strange magic that rendered him difficult to animate into undeath.

Azaven has tasked Xyoddin with the gruesome duty of cataloging every tiny bit of the man's body, business the ravenous zombie has been at for nearly a decade now. Every year, Azaven rewards Xyoddin's work by allowing him to eat a portion of the dissected body.

### XYODDIN XERRIOCK

|        |    |     |
|--------|----|-----|
| XP     | CR | HP  |
| 25,600 | 13 | 218 |

Male Azlanti ravenous dread zombie human aristocrat 4/rogue 9  
(*Advanced Bestiary* 105, 211)

CE Medium undead (human)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +26

**Aura** unnatural aura

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 15, flat-footed 21 (+7 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

**hp** 218 (13 HD; 9d8+4d8+156); fast healing 10

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** cannibalistic healing, channel resistance +2, evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +3; **DR** 5/—;

**Immune** undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *human bone dagger* +20/+15 (1d4+9/19–20), bite +18 (1d4+11)

**Ranged** mwk dagger +17/+12 (1d4+8/19–20)

**Special Attacks** brain consumption, command zombies, favored prey (humans), hungry special attacks, sneak attack +5d6, sprint

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Xyoddin tears free a portion of the torso's liver and eats it before combat begins if he has a chance, gaining the benefits of fast healing 10 for the fight to come.

**During Combat** If faced with enemies that include humans in their ranks, Xyoddin's terrible hunger pulls him to them, causing him to ignore all non-human targets. He's able to hold back his ravenous urgings enough to resist taking the time to feast on a slain human if other enemies remain to defeat, but only barely.

**Morale** Xyoddin fights until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 30

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +18 (+20 grapple);

**CMD** 33 (35 vs. grapple)

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dazzling Display, Dodge, Greater Feint, Improved Feint, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Shatter Defenses, Toughness, Weapon Focus (dagger)

**Skills** Acrobatics +28, Bluff +27, Climb +15, Diplomacy +27, Escape Artist +24, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (nobility) +18, Perception +26, Perform (string) +20, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +24, Survival +10

**Languages** Giant, Thassilonian

**SQ** rogue talents (bleeding attack +5, combat trick, surprise attack, weapon training), trapfinding +4

**Gear** +3 chain shirt, +1 human bone dagger,

XYODDIN  
XERRIOCK



masterwork dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, 146 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Brain Consumption (Ex)** When Xyoddin makes a successful grapple check to deal damage with his bite against a pinned or helpless living foe, the victim takes 2d4 points of Intelligence drain as Xyoddin consumes portions of his brain. A successful DC 23 Fortitude save halves this Intelligence drain. A creature reduced to 0 Intelligence by this attack is slain. Creatures immune to critical hits and those with multiple heads are not killed by this attack. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Cannibalistic Healing (Ex)** So long as Xyoddin has fed on human flesh within the last 24 hours, he gains fast healing 10.

**Command Zombies (Su)** Xyoddin can automatically command all normal zombies within 30 feet as a free action. Normal zombies never attack him unless they are compelled.

**Favored Prey (Ex)** Xyoddin gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls against humanoids and a +2 bonus on Bluff, Perception, Sense Motive, and Survival checks when using these skills against humanoids. Against humans, these bonuses increase to +4.

**Hungry Special Attacks (Ex)** Humans take a –2 penalty on saving throws against Xyoddin's special attacks.

**Ravenous Body (Su)** Normally, Xyoddin must eat human flesh at least once every 3 days or he begins to starve, but the sustaining presence radiated by Runeforge prevents this.

**Sprint (Ex)** Once per day, Xyoddin can move at a speed of 300 feet when he makes a charge.

**Telepathic Bond (Sp)** Xyoddin has a permanent *telepathic bond* with Azaven.

**Unnatural Aura (Su)** Any animal within 30 feet of Xyoddin must succeed at a DC 26 Will save or become panicked, remaining so for as long as it remains within this proximity. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

**TREASURE:** The various lenses and magnifying glasses built into the contraption around the examination table are worth 100 gp each—there are 10 lenses in all. The research books are worth a total of 10,000 gp. They detail various experiments, summoning rituals, chemical concoctions, and steps that Runelord Zutha's minions followed to attain their various states of undeath. They provide a +5 circumstance bonus on all Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (religion) checks made regarding necromancy and undead creatures.

A character who spends at least a few hours looking through these books quickly comes across a fairly significant section detailing Runelord Zutha's final task for the Ravenous Crypts—the development of a place and method for him to retreat from the world into stasis, should Thassilon come to a sudden end. Zutha asked his agents in Runeforge to develop a way to split his phylactery, a book entitled *The Gluttonous Tome*, into three pieces, which could then be hidden in the world far from Thassilon. Then, after the dust of the empire's fall had settled, these three fragments could be brought

back together to call him back from the beyond. That Azaven and the other (now destroyed) necromancers accomplished this goal is recorded, but no indication of where the three parts of the phylactery were sent can be found. In fact, if the PCs take the time and effort to try to learn more about this phylactery, even the use of powerful effects like *commune* or *contact other plane* fail—for the current status of this phylactery is beyond even the gods to divine.

**DEVELOPMENT:** If Azaven becomes aware of the fact that the Ravenous Crypts have been invaded, he orders Xyoddin to begin patrolling the crypts to look for intruders. Before Xyoddin sets off on this patrol, Azaven allows Xyoddin to feast on some human flesh to activate his fast healing. Xyoddin keeps the lich regularly updated via their telepathic link—if Xyoddin encounters the PCs, he attacks them at once, but during the fight keeps Azaven updated on the PCs' capabilities, tactics, and weaknesses.

## F8 CRYPT GUARDIANS (CR 12)

Numerous five-foot-wide burial niches line the inner walls of this “U” shaped catacomb. Each niche contains a stone burial urn, large enough to contain a crouching human body within the ancient stone container. **CREATURES:** The urns, as with all others in this crypt, are all empty, yet the hall itself is not. Another six Thassilonian mummies stand guard here, ready to attack any intruders. As in area F1, one of these mummies bears a permanent *telepathic bond* with Azaven, and alerts him to intruders at the start of combat. The narrow confines of this crypt force the mummies to fight foes one at a time, so any mummy without a target uses the aid another action to increase the AC of any adjacent mummy in combat.

| THASSILONIAN MUMMIES (6) | XP         | CR | HP      |
|--------------------------|------------|----|---------|
|                          | 3,200 each | 7  | 95 each |

(see page 259)

## F9 SECRET CRYPT

The back wall of this niche, as well as the entrance into area F10 itself, is hidden by secret doors. A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals the locations of both hidden doors.

## F10 ASSEMBLY ROOM (CR 15)



Lanterns hang from hooks over three large tables scattered throughout this chamber. Two tables are covered with preserved human body parts stitched together with thick thread to partially form a pair of patchwork human corpses. Stools and small steel work trays covered in slender knives, clamps, hooks, saws, screws, needles, and other less identifiable tools surround each of the large tables.



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This is where Azaven the lich performs the bulk of his work and research, and likely where he's encountered by the PCs. Stone boxes under the worktables contain caches of more dismembered body parts. The two stitched-together corpses on the tables are nearly completed subjects that Azaven has prepared from leftover body parts—his hope is to create undead from reconstructed parts rather than simply limiting himself to whole bodies, but many of his previous experiments along these lines proved gruesomely and spectacularly unstable.

In the northwestern corner of the room is a hidden trap door that can be discovered with a successful DC 30 Perception check—it opens through the roof of area F11, the floor of which is 10 feet below.

**CREATURE:** Azaven sits on a stool at a worktable opposite from the entrance, stitching together the last pieces of one of the prospective patchwork undead minions. Although Azaven takes the time to cast several defensive spells once he knows the Ravenous Crypts have been invaded, he's not initially looking for a fight. In fact, similar to the Scribbler earlier in the adventure, Azaven is quite curious what has become of the outside world, and

when the PCs arrive he bids them answer questions like those the Scribbler asked. Azaven has very little interest in responding to the PCs' questions, though, and if they demand answers or resist him, he decides to kill them and extract the knowledge he seeks from their soon-to-be-undead bodies.

## AZAVEN

|              |          |           |
|--------------|----------|-----------|
| XP<br>51,200 | CR<br>15 | HP<br>179 |
|--------------|----------|-----------|

Male Azlanti human lich necromancer 14 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 188)

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, human)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., life sight; Perception +29

**Aura** fear (60-ft. radius, DC 23)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 17, flat-footed 22 (+5 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

**hp** 179 (14d6+128)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, rejuvenation;

**DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** touch +9 (1d8+8 plus paralyzing touch)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy (DC 21, 11/day)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +22)

11/day—grave touch (7 rounds)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 14th; concentration +22)

7th—quickened *displacement*, *finger of death* (DC 27), *prismatic spray* (DC 25), quickened *vampiric touch* (2)

6th—quickened *blindness/deafness* (DC 26, 2), quickened *cat's grace*, *chain lightning* (DC 24), *disintegrate* (DC 24), *mislead* (DC 24)

5th—*fabricate*, quickened *magic missile*, *telekinesis* (DC 23), *wall of force*, *waves of fatigue* (2)

4th—*bestow curse* (DC 24), *contagion* (DC 24), *dimension door*, *enervation* (2), *fear* (DC 24), *mass reduce person* (DC 22), *stone shape*

3rd—extended *false life*, *fly*, *gaseous form*, *ray of exhaustion* (2), *slow* (DC 21), *stinking cloud* (DC 21), *tongues*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 22, 2), *ghoul touch* (DC 22), *glitterdust* (DC 20), *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *spectral hand*

1st—*chill touch* (DC 21, 2), *grease* (DC 19), *magic missile* (3), *obscuring mist*, *reduce person* (DC 19)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*

**Thassilonian Specialization** necromancy;

**Opposition Schools** abjuration, enchantment

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Once he knows interlopers have invaded the crypts, Azaven casts extended *false life* and

AZAVEN



tongues on himself. He then calls a devourer—a proud being named Vioidthain, scarred with symbols only it knows the otherworldly source of—to guard him using his *staff of hungry shadows*. As soon as he can before combat, he casts quickened *cat's grace*.

**During Combat** Azaven opens battles by casting *finger of death* at a spellcaster and quickened *displacement* on himself. He then casts *wall of force* to seal himself off from the PCs, giving him time to cast *fly*, *mirror image*, and *spectral hand*. During this time, he lets the conjured devourer keep the PCs busy. If the PCs haven't breached his wall by the time he's done casting preparatory spells, he uses *dimension door* to return back into their midst and begins casting offensive spells. If he needs more minions, Azaven casts *stone shape* on a nearby wall to release several wraiths, hoping they provide additional distractions.

**Morale** Azaven values his own immortal existence too much to stick around in a fight he's losing. If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, he uses *mislead* to escape by casting *gaseous form* and retreating to area **F11**, where he gathers his phylactery before triggering the trap in the room to heal his damage. Given time, he recovers his spells and then seeks revenge on the PCs. If confronted there, Azaven has little choice but to fight until destroyed, but he makes sure to trigger the trap in the room before a fight begins.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 26, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Combat Casting, Command Undead, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

**Skills** Craft (alchemy) +26, Knowledge (arcana, dungeoneering, engineering, nobility, planes, and religion) +26, Perception +29, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +26, Stealth +30

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Netheril, Thassilonian; *telepathic bond*, *tongues*

**SQ** arcane bond (*staff of hungry shadows*), life sight (20 feet, 14 rounds/day)

**Combat Gear** *staff of hungry shadows* (10 charges); **Other Gear** *bracers of armor* +5, *headband of vast intelligence* +4 (grants ranks in Knowledge [nobility] and Spellcraft), *ring of protection* +2, *contingency* statuette worth 2,000 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Contingency (Sp)** If Azaven is grappled, a *dimension door* spell activates on him. Azaven uses this to merely reposition himself in combat if the battle is going well—if it is going poorly, he uses it to flee to area **F11**.

**Telepathic Bond (Sp)** Azaven has a permanent *telepathic bond* with his minion Xyoddin and with one of the Thassilonian mummies in areas **F1** and **F8**.

**TREASURE:** The surgical equipment here was created from silver jewelry and decorations looted from nearby crypts via *fabricate* spells. The entire collection in this room is worth 1,200 gp.

## F11 AZAVEN'S PHYLACTERY (CR 13)



This crypt contains three stone sarcophagi, each bearing detailed carvings of hundreds of capering skeletons and dancing corpses.

These three sarcophagi contain Azaven's three greatest treasures. All three are protected by a dangerous trap.

**TRAP:** If any of these three stone coffins are opened or molested in any way, the skeletons and corpses carved on the sides of all three suddenly animate and begin shrieking in a bloodcurdling manner. Hundreds of little bony arms point out into the room, and from their hundreds of outstretched fingers spring beams of necromantic fury. The trap continues to fire every round once it is first triggered (it needs a round to recharge its energies before firing again)—it ceases only after all creatures leave the room, or automatically after a full minute of use, after which it requires a full hour to recharge its energy.

### NECROMANTIC DEATHTRAP

XP  
25,600

CR  
13

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 32

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** automatic after 1 round delay (for 1 minute, after which automatic after a 1 hour delay)

**Effect** All creatures in the room take 14d6 points of negative energy damage every other round (Will DC 25 half)—undead creatures are instead healed for a like amount (they do not gain excess healing as temporary hit points). Every even-numbered round, the trap becomes inert as it recharges its energy from the surrounding walls, firing again automatically every odd-numbered round until the room is deserted or the trap is disabled. If the portal in area **F4** has been destroyed, this trap cannot recharge and only triggers once before going forever inert.

**TREASURE:** One of the sarcophagi contains 11 spellbooks Azaven has claimed from enemies and fallen allies. Each of these spellbooks bears the occasional notation written in Thassilonian, but the actual spells within—a wide range of 1st- to 8th-level spells—can be identified as normal. All of the spells Azaven has prepared can be found among these aged tomes, as can any other potent or rare spell you wish to include in the campaign. The second coffin contains 7,000 gp in mixed jewels, gems, and fine linens Azaven stores for *fabricate* spells, an *eversmoking bottle*, a *golembane scarab*, and all of the lich's personal spellbooks. The final coffin is itself Azaven's phylactery (hardness 20, hp 150, Break DC 50), a fortified magic item in its own right. Azaven opted for a stronger, sturdier phylactery rather than a small portable one, since he is bound to Runeforge and cannot leave its halls.



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## PART FIVE: THE VAULT OF GREED

THIS WAS THE RESEARCH CENTER AND LAIR OF A GROUP OF RUNELORD KARZOUZ'S MOST TALENTED AND GIFTED FOLLOWERS. THEY SPENT YEARS PERFECTING THE RUNE MAGIC OF GREED FOR THEIR MASTER, AMASSING TREASURES FOR THEMSELVES, AND STEALING A FEW THINGS FROM THEIR ENEMIES. THE GREATEST AMONG THEM WAS A POWERFUL TRANSMUTER BY THE NAME OF IZOMANDAKUS—AT HIS HEIGHT, ONE OF RUNEFORGE'S MOST POWERFUL WIZARDS. WHEN THE WARDENS OF ENVY ATTEMPTED TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE RUNEFORGE POOL ITSELF, IZOMANDAKUS WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO FIGHT BACK.



**D**uring the attack on the Wardens of Envy and the ensuing, short-lived battle that followed, most of the Lords of Greed (including Izomandakus) were slain, leaving behind a half-dozen bickering apprentices. One of these apprentices turned out to be more scheming and backstabbing than the others—a gifted wizard who had long ago turned his flesh into mithral. This man, a transmuter named Ordikon, murdered, transformed, and defeated the other apprentices, but his rampage was somewhat short-sighted. He now commands a nearly empty vault, and while he has great wealth, there is no one to lord it over, and nothing to spend it on. The only thing that has prevented him from descending fully into madness is whispers from his lord Karzoug. Ordikon realizes that Karzoug's near-awakening is what reactivated the runeforge pool, and he knows his master is nearing a return to power.

Many parts of this branch of Runeforge have been transmuted into gold or festooned with precious gems, most of which have been magically treated to revert to stone and lead if taken from the vault. Only the items listed in each area's individual treasure sections can be looted from this wing. All areas are lit with *continual light* spells cast upon gems set high on the walls, unless noted otherwise in a room's description.

### G1 PILFERER'S BANE (CR 10)



A large iron door studded with dozens of colorful gemstones stands in the eastern wall at the end of this corridor. Although the door appears to have no latch, a depression in the center contains a keyhole.

The door is in fact a trap intended to lure trespassers to their death. The actual entrance into the Vault of Greed is hidden at the end of the corridor, just to the left of the trapped door—this secret door can be found with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

**TRAP:** The door is actually a thick iron plate set in the wall. It has a nonfunctional internal lock, but no

handle. The iron slab is attached to a metal piston in a recessed area behind it. When any part of the fake door is touched, the piston thrusts forward with incredible force, smashing anything in its path against the opposing wall. A chamber behind the piston houses complex counterweights and gears that retract the piston and resets the trap.

### CRUSHING DOOR

| XP    | CR |
|-------|----|
| 9,600 | 10 |

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 24

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** crush (12d10 bludgeoning, DC 24 Reflex save to avoid); multiple targets (all creatures standing opposite to the door when it falls)

**TREASURE:** The precious stones embedded in the fake iron door are only worth a total of 50 gp in all—hardly worth the trouble of prying them out.

### G2 MORPHIC MIST (CR 10)

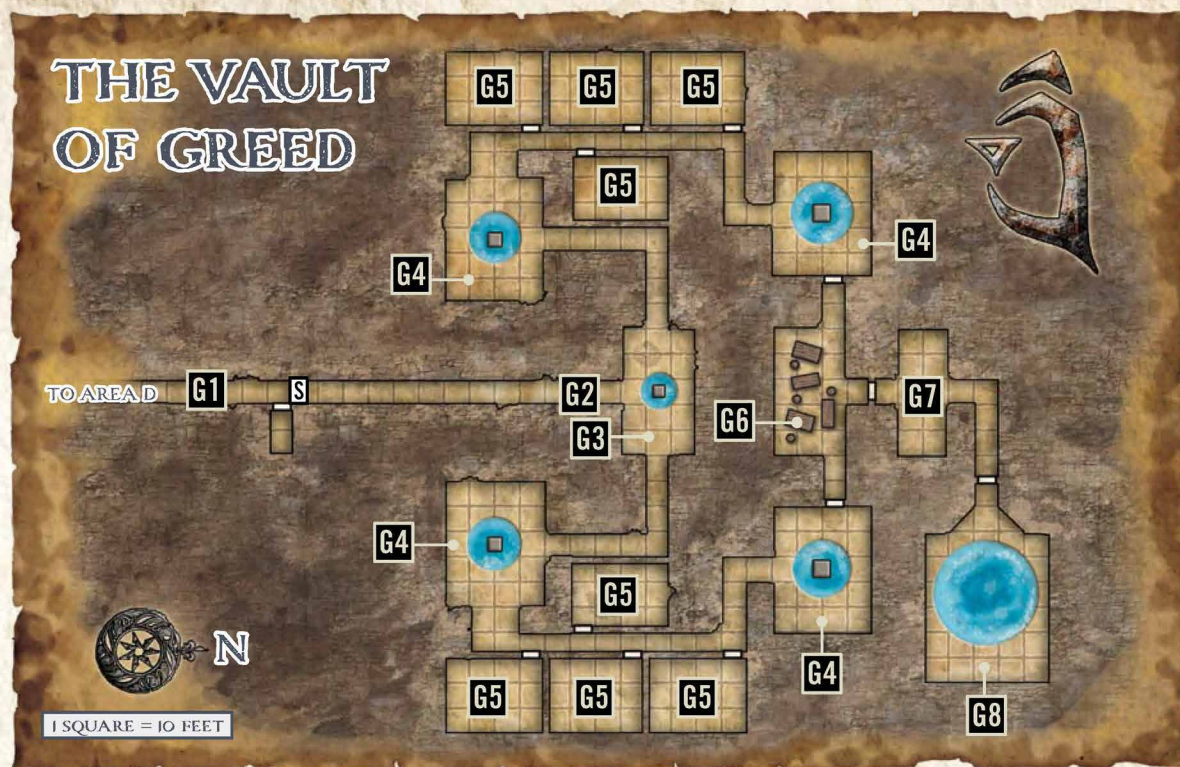


A beautiful tunnel of polished wood inlaid with silver and gold runes stretches for at least a hundred feet before ending at a wall of greenish mist sparkling with silver motes of light.

The wood that lines the walls here is an inch thick, beyond which is solid stone. The Thassilonian runes carved into the walls describe the works of Karzoug and extol his gifts in the art of transmutation. A character could study these runes and learn much of Runelord Karzoug—consult page 233 for the information that can be gained with a successful Knowledge check.

**HAZARD:** The mist acts as a secondary defense against intruders, starting at this location and continuing north all the way to the entrance to area G3. Greedy characters can pass through the mist without undue effect, but any other living creature who enters it must





succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or suffer the effects of a *baleful polymorph* to resist being transformed into a goldfish and then teleported into one of the pools in area G4. Holding one's breath grants a +4 bonus on the saving throw against the morphic mist. The mist can be dispersed by any strong blast of wind, but 1d4 rounds after the wind ceases, the mist refills the area. The mist functions at CL 13th, and can be temporarily suppressed via effects like *dispel magic*. A character who studies the mist can identify its dangerous properties with a successful DC 28 Spellcraft check, as if identifying the properties of a magic item.

The mist can be permanently removed from the Vault of Greed via the method described in area G4, but other powerful effects, such as *mage's disjunction*, can serve to permanently destroy this magical hazard as well, at the GM's discretion.

**STORY AWARD:** Award the PCs 9,600 XP the first time they manage to navigate the mist into the Vault of Greed beyond.

### G3 TROUBLE WITH MEPHITS (CR 7)



This chamber is paved with ivory tiles, each one engraved with a silver rune depicting what appears to be a claw gripping a gemstone. The walls and ceiling are of polished marble. A large silver basin in the center of the room contains an icy sculpture of a whale spraying crystal-clear water from its blowhole. The water cascades around it to keep the basin full, but never quite overflowing.

This fountain acts as a tiny portal to the Plane of Water, created as much as a display of ostentatious opulence as much as anything else. The water itself is cool and refreshing, but hardly required for those dwelling in the complex.

**CREATURES:** The portal to the Plane of Water attracts water mephits for some reason its creators have never been able to decipher. No matter how many times the Lords of Greed have killed the mephits off or driven them away, more mephits always eventually appear. At any one time, four mephits frolic in the waters of this pool. If the PCs return at a later time, more mephits have arrived—feel free to adjust the total number of mephits appearing here as you wish. Despite their small stature and relative weakness, the mephits are brave to the point of being foolhardy.

Initially hostile, the mephits nonetheless don't initiate attacks on intruders, instead hurling insults ("Oh look! Another group of fleshies come to slobber in our pool!"). If the PCs can make the mephits at least friendly, the creatures can be conversed with. The water mephits complain that while they enjoy playing in the fountain, a "mean silver man" keeps coming and casting hurtful spells at them. They know a little bit about his combat tactics (each mephit knows at least a dozen others of its kind who were killed by Ordikon), and if the PCs ask the right questions, the mephits can give them a few tips on how to fight the "silver man." At some point, the mephits also volunteer that they know of a lot more fountains in this complex, particularly that the goldfish pools are all linked to each other and



the morphic mist in area **G2**, and that the biggest of the pools (area **G8**) is “made of magic.”

### WATER MEPHITS (4)

| XP       | CR | HP      |
|----------|----|---------|
| 800 each | 3  | 19 each |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 202–203)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The mephits recently had a run-in with Ordikon and take the PCs for more enemies. Half of them spit acid at the PCs while the others attempt to summon more water mephits to aid them. They prefer to use their *acid arrows* and breath weapons over melee.

**Morale** If more than half of the water mephits are slain, the rest dive through the ice whale’s blowhole to flee back to the Elemental Plane of Water.

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs manage to learn something useful from the mephits, grant them a 3,200 XP award.

## G4 FOUNTAINS (CR 11 TO 15)



A fountain sprays water toward the ceiling, thirty feet above. The water cascades back into a pool in which colorful goldfish swim. The fountain features a nine-foot-tall stone statue of a human wizard holding a staff in one hand. The other hand is raised over his head, and it’s from this hand’s palm that the water issues.

The water in each fountain is normal and the flow is magically sustained, siphoned from the pool in area **G3** via narrow underground runnels. The goldfish in the pools are mostly that, but any PCs who succumbed to the morphic mist in area **G2** can be found in one of these fountains, determined at random. Of course, correctly identifying the goldfish for what they are might be difficult. If you wish, some of these goldfish could be other NPCs who have fallen victim to the morphic mist in the past—these should be adventurers who stumbled into Runeforge years ago and have been trapped here ever since.

**CREATURES:** The statues that stand within each of these fountains are in fact all stone golems. These golems are magically linked—what one sees and hears, the others see and hear as well. The golems ignore greedy intruders, but any non-mephit creature larger than Tiny immediately attracts the attention of the golems and it attacks at once. When one golem attacks, the other three stationed in the other fountain rooms activate as well and move as quickly as possible to converge on the room where the fight is taking place—the golems never move through area **G6** to reach their target, instead taking the long way through the vault. If the PCs work quickly to defeat the golems, they’ll not need to face multiple golems at once. The golems, once activated, continue to pursue foes throughout the vault (even into area **G6** if their prey attempts to

flee there)—they give up pursuit and return to their fountains once all obvious targets have fled from the vaults to the Runeforge hub (area **D**).

Each golem that is destroyed reduces the save DC of the morphic mist in area **G2** by 2 points. If all four golems are destroyed, the morphic mist vanishes and any characters who had been transformed into goldfish immediately return to their true forms in whatever pool they had been swimming in.

### STONE GOLEMS (4)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 12,800 each | 11 | 107 each |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 163)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Linked Senses (Su)** These golems share the same senses, and whenever any two golems are within line of sight of each other, those golems are treated as having all-around vision—they can see in all directions at once and cannot be flanked.

## G5 FABRICATION CHAMBERS

Each of these rooms served as living quarters for Izomandakus and his apprentices—although they had no need to sleep or eat, each wizard could retire here to relax or entertain himself. Each room is empty, save for a scattering of raw materials like sheets of cloth, stacks of lumber, blocks of stone, metal bars, and bones.

These rooms radiate strong transmutation magic, and any greedy character who enters one immediately understands how to use it. A character may use the room to cast *fabricate* at will as a spell-like ability. The rooms themselves do not provide the raw materials for the spell—those must be provided by the character. Items created in these rooms cannot exist outside of them—an object created in here reverts to its base materials if brought outside into the hall. Likewise, an object left in here for 24 hours reverts back to its base materials, explaining the raw materials in each of these rooms.

## G6 RESEARCH CENTER (CR 14)



Rows of thick wooden worktables occupy the center of this long chamber. Bookcases lining the walls hold hundreds of books and scrolls. Crates next to or pushed under the worktables appear to be filled with an odd variety of mundane items, such as rope, sticks, sacks, tools, and cookware. A dog on one of the tables looks dead, though its hind end appears to be made of some kind of metal. A few other animals pace back and forth in small metal cages—a house cat, a few rats, a snake, and a small white-faced monkey.

This is where the Lords of Greed experimented with their craft. The dog was used in an experiment in which Ordikon was attempting to create another



mithral creature. His experiment killed the animal and transmuted part of it into iron. The other animals are living creatures Ordikon caught in the Festering Maze—he often uses *baleful polymorph* to change centipedes, spiders, and other vermin into creatures more suitable for his current needs.

**CREATURE:** Ordikon is here, endlessly studying books on metallurgy and trying to figure out how to enhance his greatest triumph. Unfortunately for him, the transition from flesh to metal unhinged his mind—ever since his change, he's lost the ability to learn and grow. Ironically, this transformation also granted him immortality, yet although he's existed for 10,000 years, Ordikon hasn't expanded his knowledge since his triumphant (and cursed) transformation. He retains his intelligence and capacity for logic, yet no longer has the drive and creativity he once possessed, his mind having grown more like that of a construct over the centuries. He endlessly reads the same texts, grasping detail piecemeal, but unable to reconcile it with past information.

While Ordikon has no problem studying his spells and retaining knowledge of magical traditions, his mind has difficulty retaining memories of less technical natures. He thus has only vague memories of the time before his transformation. He can remember, at times, that other wizards worked with him, and that he once served a man named Izomandakus. His memories today tell him these others were like him, metal men who deserved to rule over the lesser realm of transient flesh. Arguments to the contrary only confuse him and gradually raise his anger. His warped memories make him a poor subject for interrogation about Thassilon.

### ORDIKON, THE MITHRAL MAGE

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 38,400 | 14 | 169 |

Male Azlanti mithral-clad human transmuter 13 (*Advanced Bestiary* 169)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +16

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 31, touch 15, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 169 (13d6+121)

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

**Defensive Abilities** medium fortification (75%); **Resist** electricity 30, fire 15

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to electricity

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** *staff of mithral might* +11/+6 (1d6+5), slam +9 (1d6+3)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +19)

At will—change shape (*beast shape III*/*elemental body II*, 13 rounds/day)

9/day—telekinetic fist (1d4+6 bludgeoning)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 13th; concentration +19)

7th—*prismatic spray* (DC 23), *reverse gravity* (2)

6th—*disintegrate* (DC 24, 2), *flesh to stone* (DC 24), *greater dispel magic*, *quickened mirror image*

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 23, 2), *cone of cold* (DC 21), *dismissal* (DC 21), *quickened shield*, *wall of force*

4th—*dimension door* (2), *fear* (DC 20), *mass reduce person* (DC 22, 2), *stoneskin*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 19), *fly*, *extended false life*, *slow* (DC 21, 2), *protection from energy*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *cat's grace* (2), *glitterdust* (DC 18), *extended mage armor*, *scorching ray* (3)

1st—*expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 17), *magic missile* (3), *reduce person* (DC 19, 2), *true strike*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*



ORDIKON, THE MITHRAL MAGE



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**Thassilonian Specialization** transmutation; **Opposition Schools** enchantment, illusion

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Ordikon starts every day by casting extended *false life*, *mage armor*, and *unseen servant*. In the event that he hears combat nearby (or if he hears any of the golems in area **G4** activate), he takes the time to cast the following spells before investigating: *shield*, *stoneskin*, *fly*, *protection from energy* (electricity), *cat's grace*, and *expeditious retreat*.

**During Combat** If caught off guard, Ordikon uses *dimension door* to travel to area **G8**, casts his short-term defensive spells as outlined above, then returns to **G6** to confront the PCs. He always opens by casting *disintegrate* on any obvious clerics, along with a quickened *mirror image*.

**Morale** Ordikon fights until reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, whereupon he uses *dimension door* to travel to area **G8**. If confronted there, he fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** 21, **Int** 22, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (transmutation), Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (transmutation), Toughness

**Skills** Appraise +23, Craft (metalworking) +23, Fly +15, Knowledge (arcana, nature, nobility, planes) +23, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +23, Swim -1

**Languages** Aklo, Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal, Giant, Terran, Thassilonian

**SQ** arcane bond (staff), physical enhancement +3 Con

**Combat Gear** *staff of mithral might*; **Other Gear** *cloak of resistance* +1, *pearl of power* (2nd level), *rod of metal and mineral detection*, 500 gp in diamond dust

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Medium Fortification (Ex)** Whenever a sneak attack or critical hit is scored against Ordikon, there is a 75% chance that the extra damage is negated.

**Vulnerable to Electricity (Ex)** Ordikon takes 150% normal damage from electricity attacks.

**TREASURE:** The research books scattered around this room are worth a total of 10,000 gp. They detail various experiments and partial notes on the conundrum of transmuting lead into gold. They provide a +5 circumstance bonus on all Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (religion) checks made regarding transmutation and constructs. A character who spends several hours reading through these books discovers notes and descriptions of the solution the Lords of Greed hit upon to protect Karzoug from the fall of Thassilon. By building a *runewell* larger than any before, Karzoug could place himself in stasis between realities, suspended between Golarion and a hostile plane called Leng. Once the dust settled, the plan was for one of Karzoug's apprentices to release him. The details of this process are not recorded in the books—the wizards of

runeforge were focused only on aiding in the *runewell*'s construction, not what came after it was completed.

Also present here are Ordikon's spellbooks; a wizard who examines these finds them to be particularly unusual in that many of the notes and formulae within are redundant. Spells generally take up twice as much room as they need to in these books, as if the wizard who recorded them had a habit of repeating himself in various ways without realizing it.

## G7 HALL OF GOLDEN REPOSE (CR 14)



This wide hall is floored in polished wooden planks, its walls covered in colorful jade tiles. The ceiling is made of lustrous stone that reflects the light of three decorative lanterns that brightly illuminate ten gleaming golden statues of men and women in various poses of combat readiness that stand along the walls.

All 10 of the statues in this room were once soldiers and consorts in service to the Lords of Greed. These unfortunate souls were painfully gilt while still alive but paralyzed, then posed in pleasing shapes as the gold coating their bodies hardened. A close examination of the statues reveals looks of surprise, anger, and fear on their faces. Each statue is effectively hollow, containing a leathery, brittle corpse. Unfortunately, like the extravagant decor, the gold of these statues cannot exist beyond this wing of Runeforge.

**CREATURE:** A nalfeshnee demon named Zuvuzeg guards this room, due to a *binding* spell placed by one of Izomandakus's now long-dead allies. The nalfeshnee knows that Izomandakus is now dead, and has fallen into a fit of despair. The wording of the particular binding spell that keeps him stuck within this room and serving as a lowly guardian for the powerful magical pool in the room beyond was constructed such that Zuvuzeg would escape the term of his permanent servitude only after he successfully made Izomandakus laugh, cry, shriek, and cheer by using nothing more than the power of nalfeshnee's storytelling ability. Over the years, Zuvuzeg had finished three of these tasks with jokes, parables, and tales, but had yet to manage to make the stoic transmuter shriek. And now that Izomandakus is dead, the nalfeshnee realizes that it will never be able to escape from its servitude except via death, or by being freed by another.

None of the other wizards here are particularly keen to release the demon, and so it sees the PCs as its latest (and perhaps last) chance at freedom. It promises them a great reward if they can dismiss the CL 20th binding effect that keeps it here, or otherwise manage to banish it back to the Abyss—if the PCs do manage to do so, the demon chuckles and tells them their great reward is nothing more than its indifference to them—it won't attack or prevent them from entering the chamber





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#### PART TEN: WEAPONS OF POWER

## RECHARGING RESULTS

Use this table to determine the results of recharging items in the pool of elemental arcana.

| d% ROLL | RESULT                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01–03   | <b>EXPLOSION:</b> The item explodes and is destroyed. The explosion is a 30-foot-radius burst of a random energy type that deals 1d6 points of damage per charge in the item when it exploded (Reflex DC 15 half). |
| 04–25   | <b>BACKFIRE:</b> The pool drains 1d10 charges and deals 1d6 points of damage (of a random energy type) per charge drained to the character (Reflex DC 15 half).                                                    |
| 26–50   | <b>NO EFFECT:</b> The item glows as a torch for 1d4 hours, but gains no charges.                                                                                                                                   |
| 51–90   | <b>RECHARGE:</b> The item glows and regains 1d10 charges.                                                                                                                                                          |
| 91–99   | <b>FULL RECHARGE:</b> The item glows twice as bright as a torch and becomes fully charged.                                                                                                                         |
| 100     | <b>SUPERCHARGE:</b> The item now permanently glows twice as bright as a torch, and automatically regains 1d10 charges every 7 days on its own.                                                                     |

beyond, which it assures them contains a great treasure indeed. The demon, once freed, begins to make its own way through Runeforge looking for a method of escape—you can use it as a recurring (if untrustworthy) ally or foil against the PCs as you see fit. If the PCs aren't able to free the demon, or if they attack him or mock his so-called great reward, he fights to the death.

|                |                     |                 |                  |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>ZUVUZEG</b> | <b>XP</b><br>38,400 | <b>CR</b><br>14 | <b>HP</b><br>203 |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|

Nalfeshnee demon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 65)

**STORY AWARD:** Award the PCs experience as if they had defeated Zuvuzeg if they instead merely free him.

## G8 POOL OF ELEMENTAL ARCANA



Silver beams support a domed ceiling covered in polished darkwood panels inlaid with spiky glyphs. Most of the chamber's floor ripples in an immense, forty-foot-diameter pool of deep blue liquid. Flashes of lightning and goutts of flame dance along its surface, punctuated by thunderclaps, hisses, and cacophonous shrieks. Vague shapes writhe in the currents below the pool's surface.

This is the pool of elemental arcana, a powerful magical pool created by the Lords of Greed in an attempt to build a second runeforge well that they alone could use, unhappy as they were with sharing the one at Runeforge's center. Their skills, however, could not match what the Runelords themselves had created, and the pool of elemental arcana is a flawed creation. A successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that the waters of the pool are infused with raw magic, and that they could possibly be used to repair or recharge magic items.

The pool itself is only 2 feet deep, but is dangerous nonetheless. The pool's presence causes non-greedy souls to quickly grow disoriented and confused—such creatures must make a DC 18 Will save each round they remain within 10 feet of the pool's edge. Failure results in 1d6 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma drain as the character's soul is siphoned away and converted into raw magic by the pool. Physical contact with the pool's waters imparts a –4 penalty on the save. Any creature drained to 0 Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma is absorbed mentally and physically into the water, his body and soul converted to raw magic. A creature killed in this manner leaves behind his gear, but nothing of the victim's physical body remains, greatly limiting options to restore the victim from death.

**TREASURE:** The pool of elemental arcana has the capability of recharging magic items, yet it draws the power to do so from those nearby. Immersing a magic item in the waters causes it to glow brightly for 1d4 hours—unless the item uses charges, this is the only effect the pool imparts. If an item with charges is dipped in the pool, roll on the table above to determine what occurs. Each time an item is dipped more than once a day, apply a cumulative –5 penalty on the d% roll.

A character who attempts to recharge an item or gather water from the pool must succeed at a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid touching the water. Once taken from the pool, the water becomes pure water that radiates faint transmutation magic but is otherwise unremarkable (except for its value as a component for forging *runeforged* weapons—see Appendix Eight).

The pool itself can be rendered inert for 1d4 rounds by casting a successful *dispel magic* spell against CL 15th. Water harvested from the pool while it is inert still works as a *runeforged* weapon component.





## PART SIX: THE IRON CAGES OF LUST

THIS WING WAS INTENDED AS A PLACE FOR THE BREAKING AND TRAINING OF SLAVES. ORIGINALLY TENDED BY A SISTERHOOD OF ENCHANTERS, THESE WIZARDS WERE ALSO CALLED UPON BY RUNELORD SORSHEN TO AID IN DEVELOPING METHODS FOR HER TO ACHIEVE IMMORTALITY, AND ULTIMATELY, A METHOD OF SURVIVING BEYOND THE FALL OF THASSILON. UNLIKE SEVERAL OTHER WINGS, THOUGH, NO INFORMATION ON HOW THESE GOALS WERE MET REMAINS, FOR NOT LONG AFTER THASSILON'S FALL, THE SISTERS WERE BETRAYED BY ONE OF THEIR OWN SERVANTS, A SUCCUBUS NAMED DELVAHINE.



**A**fter she orchestrated the betrayal and murder of her mistresses, Delvahine was enraged to find that she was unable to escape Runeforge and return to the Abyss. For several hundred years her rage continued, until finally she accepted her fate and set to making her new home something more befitting her desires. She transformed much of this wing into one immense room, recruiting aid from the other wings by secretly dominating or otherwise manipulating the denizens found therein.

Today, Delvahine rules the Iron Cages, a dominant mistress in charge of a small army of enslaved and supplicant minions. Her four favorite followers are her children, alu-demons who serve her needs as guardians and lovers as she demands. Alu-demons are the offspring of a succubus and a human—in this case, Delvahine and four long-dead apprentices abducted from other wings of Runeforge. Delvahine has no real ties to Thassilon or the runelords, but the chambers she guards are keys (along with those of pride) to Karzoug's defeat.

Aging functions unusually in the Iron Cages. Creatures cease aging once they become adults, and as long as they remain in the cathedral, they are immortal. This immortality does not extend beyond this wing, though, and a creature that exits it is suddenly subjected to the weight of years and ages accordingly. All of the denizens of the Iron Cages are thousands of years old, and if they were to leave, they would immediately crumble to dust—the only exception to this is Delvahine herself. Already immortal, the succubus can come and go as she pleases—under the limits imposed by Runeforge.

a gargantuan mural depicts men and women engaged in all manner of carnal acts. Numerous plain ten-foot-by-ten-foot cubes line the outer ring of the cathedral, while at its center stands a pavilion of opaque silk sheets. Near the walls of the cathedral stand several delicate-looking cages, their sides more decorative than practical. Some of them contain what appear to be long-dead bodies, although one body in a cage in the chamber's northern corner seems to be clinging to life.

This wing consists of one room—an immense cathedral lined with ivory pillars carved into the likeness of Sorshen, the Runelord of Lust. The pillars are made of iron inlaid with ivory, depicting her in various lewd positions. The cages are display cases of a sort for several of Delvahine's conquests; they're detailed in areas H2–H4.

**CREATURES:** Delvahine's alu-demon children are the caretakers of this chamber. Allowed to enter their mistress's palisade only when invited or under the gravest of emergencies, they spend long hours out here, either on guard—tormenting what prisoners they have—or otherwise whiling away the hours. The four sisters are named Eryalla, Lelyrin, Voivod, and Zevashala. They resemble strikingly beautiful human women, save for the horns on their brows, their fangs, their taloned feet, and their batlike wings. Each wears little more than a few pieces of magical jewelry and flimsy garments, but before they come to investigate intruders, they take care to retrieve their ranseurs. They react to the arrival of PCs with excitement, flying into the air and circling overhead, making lewd and frank appraisals of each PC's appearance and possible sexuality. The alu-demons keep their mistress Delvahine apprised of the situation via telepathy, and until the PCs attack, try to enter the pavilion, or attempt to interact with any of the cages, the alu-demons are content to cruelly mock and flirt with the invaders. As soon as any of these conditions occur, though, the alu-demons swoop down to attack. If the PCs have already explored the

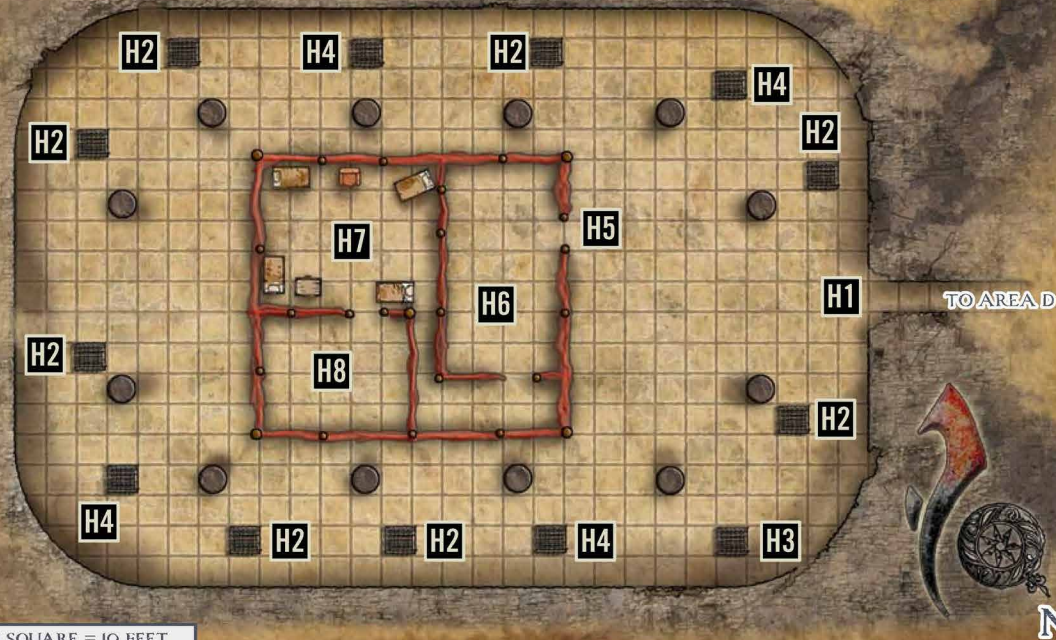
### H1 CATHEDRAL OF SEDUCTION (CR 14)



This grand cathedral can be called nothing less than opulent. The floor is covered in polished red and white tiles. Thick pillars carved into the likenesses of the same beautiful nude woman with long flowing hair circle the room and support a ninety-foot-high domed ceiling, where



# THE IRON CAGES OF LUST



Shimmering Veils of Pride and mention Vraxis (see page 280) by name or indicate that they have some information from him that Delvahine might wish to see, the alu-demons hold their attack long enough to telepathically alert Delvahine that she has guests. The succubus then contacts the PCs via the same means, asking them to state their purpose. Her initial attitude is unfriendly in this case, rather than hostile. If the telepathic conversation can make her at least friendly, she grants permission for the PCs to enter her pavilion to speak with her. In this case, the PCs themselves are escorted by all four alu-demons.

All four alu-demons are submissives, a prestige class that focuses on fanatically protecting and serving a chosen mistress.

| ERYALLA, LELYRIN, VOIVOD, AND ZEVASHALA | XP<br>9,600 each | CR<br>10 | HP<br>124 each |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|----------|----------------|
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|----------|----------------|

Female alu-demon submissive 5 (*Tome of Horrors Complete* 154, *Plot & Poison* 73)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +17

## DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 124 each (11 HD; 6d10+5d10+66)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +10; +5 vs. sleep and fatigue

**Defensive Abilities** beauty of blood, evasion, mock obedience, pain is pleasure, tirelessness; **DR** 5/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 16

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

**Melee** mwk ranseur +19/+14/+9 (2d4+9/x3) or  
2 claws +19 (1d6+6 plus vampiric claws)

**Special Attacks** shield the mistress

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +12)

3/day—*charm person* (DC 15), *detect thoughts* (DC 16),  
*disguise self* (DC 15), *suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*dimension door*

## TACTICS

**During Combat** The alu-demons start combat by using *suggestion* on heavily armored foes, suggesting that those foes take off their armor and gear so the demons can “get a better look at them.” They then attempt to use *charm person* against any foes who resist this initial *suggestion*. They avoid melee as long as they can, hovering just out of reach of non-flying foes and using their ranseurs. If one alu-demon is forced into melee, the others join their sister, one flanking the foe and the others standing directly behind their sisters to attack with the ranseur via reach so all four can attack one target at a time.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 50 hit points, an alu-demon uses *dimension door* to travel to area H7 and takes up a protective position at her mistress's side. If that alu-demon has a charmed PC, she takes that PC with her when she retreats. Delvahine may or may not offer her children and their new pets healing.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 16, **Con** 21, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 34

**Feats** Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +20, Escape Artist +19, Fly +19, Knowledge (planes) +18, Perception +17, Perform (sing) +10, Sense Motive +17, Stealth +19



**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** mistress (Delvahine), mistress said so

**Gear** masterwork ransour, *belt of mighty constitution* +2, *bracers of armor* +3, jewelry worth 8,000 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Beauty of Blood (Ex)** Submissives are immune to bleed damage, and take 1 fewer point of damage from all slashing attacks.

**Mistress (Ex)** The succubus Delvahine is the mistress to all four of these alu-demon submissives. If any of these alu-demons ever willingly disobeys Delvahine or willingly allows her to come to harm, they lose all of their supernatural abilities save for their vampiric claws, and take a permanent -6 penalty on all saving throws against enchantment effects. If Delvahine dies, these penalties apply as well.

**Mistress Said So (Su)** The alu-demon submissives gain a +1 morale bonus on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks.

**Mock Obedience (Su)** Any time an alu-demon submissive is affected by a charm or compulsion effect, she may make a second saving throw to break its hold at any time as an immediate action.

**Pain is Pleasure (Ex)** An alu-demon submissive has damage reduction 5/— against nonlethal damage.

**Shield the Mistress (Ex)** Whenever Delvahine would be hit by a ranged attack or melee attack and the alu-demon submissive is within 5 feet of Delvahine, the submissive may make a DC 20 Reflex save to be hit by the attack instead. If Delvahine is forced to make a Reflex save against an effect that normally allows a Reflex save for half damage, the submissive may make that Reflex save against the effect to take the full damage from the effect while preventing any of that damage from harming the mistress. Evasion does not protect the submissive from this particular damage. The submissive must be aware of the attack and cannot be flat-footed in order to use this ability. She can attempt to shield the mistress against up to 8 attacks per round.

**Tirelessness (Ex)** A submissive gains a +5 bonus on saving throws against sleep and fatigue effects.

**Vampiric Claws (Su)** Each time an alu-demon damages a foe with her claw attack, she gains temporary hit points equal to the amount of damage she inflicted. She cannot gain more hit points in one strike than her target's current hit points + the target's Constitution score (which is enough to kill the target). These temporary hit points vanish in 1 hour.

## H2 EMPTY DISPLAYS



A human-sized birdcage with flimsy silver bars decorated with delicate golden birds and flowers stands on four slender legs here. The cage doesn't seem to have a door.

These cages are in fact much more solid than they appear, for each is a permanent *forcecage* (CL 15th) with a decorative metal shell built around it. The *forcecages* themselves are solid cubes, and the air inside refreshes

as it does elsewhere in Runeforge. No practical way to enter or exit these cubes exists. When a new victim is captured, Delvahine typically renders him unconscious and then has two of her children, carrying the prisoner's body between them, use *dimension door* to enter the cage, leave the prisoner, then use *dimension door* to get out. Once the trophies are caged, Delvahine can visit them as she wills.

**TREASURE:** The gold and silver cages are worth 1,000 gp each if the PCs can devise a method to remove the immobile *forcecage* inside of each. Each cage weighs 250 pounds.

## H3 MR. MUTT



The inside of this birdcage contains a shivering man wearing little more than a set of chains and a thick leather collar. A pair of clay bowls occupies one corner and a pile of straw sits in another.

**CREATURE:** A young Thassilonian soldier named Nelevetu Voan earned the enmity of one of the caretakers of the Cathedral of Lust a few weeks before the fall of Thassilon. He was imprisoned here as punishment, and for the last 10,000 years has remained a prisoner. Over those years, Delvahine and her daughters have visited him countless times, to the extent that he's little more than a shuddering animal, energy drained to the brink of death yet unable to die as long as the cathedral sustains him and the demons don't push him too far. The alu-demons have taken to calling him Mr. Mutt and think of him as their pet.

Nelevetu is a broken shell of a man, and his madness is so profound that he's little more than a toy for the sadistic temptresses now. His reaction to the PCs should they free him should be pitiful and disgusting, perhaps shocking. Powerful magic can restore his sanity, but with 10,000 years of memories weighing on him, sanity might be a crueler fate than death. If the PCs cure him of his madness and can soothe his fears with a successful DC 50 Diplomacy check (or any kind of mental control), they might be able to learn much of Thassilon—he was a commander in Sorshen's army, after all. You can use Nelevetu to instill in the PCs the gravity of the situation—his tales of the cruelties of the runelords should be enough to convince the PCs that having even one of them return would be a disaster for Varisia. At the very least, Nelevetu can inform the PCs of a fair amount of the information about Shalast and Karzoug presented on page 233.

Nelevetu will only continue living as long as he remains here in the Cathedral of Lust. His life has been preserved by the cathedral's magic, and if he leaves, he immediately crumbles to dust as the years finally claim him. Nelevetu's statistics below present him in this weakened, traumatized, and insane state; he'll



still need equipment if he's going to be able to help the PCs, and even then he can't leave this room without immediately crumbling to dust.

| NELEVETU VOAN | XP<br>1,200 | CR<br>4 | HP<br>81 |
|---------------|-------------|---------|----------|
|---------------|-------------|---------|----------|

Male Azlanti fighter 11  
CN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +6; **Senses** Perception -2

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 81 (11d10+16)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** -3, **Will** -6; +3 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +3

**Weaknesses** energy drained, schizophrenic

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** unarmed strike +5/+0/-5 (1d3+4)

**Special Attacks** weapon training (pole arms +2, close +1)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** If attacked, Nelevetu shrieks and cries, but does his best to fight back to defend himself—although it's more likely he'll become confused due to his schizophrenia. The noise he makes, if outside of his cage, is enough to alert all of the inhabitants of the Iron Cages, who come to investigate at once. If cured of his madness, Nelevetu is grateful and agrees to aid those who saved him in fighting against his oppressors—particularly if they remove his negative levels and give him equipment he can use.

**Morale** Nelevetu fights to the death, regardless of the state of his mind and soul—he's not suicidal, but after as long as he's lived, he certainly no longer fears death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Dodge, Greater Weapon Focus (halberd), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (halberd), Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Specialization (halberd)

**Skills** Intimidate +2, Perception -2, Sense Motive -2

**Languages** Thassilonian

**SQ** armor training 3

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Energy Drained** Nelevetu currently suffers from 10 permanent negative levels, courtesy of encounters with Delvahine. The penalties to his stats and hit points from these negative levels have been calculated into the stats above.

**Schizophrenic** Nelevetu suffers from madness—specifically, from a potent case of schizophrenia (see *GameMastery Guide* 251). This debilitating condition makes him take a -4 penalty on all Wisdom- and Charisma-based skill checks. In addition, it prevents him from ever taking 10 or 20 on any roll. In addition, he must make a DC 16 Will save each round he's in a stressful situation (such as combat) to resist becoming confused for 1d6 rounds.

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs restore Nelevetu's mind and convince him to help, award them 9,600 XP.

## H4 CORPSE CUBES



The interior of this cube is thick with the stink of death. A nearly skeletal human corpse lies in the middle of the cell, surrounded by a stain of corruption and ancient rot.

These bodies are all at least hundreds of years (in a few cases thousands of years) dead, past victims of the succubus whose bodies were left to rot after they died. (Within each cube, the strange energies that grant immortality to those who live in this wing of Runeforge override the preservative effects of the dungeon, allowing dead flesh to decay normally.) Each of the four was father to one of the alu-demons, and they treat these cubes with a near-holy respect, averting their gaze from the bones within out of fear that their mother might think they were lusting for them. It is not good to displease the mistress or arouse her jealousy.

## H5 DELVAHINE'S PAVILION



This huge pavilion is made of silk sheets of various colors—crimson, lavender, ochre, cobalt blue, and purple. The sides ripple softly, as if a breeze were gently caressing the fabric. The entire structure looks unabashedly glamorous and out of place, yet here and there, splashes of what can only be blood mar its beauty.

This pavilion serves Delvahine as a pleasure palace. She often invites some or all of her children in to assist in her depravities, but just as often relies on the charmed and dominated creatures she's collected from other wings of Runeforge. Her reputation as a dangerous and unpredictable harlot is more than deserved.

The pavilion, contrary to its looks, is not a fragile thing of fabric. The sheets of cloth are fashioned of tough silk harvested from behemoth spiders that dwell in the Outer Rifts of the Abyss. Each of the pavilion walls takes a great deal of effort to push through or break down and is resistant to most physical and energy attacks—bludgeoning and piercing attacks deal no damage at all to them, and they are immune to electricity and cold attacks. Fire deals half damage—only acid and sonic deal normal damage, and even then the not-inconsequential hardness of the fabric applies (hardness 10, hp 60 per 5-foot square, Break DC 32). Note that while this exotic fabric would normally be worth dozens of gp per square yard, portions of the stuff harvested and brought beyond the Iron Cages swiftly crumble to worthless flakes of dust only 1d6 rounds after leaving the preservative influence of this wing of Runeforge.



SINS OF THE  
SAVIORS

CHAPTER  
BACKGROUND

PART ONE:  
THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME

PART TWO:  
SEEKING RUNEFORGE

PART THREE:  
RUNEFORGE AND THE  
ABJURANT HALLS

PART FOUR:  
THE RAVENOUS CRYPTS

PART FIVE:  
THE VAULT OF GREED

PART SIX:  
THE IRON CAGES

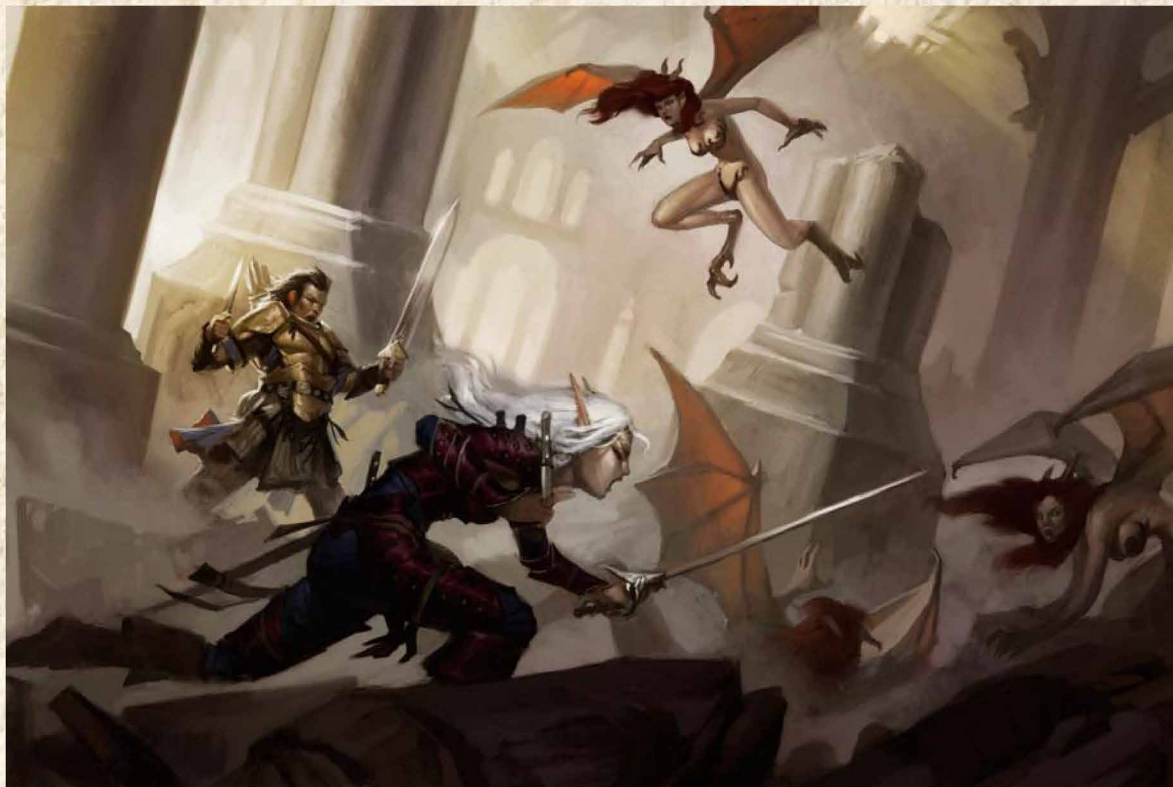
PART SEVEN:  
THE SHIMMERING VEILS

PART EIGHT:  
THE FESTERING MAZE

PART NINE:  
THE HALLS OF WRATH

PART TEN:  
WEAPONS OF POWER





## H6 PAVILION ENTRANCE (CR 13)



Numerous thick rugs, cushions, and tasseled pillows cover the floor of this decadent chamber. Strange, exotic scents are in the air, likely coming from several smoldering braziers and censers balanced on elegant silver stands in the corners of the room.

**CREATURES:** A group of long-dominated stone giants stands guard here. Delvahine received them as gifts from Vraxeris thousands of years ago when he first began to approach the succubus with talk of a treaty (see the Shimmering Veils for more information). The stone giants themselves have been Delvahine's slaves for so long that they have no memories of their lives before, or even the concept that they're not the only members of their kind in the world.

| ENSLAVED STONE GIANTS (5) | XP<br>4,800 each | CR<br>8 | HP<br>102 each |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|
|---------------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The stone giants move to block entrance into the room if anyone enters, and bellow out a warning to their mistress. If she doesn't reply to them telepathically in 1 round to allow the visitors entrance, the giants attack at once. Their primary goal is to prevent anyone from entering the pavilion, and they'll abandon targets as necessary to do just that.

**Morale** The giants fight to the death.

**TREASURE:** The four incense burners are minor magical devices that never go out or run out of fuel; they can be commanded to emit any number of pleasant and mildly narcotic scents. Each is worth 500 gp.

## H7 MISTRESS DELVAHINE'S CHAMBERS (CR 15)



The air in this room is unusually close—seeming almost to shimmer with pleasant-smelling mist. Pillows, cushions, and throw rugs cover the floor, and four beds sit in the corners of the room. Each bed has an iron frame to which numerous ropes and leather straps are attached. A large padded throne sits against the far wall, between two beds, while opposite it in another corner, a tall, spindly censer sits on a low wooden table—it's from here that the faint mist seems to be issuing.

This chamber is Delvahine's personal playground, a place where she can satisfy all of her deviancies and desires. The censer on the darkwood table is part of a trap to weaken the will of those who enter—the unusual magic item's power is tied to the magic of this wing of Runeforge, and if taken from this area, it ceases to function until it is returned. The censer's fumes constantly emit a *mind fog* effect (CL 15th) in a 60-foot spread—this room and area H8 are filled with the mist. Unlike normal *mind fog*, the mist produced by this censer does not affect outsiders. Any other creature that enters the area must succeed at a DC 17 Will save





or take a –10 competence penalty on Wisdom checks and Will saves as long as he remains in the mist and for 2d6 rounds thereafter. A moderate wind disperses the mist, but the mist refills the area immediately once the wind passes.

**CREATURE:** Delvahine spends equal amounts of her time lounging and engaged in all matter of debauchery involving her daughters, the giants, summoned demons, participants called in via *summon monster III*, or just herself. She reacts poorly to interruptions, and if the PCs haven't already made contact with her and secured an audience, she calls out telepathically for aid from any surviving giants or daughters and attacks immediately.

If the PCs have secured an audience with the succubus by mentioning Vraxeris, she's curious to know why he hasn't visited or contacted her in years. If she learns of his death, her mirthful reaction plays to the PCs' favor—her amusement at his failure to keep up with his clones puts her in a good mood. As long as the PCs don't insult her, she agrees to give the PC with the highest Charisma score one of her toys from area **H8** for use in the runeforge pool—all she asks in payment is that one of the PCs accompanies her into her boudoir for a few minutes of fun... alone. She'll also accept payment in jewelry or magic items worth at least 5,000 gp—a better option, since anyone left alone with Delvahine for even a few minutes is in deep trouble. Such characters are typically energy drained to death. If they're lucky.

## DELVAHINE

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 51,200 | 15 | 249 |

Female succubus bard 6/dominant 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 68, *Plot & Poison* 66)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect good*; Perception +33

### DEFENSE

**AC** 29, touch 16, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +6 Dex, +7 natural)

**hp** 249 (19 HD; 8d10+11d8+158)

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +20, **Will** +17; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

**DR** 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 18

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

**Melee** *sadist's lash* +22/+17/+12 (1d3+5/19–20), +1 dagger +21/+16/+11 (1d4+5/19–20) or 2 claws +22 (1d4+4 plus 1d3 nonlethal) or agonizing touch +22 (1d3 nonlethal)

**Special Attacks** agonizing touch, binding whip, deadly whip, energy drain, penetrating whip, profane gift, bardic performance 27 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2, suggestion)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +25)

Constant—*detect good*, *tongues*

At will—*charm monster* (DC 27), *detect thoughts* (DC 25),

*ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *suggestion* (DC 26), *vampiric touch*

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 28), *summon* (level 3, 1 babau 50%)

**Spells Known** (CL 11th; concentration +24)

4th (5/day)—*dominate person* (DC 29), *freedom of movement*, *greater invisibility*

3rd (7/day)—*confusion* (DC 27), *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *haste*

2nd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 25), *cure moderate wounds*, *eagle's splendor*, *hold person* (DC 26), *mirror image*

1st (9/day)—*alarm*, *animate rope*, *cure light wounds*, *grease* (DC 24), *hideous laughter* (DC 25), *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*ghost sound* (DC 23), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Delvahine is unlikely to be caught off guard by the PCs since her daughters keep in telepathic contact with her. Once she knows the PCs are approaching (either at her permission or otherwise), she casts *freedom of movement*, *eagle's splendor*, and *mirror image*.

**During Combat** Delvahine prefers to fight with allies, particularly her submissive daughters, who are well trained at protecting her. She uses her bardic performance to inspire courage on the first round of combat, then moves on to use *dominate person* and *confusion* against her foes. If forced to fight in melee, she fights with dagger and *sadist's lash*, using Arcane Strike each round to deal an additional 3 points of damage with each hit.

**Morale** Delvahine teleports to area **I2** if brought below 20 hit points—as distasteful as it is to her, she hopes to seek aid from Vraxeris. When she discovers he is dead and only his simulacra remains, she assumes his form, allies with his simulacra, and awaits the PCs' arrival in that wing to seek revenge.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 23, **Con** 26, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 36

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 35

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Reflexes, Dazzling Display, Double Slice, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Spell Focus (enchantment), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (whip)

**Skills** Acrobatics +36, Bluff +37, Diplomacy +36, Escape Artist +29, Fly +36, Heal +11, Intimidate +36, Knowledge (arcana, planes) +20, Perception +33, Perform (dance) +36, Perform (oratory) +36, Sense Motive +36, Stealth +29

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Thassilonian; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** change shape (Small or Medium humanoid; *alter self*), enchantment specialization, bardic knowledge +3, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (dance, oratory)

**Gear** +2 *glamered mithral chain shirt*, *sadist's lash*, +1 dagger, *belt of physical might* +4 (Dex, Con)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Agonizing Touch (Su)** Delvahine can deal 1d3 points of nonlethal damage with a touch attack at will as a standard action. She deals an additional 1d3 points of nonlethal damage with her natural attacks.



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**Binding Whip (Ex)** Delvahine does not provoke attacks of opportunity when she uses a whip in melee. She can also attempt to entangle a Large or smaller foe with a whip—to do so, she makes a touch attack against a target. If she hits, the target is entangled. If she succeeds at an opposed Strength check against the target, the target can not move farther than 15 feet away from Delvahine. An entangled creature can escape with a successful DC 20 Escape Artist check (a full-round action) or DC 25 Strength check, or by sundering the whip. As long as she entangles a foe with her whip, Delvahine cannot use that whip to make additional attacks. Delvahine can release a foe from her binding whip as an immediate action.

**Deadly Whip (Ex)** Delvahine can choose to deal normal damage with a whip rather than nonlethal damage.

**Enchantment Specialization (Ex)** Delvahine gains a +1 bonus to overcome SR when she casts *dominate person*, and the save DC of any *dominate person* spell she casts increases by 1.

**Penetrating Whip (Su)** Delvahine can harm any foe with her whip, regardless of the foe's armor or natural armor bonuses.

**TREASURE:** A DC 20 Perception check reveals something hidden under the southernmost bed: a *handy haversack* that contains a *tome of understanding* +1, six *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of remove disease*, and a *potion of remove paralysis*.

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs manage to get a *runeforged* weapon component from Delvahine without sacrificing one of their own or starting a fight, grant them XP as if they had defeated Delvahine in battle.

## H8 DELVAHINE'S BOUDOIR (CR 14)



This smoky chamber has no furniture, but mounds of blankets, pillows, and sheets lie heaped on the floor, in some places built into nests.

This chamber is Delvahine's personal room—her boudoir. While the opening between this room and area H8 is normally left open, Delvahine can cause a curtain to swing down to seal off this room completely at a touch. Other creatures may attempt to do so as well, but locating the small spot that triggers the curtain requires a successful DC 35 Perception check—opening the curtains without locating this requires a successful DC 40 Disable Device check.

Any PC foolish enough to accompany her into this room to make a payment for one of her devices (see the previous area) is subjected to the succubus's energy drain and her agonizing touch for 2d4 minutes—that's a minimum of 20 rounds, and is likely enough to kill anyone.



With a successful DC 35 Diplomacy or Intimidate check, the succubus agrees to let the PC spend 1d3 rounds preparing for the payment with spells or other protective magic. Delvahine may be disappointed if her lover doesn't perish as a result of their time together, but for well-spoken companions she's willing to make exceptions! If at any point a PC attacks her, the succubus calls out for her daughters to teleport in to aid her, then fights as detailed in her tactics above. In such a case, she is immediately joined by the two creatures that guard this chamber.

**CREATURES:** Delvahine's boudoir is far from undefended. Two shining children, originally summoned by one of the previous mistresses of this wing of Runeforge, now serve Delvahine as charmed minions. Delvahine is quite fond of the two creatures, particularly their spell-like abilities to cast *mirage arcana*—at her command, the shining children use this ability to completely change the appearance of this room. The primary reason the chamber has no furniture is that

the blankets, cushions, pillows, and sheets often mix well with the pastoral glens, nightmarish hellscape, decadent boudoirs, or intimidating dungeons that the succubus enjoys as window dressing for the room.

Delvahine has kept the two shining children under the effects of a *charm monster* spell for many, many years. But in truth, even if these effects are dispelled, the monsters themselves don't really mind serving the succubus—they feel no lust for the creature, but have still, in their own strange ways, come to look upon her as a mother figure of sorts. As a result, they fight any intruders to the death if they're not accompanied by their succubus mistress. The shining children themselves stand silent and motionless in the corners of the room at all other times, waiting to serve at the succubus' command.

### SHINING CHILDREN (2)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 19,200 each | 12 | 152 each |

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 245)

**TREASURE:** Strown about the chamber are a dozen exotic, bejeweled toys and devices of decidedly erotic natures that Delvahine uses in her debauches. The functions of some of these devices are salaciously obvious in some cases, but in others isn't always clear at first glance. As a collection, they are worth 2,400 gp, but not all merchants would publicly admit to an interest in purchasing them, requiring the merchant to be helpful (or bluffed as to the true nature of the devices before they can be sold. In any event, any one of these toys works as a component for a *runeforged* weapon.





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# PART SEVEN: THE SHIMMERING VEILS

ALTHOUGH THE VAULTS OF GREED ARE MORE DECADENT, AND THE IRON CAGES MORE DEVIANT, THE SHIMMERING VEILS OF RUNEFORGE HOUSED THE WIZARDS WHO TOOK THE GREATEST PRIDE IN THEIR ROLES HERE. THEIR LEADER, VRAXERIS, WAS HANDPICKED BY RUNELORD XANDERGHUL, AND HIS APPRENTICES WERE THE MOST LOYAL OF ALL IN RUNEFORGE. ALTHOUGH ALL SEVEN WINGS WORKED TOGETHER AND, IN THEORY, WERE EQUAL, IN TIME IT BECAME APPARENT THAT VRAXERIS AND HIS ILLUSIONISTS WERE THE BEST SUITED TO LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION.

As a result, in the thousands of years after Thassilon fell, Vraxeris was the only one of the original runelord apprentices to survive. In other wings, apprentices like Ordikon or Azaven inherited control, or non-apprentice minions like Delvahine or Athroxis took command. In the Shimmering Veils, Vraxeris retained control. Even after his apprentices died of old age, he remained, for Vraxeris had mastered the art of creating clones. Yet Vraxeris's skill at cloning himself went beyond even what the spell itself allowed, for each time he aged and died, he was reborn in a fresh, young body. As long as he could maintain his studies and experience (since each clone wakens with two permanent negative levels), Vraxeris was effectively immortal.

It took the awakening of the runeforge well to disrupt this cycle. Vraxeris aided the others in defeating the Abjurant Halls, then turned his considerable mind to the question of why the well had awakened. It didn't take him long to determine that Karzoug was the source. Enraged that it wasn't his lord, Xanderghul, who was wakening, Vraxeris began to research a method by which he could escape Runeforge and defeat Karzoug before he had fully emerged back into the world. With Karzoug's wealth and power, Vraxeris could then awaken his own master with ease.

Vraxeris was nearing the solution for these conundrums when tragedy struck. Always before, he had managed to accumulate enough power to create a new clone before his current body perished. Yet in his efforts to create a portal out of Runeforge, he delayed his advancement just enough that when he was seized with a sudden, unexpected recurrence of the same hereditary dementia responsible for the majority of his previous deaths, he was unprepared. In this growing dementia, he lost the ability to tell the difference between reality and his own illusions. He locked himself in his meditation room and spent nearly every day clothing himself in illusions of beauty, and staring at himself in his mirror. Eventually, as he had countless times before,

the dementia in his brain spread deeper, and as he sat in front of his mirror bedecked in kingly raiment believing that he was a god, he quietly passed away when the basic life-giving functions of his brain failed. Yet this time, there was no clone waiting to return his soul to life.

This wing of Runeforge is a grand cathedral decorated with peacock motifs and massive chandeliers hanging from the ceiling to brightly illuminate it with hundreds of *continual flames*.

## 11 REFLECTED ENMITY (CR 14)



This brightly lit corridor is lined with floor-to-ceiling mirrors. The reflections give the dizzying impression that the corridor opens up to each side, extending infinitely into the distance.

Although most of the mirrors in this hallway are not magic, two mirrors at either end of the junction are *mirrors of opposition* built into the walls. Any character coming between them who turns to face his reflection in one also sees his reflection in the other, triggering two exact duplicates of that PC to attack him. The same thing happens up to three more times each time a PC sees his reflection. The *mirrors of opposition* are not portable magic items, unfortunately—their construction depends as much upon Runeforge's magical properties as anything else.

**STORY AWARD:** Award the PCs 38,400 XP for surviving this encounter against their own duplicates.

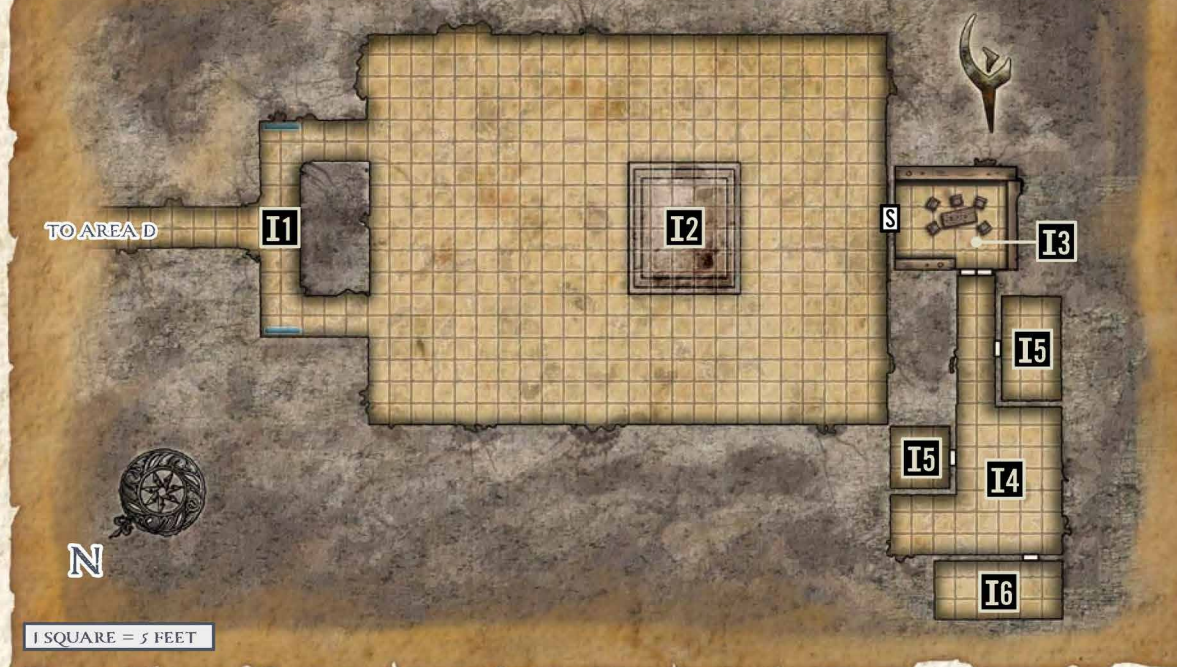
## 12 THE PEACOCK SHRINE (CR 13)



The corridor opens into an immense cathedral of polished ivory flagstones. Mirrored walls rise to a height of nearly a hundred feet, where the vaulted ceiling arches majestically. Four immense chandeliers hang from golden chains and brightly illuminate the entire room. At the center of the cathedral, a three-step dais of polished wood



# THE SHIMMERING VEILS OF PRIDE



supports a peacock the size of a wyvern, its feathers spread regally behind it. The creature's eyes seem to hold a great depth of wisdom and intelligence.

The peacock is a heightened *permanent image* (Will DC 23 to disbelieve). A secret door behind a section of mirrors in the far wall may be located with a DC 30 Perception check. Fragments of any of the wall mirrors here function as *runeforged* weapon components.

**CREATURES:** Before he moved on to perfecting and improving the *clone* spell, Vraxeris experimented on himself often with *simulacrum*. Today, only six of these simulacra remain. Without the capacity to grow more powerful or the drive to improve themselves, these effectively immortal duplicates were used by the real Vraxeris as assistants. Now that Vraxeris is dead, the six simulacra continue to carry out his last orders: to keep anyone from disrupting his studies in area **I3**. Each simulacrum is identical: an immaculately dressed human man with shoulder-length blond hair. When they detect intruders, they speak with one sonorous voice in Thassilonian: "The master is in study—he is not to be disturbed. Please keep your screaming to a minimum while you are punished for daring to venture this close to his magnificence."

## FALSE VRAXERISES (6)

| XP         | CR | HP      |
|------------|----|---------|
| 4,800 each | 8  | 93 each |

Male Azlanti human simulacrum illusionist 9

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +11

## DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+1 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

**hp** 93 each (9d6+59)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk dagger +6 (1d4/19–20)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +13)

At will—invisibility field (9 rounds/day)

7/day—blinding ray

**Spells Prepared** (CL 9th; concentration +13)

5th—*feeblemind* (DC 19), *shadow evocation* (DC 21, 2)

4th—*confusion* (DC 18), *greater invisibility*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 20, 2), empowered *scorching ray*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, extended *false life*, *fireball* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 19, 2)

2nd—*invisibility* (2), *minor image* (DC 18, 2), *mirror image*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*

1st—*charm person* (DC 15), *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15), *shield*, *silent image* (DC 17, 2)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*

**Thassilonian Specialization** illusion; **Opposition Schools** conjuration, transmutation

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** If the simulacra suspect trouble is coming (such as if they hear combat in area **I1**), they cast *false life*, *invisibility*, and *shield* on themselves.

**During Combat** The simulacra do their best to rely on invisibility and ranged spells to keep foes from being able to directly engage them with ease.



**Morale** The simulacra fight until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 19, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion), Toughness

**Skills** Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (arcana, nobility, religion) +17, Perception +11, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +17

**Languages** Aklo, Draconic, Giant, Necril, Thassilonian

**SQ** arcane bond (dagger), extended illusions +4 rounds

**Gear** masterwork dagger, *ring of protection* +1, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, noble's outfit worth 200 gp, spellbook (contains only spells prepared)

### I3 MEDITATION ROOM



Bookcases full of tomes and scrolls line this cozy chamber's walls and a reading table with several matching chairs sits atop a thick rug in its center. A peacock made of gold sits upon the table, holding a single stick of incense cleverly positioned in its tail feathers. A heavy wooden door exits the room through the wall to the northwest. A figure lies slumped in the chair in the far corner—the body of a man wearing rich robes and a cloak made of peacock feathers. An elegant mirror is clutched in his hand, and a book and quill sit on the table before him.

This room is filled with religious essays on the subject of the Peacock Spirit, one of the more popular faiths during Thassilon's height. Unfortunately, the books kept here are maddeningly vague and coy in revealing actual details about the Peacock Spirit, made all the worse by the large volume of material at hand. Very little here can be of use in bringing to light more facts about this maddeningly obscure ancient cult.

The body in the chair has been dead for well over 2 years, yet it looks as if it had only died a moment ago. These are the remains of Vraxeris himself, magically preserved by Runeforge. The book in his lap is an extensive journal written in Thassilonian. Reading the journal takes a day of study, although a character who skims the journal and succeeds at a DC 25 Linguistics check can glean the important entries relating to Runeforge and relatively recent events.

The bulk of the journal catalogs Vraxeris's studies and the development of an improved version of *clone* that effectively granted him immortality. The drawback was that each time he switched bodies, he lost a portion of his own knowledge and experience, forcing himself to relearn much with each incarnation. At several points in the

book, he also speaks of how with each new clone, the debilitating dementia that lurks at the end of his life manifests a little sooner—with each new body, his effective lifespan shrank. It seems obvious that the dementia finally struck soon enough to prevent him from creating a new clone, and thus finally, death claimed him. A wizard could use the journal to rebuild Vraxeris's version of *improved clone*, but the research for creating this powerful 9th-level spell is particularly onerous and would itself consume most of a lifetime. Nevertheless, the journal is worth 15,000 gp for this information alone, and if word of its contents were to spread, all manner of unscrupulous wizards would doubtless do much to claim it by more violent means.

Of more immediate interest to the PCs are the journal's notes on more recent events. These key



VRAXERIS



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The runeforge pool awoke! I first took this as a sign that Runelord Xanderghul had risen. When I arrived at the pool to investigate, it seemed that the others had come to the same conclusion. The foolish Wardens of Envy thought to disrupt the recrudescence, and with the aid of Azaven, Ordikan, Athroxis, and that lovely creature Delvahine, we were able to defeat them utterly. Their Abjurer Halls lie in ruins. Our treaty was short-lived, though. Azaven absconded with the bodies and that treacherous wench Athroxis nearly turned me to death before I made it back here.

I was mistaken. Runelord Xanderghul still slumbers. It is that monster Karzoug who quickens and nears rebirth. Damnation! He must not be allowed to precede Xanderghul into the world, for he would rebuild Thassilon in his own inferior image, a testament to his own greed rather than one of pride in the work. He must be delayed or defeated!

I have managed to escape this place, to a certain extent. By astral projection I can explore what the world outside has become. It is a brutish place, yet it pleases me to see Thassilon's mark endures in the shape of our monuments. Still, the wilderness of the world vexes me. Gone is the empire I knew. Karzoug's city of Xin-Shalast is now hidden high in the mountains, and when I finally discovered it, I found the spires where his body is hidden to be inaccessible, warded against astral travelers by the occlusion field around the peak of Mhar-Massif. As long as his runewell is active, I fear even a physical approach would be impossibly deadly. I must determine a way to pierce these wardings, and to send an agent in my place. No need to risk my own life before my clone is ready.

excerpts are reproduced in Handouts 5-2 and 5-3. Alternatively, some of the information in the journal can be gleaned from *speak with dead* used on the remains themselves—attempts to raise Vraxeris from the dead automatically fail, though, for his soul has already been judged by Pharasma and has gone on to its final punishment.

**TREASURE:** The golden peacock is worth 800 gp. The books weigh just over 200 pounds, but as a collection is worth 1,500 gp to a scholar of Thassilonian lore. Vraxeris's spellbooks sit on the shelves to the north, and contain a wealth of spells between their covers, including all of the wizard illusion spells in the *Core Rulebook*—there are no conjuration or transmutation spells in these books.

The gear remaining on Vraxeris's body is worth a small fortune. He wears an *evil robe of the archmagi*, a *headband of vast intelligence* +6, a *ring of wizardry* II, and a *cape of the mountebank*.

## I4 VRAXERIS'S LIBRARY



Once a fine library, the books held in this large chamber—along with the bookshelves that once held them—have been destroyed by fire and force. The devastation seems complete—although it's possible something may survive somewhere under all of the ruin. To the north, a sizable alcove extends from the room into what may have once been a large reading area, but this too has been ruined.

As Vraxeris neared his end, he experienced a short moment of dreadful lucidity—a half-hour only in which he realized he had allowed his dementia to slip too far and would soon be dead forever. Struck with rage and despair, he destroyed the once-priceless contents of this room before lapsing back into madness, retreating to area I3, and finally dying.

**TREASURE:** A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals one single, intact book amid the destruction—a *tome of leadership and influence* +2.

## I5 CLONE REMAINS



This room is empty—save for a grisly heap of identical-looking dead bodies stacked in a well-organized heap.

This immense pile of bodies are the remains of Vraxeris's previous clones—all elderly versions of the body found in area I3, magically preserved by Runeforge. Between these two rooms, just over 200 dead clones are present—Vraxeris was too full of pride and too stubborn to simply dispose of the bodies.

## I6 VRAXERIS'S BEDROOM (CR 13)



This long room contains only three plain items of furniture—a large bed strewn with silk ropes, a writing desk, and a freestanding armoire.



*I have taken steps toward an alliance with Delvahine. She may be able to escape this place, for she was not of the original blood. At the least, she can call upon agents from outside, and perhaps through them we can secure servants in the outer world. She seems uninterested in Sorshen's return; all the better for Xanderghul, that.*

*The runeforge pool is the key. As I suspected, the occlusion field around Karzoug's fortress in Xin-Shalast has a flaw. His lack of knowledge of the intricacies of Sorshen's and my own lord Xanderghul's powers have left an opening. My agents must use components infused with our lord's virtues, attract the latent magic within these components, and then anoint their chosen weapons with this raw power. The runeformed pool seems to have enough reserves to enhance no more than half a dozen or so runeformed weapons, but those enhanced with enchantment and illusion magic will be most potent against Karzoug's defenses. They may even be pivotal in his defeat. For my own part, fragments of any of the mirrors in the Peacock's Hall should suffice for a component. Delvahine's... equipment... should suffice for enchantment, although one might be wise to cleanse them before they are handled.*

*The search for an agent goes poorly. Delvahine seems more interested in her own lusts than aiding me. Worse, the lapses and fevers are increasing. I fear that I will be forced to see to Karzoug myself, in which event I will need to use the master circle I built into the Halls of Wrath to escape this place. Yet first, I must set aside my work on delaying Karzoug's return and turn back to the final development of my 205th clone. I only hope I have time to finish before the dementia takes hold...*

Ever frugal, Vraxeris's bedroom was appointed with relatively mundane furnishings that the wizard often changed the appearance of with his illusions. Since his death, these illusions have faded, leaving behind the plain, miserly truth for anyone to see.

**CREATURES:** While Vraxeris was fond of the succubus Delvahine, he wasn't always fond of her demanding personality. She rarely visited him in this wing, and never visited his bedroom—so she never learned that the wizard had created six simulacra of her to keep in his bedroom for his pleasure. If she were to somehow learn of this somewhat disturbing fact, she'd make her way into this room as soon as possible to destroy them.

The six false Delvahines in this room are relatively vacant in personality, yet Vraxeris left one final command for them—they shriek and howl if intruders enter the room, attacking on sight unless the intruders are accompanied by the true Delvahine, in which case all six simulacra go a little mad and function as if confused as long as the real Delvahine remains in sight.

### FALSE DELVAHINES (6)

| XP         | CR | HP       |
|------------|----|----------|
| 4,800 each | 8  | 103 each |

Female simulacrum succubus bard 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 68)  
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect good; Perception +22

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +7 natural)

**hp** 103 each (9 HD; 8d10+1d8+55)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

**DR** 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 18

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

**Melee** 2 claws +12 (1d4+3)

**Special Attacks** bardic performance 14 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +1), energy drain, profane gift

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +22)

Constant—detect good, tongues

At will—charm monster (DC 24), detect thoughts (DC 22),  
ethereal jaunt (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), greater  
teleport (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), suggestion (DC  
23), vampiric touch

1/day—dominate person (DC 25), summon (level 3, 1 babau 50%)

**Bard Spells Known** (CL 1st; concentration +11)

1st (4/day)—animate rope, hideous laughter (DC 22)

0 (at will)—mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 19, **Con** 22, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 31

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Dazzling Display, Spell Focus (enchantment),  
Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (whip)

**Skills** Acrobatics +35, Bluff +30, Diplomacy +35, Escape Artist +16, Fly  
+35, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana, planes) +16, Perception +22,  
Perform (dance, oratory) +22, Sense Motive +35, Stealth +16

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Thassilonian; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** change shape (Small or Medium humanoid; alter self), bardic  
knowledge +1



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### PART TEN: WEAPONS OF POWER





## PART EIGHT: THE FESTERING MAZE

THIS AREA WAS ONCE A SERIES OF CANALS AND POOLS—FOR MEDITATING, REFLECTING, BATHING, AND JUST SOAKING—AS WELL AS DIVANS, PADDED BENCHES, AND SOFT BEDS WHERE THE VIRTUE OF REST WAS PURSUED. IT WAS A REWARD FOR THE FAVORITES OF KRUNE, THE RUNELORD OF SLOTH AND RULER OF HARUKA. OF COURSE, THE VIRTUE OF REST BECAME CORRUPTED LIKE ALL OF THE OTHERS, DEGENERATING INTO THE BASEST FORM OF INDOLENCE. WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN A BEAUTIFUL HAVEN HERE INSTEAD BECAME A COLLECTION OF CESSPOOLS SURROUNDED BY STAGGERING PILES OF FILTH AND REFUSE.



**T**he wardens of sloth were the first to succumb in the centuries after the fall of Thassilon—none of this wing's masters survived more than a decade, in fact, and today the Festering Maze is ruled by the least and last of their minions, an obese wizard named Jordimandus who traded his heart and soul for immortality from his foul patron Jubilex—as long as Jordimandus doesn't stray too far from the magical humors that both revitalize him and pollute the waters of the maze itself. These fluids, infused as they are with Abyssal energies, have transformed the maze over the past thousands of years into something more akin to a demonic sewer than anything resembling the relaxing retreat and bathing facility that it was originally designed to be. Members of the other Runeforge wings have taken to calling the place the Festering Maze and using it as a farm of sorts for creatures to experiment on, although the unpleasant stench and foul conditions in the maze ensure that these visits never last too long.

**FOUL VAPORS:** The air in the Festering Maze is foul and slightly toxic—the magic that replenishes air elsewhere in Runeforge helps to keep the air in this wing from becoming downright poisonous, but only just barely. Any visitors to the maze must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save once per hour (the DC increases by +1 each hour) to avoid becoming sickened for as long as they remain in the maze plus an additional hour after they leave the complex. This is a poison effect—creatures that do not breathe, or that have dwelled in the maze for at least a week (as have all the denizens of the maze) are immune to this effect.

**TAINTED WATER:** To call the slimy liquid that slowly flows through the Festering Maze “water” is, to put it mildly, charitable. The stuff is foamy, foul-smelling, cloudy, and riddled with disease. Anyone who drinks it is immediately exposed to blinding sickness, while anyone who enters the water while wounded is exposed to filth fever—rules for both diseases are presented on page 557 of the *Core Rulebook*. Creatures that have dwelled in the maze for at least a week are immune to these effects, as are creatures that are immune to disease entirely.

### J1 RUNEFORGE SEWERS



The air grows thick and foul-smelling in this chamber, yet the vaporous stink here is nothing compared to the insult to the senses elsewhere. Slime encrusts the walls in swaths of sickly brown and noxious green. A foamy sewage channel runs along a slippery walkway, the thickly shuddering skin atop the slowly churning fluid seeming to hint that, despite its repulsive appearance and smell, something lurks in those depths.

Although they bear a striking resemblance to sewers, both in appearance and scent, the tunnels of the Festering Maze were not designed for that intent. Regardless, today these chambers have all the charm of a poorly maintained septic system. The walls and waters of this maze are alive with relatively harmless but nonetheless disturbing vermin: fist-sized spiders, deformed rats, pallid foot-long centipedes, and glistening tangles of worms wriggle in the corners of all these rooms.

Two types of passageways exist in this wing of Runeforge: walkways and waterways. Each presents its own dangers. Walkways are exceptionally slippery—it costs 2 squares of movement to enter any walkway square, and the DC of Acrobatics checks increases by 5. A successful DC 10 Acrobatics check is required to run or charge here. In places, narrow bridges span the waters; these bridges are only 2 feet wide, and require a successful DC 15 Acrobatics check to cross. Failure by 5 or more indicates a fall into the foul waters below.

The waterways aren't much better. The water level rises to within an inch of nearby walkways, and is generally about 10 feet deep. The current flows toward area J4, but isn't strong enough to make the stuff particularly tricky to swim in. At several places along these tunnels, metal grates block progress. Omox demons can slither through these grates, but other creatures must either smash through the grates or force







them open (hardness 10; hp 60; DC 25 Strength check to force open). Alternatively, all of the gates can be opened by throwing the appropriate lever in area J2. Note that in some cases, the grates have been destroyed by previous visitors—these grates can be passed through with ease.

**CREATURE:** The lord of this wing is an obese wizard named Jordimandus. While he never leaves his lair in area J5, he does keep an eye on his realm via his quasit familiar, Sobloch. The quasit patrols the maze while invisible—if he spots the PCs, he quickly flies back to his master to report, after which Jordimandus prepares for battle. There's a 30% chance that Sobloch is in this room when the PCs arrive. If he's not here at that point, there's a cumulative 10% chance per 10 minutes of the quasit encountering the PCs on his ceaseless patrol—this chance rises to 100% the first time the PCs get into a significant combat.

## SOBLOCH

HP  
95

Quasit familiar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 66)

## J2 SLUICE CONTROLS (CR 14)




A slippery walkway connects four platforms running down the room's center to a station of some sort at the far end of the chamber—there, three large and filthy levers protrude from the dripping wall. To the north, four metallic pipes protrude from the wall, ten feet above the level of

the sewage—fresh foulness runs from these pipes in thick streams. Every now and then, something larger and hideously more substantial than mere fluid strains through the bars blocking these pipes to drop with a turgid splash into the foulness rippling below.

The reservoir itself is 20 feet deep. The pipes in the north wall once connected to one-way portals to the Plane of Water, similar to those that feed the fountains in the Vault of Greed, but not long after Jordimandus took control of the Festering Maze, he refocused these portals to much more distant points in the Great Beyond. Today, these tubes instead siphon in tainted water from the Abyssal realm of Undersump—the domain of Jordimandus's patron, Jubilex. Omox demons periodically slip through these portals into the Maze, and the fluids have caused other creatures in the maze to mutate (see the denizens of area J4), but the portals do not allow escape from Runeforge in the other direction. If a character climbs up one of these tubes, he'll find it comes to an apparent dead end 100 feet to the north of the room, with the foul waters seeming to seep directly out of a blank wall.

All of the levers protruding from the western wall are massive, 3-foot lengths of pitted iron. A slime-encrusted plaque above each lever bears a word or short phrase in Thassilonian—before this word can be read, though, the slime covering it must be cleaned away. In fact, the slime is so thick that unless someone succeeds





at a DC 15 Perception check, the three plaques could well go entirely unnoticed. The left and right levers are in the “up” position, while the middle one is in the down position. The first time any of these levers are used, a successful DC 20 Strength check is required to move them.

**Left Lever:** This lever’s plaque reads “Access Control.” Lowering this lever causes all of the gratings in the Maze to retract up, granting increased mobility through the Maze. Raising it again lowers the grates back into place.

**Middle Lever:** This lever’s plaque reads “Portal Control.” Pushing this lever up closes off the portals to Undersump at the far end of the pipes. Fluid ceases to flow from the pipes, and over the course of an hour, the remaining water drains into area **J4**, leaving a 10-foot-deep pool in this room, a much deeper pool at **J3**, and several slippery but navigable tunnels in between. Pushing the middle lever back down opens the portals again—if at least an hour has passed, the backed-up sludge carries with it 1d3 omox demons that slop into this chamber and immediately attack any creatures they find within. Note that Jordimandus immediately notices if this lever is manipulated, and prepares for battle as detailed in his tactics.

**Right Lever:** This lever’s plaque reads “Warning: Cleaning Cycle.” If the right lever is pulled down, an explosion of water erupts from the ceiling above the central platform—this deluge knocks anyone on that platform into the surrounding waters if they fail a DC 15 Reflex save. This blast of water carries with it a single elder water elemental, summoned from the Plane of Water (see Creatures, below) before closing automatically 1 round later. This effect may only be activated once per day.

**CREATURES:** Beyond the vermin that infest the maze and the more dangerous creatures that live in some of the larger rooms, several particularly noxious demons make their home in the Festering Maze—omoxes, known to some as ooze or sloth demons. With gelatinous bodies topped by powerful humanoid arms and frightening skull-like faces, these demons swim and cavort in the Maze’s waterways and take exception to intruders.

Two omox demons lurk in the waters of this chamber—faced with a group of intruders, they wait until the group is spread out in the room before rising up from the filthy waters to attack. If the water elemental is released, it focuses all of its attention on any omox demons in the room. Once any omoxes present are slain, the elemental begins scrubbing away the filth in the wing—an impossible task unless the PCs close the portals to Undersump, and even then a task that could keep the elemental occupied for weeks. The elemental does not attack the PCs unless it is attacked first, but enterprising PCs could lure it into

encounters with other creatures in this wing—all the PCs need to do is get the elemental to follow them and its hatred of filth will do the rest!

### OMOX DEMONS (2)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 19,200 each | 12 | 162 each |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 79)

### ELDER WATER ELEMENTAL

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 12,800 | 11 | 152 |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 127)

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs conjure the elemental and manage to use it to combat the denizens of this wing, award them XP as if they’d defeated the elemental in combat once it dies or once the PCs finish with this wing of Runeforge.

## J3 A FILTHY GRAVE



The worked stone of the tunnel gives way here to a natural cavern. A twenty-foot-wide gap breaks the walkway, while the rough stone walls are caked with a riot of color—ooze and fungi of all colors in the rainbow grow thick here in a foul-smelling profusion of beauty.

In some parts of this maze, century after century of exposure to the foul energies from Undersump have eaten away at the preservative magic, resulting in a long period of slow decay culminating in several partial collapses. These energies also caused a deep sinkhole to develop, although the tainted water hides the true extent of the hole. The pool here is 150 feet deep, coming to an end finally amid a tangled pile of debris and bones.

**TREASURE:** Several years ago, one of Ordikon’s minions entered the Festering Maze to capture a batch of creatures for use as experimental subjects, only to end up dead at the bottom of this pit. The wizard’s remains lie at the bottom of the pool today—most of his gear has long since been ruined by the waters, but his *rod of extend metamagic* and *bag of holding I* remain. The wizard’s spellbooks are in the bag. Feel free to fill these spellbooks as you see fit, but within the book’s margins are notes on how the morphic mist and the golems in areas **G2** and **G4** function—if the PCs haven’t yet encountered these dangers, these notes should help prepare them for that eventuality.

## J4 INFESTED SUMP (CR 14)



The surrounding stone has fallen away into a large, curved cavern. Here and there, foul water cascades into the room from intersecting tunnels, tumbling ten feet to the frothy surface of liquid below.





## SINS OF THE SAVIORS

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As with area J3, this cavern was created when the caustic nature of the tainted water ate away at a particularly weak section of stone, resulting in this chamber. The rest of the Maze drains into this chamber, which has stabilized at a depth of about 20 feet before the overflow sifts away through narrow fissures in the stone, eventually draining into the eternal void that surrounds Runeforge.

**CREATURES:** Over the ages, countless strange and foul monstrosities have found their way through the portals in area J2 into this complex. This room contains a pair of such creatures—two tentacled, gray monsters from the deepest crevices of the Abyss: chernobue qliploth. The two vaguely tadpole-shaped monsters have chosen this cavern as their lair, and for many years have been wallowing within its walls. Their ability to use *air walk* at all times allows them to come and go as they will, as does their *plane shift* ability. As *plane shift* is a spell-like ability, the chernobues can come and go from Runeforge as they will, and often spend weeks at a time infesting and befouling other realms. For now, though, the two repulsive monsters have been resting here in their lair for many weeks—they do not take well to intruders, and fight to the death to defend their home.

### CHERNOBUES (2)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 19,200 each | 12 | 150 each |

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 220)

## J5 JORDIMANDUS'S THRONE (CR 15)



This room reeks of strange chemicals. A five-foot-wide metal walkway looks out over a large pool of foamy, filthy water ten feet below, from which five metallic pipes emerge through the walkway above. Four of these pipes are five feet in diameter and extend up in the four corners of the room to a height of about a foot above the balcony; each is filled with a different colored bubbling fluid. The fifth pipe is twenty feet wide and extends up to the north—this pipe is filled nearly to the rim with shuddering, glowing green sludge. Thin streams of fluid flow through the air from the four corner pipes to drain into the central one. A stone throne floats in the air above this slime.

The glowing contents of the pipe fill this room with normal (if unusual) light. As with other surfaces in the maze, the balcony that encircles this room is slippery. The pool of filthy water below is 30 feet deep, while the ceiling is 20 feet above balcony level.

While the water below is no different from the water elsewhere in the maze, the fluid contained in the five pipes is quite different. Each of the smaller pipes in the four corners of the room contain magically replenished supplies of the four bodily humors—magical alchemical

fluids distilled from blood, phlegm, yellow bile (choler), and black bile (melancholy). These fluids steep in their pipes, then flow through the air to mix in the central pipe, forming a magical fluid that sustains and bolsters this room's most dangerous occupant. Contact with any of these four humors has specific effects—a character who drinks any of these humors takes a –6 penalty on the saving throw to resist the humor's effect. All but choler have mind-affecting effects.

**Blood (Red, northwest pipe):** Blood fills those who touch it with overwhelming joy and mirth (DC 15 Will save or be affected by *hideous laughter* for 1d4 rounds).

**Phlegm (Brown, northeast pipe):** Phlegm drives those who touch it momentarily insane (DC 15 Will save or be affected by the confused condition for 1d4 rounds).

**Choler (Yellow, southwest pipe):** Choler dissolves flesh at an alarming rate, inflicting 6d6 points of acid damage to anyone who touches it (DC 15 Reflex half).

**Melancholy (Black, southeast pipe):** Melancholy overwhelms the target with paralyzing remorse (DC 15 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds).

**CREATURES:** Bloating Jordimandus, the only surviving Warden of Sloth, rules from this chamber—although “rules” is perhaps not the most accurate term, since he’s content to let events in the Festering Maze unfold without his intervention. Once a mere servant to the original Wardens of Sloth, when those wizards expired not long after Thassilon’s fall, Jordimandus found himself the only remaining wizard amid a vast collection of research materials. In the first several years of his lonely new life, Jordimandus was unusually productive—not only did he manage to change the focus of the portals in area J2, but he even managed to secure a potent demonic enhancement from his shapeless patron, Jubilex—a magical heart of slime. This heart, which beats slowly in his forever-opened chest, grants Jordimandus great defensive powers, but has also turned him over the years into a paragon of sloth—an obese monstrosity who wants little more than to spend his hours sitting on his levitating throne above the alchemical soup that is now the sole thing keeping him alive.

While Jubilex’s gift grants Jordimandus immortality, that gift persists only as long as the wizard remains in this room, in range of the magical humors that mix in the open pipe below his floating throne. The humors in each of the pipes themselves are alive, and move to attack anything that comes within reach. Each humor is effectively an immobile advanced ochre jelly—but each has a reach of 15 feet. The ochre jellies do not have the split ability, but do possess significant spell resistance. Worse, the touch of each ochre jelly inflicts an effect dependant upon which pipe it dwells within—see the effects above for the four humors. If one of these ochre jellies is slain, that stream of humor splashes to the ground and Jordimandus immediately gains a negative level. If all four jellies are slain, Jordimandus



can survive for no longer than a week—unless he can repair the damage done (which is unlikely, due to his now almost overwhelming slothfulness).

## JORDIMANDUS

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 51,200 | 15 | 190 |

Male Azlanti conjurer 15

CE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +0; **Senses** see invisibility, Perception +16

### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 12, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +6 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 190 (15d6+135)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +8, **Will** +15

**Defensive Abilities** demonically obese, heart of slime; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** critical hits, sneak attacks

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** unarmed strike +9/+4 (1d3+2)

### Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +20)

At will—dimensional steps (450 feet/day)

8/day—acid dart (1d6+7 acid)

### Spells Prepared (CL 15th; concentration +20)

8th—quickened *dimension door*, *summon monster VIII* (2)

7th—quickened *dispel magic*, *power word blind*, *summon monster VII* (2)

6th—quickened *acid arrow* (2), *disintegrate* (DC 21), *greater dispel magic*, *summon monster VI*

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 22, 2), *dismissal* (DC 20), *feeblemind* (DC 20), quickened *shield*, *summon monster V*, *telekinesis* (DC 20)

4th—*confusion* (DC 19), *dimension door* (2), *mnemonic enhancer*, *screaming* (DC 19), *stoneskin*, *summon monster IV*

3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *fly*, *stinking cloud* (DC 20, 2), *suggestion* (DC 18), *summon monster III*

2nd—*acid arrow* (2), *false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 19), *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *resist energy*, see *invisibility*

1st—*charm person* (DC 16), *grease* (DC 18, 2), *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *summon monster I*, *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*

### Thassilonian Specialist conjuration; Opposition Schools

evocation, illusion

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Jordimandus casts *mage armor* and *unseen servant* daily. Once he realizes his maze is invaded, he casts *stoneskin*, see *invisibility*, *false life*, *fly*, and quickened *shield*.

**During Combat** Jordimandus starts combat by summoning monsters, using quickened *acid arrows* while he does. He resorts to offensive spells only once there's a nice group of summoned monsters to protect him from melee. He stays in his throne until menaced in melee, at which point he uses flight, dimensional steps, and *dimension door* to stay away from the PCs. Jordimandus carries his *rod of absorption* at all times—he does not carry a weapon at all, relying entirely on magic in combat.

**Morale** Jordimandus is something of a coward—if he's brought down to fewer than 30 hit points, he drops to his knees and begs for his life. While he can't leave this room without dying, he's learned quite a lot about Runeforge and its inhabitants—information that the PCs can use to their advantage (see *Treasure*, below).

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 22, **Int** 20, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Combat Casting, Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (conjuration), Improved Familiar, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration), Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +17, Fly +30, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (planes) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Perception +16, Spellcraft +23



JORDIMANDUS



## RUNEFORGED WEAPON COMPONENTS?

|          |                                                        |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| SLOTH    | admixture of the four humors                           |
| GREED    | waters from the pool of elemental arcana               |
| ENVY     | vial of ethillion?                                     |
| LUST     | one of Delvahine's personal toys, perhaps?             |
| PRIDE    | a shard from any of the mirrors Vraxeris has looked in |
| WRATH    | ashes from anything in the Halls of Wrath              |
| GLUTTONY | some of that delicious Init wine                       |

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Draconic, Elven, Necril, Thassilonian  
**SQ** arcane bond (quasit), summoner's charm (7 rounds)

**Combat Gear** *rod of absorption*; **Other Gear** *cloak of resistance +3, handy haversack, ring of protection +2, diamond dust worth 500 gp, ivory plaque worth 50 gp, silver mirror worth 1,000 gp, spellbooks*

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Demonically Obese (Ex)** While Jordimandus's fat grants a +4 natural armor bonus, it reduces his base speed to 10 feet.

**Heart of Slime (Su)** Jordimandus's heart grants a +6 profane bonus to Constitution and renders him immune to critical hits and sneak attacks. The heart also effectively makes him immortal by ceasing his aging and nourishing him. Oozes do not attack Jordimandus as a result of his unholy heart. If all four of the variant ochre jellies in the surrounding pipes are slain, Jordimandus's access to the life-giving humors ceases and his heart begins to decay. He immediately loses all the benefits granted him by the heart, and furthermore takes 1d6 points of Constitution drain each day until he perishes.

**SOBLOCH**HP  
95

Quasit familiar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 66)

**VARIANT OCHRE JELLIES (4)**

|            |    |         |
|------------|----|---------|
| XP         | CR | HP      |
| 2,400 each | 6  | 75 each |

Advanced ochre jelly (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 218, 294)

**SR** 24

**Space** 10 ft., **Reach** 15 ft.

**TREASURE:** Jordimandus's "floating" throne doesn't precisely float at all. The 6-ton throne is in fact supported by two *immovable rods* fitted into its

base—removing these rods sends the throne plunging into the liquid below. A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals a hidden latch on the throne's left arm; depressing it causes a hidden drawer to open on the right side. Jordimandus keeps his spellbooks in here, along with a few magic scrolls (a *scroll of planar ally*, a *scroll of teleport*, and a *scroll of stone to flesh*) and a *manual of gainful exercise +2* that Jordimandus has never had the energy to read.

An investigation of Jordimandus's spellbooks reveals far more than spells—while Jordimandus hasn't left this room in well over 9,000 years, he's spent a significant amount of time using scrying to spy on Runeforge's other inhabitants. While most of what Jordimandus has scribbled in his margins is useless gossip, anyone who can read Thassilonian and spends 2d4 hours reading the notes can learn the names and basic roles of most of the named NPCs in Runeforge (subject to GM discretion).

Perhaps more importantly, though, Jordimandus has scrawled on the inside cover of his largest spellbook a significant bit of information—his suspicion on what components would work best for the crafting of *runeforged* weapons (see Handout 5-3). Jordimandus hopes someday to forge multiple *runeforged* weapons, arm summoned champions with them, and take over all of Runeforge—he's done most of the research needed to make the weapons and frequently mentions these plans elsewhere in his spellbook, but, fortunately for Runeforge's inhabitants, lacks the energy and drive to follow through on the plan.

Fluid from the central pipe in this room suffices as a *runeforged* weapon component.



SINS OF THE  
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## PART NINE: THE HALLS OF WRATH

RUNELORD ALAZNIST TASKED HER FINEST (AND MOST DESTRUCTIVE) WIZARDS AND SOLDIERS WITH THE CARE OF THE HALLS OF WRATH. TO AID THEM, SHE GAVE THEM THE SECRET OF CREATING THE HORRIFIC SOLDIERS KNOWN AS SINSPAWN, AND WITH THAT KNOWLEDGE, THE KEY TO FLESHWARPING. UNFORTUNATELY, THE WIZARDS OF WRATH DID NOT TAKE WELL TO WORKING TOGETHER. AFTER THE WARDENS OF SLOTH DECLINED, THE WIZARDS OF WRATH WERE NEXT. YET WHERE THE WARDENS OF SLOTH LEFT BEHIND ONLY ONE TO CARRY ON THEIR WORK, SEVERAL APPRENTICES REMAINED IN THE HALLS OF WRATH.



**C**enturies have since passed, and in that time, these heirs grew less interested in developing new magic and more interested in maintaining their own brutal society of warfare and training. The inhabitants of the Halls of Wrath have prepared endlessly for Runelord Alaznist's return, yet have made no attempt to hasten that event. The sinspawn are used for training human soldiers, who themselves have developed a closed but highly successful society. Hundreds of generations have passed, each led by a new highlord or highlady ascended from their own ranks. The current leader of these halls is a brutal woman named Athroxis, and the PCs are destined to give her what she's longed for her entire life—a chance to test the training of her soldiers against true invaders.

The Halls of Wrath are made up of several isolated chambers attached to each other via permanent *teleportation circles*—gifts from one of the Wardens of Sloth before Thassilon fell. None in the Halls of Wrath could hope to understand or duplicate the creation of a teleporter, so close-minded are they to conjuration magic, yet they value these *teleportation circles* beyond all else, since the circles' destruction would isolate them forever and turn their homes into tombs.

**Teleportation Circles:** Each of these measures 10 feet in diameter and is represented by a complex rune carved into the ground surrounded by a deep circular groove. Up to four Medium creatures may enter a teleportation circle at once. Those who do are immediately teleported to the destination keyed to it: always a specific circle with the rune of wrath engraved in the ground within it. The *teleportation circles* are one-way only.

### K1 IRON GUARDIAN (CR 13)



A wide corridor of polished marble opens into a brightly lit and extremely tall chamber. The upper portion of the far wall is entirely covered in a mural of an armored woman with crimson hair holding a burning ranseur and riding on the back

of a massive red dragon. A square outcropping of smooth marble juts out from the far wall, rising from the floor to a height of thirty feet. An opening in the wall directly behind the flat top of the stone column leads deeper into this section of the vault. A twelve-foot-tall iron statue stands on this platform, an enormous iron bow gripped in its metal fists and a strange rune that looks almost like a pair of fangs decorating its chest.

This immense hall was used to receive visitors to the Halls of Wrath—those who were turned away were executed by the room's guardian if they didn't immediately leave. The marble surfaces of this chamber are too smooth to climb without magic—when a visitor was granted an audience, the room's guardian was commanded to carry the visitor up to area K2.

**CREATURE:** As many PCs will doubtless suspect, the iron statue is a golem. What they might not expect is that this iron golem is a variant known as an iron archer, and is capable not only of making devastating ranged attacks, but of *air walking* as well.

When the iron archer detects intruders, it sounds a thunderous alarm that triggers other alarms throughout the Halls of Wrath—metallic clanking that vibrates the stones. This alarm alerts all of the denizens of the Halls of Wrath—Highlady Athroxis uses her *wand of clairaudience/clairvoyance* to observe the battle in this room.

#### IRON ARCHER

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 38,400 | 14 | 151 |

Variant iron golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 162)

N Large construct

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *see invisibility*;  
Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

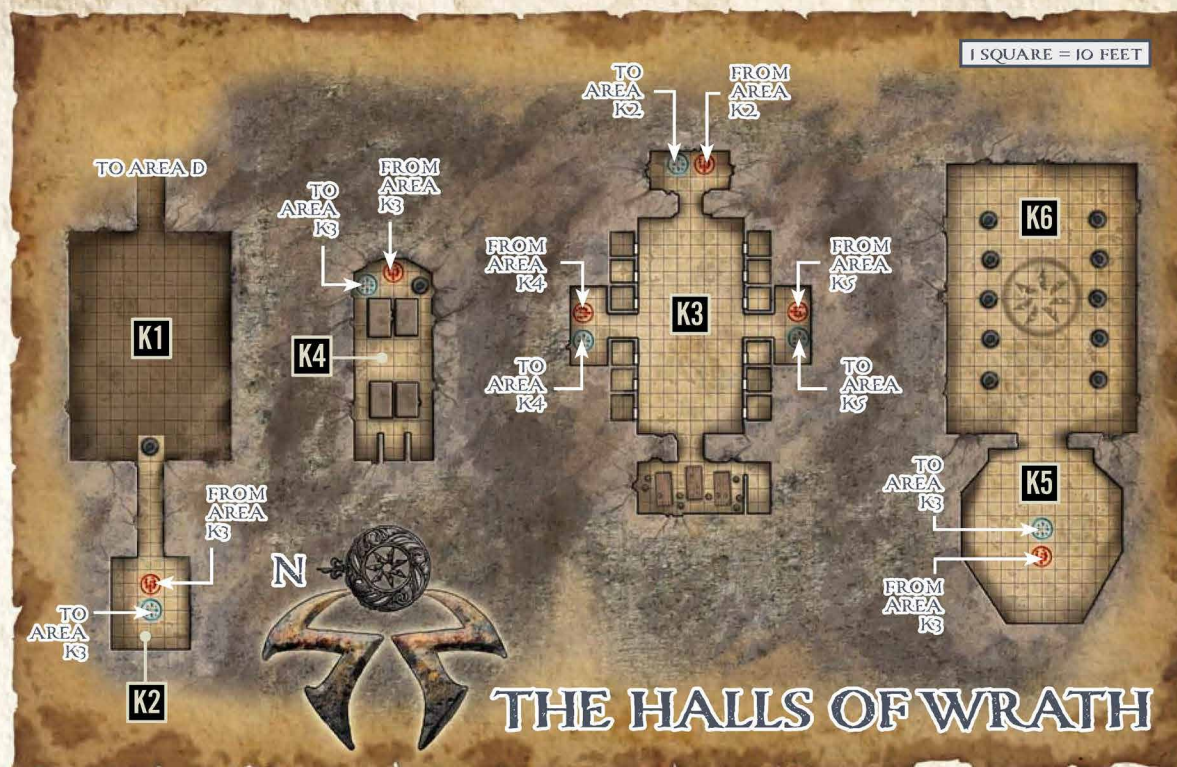
**AC** 32, touch 10, flat-footed 31 (+1 Dex, +22 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 151 (22d10+30)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

**DR** 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic





#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +34 (2d10+19/19-20)

**Ranged** arrows of wrath +22/+17/+12/+7 touch (3d6/x3)

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

**Special Attacks** arrows of wrath, breath weapon (DC 21), powerful blows

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th; concentration +15)

Constant—*air walk*, see *invisibility*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The iron archer focuses its attacks on opponents who get past it into the corridor to the exclusion of all others, until the target is dead or flees. If no opponent gets past it, the iron archer focuses on flying foes.

**Morale** The iron archer fights until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 36, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +22; **CMB** +36; **CMD** 47

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Arrows of Wrath (Su)** When the iron archer attacks with its bow, it fires arrow-shaped bolts of energy. These arrows deal 3d6 points of damage on a hit. On the first round of combat, these arrows deal fire damage. On the second round, they deal electricity damage. On the third they deal cold damage. On the fourth round, they switch back to fire and the cycle repeats. If the iron archer ceases to use its arrows (to make a melee attack, for example), the cycle restarts with fire arrows the next time it fires.

**TREASURE:** Both of the golem's eyes are valuable gemstones—the left is a diamond worth 5,000 gp,

while the right is in fact a *gem of brightness* (13 charges; the golem cannot use this item).

### K2 TELEPORT ROOM



Two engraved circles in the ground surround large runes in their center. The one to the east is red, while the one to the west is blue.

These are *teleportation circles*. The eastern circle is the arrival point from area K3, while the western one is the departure circle to area K3. They can be identified as *teleportation circles* with a successful DC 29 Knowledge (arcana) check, although determining where they go or lead from can only be discovered by trying them out.

### K3 BARRACKS AND TRAINING HALL (CR 14)



This long chamber is filled with practice dummies dressed in battered and scorched suits of armor and a few contraptions bearing sharp implements. Several doors and two open corridors exit the chamber along each side wall. An opening in the opposite wall leads to what appears to be a meeting hall.

Several *continual flames* on the walls provide light for this chamber, which is the primary training hall for the denizens of the Halls of Wrath. No matter how battered the training dummies get, the room itself repairs them every 24 hours so they're good to go for the next day's work.



Despite the fact that the warriors stationed here need not eat or sleep, their training demands they take time to do so. This prevents them from falling into habits that could be problems once the call for war is heard and they must return to Golarion. Each of the 20-foot-square side rooms contains bunks for humans to the west, sinspawn to the east.

**CREATURES:** After the first few generations of warriors of wrath grew too inbred, steps were taken to ensure that only the most desirable traits were passed on to the children of this insular community. Using the fleshwarping labs (area K4) to aid in the shaping of both human and sinspawn offspring alike, the denizens have even regulated the cycle of birth and death in the Halls of Wrath. Each generation of soldier is allowed to breed at age 24, and then when they reach the age of 44, a new Highlord is selected and the older generation

is sent to the flesh forges for transformation into sinspawn. Fortunately for the PCs, the recent war with the Abjurant Halls resulted in the deaths of many of the warriors here. Their numbers depleted, and having not yet reached the age where they are traditionally allowed to reproduce themselves, several warriors of wrath now toil in the fleshwarping labs, seeking a way to reverse the sinspawn transformation in hopes of reclaiming lost numbers. As a result, only six warriors of wrath and six sinspawn are here to stand against the PCs.

As combat begins here, Highlady Athroxis observes via her *wand of clairauidience/clairvoyance*.

### WARRIORS OF WRATH (6)

| XP         | CR | HP      |
|------------|----|---------|
| 3,200 each | 7  | 74 each |

Azlanti fighter 1/evoker 5/eldritch knight 2

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex)

**hp** 74 each (8 HD; 3d10+5d6+37)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *greatsword* +11 (2d6+5/19–20)

**Special Attacks** intense spells (+2 damage)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +10)

7/day—*force missile* (1d4+2)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 6th; 10% spell failure; concentration +10)

3rd—*displacement*, *fireball* (DC 19, 3), *haste*

2nd—*bull's strength*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray* (3), *shatter* (DC 16)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 17), *magic missile* (3), *shocking grasp*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *flare* (DC 14), *light*, *ray of frost*

**Thassilonian Specialization** evocation; **Opposition Schools** conjuration, abjuration

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The warriors of wrath allow the sinspawn to initially engage the PCs, giving themselves time to cast *bull's strength*, *mirror image*, *haste*, and *displacement*. They step in to replace fallen sinspawn on a one-for-one basis, using spells like *fireball* and *scorching ray* to hit PCs who hang back from the melee.

**Morale** The warriors of wrath fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 18, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Craft (armorsmith or weaponsmith) +16, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (engineering) +16, Perception +10, Spellcraft +16

**Languages** Aklo, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Thassilonian

**SQ** arcane bond (greatsword)

**Gear** +2 *mithral shirt*, +1 *greatsword*, spellbook (contains prepared spells only)

WARRIOR OF  
WRATH



## SINSPAWN AXEMEN (6)

| XP         | CR | HP      |
|------------|----|---------|
| 3,200 each | 7  | 69 each |

Male sinspawn fighter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 246)  
NE Medium aberration

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., sin-scent; Perception +11

### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

**hp** 69 each (8 HD; 3d8+5d10+29)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1; **Immune** mind-affecting effects; **SR** 13

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 greataxe +13/+8 (1d12+7/x3), bite +5 (1d6+1 plus wrathful bite)

**Special Attacks** weapon training (axes +1)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The sinspawn move to intercept intruders and prevent anyone from engaging the warriors of wrath for as long as they can hold the line. They always use Power Attack in combat (taking a –2 penalty on attacks to deal +4 damage).

**Morale** The sinspawn fight to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)

**Skills** Intimidate +13, Perception +11, Stealth +11

**Languages** Thassilonian

**SQ** armor training 1, martial proficiency

**Gear** +2 breastplate, +1 greataxe

## K4 FLESHWARPING LAB (CR 13)



This long chamber is filled with two rows of wide worktables. The far end of the chamber contains three wide alcoves. The ones to the north and south are each filled with all manner of alchemical supplies and large barrels, while the one in the middle contains a single huge vat of what appears to be twitching, foul-smelling flesh.

This chamber is where the Lords of Wrath forge magical weapons and armor, and also where they transform older generations into sinspawn and engineer the proper growth of their own children.

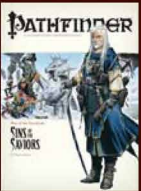
The vat of bubbling flesh in the central alcove is a semi-living mass of protoflesh—the raw building material for growing sinspawn and a key component of much of the work done here to keep the generations of wrath from descending into deformity and madness. The stuff smells foul, and is dangerous to eat or even to touch. A living creature that contacts protoflesh must succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude save (at a –4 penalty if the

protoflesh is actually consumed or injected) or suffer a painful and unfortunately permanent mutation. These mutations can be vestigial limbs, twisted feet, sightless and hideous eyes, or anything else—feel free to get creative in describing them. The effects are the same—one randomly determined ability score is reduced by 2 points. This is not drain or damage, but a permanent reduction to the score. This reduction may be removed by excising the mutated part and then casting *regenerate*, via *greater restoration*, or with a *miracle* or *wish*. Protoflesh dies quickly if removed from a vat—it remains dangerous only for 1 round after being removed from the vat itself.

**CREATURES:** This room is currently occupied by nine warriors of wrath, all toiling diligently on a complex problem—a method to revert a sinspawn back into its human source. The answer is still a long way off for the increasingly frustrated warriors of wrath, who take to any interruptions with welcome and sadistic glee. They fight to the death to protect this laboratory.



SINSPAWN  
AXEMAN



## SINS OF THE SAVIORS

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

### PART ONE: THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME

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### PART THREE: RUNEFORGE AND THE ABJURANT HALLS

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### PART EIGHT: THE FESTERING MAZE

### PART NINE: THE HALLS OF WRATH

### PART TEN: WEAPONS OF POWER



## WARRIORS OF WRATH (9)

| XP         | CR | HP      |
|------------|----|---------|
| 3,200 each | 7  | 74 each |

(see page 292)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Anytime a warrior of wrath is next to a fleshwarping vat and not engaged in melee, she'll attempt to splash a glob of protoflesh on a PC by dipping a weapon and flipping the glob from the tip. This resolves as a ranged touch attack (with a -4 penalty on the attack roll for it being an improvised weapon, of course); it does not deal splash damage and only endangers the poor creature struck.

## K5 CHAMBER OF READINESS



The polished granite walls of this large chamber are covered in spidery glyphs. The ceiling rises twenty-five feet high, where a mural depicts a redheaded woman holding a flaming ranseur standing atop a burning tower of stone. Swords and ranseurs rest inside shallow depressions in the walls, glowing faintly to illuminate the chamber. The east side of the room is a solid wall of billowing black smoke.

This room is where initiates who wish to test themselves and make the attempt to become a new highlord or highlady of wrath prepare themselves for the grueling combat that awaits them beyond the veil of smoke at the far side of the chamber. To advance, an initiate need only defeat the current highlord or highlady.

A successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check or *read magic* spell determines that the glyphs on the walls represent various forms of evocation magic, particularly those involving fire or the creation of magic weapons.

The wall of smoke separating this room from area K6 is a very decorative *illusory wall* (CL 15th, Will DC 17).

**TREASURE:** The weapons embedded in the walls include two +1 *greatswords*, two +1 *ranseurs*, and two +1 *longswords*. Each of them glows continuously, providing light equal to a torch. The weapons may be removed with a *stone shape* spell, excavation, or a DC 30 Strength check.

## K6 HALL OF TESTING (CR 16)



A wide avenue flanked by crimson stone pillars runs down the center of this chamber—the ceiling arches sixty feet above and seems to be made of fire. At the center of the room, a huge seven-pointed star made of silver is engraved into the floor and surrounded by a circle of low-burning flames.

This enormous chamber serves as a training ground for the current highlord or highlady of wrath and as an arena for the testing of new applicants. The fire burning above is quite real—treat it as a permanent *wall of fire* (CL 15th) covering the extent of the ceiling. Ash resulting from objects burnt in the flames of this *wall of fire* (or any magical fire effect generated in this room, for that matter) function as the component for *runeforged* weapons.

The Sihedron Rune in the middle of the room is in fact an immense portal—this is the “master circle” that Vraxeris wrote about in his journal. The master circle has two functions, but Highlady Athroxis can only activate the first of them.

**Calling:** Once per day, the master circle can be commanded to call a single creature, functioning as a *planar binding* spell (CL 15th)—only one called outsider

may be active at a time via this effect. It is this use that Highlady Athroxis can utilize.

HIGHLADY  
ATHROXIS



**Travel:** If any teleportation effect is used while the caster is standing within the circle, the teleportation energy is instead absorbed by the master circle, which then opens a gate to the center of the Sihedron Circle on the lower slopes of Rimeskull. The gate is a two-way portal, and remains open for 1 hour before closing.

**CREATURES:** Highlady Athroxis awaits the PCs here, likely having already watched them in battle several times with her magic wand—her frustration with her servants' failures increasing to rage with each of the PCs' victories. She has little in the way of social graces, and when the PCs enter the room she shrieks a battle cry in Thassilonian—something to the effect of “For fury and hellfire!”—and attacks at once. Unfortunately for the PCs, Athroxis is not alone—she is accompanied by a glabrezu demon she called up from the Abyss (using the room's Sihedron Rune portal) to serve as a guardian.

## HIGHLADY ATHROXIS

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 51,200 | 15 | 193 |

Female Azlanti human fighter 1/evoker 5/eldritch knight 10  
LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +17

### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 16, flat-footed 25 (+10 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 insight, +2 natural)

**hp** 193 (16 HD; 1d10+5d6+10d10+116)

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** +3 *adamantine flaming ranseur* +22/+17/+12 (2d4+10/19–20/x3 plus 1d6 fire)

**Special Attacks** spell critical, intense spells (+2 damage)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +19)

8/day—force missile (1d4+2)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 14th; 15% spell failure; concentration +19)

7th—*mage's sword*, *prismatic spray* (DC 24, 2), *project image* (DC 22)

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 23, 2), still *cone of cold* (DC 22, 2), *flesh to stone* (DC 21)

5th—*cone of cold* (DC 22, 2), *feeblemind* (DC 20), maximized *scorching ray*, empowered *vampiric touch*, *wall of force*

4th—*confusion* (DC 19), still *fireball* (DC 20, 2), still empowered *magic missile* (2), empowered *scorching ray*, *shout* (DC 21)

3rd—*fly*, *greater magic weapon*, *haste*, *keen edge*, *lightning bolt* (DC 20, 2), empowered *magic missile*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *false life*, still *magic missile* (2), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, see *invisibility*

1st—*burning hands* (DC 18), *expeditious retreat*, *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shocking grasp*, *true strike* (2)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *flare* (DC 17), *ray of frost*, *read magic*

**Thassilonian Specialization** evocation; **Opposition Schools** abjuration, conjuration

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Athroxis casts *greater magic weapon* and *keen edge* on her ranseur daily, and *false life* on herself. When she sees the PCs reach area K3, she casts *fly* and *mirror image* on herself as well.

**During Combat** Athroxis casts *haste* immediately before combat begins, and then uses her *cone of cold* spells. She favors spells like *blindness/deafness* and her still spells, since they aren't impacted by her spell failure chance. When she engages in melee, she uses Combat Expertise—this penalizes her attack rolls by –4 but increases her AC by +4.

**Morale** Athroxis fights to the death. If reduced to 15 or fewer hit points, she willingly sacrifices herself, centering a *fireball* on herself if doing so catches a number of PCs in the blast.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 35

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Expertise, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Critical (ranseur), Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Still Spell, Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Climb +24, Craft (weaponsmith) +25, Fly +15, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Perception +17, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +25

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Thassilonian

**SQ** arcane bond (ranseur), diverse training

**Combat Gear** *wand of clairvoyance/clairaudience* (32 charges), *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 10th, 25 charges); **Other Gear** +4 *mithral breastplate*, +1 *adamantine flaming ranseur*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of physical perfection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, *ring of protection* +2, spell component pouch, spellbook

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mark of Wrath (Su)** Highlady Athroxis wears the mark of her rulership on her flesh—a faintly glowing tattoo-like rune on her forehead that moves through the generations from one ruler to the next. The mark of wrath provides her with a +1 insight bonus to AC and on attack and damage rolls. Once per day as a swift action, she can call upon the mark to protect her with a *fire shield* (CL 15th). If she is slain in combat, the mark of wrath transfers to the brow of her defeater. It can only be transferred again on that character's death at the hands of another, but can be removed with a successful *break enchantment* against CL 20th. Once removed in this manner, it vanishes forever.

## GLABREZU (TREACHERY DEMON)

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 25,600 | 13 | 186 |

(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 61)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The glabrezu demon follows Highlady Athroxis's commands when she gives them, serving as a bodyguard and helping to prevent foes from flanking her. As it was called, it can use its summon demons ability, doing so on the first round to attempt to summon vrocks.

**Morale** The demon fights to the death.



## SINS OF THE SAVIORS

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### PART FIVE: THE VAULT OF GREED

### PART SIX: THEIRON CAGES

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### PART TEN: WEAPONS OF POWER



# PART TEN: WEAPONS OF POWER

ONCE THE PCs REACH RUNEFORGE, THE ADVENTURE DOESN'T IMMEDIATELY TELL THEM WHAT TO SEEK OUT AND ACCOMPLISH, BUT THEIR TRUE GOAL SHOULD EVENTUALLY BE TO CREATE RUNEFORGED WEAPONS FROM THE RUNEFORGE POOL IN THE HEART OF THE COMPLEX. THE MOST LIKELY PLACE THEY CAN LEARN ABOUT THESE WEAPONS IS FROM VRAXERIS'S OR JORDIMANDUS'S JOURNALS, BUT YOU CAN JUST AS EASILY DROP HINTS THAT THE CENTRAL POOL CAN BE USED TO CRAFT WEAPONS IF THE PCs CHARM POWERFUL NPCs OR PERFORM MAGICAL DIVINATIONS UPON THE RUNEFORGE POOL ITSELF.

In order to infuse a weapon with power from the pool and transform it into a *runeforged* weapon, a character must gather components that have themselves been infused with magic over the past several centuries. Not any component will do—these must be items that are themselves icons of sin. Each of these items detects as very faint magic of the appropriate school, and when brought within 10 feet of the runeforge pool, these items glow brightly and seem to buzz with energy. Full rules for creating *runeforged* weapons, as well as what they can do, can be found in Appendix Eight.

In the final chapter of this campaign, certain wards and creatures the PCs encounter are susceptible to *dominant* weapons (those enhanced by lust and pride magic, the opposition to greed). If no PC forges a *dominant* weapon, the next chapter becomes more difficult—yet not completely impossible. You may wish to take advantage of any divination spells the PCs cast, or perhaps reward a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check with clues to this effect—or you might not.

Note that you may have players in your group who balk at the concept of infusing their favorite weapons with sin. Although sin itself is not directly tied to evil in the context of alignment, the idea of embracing sin can work at odds to certain player character sensibilities. In this case (and by this point in the adventure, you'll know if you have PCs for whom this might be a problem), feel free to not refer to *runeforged* weapons by their sinful name, but rather by their virtuous name. The difference between wielding a *dominant* weapon and a *commanding* weapon are entirely semantic—both weapon types are identical in game terms, and in how well they work against Karzoug and his minions. The remainder of this book assumes the players choose to refer to their *runeforged* weapons by their sinful names, but if your players opt for the virtuous route, don't forget to adjust the names as appropriate!

**STORY AWARD:** Grant the PCs 51,200 XP when they successfully build their first *dominant* weapon. No experience points are awarded at all for building any other type of *runeforged* weapon.

## A RUNELORD ENRAGED (CR 16)

Although he's not yet fully awakened, Karzoug has reestablished his link with the runeforge pool, and when the pool is used to craft *runeforged* weapons, he feels it. Karzoug knows that *dominant* weapons in particular are a threat to him, and as soon as the first one of these is crafted, he acts. From deep within the Eye of Avarice high above Xin-Shalast, Runelord Karzoug reaches out to use the runeforged pool himself. With a sudden explosion of water, a beam of golden light bursts from the pool to bathe the statue of Karzoug. Immediately, the towering statue animates, transforming into an enormous stone golem. It stares down at the PCs and speaks, the voice the same they heard issuing from Mokmurian at the end of the previous adventure. "You. Again. I can't help but be inspired by your optimism, but alas, your weapons will never reach Xin-Shalast. Your fate is death, here in Runeforge."

### KARZUG STATUE

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 76,800 | 16 | 205 |

Variant stone golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 163)

N Huge construct

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +2

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 31, touch 8, flat-footed 31 (+23 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 205 (30d10+40)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

**DR** 15/adamantine and bludgeoning; **Immune** construct traits, magic

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +43 (3d10+15 plus petrification)

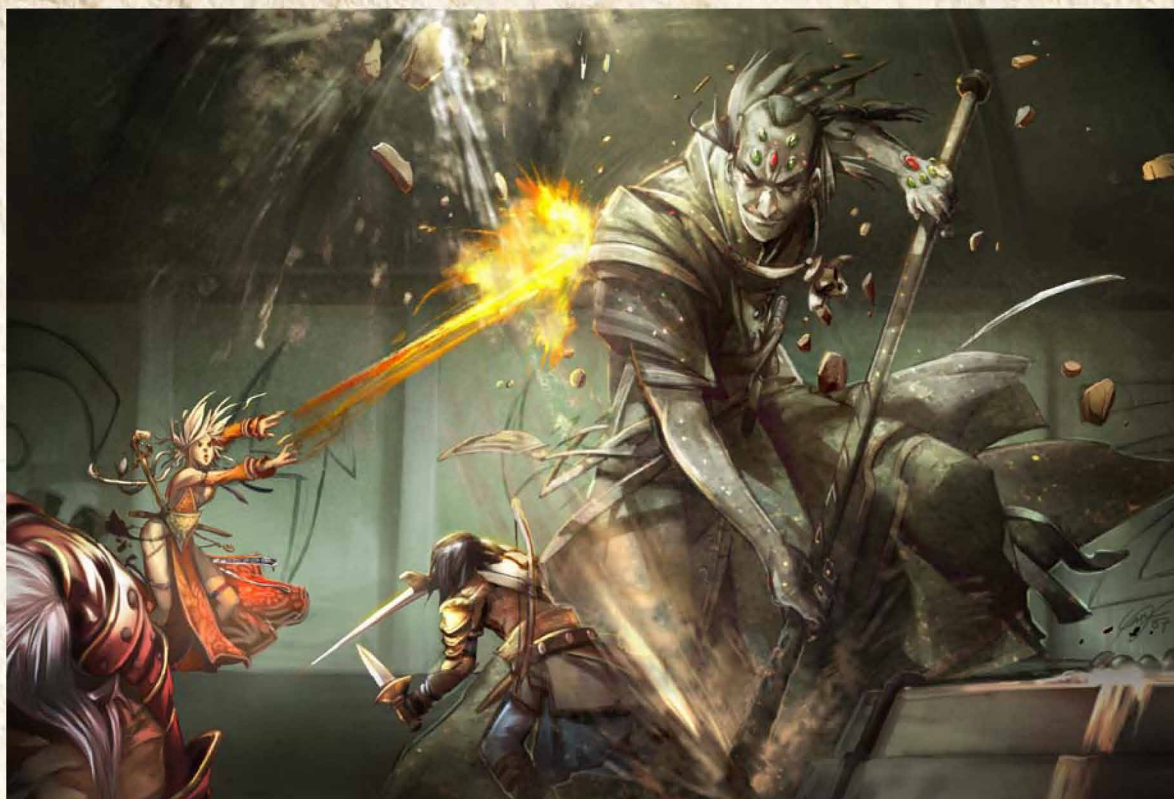
**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** shattering blow, slow (DC 25)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The stone golem uses its slow ability on the party every chance it gets, moving to place itself in an optimal position before activating this power. It focuses its physical attacks on the character who created the *dominant* weapon. Fortunately for that character, this newly enhanced weapon





bypasses all damage reduction possessed by the stone golem.

**Morale** Karzoug can maintain the golem's animation for only 4 rounds. If the PCs still live on the fifth round, the statue spends a round just speaking: "This... this is not the last... come then, heroes. Seek me atop Mhar Massif, if you value life so poorly. You should be honored to be the first fools executed under the banner of Shalast in ten thousand..." Karzoug is unable to finish his taunts, though, and the golem reverts to inanimate stone. It does not attack again.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 40, **Dex** 11, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +30; **CMB** +47; **CMD** 57

**Feats** Power Attack<sup>8</sup>

#### SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Petrification (Su)** A creature struck by the statue's slam attack must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save or take 1d10 points of Dexterity drain. A creature drained to 0 Dexterity becomes petrified. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Shattering Blow (Su)** If the Karzoug statue ever damages a petrified creature with its slam attack, that creature must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save or be shattered into fragments. This essentially kills the PC, but also deals 3d10 points of slashing damage to all creatures within a 5-foot radius of the shattered statue. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

This adventure's chapters are organized roughly in escalation of power; Part Eight contains tougher challenges and greater rewards than Part Seven, for example. Yet the PCs are free to tackle Runeforge's seven

wings in any order they wish. Likewise, they have plenty of time to explore the dungeon, and if they can travel the planes, they can even retreat back to Golarion to rest and recover. Runeforge's environment has remained what it is for thousands of years, and while the invasion of a band of heroes certainly stirs things up, Runeforge will be waiting for their return.

Once the PCs manage to forge at least one *dominant* weapon, they're ready to make the journey to Xin-Shalast. Yet the prospect of escaping Runeforge and returning to Golarion may not be apparent to some parties. Those who lack access to methods of escape like *plane shift* must discover the method of escape via the Sihedron Rune in area K6, or use a *scroll of plane shift* from area F4. You may need to include other methods for your players to return to Golarion as well, especially if none of them can activate the Sihedron Rune or use a *scroll of plane shift*. Using the *cape of the mountebank* from area I3 while standing in the Sihedron Rune in area K6 can trigger the exit portal, for example.

Even if the PCs emerge from Runeforge without any *dominant* weapons, the experience and gear they accumulate within its various dungeons can help to prepare the PCs for the challenges that await them high in the Kodar Mountains. Even though things might seem to be coming to a head, and it might feel as if Karzoug's about to emerge into the world, feel free to give your PCs time to rest and recover from their ordeal in Runeforge.

For Karzoug has a few final surprises for the PCs before they can finally confront him in the fabled Spires of Xin-Shalast.





6

# SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

BY GREG A. VAUGHAN







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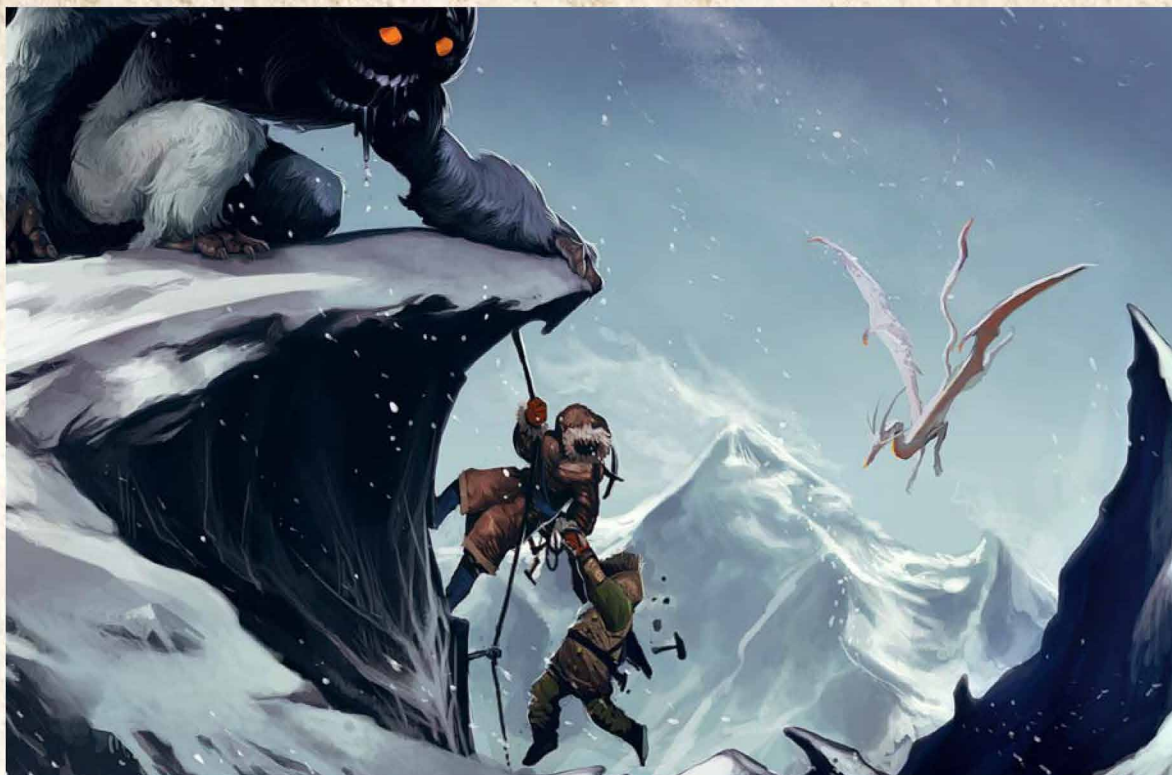
world, his powers restored and his city resurrected, to raise Thassilon from the ashes. Yet there is still time. Karzoug is awake, but though his mind has been hard at work, he cannot yet physically leave the demiplane hidden between this world and Leng—a place known as the Eye of Avarice. While the stone giant Mokmurian was his primary agent in Varisia, in Xin-Shalast Mokmurian would have been but a captain in his army. The denizens of the ruined city have aligned themselves to Karzoug's banner, and though they bicker and fight among themselves, they are ready to serve him. Among these minions are devils, dragons, tribes of deadly lamias, creatures culled from the madness of Leng, and armies of giants led by powerful rune giants. With his rune giant minions, Karzoug's influence over the giants of Varisia will become complete.

Yet these are not Karzoug's only agents in Xin-Shalast, for he has selected new generals, new champions, and even a new apprentice to serve him. The stage is set for the runelord's return, and only one group of heroes stands between him and Varisia.

Although *Rise of the Runelords* assumes that the majority of the villainous leaders the PCs confront are slain when they are defeated, if any of them have managed to escape the punishing blades and spells of your party, this chapter is the best and most logical point to reintroduce them. While some villains (notably Mokmurian) have their dooms all but written into the text of their encounters, others (like the lamia matriarch sisters Xanesha and Lucrecia, some of the masters of Runeforge, Barl Breakbones, Arkrhyst, or even Nualia) could conceivably survive and harbor long-lasting grudges against the PCs.

The tale of Karzoug's awakening, of his slow return to Golarion, has been told over the past five chapters. Karzoug is now nearly ready to step back into this





## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

#### PART ONE: SEEKING XIN-SHALAST

#### PART TWO: WHISPERS IN THE WIND

#### PART THREE: ON THE WORLD'S ROOF

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for others, this could represent a shifting of alliances and goals encouraged by the overwhelming desire for vengeance against the PCs. Nualia, for example, may seethe with such fury that she could seek out the PCs' enemies and volunteer her aid against them, eventually reaching the Spires of Xin-Shalast herself to pledge her support of Karzoug.

In all cases, you should take the time to advance these villains in level to something appropriate to challenge high-level PCs. If you're using them as solo fights, aim for a CR of 2 or 3 points above the average party level—if you're going to have them join forces with other encounters, the total CR of that encounter should be 2 or 3 points above the average party level. You want these rematch fights to be exciting and memorable, after all!

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

With the magic and lore retrieved from Runeforge, the PCs are finally ready to seek out Xin-Shalast and confront the rising runelord. After researching the ancient and legendary city and discovering that Mokmurian deliberately expunged his route to Xin-Shalast from his notes, the best clue the PCs have to go on is a pair of dwarven brothers who claimed to have discovered the city's location and set off into the Kodar Mountains to plunder its riches. In their cabin in the Kodar foothills, the PCs find more than a map to Xin-Shalast—they find the brothers' ghosts, still tormented by the supernatural creature that slew them so many

years ago. By defeating this menace and appeasing the ghosts, the PCs can finally discover the secret route to Xin-Shalast and learn several important secrets that will aid them in their final quest.

Braving the heights of the Kodar Mountains, the PCs face challenges both natural and wholly unnatural in the ruined Lower City, now being slowly reoccupied by Karzoug's army. Finding unexpected allies in the city, the party learns a secret way to surmount the incomparable heights of the face of Mhar Massif, atop which stand the very spires of Karzoug's citadel. Finally, they confront Karzoug himself within the Eye of Avarice, where the fate of the ancient runelord—and Varisia's future—is decided.

## ADVANCEMENT TRACK

**15TH LEVEL:** The PCs should be 15th level when they begin this chapter.

**16TH LEVEL:** The PCs should reach 16th level just after finishing the wendigo siege—they should not attempt to explore Xin-Shalast at a lower level.

**17TH LEVEL:** The PCs should reach 17th level as they begin exploring the Pinnacle of Avarice, or as soon as possible after they reach this site.

**CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE:** The PCs should be close to 18th level by the time they reach the final encounter.





## PART ONE: SEEKING XIN-SHALAST

XIN-SHALAST IS LOCATED HIGH IN THE KODAR MOUNTAINS, CLOAKED IN AGELESS MAGIC THAT PREVENTS ITS APPROACH BY MOST WHO SEEK ITS LEGENDARY STREETS. THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN WORLDS ARE TRANSITORY HERE, A FACET THE CITY'S FOUNDERS SOUGHT PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT SUCH CONDITIONS MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO REACH WITHOUT KNOWING THE WAY. AN IDLE SEEKER OF XIN-SHALAST COULD WALK UP ONE SIDE OF MHAR MASSIF AND DOWN THE OTHER WITHOUT EVER FINDING THE CITY—THOSE WHO SEEK IT ACTIVELY CAN SPEND THEIR ENTIRE LIVES LOOKING WITHOUT SUCCESS.

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**M**okmurian discovered Xin-Shalast's location with the aid of books and maps he recovered from the hidden library under Jorgenfist, and he destroyed those sources after committing them to memory. Yet traces remain. A character who researches Xin-Shalast in the library of Thassilon under Jorgenfist and rolls well on his Knowledge check can learn much of the city's location. Likewise, interrogating prisoners from Runeforge or perhaps studying their notes and spellbooks can reveal much. As this chapter begins, the PCs should have learned the following about Xin-Shalast—if they've not yet learned this information have one of the PCs discover the missing clues while studying a recently acquired spellbook, or perhaps after they speak to an expert on Thassilon, such as Sandpoint's own Brodert Quink.

- Xin-Shalast is located on the towering mountain of Mhar Massif, in a valley that lies at the headwaters of the River Avah.
- Mhar Massif itself is said to serve as a bridge to strange realms beyond Golarion.
- Anyone who can find the River Avah can follow it directly into Xin-Shalast.

The problem arises from the fact that this entire region, from the River Avah to the summit of Mhar Massif, lies in a realm where reality has frayed at the edges. In order to reach Xin-Shalast, the PCs need a guide of some sort—or at the very least, detailed notes left behind by someone who has been to Xin-Shalast before.

### CONSULTING BRODERT

The PCs have likely spoken to Brodert Quink, Sandpoint's local expert on all things Thassilonian, about their discoveries. This adventure assumes he's the one they go to for advice again when they seek answers to finding the hidden city of Xin-Shalast, though they could just as easily consult other experts, ranging from Pathfinders in Magnimar to extraplanar oracles to their own sages and scholars within the party.

Assuming the PCs have stayed in contact with Brodert since his help back during "The Skinsaw Murders," the old sage has begun to see the PCs as his own personal field research team. Certainly, if they share with him confirmation that the Old Light of Sandpoint was once a weapon and thus validate his own educated guesses as to the ruin's original purpose, he is very friendly indeed.

Unfortunately, Xin-Shalast is as much a legend to Brodert as to any other scholar of things Thassilonian. Yet if the PCs ask him about Xin-Shalast, he grows thoughtful for a moment, then snaps his fingers as he remembers an old account of a pair of dwarven brothers who claimed to have discovered the route to the fabled city. After rooting through his books and scrolls for a few minutes, he emerges triumphant with a letter he received from the author of the definitive cyclopedia on the region of Varisia and the Storval Plateau: Cevil "Redwing" Charms's well-known (and well-criticized) volume, *Eidolon*. He allows the PCs to read the letter but won't let them keep it—Redwing is one of his favorite authors, and the letter is a personal treasure. The letter is reproduced as Handout 6–1.

The letter concerns the escapades of two dwarven brothers, Silas and Karivek Vekker, who journeyed into the Kodar Mountains and supposedly discovered the route to Xin-Shalast. Brodert has done his own research and can confirm that Silas and Karivek Vekker did indeed abscond with a fair amount of invested capital into the mountains. The common theory in Janderhoff is that the dwarves used the "discovery of Xin-Shalast" as a cover for a con, but those who knew the Vekkers personally held them in quite high regard. Brodert suspects that they did indeed discover Xin-Shalast, and their secrecy was one born of necessity rather than malice. For if they had discovered the great city, until they could return with proof, it would only be wise to guard the discovery. Brodert theorizes that the Vekkers met some sort of foul end in the Kodars, and that if their base of operations could be found (along the banks of the Kazaron River, according to Redwing's letter), perhaps clues to the city's location could be found therein.



*Salutations, Mr. Gunk!*

*Thank you again for the kind words and drink. It's always a pleasure to speak with readers of my work, especially those well read and civilized enough to know of my writing beyond Eidolon. Alas, I was unable to procure a copy of the early draft from my personal files. It would seem that it has gone the way of so much of my early work, lost forever to the gulfs of time and narrow-minded publishers unable to grasp the import of a young Pathfinder's work.*

*Fortunately, my mind is as quick now as it was in those early days of my explorations of your fantastic homeland. I recall the evening I first heard the story of Xin-Shalast, while seated on a log in a Varisian camp, sharing ruby mead with an enchanting young woman. Ah, but that's a story for other times.*

*I was intrigued by the tale, though. All peoples have tales of "cities of gold," yet with Xin-Shalast, the Varisians had no tradition of explorers seeking it. They viewed the place as one of evil, a place to be feared and forsaken. As far as I could tell, none of your indigenous people ever sought out the ruins before the advent of Chelish rule. But there was mention, come to think of it, of two dwarven brothers. Vekker, I think their names were. Claimed to have found the route to Xin-Shalast and convinced several tradesmen in Janderhoff to support and supply their plan to establish a base of operations in the low Kodar Mountains along the Kazaron. Their vanishing into the Kodars bankrupted all but one of their investors, I hear, and even today, the Vekker name is generally accompanied by a litany of rousing dwarven profanity when it comes up in Hoffian taverns.*

*In the stead of enclosing a copy of the early, complete draft of my work, though, please find a signed copy of Eidolon with this missive. I trust it will look quite handsome on your shelf.*

*In good health,  
Redwing*

## USING MAGIC

Even if there aren't PCs in the group who can cast divination spells, they can certainly seek out spellcasters or scrolls in Magnimar to use magic to aid in their search for Xin-Shalast. Unfortunately, most divination spells are somewhat reduced in effectiveness due to the reality-altering region in Mhar Massif's shadow. Use the results of spells like *commune* and *contact other plane* to steer the PCs in the right direction, but don't feel bound to answer questions precisely. Spells like *legend lore* reveal all of the bulleted information on page 302, as well as the fact that most recently two dwarven brothers named Vekker claimed to have discovered the route to the city, but after establishing a base of operations in the Kodar Mountains, they were never heard from again.

## A. THE WORLD'S ROOF

The Kodar Mountains are one of Golarion's most intimidating and massive mountain ranges. Few places in the world are more inhospitable to life than these mountains, yet life endures here. The extremes make for equally powerful monsters and denizens, of course—only the strongest survive for long in this region, known to the Shoanti as the World's Roof.

This adventure assumes the PCs come seeking Xin-Shalast by first traveling up the Kazaron River in search of the vanished Vekker brothers and, possibly, the River

Avah, said to show the route to Xin-Shalast. How the PCs reach the Kodar Mountains is left to them. *Teleport* is unlikely to be useful until the PCs actually reach the Kodars and know where they're going, but spells like *wind walk* and *shadow walk* can make the journey fly by. Certainly, speedy methods of magical travel can come in handy once the PCs reach the cabin or even Xin-Shalast, but on their first trip up into the forbidding mountains, chances are good that they'll have to make that journey the old-fashioned way.

Assuming the PCs are traveling up the Kazaron River, it is at the point labeled "A" on the map on page 318 that they transition between rugged foothills and truly intimidating mountains. As long as the PCs continue to travel along the riverbank, they find the overland journey somewhat easier—but eventually they need to head into the mountains themselves.

Make sure to be familiar with the rules for adventuring in high mountains, as presented on pages 428–430 of the *Core Rulebook*. The physical dangers presented by mountain climbing and high altitudes are, in many cases, as dangerous as the monsters the PCs are destined to face in this adventure, and enforcing these hazards can help to drive home the fact that the heroes are exploring a truly inhospitable range. More to the point, if the players feel the Kodar Mountains are dangerous, they can better understand why Xin-Shalast has remained hidden from the world for so long.



## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

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## PART TWO: WHISPERS IN THE WIND

THE DWARVEN BROTHERS SILAS AND KARIVEK VEKKER CAME TO THE KODAR MOUNTAINS 70 YEARS AGO, FOLLOWING UP ON RUMORS OF AN EXTENSIVE VEIN OF GOLD IN THE HIGH MOUNTAINS. WHEN THEY FOUND GOLD IN SOME NEARBY ALLUVIAL GLACIER DEPOSITS, THEY STAKED THEIR CLAIM AND OPENED A PLACER MINE. AS IS OFTEN THE WAY OF DWARVES, THEY WERE VERY SECRETIVE ABOUT THEIR MINE'S LOCATION, GOING AS FAR AS TO BUILD A CABIN AND MINING HEADQUARTERS SEVERAL MILES FROM THEIR CLAIM. NEITHER COULD IMAGINE HOW CLOSE THEY WERE TO THE RICHEST SITE IN ALL OF VARISIA—XIN-SHALAST.



Silas and Karivek worked their placer mine for several decades but knew it would soon play out, so they scouted deeper into the surrounding mountains, searching the streams and cliff faces for a show of color where they could potentially find new deposits for mining. Their skill at mountaineering and their dwarven stubbornness paid off—they accidentally found the headwaters of the River Avah, and beyond that, Xin-Shalast.

The dwarves only explored the very edge of the city before they were forced to flee from a group of enraged giants. Yet the wealth they saw in the city had done its work—all thoughts of mining for gold had been banished from their minds. Why bother pulling gold out of deep holes in the dirt when you could just pick it up off the ground? Yet Xin-Shalast was far from a safe place, and in order to harvest it properly, the dwarves realized they needed support.

They returned to Janderhoff, where they approached several mining consortiums and quietly secured supplies and financing to begin deeper exploration of Xin-Shalast, proving their claim with the strange relics they'd brought back. The investors asked the Vekkers to keep their discovery quiet and put vast amounts of money at the Vekkers' disposal. The brothers returned to the north with a small army of miners, explorers, and mercenaries, all eager to make a fortune exploring Xin-Shalast.

Yet the Vekkers' army never made it to the City of Greed. Only a day after reaching the glacial site of their first mine, an avalanche struck their convoy and carried off all of their supplies. An attempt to retrieve the supplies resulted in the deaths of seven more dwarves. Their return route blocked, the survivors made their way on, hoping to find solace, shelter, and—above all—more food in the storerooms of the Vekkers' cabin, but upon arriving they found the place had been raided by the abominable snowmen that dwell in the Kodars. No food remained.

It didn't take long for starvation to drive the dwarves to desperation and then to madness, and when Karivek suggested cannibalism as a route to regain their

strength for the journey back out of the mountains, only his brother Silas and a few other dwarves objected. The dissenters were outnumbered, and with a fury born of madness, Karivek and the rest of the starving dwarves fell upon their companions and fed well for the first time in a month.

Then a curious thing happened. The dwarves found the feast strangely invigorating. Their minds cleared and their strength returned, and with it their greed. The dwarves decided not to turn back, but to continue on into the Kodar Mountains to find Xin-Shalast. As they traveled, those who fell behind or complained or merely had the disadvantage of being the largest among them became new meals, and with each meal, the dwarves felt their strength growing. They paid no attention to the strange whispers on the wind, or to feet blackened by frostbite and falling to pieces, or to the fact that they had been wandering the mountains for days without aim. Eventually, only one dwarf remained—Karivek Vekker. With nothing left to eat, he sat down upon a lonely mountain ledge overlooking the Kazaron River, and as starvation set in once more, he noticed for the first time the whispers in the wind. A shape congealed in the mist before his eyes, and as the source of the cannibal cravings took form in the air before him, Karivek looked upon the wendigo that had brought the doom upon them all and attempted to hurl himself off the ledge in despair. The wendigo caught him and dragged him through the sky with such speed that the dwarf's frostbitten feet were blasted away, and at the end, the evil spirit dropped him from a staggering height. Karivek had nearly a minute to despair and regret before he hit the ground.

### VEKKERS' CABIN

Though the placer mine itself was long ago lost in an avalanche, the brothers' cabin still survives to this day. Anyone who travels this far up the Kazaron River can't miss the cabin built of split logs cemented with a rough mortar and a shake shingle roof. The logs and shingles are decades old, and a profusion of lichens growing on





these walls gives it a strangely organic look. Each window is 2 feet high by 2 feet wide and has double shutters to aid in keeping out the cold. The cabin itself sits low in a valley in the Kodars, at an altitude of merely 4,500 feet.

No strangers to the dangers presented by the local fauna (especially the abominable snowmen, with whom the Vekkers had countless run-ins), the somewhat paranoid brothers constructed their cabin perched defensively at the edge of a 60-foot-high cliff. The dwarves then constructed a spiraling stair and pulley-and-bucket system leading directly up to the cabin from the base of the cliff. This they encased in a wooden shaft made of the same mortared logs, and built a small storage shed and an addition at the base of the stair where the mined ore could be separated from the worthless gangue before going through all the trouble of hauling it up to the cabin.

Today, the abominable snowmen and other regional beasts avoid the cabin for a singular reason: the place is haunted by the spirits of the dwarves eaten by their kin a decade ago. These haunts aren't evil, but neither do they welcome visitors to the cabin. Driven by the pain and horror of their hideous deaths, these haunts lash out at anyone trying to enter the cabin. Only one spirit among them, the shade of Silas Vekker, retains his mind and wits, but to reach him and learn how the haunted cabin can be put to rest, the PCs must brave the wrath of the rest.

Most of the haunts in this section of the adventure don't provide much of a challenge for high-level characters, but that's not really their purpose. These haunts are included more to help build on the themes

and mood of the adventure, teaching how greed can lead to terrible ends if not kept under control. Further, haunts are an excellent way for an adventure to give the players some backstory to events in the area. By the time the PCs finish their initial exploration of the cabin, they know most of the gruesome details of what happened here, and they learned of those details in an interactive way that, ideally, immerses them more in the adventure's story than would simply reading aloud some text.

Although unlikely to matter initially, the strength of the cabin's walls likely comes into play later in this adventure (see "The Wendigo Siege" on page 315). The cabin's walls have hardness 5, hp 75, and Break DC 25. Doors are hardness 5, hp 20, and Break DC 23 (most doors open easily, but some are stuck and must be forced open—this Break DC is the roll to not only force the door open but to completely smash it from its hinges). The double-shuttered windows are hardness 5, hp 20, and Break DC 18.

## THE WATCHER IN THE WASTES

The wendigo who brought ruin to the Vekkers and destroyed their hopes for fame still dwells in the surrounding region, and it does not suffer intruders into its territory well. Although powerful, the dangerous outsider prefers to wage its war against intruders in more subtle and harrowing methods, saving physical attacks as a last resort. For the duration of this part, the wendigo becomes increasingly aware of the PCs' intrusion into the region, resulting in the following escalation of minor events.





**MYSTERIOUS HOWL:** Soon after the PCs first sight the Vekker's cabin, the wendigo's forlorn howl carries over the region, a mournful, drawn-out shriek not unlike the cry of a dying elk. The monster is farther than a mile away when it makes this initial howl, and thus it has no other effect on any PC who hears the sound with a DC 25 Perception check. Those PCs who hear it can attempt a DC 27 Knowledge (planes) check to identify the sound as supernatural and likely from an outsider (the howl can be correctly identified as a wendigo's howl if this Knowledge (planes) check exceeds the DC by 10 or more).

**RISING STORM:** After the first haunt is activated, the wendigo senses the PCs' intrusion into the area and uses *control weather* to cause a rising snowstorm. For 20 minutes after the first haunt is triggered, the weather steadily worsens, eventually reaching snowstorm status after the 20 minutes. This snowstorm lasts for 4d12 hours—the wendigo “recharges” the snowstorm every 24 hours with a new *control weather* spell as long as it suspects the PCs remain in the area.

**NIGHTMARISH REST:** The wendigo observes the Vekker cabin region from a distance—unless the PCs take particular care to stay stealthy, the monster learns enough about them that it soon retreats to deeper in the mountains to cast *nightmare*, targeting one of the PCs at random with its dream haunting ability. Not only does this infuse a sleeping PC's dreams with nightmares of being a cannibal, it exposes the PC to wendigo psychosis (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 281).

**THE WENDIGO DRAWS NEAR:** As soon as the PCs defeat Karivek Vekker's ghost (see Event 3 on page 313), the wendigo howls again. This time, it's within a mile, and the entire party can hear (and perhaps become shaken as a result). This close, a successful DC 27 Knowledge (planes) check correctly identifies the howl as that of a wendigo.

**BLIZZARD:** After the second howl, the wendigo uses *control weather* to create a blizzard—it maintains this blizzard as constantly as it can for the next several days in an attempt to drive the PCs to seek shelter in the Vekker's Cabin, whereupon it lays siege to the cabin as detailed on page 315 in Event 4. Rules for blizzards appear on page 438 of the *Core Rulebook*.

## B1 THE TAILINGS (CR 14)



A split-log tower abuts the cliff face and rises from a workshop on ground level to a larger cabin perched on the cliff's edge sixty feet above. The rough wooden structure is so overgrown with lichen as to almost appear an extension of the rock face. The ground to the south of the lower structure is a steep embankment, over which a chute protrudes from the structure's southern wall. At the base of the embankment is a large pile of fine, black sand that spreads out in a deposit striated by years of

erosion. The ground surrounding the pile is barren of any plant life, with the exception of a single sagging pine tree. Faint traces of a footpath lead to the workhouse doors, though it is obvious none have come this way in many years.

The mound of sand under the chute is composed of the leavings from the act of processing gold ore in area B5. To separate the gold from the rock matrix, the dwarves used an arsenic solution. Over the years, this arsenic-rich debris has leached into the surrounding ground and destroyed all plant life in the region, with the exception of the lichens and fungus that grow so well on the cabin itself. Anyone coming in contact with the fine black dust risks arsenic poisoning (see page 558 of the *Core Rulebook*—if the PCs only handle the stuff and don't actually ingest any of it, they gain a +6 bonus on their saving throw to resist the poison's effects).

**CREATURE:** Two years ago, a guardian and protector of the upper treeline sensed the presence of poison and pollution here as it leached into the Kazaron and flowed downriver. This guardian, an ancient treant, came upon this area and sought to clean up the flora-killing tailings, and while it managed to move many of the contaminants away from where they were leaching into the river, its own exposure to the pollution weakened and eventually killed it—while plants are normally immune to poison, long-term exposure to this particular form of pollution kills plants just as well (only not nearly as quickly).

The death of the noble creature gave the spirits haunting the cabin a convenient corpse to focus upon. This, combined with the corruption and pollution now concentrated in the region, caused the treant to rise the next night as a horrific undead creature. Its once-kindly soul has been replaced with one of eternal hunger and wrath, and it is content now to slaughter any creatures that happen by. After killing them, it flings their shattered carcasses upon the tailings pile and awaits new victims. Now it stands beside the tailings, looking like nothing more than a dead pine tree on the verge of collapse, and does not attack unless PCs come down the embankment to examine the area of the tailings. Later, though, if a lone PC or pair of PCs exits the bottom floor of the cabin, it immediately tries to slay them before they have a chance to escape. It buries its victims shallowly in the tailings pile, where they can be discovered with a successful DC 16 Perception check.

### THE HORROR TREE

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 38,400 | 14 | 199 |

Unique undead treant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 266)

NE Gargantuan undead

**Init** –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +27

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 5, flat-footed 28 (–1 Dex, +23 natural, –4 size)

**hp** 199 (21d8+105)



**Fort** +12, **Ref** +6, **Will** +15

**DR** 10/slashing; **Immune** cold, undead traits

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +27 (4d6+15/19–20 plus fungus)

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

**Special Attacks** double damage against objects, trample (4d6+22, DC 35)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The horror tree has an uncanny knack for sensing druids, rangers, gnomes, and other creatures with ties to the natural world. It targets these foes over others. The horror tree pursues foes as long as they remain in sight but does not pursue enemies into the cabin (though if foes remain in reach, it does strike at them through open doors and windows).

**Morale** The horror tree fights until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 41, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +34; **CMD** 43 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Critical Focus, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Sunder, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (slams), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (slams)

**Skills** Knowledge (nature) +22, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +11 (+27 in forests), Survival +24

**Languages** Sylvan

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Fungus (Ex)** The horror tree's branches are encrusted with a virulent fungus that grows rapidly when in contact with blood, sending filaments ripping through the bodies of any living creatures damaged by its slams and dealing 1d6 points of Dexterity damage in the process. A creature brought to 0 Dexterity by this effect is slain.

**TREASURE:** A hollow in the undead treant's trunk hides some treasures it has gathered over the years. These can be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check of its body and consist of a large black opal worth 2,000 gp, a cracked leather backpack containing a broken rock hammer and 43 gp, 12 +2 crossbow bolts of distance, and a sealed pocket flask holding an *elixir of the peaks*.

## B2 STORAGE ROOM

This room has a steeply sloping roof. A lock bars the doors, but it is so badly rusted that a DC 12 Strength check or 5 points of damage (hardness 6) shatters it. Within are the dusty remains of a once-thriving mining enterprise. The rotten remnants

of wheelbarrows, shovels, picks, ore sacks, plates for panning, and sluices for separating placer deposits are stacked in a jumble. These are all covered in a thick layer of frost and have deteriorated to the point of uselessness.

## B3 LOWER ENTRY



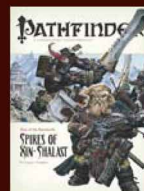
This room has a bare plank floor. A wide double door stands to the east, and next to it a shabby curtain closes off another opening. The room's dry boards still appear to be stout, having successfully remained sealed from the elements over the years.

The outer door to this room is locked. The lock has corroded but is still strong—in fact, the corrosion has made it even more difficult to pick (DC 33 Disable Device, hardness 8, hp 20, Break DC 25).

This room served as the secure entry where the brothers could bring the ore they recovered from their mine for processing. The doors to the east are also locked, though they are not corroded and can be opened with a successful DC 30 Disable Device.



THE HORROR  
TREE



## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

### PART ONE: SEEKING XIN-SHALAST

### PART TWO: WHISPERS IN THE WIND

### PART THREE: ON THE WORLD'S ROOF

### PART FOUR: XIN-SHALAST

### PART FIVE: SCALING MHAR MASSIF

### PART SIX: PINNACLE OF AVARICE

### PART SEVEN: THE EYE OF AVARICE



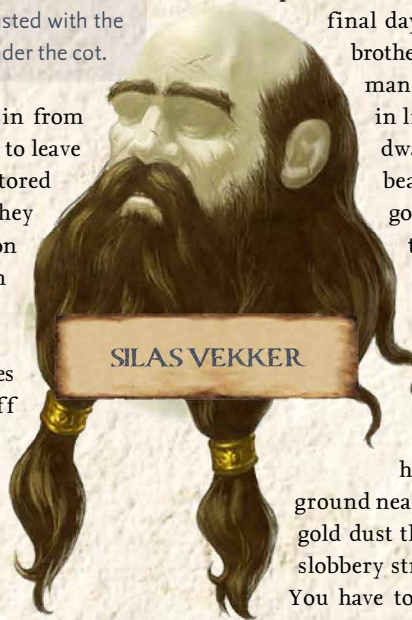
## B4 SACK ROOM



Beyond the curtain is a small, barren chamber. A wood-frame cot rests against the far wall with a rough, straw-tick mattress and a threadbare blanket. A pair of old work boots, crusted with the dried remains of old mud, still sits under the cot.

When a new load of ore was brought in from the mine, the Vekker brothers were loath to leave it unattended until it had been safely stored away in their strong room. To this end, they worked night and day in the separation chamber, but even their hardened dwarven constitutions required occasional breaks. When this occurred, one of the brothers slept in this chamber to ensure that thieves would be unable to break in and make off with the gold.

**TREASURE:** A +3 *punching dagger* is hidden in the left boot. The deathblade poison that once coated the blade has long since dried and flaked away, leaving only a slight (and harmless) discoloration on it.



SILAS VEKKER

while in this chamber, is exposed to a high concentration of arsenic poisoning (see area B1).

**HAUNT:** The Vekkers had enough gold to buy food to last them years, but nowhere from which to buy any, a powerful irony that Silas obsessed on in the final days before he was murdered by his brother. His spirit, still driven by hunger, manifests in this room as he appeared in life in healthier times, as a balding dwarf with a few facial scars and a full beard separated into two lengths by gold rings. When the PCs first enter this room, a shadowy form shifts and moves in the room's corner. As the haunt manifests, the shadows fade and Silas appears to be squatting in the southeast corner of the room, his back to the doors as he scoops up handfuls of gold dust from the ground near the chute. As Silas turns around, gold dust thick in his beard and dripping in slobbery strings from his lips, he says, "You! You have to try this! It's so... delicious!" As he says this, he stuffs another handful of gold dust into his mouth and swallows. Of course, the "dust" he's eating is in fact arsenic-tainted grit.

## B5 ORE SEPARATION (CR 8)



The air in this long-sealed chamber is putrid. The back wall is the solid rock of the cliff face. A ramp rises from the western door to a height of five feet, which is the elevation of the rest of the plank floor. Mounds of dust and rocky debris clutter the floor, while rusty mechanical equipment, large copper tanks, and several rock-crushing and chipping tools sit upon sagging wooden tables. The handle of a shovel sticks up from a debris pile immediately below this aperture. Two pairs of elbow-length, thick leather gloves, stained from long use, hang from hooks beside the north doors.

The Vekker brothers carted their placer deposits into this chamber to remove the gold ore from the gangue. They used an arsenic solution to chemically separate the minerals. Raw gold was carted into the next chamber to be stored safely in their cabin. The leftover debris was then shoveled through a grating in the southern wall that opens into a chute that deposits waste near area B1. The grate is latched from this side and can be easily opened (treat as a strong wooden door), but the iron bars cannot be removed from the frame, blocking access from outside.

This entire room is heavily tainted with arsenic deposits, especially the mounded dust and rubble on the floor. Anyone exposed to this material, either from falling prone in it or even by just having an open wound

### GOLD-EATING DWARF

| XP    | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 4,800 | 8  | 16 |

LN haunt (all of area B5)

**Caster Level** 8th

**Notice** Perception DC 10 (to notice the shadowy image of Silas crouching in the corner)

**hp** 16; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 minute

**Effect** Silas's words function as a *mass suggestion* spell; anyone who hears him must succeed at a DC 19 Will save to resist the compulsion to scoop up and eat a handful of the arsenic-tainted dirt on the room's floor. The haunt enhances the already deadly effects of the arsenic in this case—anyone who eats the stuff must make a DC 20 Fortitude save against the effects of arsenic poisoning. Silas watches as anyone eats, and as the victim feels the poison flowing through his system, the haunted character sees Silas suddenly shrink in on himself, grow emaciated, and then fly apart in a red explosion of bite-sized morsels of flesh and bone. An instant later, he is gone—but only for a minute, after which he appears again.

## B6 ORE SHAFT (CR 8)

The description of this area depends on whether the PCs enter from the bottom or from the top. The following description assumes the party has entered from the bottom. Modify it accordingly if they enter from area B7.



The wooden walls of this musty shaft abut the natural stone of the cliff face to the east. A



sturdy-looking wooden stair and rail starts at the bottom of this shaft and circles up into the heights, running clockwise. Above, its passage is lost in the gloom, like the musty interior of an ancient silo. A thick length of chain hangs down the shaft in loops, its links swaying and clanking softly to the periodic gust of wind that penetrates the walls. No windows pierce the wooden walls. Propped against the east wall near the door is an upended wheelbarrow.

The Vekker brothers built this enclosed stair to create a secure way to access their cabin above. A great ore bucket hangs at area **B7**, which they lowered via chains with a winch to load the gold gleaned from the separation chamber. The wheelbarrow was used to cart the gold to the ore bucket.

The stairs rise 60 feet to area **B7** and are sturdy and in good repair despite their age. A trap is set 50 feet up the stairs. The Vekker brothers deactivated this trap in area **B11** or just jumped over the trigger steps whenever necessary.

**CREATURE:** As soon as the tipping stairs are triggered (or just before the PCs are about to exit the room), the spirits haunting the cabin manifest by animating the chain hanging from the ceiling here. The chain twists like an immense snake as it animates, coiling over and across itself and swinging the metal ore bucket with deadly effect. Though the chain only takes up a 5-foot square, its reach accounts for much of its size.

### HAUNTED CHAIN

| XP    | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 3,200 | 7  | 52 |

Advanced animated object (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14, 294)

N Large construct

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -3

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 52 (4d10+30)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** -2

**Defensive Abilities** hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits

**Weaknesses** haunted

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +11 (1d8+8 plus grab)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 60 ft.

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+12)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The haunted chain lifts anyone it constricts to the top of the shaft and on the next round drops him after attempting (and possibly succeeding at) a second round of constriction damage.

**Morale** The haunted chain fights until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +13 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 24 (can't be tripped)

**SQ** construction points (additional attack, constrict, faster, grab, haunted, metal)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Haunted (Ex)** The chain is haunted, and as a result takes damage from positive energy as if it were an undead creature. It can be detected by *detect undead*.

**TRAP:** A section of trapped stair stands 50 feet above the floor of area **B6**. Placing any amount of weight on one of these three steps causes that section of the step and rail to collapse outward, dumping anyone on them into the central shaft of the stairwell. The collapsed steps and rail can be reset by a lever hidden in area **B11**.

### TIPPING STAIRS

| XP    | CR |
|-------|----|
| 1,600 | 5  |

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 27; **Disable Device** DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Bypass** (hidden lever in area **B11**); **Reset** manual

**Effect** 50-ft. fall (5d6 falling damage); DC 20 Reflex save avoids

### B7 TOWER LOFT



No windows open into this dark, plummeting shaft. A heavy winch bolted to the balcony supports a rusty chain that runs up through a pulley mounted in the roof of the shaft and from which hangs a heavy iron bucket. Heavy wooden chocks have been nailed to the floor at the edge of the balcony, and the front wheel of a wheelbarrow rests against them.

Here, the Vekkers hauled up the gold from their mine for safe storage. The winch is still functional, though extremely rusty, and can be used to raise or lower the ore bucket between here and the floor of area **B6**—provided that the haunted chain itself has not been destroyed yet (raising or lowering the bucket does not activate the haunted chain). A full bucket can be raised at a rate of 10 feet per move action with a successful DC 15 Strength check for each 10 feet—the empty bucket requires no Strength check). Lying nearby is a 10-foot pole with an iron hook at the tip. This was used by the dwarves both to open and close the shuttered windows and to drag the ore bucket over to the balcony, where its contents could be dumped into a wheelbarrow. The windows, unlike most of those in the rest of the cabin, are shuttered from the inside.

A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals the skillfully disguised secret door to area **B13**.

### B8 FRONT PORCH (CR 5)



A rough porch with crudely crafted handrails extends from the front of this cabin. A short stair descends to the ground at its north end. The eaves



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of the overhanging roof are festooned with dozens of animal skulls, including bears, deer, aurochs, and various other animals. The posts supporting the overhang and the outside edge of the handrail itself are hung with racks of antlers. A stone chimney rises next to a door on the porch, and a couple of split logs have been set on the raised porch as furniture.

The Vekker brothers supplemented their carefully hoarded supplies with whatever game they could hunt. There is nothing of note among the many trophies here. A signboard mounted above the front door bears faded but still legible print in Dwarven naming this the “Vekker Mining Co. Headquarters.” The front door is not locked but is stuck in its frame, requiring a successful DC 18 Strength check to open.

**HAUNT:** Have each PC make a Perception check when the group reaches this area. No matter what the results are, tell the player who had the highest result that he feels strange here, as if he were being watched by something or someone. You can even tell this player he might have seen a humanoid shape in the distance, staggering in the snow just at the edge of vision to the east. This is a manifestation of Silas Vekker as he attempted to escape his hunger-mad kin by racing into the snow. One round after this brief glimpse, the haunt manifests in force as Silas notices the characters.

### PARTIALLY EATEN DWARF

| XP    | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 1,600 | 5  | 10 |

LN haunt (northern 15 feet of area B8)

**Caster Level** 5th

**Notice** Perception DC 25 (to notice the distant humanoid shape turn to face the party);

**hp** 10; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

**Effect** A dwarven man (recognizable as the same one from the haunt in area B5) staggers out of the snow. His eyes are wild with fear, his clothes in tatters, and blood drips from several cuts on his exposed flesh. When he sees the PCs, he cries out, “Run! Run for your lives! They’re going to eat you!” With that, the dwarf flees into the snow. All PCs in the area must make a successful DC 20 Will save to avoid being overcome with the conviction that the other members of the party are cannibals and are about to attack them—those who fail this save become panicked for 1d6 rounds, dropping all held items and attempting to flee from their allies at top speed. Characters who race blindly into the snow in this manner have a flat 50% chance each round of running off the edge of the cliff, in which case they fall 60 feet to the ground below.

### B9 ENTRY



This simple chamber has a worn hide rug covered with muddy stains before the door, next to a rickety chair. A thick blanket covers the opening to the south.

The door can be locked and has brackets for a bar, though no bar is present.

### B10 COATROOM



This tiny chamber is stuffy and lightless. Heavy blankets hang as curtains across two archways. A wooden bench rests against the south wall under which is arrayed an assortment of shabby foot gear. Above it is a row of hooks, a number of which hold dusty garments.

The dwarven miners removed their dirty clothing here to create some modicum of cleanliness in their cabin. Beneath the bench are six pairs of dried and cracked leather boots of various types, all sized for dwarves. They include everything from rough-soled climbing boots to hip-high waders for panning cold mountain streams. The various garments include oiled leather raincoats, fur-lined winter coats, and mud-stained dungarees and coveralls. These are likewise all proportioned for a dwarf and are largely ruined from moths and dry rot.

**TREASURE:** Concealed beneath the raincoats (DC 10 Perception check), a +2 *construct bane earth breaker* leans against the wall, purchased from the Shoanti long ago.

### B11 BUNKROOM



A large, worn elk hide is spread across the floor of this bunkroom. Another old, moth-eaten hide covers the entry into a small closet. A window looks out to the south. A crack runs through the thick panes of the southern window. A set of rough-made bunk beds stands against the north wall next to the door, an old coat with holes in its elbows hanging from one post. The bunks themselves have flat straw mattresses and layers of heavy blankets piled at their feet. An old metal coal box rests on one for use as a foot warmer. A rack on the west wall holds a crossbow, two axes, and a light wooden shield. Beneath it is a large leather chest. A hooded lantern hangs unlit from a rafter.

The Vekker brothers shared this bunkroom. Nothing in it is of any value, and the weapons and shield are warped and useless. The leather trunk holds only mundane articles of rough clothing, a few grooming items, and various small trinkets of Shoanti manufacture. One of the unoccupied pegs on the weapons rack is actually a lever that resets and deactivates the trap in area B6. It can be discovered with a successful DC 20 Perception check. The cracked window has only 2 hit points remaining. The curtained closet is actually a privy with a wooden bench and an old rusty bucket. Hanging from a small hook are a number of torn papers. If examined, these







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turn out to be broadsheets from Korvosa, dated about 70 years ago. The Vekker brothers were not avid readers, but they saved every scrap of paper they could find to serve other purposes.

## B12 STORAGE CLOSET



This chamber contains heavy shelving and still holds the detritus and debris accumulated over decades of habitation.

All manner of odds and ends for the maintenance and upkeep of the cabin and the mining venture can be found herein under a thick layer of dust and ancient rodent droppings. There is nothing of particular value, but feel free to throw in any mundane items you see fit, such as a pair of snowshoes or a tinder box.

## B13 STRONG ROOM

The walls and door of this chamber are reinforced with double thickness. The secret door is locked and requires a successful DC 35 Disable Device to open. Otherwise, the walls around this room have hardness 5, 150 hit points, and Break DC 35.



Seven large burlap sacks sit against the northern wall of this small room, while to the west sits a small desk and chair. A leather-bound ledger lies atop the desk.

The ledger on the desk contains several detailed maps of the regions the brothers were mining, and locates all of their assay points and mines. Notes on the payout of each mine are listed—it appears that all of them have played out without imparting any particularly rich lodes. Several pages near the end of the ledger have been torn out—these once contained the brothers' notes on the location of Xin-Shalast. Silas tore them out when he realized how important the discovery was, committed them to memory, then burned the pages.

**TREASURE:** Here, the Vekkers stored the gold from their mine after the ore was separated in the building below and hauled up through the shaft. The door creaks loudly when opened (by design to alert the Vekkers to thieves). Within are seven burlap sacks. Five are stuffed with gold dust and are worth 1,000 gp each. The last two actually hold gold nuggets and are worth 2,500 gp each. Each sack weighs 40 pounds. Hidden behind one of the sacks is a small coffer holding 14 uncut gems the brothers found, worth 50 gp each.

## B14 LIVING AREA (CR 8)



This room obviously doubled as the main living quarters and kitchen for the inhabitants of the cabin. A stone hearth and chimney occupy the

southeast corner, with an iron hook holding a cauldron above the grate. The rest of the room is in a horrific state—firewood, cooking utensils, pots and pans, and even the furniture lie in scattered heaps. A painting of two dour-looking dwarves standing in front of an enormous elk hangs askew on the northern wall. Ancient bloodstains mar the walls and floor and bits of overturned furniture here and there, but there are no bodies.

This is where the Vekker brothers took their meals and spent most of what little leisure time they had. The painting clearly depicts two dwarves with a family resemblance; they are Silas and Karivek Vekker. The painting was made years ago in Janderhoff, where the brothers posed with a stuffed elk to commemorate their hunting prowess in the Kodar Mountains. Characters who've seen Silas's manifestation in the various haunts in the cabin will recognize the dwarf immediately.

The disarray and blood are all that remains of the terrible fight that broke out in this room when Karivek and his dwarves decided cannibalism was the only solution. The fight spread out onto the porch and surrounding ledge relatively quickly, but scavengers have long since removed the results of that fight.

**HAUNT:** As the PCs investigate this room, they begin experiencing subtle twinges of hunger. Without much more warning, those twinges erupt into full-blown pangs of painful starvation and unholy urges to feast on their companions. While these hunger pangs pass quickly, the damage to the mind is more persistent.

## CANNIBAL URGINGS

| XP    | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 4,800 | 8  | 16 |

CE haunt (all of area B14)

**Caster Level** 8th

**Notice** Wisdom check DC 18 (to notice sudden twinges of unnatural hunger)

**hp** 16; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

**Effect** When the hunger pangs strike, all characters in the room must make DC 20 Fortitude saves to resist taking 10d6 points of nonlethal starvation damage from the sudden phantom hunger. Accompanying this ravenous sensation is the conviction that only the flesh of the other PCs can sate the hunger. Any character who took starvation damage must then make a DC 20 Will save to resist taking 2d6 points of Wisdom drain as the cannibal urgings overwhelm the PC and drive him to the brink of madness.

## B15 LARDER (CR 14)

The door to this room is heavy and seals with the surrounding frame, requiring a DC 15 Strength check to open.



This bare-floored room has a series of iron hooks suspended from the rafters. The window in the far





wall looks out over the edge of the cliff and, unlike others in the cabin, has no glass or shutters—only a tight lattice of iron bars. Against the far wall sits a four-foot-tall mound of bones—dwarven bones, by the look of them.

The dwarves used this room for their cold storage. In all but high summer it remained cooler than the rest of the cabin and allowed their meats and foodstuffs to last a little while without spoilage. The close-set bars on the windows likewise kept out vermin, except for flies and mosquitoes in the warmest months, and the toughened dwarves were not overly picky about the condition of their meals.

The bones are the remains of the four dwarves, including Silas Vekker, who were killed and eaten a decade ago. An investigation of the remains followed by a successful DC 20 Heal check reveals that the bones have been picked clean and are, in many places, scraped and gnawed by what would appear to be dwarven teeth.

**HAUNT:** The first person to examine the bones is in for a rough surprise—on one of the bones, he recognizes his own jewelry: a ring on a skeletal finger, a necklace draped over a ribcage, or a belt dangling over ivory hips. With this discovery comes the conviction that the gnawed bones are, in fact, that character's own. An instant later, that character becomes surrounded by a whirling storm of shadowy forms as the ghosts of the cannibalized dead attempt to add that PC to their number.

### THE HUNGRY DEAD

| XP     | CR | HP |
|--------|----|----|
| 38,400 | 14 | 20 |

CE haunt (all of area **B15**)

**Notice** Perception DC 25 (to hear the rising whispers and slobbering grunts of the hungry dead)

**hp** 20; **Trigger** touch; **Reset** 1 minute

**Effect** To observers, the haunted character suddenly begins thrashing wildly, as if dozens of invisible hands were tugging and pushing him about the room. At the same time, bloody wounds from invisible teeth appear across the victim's body. The haunted character perceives that he has suddenly been surrounded by a dozen emaciated but fantastically strong dwarves, all of whom are attempting to eat him alive. The ghosts make 10 attack rolls against the PC at a +15 bonus; each hit deals 2d6+7 points of damage and threatens a critical hit on a roll of 19–20. A character reduced to –10 hit points by these bites is torn apart so that nothing remains but a red, well-gnawed skeleton draped in his gear.

### EVENT 1: CANNIBAL FURY (CR 15)

As the PCs finish exploring the cabin, they should be able to piece together some of what occurred here more than a decade ago, but unfortunately find the place to be devoid of any real clues as to Xin-Shalast's location. The true source of this information, the ghost of Silas Vekker, has yet to properly show itself—but before it

does, the unquiet spirits haunting the cabin have one final cacophonous assault in mind. By the time you have this haunt begin, the weather outside should have grown progressively worse—if the PCs bother to look outside at any point while exploring the cabin, explain to them that it's started to snow softly. When you start this event, the snowfall has increased to heavy snow, as detailed on page 438 of the *Core Rulebook*.

This final haunting event is more complex than the haunts keyed to specific rooms—this is a multistage haunt that should play out, to a certain extent, like a highly scripted combat. It can begin at any point you wish—preferably after the PCs have already experienced most or all of the other haunts the cabin has to offer, but before they feel that they have exhausted all of the possibilities in the cabin. If the PCs decide to spend the night in the cabin, this event plays out not long after they bed down. High-level PCs have access to teleportation and other effects, though, and chances are good you won't get the opportunity to have this final event occur in the dead of night. In that case, try to time the haunt so that it occurs at a natural climax to the exploration of the Vekkers' cabin, perhaps just after the PCs have experienced the last haunt, or just after they discover the secret strong room in area **B13**.

**HAUNT:** This haunt starts innocently enough, with strange sounds from elsewhere in the cabin indicating that the PCs aren't the only ones here. These sounds rapidly grow in power, until it seems as if an entire army of invisible, shrieking lunatics is on the loose. This persistent haunt plays out over 11 rounds, following a scripted series of actions. Allow the PCs to take their own actions as they wish each round; the haunt's actions always occur on initiative count 10.

### CANNIBAL FURY

| XP     | CR | HP |
|--------|----|----|
| 51,200 | 15 | 67 |

CE persistent haunt (Vekker Cabin and environs to a radius of 30 feet from cabin's outer walls)

**Caster Level** 15th

**Notice** Perception DC 25 (to hear the sound of knocking somewhere in the cabin)

**hp** 67; **Trigger** timed; **Reset** none

**Effect** This persistent haunt adheres to the following round-by-round schedule. Note that until the haunt begins to act in force on the fifth round, it cannot be dismissed or damaged. These first four rounds are, in effect, an extended warning of what's about to occur.

**Rounds 1–3:** Allow the PCs to each make a DC 25 Perception check. Anyone who succeeds hears a faint knocking coming from the lower portion of the cabin, probably the outer door at area **B3**, as if some lost traveler were seeking shelter from the storm. PCs in the lower rooms of the cabin or the stair shaft need only succeed at a DC 10 Perception check to hear this knocking. The knocking continues for 3 rounds, during which time PCs might head down to see whom it might be.



Attempts to see the ground outside the cabin are fruitless due to the whirling snow flurries, unless the PCs are within 5 feet, and then they still see nothing present that could have caused the knocking.

**Round 4:** The strange knocking grows silent for 1 round.

**Round 5:** A loud crack followed by a mighty hammering sound suddenly fills the cabin as its walls begin to shake and groan, almost as if the structure were giving up its purchase on the cliff edge and sliding off. On each turn that a PC remains in the haunt's area, he must make a DC 15 Acrobatics check; failure indicates he cannot move for that round, while failure by 5 or more indicates he falls prone. A character in area **B6** at this time falls off the stairs if he falls prone.

**Round 6:** The hammering continues, but now the faint images of starving dwarven ghosts can be glimpsed out of the corner of the eye. Each character suddenly experiences painful hunger pangs and must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save to resist taking 4d6 points of nonlethal damage and 1d4 points of Constitution damage from the horrific hunger.

**Round 7:** Voices can now be heard, in most cases wordless cries of pain, but now and then snatches of sentences like "eating us..." or "don't let him..." or "so hungry..." The hammering continues, but now the starving ghosts seem to notice the PCs for the first time. Each PC must make a DC 18 Will save—failure indicates that the haunt possesses him as the ghosts themselves seem to flow into the PC's body. Possession inflicts 1d6 points of Wisdom drain, and has additional implications in rounds 8–10.

**Round 8–10:** For the last 3 rounds of this complex haunt, the shaking and hammering continues. Characters possessed by the haunt do not need to make Acrobatics checks to move and take whatever actions they can to render non-possessed characters unconscious or helpless, using whatever tools they have at their disposal. If a possessed character is adjacent to a helpless, non-possessed character and is not threatened by any other non-possessed character, he attempts a coup de grace action against the helpless character with the best weapon option he has. If a possessed character is adjacent to a dead character, he feeds on the body and takes no other actions unless he is attacked by someone else.

**Round 11:** With a sudden lurch, the haunting stops. Possessed characters immediately regain control of their faculties. Any character who successfully fed on an ally must make a DC 20 Will save upon realizing what he's done—failure results in an additional 2d4 points of Wisdom drain from the supernaturally fueled revelation. At your option, characters subjected to extreme Wisdom drain from this haunt could develop various insanities (see page 250 of the *GameMastery Guide*). The cabin itself shows no signs of damage from the violence aside from anything the PCs themselves have done to it. A few rounds later, Silas Vekker finally manifests before the PCs as detailed in Event 2, below.

## EVENT 2: A GHOST'S PLEA

The Cannibal Fury haunt ends abruptly not because the unquiet spirits have had their say, but because

one among them retains fragments of sanity. This is the spirit of Silas Vekker, and just as it takes the angry ghosts of his kin several rounds to ramp up to the fury evidenced at the height of the climactic haunting, it takes him about a minute to finally gather the energy to quell these spirits. When he does, the ghosts vanish in an instant, save for one.

Silas Vekker is the same spirit the PCs might have encountered elsewhere in the cabin—a balding dwarf with a dark brown beard. His facial features are curiously indistinct—he has no eyes, for example, and when he speaks, his lips barely even move. Maintaining this manifestation is tremendously draining for the spirit, and he can do so only for a short amount of time. As he speaks, bite-sized bits and pieces of him tear loose and fade, leaving him a growing patchwork of red, until finally, not enough of him remains and the entire thing fades away.



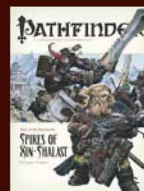
"You... you are alive? You do not hunger? Ah... that is what I sense in your blood. Greed. You seek the City of Greed. You should abandon your quest, lest you end up like me. Cold. Dead. Eaten. But I suspect you cannot be swayed. Know then that I know the way to Xin-Shalast. I can show you the way, but only if you bring me my brother. He died on a ledge in the mountains a mile's walk north from this cabin. I can feel his soul out there, still hungry, still insane. Bring his bones to me so that I might reconcile with him. Once he is at rest, I will show you the way so that I might rest as well..."

Silas's spirit doesn't have enough energy to maintain rational discourse for long—certainly not long enough to speak much more than his tale above. After delivering his message to the PCs, the ghostly dwarf is gone—eaten away to nothing. He and the other haunts in the cabin remain quiet for a full week thereafter. If after that time Karivek's bones have not been returned, the haunts resume their normal patterns of haunting.

## EVENT 3: HUNGRY GHOST (CR 16)

Karivek's body lies on a high mountain ledge overlooking the final mine the brothers worked before they discovered Xin-Shalast. Discovering this location via divination spells is certainly one option, but PCs lacking these resources need to recover the ledger from area **B13**. The location of the final Vekker mine is indicated in that book—at the base of a 2,000-foot-tall cliff in the mountains, a mile north of the cabin. The remnants of what was once a well-worn trail between this mine and the cabin still exist—this trail can be followed with a DC 25 Survival check. Otherwise, the journey to Karivek's body is one through trackless, rugged mountains.

The cliff itself is relatively sheer, and for the purposes of searching for the proper ledge, thankfully free of many



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areas that would qualify. Unfortunately, this means that the sheer cliff face also presents a difficult obstacle for characters unable to fly, teleport, or otherwise bypass the climb. The wind around the cliff is strong and the cliff face icy, and would take numerous DC 30 Climb checks to scale.

The ledge in question is near the mountain's peak above. Trailing to a 5-foot-wide shelf to the northwest and southeast, the ledge deepens into a large flat area in the middle. The ground here is rough and uneven, covered with rubble and rocks and counting as difficult terrain. Further, the presence of Karivek's unquiet spirit causes a layer of thick fog to obscure the ground to a depth of 1 foot. This fog extends out over the cliff and down 30 feet from the edge, so that a character unable to see through the fog who moves through a square adjacent to the edge must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid stumbling and falling into a 2,000-foot fall into the mine digs below.

Near the eastern end of the ledge, a small number of gravestones protrude from the mist. As Karivek neared the end, guilt and remorse for his heinous acts of murder and cannibalism faded in the stark face of starvation, and the gravestones, each marked with dwarven names (including that of his brother, Silas), were a last-minute attempt to atone for his deeds. Despite the dozen or so grave markers, there's only one body here, and it's not even buried.

**CREATURES:** Karivek's body lies near a long-dead fire pit in the eastern portion of the ledge, frozen solid and preserved by the cold mountain air. The corpse still wears its padded armor, but is itself in frightful shape. Not only is it broken and mangled, as if it had fallen from a great height, but the body's legs end in charred, blackened stumps where the feet had been burnt off.

In life, Karivek was a gifted and adventurous miner—he and his brother were something of a legend in Janderhoff for their eagerness to seek out incredibly dangerous places to mine. Karivek could have had a quite comfortable life plying his skills closer to home, but his adventurous spirit would never let him settle down. Now that same spirit remains here, transformed by his hunger and guilt and fear into a powerful ghost.

Among the various powers Karivek gained upon becoming a ghost is an ability to attract and manipulate certain creatures with the cold subtype. Currently, an enormous frost worm, attracted by Karivek's supernatural control over cold, dwells in the area and serves the ghost as a guardian. The huge beast lies in wait under the packed ice and snow in the middle of the ledge, and erupts from hiding to attack with its breath weapon as soon as it notices any creatures approaching the ledge.

Karivek's ghost remains hidden until his corpse is touched or the frost worm attacks, at which point he flies up out of the mist to attack. In death, Karivek's mouth is filled with fangs that drip streamers of blood that fade

away to mist before they strike the ground. Although he's incorporeal, his freezing temperature leaves a rime of ice across any surface he travels near—such as by leaving frosty hand prints on walls as he passes through them.

## KARIVEK VEKKER

|        |    |     |
|--------|----|-----|
| XP     | CR | HP  |
| 51,200 | 15 | 161 |

Male ghost dwarf expert 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144)

NE Medium undead (cold, incorporeal)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +26

### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 17, flat-footed 20 (+5 armor, +5 deflection, +2 Dex)

**hp** 161 (15d8+90); fast healing 10

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +13; +2 vs. spells and spell-like abilities

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** cold, undead traits

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 30 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** corrupting touch +13 touch (15d6 plus 2d6 cold), vicious bite +13 touch (3d6+7/18–20 plus 1d8 bleed and 1d6 Cha and 1d6 Con)

**Special Attacks** command the frozen, eater of flesh, telekinesis (DC 22)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +20)

At will—*dominate monster* (DC 24; can only affect non-outsiders with the cold subtype)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Karivek uses his frightful moan on the first round of combat, then uses *telekinesis* to hurl non-flying foes off of his ledge. He focuses his melee attacks on larger foes—victims with the most meat on their bones. If he sees that the frost worm is nearly dead and surrounded by enemies, he'll attempt to kill the worm with his corrupting touch in order to trigger its death throes, knowing that only the supernatural piercing damage can hurt him (and even then, at best, he'll only take half damage from that, due to his incorporeal nature).

**Morale** Once Karivek engages in battle, he fights until destroyed, knowing he will just rejuvenate in a few days.

### STATISTICS

**Str** —, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28 (32 vs. bull rush, 32 vs. trip)

**Feats** Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Profession [miner]), Toughness

**Skills** Climb +18, Craft (armorsmith) +19, Craft (blacksmith) +19, Fly +10, Knowledge (geography) +19, Knowledge (nature) +19, Perception +26 (+28 unusual stonework), Profession (miner) +26, Survival +17

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant

**SQ** frozen dead

**Gear** +4 improved cold resistance padded armor

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Command the Frozen (Su)** Karivek's death at the hands of a supernaturally cold malevolence (the wendigo) has given him





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ghost power over non-outsider creatures who possess the cold subtype. The ghost can use *dominate monster* at will on any non-outsider with the cold subtype as a spell-like ability, but can only maintain control in this manner over one creature at a time.

**Eater of Flesh (Su)** As a victim of the wendigo's insidious disease prior to his death, Karivek retains a portion of that sickness within his very being. On a successful critical hit with his vicious bite attack, the ghost tears away a chunk of flesh and consumes it (the flesh becoming ghostly and vanishing as he does so)—this deals 1d6 points of Constitution and Charisma drain to the victim (DC 22 Fortitude save negates).

**Frozen Dead (Su)** Karivek gains the cold subtype, thanks to his death in this frozen landscape. As long as he's in an area where the temperature is below freezing (as it is on this ledge), he gains fast healing 10.

**Rejuvenation (Su)** Until his bones are returned to the Vekkers' cabin, Karivek's ghost rejuvenates 2d4 days after it is destroyed.

**Vicious Bite (Su)** Karivek threatens a critical hit with his bite on a natural roll of 18–20. His fangs become solid and razor sharp as they cut through flesh but ignore armor, allowing him to attack with his bite as a touch attack. Karivek adds 1-1/2 times his Charisma modifier as damage to his vicious bite attack. Wounds caused by his vicious bite are deep and gory, causing 1d8 points of bleed damage.

### ADVANCED FROST WORM

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 25,600 | 13 | 200 |

hp 200 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 126, 292)

**TREASURE:** Karivek's corpse still wears his +4 *improved cold resistance padded armor*, but his other gear has long since gone missing.

**DEVELOPMENT:** As soon as the PCs defeat the ghost, the wendigo howls and starts a blizzard, as detailed in "The Watcher in the Wastes."

### EVENT 4: THE WENDIGO SIEGE (CR 17)

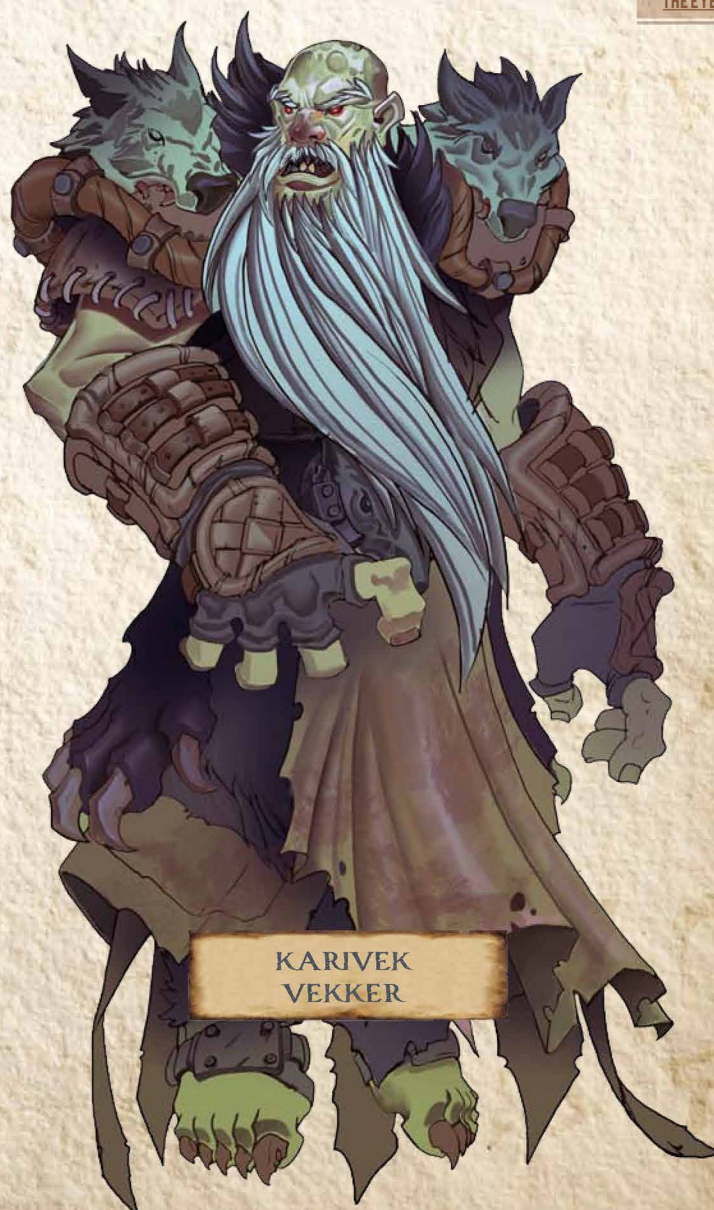
Once the PCs defeat Karivek's ghost and secure his remains, they need only return the bones to the Vekkers' Cabin. Unfortunately, doing so is made more complicated by the wendigo's mounting wrath. The horrific outsider is displeased with the PCs' meddling in its cannibal tableaux and steps in to punish them and, ideally, induct them into its monstrous ways. The PCs have already heard its howl at least once as they approached the cabin the first time, and one of them might even be haunted by the monster's dreams. As they return to the cabin, the wendigo howls once again, then creates a blizzard to hinder movement and ideally catch the PCs in an open area on their way back to the cabin with Karivek's remains.

When the PCs return to the cabin with Karivek's bones, a strange sense of calm seems to fill the structure. Even the howling sounds of the blizzard outside seem muted

and quiet. As soon as the PCs bring the bones to area B14 (or wherever Silas manifested to them to ask this favor), Silas Vekker appears again, an expression of sadness and forgiveness on his face. Yet Karivek is not yet quite ready to accept his brother. The cannibal ghost manifests as well, his bones crumbling to dust and reforming his ghostly incarnation. The two ghosts silently face off against each other, seemingly caught in a struggle of wills as wispy strings of ectoplasm and wafts of ghostly presence lash out and coil about one another.

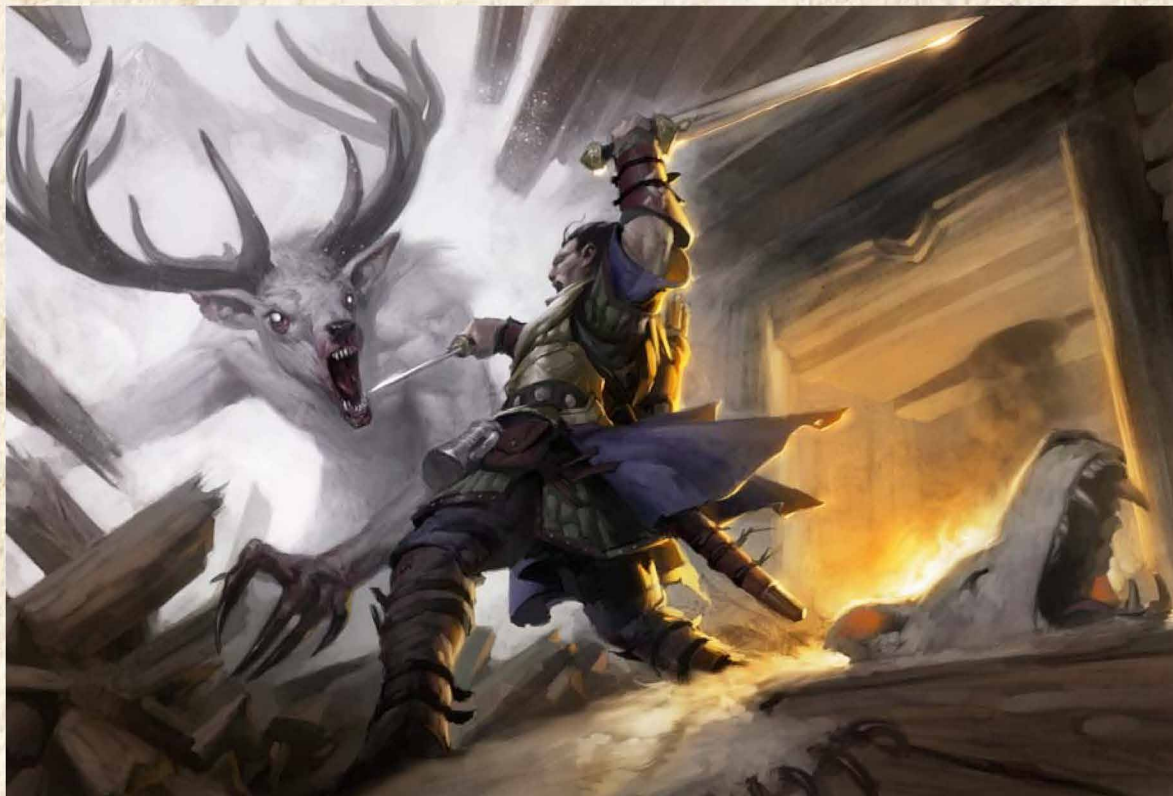
All Silas needs to calm his brother's spirit is time—10 minutes is enough. Unfortunately, the wendigo can sense the reconciliation and the impending loss of its masterpiece, and it quickly takes action against the cabin and the PCs inside.

**CREATURE:** The wendigo does not initially attack the PCs directly, preferring to wage a psychological war of fear and terror against them. If they're caught outside in the blizzard, it follows them while wind walking, turning solid



KARIVEK  
VEKKER





now and then to make flyby attacks against stragglers or anyone who becomes separated from the group.

Once the PCs return to the cabin, though, the wendigo's tactics become more physical. The monster lays siege to the cabin, smashing its walls and roofs with its powerful claws in an attempt to tear the place apart and to get to the victims inside. Left to its own, the wendigo can use its *dream haunting* ability against the reconciling brothers, infusing them both again with cannibal urges and madness. This overwhelms Silas over the course of 10 minutes, transforming him into a cannibal ghost as well (use the same stats as Karivek)—if this occurs, the PCs must slay the wendigo and then defeat both rejuvenated ghosts before Silas can attempt to heal the rift between himself and his brother.

## WENDIGO

| XP      | CR | HP  |
|---------|----|-----|
| 102,400 | 17 | 279 |

hp 279 (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 281)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The wendigo prefers to attack lone targets, but it doesn't shrink from multiple foes. It focuses its attacks on the weakest-looking or most lightly armored foes at first, and if it manages to establish a hold on a creature, flies at least 200 feet into the air before dropping its foe onto the rocky ground below, after which it returns to the cabin to finish off anyone still within. If it finds that the PCs are strong melee combatants, it starts using bite attacks with its Flyby Attack feat to limit melee attacks made against it. Characters who use fire, though, receive the brunt of the wendigo's attacks if possible.

**Morale** If reduced below 40 hit points, the wendigo uses *wind walk* to flee into the mountains (snatching a PC if it has the chance)—it does not return to reassert its dominance over the region anytime soon.

**DEVELOPMENT:** If the wendigo is defeated or driven off, Silas wins the silent confrontation with his brother in 10 minutes, at which point Karivek's ghost suddenly relaxes and sighs. His teeth return to normal and his feet grow back before he fades away into nothingness. Silas turns to face the PCs, his expression now at peace but not without an element of sadness. His final words to the PCs before he fades are a warning.



"You have saved my brother. You have saved me. I should reward you by simply taking the path to Xin-Shalast with me into the beyond, yet I sense that you still harbor a desire to see those golden ruins. Very well. Look to the pages of my ledger for the way, and may Torag watch over you in the darkness to come..."

As he finishes speaking, Silas fades away as well. As he does, several parchment pages appear and float lazily to the ground. These are the missing five pages from Silas's ledger from area B13, and they provide exacting details on the route to Xin-Shalast.

**DEVELOPMENT:** If the party puts the Vekkers to rest before the wendigo can transform Silas, award the PCs 51,200 XP.





## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

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# PART THREE: ON THE WORLD'S ROOF

ONCE THE PCs HAVE SECURED ALL OF THE MISSING PAGES OF THE VEKKER BROTHERS' LEDGER, THEY HAVE IN THEIR HANDS AN INCREDIBLE TREASURE. THE ROUTE TO XIN-SHALAST WOULD BE A PHYSICAL TRIAL EVEN WITHOUT THE INFLUENCE OF INTRUDING REALITIES AND THE DISORIENTING EFFECTS OF LENG'S PROXIMITY TO THE WORLD—WITH THOSE IN PLAY, ONLY BY SHEEREST LUCK COULD ANYONE HOPE TO FIND THE LOST CITY OF GREED. SUCH WAS THE VEKKERS' LUCK A DECADE AGO WHEN THEY FIRST FOUND THE RUINS WHILE SEARCHING FOR MINING LOCATIONS.

The first step for the PCs, according to the Vekkers' directions, is to continue traveling up the Kazaron River until they reach the second tributary. The ledger identifies this river as the legendary River Avah, yet it also says the winding route between the Kodar Mountains is not one for the faint of heart. There are no banks to walk along and the river itself often rises in cataracts of up to 300 feet in height as it climbs ever higher into the mountains. The waters of the River Avah are freezing cold, yet they themselves never freeze. As the PCs follow the river upstream, the air grows thin and the sky a deep blue. From leaving the Kazaron to the point just south of the Icemists (where the PCs move onto the smaller scale "Xin-Shalast Environs" map), they climb thousands of feet to a height of just over 15,000 feet above sea level—consult the section on mountain travel and altitude zones on page 430 of the *Core Rulebook* for rules and guidelines on how to handle adventuring in this hostile environment.

Eventually, the PCs reach the River Avah's source—a frozen swampland shrouded in glittering clouds of ice crystals known as the Fen of the Icemists. Yet even then they find no indication of the ruined spires of Xin-Shalast. Here, the ledger tells the PCs they must fast and wait for a night with a full moon, whereupon the remainder of the route is made clear to them, for here is the edge of Leng's otherworldly influence upon Golarion. Natural creatures are skittish in this region, and with the exception of magically compelled animals, animal companions, and familiars, no animal willingly travels into the region depicted on the Xin-Shalast Environs map. Particularly sensitive intelligent creatures can sense the inherent "wrongness" of the region as well—any character who succeeds at a DC 20 Wisdom check feels distinctly unwelcome in the region and suffers nameless feelings of dread and worry. These sensations have no game effects but should serve to keep the PCs on their toes nonetheless.

Anyone attempting to enter this region must make a successful DC 25 Will save or unknowingly and

unintentionally wander out of the region after following a curving path that takes him back into a region of the Kodar Mountains not influenced by Leng. This warping of reality affects even attempts that use ropes or other methods of marking progress, shifting things subtly so that an explorer who fails the Will save simply emerges on the opposite side of the region without actually ever traversing the realm within. A character who succeeds at the Will save after entering this region suffers no additional penalties until he tries to leave—the feeling of wrongness from Leng's proximity persists the whole time.

A character under the effects of *protection from chaos* gains a +2 bonus on this Will save. *True seeing* allows the character to come and go as he wills as well, bypassing the save. Once inside the zone, he need not maintain *true seeing* until he wishes to leave the area, in which case he must succeed at the DC 25 Will save to avoid finding that the distortion works in reverse and that, no matter what route he takes, he constantly finds himself returning to the region's heart. A character who attempts to *teleport* into this region from outside (or out from within) must succeed at a DC 30 caster level check or the spell fails.

A nonmagical method to cleanse the body and mind and ease the journey into Xin-Shalast exists as well—this is the method the Vekkers accidentally stumbled upon when they camped at the region's boundary at the current source of the River Avah while searching for a new mine. They had extended their assaying trip an additional week and were forced to ration their food supplies. Anyone taking nonlethal damage from starvation who stands at the source of the River Avah during a full moon can make a DC 15 Perception check to notice what appears to be a ghostly afterimage of the River Avah continuing up into the mountains to its original source from before geologic activity in the region altered it. Once this ghostly river is spotted, a character can follow it with ease as long as he continues to suffer from starvation; following the ghostly river (shown as a dotted line on the Xin-Shalast Environs map) eventually leads the PCs to the lower city of



# NORTHEASTERN VARISIA



Xin-Shalast—but not before passing through one of the region's more dangerous areas.

## C QUEEN OF THE ICEMISTS (CR 16)

The phantom River Avah leads through a partially frozen wetland—the Fen of the Icemists. Once a lake, this region was clogged with silt by several volcanic eruptions at the time of Thassilon's fall, creating this treacherous and unique high-altitude fen. The waters of the Icemists are in a constant state of freezing and thawing, with the mix of high altitude and latent volcanism creating a mist-shrouded frozen region of water and swaths of icy mud. No plants exist in the Icemists apart from the ever-present stalks of strange pale fungi and clots of floating lichens that cover and hide deep tarns of freezing water—the entire region has about it a chilling aura of frozen menace.

The Fen of the Icemists is riddled with hummocks of solid ground and protruding rocks. Careful travelers can move through the fen without falling into the water, but doing so requires someone in the party to make a successful DC 25 Survival check once per hour. If the check fails, a random member of the party falls through a patch of thin ice into the freezing waters of a 1d10 × 10-foot-deep tarn. A creature so submerged takes 3d6 points of cold damage per round—the hole through which she fell through refreezes in only 1d4 rounds. A character who attempts to extract someone through the hole must succeed at a DC 15 Acrobatics check to avoid breaking through the ice herself. A lone victim can attempt to climb out of the hole by making a DC 20

Climb check followed by the DC 15 Acrobatics check to avoid falling back in before reaching more solid ground.

The Fen is about 2 miles wide, but due to the treacherous nature of the path, travelers on foot move at 10% their normal speed.

**CREATURE:** Aside from the occasional flying creature (such as a dragon or roc), few beings dwell in the freezing waters of the Icemists. One notable exception is a capricious nature spirit—an icy nymph named Svevenka. She makes her presence known to the PCs at some point as they pass through her fen, appearing as a beautiful elven woman with long dark hair, pale purple skin, and exaggerated ears and limbs. She watches them carefully while disguised as an otter in the water and attacks them only if they disrespect the swamp. If one of the PCs is particularly loud or obnoxious, she attempts to tease that character a little by casting *baleful polymorph* on him. She only attacks the PCs if they're blatantly disrespecting her swamp or if they take her *baleful polymorph* joke poorly.

If, on the other hand, there are any PCs in the party who helped put Myriana's troubled spirit to rest in "The Hook Mountain Massacre," Svevenka recognizes them—especially if a PC still carries Myriana's inspiration. Myriana was Svevenka's cousin, and she felt her kin's death as a stab in her own heart. Svevenka learned of the PCs role in putting Myriana's spirit to rest through her various fey contacts, and when she recognizes them here in her home, she is moved to reveal herself and her relationship with Myriana to them. In thanks for what they did, Svevenka warns the PCs that all is not right in



the region, and that they would do best to avoid traveling farther north.

If the PCs reveal to the nymph their plans to reach Xin-Shalast and confront Karzoug, she grows thoughtful and perhaps a bit excited. While she does not wish to leave her beloved Icemists unprotected, she volunteers her aid, telling the PCs that this place can be a safe harbor for them if they wish. She'll even put her spells at their disposal. Ssevenka knows quite a bit about the region, and if the PCs ask for advice, she can warn them about the giants, lamias, and abominable snowmen that dwell in Xin-Shalast. She can also warn them about the region's proximity to Leng, and the occluding field around Mhar Massif's peak. She suspects that the denizens of Xin-Shalast created the field to protect it and that they must have some magical method of protecting themselves from the field, but these are merely guesses on her part.

Finally, she'll tell the PCs about Xin-Shalast's skulks—descendants of the city's original citizens, they live still in the city's ruins. Ssevenka knows there are two factions among the skulks—the relatively peaceful (and less powerful) “Spared” and the vampiric minions of the Hidden Beast, a creature with whom Ssevenka has fought before. She suggests the PCs seek out a member of the Spared for further information about the city once they enter the place, for few other factions within Xin-Shalast are likely to be as willing to help them.



SSEVENKA

## SSEVENKA

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 76,800 | 16 | 256 |

Female icy nymph druid 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 217, *Advanced Bestiary* 150)

CG Medium outsider (augmented fey, cold, elemental, extraplanar, water)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +25

**Aura** blinding beauty (30 ft., DC 27), cold aura (10 ft., DC 28),

### DEFENSE

**AC** 35, touch 28, flat-footed 26 (+9 deflection, +8 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +2 shield)

**hp** 256 (16 HD; 8d8+8d8+184)

**Fort** +27, **Ref** +25, **Will** +27; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects

**Defensive Abilities** resist nature's lure; **DR** 10/cold iron;

**Immune** cold, elemental traits; **Resist** fire 20

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** +3 dagger +21/+16 (1d4+2/19–20 plus 1d6 cold and paralysis)

**Special Attacks** body of ice 15 rounds/day, exude ice, icy touch, stunning glance, wild shape 3/day

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +14)

1/day—*dimension door*

**Spells Prepared** (CL 15th; concentration +21)

8th—*finger of death* (DC 24), *whirlwind* (DC 24)

7th—*freezing sphere* (DC 23), *heal*, quickened *poison* (DC 20)

6th—*antilife shell*, quickened *barkskin*, *control winds*<sup>o</sup>, greater *dispel magic*, *transport via plants*

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *call lightning storm* (DC 21), *commune with nature*, *cure critical wounds* (2), *ice storm*<sup>o</sup>

4th—*air walk*, *control water*, *cure serious wounds* (3), *sleet storm*<sup>o</sup>

3rd—*call lightning*<sup>o</sup> (DC 19), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *dominate animal* (DC 19), *quench*, *water walk*

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *cat's grace*, *chill metal* (DC 18), *fog cloud*<sup>o</sup>, *gust of wind*, *lesser restoration*, *resist energy*

1st—*charm animal* (DC 17), *cure light wounds* (4), *obscuring mist*<sup>o</sup>, *speaking with animals*

0 (at will)—*flare* (DC 16), *guidance*, *mending*, *stabilize*

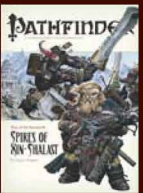
**D** Domain spell; **Domain** Ice

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Ssevenka casts *barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, and *cat's grace* on herself before revealing herself to the PCs.

**During Combat** Ssevenka's first action in combat is to cast *antilife shell*. She relies on this spell to keep enemies from engaging her in melee while she summons creatures and uses ranged spells against foes. If her foes manage to engage her in melee, she wild shapes into a dire bear to continue the battle.

**Morale** Ssevenka fights until brought below 25 hit points, at which point she flees using *transport via plants* to escape to the opposite side of the Icemists; she does not seek another confrontation with the PCs.



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### PART SIX: PINNACLE OF AVARICE

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#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 26, **Con** 30, **Int** 16, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 28

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 37

**Feats** Ability Focus (blinding beauty), Dodge, Mobility, Natural Spell, Quicken Spell, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Wind Stance

**Skills** Acrobatics +32, Climb +12, Escape Artist +27, Handle Animal +28, Knowledge (nature) +24, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Stealth +27, Survival +8, Swim +18

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**SQ** ice mastery, inspiration, nature bond (Ice domain), nature sense, trackless step, unearthly grace, wild empathy +31, wild empathy +21, woodland stride

**Gear** +3 dagger, headband of inspired wisdom +2, ring of force shield, ring of major fire resistance

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Cold Aura (Su)** Svevenka emits an aura of cold in a 10-foot radius.

Any creature in this range takes 2d6 points of cold damage per round (DC 28 Fort for half). Svevenka can suppress or resume her cold aura as a free action. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Exude Ice (Su)** At will as a full-round action, Svevenka can exude a circle of slippery ice in a 20-foot-diameter spread centered on her. This ice remains in the affected area, melting away as normal for the ambient temperature. Moving into a square of ice costs two squares of movement, and the DC for Acrobatics and Climb checks in the area increases by +5.

**Ice Mastery (Ex)** Svevenka gains a +1 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls if her foe is touching ice. She never slips or slides on ice unless she wishes, and can climb icy surfaces as though affected by a *spider climb* spell.

**Icy Touch (Su)** Svevenka's touch deals 1d6 points of cold damage. Attacks she makes with metallic weapons deal +1d6 points of cold damage as well. Anyone who takes this additional cold damage must succeed at a DC 28 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs befriend Svevenka and earn her aid and advice, award them XP as if they had defeated her in combat.

### D GIANT SENTINELS (CR 16)

At this point along the ghostly river's route, the phantom waters are joined by an ancient road paved with flat stones that have a faint sheen of gold to them. This road continues north to Xin-Shalast—from this point on, the PCs have a physical route to follow and need no longer depend upon the phantom waters of the Avah. The road itself is 100 feet wide, its surface patchy here with swaths of ice but providing a welcome flat surface upon which to travel.

**CREATURES:** A small group of neutral evil cloud giants led by a one-eyed brutish frost giant named Bjormundal has been ordered by their rune giant masters to guard this approach to Xin-Shalast. The giants dwell in a cave overlooking the road—the 60-foot climb up to the cave requires a successful DC 20 Climb check. Two of the four giants stand guard at the cave entrance at all times, hiding behind several immense boulders.

### BJORMUNDAL

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 25,600 | 13 | 215 |

Male frost giant fighter 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 149)

CE Large humanoid (cold, giant)

**Init** +6; Senses low-light vision; Perception +22

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 11, flat-footed 26 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 215 (18 HD; 14d8+4d10+130)

**Fort** +19, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, rock catching; **Immune** cold

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** +3 greataxe +28/+23/+18 (3d6+21/19–20/x3)

**Ranged** rock +16/+11/+6 (1d8+11)

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

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Bjormundal, perhaps feeling a need to compensate for his shorter sized compared to his minions, leaps down to confront the PCs in melee as soon as he spots them, leaving the cloud giants to make attacks at range. Bjormundal fights with Power Attack. Faced with a foe using a powerful weapon, he'll try to sunder it with a Vital Strike.

**Morale** Bjormundal flees if reduced to fewer than 30 hit points.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 33, **Dex** 14, **Con** 22, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 38

**Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)

**Skills** Intimidate +22, Perception +22, Stealth -4 (0 in snow)

**Languages** Common, Giant

**SQ** armor training 1

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure serious wounds* (3); **Other Gear** +2 breastplate, +3 greataxe, ring of feather falling

### CLOUD GIANTS (4)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 12,800 each | 11 | 168 each |

**hp** 168 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 147)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** When the first two giants spot intruders, they start throwing rocks on the surprise round. The sound of the rocks smashing into the ancient road below is enough to draw the other two giants from the cave's depths in only 2 rounds. The four giants gain cover against attacks from below from their positions behind boulders, and continue attacking with hurled boulders until foes confront them in melee. If foes flee to the north toward Xin-Shalast, the cloud giants levitate down to the road and give chase.

**Morale** The giants fight to the death unless freed of their slavery to the rune giants.

**TREASURE:** The giants have gathered a total of 1,265 gp in coins, a chest of copper bars worth a total of 500 gp, and a fine cave bear cloak worth 2,000 gp.





## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

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# PART FOUR: XIN-SHALAST

XIN-SHALAST. FABLED CITY AT THE EDGE OF REALITY. A STEPPING STONE BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THAT WHICH IS BEYOND. DOORWAY TO THE PLATEAU OF LENG. THE SPIRED CITY OF XIN-SHALAST HAS STIRRED THE IMAGINATIONS OF POETS AND MADMEN FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS—QUITE A FEAT FOR A CITY THAT, NESTLED AGAINST THE SLOPES OF ONE OF THE TALLEST MOUNTAINS ON GOLARION, HAS BEEN LOST TO EXPLORATION IN ALL THAT TIME. LEGENDS HAVE CALLED XIN-SHALAST THE CRADLE OF LIFE, CLAIM IT WAS BUILT BY THE FIRST RACE, AND HOLD ITS STREETS TO BE OF GOLD AND TOWERS TO BE OF RUBY AND DIAMOND.

Time and legend have a way of making such distortions seem like fact, yet Xin-Shalast is indeed a place of wonder, mystery, and danger. Once the crown jewel of the nation of Shalast, and arguably the greatest of all Thassilon's capitals, Xin-Shalast has remained hidden from prying eyes for ages, standing strong against the steady march of decay due to its proximity to other worlds, where the very rules of existence are twisted and wrong. Today, high in its mystical mountain valley, when the wind cuts just right between the jagged peaks, listeners can still sometimes hear the otherworldly voice of the Ancients piping, "Tekeli-li... Tekeli-li..."

Despite its legendary status among explorers and scholars (most of whom argue that, if indeed the place ever existed, it is certainly gone now), Xin-Shalast is a very real place. The former capital of Shalast, Domain of Greed, and one of the seven rune-cities of Thassilon, the city actually comprises two distinct entities. Xin-Shalast Major, known more commonly by its inhabitants as the Lower City, occupies a long valley at the foot of the great mountain of Mhar Massif. Xin-Shalast Proper, also known as the fabled Spires of Xin-Shalast, sits high upon the southern slope of Mhar Massif, just below its demon-haunted summit. This was the personal palace and fortified citadel of the Runelords of Greed, a line of eight archmagi that ended in the reign of Karzoug the Claimer. From this perch, the current runelord could survey his city in the valley below.

The ancient citadel of the Spires of Xin-Shalast is further explored in Part Five—Part Four is concerned with the Lower City itself. In its heyday, the Lower City was a booming metropolis unnaturally sustained in one of the most forbidding environments of Golarion, high in the Kodar Range, by the will and magical might of the Runelord of Greed. The citizens believed that the runelord's magic was all that kept the three ever-simmering volcanoes of the nearby peaks quiescent, though even in the years after Thassilon's fall, only one major eruption occurred (see area I).

The population of Xin-Shalast at its height consisted of a varied mix of races. The bulk of the legendary city's citizens were humans, yet they could not be called the movers and shakers of the metropolis. At the top of the city's hierarchy were the bestial lamia-kin, Karzoug's favored servants, valued for their ability to erode the will of dissenters and magically compel their victims. As with the other six runelords, giants of all types answered the Runelord of Greed's call as well, serving as shock troops and enforcing his will across the length and breadth of Shalast. The giantkind were controlled by a relatively small tribe of rune giants, unnatural creations whose sole purpose was to dominate the lesser giant races in the runelord's service. Below these groups came the various humanoid races who composed the majority of the city's population and filled the provider caste, performing the roles of artisans, entertainers, and merchants to keep the economy and infrastructure of the empire alive. Beneath all of these was the slave caste, almost always humanoids from neighboring nations (particularly from Bakrakhan to the west), segregated into a fortified district of the city when not going about their daily labors. Upon their backs lay the task of maintaining the empire, and their lot in life was a hard one indeed, rarely allowing survival past middle age. Apart from all of these groups within the city were the many dragons who owed allegiance to Karzoug. These great beasts laired mainly in the Teeth of Karzoug's mountain citadel or in caves along the slopes of the mountain. Some few chose to dwell in the Lower City itself. The dragons answered to none save Karzoug and the most highly placed Harridans of the Mountain, as well as the occasional rune giant assigned to oversee a flight of (usually young) dragons. Finally, there were the strange monstrosities and alien entities the lords of Xin-Shalast called upon to serve strange tasks—denizens from Leng, the eerie shining children, the horrific scarlet walkers, and other monsters used as guardians, advisors, or both—depending upon their individual and monstrous natures.





Today, very few humans remain in the city of Xin-Shalast. The bulk of the city is uninhabited, yet over the past 10,000 years, the giants and lamias have retained their presence here. Now that Karzoug is awakening, they are eager to see the ancient tales handed down by their ancestors once again come to life.

## CITY OVERVIEW

What was once a vibrant, cosmopolitan city built miraculously above the 15,000-foot mark is now a desolate ruin of cyclopean proportions. Still mind-boggling in its scope and grandeur at first glance, on closer inspection it is a mere shadow of its original glory—a sterile, forsaken shell. Only with recent events have the ruins of Xin-Shalast begun to come to life once again. With the stirring of its former master in the spires upon the mountain above, this haven of evil has begun to attract the descendants of those who once owed him fealty. Though the city is still vastly underpopulated and largely deserted, new dangers roam its echoing streets and forgotten passages in addition to the natural hazards to be found in this bleak locale at the edge of the world.

Even today, the most striking aspect of the Lower City is its epic size. Everything about Xin-Shalast is massive, designed as it was to house hundreds of thousands of citizens in close quarters, a sizable portion of them giants. Buildings tower to great heights, byways are wide and lined by massive columns, doorways are cavernous openings, and building interiors are composed of great hollow chambers like the naves of primeval cathedrals. When first viewed from the entrance pass into the valley, the city seems much smaller than it really is. Only when the viewer realizes the distances and scale involved does she grasp the true scope of this monstrous place. Read or paraphrase the following description when the Lower City is first viewed from its southern entrance.



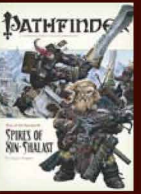
This tableau defies belief. A narrow mountain pass opens into a glacial valley extending north and then turning to the west at the base of the vast mountain at the far end. Filling this valley is an ice-capped city of enormous proportions. The near end is mostly blocked by a huge fortress of smooth black stone, with multiple towers rising from its high walls. Exiting the bailey of this fortress is a massive causeway of gold that dominates the city as it travels down the center of the vale. Enormous towers and spires of many-colored stone pack both sides of the central thoroughfare, rising to prodigious heights and giving the illusion that the road itself is a valley. The eastern slope of the valley has been partially subsumed by an ancient volcanic flow,—nearly a quarter of the city appears to have been so buried. That section is now little more

than a great mass of ice, with the jagged angles and peaks of ruined structures poking through its topmost layer here and there. Where the valley curves slightly to the west, the structures, if anything, grow even larger, becoming truly gigantic as they climb up and over the rocky spur. At the far end of the valley, the city abuts the lower slope of a truly massive peak. Yet the city builders appear to have taken no heed of this change in slope, for the great causeway merely elevates at a steep angle and continues to climb the incline in a nearly straight line, transforming into an immense stairway. Additional buildings cling precariously to the mountain face alongside the causeway, growing even larger and more impressive as they ascend. The gigantic buildings finally give way a few thousand feet above, but the mighty road continues to wend its treacherous way to just below the mountain's peak. There, a spired citadel looms, its size and proportions truly magnificent. It, too, fails to summit the mountain—instead, its topmost spires end just below the dominant face of a stern man, carved into the peak of the mountain and surveying the city below. The otherworldly quality of this strange panorama is further reinforced by the sound of the cold winds slicing across the high peaks, making strange cries and shrieks in the thin mountain air.

As mentioned, the structures are universally of massive proportion with multiple levels, usually in the form of towers of various shapes, and are mostly covered in a thin rime of hoarfrost. Strong winds and the lurking presence of Leng work to prevent much in the way of actual snowfall in Xin-Shalast, but here and there small drifts lie against buildings or mounds of stone. Built as they were by giants, the buildings are incredibly durable, with thick walls and roofs, and have largely remained intact through the ages. Many have holed roofs or crumbled sections but remain structurally sound; very few beyond specific areas of the city mentioned below have crumbled into true ruin. The structures of the Lower City are reminiscent of the ancient architecture of vast proportions that can still be found in other parts of Varisia, such as the Storval Stair or the Irespan of Magnimar. Other than these similarities and a propensity for multi-balconied spires, the actual buildings of Xin-Shalast are extremely dissimilar, built in a great variety of exotic styles reflecting the various giant races, multiple cultures of the subjugated peoples, and magnificent architectural skill and magic once available to the empire of Thassilon.

The Lower City of Xin-Shalast is divided into seven districts, each of which had its own consul appointed by the Harridans of the Mountain (the ruling caste of





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# XIN-SHALAST: LOWER CITY

1 SQUARE = 750 FEET


FACE OF  
MHAR MASSIF





lamias) during the city's height. These consuls led their districts and made sure they were run in a manner consistent with the principles of greed and dictates of the runelord. Six of the districts are the Artisan District, the Slave District, the Entertainment District, Temple Row, Jotunburg, and the Rising District. The seventh district actually existed in the twisted maze of tunnels and catacombs below the city and was called the Hypogeum.


The building materials are several varieties of stone quarried from the rock faces of the Kodar Range, including a hard green marble similar in appearance to emerald. Walls, especially outer walls, tend to be extremely thick, sometimes 20 feet or more, and the principle of the arch and vaulted ceilings are used repeatedly to support the massive weight of the structures above. To lessen the weight of the building materials, many rooms in the buildings have vast open spaces with multiple columns and high ceilings. Most of the wooden doors and accoutrements within the city still exist today, having been essentially freeze-dried to a silvery finish and stony hardness.



The valley walls are extremely steep—cliffs of sheer, gray rock rise from 100 to 300 feet above the tops of the buildings before angling away into mountainous peaks. Unless otherwise mentioned, they are devoid of flora other than simple lichens and the occasional high-altitude nightshade or waterleaf eking out a harsh existence in a crack or fissure.

**ALTITUDE DANGERS:** The entirety of the lower city of Xin-Shalast is above 15,000 feet in altitude. As such, creatures are subject to altitude fatigue and sickness, as detailed on page 430 of the *Core Rulebook*. All of the creatures found in Xin-Shalast have acclimated to these conditions, and need not worry about these effects.

## EXPLORING XIN-SHALAST



Although the PCs are now in Karzoug's direct shadow, the exploration of Xin-Shalast is not on a timetable. There is no rush for the PCs to complete this portion of the adventure, so you can allow them to spend some time exploring the ruins at their leisure. A certain amount of exploration is necessary, in fact, before the PCs can even approach the Spires of Xin-Shalast above, as Karzoug's *runewell* creates an immense occluding field that prevents any but his most trusted minions from entering with ease. In order to survive within this hostile zone, the PCs need not only powerful magic, but also magic items called *Sihedron rings* that prevent the occluding field from utilizing its potent transmutation magic on the wearer. Several creatures encountered in Xin-Shalast wear *Sihedron rings*—they can be found in three locations (areas I, K, and Q), while many more are to be had in the Pinnacle of Avarice. There are intentionally fewer rings than there are expected PCs, since this forces them to be creative in their initial entrance into

the occluding field, but if you'd rather hand out more rings so the PCs aren't forced to use other forms of magic to protect against the field's effects, feel free to do so. It's possible the PCs could attempt to explore the Spires and the Pinnacle of Avarice before securing the proper gear—if they try this, let them. Assuming they survive, there's no real penalty for having to head back down into Xin-Shalast to gather more rings, apart from wasting their resources. Ultimately, PCs who take their time exploring Xin-Shalast not only find themselves better prepared for what awaits them in the Pinnacle of Avarice, but they can also learn more about Karzoug, the city's history, and the methods by which he can be defeated. Not everyone in Xin-Shalast is an enemy.

## WEARING SIHEDRONS

Throughout the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path, the PCs have likely been collecting *Sihedron medallions* from their vanquished foes. Once they enter Xin-Shalast, these medallions add a new level of tactical complexity, for Karzoug can sense the world through a *Sihedron* wearer's senses and can speak through the wearer's voice. As long as at least one PC wears a *Sihedron medallion* while in Xin-Shalast, Karzoug knows where that PC is. The chance of wandering monster encounters occurring doubles, and you should make encounter checks twice as often. Karzoug might, at times, taunt the PCs using the wearer's voice. He might even attempt to disrupt spells with verbal components or call out warnings to monsters the PCs are about to ambush. A PC can attempt to resist this effect by making a DC 25 Will save.

A *Sihedron medallion* can substitute for a *Sihedron ring* in protecting its wearer in the occluding field, so if the PCs can't find enough rings, the medallions can be less desirable and more dangerous replacements.

## EVENT 5: EMERGENCE OF THE SPARED

This event can occur at any time after the PCs enter the ruins of Xin-Shalast, ideally not long after they first run afoul of some of the city's hostile inhabitants and have secured a safe place to rest and recover. As the PCs do so, the rattle of falling rock should attract their attention to an opening in a nearby building.

**CREATURE:** The source of the sound is a strange humanoid creature known as a skulk. After Thassilon's collapse and the volcanic eruption that destroyed nearly a quarter of the city, many of Xin-Shalast's slaves found themselves suddenly freed, yet without the gear or experience to make escaping the city possible. Instead, they retreated to the deep caves below Xin-Shalast, where they found themselves safe within cysts that formed among the ruined buildings. Led by a woman named Mesmina, a powerful cleric of Lissala who had abandoned her loyalty to Karzoug with the empire's fall, they remained beneath the notice of the remaining



inhabitants of the ruined city above, and over the course of hundreds of generations, they evolved into something beyond humanity—a race of chameleon-like humanoid called skulks.

Calling themselves the Spared, these survivors believed in a divine mandate handed down from Mesmina that they were meant to survive, no matter the cost, and find freedom in the city that once oppressed them. Over the years, the Spared excavated a series of tunnels through the earth and grew to know the tangle of caverns connecting various cysts and partially intact buildings buried in the flow. They scavenge vermin and what plants and fungi are able to grow in their humid tunnels and only rarely make use of their hidden surface entrance at area I.

After centuries of undisturbed isolation, trouble has come to the tunnels of the Spared. Recent diggings to expand their warrens broke through into the passages of the Hypogeum. Though the breach was quickly repaired and camouflaged to avoid the notice of the savage tribes occupying those subterranean quarters, it was not done quickly enough, and something passed undetected into the tunnels of the Spared. With this creature, a hideous abnormality known as the Hidden Beast, the Spared find themselves once again enslaved. It is ensconced within the inner chambers of these tunnels, surrounded by dominated skulks who do its bidding.

The ancient prophecies of Mesmina say that when the Spared become enslaved once more, strangers like their ancestors pictured in their tunnel murals will come to free them. These strangers are the PCs, and though their appearance in Xin-Shalast is little more than a coincidence (if they were truly prophesied saviors, certainly the PCs would have arrived to deliver the Spared to freedom 30 years ago when the Hidden Beast first established its rule over the tribe), one skulk in particular becomes convinced the PCs are the skulks' saviors as soon as he notices them in a battle with one of Xin-Shalast's other monsters.

This skulk, a quietly observant creature named Morgiv, hopes the PCs might be able to save his tribe from the Hidden Beast's control. Though the skulks of the Spared appear doughy and blubbery (an evolutionary result of life in this cold, harsh environment), they are in fact quite quick on their feet and agile. Skulks can change the color of their skin with ease to match the environment around them—perhaps the single greatest reason their tribe has survived this long in a city inhabited by bickering groups of lamia-kin and giants.

Morgiv has come to talk, not fight. He speaks only Thassilonian, so the PCs may need to devise some

means of communication or else resort to pantomime. If communication can be established, Morgiv explains the history of his tribe quickly, ending with the recent developments of his people falling under the control of an invisible monster known as the Hidden

Beast. Many skulks have disappeared, and others clearly serve this unknown being—those who aren't enslaved call the entity the Hidden Beast because none of them have seen it. All who have sought it out disappear or end up as undead vampiric slaves.

Morgiv notes that his tribe was once enslaved by the rulers of this city, and that their leader, beloved Mesmina, delivered them out of that bondage. She prophesized that should the tribe ever again fall victim to slavery, strangers will come to the people's aid. At this point, Morgiv excitedly tells the PCs that they are those strangers, that their appearance and raiments are similar to those

pictured on the walls of his home in the depictions of Mesmina herself.

If the PCs agree to help Morgiv by slaying the Hidden Beast, he excitedly leads them to area I and thence down through a network of tunnels that leads directly to the Hidden Beast's deep underground lair, bypassing all of the monster's guardians above with ease. See the description of area I for more details.



MORGIV

## MORGIV

| XP  | CR | HP |
|-----|----|----|
| 400 | 1  | 16 |

CN male skulk (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 248)

hp 16

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Morgiv, like most skulks, lives by avoiding combat; he fights only if cornered, but does so while sobbing and begging for mercy.

**Morale** Morgiv flees if confronted with combat.

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs befriend Morgiv and learn what he knows of the history of his tribe and Xin-Shalast, award them 12,800 XP.

## E KRAK NARATHA (CR 15)



The ruined road branches here, a narrower route leading around to the west while the main thoroughfare passes through a looming stone wall flanked by glossy black towers. It seems to be some sort of ancient gateway to the city proper. A dark mass of gritty, rocky ice presses up against the fortress's northern face, the



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ancient lava flow apparently stopped (but only just) by the stone walls.

This is Krak Naratha, a huge fortress that guards the entrance to the valley of Xin-Shalast. Its walls are 50 feet thick and rise to a height of 75 feet. The square towers extend as high as 200 feet. Krak Naratha is composed of volcanic glass harvested from the caldera east of the valley, its roof and edges once gilt in gold but now only retaining splashes of color. Its joint seams are very fine and almost invisible in the dark stone. Climbing the walls requires a successful DC 40 Climb check.

The gates of Krak Naratha fell long ago, leaving an empty gatehouse to provide entry to its bailey. The former garrison blockhouse has partially collapsed, as has much of the northeastern wall. The ancient volcanic eruption did significant damage to these structures, but not enough to completely destroy them. A smaller gate to the east of the ruined blockhouse once opened into the Slave District, but this is now blocked by a mass of ice. Anyone climbing the tower stairs up to the fortress's rear wall can easily descend onto the surface of the lava flow (which lies only 8 feet below the ramparts).



**CREATURES:** Krak Naratha currently serves as the home of a particularly enterprising group of harpy-like lamias known as kuchrimas. These kuchrimas have transformed Krak Naratha's bailey into an enormous paddock for the keeping of a vast herd of high-altitude mountain aurochs as food sources. While many of Xin-Shalast's inhabitants hunt within the city itself for food, quite a few have taken to the convenience of Krak Naratha's farm and paid the kuchrimas handsomely for access to their herd. With Karzoug's wakening, the burgeoning lamia matriarchs have decreed that the kuchrimas are no longer to charge for access to the aurochs—that any of Xin-Shalast's growing army can visit here for food as they wish. Worse, the lamia rulers have seized Krak Naratha's treasury. The kuchrimas are foul-tempered about this recent turn of events, but when three previous rebellions resulted in quick and painful punishment from the lamias and their rune giant allies, the kuchrimas swallowed their pride and accepted the new order bitterly.

Unless the PCs are particularly stealthy, one of the four Krak Naratha soldiers always on duty on the walls notices their approach and uses a thunderstone to sound the alarm. A few moments later, three soldiers fly down to confront the PCs. If the characters can produce Sihedrons and can bluff the kuchrimas, they might be able to convince the lamia-kin that they are new recruits of Karzoug's growing army and be allowed to pass into the city. Otherwise, the lamia-kin shriek in anger, detonate another thunderstone to raise the alarm again, and attack.

If the PCs attempt to enter Krak Naratha, several soldiers use thunderstones to whip the aurochs into a stampede. The stampede consists of 24 aurochs running at full speed (160 feet) from the entrance of the fortress.

In all, there are only a dozen kuchrimas left in Krak Naratha—a shadow of their former strength, and a testament to the decisive punishment inflicted upon them after their previous rebellions against Xin-Shalast's new leaders.

#### KRAK NARATHA SOLDIERS (12)

| XP         | CR | HP  |
|------------|----|-----|
| 4,800 each | 8  | 104 |

Kuchrima (see page 411)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The kuchrimas avoid melee combat, hovering within 30 feet in order to gain the Point-Blank Shot attack and damage bonuses. Creatures successfully climbing the sides of the ravine or who separate themselves out are singled out for Snatch attempts, allowing the lamia-kin to carry them up high and drop them.

**Morale** The kuchrimas fight to the death, for they are unwilling to give their leaders an excuse to punish them.

#### MOUNTAIN AUROCHS

| XP    | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 1,200 | 4  | 34 |

Advanced giant aurochs (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 174, 294, 295)  
hp 34 each

#### F GOLDEN ROAD

This elevated stone causeway is 75 feet wide and runs nearly a hundred feet off the ground in places. This elevation is not immediately obvious, though, as huge buildings and towering structures constructed along the road's entire length give the illusion that the causeway remains at ground level. This illusion is broken somewhat where small "feeder alleys" branch off from the main course of the causeway to descend into the various districts of the city below. Though the bricks of the road are of basalt, they do in many places retain gold plating that might once have covered the entire run.

The Golden Road remains sound, though here and there stretches of up to 200 feet in length have collapsed into rubble. In areas abutting the Slave District, the Golden Road is often bordered to the east by the lava flow and in many places has been destroyed or overflowed by it. Other sections actually open into the deeps of the Hypogeum and the lairs of creatures dwelling there.

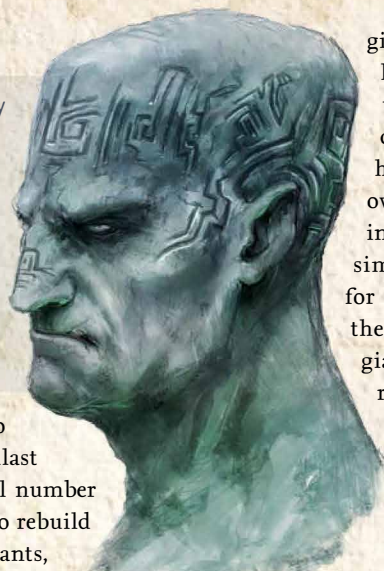
The Golden Road is so named for its course that leads through the center of the city and up the side of the mountain, supposedly directly to the feet of Mhar Massif. It was indeed plated in thin sheets of gold for its length at Xin-Shalast's height, but time has not been so kind to these sheets. The thoroughfare remains the most heavily traveled route in Xin-Shalast today—check for wandering monster encounters twice per day and twice per night here, with the chance of an encounter 20% of the time.



## G GIANT ENCAMPMENT



This section of the ruined city has been cleared of rubble, leaving a roughly circular courtyard about a quarter-mile in diameter. Many oversized tents and crude shelters have been erected in the clearing, turning it into what looks like a giant-sized refugee camp.



GYUKAK

Although Karzoug was pleased to find that giants still dwelt in Xin-Shalast when he awoke 5 years ago, the total number was but a fraction of what he needs to rebuild the city. When he revived his rune giants, they were able to subjugate the cloud, frost, and storm giants that dwelt here in the ruins, after which rune giant scouts slowly expanded their explorations into the surrounding mountains. When they find a tribe, they dominate its leaders and move on, trusting their minions to handle the heavy work of relocating the tribe to Xin-Shalast.

New arrivals to Xin-Shalast generally congregate here, in a large swath cleared of rubble. Hundreds of giants dwell in the yurts, tents, and surrounding ruins, awaiting assignments by the giants of Shahlaria (area R). The giants living here spend long hours toiling at rebuilding the northern section of Xin-Shalast, returning here only to grab a few hours of sleep and food.

There are more than 500 hill giants, frost giants, and stone giants currently encamped in this area. Most come from lower elevations and require time to acclimate to Xin-Shalast's thin air, but once they're ready, they're put to work to the north. There's little of interest for PCs here but a fight—fortunately, these giants aren't too aggressive (either because they're acclimating to the elevation or because they're recovering from a hard day's work) and only attack those who are overly aggressive or openly attempt to walk among the larger folk. The giants hold the rune giants in awe, especially given the larger giants' size and swift action when punishment is required, and have little interest in talking with (or being seen talking with) obvious intruders.

**CREATURE:** Not all of the denizens here are cowed by their new masters. One stone giant mercenary, a heavily tattooed creature named Gyukak, has begun secret talks with several giants here in an attempt to organize a rebellion and escape what he sees as an accursed city. His giants keep their true allegiances secret, but are completely loyal to Gyukak.

Gyukak's motivations aren't entirely selfless. In truth, he is an ogre mage who maintains a stone

giant disguise. Gyukak hopes to build himself a private army large enough to lead out of Xin-Shalast so he can claim several now-abandoned giant homelands on the Storval Plateau as his own holdings. Despite the fact that his intentions for the giants have marked similarities to those of Karzoug, his plans for fomenting a rebellion run counter to the will of the runelord. When enough giants are properly indoctrinated into the runelord's service, they might provoke a pogrom of annihilation upon the resistant hill giants loyal to Gyukak. A party could find itself on either side of this conflict or stuck in the middle as scapegoats.

Gyukak pays attention, and if the PCs' presence becomes known to the giants of this encampment, he attempts to contact them, introducing himself as a rebel and

the leader of giants who want to escape Xin-Shalast. Gyukak hopes to convince the PCs to create a big distraction to the north, such as attacking the blue dragon Ghlorofaex or even attempting to scale Mhar Massif, so he can lead his giants south and out of Xin-Shalast without attracting the attention of the rune giants. You can use Gyukak to answer PC questions about Xin-Shalast (the ogre mage has spent some time exploring the place and knows most of its dangers). He can certainly warn the PCs about the occlusion field near the peak of Mhar Massif, and he suspects that certain leaders among the giants have items that allow them to enter the field unharmed. Gyukak encourages the PCs to attempt to assassinate these leaders, for such an attempt would certainly create the distraction he craves.

### GYUKAK

| XP    | CR | HP |
|-------|----|----|
| 4,800 | 8  | 92 |

Male ogre mage (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 221)

hp 92

#### TACTICS

**Morale** Gyukak is a swift judge of character and knows he's no match for the PCs. If he gets the feeling they might be about to attack him, he decides to cut his losses and turns invisible to aid his attempt to escape.

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs manage to get important information about Xin-Shalast from Gyukak, grant them 12,800 XP.

## H ABOMINABLE DOME (CR 15)



An immense dome of stone rises at the end of an elevated road here. The structure towers



## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

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five hundred feet in height and is capped by a smaller dome that brings its total height to nearly seven hundred feet in all. Numerous arches and openings decorate the building's sides, all allowing access to its cavernous interior.

The interior of this building is mostly open, creating a truly impressive enclosed area once used as a place for the most gifted stone giants of ancient Xin-Shalast to practice the art of monument construction. All that remains of their final project is a heap of rubble 100 feet high in the center of the area. The stone giant architects themselves dwelt in chambers built into the walls of the dome, accessed by spiraling ramps and each with its own private exit into the city.



**CREATURES:** Although no giants have dwelt here for thousands of years, its current tenants are no less huge. A tribe of particularly violent and loathsome yetis took up residence here 6 decades ago and were more than capable of holding their own against the giants and lamias of the city. Until only a few weeks ago, the tribe was led by an immense chieftain named Voorgoor, a monster who maintained his rule through brutality and force. When Karzoug awoke and his rune giants returned to Xin-Shalast, they knew the abominable snowmen were a tremendous resource for their armies. Yet not being giants, they were more resistant to traditional methods of rune giant control. For many months, the giants left the yetis to their own devices, but recently, with Karzoug's release nearing, the giants have initiated a plan to subvert the yetis. The giants made an open and public invitation to Voorgoor, acknowledging his strength and power before the other yetis under his command and inviting the behemoth to join them as a co-ruler of Xin-Shalast. The abominable snowmen remaining here assume that Voorgoor remains there, for their leader pays visits to the tribe on a weekly basis to check up on them and punish those who have strayed too far from his leadership, yet there is no more day-to-day leadership in the tribe.



In fact, Voorgoor was slain and fed to the dragon Ghlorofaex, and his periodic "visits" back here are made by none other than Khalib (Karzoug's current apprentice), disguised as Voorgoor via a *monstrous physique II* spell (*Ultimate Magic* 229). In this way, the abominable snowmen are kept under control with a minimum of effort and fuss, ready for a time when their savagery might be needed.

The tribe itself dwells in hollows and chambers within the central pile of rubble. Voorgoor once dwelt in a spacious cave near the top of the pile, but that cave now stands empty. At the peak of the rubble pile, the snowmen maintain a 30-foot-tall altar to Voorgoor in the form of hundreds of bones tied together with lengths of sinew to form a rough approximation of a humanoid shape. The tribe numbers 26 in all, but at any one

time, only six are present here, with the remaining 20 scouring Xin-Shalast or the surrounding mountains for smaller things to torment and eventually eat.

### ABOMINABLE SNOWMEN (6)

| XP    | CR | HP  |
|-------|----|-----|
| 9,600 | 10 | 156 |

Yeti barbarian 2/fighter 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 287)

CE Large monstrous humanoid (cold)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 10, flat-footed 21 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +14 natural, -2 rage, -1 size)

**hp** 156 (12 HD; 10d10+2d12+88)

**Fort** +18, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, uncanny dodge; **Immune** cold;

**DR** 10/piercing

**Weaknesses** vulnerability to fire

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +14 (1d6+4), 2 claws +20 (1d8+10/19-20 plus 1d6 cold)

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

**Special Attacks** cold, frightful gaze (DC 13), rage (11 rounds/day), rage powers (animal fury), rend (2 claws, 1d6+6 plus 1d6 cold)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The abominable snowmen lack subtlety in combat—their roars and bellowing charges are as close as they get to organized tactics. Each snowman picks one target to attack, doubling up only if there aren't enough victims to go around.

**Morale** The snowmen fight to the death to protect their lair but do not pursue foes farther than 500 feet from its edge.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 27, **Dex** 14, **Con** 24, **Int** 7, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 32

**Feats** Cleave, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (claws), Improved Natural Attack (claws), Power Attack, Skill Focus (Climb), Weapon Focus (claws), Weapon Specialization (claws)

**Skills** Climb +28, Perception +11, Stealth +13 (+21 in snow)

**Languages** Aklo

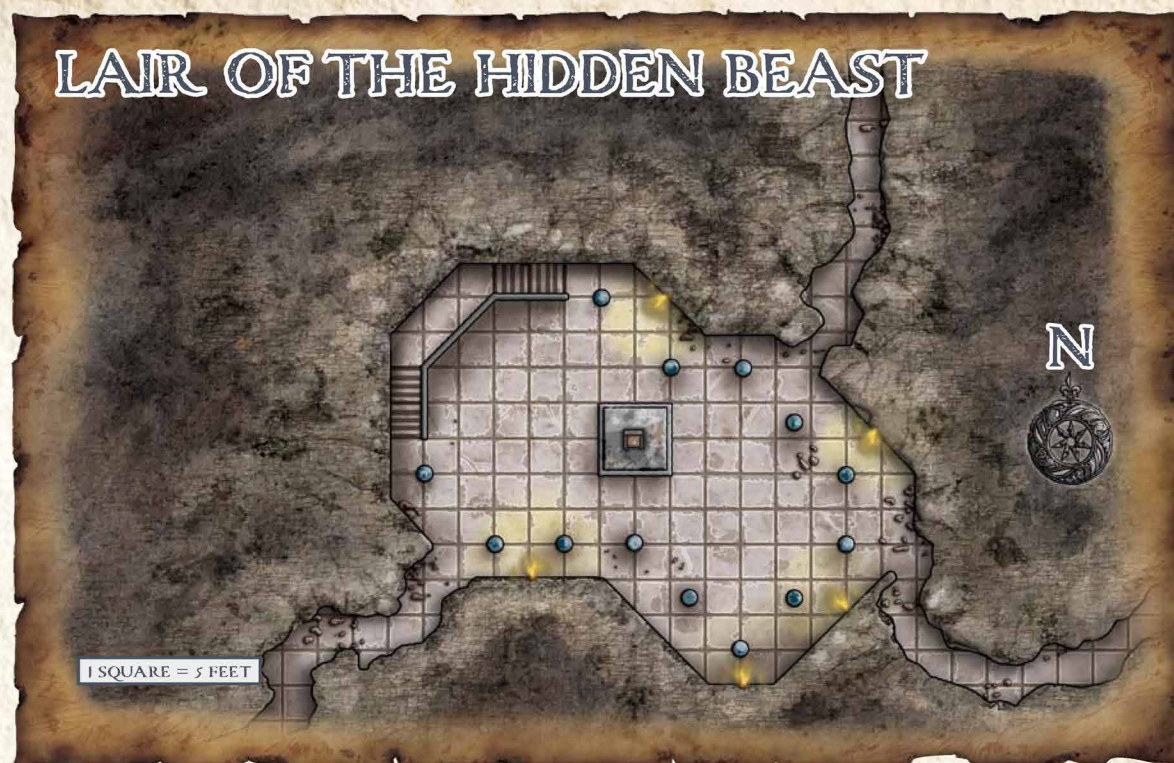
**SQ** thick hide, fast movement, armor training 1

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Thick Hide (Ex)** The abominable snowmen of the Kodars have thicker fur and hides than most yetis—their base natural armor bonus is +14 and they possess damage reduction 10/piercing as a result.

**TREASURE:** Scattered among their lairs, the abominable snowmen have collected several pieces of treasure—all of which have been left behind by those unfortunate enough to be caught by the snowmen and eaten. Each of the following items can be discovered with a successful DC 20 Perception check and 10 minutes of work picking through the refuse- and rubble-filled dens: a mithral breastplate, a cobra-shaped platinum armband with





rubies for eyes worth 2,000 gp, a *ring of the ram* with only 5 charges left, a +2 *vicious kukri* that bears the unholy symbol of Lamashtu etched on its blade, and a *bronze griffon figurine of wondrous power*.

## 1 LAIR OF THE HIDDEN BEAST (CR 16)

Buried under the lava flow, the majority of the Slave District buildings are hidden completely from view. Most of them were destroyed when a nearby volcano exploded, sending a pyroclastic flow into the city, but those that were built strong survived, and their interiors remain open and navigable where natural tunnels in the ice connect them. The region is, as a result, a tangled network of caves and chambers. Explorers could spend weeks, if not months, wandering these tunnels and never see them all. For thousands of years, these tunnels were the primary home of the Spared.

The Spared slowly expanded their tunnels as their population grew, but on a fateful day 5 decades ago, skulk tunnelers broke into an ancient crypt deep below the surface at this location, inadvertently releasing an immortal monstrosity that had been trapped therein since the fall of Thassilon. This creature was the Hidden Beast, and it took less than a month for it to seize control of the Spared. Ever since, the skulks have lived only to serve the Hidden Beast's whims, with only a handful brave enough to escape into the outlying reaches of Xin-Shalast.

Although the PCs could find their way into the lair of the Hidden Beast accidentally, it's more likely they are directed here by Morgiv, a brave but simple skulk

who wants to see his people freed from the tyranny of the Hidden Beast, which treats the Spared as a farm for its gluttonous hunger. Morgiv knows the tunnels under the Slave District well and can lead the PCs to the very doorstep of the Hidden Beast's lair, bypassing its lax security with ease. The defenses of the lair itself, unfortunately, are not so easily surmounted.

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs as they reach the Hidden Beast's lair.




The tunnel opens into a large room, a cyst in the earth under the weight of the buried city formed by some ancient basement gallery. A raised balcony to the northwest is accessed by two stairs and has a low stone balustrade. Pillars along the room's perimeter rise to a vaulted ceiling, while in the center of the room sits a dais holding an ornate throne. Seated upon the throne is a skeletal figure shrouded in musty robes bearing arcane symbols.

A silent mental *alarm* wards each of the three tunnel entrances to this chamber, placed there by the Hidden Beast itself. The central throne and dais sit above a large hollow area created by the Hidden Beast to serve as a "coffin"—this area can be reached with ease by creatures in gaseous form, but other creatures must move aside or destroy the 9-1/2-ton slab of basalt (hardness 8, hp 540, Break DC 50) to get to this chamber.

**CREATURES:** The ancients of Xin-Shalast often explored other realms and realities, ever seeking new discoveries





of magic and wealth to use to leverage more favor from Karzoug. One such sect of astral travelers came upon a strange leathery sphere floating inert in the void and brought it back here to investigate. Unfortunately for them, that sphere was a slumbering monstrosity—an undead tentacled sorcerer from a distant realm, cast into the Astral Plane by its enemies. When the travelers returned to the Material Plane with the sphere, the monster awoke and slew all but one of them. This last Thassilonian escaped only by sealing the chamber with *walls of force*, then later by collapsing the tunnels that accessed the chamber. The creature itself, ever patient and potent, returned to its slumber after realizing it couldn't escape. It slept through the fall of Thassilon and the following millennia, only to be awakened again by the Spared.

The Spared have taken to calling this creature the Hidden Beast, but the monster is actually a vampiric decapus—an undead octopoid creature with 10 tentacles protruding from its body surrounding a maw with large yellow fangs. Its cruel red eyes and slimy skin augment its monstrous visage, and its voice is a chilling whisper. The Hidden Beast has no real goals or desires beyond feasting on the blood of the living—its mind works in ways alien to most life on the Material Plane. It keeps the Spared under its control by dominating them or by transforming their leaders into enslaved vampires who then, in turn, dominate the living for their master. The Hidden Beast has no real desire to leave this area (feeding has been great over the past few decades), nor does it care that some of its flock escape its dominion now and then. Karzoug's agents discovered the Hidden Beast not long after Mokmurian's visit and managed to establish peaceful contact with it, but haven't quite managed to convince it to accept Karzoug as lord. The runelord himself plans to visit the Hidden Beast to make an offer it can't refuse after he emerges from the Eye of Avarice, but until then, the Hidden Beast is allowed to maintain its tiny empire under the Slave District.

The Hidden Beast spends its time invisible. The skeleton atop the throne in the middle of the room is actually the monster's public "face"—an illusion it maintains. When the Hidden Beast needs to speak to visitors, it uses a silent *ventriloquism* spell to do so through the illusion. As soon as it notices the PCs, it does exactly this, causing the desiccated and dead skeleton to sit up and take notice before addressing them in Abyssal: "Which of you would offer your blood to me? Step forward and feel the embrace of your new lord!"

The Hidden Beast isn't interested in visitors other than as a source of blood—if no PC steps forward to offer himself to the illusion, it attacks as detailed below. If a PC does offer himself, the beast slithers up to that character and attempts to grapple him so it may use its blood drain ability.

The Hidden Beast is not alone in this chamber—four vampire skulls hide in the shadows around the room's perimeter. Absolutely loyal to their master, they wait until combat begins before joining the fight, attacking first only if they're noticed beforehand.

## THE HIDDEN BEAST

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 51,200 | 15 | 267 |

Male vampire decapus sorcerer 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 277)

CE Large undead (augmented aberration)

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +45

### DEFENSE

**AC** 33, touch 18, flat-footed 27 (+3 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +11 natural, +4 shield, -1 size)

**hp** 267 (24 HD; 14d8+10d6+169); fast healing 5

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +17, **Will** +23

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +22 (1d8+8), tentacles +22 (3d6+8/19–20 plus grab), slam +22 (1d6+8 plus energy drain)

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

**Special Attacks** blood drain (1d4 Con), children of the night, constrict (3d6+12), create spawn, dominate (DC 27), energy drain (2 levels, DC 22)

**Decapus Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +11)

At will—*minor image* (DC 16)

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +15)

8/day—grave touch (5 rounds)

1/day—grasp of the dead (10d6 slashing, DC 20)

**Spells Known** (CL 10th; concentration +15)

5th (4/day)—*telekinesis* (DC 20)

4th (6/day)—*animate dead*, *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 21)

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *lightning bolt* (DC 18), *vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *false life*, *minor image* (DC 19), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

1st (8/day)—*alarm*, *chill touch* (DC 16), *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shield*, *ventriloquism*

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

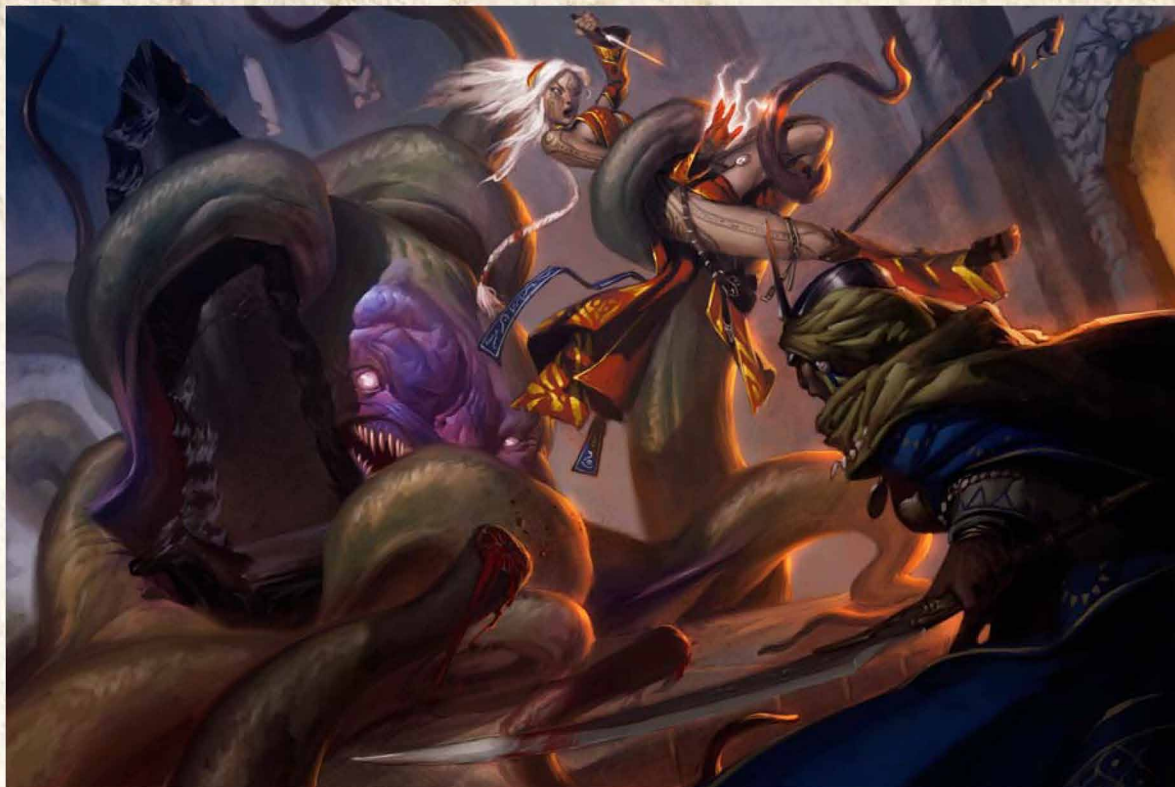
**Bloodline** undead

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The Hidden Beast casts extended *false life* on itself every day and places a silent mental *alarm* at each of the room entrances. It uses its *ring of invisibility* to remain invisible at all times.

**During Combat** The Hidden Beast concentrates on maintaining the illusion of the undead speaker, hoping the PCs waste at least a round fighting it while its vampire minions move into position around them. The creature uses *ventriloquism*





## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

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to disguise its actual location, taking the first few rounds of combat to cast *displacement*, *mirror image*, and *shield* on itself. The Hidden Beast is fond of using *telekinesis* to disarm foes, but it generally starts its offense by casting *phantasmal killer* or *lightning bolt*. It avoids melee combat unless it can engage a foe one-on-one.

**Morale** If reduced to 0 hit points, the Hidden Beast automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape through the fissures in and around the dais in the center of this room. These narrow fissures lead down 30 feet to a circular cavern, 20 feet in diameter, that serves as the Hidden Beast's "coffin." Once at rest here, it rematerializes and is helpless. It regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then it is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round from its fast healing. Once fully healed, it seeks out the PCs for swift and brutal revenge, losing sight of all other tasks until it succeeds at this quest.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 43 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Alertness, Arcane Strike, Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes Critical Focus, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Improved Critical (tentacles), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (tentacles), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (illusion), Still Spell, Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +40, Climb +33, Perception +45, Sense Motive +28, Stealth +36

**Languages** Aklo

**SQ** bloodline arcana (corporeal undead affected by humanoid-

affecting spells), change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, shadowless, sound mimicry (voices), spider climb, tentacles

**Gear** ring of invisibility, Sihedron ring

### VAMPIRE SKULKS (4)

| XP         | CR | HP      |
|------------|----|---------|
| 6,400 each | 9  | 82 each |

Vampire skulk rogue 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 248)

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, skulk)

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25

### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 18, flat-footed 19 (+1 armor, +1 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +1 shield)

**hp** 82 each (9d8+42); fast healing 5

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +16, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits;

**Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 35 ft.

**Melee** +1 *vicious dagger* +14/+9 (1d4+5/19–20 plus 2d6), slam +7 (1d4+2 plus energy drain)

**Ranged** +1 *composite shortbow* +13/+8 (1d6+5/x3)

**Special Attacks** blood drain (1d4 Con), children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 17), sneak attack +4d6, energy drain (2 levels, DC 17)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Once combat begins, the hidden skulks move





along the walls of the room and attempt to take up positions where they can move as pairs to flank foes. They continue to fight two-on-one as long as possible to maximize their sneak attacks. They prefer to fight foes who do not possess silver weapons, breaking off combat with those who use such weapons to seek easier prey if possible.

**Morale** The vampire skulls fight until reduced to 0 hit points, at which point they turn gaseous and drift toward the balcony to the northwest. Once there, they seep through cracks in the wall into a room under the balcony in which their coffins (actually nothing more than narrow niches in the floor) wait for them to rest and recover.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 22, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 28

**Feats** Alertness, Altitude Affinity, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Fleet, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger), Wind Stance

**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Bluff +23, Climb +16, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Sleight of Hand +18, Stealth +34, Survival +15

**Languages** Aklo, Thassilonian, Undercommon

**SQ** camouflaged step, chameleon skin, change shape (dire bat or wolf, beast shape II), gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb, rogue talents (bleeding attack +4, combat trick, finesse rogue), trapfinding +3

**Gear** +1 vicious dagger, +1 composite shortbow with 20 arrows, ring of protection +1

**DEVELOPMENT:** If the PCs destroy the Hidden Beast completely, the remaining vampiric skulls that haunt the region become free-willed and flee deep into the substructure of the district. The surviving Spared will eventually band together to hunt them down, yet for now, the skulls prefer to remain hidden as well. Yet their gratitude to the PCs for their deliverance from this latest overlord does not go unrewarded. If he's nearby, Morgiv promises the PCs a reward once he and the other Spared can orchestrate it—in the meantime, the skulls themselves follow and watch over the PCs' progress through the Lower City from afar. When this unseen but ever-present escort senses danger, they give cry to a series of hoots and warning howls—as a result, the PCs are able to react to danger much more quickly, and gain a +4 bonus on all Initiative checks made while in the Lower City. In any event, the skulls offer the den of the Hidden Beast to the PCs as a safe place for them to rest if they wish.

One day after the Hidden Beast's defeat, Morgiv tracks the PCs down to give them some good news—his brethren have already managed to reclaim one of their old shrines, and they've decided that the treasures they had hidden there (treasures warded by powerful magic that prevented vampires from looting them) should be given to the PCs. The skulk hands the PCs a leather *bag of holding II*, but the true treasures lie within—a *staff*

*of healing*, a *scroll of greater restoration*, two *scrolls of heal*, a *scroll of true resurrection*, and a silk pouch containing eight *elixirs of the peaks*.

## J THE TANGLE

This southern portion of the Entertainment District was once the hub of brothels, gambling dens, small arenas and fighting pits, and less savory venues such as recreational torture chambers and drug parlors. Often informally referred to as the Eurythian Quarter, after Runelord Sorshen's realm to the south (although never called such when Karzoug or his agents were in earshot), this portion of the city was ruined by the fall of Thassilon and the attendant volcanic eruption. While the pyroclastic flow that buried the Slave District didn't hit this section of the city, lava bombs and a devastating mudslide did, reducing much of this region to tangled rubble. The nutrient-rich mud cascaded into the edge of this quarter and buried dozens of public baths built around thermal springs. The combination of nutrients, mineral-laden waters, and a favorable environment caused by the warming and humidifying influence of the hot springs resulted in a burst of strange plant and fungal growth. This ecosystem flourished, expanding across much of the area and covering it in an enveloping tangle of pallid vines and sheets of lichen. This overgrowth ground the buildings beneath into rubble and then into soil, creating more opportunities for growth and leaving a strange high-altitude fungus jungle filled with hidden ruins and unexpected flora and fauna. The flora was never able to expand farther south onto the mud field because of the lack of necessary moisture and warmth provided by proximity to the thermal springs.

While the combination of fertile soil, plentiful water, and artificially warm climate did cause the beginning of the Tangle's spread, it has since far outgrown and outlasted those natural resources. Not only is this plant life unnaturally healthy, it is also unnaturally large and has begun to mutate, in some cases creating wholly unnatural species. Strange fauna sometimes emerges from the tangled depths of this quarter, and at night, weird and mournful cries can be heard from deep within. Whether these are creatures somehow transplanted here or monstrous plant forms resulting from continuing mutation is unclear to the giants and lamias, who take pains to avoid this portion of the city, as giants who wandered too close have gone missing. A lamia-led search party of giants sent in recently to determine the source of the strange growth has yet to return.

Extensive details on the Tangle's depths are beyond the scope of this adventure, but should the PCs decide to explore this dangerous section of Xin-Shalast, they soon find there is a malign intelligence to the Tangle. Anyone exploring here is attacked by strange and





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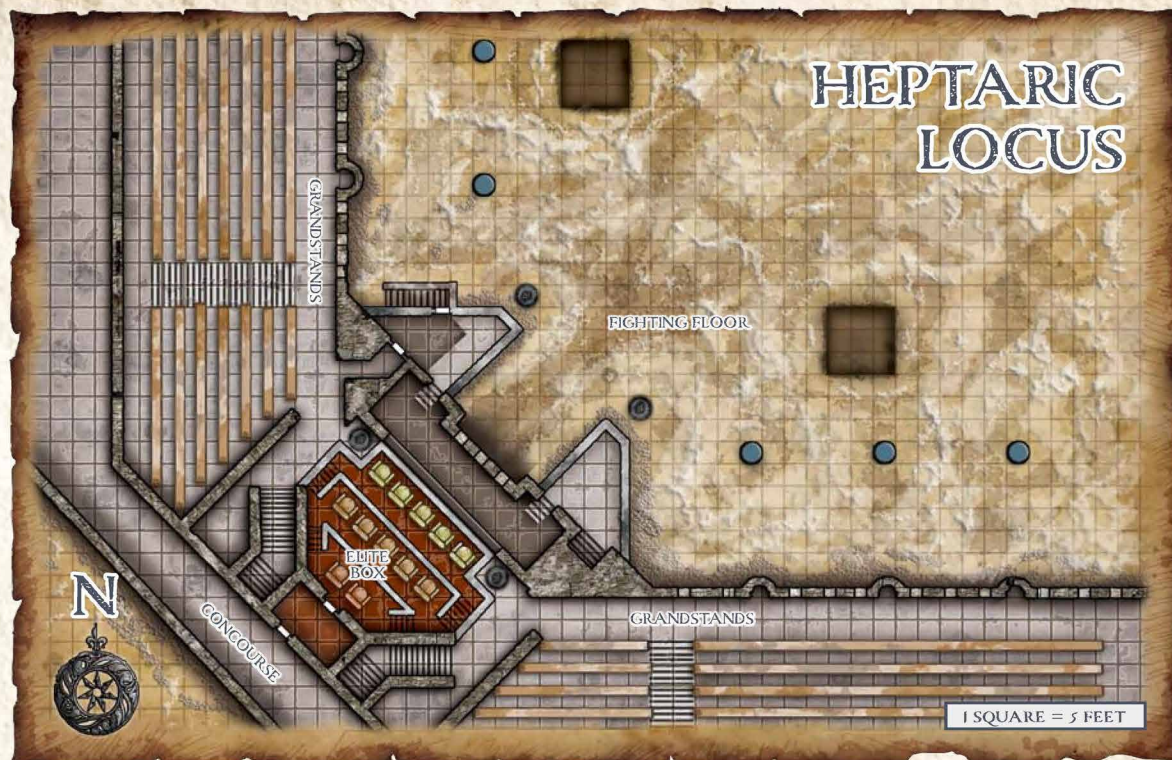
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terrifying forms of sentient plant life and creatures that exist in a symbiotic relationship with them, with shambling mounds, immense tendriculoses, yellow musk zombie giants, and vegepygmies being the primary denizens of the deep Tangle. Those captured alive are taken to the original hot springs beneath a cathedral of greenery, where the malevolent Root of the Tangle dwells. There they are suspended alive above this water, where their bodies are then slowly drained of nutrients to feed the plant host. The Root of the Tangle is, in fact, an enormous and unusually intelligent yellow musk creeper—this plant has an Intelligence of 20, 26 Hit Dice, and is Colossal in size. The creeper's eventual goal is nothing less lofty than to grow over the entirety of Golarion—but in the thousands of years it has already been growing, it's only managed to take over this portion of Xin-Shalast. Still, the creeper is patient and immortal—a good combination for those with world domination on the mind.

### **K** HEPTARIC LOCUS (CR 17)

The greatest architectural feat of the Lower City was (and remains) the magnificent Heptaric Locus, a massive covered arena and amphitheater of unsurpassed grandeur composed on a foundation shaped as a vast Sihedron Rune to represent the might and resplendence of Thassilon. To the average citizen of the city, this coliseum represented the heart of the entire nation of Shalast. This magnificent edifice rises more than 500 feet to an elaborate seven-paneled dome of crystal, from which a slender spire extends another

200 feet into the air. Seven towers surround the dome, one dedicated to each of the Thassilonian schools of magic (with the tower of Greed aimed directly at the Spires of Xin-Shalast above). Though the building shows signs of the years, with parts of the facade having fallen away and some of the lesser domes fallen in, the great central dome and spire remain intact and alive with the multiple permanent *daylight* spells that circumscribe their interiors, creating a shining beacon in the sky above. Inside, the Heptaric Locus is a ring-shaped maze of access tunnels and gates surrounding a vast arena floor. The arena seats surrounding this heptagonal battleground can accommodate up to 150,000 spectators. Below lie even more chambers—gladiator cells, training rooms, and endless storage chambers necessary to put on the spectacles for which the arena was justly famous.

Despite the excellent condition of the facilities, Karzoug's minions have not yet attempted to reclaim this structure for use. They have not cited reasons when the giants and lesser lamia, eager to see the grand building restored to its proper glory, ask about the subject, instead pushing the topic aside in favor of more pressing matters. The truth is the lamia-kin secretly fear the arena. The thousands of blood-soaked spectacles held in its confines to sate the lust of the bloodthirsty observers left their mark on the battlefield. In fact, following the fall of the empire so long ago, the emotional resonance that remained created a locus not of the glories of Thassilon as intended, but rather a locus of death that suited well the





tastes of a particularly cruel gelugon named Gamigin and a small cluster of hideous extradimensional blood-drinkers known as scarlet walkers.

**CREATURES:** Long held as a bound guardian and advisor by one of Karzoug's many apprentices, Gamigin escaped his prison when Thassilon fell. The powerful ice devil landed atop the central dome of the Heptaric Locus and watched as Xin-Shalast fell into ruin, torn apart from outside by volcanic eruptions and inside by rioting giants and wizards gone mad with terror. Eventually, even the skies above grew dark, and for an age after Thassilon's fall the darkness remained. In that time, Gamigin traveled Golarion, adding to the suffering and despair wherever he went. When the Great Darkness finally passed, Gamigin returned to Xin-Shalast and claimed the Heptaric Locus as his lair.

Since then, the ice devil has periodically left Xin-Shalast to search for "entertainment" on Golarion, often spending hundreds of years at a time in roles as diverse as mass murderer, mercenary, warlord, the power behind several thrones, and even a god worshiped by several humanoid tribes. Typically, Gamigin disguised his appearance as a towering tiefling or other outsider via *disguise self*, but sometimes he chose to play these roles without disguises. Each time, outraged and righteous adventurers eventually rose against the devil, but he always escaped via teleportation and returned here to rest, relax, and plot his next move. He maintains his presence in the arena with the clever use of illusions and the scarlet walkers whom he has befriended—even though he only spends about a decade each century in

Xin-Shalast, his efforts have been strong enough to secure a lasting pall over the place.

The PCs might decide to explore the Heptaric Locus on their own. An exploration of the locus should involve encounters with summoned bone devils, ancient traps, and periodic encounters with the scarlet walkers that haunt the place—these monsters are drawn to the lingering psychic pain that suffuses the arena, as well as to the legacy of bloodshed that has indelibly stained the grounds. Content to feed on these lingering emotions, they particularly relish the days Gamigin offers them living treats to torment.

As in the case of the Hidden Beast, Karzoug noted Gamigin's presence and sent his agents to contact the ice devil, asking him to ally with the runelord when he rose to his full power. Gamigin, intrigued by what would happen if Thassilon returned, agreed, and was given a Sihedron ring as a token of Karzoug's thanks. If the PCs come to the attention of Karzoug's minions (perhaps after spending several days in Xin-Shalast and killing many lamias and giants, or maybe after they first attempt to climb Mhar Massif), Khalib contacts Gamigin and asks the devil to assassinate the PCs. Gamigin's attack on the PCs can happen at any time after this order is given; the devil prefers to locate the PCs as they rest or wait until they're fighting other monsters in the ruins before launching his attack.

One section of the Heptaric Locus is shown on the nearby map; the elite box shown serves as Gamigin's main lair, so if he attacks the PCs and retreats, it's to here he flees. This chamber is guarded at all times by a pair



of scarlet walkers allied with Gamigin. You can use the section of the Heptaric Locus as a guide for generating additional maps for this large building as necessary.

| GAMIGIN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | XP<br>76,800 | CR<br>16 | HP<br>243 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| Male ice devil sorcerer 3 ( <i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 77)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |              |          |           |
| LE Large outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |          |           |
| <b>Init</b> +8; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +27                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |              |          |           |
| DEFENSE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |              |          |           |
| <b>AC</b> 34, touch 16, flat-footed 30 (+3 deflection, +4 Dex, +18 natural, –1 size)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |          |           |
| <b>hp</b> 243 (17 HD; 14d10+3d6+156); regeneration 5 (good weapons or good spells)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              |          |           |
| <b>Fort</b> +21, <b>Ref</b> +17, <b>Will</b> +17                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |              |          |           |
| <b>DR</b> 10/good; <b>Immune</b> cold, fire, poison; <b>Resist</b> acid 10; <b>SR</b> 24                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |              |          |           |
| OFFENSE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |              |          |           |
| <b>Speed</b> 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |              |          |           |
| <b>Melee</b> +1 <i>returning frost spear</i> +22/+17/+12 (2d6+10/19–20/x3 plus 1d6 cold and slow), bite +15 (2d6+3), tail +15 (3d6+3 plus slow)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |              |          |           |
| <b>Ranged</b> +1 <i>returning frost spear</i> +20 (2d6+10/19–20/x3 plus 1d6 cold and slow)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |              |          |           |
| <b>Space</b> 10 ft.; <b>Reach</b> 10 ft.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |              |          |           |
| <b>Ice Devil Spell-Like Abilities</b> (CL 13th; concentration +20)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              |          |           |
| Constant— <i>fly</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |          |           |
| At will— <i>cone of cold</i> (DC 22), <i>ice storm</i> , <i>greater teleport</i> (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), <i>persistent image</i> (DC 22), <i>wall of ice</i> (DC 21)                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |              |          |           |
| 1/day— <i>summon</i> (level 4, 2 bone devils 50%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |              |          |           |
| <b>Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities</b> (CL 3rd; concentration +10)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |              |          |           |
| 10/day— <i>corrupting touch</i> (1 rounds)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |              |          |           |
| <b>Sorcerer Spells Known</b> (CL 3rd; concentration +10)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |              |          |           |
| 1st (7/day)— <i>charm person</i> (DC 20), <i>disguise self</i> (DC 18), <i>obscuring mist</i> , <i>protection from good</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |              |          |           |
| 0 (at will)— <i>bleed</i> (DC 17), <i>detect magic</i> , <i>mage hand</i> , <i>message</i> , <i>prestidigitation</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |          |           |
| <b>Bloodline</b> infernal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |              |          |           |
| TACTICS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |              |          |           |
| <b>Before Combat</b> Just before he starts a fight, Gamigin attempts to summon 2d4 bone devils to aid him.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |              |          |           |
| <b>During Combat</b> Gamigin lets summoned devils engage foes in melee while he wreaks havoc with mobility, using <i>wall of ice</i> to break up enemy tactics. <i>Cone of cold</i> , <i>ice storm</i> , and <i>charm person</i> are favorites to use at range, but once he's engaged in melee he abandons his spell-like abilities and focuses his anger on obvious healers before moving on to other enemies. |              |          |           |
| <b>Morale</b> Gamigin has lived for thousands of years by knowing when he's outclassed, but he's never been confronted here in Xin-Shalast. He cuts it close to the edge as a result, fleeing to a distant hideout via <i>greater teleport</i> only if reduced to fewer than 20 hit points. He does not return to Xin-Shalast anytime soon if he escapes in this manner.                                        |              |          |           |
| STATISTICS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |              |          |           |
| <b>Str</b> 23, <b>Dex</b> 19, <b>Con</b> 26, <b>Int</b> 27, <b>Wis</b> 24, <b>Cha</b> 24                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |              |          |           |

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 39

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*ice storm*), Eschew Materials, Improved Critical (spear), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (spear)

**Skills** Acrobatics +24 (+28 when jumping), Bluff +27, Diplomacy +27, Disguise +24, Fly +20, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (history) +28, Knowledge (local) +28, Knowledge (planes) +28, Knowledge (religion) +28, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +20, Use Magic Device +27

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** bloodline arcana (+2 DC for charm spells), infernal resistances

**Gear** +1 *returning frost spear*, *Sihedron ring*

| SCARLET WALKERS (2) | XP<br>19,200 each | CR<br>12 | HP<br>168 each |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|

**hp** 168 each (see page 414)

#### TACTICS

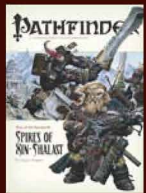
**During Combat** While there are a dozen scarlet walkers in the Heptaric Locus in all, only two of them are present the first time the PCs reach the area. They consider Gamigin an ally, if not a friend, and focus their attacks on foes who in turn attack the ice devil. Additional scarlet walkers can join the fight if you wish as these two are slain.

**Morale** A scarlet walker flees if brought below 20 hit points.

**TREASURE:** Apart from the gear he carries, Gamigin keeps his treasure split among dozens of caches scattered across the face of Golarion, nest eggs for starting up new projects as the urge seizes him. One such cache is kept in the elite box that serves as his lair. This consists of three darkwood chests (themselves worth 300 gp apiece) containing 4,500 gp, 220 pp, and 8,000 gp in assorted gems and jewelry.

## L VOMARCK'S CIRCUS

For events too large even to be held in the Heptaric Locus, Vomarck's Circus had to suffice in ancient times. Named for the stone giant champion who won the first Mastodon Chariot Races, only to die moments after victory on the goring tusks of his own blood-crazed mastodon team, this venue held everything from the aforementioned races to wizard duels, siege weapon demonstrations, and even standard horse and horse-drawn chariot races. Regardless of the event, most of the competitions were to the death. Events were talked about throughout Shalast, and the seating could hold a quarter-million spectators. Much of the southern portion of the circus has been enveloped and ruined by the Tangle, which extends a bit farther every year. Barely visible among this layer of vegetation is a stone colossus depicting the ancient hero Vomarck, complete with mastodons in the process of goring him to death. The effect is that at first glance the whole appears to be some hideous multi-headed beast emerging from the overgrowth.



## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

### PART ONE: SEEKING XIN-SHALAST

### PART TWO: WHISPERS IN THE WIND

### PART THREE: ON THE WORLD'S ROOF

### PART FOUR: XIN-SHALAST

### PART FIVE: SCALING MHAR MASSIF

### PART SIX: PINNACLE OF AVARICE

### PART SEVEN: THE EYE OF AVARICE



## M SPOLARIUM

This long, low series of buildings is situated strategically near the Heptaric Locus and Vomarck's Circus. Its primary purpose was disposal of the dead contestants from those two venues, but it quickly came to serve as the city morgue and crematorium. Deceased combatants were brought here and stripped of goods and equipment, which were then reused or sent to the Artisan District for repair and refitting. The morbid attendants were not above absconding with jewelry, personal effects, gold teeth, and even ornate tattoos on flayed swatches of flesh. The great ovens that then consumed the remnants are located at the back of the building and remain functional—if someone took the time to refuel and relight them—though there is a considerable layer of soot and charred humanoid remains to dig or chip through to gain access to them.

Intrepid adventurers might search these chambers to find one of the many caches of valuables gathered by the morticians and secretly hoarded to prevent nosy relatives or slave owners from gaining proof that the bodies had been looted. Several such hoards still exist under loose flagstones, in hollow pillars, and in at least one oven. Unfortunately, spontaneously generated undead are a problem in this place, and searchers must contend with spectres, dread wraiths, ghosts, and worse during their scavenging. In addition to these standard varieties of undead, strange undead beings composed of burning corpses roam the halls as well, and more than one centuries-unused furnace has sprung to sudden, searing flames while an intrepid looter explored its interior for hidden gold.

## N HIDDEN PATH (CR 15)

Although this relatively small tower might seem uninteresting at first glance, particularly due to the looming presence of the Heptaric Locus and Vomarck's Circus, the basement contains a long, winding tunnel that leads up a gently rising slope inside Mhar Massif. This path bypasses a fair portion of the lower route and allows characters to avoid the chance of being spotted by guardians in the lower city entirely. The passageway exits onto a high mountain ledge in the upper portion of the Rising District at an elevation of 22,000 feet.

**CREATURE:** Unfortunately, the reason the tunnel is so free of monsters despite its wide-open upper entrance is due to the presence of a 28-foot-tall predator that dwells on the ledge overlooking the mountainside. This is an immense mountain roper, a creature adapted to the high mountain environs.

### MOUNTAIN ROPER

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 51,200 | 15 | 232 |

Variant roper (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 237)

CE Huge aberration (cold)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +27

### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28 (+20 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 232 (15d8+165)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +5, **Will** +14

**Immune** cold, electricity; **SR** 30

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft.

**Melee** bite +25 (6d8+24/19-20)

**Ranged** strands +10 (1d6 Strength)

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

**Special Attacks** pull (strand, 5 ft.), strands

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The mountain roper lashes out at the closest foes, but isn't unintelligent. It knows to focus its first attacks on heavily armored foes.

**Morale** The mountain roper is usually hungry, but it's not foolish—it won't fight to the death if it can help it. If reduced to fewer than 50 hit points, the monster attempts to break off combat and bargain for its life. If the PCs can communicate and agree to parley, the mountain roper becomes an unlikely source of information—it knows much about the region, and you can use it to guide the PCs toward creatures that possess *Sihedron rings* or otherwise encourage them along whatever track of exploration you wish.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 42, **Dex** 11, **Con** 33, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +29; **CMD** 39 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (strands)

**Skills** Climb +34, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +16, Knowledge (religion) +16, Perception +27, Stealth +16 (+24 mountainous areas)

**Languages** Aklo, Thassilonian

## O HOUSE OF DIVINE CONSUMPTION

This mighty structure is walled off from the road by a row of corrugated towers ending in fluted prominences and onion-shaped domes. Multiple balconies open off of these towers and overlook the ruined compound below. Beyond gates of beaten bronze, a huge temple constructed upon a raised platform dominates the compound itself. Thassilonian runes and the seven-pointed Sihedron are prominent motifs engraved in the stone of the temple walls. Double pagodas, both of which are hollow and open onto the temple nave below, top the temple itself. One holds a massive statue of Karzoug rising from the floor of the temple, his head brushing the top of the pagoda. The other is empty, and the floor beneath is set with a gold engraving of the ever-present, clawed hand grasping a gem—the rune of greed.

The House of Divine Consumption served as the focal point for the official church of Shalast, invented by Kaladurnae, the first Runelord of Greed, and revering the philosophical and esoteric tenets





## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

### PART ONE: SEEKING XIN-SHALAST

### PART TWO: WHISPERS IN THE WIND

### PART THREE: ON THE WORLD'S ROOF

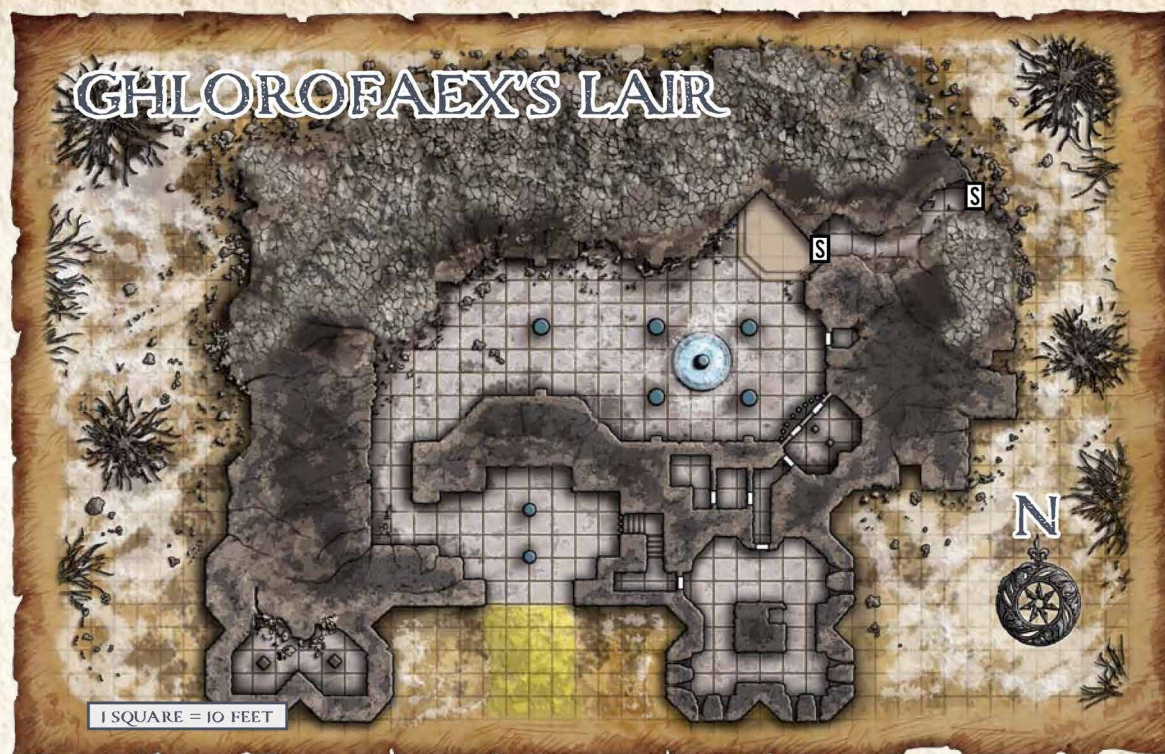
### PART FOUR: XIN-SHALAST

### MAP SIX: GHLOROFAEX'S LAIR

### PART FIVE: SCALING MHAR MASSIF

### PART SIX: PINNACLE OF AVARICE

### PART SEVEN: THE EYE OF AVARICE



of greed. Traditionally, the high priestess of the temple has always been an immense creature known as a lamia harridan (see page 404) referred to by the title of Most High. This position also served as the highest authority in the Lower City, answering only to the officials who actually received the right to dwell in the Spires of Xin-Shalast. Edicts coming from the mouth of the Most High were considered law unless countermanded by Karzoug or one of his representatives from the citadel above.

The current high priestess is Most High Ceoptra, a powerful lamia harridan who serves Karzoug faithfully as she works to reestablish his following and rebuild the ruins of the Lower City into the capital of his new empire. She has not lived within the walls of this immense temple for years, now dwelling in the Pinnacle of Avarice above so she can be at hand to speak with Karzoug as necessary. Many of Xin-Shalast's lamias—harridans, hungerers, matriarchs, and normal lamias alike—dwell in this building or in the surrounding ruins; as a result, 50% of the encounters within 1,000 feet of this area are with lamias of various types.

### **P** TEMPLE OF THE SIHEDRON

This gargantuan edifice has not fared as well with the passage of the years. Built as one bulky ziggurat-like mass with multiple towers, it has collapsed somewhat under its own weight and sections have caved in. Exploring the interior is a dangerous prospect due to the threat of additional collapses, though anyone

doing so can quickly determine that this was a temple dedicated to Lissala, the Thassilonian goddess of runes and fate. Her worship was a demanding one, as can be inferred from the carvings of priests engaged in flagellations, mortifications of the flesh, and other ritualized depictions of self-abuse that are so commonly carved into this building's surviving walls. No one has attempted to reoccupy this structure, but the few to have explored it and emerged alive speak of bestial shadows moving around corners just out of view, echoed rumbling growls, and the very real sensation that something was stalking them. Explorers who did not return were later found as bloody smears of mangled flesh, recognizable only by their tattered gear.

### **Q** GHLOROFAEX'S LAIR (CR 17)

This structure was once a massive blockhouse of stone and steel with a single well-protected gate providing the only obvious entrance. In a city of greed, the most important consideration was that the rulers received their share. Thus, this fortress housed the offices of a veritable army of tax collectors—agents in the upper levels and brutish enforcers billeted in the bowels of the building. In addition, the city's mint and treasury were located here as well, as were the offices of the city's commissar, who oversaw all of these operations.

When Thassilon collapsed, these tax collectors and the commissar were among the first to flee. Those few who simply fled survived, for the most part, but those who attempted to rob the treasury before they left





Xin-Shalast only slowed their escape long enough to doom them when a pyroclastic flow from the volcanic eruption swept through this portion of the city. The stolen treasure was scattered and over the years decayed or was claimed by other survivors, leaving the fortress itself empty. But not forever.

The building today is mostly collapsed, but a few rooms remain clear. The central audience chamber is partially fallen in, but enough of it remains to serve as a spacious lair for the current denizen. A lone tower remains standing just south of this room, but its halls are empty. A single secret tunnel leads into the central chamber from the east—these doors can be discovered with a DC 25 Perception check, but they (as well as the main entrance to the building to the south) are warded by *alarm* spells cast by the ruin's occupant.

**CREATURE:** A powerful blue dragon named Ghlorofaex, one of the strongest dragons in the Kodar region, discovered Xin-Shalast 150 years ago and was impressed, even then, with the city's glory and extravagance. Himself a creature of greed and far-reaching knowledge about Thassilonian ruins, he chose this building as his lair as soon as he recognized its original purpose. Ghlorofaex spent the last century studying Xin-Shalast and building his treasure hoard—mostly from objects stolen from lowlanders, as he views most of Xin-Shalast's treasures as better placed now than in his personal treasury.

After Karzoug awoke, one of the first commands he issued his newly awakened rune giant minions was to contact all local dragons and recruit them to the runelord's cause. In ancient times, Karzoug counted dozens of dragons as his allies (he even keeps a draconic slave within the Eye of Avarice to this day), and he is eager to rebuild these ties. Most of the dragons recruited so far still dwell in the surrounding mountains (and can be encountered as wandering monsters), while only Ghlorofaex lives inside the city itself. Of the dragons, this blue was dangerous enough that, as in the case of the Hidden Beast and Gamigin, the rune giants opted for a diplomatic approach. Fortunately for all concerned, Ghlorofaex was honored to have been chosen by Karzoug. A student of Thassilon's architecture, the blue dragon is eager to ally himself with the rising runelord, knowing full well from his studies of the city's carved walls that favored dragon allies were well rewarded by the rulers of Xin-Shalast in the past.

For now, Ghlorofaex has been spending his time waiting patiently here in his lair, emerging now and then to make token fly-overs of the city to appraise its condition. He does not react well to intruders unless they can convince him they are Karzoug's minions as well, in which case Ghlorofaex demands to know when Karzoug will be fully returned to the world so he might benefit from the runelord's alliance. The

dragon has little patience for visitors, though, be they giants or lamia-kin or PCs, and if visitors remain too long (5 minutes should be the maximum), the dragon's impatience gets the better of him and he attacks.

## GHLOORFAEX

| XP      | CR | HP  |
|---------|----|-----|
| 102,400 | 17 | 149 |

Very old blue dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 94)

LE Gargantuan dragon (earth)

**Init** +3; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., dragon senses; Perception +29

**Aura** electricity aura (10 ft., 1d6 electricity), frightful presence (270 ft., DC 25),

### DEFENSE

**AC** 37, touch 6, flat-footed 37 (+3 deflection, -1 Dex, +29 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 275 (22d12+132)

**Fort** +19, **Ref** +12, **Will** +17

**DR** 15/magic; **Immune** electricity, magic paralysis and sleep, dragon traits; **Resist** cold 30; **SR** 28

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy)

**Melee** bite +29 (6d6+11/19-20), 2 claws +29 (2d8+11), tail slap +24 (2d8+5), 2 wings +24 (2d6+5)

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

**Special Attacks** breath weapon (120-ft. line, 18d8 electricity, Reflex DC 27 for half, usable every 1d4 rounds), crush (4d6+16, Reflex DC 27 for half), desert thirst (DC 25), mirage, tail sweep (2d6+16, Reflex DC 27 for half)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 22th; concentration +26)

At will—*hallucinatory terrain* (DC 18), *ghost sound* (DC 14), *minor image* (DC 16), *ventriloquism* (DC 15)

**Spells Known** (CL 11th; concentration +15)

5th (4/day)—*baleful polymorph* (DC 19), *wall of force*

4th (7/day)—*arcane eye*, *charm monster* (DC 18), *dimension door*

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

2nd (7/day)—*acid arrow*, *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *charm person* (DC 15), *grease* (DC 15), *magic missile*, *reduce person* (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Ghlorofaex first attempts a breath weapon pass if two or more opponents are in a line. He then casts *displacement* and *haste* before he attempts to crush as many enemies as possible and fights in melee until reduced below 150 hit points, at which point he takes to the air again to use his breath weapon and ranged spells.

**Morale** If reduced below 100 hit points, Ghlorofaex flees the area—he may come back to attack the PCs again in the future at your discretion.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 33, **Dex** 8, **Con** 23, **Int** 18, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 18





## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

### CHAPTER BACKGROUND

#### PART ONE: SEEKING XIN-SHALAST

#### PART TWO: WHISPERS IN THE WIND

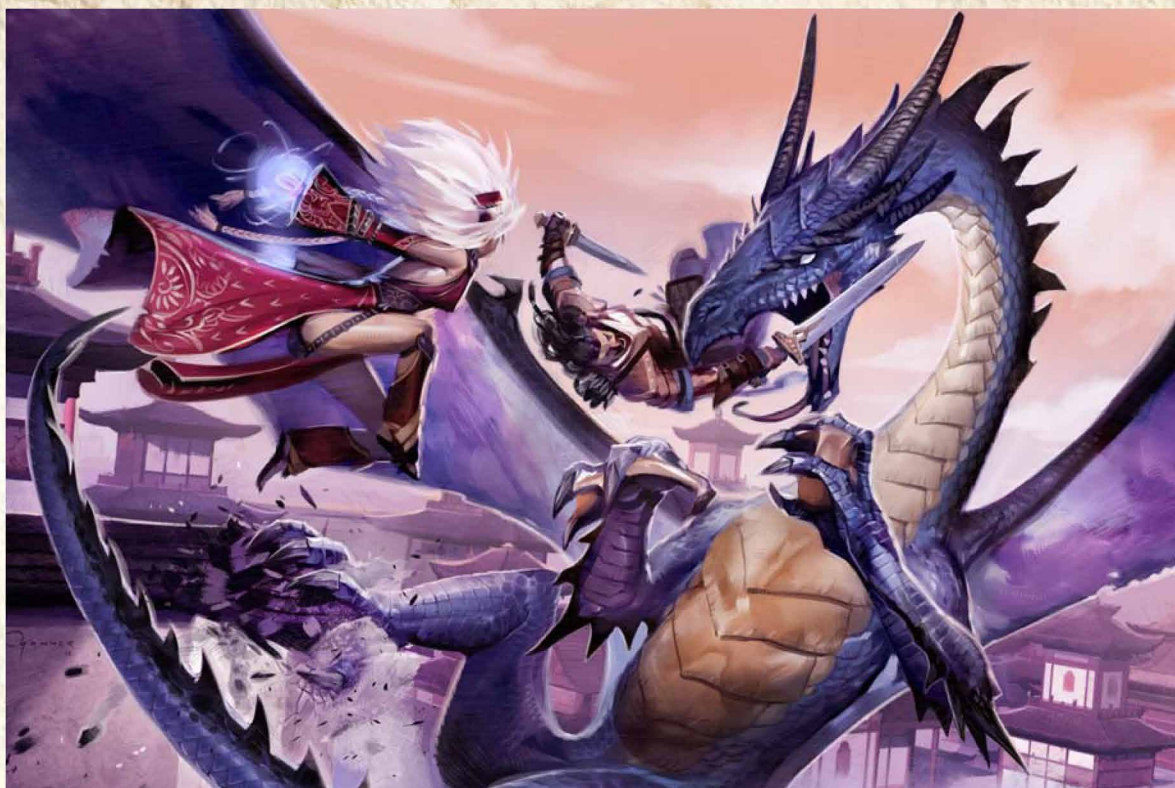
#### PART THREE: ON THE WORLD'S ROOF

#### PART FOUR: XIN-SHALAST

#### PART FIVE: SCALING MHAR MASSIF

#### PART SIX: PINNACLE OF AVARICE

#### PART SEVEN: THE EYE OF AVARICE



**Base Atk** +22; **CMB** +37; **CMD** 46 (50 vs. trip)

**Feats** Altitude Affinity, Critical Focus, Endurance, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

**Skills** Bluff +29, Fly +10, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (engineering) +29, Perception +29, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +29, Survival +29, Use Magic Device +29

**Languages** Auran, Common, Draconic, Giant, Thassilonian

**SQ** sound imitation

**Gear** ring of greater cold resistance, Sihedron ring

**TREASURE:** Ghlorofaex keeps his treasure in a highly organized state behind a large stone door in the eastern area—beyond is a 10-foot-square chamber, the far wall of which is collapsed. There's more than enough room left for the dragon's treasure, though, which consists of 64,000 sp, 21,000 gp, 520 pp, a gold coffer worth 1,400 gp that contains 35 assorted gemstones worth a total of 12,000 gp, a silver bracelet worth 25 gp, a jade comb worth 300 gp, a pair of red silk gloves embroidered with gold thread worth 800 gp for the pair (in a glass display box itself worth 100 gp), a suit of masterwork mithral half-plate, a masterwork breastplate, a suit of +2 banded mail, a wand of lightning bolt (CL 6th, 23 charges), a leather bag containing 4 frozen potions of cure light wounds, a frozen potion of owl's wisdom, a flask of oil of magic vestment +4, a bejeweled ivory scroll tube worth 300 gp that contains a scroll of foresight and a scroll of mass heal, a ring of evasion, and a rod of extend magic.

## R SHAHLARIA

Situated on a low rise overlooking the northern edge of Jotunburg is a ponderous fortress that served as the pride and joy of Shalast's military. This was the Shahlaria, the military training and indoctrination academy that turned out the hordes of loyal giant soldiers that served as the front line of Karzoug's fighting forces. Under the direct tutelage of the Grand Polemarch, the supreme military leader of Shalast who answered only to the runelord himself, the commandant of the academy gave the giant conscripts and volunteers the premiere martial and tactical training available in that age, and probably any age since. It was here that the rune giants of Xin-Shalast dwelt, in massive chambers carved into the rock below the fortress above.

The majority of the cloud giants and storm giants who live in Xin-Shalast dwell in Shahlaria. They are led by powerful individuals—advanced members of each race known as wardens. The cloud giants are led by the Wardens of Wind, while the storm giants are led by the Wardens of Thunder. Many of these leaders have been taken away to serve in the Pinnacle of Avarice, leaving behind a fortress with no clear ruler. Yet chaos does not reign in Shahlaria, for the cloud and storm giants that dwell here live in fear of their rune giant overlords.

An attempt to explore this immense structure could well entail an adventure in itself. Unfortunately, apart from incidental treasure and experience points, there's little in here for the PCs to aid them in their current conflict against Runelord Karzoug.



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DC 30 Climb checks to bypass particularly harrowing obstacles. Magical flight is a much safer option, as is teleportation. Even then, the winds, thin air, and cold present deadly hazards.

As the PCs climb up from the Lower City, there's a 15% chance per hour that someone notices and attacks—possibly dragons, flying patrols of lamias, or frost giants—the most likely things to notice the PCs are the Leng spiders that infest the region (see page 341). Once the PCs climb above 26,000 feet and enter the death zone (see below), these leng spiders become the only creatures they'll encounter until they reach the Pinnacle of Avarice.

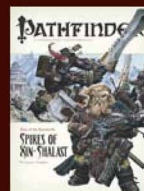
From the Lower City's elevation of just above 15,000 feet to the upper slopes of Mhar Massif, the PCs will need to endure the effects of high peak altitudes, as detailed on page 430 of the *Core Rulebook*. But once the PCs near the spires, they pass above 26,000 feet and enter what is known as the "death zone," the point at which the air itself grows too thin to breathe. In the time of Thassilon, the interiors of all the buildings here maintained breathable atmospheres, and certain outdoor areas (primarily courtyards and walkways between structures) had zones where portals to the Plane of Air and churning elementals worked to maintain rivers of breathable air, but today only the uppermost reaches of the Pinnacle of Avarice itself maintains these effects. Creatures who come and go from the region today (mostly giants, Ceoptra, and Khalib) generally resort to magic or speed (or a combination of both) to limit their exposure to the death zone's effects. The following rules for the death zone supplement those presented for high altitudes in the *Core Rulebook*.

**DEATH ZONE (MORE THAN 2,600 FEET):** Normal life is not possible at this altitude; there is simply not sufficient atmospheric pressure to allow enough oxygen to be inhaled by breathing creatures. Altitude sickness

Mhar's failed attempt to come to Golarion scarred the region in other ways—most notably, in the thinning of the boundary between this world and the nightmare realm of Leng. The influence of Leng grows ever more powerful the higher one climbs along the slopes of Mhar Massif, almost as if the mountain's sheer height were piercing the firmament and allowing this other world to leak in around its crown. Scaling the Face of Mhar is extremely dangerous, with even the most direct route (the ascending Golden Road) posing numerous difficulties along the way.

Ascending the mountain via the Golden Road is the easiest climb, requiring only a dozen successful DC 15 Climb checks in total along its face, where the road becomes particularly steep or has crumbled away for short stretches. Attempts to climb the mountain along any other route require DC 25 Climb checks, made round-by-round, along with a dozen areas that require





## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

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manifests almost immediately at these heights. After each 10-minute period a character spends in the death zone, he must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1 point of damage to all ability scores. Acclimation to high altitude (such as that granted by the Altitude Affinity feat, or to creatures who have adapted to such regions) offers no protection at all. Perhaps even more dangerous—as soon as any creature fails three consecutive saving throws against this effect, it begins to slowly suffocate—until that creature returns to more hospitable terrain, it suffers the effects of slow suffocation, as detailed on page 445 of the *Core Rulebook*. Temperatures in the death zone are always severely cold.

## INVADERS FROM LENG (CR 18)

**CREATURES:** The Runelords of Greed often used the proximity of Leng for their own plots, but it wasn't until Karzoug rose to power that the rulers of Shalast formally entered an alliance of sorts with that realm's denizens. It was with the aid of the denizens of Leng that Karzoug built the tower known as Guiltspur, and the massive Cyphergate that looms today over the city of Riddleport. His final project with these otherworldly entities is known only as the *Leng Device*—a machine capable of bending time itself (see area X12).

But far more monsters dwell in Leng than its eponymous denizens, and few of these monsters share alliances among themselves. The enormous spiders of Leng are chief among the ancient enemies of the not-quite-humanoid denizens, and after the fall of Thassilon, several Leng spiders were able to pierce the boundary between worlds here, once Mhar Massif's defenses crumbled. The spiders found a dead world under a black sky, and swiftly slaughtered those denizens of Leng that they found still stationed here.

When Karzoug woke recently, he called a new group of denizens to aid in repairing and activating the *Leng Device*, and the spiders of Leng took note. A group of three particularly powerful spiders have recently arrived in the region—their proximity to Leng protects them from the effects of the occluding field, and their *ioun stones* help sustain them in the thin atmosphere, but the spiders have been unsuccessful in infiltrating the region protected by the occluding field.

Eager to find out more about what their enemies are up to, the Leng spiders do not initially see the PCs as enemies but rather as tools. The three mastodon-sized spiders (each bearing an odd number of legs—seven or nine or 11, but not eight, like one might expect of a spider)


approach the PCs warily when they notice them. The spiders are powerful, yet also quite intelligent—they realize humanoids capable of reaching this part of the world are likely not pushovers. The lead spider, a bloated creature that keeps web bolas ready, addresses the party using its tongues ability, informing them that they are required to perform a service rather than merely serve as sustenance for their bellies.

Assuming the PCs don't immediately attack the monsters, the spiders keep their distance (approaching no closer than 40 feet) during the conversation. They explain with swiftly mounting impatience: "Our enemies, those from Leng who play at aping your vexingly symmetrical appearances, have returned to this world to honor an ancient alliance with the recrudescient lord." The spiders go on to half-request, half-demand that the PCs act as their executioners—enter the pinnacle above and destroy the denizens of Leng they find within. If they can, they must also destroy the *Leng Device*. The spiders know little about what the device is, aside from the fact that the denizens were called upon by Karzoug to aid in its creation over 10,000 years ago, and that its destruction will distress their enemies in a way the spiders anticipate to be quite pleasing.



LENG SPIDER





If the PCs think to ask for a reward, the spiders are amused and the palpitations of their pedipalps and nightmarish mouths might be interpretable as laughter. If the PCs press for a reward, the spiders grow tired and attack the PCs and feast on them after all.

| ADVANCED LENG SPIDERS (3) | XP          | CR | HP       |
|---------------------------|-------------|----|----------|
|                           | 51,200 each | 15 | 232 each |

hp 232 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 176, 292)

**TREASURE:** The Leng spiders have come prepared for the hostile environment—immunity to cold and the ability to walk on the air helps them somewhat, but each of them also uses an *iridescent spindle ioun stone* to cope with the thin air.

**DEVELOPMENT:** Although they share some of the PCs' enemies, the Leng spiders are not safe allies. Once the PCs defeat the denizens of Leng, the spiders no longer have any real use for them. The spiders have no easy way to return to Leng immediately, though, and thus remain in the region even after the PCs have carried out their mission. The occluding field continues to bar their entrance into the spires region itself, but if the PCs return to the spiders after completing the task, the spiders don't thank them at all—they merely attack them. In fact, even if the PCs don't intentionally return to interact with these treacherous arachnids, you can use them as an additional encounter against the PCs at some point in the future—the creatures certainly aren't bound to remain in this area, and may eventually clamber down the mountainside to investigate the Lower City itself.

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs manage to negotiate a truce with the Leng spiders, or otherwise manage to learn about the situation in the Pinnacle of Avarice (such as via mind control), award them XP as if they had defeated these three Leng spiders in combat.

## THE OCCLUDING FIELD

To keep the Spires of Xin-Shalast a secret through the millennia, the entire complex lies within a vast effect called an occluding field, centered upon the Pinnacle of Avarice (area W). The occluding field renders the entire area shown on the Spires of Xin-Shalast map on page 343 impenetrable to divination or scrying of any sort (though use of the Eye of Avarice to scry upon the outside world is not similarly barred).

Furthermore, the occluding field sheds a powerful effect that spurns and rejects those not attuned to the region. This field feels like an invisible force, almost like gravity, that seems to push against intruders. Teleportation effects simply do not function in this area (with the notable exception of the portal in area X14), and it creates a completely impassable barrier to creatures that are astrally projecting or who attempt to enter the region while ethereal or shadow walking. The sensation

also causes intense vertigo, as if gravity's direction had suddenly changed to be behind the character attempting to approach the Spires of Xin-Shalast. Worse, once a minute, the field pulses with invisible force that creates wracking, blinding pain. When such a pulse occurs, any non-attuned creature in the occluding field must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save to avoid taking 8d6 points of damage (this damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction and energy resistance) and a DC 20 Will save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Wisdom drain as flashes of an alien world rip through his mind, leaving madness and fear in their wake (this is a mind-affecting effect). A character who fails both saving throws in the same round is permanently blinded by the pain.

A character who wears a *Sihedron medallion* or *Sihedron ring* can ignore the effects of the occluding field. (Other magic items with powerful links to Thassilon or Shalast may work as well, at your discretion.) Mindless creatures like constructs and vermin are also immune to these effects, as are all attuned creatures (this includes all of the denizens of Leng in area X12 and all outsiders conjured directly into the field via calling effects like *greater planar binding* with the aid of the *anima focus* in area X17). Characters who wield *domineering weapons* (see page 423) gain a +4 bonus on saving throws to resist the effects and do not go blind if they miss both saves.

If the PCs have not yet learned about the aid the *Sihedron rings* can grant them, once they are exposed to the occluding field's power they can certainly learn about these items' value via spells like *commune* or *divination*.

## THE SPIRES

The Spires of Xin-Shalast, the fabled citadel on the World's Roof, house the end of the party's quest. Situated on the steep face of the mountain, deep in the death zone, these fantastic spires served as the administrative heart of the Satrapy of Greed and the seat of power of Karzoug and his runelord predecessors. Composed of multiple towers clinging to the side of the mountain, surrounding the central Pinnacle of Avarice, this vast citadel was once a city in and of itself, with each tower soaring hundreds of feet in height and containing countless passages, chambers, and battlements. Despite the size of this fortress, it is all but abandoned—only the highest level of the Pinnacle of Avarice, the chambers where Karzoug spent the last minutes of Thassilon's height and the chambers where he will once again emerge into this world, is inhabited. Its residents are Karzoug's elite—his champions, his apprentices, and his generals—and to defeat the runelord and prevent his return, the PCs must first best these powerful minions.

The outlying areas of the Spires are detailed in brief here, however, for you to expand upon in your campaign as you see fit.





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### S THE TEETH

These structures of cut alabaster rise on squat bases to pyramidal peaks 400 feet high. Their interiors are largely hollow, composed of a few cavernous chambers. In days of old, these towers served as the guarded gateway into the domicile of the Runelords of Greed. Blue dragons outfitted with *necklaces of adaptation* once dwelt in these towers, serving as guardians for the approach to the Spires. In time, Karzoug hopes to repopulate his draconic guards, starting with Ghlorofaex. For now, though, these ivory teeth stand silent and empty.

### T HARRIDANS' COMPOUND

These three spires have intricate facades with hundreds of arches and balconies. Each stands 1,300 feet high, and the three surround a walled compound. Lamia harridans who served in the runelord's highest echelon and saw to most of the administration of his empire—freeing him to pursue his magical research and plot the downfall of his rivals—became known as the Harridans of the Mountain, for their place of prominence at the feet of the runelord's own abode. The three towers of this compound were the Ambassadors' Spire, where envoys to the court of the Runelord of Greed were welcomed and housed; the Rune Spire, where Xin-Shalast's giant servitors were subjected to the will-sapping and mind-controlling talents of the lamias to indoctrinate them as absolutely loyal slaves; and the Harridans' Spire, where the Harridans of the Mountain themselves resided and held court with their

own secret councils. The descendants of these lamia-kin have spread throughout Xin-Shalast and await a time when their leaders return to these towers—but currently, only one harridan dwells in Xin-Shalast—the dangerous and deadly oracle known as Most High Ceoptra (see area X17). For now, this compound lies abandoned of life.

### U MALIGN ASCENSION

This winding path climbs from the harridans' compound to the runelord's citadel. It rises 1,000 feet over its meandering course, providing the only direct land access from the city below that doesn't involve mountain climbing.

### V FUGUE TOWERS

This triangular fortress comprises three slender towers rising 800 feet, each connected by thick walls to create a deep pit of a courtyard in the center. A single stair spirals within the south tower, connecting all of the levels, which consist of hall upon hall of cell blocks built within the thick fortress walls. On this desolate precipice, enemies too valuable to kill whiled away the years in squalor and isolation. Today, the cells stand empty but for the souls of the restless dead left to rot within them, but the halls themselves are still patrolled by powerful golems.

### W PINNACLE OF AVARICE

This immense tower is the lair of Karzoug himself. It is detailed in full in Part Six.





THE TRUE HEART OF THE DOMAIN OF SHALAST, THIS MASSIVE ICE-SHROUDED TOWER OF WHITE GRANITE SERVED AS THE SEAT OF EVERY RUNELORD OF GREED UP TO AND INCLUDING KARZOUG. THE 2,200-FOOT-TALL TOWER TOPS OUT RESPECTFULLY JUST BELOW THE CARVED FACE AT THE MOUNTAIN'S PEAK, YET THE PINNACLE ITSELF IS MOSTLY HOLLOW. THE INSIDE OF THE IMMENSE STRUCTURE SOARS LIKE A CAVERNOUS SILO, SUPPORTED BY AN INTRICATE INTERNAL ARCHITECTURAL WONDER OF DOZENS OF STONE FLYING BUTTRESSES AND ARCHES.



Thus, when Karzoug heard of Runelord Haphrama's call for new apprentices, he scuffed a summoning circle during one of Thurbel's conjurations and idly looted his master's belongings as the freed daemon devoured the wizard's body. With several potent magic items in tow and enough gold to impress even a Runelord of Greed, Karzoug was easily selected to serve as one of Haphrama's new devotees.

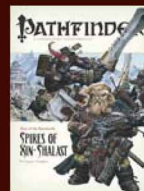
At the feet of the runelord, Karzoug learned much of the art of transmutation and the magic of greed. He found himself enthralled by the thinning of reality that occurred near the slopes of Mhar Massif. With secret alliances between himself and denizens from Leng, Karzoug began to master strange, eldritch powers in secret. His pacts promised a twisting of reality, providing his inscrutable tutors greater access to the lands of men. When, in the 206th year of his reign, Haphrama finally caught wind of Karzoug's plotting, he was too late to stop his upstart apprentice. A virulent spell provided to Karzoug by new allies from Leng consumed both Haphrama and his other apprentice, Vhage, stripping their souls from their bodies and hurling them into the void between the planes.

Karzoug took up the burning glaive—the Runelord of Greed’s symbol of rule—at the age of 77 and began his reign as Runelord of Greed. His reign saw the rise of Shalast to new heights, as his cunning and manipulative nature wended countless paths to power. Despite his people’s dread, Karzoug’s capital at Xin-Shalast rose in prominence, becoming one of the age’s most breathtaking cities—though its grandeur existed only to delight the

During the reign of Runelord Haphrama, Karzoug was born in a slave den in the city of Malistoke. What horrors he endured through the early years of his life in the city's flesh pits are unknown, for they were later stricken from history at his command. One thing is for certain, though: when Karzoug walked from the dark gates of that city 27 years later, his path was soaked in blood and his soul charred as black as night's void.

With gold teeth plucked from the head of his last master, Karzoug was able to buy an apprenticeship with a traveling demon binder named Thurbel. For 7 years he followed Thurbel, serving as both a lure for summoned fiends and a slave to the wizard. He died





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runelord and the nobles and slaves he gathered around him. In his 466-year reign, Karzoug surpassed all of the previous Runelords of Greed in power and, it could be argued, several fellow runelords as well. Like his peers, though, he was forced at the height of his influence to retreat from the world to avoid the cataclysm that befell it. He took with him into this self-imposed exile 35 rune giants and his favorite apprentice, Khalib. The plan was for the stasis to persist for some time after Earthfall, with Karzoug securely hidden between worlds in a demiplane of his own construction—the Eye of Avarice—where he would be protected long enough for the apocalypse to run its course. Unwilling to take any chances, Karzoug elected to have his protections so overwhelming within the Eye of Avarice that nothing could harm him, yet this also required what he planned on being nothing more than a temporary suspension of his ability to exist. The plan was to have the stasis effect on his apprentice Khalib (or failing that, one of his 35 rune giants, or failing *that*, an intervention of one of a dozen other minions and apprentices who rode out the apocalypse elsewhere throughout Shalast) automatically end after a period of 100 years, at which point Karzoug's minions would awaken and go about the process of charging his *runewell* to restore him fully to life.

Yet Karzoug's plans, as with the plans of the other six runelords, vastly underestimated the nature of Thassilon's fall. The various betrayals by those the seven runelords counted as allies, combined with the utter and unanticipated scale of the devastation caused by Earthfall, completely disrupted not only Karzoug's complex multi-layered plans for his revival, but also those of all the runelords. And so time passed, and Karzoug remained in stasis deep in the Eye of Avarice. Dormant, his mind exploring realms beyond, Karzoug waited for millennia, anticipating the time when the runelords would once again rise over Golarion.

A time, it seems, that has finally come.

## PINNACLE OF AVARICE FEATURES

The Pinnacle of Avarice is composed of massive stone blocks hewn from the mountain's surface. Its outer face is smooth, with only small mortared seams between the masonry blocks. The whole construction is considered magically treated reinforced masonry ranging from a few feet to hundreds of feet thick, depending on the location. Rooms and passages are at least 50 feet high and often rise as high as 100 feet to accommodate its gigantic inhabitants. The walls of the rooms are carved in all manner of detailed murals depicting life in ancient Xin-Shalast and are still painted in vibrant color. The floor is of highly polished gold and onyx in a checkerboard pattern. Doors are made of solid stone, plated in gold and silver and studded with gemstones. They are unlocked, unless otherwise noted, and despite their


immense size swing open silently at the lightest touch—opening a door in the Pinnacle of Avarice is a free action. Ancient *everburning torches* still light the halls and rooms at irregular intervals, providing shadowy illumination throughout. These torches are made of ivory and inlaid with rubies and glow with a vibrant light. Even the sconces in which the torches sit are made of silver with jade inlay.

Once, these chambers were equally opulently decorated, and the temperature and air were maintained at a comfortable level for creatures more used to life in the Lower City. While the magical enhancements that keep the air in here breathable and at a chilly but not deadly temperature of 40° F still function, over the centuries the majority of the decorations and furnishings within have decayed and crumbled, leaving behind only the stone walls. The new denizens of these chambers have brought along their own rough furnishings to make life here comfortable while they wait for Karzoug to complete his return from the Eye of Avarice. Nevertheless, with 2d4 hours of work, a dedicated looter can scavenge 2d6 × 100 gp worth of gold, gems, and other baubles from any of the Pinnacle's 23 encounter areas over and above any of the treasure listed for the specific areas—once an area has been stripped of this incidental gold, though, it cannot be so harvested again.

Note that all of the Pinnacle's inhabitants know who the PCs are and are familiar with their basic strengths and weaknesses. Karzoug has learned from speaking to the souls the PCs sent to his *runewell* as much as from reports from his numerous agents in the world. As such, unless the PCs are well disguised and have a really good story, the chances for diplomacy and nonviolent resolutions to encounters in the Pinnacle of Avarice are unlikely at best.

Although there's no wandering monster chart for the Pinnacle, the sound of combat here quickly attracts the attention of those who dwell within. How long it takes creatures in neighboring rooms to respond to combat and join in is mostly just a factor of their speed—as a result, fights here should have a tendency to spiral out of control fast, as more and more reinforcements arrive. It's likely the PCs need to mount multiple forays into the Pinnacle before they can secure an entrance into the Eye of Avarice where Karzoug waits. Overall, exploration of this complex shouldn't feel like a dungeon crawl as much as it does a long, drawn-out battle that spans multiple rooms and opponents. Nevertheless, there are nearly two dozen encounter areas in the Pinnacle, and if the PCs take the time to visit and explore before they rush ahead to confront Karzoug, they'll find that their discoveries and accomplishments may just save their lives. Conversely, PCs who ignore things like the opportunity to defeat Karzoug's key minions, destroy the *Leng Device* (see area X12), rescue Viorian (see area X3), or otherwise chip away at Karzoug's defenses could





easily find themselves facing not just a runelord and his pet dragon in the end game, but a small army of giants and high-level minions as well!

**DOORS AND WALLS:** All of the doors and walls in the Pinnacle are magically treated stone, and thus have hardness 16 and twice the normal number of hit points. Break DCs are +20 higher than normal (*Core Rulebook* 411). Any attempt to physically bypass a wall or door by an effect like *passwall* or *transmute rock to mud* that doesn't deal hit point damage is prone to failure—unless a spellcaster attempting such an effect can succeed at a Caster Level check (DC = 30 + twice the spell's level), such spell effects automatically fail when cast.

## PINNACLE RESOURCES

While the PCs are free to tackle the encounter areas in the Pinnacle of Avarice in any order they wish, once a fight begins, word spreads fast. If the PCs don't handle their fights quickly and decisively, they swiftly find themselves being overwhelmed by lamias, giants, and worse. For sake of ease, the total numbers of opponents in the Pinnacle are summarized here, so you can more easily keep track of the area's reinforcements.

**LESSER WARDENS:** Numerous cloud and storm giants dominated by their rune giant masters patrol the halls or guard key areas. This includes a total of 10 wardens of wind (advanced cloud giants) and three wardens of thunder (advanced storm giants). As long as at least one rune giant remains active in the Pinnacle, slain wardens are replenished at the rate of two wardens of wind and one warden of thunder per day.

**DENIZENS OF LENG:** The 12 denizens of Leng remain in area X12 and do not emerge under any circumstances.

**LAMIAS:** The most dangerous lamia in the pinnacle is the last harridan, Most High Ceoptra. She remains in area X17 as the guardian of the *anima focus*, yet the hungerers who dwell in area X7 are quick to move to defend the Pinnacle as needed. As long as Ceoptra lives, new hungerers can be brought in from Xin-Shalast to replace slain ones at the rate of one replacement per day.

**RUNE GIANTS:** There are two rune giants in all: one in area X4 and another in area X13. The one in area X13 responds to alarms immediately, but the one in area X4 doesn't mobilize unless an alarm continues for at least 5 rounds. Each time a rune giant is defeated, one warden of thunder and two wardens of wind (chosen randomly) are released from domination and attempt to escape Xin-Shalast.

**KHALIB:** Karzoug's only surviving apprentice, Khalib, is in area X15. He responds to alarms after casting his preparatory spells as detailed in that encounter area. As long as Khalib lives, he can replenish one conjured guardian a day via *greater planar binding*.

**VIORIAN:** Karzoug's current champion and wielder of the sword of greed, Viorian serves as Karzoug's word of law until the runelord emerges fully from the *runewell*.

She spends most of her time in area X3, patiently awaiting the will of her master. She and her three giant guardians remain here unless an alarm persists for 5 rounds, at which point they move to provide aid.

**CONJURED GUARDIANS:** Additional monsters exist in the Pinnacle, although these creatures, such as the shemhazian demon in area X16, do not venture far from their assigned areas of guardianship.

## X1 ENTRANCE RAMP (CR 16)



The seemingly infinite stone ramp finally comes to an end here. A massive pair of golden double doors stands to the north, while a smaller golden door to the west allows an alternative route onward. Intricate carvings on the walls evoke images of Xin-Shalast in its heyday, accented with vibrant paint and inlaid gems here and there. The highly polished floor consists of a checkerboard pattern of gold and black tiles, while the entire place is brilliantly lit by what appear to be dozens of bejeweled everburning torches in equally decadent sconces.

The larger doors that lead into area X2 can be locked via a lever on the opposite side, although unless the alarm is raised, the inhabitants of the Pinnacle leave the doors open for convenience. Once they're locked, a successful DC 40 Disable Device check can force the doors open from this side. The smaller door leads into a room that was once used as an office, but is now empty.

**CREATURES:** A group of four wardens of wind are posted to this hall as guards. Dominated by rune giants, these cloud giants remain watchful and alert, patient, and silent. All of these giants prominently bear the mark of the Sihedron as a brand on their brows.

| WARDENS OF WIND (4) | XP<br>19,200 each | CR<br>12 | HP<br>200 each |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|

Advanced cloud giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 147, 294)

AC 35, touch 12, flat-footed 34 (+11 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

hp 200 each

Fort +21, Ref +11, Will +15

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The cloud giants' primary goal is to prevent the PCs from using this area to enter the Pinnacle; they take up defensive positions near the doors to do so. Each has a stash of six boulders to hurl at foes who choose to fight at range.

**Morale** These giants fight to the death.

### STATISTICS

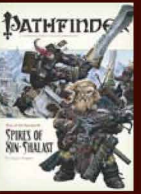
**Gear** +2 full plate, Sihedron ring

## X2 VISION OF KARZOUG (CR 15)



The ceiling of this curving hallway rises to an arch some fifty feet above. Curving to the west, the





SPIRES OF  
XIN-SHALAST

CHAPTER  
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SEEKING XIN-SHALAST

PART TWO:  
WHISPERS IN THE WIND

PART THREE:  
ON THE WORLD'S ROOF

PART FOUR:  
XIN-SHALAST

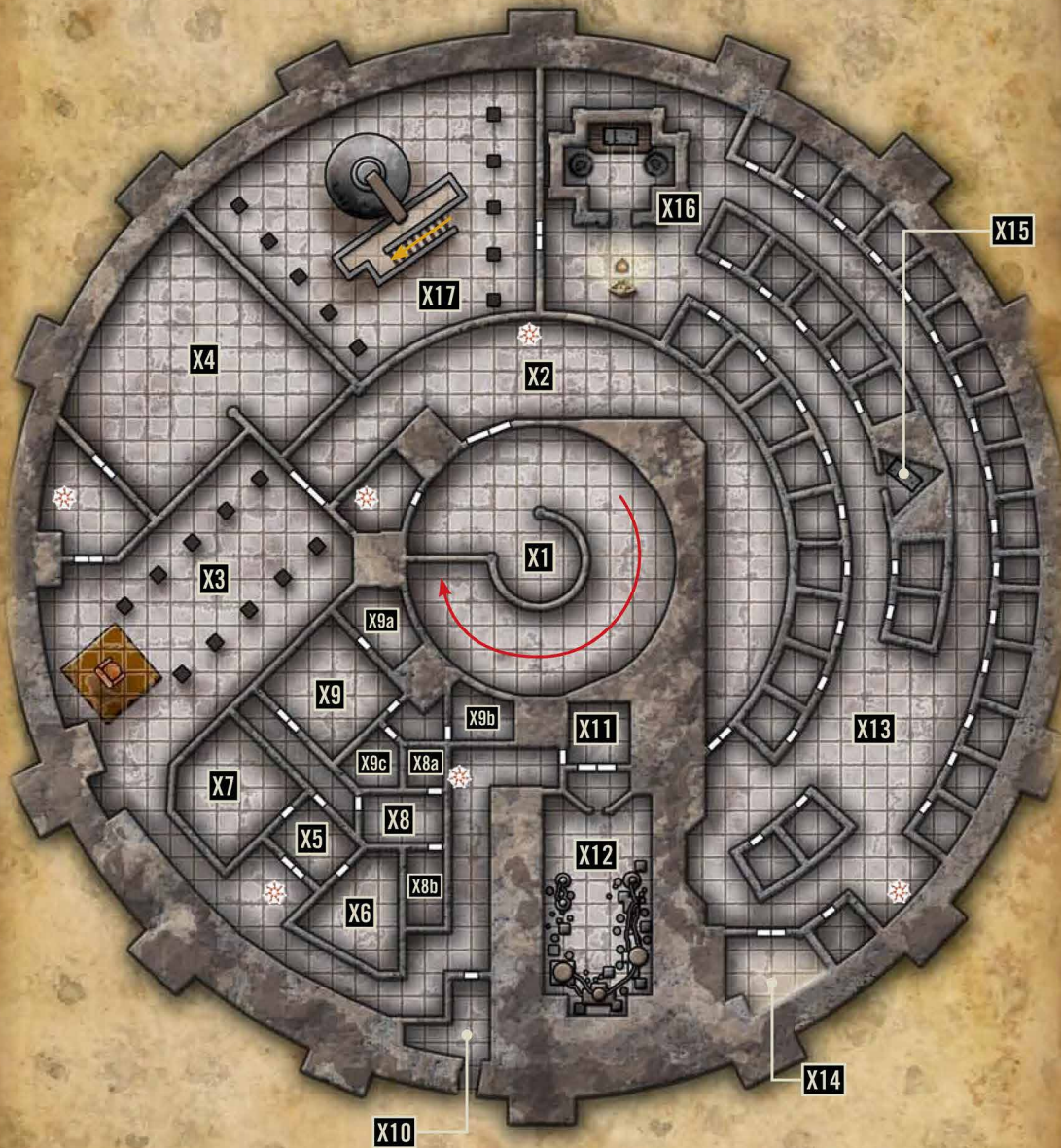
PART FIVE:  
SCALING MHAR MASSIF

PART SIX:  
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MAP EIGHT:  
THE PINNACLE OF AVARICE

PART SEVEN:  
THE EYE OF AVARICE


# THE PINNACLE OF AVARICE



1 SQUARE = 10 FEET  
STAIRS ● UP ● DOWN  
✱ KARZOUG IMAGE








hall ends at a particularly immense pair of double doors that appear to be made of gold.

In several places throughout the Pinnacle of Avarice, the boundary between Golarion and Leng is particularly thin—these locations allow Karzoug to directly observe and, to a certain extent, interact with objects in the vicinity. Six of these points exist within the Pinnacle of Avarice, such as the one in this hallway. These locations are marked on the map by Sihedrons. Whenever the PCs enter into view of one of these locations, Karzoug can notice the approach as if he were there in person and immediately manifests a slightly transparent image of himself at the location marked.

Treat this as if Karzoug were using a *project image* spell—he cannot move his projected image from this spot (although he can rotate in place), but can continue to sense the area around him as if he were there in person. Likewise, he can use this projected image to cast spells against targets in range of the image. The image has a cumulative 20% chance of vanishing each time he casts a spell through it, the magic having disrupted the tenuous connection. An image can also be dispelled (CL 20th) as normal.



A character who owns a *dominant weapon* (even if that weapon is not currently held by the character) automatically feels a strong sense of antipathy toward any such projected image, and realizes that by plunging the weapon into such a projected image (treat this as if the PC were making a touch attack against Karzoug's touch AC of 22), she can automatically dispel the effect. Dispelling an image of Karzoug in this way sends a powerful backlash of magic back through the link into the Eye of Avarice, forcing the runelord to make a DC 28 Fortitude save to avoid gaining 1 negative level.

In all, there are six areas in the Pinnacle where Karzoug can manifest, but once an image vanishes or is dispelled in any way, that thin spot between this world and the Eye of Avarice closes forever. In time, new spots may manifest in the area, but for now, these six areas not only give Karzoug a chance to finish the PCs off before they can reach his domain, but also give the PCs an opportunity to strike at the runelord as well, either directly via the threat of negative levels, or indirectly by forcing the runelord to begin depleting his magical resources before the PCs confront him. Of course, the longer the PCs wait between dealing with these manifestations and attacking Karzoug directly, the less impactful these temporary setbacks will be for the runelord.

The first time Karzoug manifests before the PCs in this manner, his attitude is one of condescension and mockery aimed at the PCs. A typical introduction might be as follows.



"And so the fools have found me. I must applaud your tenacity. You are much more persistent than

the worms I thought you to be. You are more like hungry maggots in your endless squirming and writhing to get to the death that awaits you at the core of your fate. I am that fate, maggots. I am your death!"

Karzoug saves his really powerful spells for the inevitable final confrontation, preferring to hit the PCs with 6th-level and lower spells through these images.

In future encounters against the PCs through these thin spots, Karzoug grows increasingly aware of how powerful his foes are and spends less and less time on mockery. By the time the PCs encounter and survive five of his manifestations, Karzoug actually begins to grow nervous, although he tries not to show it. If he suffers more than three negative levels at any one time from backlash caused by *dominant weapons*, he'll even avoid activating these thin spots—but even then, a successful DC 35 Perception check or the use of *detect magic* or similar effects that can observe the strong conjuration magic these thin spots shed is enough for a person wielding a *dominant weapon* to notice the almost imperceptible thin spot—even when Karzoug's not using it to manifest a link, a *dominant weapon* thrust into the spot can close it and inflict negative levels on the runelord.

Karzoug's stats, and thus all the spells he has available for use through these images, appear on page 363.

**STORY AWARD:** Defeating each of these projections of the Runelord of Greed earns the party 51,200 XP.

### **X3** THRONE ROOM (CR 19)



The interior of this dazzling chamber is awash in golden light—it shines from every gem, every strip of gold, and every silver-inlaid wall carving, creating a kaleidoscope of color and riches. The checkerboard pattern on the floor is interrupted in a twenty-foot-wide path from the northeastern doors to a throne on a dais of onyx to the southwest by a path of what appear to be countless rubies, forming a "red carpet" of sorts to the throne itself. This throne, if possible, makes the rest of the chamber's extravagance seem pale and poor, for it is made of shining gold, diamonds, rubies, and sapphires, and draped with shimmering, glowing furs from unrecognizable creatures.

This was Karzoug's throne room—the place where he would hear the needs of his nobles and pass down judgment on crimes against his nation. He very rarely held court here, though, preferring to spend his time in other endeavors (usually in one of his many transmutation labs, located elsewhere in the secret corners of Shalast). When he wasn't in court, this throne was typically occupied by his current champion—a soldier handpicked to wield one of the *Alara'hai*, the legendary sword of greed.





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**CREATURES:** When Thassilon fell and the runelords went into hiding, the seven weapons known collectively as the *Alara'hai* likewise went dormant, leaving their champions to their fates. For thousands of years, these weapons circulated among treasure hoards, collections, and owners, and while their magic remained minimal, their legends did not. They became known as the *Seven Swords of Sin*, and until recently, were little more than obscure reminders of the power the runelords once wielded. The sword of greed is a golden scimitar named *Chellan* (see page 420), and most recently was the property of a particularly greedy mercenary guildmaster from Riddleport named Vorian Dekanti. When Mokmurian awakened Karzoug 5 years ago, *Chellan* awoke as well, flaring to golden life. Woken from sleep by a strange keening, Vorian investigated her collection to find the sword shining in its display. As she removed the sword from its case to examine it, the powerful weapon seized control of her. She murdered everyone in her manor, help and mercenary alike, and then set off for Xin-Shalast. The sword kept her alive on the journey, and when she arrived she was met with open arms by its inhabitants. She has been baptized in the *runewell* and spent the past 5 years training and honing her skill under *Chellan's* command, so that now Vorian is little more than a vessel for the sword's power.

Vorian is a beautiful woman, yet her years under *Chellan's* command have erased any remnants of her soul and personality. She is now little more than a mindless shell controlled by the *sword of greed*, with little to interest her apart from basking in the glory of this throne room. She has become yet another of Karzoug's treasures, and one of his most deadly, for she does not hesitate to attack any who dare enter this sacred vault. She is attended by three wardens of thunder who serve her (in theory) as bodyguards, although the giants fear what she has become to the extent that they avoid approaching within 10 feet of her unless absolutely necessary.

### VORIAN DEKANTI

| XP      | CR | HP  |
|---------|----|-----|
| 153,600 | 18 | 283 |

Female human fighter 18

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 37, touch 16, flat-footed 34 (+14 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +7 shield); 20% miss chance

**hp** 283 (18d10+180)

**Fort** +22, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18; +5 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +5, runelord champion, **SR** 32 (vs. transmutation only); **Immune** mind-affecting effects; **SR** 20

**Weaknesses** susceptible to *dominant* weapons

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** *Chellan* +34/+29/+24/+19 (1d8+22/15-20), heavy shield +31 (1d4+12 plus bull rush)

**Ranged** +1 *composite longbow* +21/+16/+11/+6 (1d8+11/x3)

**Special Attacks** weapon training (heavy blades +4, close +3, light blades +2, bows +1)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** On the first round of combat, Vorian drinks her *potion of haste*. After this, her tactics are simple—she selects the strongest-looking foe and focuses her wrath upon him, moving to other foes only when her current target is defeated. She uses *Power Attack* and *Vital Strike* when she isn't making a full attack, but abandons this tactic when making a full attack with *Chellan* and a shield bash.

**Morale** Vorian fights to the death.



VORIAN DEKANTI





#### STATISTICS

Str 29, Dex 17, Con 26, Int 10, Wis 24, Cha 8

Base Atk +18; CMB +28; CMD 44

**Feats** Altitude Affinity, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus,

Endurance, Greater Weapon Focus (scimitar), Greater Weapon Specialization (scimitar), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Shield Bash, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Shield Master, Shield Slam, Staggering Critical, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)

**Skills** Acrobatics +19, Intimidate +20, Ride +22

**Languages** Common, Thassilonian

**SQ** armor training 4, exceptional wealth, inherent bonuses, permanent spells

**Combat Gear** *potion of haste, potions of cure serious wounds (5); Other Gear* +5 full plate, +5 heavy steel shield, Chellan, +1 composite longbow (+10 Str) with 20 arrows, belt of physical might +6 (Str, Con), boots of teleportation, cloak of minor displacement, headband of inspired wisdom +6, ring of freedom of movement, scarab of protection (10 charges), Sihedron ring, vibrant purple ioun stone (contains a fly spell)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Exceptional Wealth** Viorian has gear equal to a 17th level PC, and as such her CR is +1 higher than normal.

**Inherent Bonuses** In order to ensure his champion is as powerful as possible, Karzoug has used *wish* spells to grant Viorian a +5 inherent bonus to Strength and Dexterity and +4 inherent bonuses to Constitution and Wisdom.

**Permanent Spells** Viorian has *telepathic bond* as a permanent spell effect at CL 20th (placed by Karzoug).

**Runelord Champion (Ex)** Viorian bears the rune of greed upon her left shoulder, a physical manifestation of her role as Karzoug's champion. She has pledged herself to his service, body and soul, and as long as Karzoug lives (even while that life is confined to the far side of the *runewell*), she gains complete immunity to mind-affecting effects. In addition, she possesses SR 32 against spells from the school of transmutation. Unfortunately, being the champion of greed also brings with it an associated weakness against domineering *runeforged* weapons—she qualifies as a transmuter for that weapon's bane effects, and critical hits made against her with such weapons automatically confirm.

#### WARDENS OF THUNDER (3)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 38,400 each | 14 | 237 each |

Advanced storm giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 152, 294)

AC 37, touch 12, flat-footed 36 (+13 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

hp 237 each

Fort +22, Ref +13, Will +18

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The wardens of thunder use *chain lightning* and *call lightning* during the first 2 rounds of combat, after which one moves to flank foes with Viorian and the other two hang back to use their longbows against healers.

**Morale** These giants fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Gear +4 full plate, Sihedron ring

**TREASURE:** Beyond the significant amount of treasure carried by Viorian herself, the value of the gemstones and precious metals in this room is significant. A single dedicated looter can spend an hour prying up gems, scraping gold plating, and otherwise scavenging wealth to the amount of  $1d6 \times 1,000$  gp per hour spent working in this room, to a maximum amount of looted wealth equal to 60,000 gp.

**DEVELOPMENT:** Although the influence of Karzoug and Chellan have completely rebuilt Viorian's personality and destroyed her memories (to the extent that if she loses the sword, she continues functioning as a single-minded runelord's champion), it's possible to restore the woman to her previous personality. Doing so first requires separating Viorian from Chellan for a minimum of 24 hours. After this point, Viorian's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores each drop to 1 and remain at that level until Chellan is returned to her (at which point these scores return to normal and she resumes her role as Karzoug's champion) or she is targeted by a *greater restoration* spell, at which point her ability scores are restored and her previous personality—as a neutral evil leader of a now disbanded Riddleport gang that she is significantly overqualified to lead—is restored. Despite her evil nature, she remembers her time as Karzoug's thrall, and the kindness the PCs show her can set her swiftly down the path of redemption. Whatever her new fate, she retains the skills and experience she gained during the past several years as Karzoug's champion-to-be, and if left to her own devices becomes increasingly obsessed with finding out more about the other six runelords so that she can prevent what Karzoug did to her from happening to anyone else. In the meantime, she'll absolutely aid the PCs in facing Karzoug in the Eye of Avarice, giving them a powerful ally in the fight to come.

**STORY AWARD:** If the PCs manage to rescue and recruit Viorian, grant them XP as if they had defeated her in combat, as well as an additional 51,200 XP.

#### X4 RUNE GIANT LAIR (CR 17)



A pair of outrageously sized beds, each over forty feet long, lie against the far wall of this enormous chamber. A towering stone table flanked by equally oversized chairs sits in the center of the room.

**CREATURE:** Although each of the stasis cells in area X13 once held a rune giant, most of these towering monsters relocated to Xin-Shalast to aid in reclaiming the city for Karzoug. Only a few remain here in the Pinnacle, and they generally rest in shifts. The first time the PCs





enter this room, a single rune giant is doing just that—slumbering in one of the enormous beds here (unless combat in a nearby room woke him, of course!)

## WARDEN OF RUNES

| XP      | CR | HP  |
|---------|----|-----|
| 102,400 | 17 | 270 |

Rune giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 130)

**AC** 38, touch 9, flat-footed 38 (+14 armor, +3 deflection, +15 natural, –4 size)

**hp** 270

**Gear** +5 full plate, *Sihedron* ring

## X5 LAMIA-KIN QUARTERS



This exquisitely decorated chamber contains thick carpeting on the floor, a flickering fireplace along the northern wall, and several large nests of fine furs and cushions.

As with the rune giants and Khalib, Karzoug saw the need for a small army of lamias in the earliest days of his wakening, and as such arranged for the chambers within this subsection of the Pinnacle to provide for the needs of several lamia minions, led by the harridan Ceoptra. All of the lamias in this wing have spent the last several thousands of years in stasis, wakening only after Karzoug was roused from sleep. The matriarchs Xanesha and Lucrecia were among those who dwelt in this complex—while they have gone far beyond Xin-Shalast on their masters' orders, several remain within the area to this day. This central chamber serves as a small shared lounge for the matriarchs to relax in—the fireplace is real, but magical (the smokeless flames within give off heat but do not actually burn objects placed within).

**TREASURE:** Many of the furs on the floors here are quite fine examples of exotic pelts, ranging from snow leopard to yeti. In all, there are 20 pelts, each being worth 250 gp. Amid one of the pelts lies a forgotten *periapt of proof against poison* fitted into a short hair pin, left here by a lamia matriarch who has since moved out of the Pinnacle. A successful DC 30 Perception check allows this hidden bauble to be discovered during the looting of the room; otherwise, it may go unnoticed tangled amid the fibers of a particularly large yeti fur blanket.

## X6 PRIESTESS'S CELLS (CR 15)



The decor of this large room is quite comfortable—thick carpeting covers the floor, while delicate chandeliers hang from the ceiling. Several large nests of furs and cushions lie about the room.

**CREATURES:** While some of the lamia priestess who serve Ceoptra have been deployed elsewhere (such as to Jorgenfist), four of them remain stationed here, waiting

to serve their mistress as needed. The priestesses have spent much of the last several months relatively idle, with thrice-weekly trips down the mountain to catch food for the hungerers in area X7 being their only real distractions of late. They look upon the arrival of the PCs as not only an opportunity to earn approval from Ceoptra, but as a much needed break from boredom. Note that while Ceoptra herself is in fact an oracle of the House of Divine Consumption, these priestesses are clerics of Lamashtu—for now, Ceoptra suffers the worship of the Demon Queen by these clerics, but the harridan plans someday to enforce a conversion of these lamias to the official religion of Xin-Shalast. Since such a conversion would result in the loss of the lamias' clerical powers and spellcasting ability, Ceoptra has been forced to constantly delay these plans for conversion until Karzoug has returned and she has time to retrain them.

## LAMIA PRIESTESSES (4)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 12,800 each | 11 | 161 each |

**hp** 161 each (see page 220)

**Gear** as detailed on page 220, but replace *rings of protection* +2 with *Sihedron* rings

## X7 HUNGERERS' DEN (CR 17)



This foul-smelling abattoir of a room is empty of furniture—it would appear that whatever lives here prefers to use the half-gnawed bodies of previous meals as bedding.

**CREATURES:** Whereas most lamia-kin prefer to bask in luxury and surround themselves with beauty, the bloated monstrosities known as hungerers have no such interests. Anything that could be interpreted as a distraction from gluttony holds little interest for the hungerer. Many of these obese lamia-kin dwell in Xin-Shalast, with the two that dwell herein being Ceoptra's pets. Both of these hungerers were once lamia matriarchs who displeased Ceoptra. Her lamia-kin followers won't easily forget this, since transformation into a hungerer is one of the greatest punishments a normally vain lamia can be subjected to.

## HUNGERERS (2)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 51,200 each | 15 | 220 each |

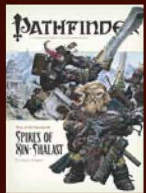
**hp** 220 each (see page 410)

**Gear** *Sihedron* ring

## X8 PRISON (CR 16)



The stone walls of this chamber are stark and undecorated—even the floor is merely functional in appearance. Two iron doors face each other across the room to the west.



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This barren chamber is nothing more than a guard room that allows observance of the two prison cells to the north and south (areas **X8a** and **X8b**). These cells are themselves used only for the most important and hated of Karzoug's prisoners, but are currently empty. If during the course of the adventure, a significant NPC escaped from the PCs (such as Barl Breakbones, or even an ally who vanished at some point), feel free to place that character in one of the two prison cells here.

One of the cells is twice as large as the other (cell **X8b** is generally used to house larger prisoners like giants and dragons), but both contain the same set of wards: incredibly difficult to pick locks (it's a DC 40 Disable Device to unlock either door—Ceoptra keeps the keys in her shrine at area **X9a**), while the interior of each cell is bathed in persistent *antimagic fields* (CL 20th).

**CREATURE:** While the lamias in the exterior rooms of this portion of the spire are all expected to help guard these cells, the primary duties of guardian fall to an astradaemon Khalib “recruited” with a *greater planar binding* spell. Although there's unlikely to be any prisoners to guard here, the astradaemon remains at its post with orders to slaughter anyone it doesn't recognize who dares to enter this chamber unescorted by a known ally.

#### ASTRADAEMON

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 76,880 | 16 | 212 |

hp 212 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 63)

#### X9 CEOPTRA'S CHAMBERS



The thickly carpeted floor of this grand chamber is further strewn with expensive-looking throw-rugs and exotic furs. A nest of the same lies heaped in the center of the room, under a rotunda-like construction atop which a canopy of silks and gauzy veils adds to the chamber's mystique.

The leader of the lamias of Xin-Shalast and the high priestess of the cult of Lissala in the region is the lamia harrikan known as Most High Ceoptra. This room and the nearby chambers consist of her personal suite here in the Pinnacle, although she spends the majority of her time in area **X17** now, guarding the *anima focus*. An investigation of this room reveals that whatever sort of creature that dwells here is the size of an elephant, yet is also exceptionally fastidious—the silks and furs in here are impeccably clean.

Area **X9a** is a personal shrine dedicated to the esoterica and philosophies of greed—the northern wall is decorated with an enormous golden Sihedron, before which sits a rune-carved altar. Area **X9b** and **X9c** are smaller chambers once used by two of Ceoptra's favorite minions, the lamia matriarch sisters Xanesha and Lucrecia. Both of these still-quite-well-decorated bedrooms are empty, unless

one of those two lamia matriarchs escaped the PCs and returned here.

**TREASURE:** A successful DC 30 Perception check of the altar in area **X9a** reveals a hidden panel in which Ceoptra keeps three *scrolls of resurrection*, a *scroll of commune*, and a single enormous platinum key worth 2,500 gp. This key unlocks the doors to the cells in area **X8**. The gold of the Sihedron on the wall can be scraped away with an hour's work, resulting in 1,250 gp worth of gold.

#### X10 MOKMURIAN'S DOOR (CR 16)

This small room, once a storeroom, is the chamber into which Mokmurian entered when he first visited the region several years ago. At that time, the magical wards that protected the Pinnacle kept the entire structure sealed tight—the ramp leading to area **X1** being as impenetrable as anything else. The stone giant studied the external walls of the Pinnacle, and was delighted to find a small flaw in the magic here caused by an even smaller flaw in the stonework beneath—despite the minor nature of these flaws, they were enough for Mokmurian to burrow through into the interior with the application of *disintegrate* spells.

**CREATURE:** The hole carved into the wall remains today—with so few visitors, the creatures of the pinnacle haven't bothered with the relatively significant work of repairing the damage. In the meantime, as a temporary measure, Khalib has simply placed a planetar, conjured via *greater planar binding*, as a guardian here. The choice of planetar appeals to Khalib's sense of irony and is a rather clever ploy to trick any good-aligned intruders into believing that what lies within the chambers should, in fact, be avoided. At the very least, Khalib delights in the likely mental trauma caused to kindhearted heroes forced to fight an angel.

The planetar, named Ayruzi, is an androgynous creature with pale green skin and tear-stained eyes. Khalib has compelled Ayruzi via the *greater planar binding* to guard this entrance for 16 days, a length of servitude that began the first day the PCs arrived in Xin-Shalast. While so bound, Ayruzi must silently guard this room from intruders, and must attack any who attempt to enter, fighting to the death.

#### AYRUZI

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 76,800 | 16 | 229 |

Planetar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 11)

hp 229

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Khalib's command to Ayruzi to fight silently prevents her from speaking, and also from casting spells—she's free to use her spell-like abilities, though. While Khalib's *greater planar binding* compels Ayruzi to fight, she desperately wishes to communicate with the PCs. If the PCs don't establish telepathic communication with the angel, though, she has no real option but to fight as best she can.





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She continues to attack intruders at range from this room as long as she can, but is not allowed to leave the area to pursue foes.

**Morale** Khalib has commanded Ayruzi to fight to the death, but his command has a fatal flaw—if the PCs deal enough damage to kill Ayruzi and she goes down, the wording of his command causes the effects of the *greater planar binding* to cease—even if she's still regenerating. If allowed to heal back to consciousness via regeneration, the angel wakes no longer under the *greater planar binding's* effects and offers her aid to the PCs, as detailed under development below.

**DEVELOPMENT:** If the PCs can establish nonverbal communication with the angel (such as via telepathy, or simply by asking her questions she can answer with nods of the head or other simple pantomime while she's attacking), she tries to get them to banish her—once sent back to Nirvana, the strictures of the *greater planar binding* end, and she arranges to return to the Material Plane to seek revenge against Khalib. Her inability to use *plane shift* or *teleport*, unfortunately, means that it will be many days before she can return to Xin-Shalast to aid the PCs—in this case, you can have her return whenever you wish. If, on the other hand, the PCs manage to help her escape from the *greater planar binding* effect without banishing her (such as by temporarily killing her, as detailed above under Morale), Ayruzi immediately joins the PCs and vows to aid them in their fight against Karzoug—all she asks in return is the opportunity to deliver the killing blow to Khalib for the humiliation he inflicted upon her pride.

## X11 THE AKLO DOORS (CR 16)



Two vast double doors, each ten feet in width, stand in the southern wall of this barren chamber. The face of each black stone door is covered with tens of thousands of tiny runes carved in an eerie, spidery script. The runes seem to writhe and slither about when not under direct observation.

These doors lead into the eldritch laboratory in which Karzoug's denizen of Leng minions toiled on the construction of the *Leng Device*, and as such, he wanted to ensure that only a few could safely come and go from the room beyond these doors. Each of the doors is covered with magical runes, written in Aklo, that describe in florid detail the horrors of Leng. In effect, the runes consist of a warning to anyone who would enter and trespass on the land of Leng beyond the doors. Anyone who can read Aklo, takes an hour to study them, then succeeds at a DC 30 Knowledge (planes) or Linguistics check can deduce the nature of these warnings. Unfortunately, anyone who reads any of the runes for as short a time as a single round (or who dares to attempt to open the doors) triggers a deadly magical trap.

**TRAP:** The runes on the Aklo doors do far more than merely warn about Leng's eldritch horrors. Any who read the runes or attempt to open the doors subject their minds to the labyrinthine network of tunnels that wind through the depths of the underworld below Leng—a nightmare maze of horrors and things best left unseen. So realistic are these visions that the victims are physically transported into the phantasm, vanishing entirely from reality for as long as it takes them to find their way back. Creatures native to Leng, Karzoug himself, and any chaotic evil outsider of CR 10 or higher are immune to the effects of the Aklo doors. Merely reading the runes is enough to trigger the trap, but so is any attempt to open the doors—once the trap is triggered, all targets other than those mentioned above as being immune who are within a 30-foot spread of the doors are whisked away into the extradimensional nightmare maze.

### THE AKLO DOORS

XP  
76,800

CR  
16

Type magic; Perception DC 35; Disable Device DC 35

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch or proximity; **Reset** automatic


**Effect** spell effect (*maze*; each round all creatures trapped within the *maze* are subjected to a *phantasmal killer* effect [save DC 16], but once any one trapped creature succeeds at the DC 20 Intelligence check to escape the maze, all currently entrapped victims escape at once, reappearing on the north side of the now-once-again closed Aklo doors); multiple targets (all valid targets within 30 feet).

## X12 THE LENG DEVICE (CR 17)



The plain stone walls of this long room are lined by a variety of tables, boxes, crates, and cylinders. Some are made of stone, but others appear to be composed of metal. Strange winding cables protrude from some to connect to others. All of this clutter seems to focus upon a large metal framework constructed at the southern end of the room, where strange currents of energy dance and shimmer within a strange ring of stone. Now and then, these currents coalesce into shapes—images startling for their familiarity and yet totally alien. The image revealed is of a massive city of towers and gigantic monuments set in a mountain valley at the foot of a huge peak—Xin-Shalast, as it would appear from this high mountain vista. The city beyond the energy curtain is very different, however, in that its towers and buildings are ablaze with light both magical and mundane and the great central road and surrounding streets teem with tens of thousands of giants and humanoids of all descriptions. The sounds and even the smells of this strange metropolis waft through the image—an image that is, perhaps, trying to be an open window.





This chamber holds an ancient experiment begun by Karzoug and his allies from Leng, one he abandoned and sealed away just before he entered hibernation. The strange apparatus splayed about the room and culminating in the energy field at the far end is an otherworldly experiment known as the *Leng Device*. Using the warped technologies of the outer realms, Karzoug and his associates from Leng attempted to create a fixed portal in time—one that would allow travel to a specific day from any point in the future. That day is one when Xin-Shalast was at its height—Karzoug knew he would need an army when he awoke, and with this device he hoped to bring forth the ancient armies already gathered to reign terror anew upon the world, transporting them wholly from the past to the present. While this device was nowhere near completion when Thassilon fell, if Karzoug wakens fully, he can have it ready to transport the armies of Xin-Shalast from the ancient past to the modern day—perhaps his greatest magical feat ever.

Yet there are others who have an interest in the device. That same nameless patron from Leng who once helped Karzoug build the device has finally managed to send minions to Golarion recently. While these denizens of Leng have deluded the remaining inhabitants of the spire into believing they seek merely to prepare the *Leng Device* for Karzoug's return, in truth the original goal of the device, and the actual reason those from beyond in Leng agreed to work with Karzoug in the first place, is to waken the Great Old One Mhar who dwells beneath the mountain that bears that entity's name.

Dozens of denizens of Leng now dwell in Xin-Shalast and the surrounding mountains, sent here to scout the place, observe, and gather topographical data that they then report to the denizens toiling in here so they can make proper adjustments. The work is long and grueling, made more so by the necessity of hiding their work's results so that Karzoug doesn't realize what the alien technicians are actually up to. Indeed, to someone viewing the results of the denizens' tinkering from afar (such as the *runewell*) it seems their work is merely tuning the device and preparing it for the portal to ancient Xin-Shalast. Yet once Karzoug's *runewell* triggers and returns him to this realm, the denizens of Leng are ready to siphon that power into the *Leng Device* and to awaken Mhar from its eons of slumber. No other beings in the region know what the denizens of Leng are truly up to here, including their ancient foes, the spiders of Leng (see page 341). The spiders know only that they wish to see their enemies fail at whatever efforts they are attempting.

The *Leng Device's* portal cannot yet allow physical travel or even communication—the portal does not exist in ancient times at this point. Yet it does allow an observer in this chamber to see Xin-Shalast at its height 10,000 years ago, only a few years before the empire's fall. Contact with the energy field has no effect other than a slight tingling, and spells cannot be cast through it.

Anyone examining the panels or consoles of the device must succeed at a DC 45 Knowledge (arcana) check to understand the *Leng Device's* general purpose—it takes a successful DC 55 check to realize it's slowly being repurposed to a point in time eons before Thassilon's height. A successful DC 40 Knowledge (geography or local) check reveals numerous similarities between the stone ring at the center of the *Leng Device* and the much larger ring of stone located in the Varisian city of Magnimar—as if both devices were built by similar hands. Anyone who attempts to damage or manipulate the *Leng Device* has a 30% chance of creating a small explosion affecting all within 5 feet and dealing 6d6 points of force damage (no save). This causes no noticeable damage to the device and has no effect on the portal—the device itself is a major artifact and cannot be destroyed without traveling to Leng, where its unknowable foundations lie shrouded in secret monasteries.

**CREATURES:** The 12 denizens of Leng working here are in the process of fine-tuning the device. Vaguely human shaped, these monsters appear to wear twitching yellow robes, turbans, and veils. When they attack, these robes part to reveal horned heads, hooved feet, and monstrosly toothy maws. The denizens do not interact with any of the other inhabitants of the Pinnacle, but are prepared to defend their work if necessary.

Unknown to the PCs, the denizens of Leng themselves are inexorably tied to the device. Each time a denizen is slain, the *Leng Device* flashes with light and emits a strange high-pitched whine. With each death, the image in the window shifts, growing distorted and warped. With the last denizen slain, the image vanishes altogether, transforming into a gut-churning vortex of spinning lights and sheets of energy. Unfortunately for the PCs, this disruption in the fabric of time quickly draws the attention of an ancient and powerful monstrosity from the dawn of time itself—an advanced hound of Tindalos. The hound manifests in this chamber only 2d6 rounds after the last denizen of Leng is slain, pouring from the southern corners of the room with a blast of noxious mist and a blood-curdling howl. Only by defeating at least one of the denizens of Leng without slaying him can the PCs prevent the arrival of this hound (banishing denizens to another plane has the same effect as killing them).

If the hound appears after the PCs have left the room, its howl can still be heard throughout the Pinnacle. It emerges from the room and begins stalking the complex, killing anything (PC, giant, or lamia alike) it comes across. Particularly cagey PCs can actually use this Thing from Beyond Time as a dangerous ally, since the beast focuses its wrath on larger foes before smaller ones.

In any event, the hound's manifestation has one positive effect: it overloads the *Leng Device*. While not destroying it, the portal energy built up in its conduits is dispersed and the device becomes inert. Future denizens of Leng might return here someday to begin







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the decades-long process of activation again, but for now, this dangerous device's threat is stymied. The Thing from Beyond Time itself is a 14-foot-long creature capable of shifting in and out of reality. The creature is only vaguely shaped like a hound; its feet end in large razor-sharp talons and the enormous maw set under its bulging black eyes is filled not only with weirdly transparent teeth, but a long bladed tongue capable of lapping away the minds of those it cuts.

| ADVANCED DENIZENS OF LENG (12) | XP<br>6,400 each | CR<br>9 | HP<br>115 each |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|

**hp** 115 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 82, 294)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The denizens ignore the PCs unless they become hostile or try to damage the machine.

**During Combat** The denizens of Leng attempt to flank the PCs and use sneak attacks with their claws and bites.

**Morale** These denizens fight to the death to protect the secret of their project.

| THE THING FROM BEYOND TIME | XP<br>76,800 | CR<br>16 | HP<br>256 |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|
|----------------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|

Unique hound of Tindalos (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 158, 292)

NE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +11; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +29

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 31, touch 17, flat-footed 23 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +14 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 256 (19d10+152)

**Fort** +18, **Ref** +20, **Will** +13

**DR** 10/magic and piercing; **Immune** poison, mind-affecting effects

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** bite +28 (4d6+10/19-20), 2 claws +28 (2d6+10/19-20), tongue +23 (2d8+5 plus 1d4 Wisdom drain)

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

**Special Attacks** ripping gaze (DC 24)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +15)

Constant—*air walk*

At will—*fog cloud*, *invisibility*, *locate creature*

3/day—*dimensional anchor*, *discern location*, *greater scrying* (DC 22), *haste*, *slow* (DC 18)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The Thing from Beyond Time is not immune to the effects of the occluding field—in fact, its presence causes the monster extreme discomfort and pain. Beyond its first manifestation in the room (made possible only by the *Leng Device*'s fluctuation of energy), this hound of Tindalos cannot use its angled entry ability at all. The feeling of being trapped and cut off from the angles of time enrages the monster, driving it into a blind frenzy.

**Morale** If the occluding field is brought down, the hound immediately uses *plane shift* to flee, never to return.

Otherwise, it fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 30, **Dex** 24, **Con** 24, **Int** 20, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 20





**Base Atk** +19; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 48 (52 vs. trip)

**Feats** Ability Focus (ripping gaze), Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (claws), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +29 (+33 when jumping), Escape Artist +26, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (engineering) +24, Knowledge (geography) +24, Knowledge (history) +24, Knowledge (planes) +27, Perception +29, Sense Motive +29, Stealth +25, Survival +26

**Languages** Aklo

**SQ** angled entry, otherworldly mind

### X13 RUNE GIANT CELLS (CR 18)

Each of these empty chambers radiates lingering transmutation magic. A character who studies these auras and makes a successful DC 38 Spellcraft check can tell that these rooms once served as stasis chambers, utilizing an effect similar to that created by *temporal stasis*. In fact, each chamber once held a single rune giant in stasis, placed there by Karzoug in the twilight days of Thassilon so he'd have a small army of them at his disposal when he woke. Karzoug was able to release these giants from stasis and now uses them as a key component in the rebuilding of Shalast's power.

**CREATURES:** Most of the rune giants who once stood in stasis here are now spread out through Xin-Shalast, but two remain here in the Pinnacle—one in area X4, and one here in this large room, where it commands three wardens of wind on reserve, ready to come to the aid of any alarms raised elsewhere in the complex.

#### WARDEN OF RUNES

| XP      | CR | HP  |
|---------|----|-----|
| 102,400 | 17 | 270 |

Rune giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 130)

**AC** 38, touch 9, flat-footed 38 (+14 armor, +3 deflection, +15 natural, –4 size)

**hp** 270

**Gear** +5 full plate, *Sihedron* ring

#### WARDENS OF WIND (3)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 19,200 each | 12 | 200 each |

Advanced cloud giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 147, 294)

**AC** 35, touch 12, flat-footed 34 (+11 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +12 natural, –2 size)

**hp** 200 each

**Fort** +21, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15

**Gear** +2 full plate, *Sihedron* ring

### X14 PORTAL ROOM



The southern wall of this otherwise empty chamber shimmers and glows, a wall of swirling golden mist rather than the polished stone seen elsewhere in the complex. Now and then strange shapes can be half-seen through the mist.

The swirling golden mist on this wall is a stationary, one-way portal that transports any who step into the mist down into Xin-Shalast. Those who traverse this portal appear before the fortress of Shahlaria (area R), preceded by a blast of golden mist. There is no method to return to the Pinnacle of Avarice from Shahlaria—this portal was used by the majority of the rune giants to disperse into the city below, and functions more as an escape route than anything else.

### X15 KHALIB'S QUARTERS (CR 15)



This triangular room is empty, save for a golden bed strewn with exotic furs and silk sheets. A long shelf above the bed holds nearly two dozen leather-bound books.

This room alone among the rune giant cells is sized for a human occupant, for it once served as a stasis chamber for a man named Khalib—one of Karzoug's most powerful apprentices and, in theory, the man who was originally destined to waken a few years after Thassilon's fall to rouse Karzoug. Unfortunately, Karzoug's other apprentices didn't necessarily want their runelord to return—they harbored secret jealousies and envied Karzoug's power. They thought that by preventing Khalib's return they could thus prevent Karzoug's, and therefore one among them could take up the mantle of greed. Their plan half-worked—after Karzoug and Khalib entered stasis, they did manage to alter the “timer” on Khalib's stasis chamber so he would never emerge (barring external tampering). That done, the remaining apprentices turned on each other, the focus of their envy having shifted to themselves. It took them less than a month to kill each other off. It would be 10,000 years before Mokmurian would finally come to the Pinnacle of Avarice to finish the job Khalib was never able to complete.

**CREATURE:** When Karzoug wakened his rune giants, he considered not wakening Khalib, so disappointed was he in his apprentice's failure. The runelord has only recently reversed this petty decision, and wakened Khalib a few months ago, after Karzoug realized he was going to require all the help he could muster against the PCs. Since then, Khalib has spent much of his time searching his soul for a way to repay Karzoug for his failure to waken him. Helping to gain new allies (such as aiding in the subjugation of the yetis in area H) is a step in the right direction, but Khalib knows he needs to do more. Destroying the PCs strikes him as the perfect solution—once he realizes the PCs are in the Pinnacle, he searches them out immediately and confronts them. Only if the PCs are particularly stealthy in their invasion do they find Khalib here, deep in study and meditation.

First of his school in power and magical skill, Khalib was a natural choice as an apprentice aspirant for Karzoug



and quickly rose through the competition on his own raw power and ambition. Seeing the other apprentices as beings of lesser power, Khalib took to calling himself First Apprentice in Karzoug's court and in the presence of the others. Khalib saw his rise as the next Runelord of Greed to be a natural progression, waiting patiently for Karzoug's power to wane so he could convince the rune giants to support his bid for power. At least, that was his mindset before his long period in stasis—now, he fears that Karzoug will cast him aside before he has a chance to wrest control. Khalib hasn't even fully comprehended the fact that 10,000 years have come and gone, and that Thassilon is no more—he understands the passage of time on an intellectual level, but emotionally hasn't yet started to come to terms with the fact that the world he once knew is no more.

| KHALIB | XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|--------|----|-----|
|        | 51,200 | 15 | 185 |

Male Azlanti human transmuter 16

IE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +5; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Perception +18

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 29, touch 18, flat-footed 24 (+5 armor, +3 deflection, +5 Dex, +2 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 185 (16d6+127)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15

**DR** 10/adamantine

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

**Melee** +4 *dagger* +12/+7 (1d4+4/19–20)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th; concentration +23)

At will—change shape (*beast shape III/elemental body II*, 16 rounds/day)  
10/day—telekinetic fist (1d4+8 bludgeoning)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 16th; concentration +23)

8th—*greater planar binding*, quickened maximized *magic missile*, *temporal stasis* (DC 27, 2)  
7th—*delayed blast fireball* (DC 24), *ethereal jaunt*, *reverse gravity* (2), *statue*, *summon monster VII*  
6th—*disintegrate* (DC 25, 2), *flesh to stone* (DC 25), *greater dispel magic*, quickened *resist energy*, *summon monster VI*  
5th—*dismissal* (DC 22), *overland flight* (2), quickened *shield*, *summon monster V*, *telekinesis*, *wall of force*  
4th—*arcane eye*, *dimension door*, maximized *magic missile*, *mnemonic enhancer* (2), *stoneskin*, *wall of ice*  
3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *greater magic weapon*, *haste*, *nondetection*, *slow* (DC 22, 2)  
2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 20, 3), *cat's grace* (2), *false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 20, 2)  
1st—*alarm*, *expeditious retreat* (2), *feather fall*, *magic missile* (2), *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 19)  
0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

**Thassilonian Specialization** transmutation; **Opposition Schools** enchantment, illusion

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Khalib casts *false life*, *overland flight*, and *nondetection* on himself every day. Once an alarm is raised, he also casts *stoneskin*, quickened *shield*, and *cat's grace* on himself before entering battle. He casts *greater magic weapon* on his masterwork dagger as well, even though he's long believed that if he's been forced to resort to using his dagger in combat, something has gone horribly wrong.

**During Combat** Khalib begins his battles by casting *summon monster* spells, augmenting them with quickened spells at the same time, as appropriate. He's not all that concerned



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that these monsters aren't attuned to the occluding field—since if they're cut down early by the zone's damaging pulses, he can always summon more. He saves *temporal stasis* for particularly troublesome enemy spellcasters. He prefers to fight alongside giants and lamias, and if he finds the PCs before they're already in a fight, he attempts to rally the nearest group of monstrous allies to attack before he confronts them.

**Morale** Khalib fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 20, **Con** 20, **Int** 24, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Altitude Affinity, Augment Summoning, Craft

Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Endurance, Greater Spell Focus (transmutation), Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration, necromancy, transmutation), Toughness

**Skills** Craft (alchemy) +26, Diplomacy +17, Fly +17, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (engineering) +26, Knowledge (nobility) +26, Knowledge (planes) +26, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +26, Use Magic Device +17

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Azlanti, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Infernal, Thassilonian; *tongues*

**SQ** arcane bond (*Sihedron ring*), contingency, permanent spells, physical enhancement +4 Con

**Combat Gear** *staff of size alteration*; **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *evil robe of the archmagi* (variant, +4 resist to saves replaced by +4 Int enhancement), *Sihedron ring*, gold-and-ivory contingency statuette worth 2,000 gp, spellbooks (contain all spells from the *Core Rulebook* plus *monstrous physique* spells from the *Advanced Player's Guide*, save for any enchantment and illusion spells), gemstone dust worth 15,000 gp (for *temporal stasis*)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Contingency** When Khalib snaps his fingers (a free action), *stoneskin* activates on him.

**Permanent Spells** Khalib has made the following spells permanent on himself: *arcane sight*, *darkvision*, *see invisibility*, and *tongues*.

### X16 RELIQUARY (CR 16)



A 20-foot-tall golden statue of Karzoug, Runelord of Greed, stands in the southern portion of this chamber, his hands before him as if they may have once held an object between them. A brazier stands before the statue, plumes of smokeless fire churning inside of it. North of the statue stands a stone pagoda-like structure, a single opening in its southern face revealing two smaller statues of Karzoug within, on either side of a twenty-foot-long sarcophagus bearing the likeness of the runelord on its golden lid. To the west, a massive pair of golden double doors shimmers behind a hazy screen of golden energy.

It was inside this structure that Karzoug prepared for his entrance into the half-world of the Eye of Avarice between Golarion and Leng, the hideout intended to keep him safe from his enemies and the fall of his empire just long enough for his followers to release him, yet it became his tomb for 10,000 years. The contents of the pagoda are mostly symbolic; opening the sarcophagus reveals it to be empty. An examination of the statue confirms that it once seemed to hold a large object in its hands, perhaps something that was aimed directly at the sarcophagus. This was where the *soul lens* was kept, before it was moved into the Eye of Avarice (see Part Seven).

The doors to the west lead into the chamber of the *anima focus*—the only way to enter and exit the Eye of Avarice. The golden field that covers the doors is a permanent *wall of force* (hardness 30, hp 400, CL 20th) that repairs damage to itself at the rate of 10 hit points per round. Each time an effect damages this wall or attempts to destroy it, a golden bolt of energy rebounds back to strike the source of the damage (and the creature responsible), dealing 10d6 points of force damage (Reflex DC 20 for half). Damage inflicted on the wall of force by *dominant weapons* not only ignores the wall's hardness, but also cannot be self-repaired by the wall—furthermore, attacks with these weapons do not trigger reactive force bolts. This *wall of force* may seem to only shimmer before the doors, but in fact it extends through all the walls, ceilings, and floors surrounding area X17—any attempts to enter the room physically will find their efforts stymied by this effect.

**CREATURE:** Although the *anima focus* itself is quite well defended (see area X17), Khalib has placed a lumbering demon here to act as a guard, conjured via *greater planar binding* and commanded to prevent all trespassers from either entering the chamber of the *anima focus* or even from leaving the reliquary alive. This shemhazian demon (a multi-eyed, bearlike monster with a serrated tail and additional insectoid claws protruding from its back like bristly wings) is eager to prove its worth by attacking such intruders as the PCs—it provides Ceoptra in area X17 with a constant telepathic update on the battle, not only warning her that the PCs are near, but advising her on the best tactics to use against them.

#### SHEMHAZIAN DEMON

| XP     | CR | HP  |
|--------|----|-----|
| 76,800 | 16 | 246 |

hp 246 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 80)

### X17 CHAMBER OF THE ANIMA FOCUS (CR 19)



Pillars of gold support the arching ceiling of this room. The northern wall bears a particularly detailed mural that shows Xin-Shalast at its height, with the face atop Mhar Massif appearing to address its citizens as magical runes and spirals of energy emerge from its open mouth. Yet even



this impressive work of art is overwhelmed by what towers in the center of the room—an immense, slowly rotating, thirty-foot-diameter sphere of gold, its surface shimmering with strangely sluggish flames. A stone walkway with a set of stairs leads up to the side of the sphere, where a five-foot-wide ramp leads up to a ten-foot-wide platform balanced precariously atop of the globe, from which a shimmering pillar of golden light shines up to the ceiling above.

The immense gold globe is a powerful magical artifact known as an *anima focus*—the magical link between this world and the *runewell* hidden within the Eye of Avarice. As long as the *soul lens* remains inside the Eye of Avarice, the *anima focus* cannot be damaged or moved from its location. It functions as an anchor and window into the Material Plane for the *soul lens*, and it is through it that souls of greed have been siphoned into the *runewell* as this Adventure Path has progressed. Whenever such a soul perishes, the beam of light emitted from the top of the *anima focus* glows green and siphons a portion of that soul's greed into the *soul lens* in the Eye of Avarice, and thence into the *runewell*, which in turn amplifies the siphoned soul fragment so it can be used by the *runewell* to energize Karzoug's return to Golarion.

The *anima focus* also serves as the only route into the Eye of Avarice. Any character who steps onto the glowing platform atop the *anima focus* becomes overwhelmed by a sudden sense of vertigo and double vision, as the view of the Eye of Avarice appears to overlay his current field of view. The character cannot visually make out any figures inside the Eye of Avarice, but he can certainly sense the presence of both Karzoug and the *soul lens* inside. This disorientation lasts as long as the character remains atop the *anima focus*, and for 1 minute after he vacates the area, during which time everything appears blurry and indistinct to the character (incidentally providing concealment and a 50% miss chance to all creatures the character attacks). Only fire (such as the flames that surround the gold sphere below) remains crisp and in focus to the character while so affected (creatures with the fire subtype are not effectively concealed due to the disorientation)—the only real clue as to how to transition completely into the Eye of Avarice.

If, while under the disorienting effects of the Eye, a character touches flame to himself or reaches out to touch any of the flames licking up from the gold sphere, the fire immediately and instantly consumes him, even if he's normally resistant to or immune to fire. To observers, it appears that the character has been burnt to nothingness in the span of an instant, when in fact the user has merely transported into the Eye of Avarice. This journey is not without pain—the traveler must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save

to avoid being stunned by this transportation. While immunity or resistance to fire doesn't prevent this planar transportation, it does prevent the chance of being stunned by it.

A character who strikes the *anima focus* with a *dominant weapon* can also effect entrance into the Eye of Avarice, for in so doing, the disruptive clash of opposing magic tears a hole in reality before the statue. This opening functions as a gate into the Eye of Avarice, but one infused with dominant magic such that Karzoug cannot use the gate to escape (although he can certainly cast spells through it into this area). The *gate* remains open for 10 minutes before closing.

Apart from general experimentation, spells like *legend lore* and *vision* can reveal the method and function of the *anima focus*—this was how Mokmurian learned how to enter the Eye of Avarice and, subsequently, it was what doomed him.

The *anima focus* also has two other qualities the denizens of the Pinnacle enjoy. First, it is the source of the wall of force that surrounds area X17—a creature can activate or deactivate this wall by touching the *anima focus* and taking a standard action to concentrate. Secondly, the *anima focus* automatically attunes any creatures conjured in area X17 via a calling effect to the occluding field, allowing such creatures to exist comfortably within the region as if they wore a Sihedron.

**CREATURES:** Before the PCs can take the time to tinker with the *anima focus*, they need to deal with the Pinnacle's final guardians: several wardens of wind who attend to their mistress, Most High Ceoptra. This lamia, like the long line of her ancestors back to Xin-Shalast's heyday, is a devoted servant of the concept of greed and Shalastian tradition—she doesn't worship a specific deity. The closest approximation to a deity for her is Karzoug, although she gains her spells from her blind faith in greed and her ancestors and not from the runelord. Her slavish devotion made her the obvious choice for the runelord when he decided he needed a guardian to watch over the only entrance to his prison. Ceoptra takes the charge quite seriously and never abandons her post, sending one of her giant attendants as a proxy whenever she needs to conduct business elsewhere.

### MOST HIGH CEOPTRA

| XP      | CR | HP  |
|---------|----|-----|
| 153,600 | 18 | 287 |

Female lamia harridan oracle 14 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 186, *Advanced Player's Guide* 42, plus see page 404)

CE Huge monstrous humanoid

**Init** +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +29

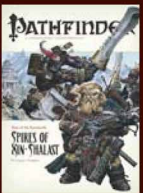
#### DEFENSE

**AC** 37, touch 19, flat-footed 29 (+6 armor, +3 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, +2 shield, –2 size)

**hp** 287 (23 HD; 9d10+14d8+175)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +20, **Will** +21

**DR** 10/magic; **SR** 29



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## OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Melee** +3 unholy dagger +29/+24/+19/+14 (1d6+12/17-20), 2 claws +26 (1d6+4), touch +21 (1d8 wisdom)

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

**Special Attacks** 1d8 Wis drain, pounce, rake (2 claws +26, 1d6+4)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +21)

At will—*disguise self*, *ventriloquism*

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 21), *major image* (DC 20), *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 21)

1/day—*deep slumber* (DC 20)

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

7th (4/day)—*destruction* (DC 24), *ethereal jaunt*, *mass cure serious wounds*

6th (6/day)—*blade barrier* (DC 23), *greater heroism*, *heal*, *mass cure moderate wounds*

5th (7/day)—*greater command* (DC 22), *flame strike*, *mass cure light wounds*, *telekinesis*, *wall of stone*

4th (7/day)—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds*, *death ward*, *greater magic weapon*, *sending*, *spiritual ally*\*

3rd (8/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *contagion* (DC 20), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *heroism*, *searing light*

2nd (8/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 19), *levitate*, *minor image* (DC 19),

*resist energy*, *shatter* (DC 19), *silence* (DC 19), *sound burst* (DC 19), *spiritual weapon*

1st (8/day)—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *endure elements*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*, *sanctuary* (DC 18), *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 17), *create water*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *guidance*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

**Mystery** ancestor\*

\*See *Ultimate Magic*.

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Ceoptra activates her spirit shield and casts *greater magic weapon* on her dagger. She also casts *endure elements* on herself every morning. Once she realizes the PCs are in the Pinnacle, she casts *air walk* and *death ward* on herself. If possible, just before combat begins, she casts *sending* to warn Karzoug his enemies are near.

**During Combat** Ceoptra prefers to let her giant minions engage the PCs at first while she hangs back and uses her attack spells at range. As soon as one warden of wind dies, she abandons this tactic and enters melee as well. She is fond of using *Quickened Spell* to augment her melee attacks, adding quickened *blindness/deafness*, *contagion*, *hold person*, and *sound burst* to full attacks. She uses quickened healing spells on herself each round she has fewer than 150 hit points. Remember that quickened spells do not provoke attacks of opportunity, so she doesn't need to cast defensively when utilizing this tactic in combat.

**Morale** Ceoptra fights to the death.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 28, **Dex** 24, **Con** 22, **Int** 13, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 24

**Base Atk** +19; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 51 (55 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Forge Ring, Improved Critical (dagger), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Quickened Spell, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (suggestion), Spring Attack, Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +34, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (religion) +27, Perception +29, Spellcraft +27, Stealth +3

**SQ** oracle's curse (haunted), revelations (spirit shield [+6 AC, 50% ranged miss chance, 14 hours/day], storm of souls [7d8, Fort DC 24 for half, 2/day], undersized weapons, voice of the grave [14 rounds/day, -4 save penalty], wisdom of the ancestors [*commune*, 1/day])

**Gear** +1 unholy dagger, headband of alluring charisma +4, necklace of adaptation, ring of force shield, Sihedron ring, 4 golden ankle bands worth 2,000 gp each, gold and sapphire choker worth 6,000 gp

## WARDENS OF WIND (3)

| XP          | CR | HP       |
|-------------|----|----------|
| 19,200 each | 12 | 200 each |

Advanced cloud giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 147, 294)

**AC** 35, touch 12, flat-footed 34 (+11 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 200 each

**Fort** +21, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15

**Gear** +2 full plate, Sihedron ring

MOST HIGH  
CEOPTRA





## SPIRES OF XIN-SHALAST

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# PART SEVEN: THE EYE OF AVARICE

SHELTERED FROM THE APOCALYPSE OF EARTHFALL, THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE OF THASSILON, AND FROM THE VERY ADVANCE OF TIME ITSELF, THE POCKET DIMENSION KNOWN AS THE EYE OF AVARICE FLOATS IN A SPHERE OF REALITY WEDGED BETWEEN THE MATERIAL PLANE AND THE NIGHTMARE REALM OF LENG. THIS DEMIPLANE FEATURES AN ENDLESS HURRICANE OF CHURNING FIRE, WITH A RELATIVELY TINY SPHERE OF SAFETY LODGED IN ITS CENTER—THIS IS THE EYE ITSELF, AND IS WHERE KARZOUG HAS SPENT 10,000 YEARS IN STASIS, WAITING TO RISE AGAIN.

The Eye of Avarice has normal gravity and time. The small stone island at the center of this realm bears a cavelike opening in its side, the extent of which is shown on the map. Within this area the air and temperatures are breathable and comfortable, but outside of this area conditions are identical to those on the Plane of Fire (see page 190 of the *GameMastery Guide* if the PCs foolishly venture into this inferno). Specific areas of note in the Eye of Avarice are summarized below.

**Y1 ARRIVAL PLATFORM:** When the PCs first appear within the Eye of Avarice, they manifest in area Y1, stepping out between two immense pylons between which ripples what appears to be a window looking out over the city of Xin-Shalast. A moment's study confirms that this view closely duplicates the one that might be enjoyed by looking out of the face carved into Mhar Massif's peak. This is not a two-way portal, and once a character activates the *anima focus* (either as intended, or with a *dominant weapon*, as detailed in area X17), there is no returning to the Material Plane save via methods like *plane shift*, *gate*, or those detailed in Concluding the Campaign on page 365.

Numerous red-hot pillars of gold rise from the fires below in the Eye of Avarice. A character who ends her turn in a square adjacent to one of these pillars takes 1d6 points of fire damage—contact with a pillar deals 3d6 points of fire damage. The pillars themselves cannot be harmed by mortal means.

The stone surfaces upon which the PCs and other denizens of the Eye of Avarice stand upon extend down into the fires 100 feet below. Climbing the glassy sides of these sheer surfaces requires a successful DC 40 Climb check, while a fall into the fire inflicts damage as if falling into water from that height—once in the fire, the PCs effectively pass into a sea of lava and take damage as appropriate (*Core Rulebook* 444) until they escape.

**Y2 OBSERVATION BALCONIES:** These balconies are supported by chains attached to the pillars—no walls

extend down to the fires below from these balconies. Despite their precarious appearance, they can support any weight upon them. Each balcony is 150 feet above the fires below.

**Y3 THE RUNEWELL:** This pool of what appears to be molten gold is in fact Karzoug's *runewell*—see page 424 for rules on this powerful artifact. The *soul lens* itself is mounted on an articulated adamantine frame above, set to focus and magnify soul fragments of all those slain over the past several months in preparation for Karzoug's release. By the time the PCs arrive, Karzoug's *runewell* should be almost fully charged—once it becomes completely charged (at a point you should feel free to determine yourself, should the PCs not defeat Karzoug on their first visit to the Eye of Avarice), Karzoug can step into the *runewell* and emerge in area X16 of the Pinnacle of Avarice, once again free to spread his evil across the world. The surrounding platform is 140 feet above the fires below.

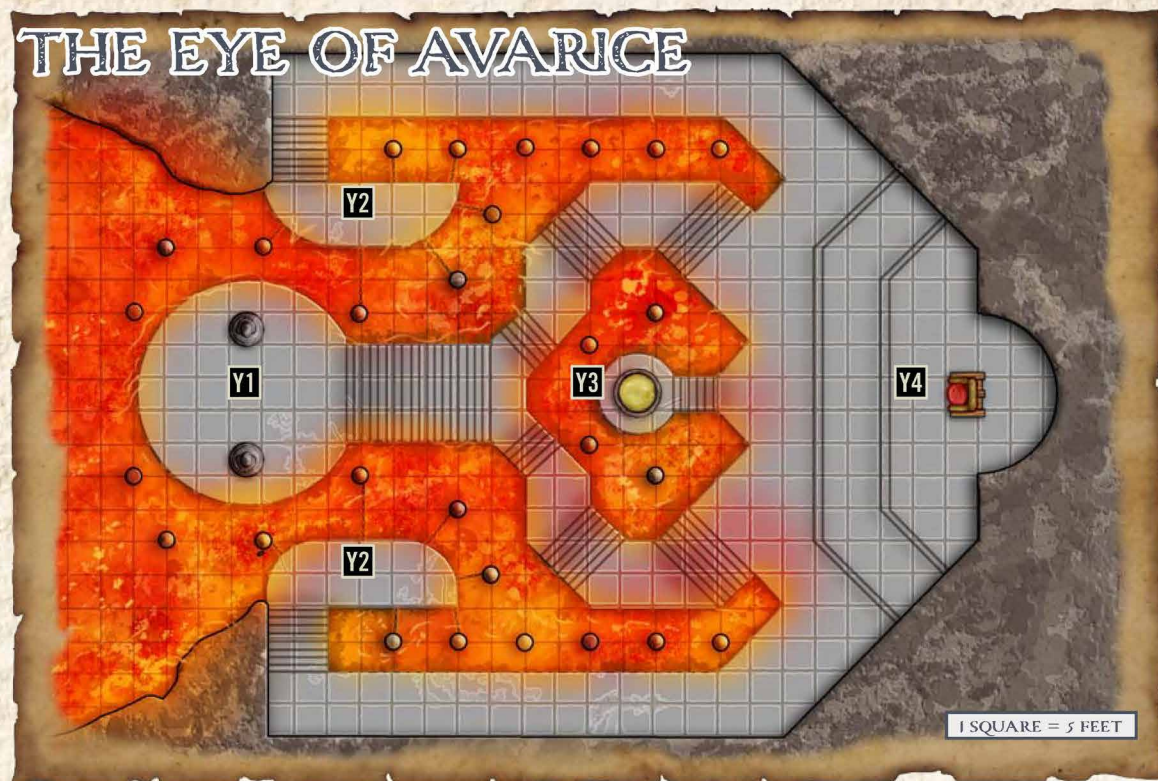
**Y4 KARZOUG'S THRONE:** The walls surrounding this extravagant throne are decorated with countless books and workspaces. Although Karzoug spent the bulk of the last 10,000 years in stasis, he's been able to spend some time reading and studying the tomes here since Mokmurian woke him from his slumber. An investigation of these tomes reveals a wide selection of books across multiple topics—all containing information about the world's history since Earthfall. These books have been the primary way in which Karzoug has prepared himself to emerge into a new world he has been apart from for so long. This level is 130 feet above the fires below.

## THE FINAL BATTLE (CR 22)

**CREATURES:** For most of the previous 10,000 years, Karzoug had been seated upon his throne in a unique form of temporal stasis that kept the wizard trapped within the *runewell* itself without a body at all. When Mokmurian came to this place, Karzoug was able to



# THE EYE OF AVARICE



reach out and, through sheer force of will augmented by thousands of years of pent-up magic, made the stone giant wizard into his puppet. Since then, the souls of those properly anointed with the Sihedron and steeped in greed have been suffusing the *runewell* at the heart of this realm, each one allowing Karzoug's physical body to manifest more and more. At first, only his vague ghostly outline could appear, and for only a few moments at a time, but now that the *runewell* is full, Karzoug has truly returned to flesh and blood—at least, as long as he remains within the Eye of Avarice.

That Karzoug can manifest images of himself in places in the Pinnacle of Avarice shows how close he is to emerging back into the Material Plane. He has enough souls stored (particularly after the PCs went on a rampage against the stone giants of Jorgenfist), yet still they take time to process and be fully “digested” by the *runewell*. Until the last soul is consumed, the *runewell* isn't fully charged and Karzoug cannot physically leave this realm. How long that takes is left to you—if you want to put this adventure on a timer, you can set the event of Karzoug's release for a specific time (although to do so most effectively, you'll need to somehow let your PCs know when the timer is up). A better choice might be to tie the event of his release to the point at which the PCs first enter this realm. If the PCs are forced to flee (via *plane shift* or *gate*, most likely), it won't be much longer before the runelord emerges from the Eye of Avarice—2 days is a suggestion, although you can certainly adjust this length as you wish.

Karzoug is a powerful foe, and the PCs should be at the top of their game when they confront him. In addition, he is not alone in the Eye of Avarice—with the aid of a blue dragon, two wardens of thunder, and a rune giant, this final battle should test the mettle of the PCs in every way. Note that while the rune giant and the dragon are loyal to Karzoug, the wardens of thunder are not—they are under the effects of a *dominate person* spell cast by the rune giant, and if they can be freed from this effect, the wardens of thunder immediately join with the PCs to fight Karzoug.

If the PCs time their assault well, they can strike against Karzoug after he's depleted some of his magic and perhaps suffers from negative levels gained from the PCs' defeat of his projected images in the Eye of Avarice. The use of *dominant weapons* also grants the PCs an edge. Yet their greatest advantage is the fact that, for now, Karzoug has nowhere to go. The PCs can prepare for their attack on him, only bringing the fight when they feel they are ready. Karzoug cannot easily replace defeated foes—replacements can only be brought in at the rate of one per day.

Slaying Karzoug is the best way to defeat the runelord. A spell like *imprisonment* or *temporal stasis* likely only delays the inevitable, but would certainly count as a victory as far as this campaign is concerned. Yet there is another way to defeat Karzoug—destroying the *soul lens* mounted over the *runewell*. Destroying this device traps the runelord inside this realm forever without the ability to return to the Material Plane. Destroying the *soul lens*, alas, is not much easier than simply killing



Karzoug. As a minor artifact, a *mage's disjunction* has a chance to destroy it, of course, but otherwise only a *dominant weapon* has any hope of damaging the artifact. Damage from any other source is ignored by the *soul lens*, and even against *dominant weapons* it retains its hardness 20. Of course, Karzoug immediately moves to destroy anyone who attempts to harm the *soul lens*. If the *soul lens* is destroyed, Karzoug roars in frustration and rage. In that case, he is trapped forever inside the Eye of Avarice, but as long as the PCs remain in here with him, he does his best to destroy them.

## KARZOUG THE CLAIMER

| XP      | CR | HP  |
|---------|----|-----|
| 409,600 | 21 | 382 |

Male Azlanti human transmuter 20

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Perception +22

### DEFENSE

**AC** 37, touch 22, flat-footed 30 (+6 armor, +5 deflection, +7 Dex, +5 natural, +4 shield) **hp** 382 (20d6+310); fast healing 10

**Fort** +20, **Ref** +18, **Will** +19; +8 vs. mind affecting

**Defensive Abilities** *freedom of movement*; **Immune** disease, confusion effects, *feeblemind*; **SR** 24

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** *Karzoug's burning glaive* +22/+17 (1d10+15/x3 plus 1d6 fire) or *talons of Ieng* +20/+15 (1d4+13/x3)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th; concentration +33)

At will—*change shape (beast shape III/elemental body II)*, 20 rounds/day)

16/day—*telekinetic fist* (1d4+10 bludgeoning)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 20th; concentration +33)

9th—quickened *baleful polymorph* (DC 30), *crushing hand*, *meteor swarm* (DC 32), *time stop* (2), *wail of the banshee* (DC 33), *wish* (2)

8th—quickened *dimension door* (2), *horrid wilting* (DC 32), *maze*, *mind blank*, *polymorph any object* (DC 33), *prismatic wall* (DC 31), *temporal stasis* (DC 33, 2)

7th—*finger of death* (DC 31), *forcecage* (DC 30), quickened *haste*, quickened *lightning bolt* (DC 26), *limited wish* (2), *reverse gravity* (2), *spell turning*

6th—*disintegrate* (DC 31, 2), *flesh to stone* (DC 31), *globe of invulnerability*, *greater dispel magic*, *repulsion* (DC 29), quickened *resist energy*, *sign of wrath* (DC 29), *true seeing*

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 30), *cloudkill*, *cone of cold* (DC 28), quickened *magic missile* (2), quickened *shield*, *telekinesis* (DC 30, 2), *wall of force*

4th—*bestow curse* (DC 28), *black tentacles*, *enervation* (2), *ice storm* (2), *mass reduce person* (DC 29, 2), *screaming*, *solid fog*

3rd—*blink*, *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 26), *keen edge*, *greater magic weapon*, *protection from energy*, *slow* (DC 28, 2), *stinking cloud* (DC 27), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 26), *false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 26), *protection from arrows*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 27, 2), *resist energy*, *scorching ray* (2), *shatter* (DC 25)

1st—*alarm*, *enlarge person*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 25), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 25, 4), *reduce person* (DC 26, 2)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *flare* (DC 23), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 24)

**Thassilonian Specialization** transmutation; **Opposition**

**Schools** enchantment, illusion

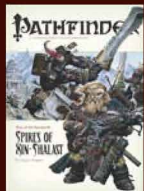
### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Karzoug casts *mind blank* and *false life* at the start of every day.

**During Combat** Karzoug starts combat seated upon his immense throne, and strives to remain out of melee as long as possible. On the first round of combat, he casts *meteor swarm* on the party, then uses his *rod of greater quicken metamagic* to cast *time stop* as a quickened spell. During the 1d4+1 rounds he gains, he casts spells like *prismatic wall*, *wall of force*, and *cloudkill* among the PCs to disrupt their tactics, and casts defensive spells on himself like *spell turning*, *true seeing*, and



KARZOUG



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MAP NINE:  
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## ROUND-BY-ROUND TACTICS

This final battle against Runelord Karzoug and his minions is one of the most complex in the entire campaign. The following round-by-round notes can help you track the actions and tactics used by the denizens of the Eye of Avarice—of course, PC actions can quickly disrupt these tactics, so be ready to make adjustments as needed as the battle plays out!

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ROUND 1:</b>             | Karzoug casts <i>meteor swarm</i> and quickened <i>time stop</i> . The blue dragon begins the fight next to Karzoug's throne, and flies out toward the PCs to breathe lightning on them. The rune giant begins between the <i>runewell</i> and the throne—he closes the distance to the PCs and casts <i>true seeing</i> . A warden of thunder stands atop each of the balconies at area Y2—each of them casts <i>chain lightning</i> .                  |
| <b>ROUND 2:</b>             | Karzoug casts <i>horrid wilting</i> and a second quickened <i>time stop</i> spell. The blue dragon flies back to Karzoug's side and casts <i>mage armor</i> . The rune giant attempts to cast <i>dominate person</i> on one of the party's heavily armored characters or rogues, ordering a successfully dominated PC to turn on his allies and fight them. The wardens of thunder fire arrows and use <i>call lightning</i> for the rest of the battle. |
| <b>ROUND 3:</b>             | Karzoug casts quickened <i>haste</i> and <i>finger of death</i> . The rune giant uses spark shower on the largest concentration of PCs he can. The blue dragon casts <i>shield</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>REMAINDER OF COMBAT:</b> | Karzoug continues casting offensive spells, resorting to his glaive and talons as a last resort. The rune giant enters melee combat. The blue dragon makes physical attacks and breathes lightning as he can.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

*globe of invulnerability*. He'll also use his *wand of stoneskin* on himself during this time. He'll repeat this tactic on the second round (pairing a quickened *time stop* with *horrid wilting* this time) to finish casting any spells he didn't get a chance to cast the first time. On following rounds, Karzoug hits the PCs with area-affecting spells like *wail of the banshee* and *finger of death*, saving spells like *temporal stasis* and *maze* to use against anyone who seems to be particularly dangerous. Karzoug's glaive takes actions on its own as well, unleashing *fireballs* on non-spellcasters and curing Karzoug of wounds whenever he drops below 220 hit points. If it comes down to melee, Karzoug releases his glaive to dance as soon as possible, fighting with his talons and using quickened spells like *lightning bolt* and *magic missile* to support his attacks. Whenever he drops below 200 hit points (or otherwise suffers a crippling effect) he casts *wish* to restore himself and his living allies to full health.

**Morale** Karzoug has nowhere to flee to—he fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 24, **Con** 28, **Int** 36, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 39

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Expertise, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (transmutation), Inscribe Rune, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Quickened Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Spell Focus (conjuration, necromancy, transmutation), Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +26, Craft (alchemy) +36, Diplomacy +26, Fly +38, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (arcana, engineering, history, nature, nobility, planes, religion) +36, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +42, Use Magic Device +26

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Azlanti, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Necril, Sylvan, Terran, Thassilonian; *tongues*

**SQ** arcane bond (glaive), contingency, exceptional stats, immortal, inherent bonuses, permanent spells, physical enhancement +5 Con

**Combat Gear** *rod of greater quicken metamagic*, *wand of blood money* (33 charges), *wand of dispel magic* (CL 10th, 40 charges), *wand of magic missile* (CL 9th, 24 charges), *wand of stoneskin* (CL 10th, 17 charges); **Other Gear** *Karzoug's burning glaive*, *talons of Leng*, *belt of physical might* +6 (Str, Dex), implanted *ioun stones* (3 *crimson spheres*, 12 *emerald ellipsoids*, 3 *onyx rhomboids*, 5 *amber spindles*), *ring of protection* +5, *ring of freedom of movement*, *robes of Xin-Shalast*, *runewell amulet*, *Sihedron tome*, ruby inscribed with the rune of wrath worth 1,000 gp (focus for *sign of wrath*), ruby dust worth 1,500 gp (for *forcecage*), vial of powdered gemstones worth 10,000 gp (for *temporal stasis*), eye ointment worth 500 gp (for *true seeing*), 75,000 gp in diamonds (for *wish* and *limited wish*)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Contingency (Sp)** If Karzoug ever becomes affected by a hostile spell effect that prevents him from acting on his own, that spell effect is targeted by a *greater dispel magic* spell.

**Exceptional Stats (Ex)** Karzoug was destined from birth to become one of the greatest wizards of his age. As a result, his ability scores were generated using 25 points, rather than using the standard 15 point buy used to create most NPCs. Additionally, Karzoug has much more gear than an NPC of his level would normally have. These modifications increase his total CR by +2.

**Immortal (Ex)** Secrets from ancient Thassilon and the realm of Leng have allowed Karzoug to sustain his life indefinitely. Unless slain by violent means, he is immortal. He gains the +3 bonus to his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores for having lived beyond venerable age, yet retains the youth of a young man and does not gain the penalties to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. This immortality also grants Karzoug complete immunity to disease and to all forms of madness (including confusion effects and *feeblemind*).





**Inherent Bonuses (Ex)** Karzoug has used *wish* spells to increase his stats. He has a +5 inherent bonus to his Intelligence, and a +4 inherent bonus to his other five ability scores.

**Permanent Spells (Sp)** Karzoug has made the following spells permanent on himself: *arcane sight*, *darkvision*, *see invisibility*, and *tongues*.

| ADULT BLUE DRAGON | XP     | CR | HP  |
|-------------------|--------|----|-----|
|                   | 25,600 | 13 | 184 |

**hp** 184 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 94)

| WARDEN OF RUNES | XP      | CR | HP  |
|-----------------|---------|----|-----|
|                 | 102,400 | 17 | 270 |

Rune giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 130)

**AC** 38, touch 9, flat-footed 38 (+14 armor, +3 deflection, +15 natural, –4 size)

**hp** 270

#### STATISTICS

**Gear** +5 full plate, *Sihedron Ring*

| WARDENS OF THUNDER (2) | XP          | CR | HP       |
|------------------------|-------------|----|----------|
|                        | 38,400 each | 14 | 237 each |

Advanced storm giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 152, 294)

**AC** 37, touch 12, flat-footed 36 (+13 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +12 natural, –2 size)

**hp** 237 each

**Fort** +22, **Ref** +13, **Will** +18

#### STATISTICS

**Gear** +4 full plate, *Sihedron ring*

## CONCLUDING THE CAMPAIGN

Once the *soul lens* is destroyed or Karzoug is dealt a fatal blow, the energy of the greedy souls the runelord's mortal form has used to return are unleashed in a blinding flash of light. All creatures in the Eye of Avarice must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save to avoid being permanently blinded. Yet this blast of soul energy is not completely destructive—the energy immediately heals all damage and cures all debilitating conditions (including death) suffered by any creature in the *runewell*. Only possible blindness caused by the explosion (and, of course, Karzoug's own death) are untouched by this cleansing wave of positive energy. While this effect also restores giants and dragons, the other creatures in the Eye of Avarice immediately surrender upon witnessing the PCs' defeat of their ancient lord.

When the brilliant flash of strange light clears, the air seems to grow thin and cold and the smoky walls of the place vanish. The *runewell* has returned to its place at the base of the Pinnacle of Avarice, and its golden waters quickly freeze—whatever magic the *runewell* might have once contained has been consumed in this final catastrophic turn of events. This event also brings down the occluding field that surrounded the Spires, restoring the order of nature to the region.

The repercussions of Karzoug's defeat are much greater than the destruction of the occluding field and the *runewell*'s return to reality—consult Appendix One, “Continuing the Campaign” to determine where things might go from here!



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## APPENDIX ONE: CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

WHEN THE DUST SETTLES AFTER THE FINAL EPIC FIGHT BETWEEN KARZOUG AND THE PCs IN THE EYE OF AVARICE, THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE WINNER. FOR THE SAKE OF VARISIA, LET US HOPE THAT THE SO-CALLED HEROES OF SANDPOINT—WHO ONCE HELPED SAVE A SMALL COASTAL TOWN FROM A RAGTAG BAND OF SLAVERING GOBLINS AND MAY HAVE GOTTEN THEMSELVES IN HOT WATER WITH THE LOCAL GROCERY STORE OWNER OVER A MISUNDERSTANDING WITH HIS DAUGHTER—HAVE DEVELOPED INTO THE TRULY LEGENDARY FIGURES THEY’LL NEED TO BE IN ORDER TO SAVE VARISIA FROM A RISING RUNELORD.

Although the PCs have averted a terrible threat to Varisia, it seems likely that most of the region’s inhabitants won’t even notice. To most locals, stopping the very real threat of an invasion by giants made the PCs as much heroes as they’ll ever be. Nonetheless, there are some who know the true extent of what the PCs have accomplished, from poor Brodert Quink (whose claims that the PCs saved Varisia from the End of the World merely become the latest in a long line of unbelievable tales) all the way up to organizations like the Pathfinder Society. Some weeks after the PCs return from Xin-Shalast, they are contacted by the Pathfinders and asked for their story. This necessitates escorting several Society members to Xin-Shalast, and for discovering the city and revealing its route, the Pathfinders are prepared to pay each PC the staggering sum of 30,000 gp.

Of course, once word of Xin-Shalast’s location gets out (either because the PCs reveal it to the Pathfinders or simply because they start selling off gold shingles and diamond door handles scavenged from the ruins), interest in the distant city explodes. Hundreds of adventurers attempt to make the difficult journey to the city to find their fortunes. Yet Xin-Shalast’s remote location all but ensures that the majority of the vast wealth remains trapped there—unless the PCs take it upon themselves to harvest the place using spells like *teleport*. Xin-Shalast is a fantastic, nearly limitless source of wealth, and those who know of its location can use that wealth to build empires. Varisia’s future could well be shaped by the choices such PCs make about where and how to spend their wealth.

Yet even without Karzoug’s looming threat, Xin-Shalast remains a dangerous place. Giants, vampiric skulls, abominable snowmen, lamias, dragons, scarlet walkers, mountain ropers, and worse still haunt its golden streets. And there’s always the fact that Leng is “just around the corner” from Xin-Shalast. This proximity could cause unforeseen problems in the future, for one can never be

sure what malignant eyes might be watching from this ancient, evil realm.

Most importantly, for all the party’s success against Karzoug, he was but one of seven. The other six runelords went into seclusion at the same time as Karzoug, and the Runelord of Greed’s attempt to rise sent ripples through the various *runewells* scattered throughout the world. One, two, or more of the other six runelords could well be quickening in their tombs, preparing for their own emergence into Golarion. It might be years, even decades, but one thing is certain:

The Return of the Runelords draws near.

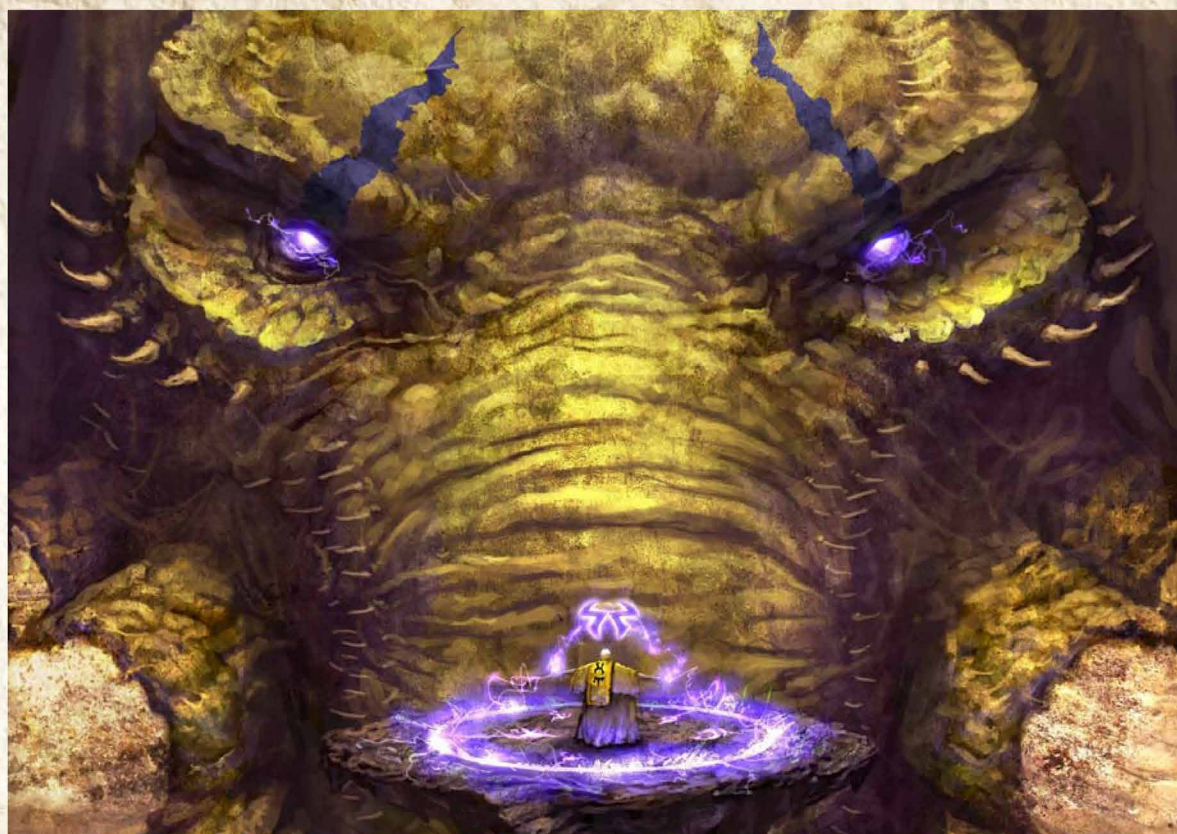
### WHAT IF KARZOUG WINS?

If Karzoug defeats the PCs, or if they are forced to flee and don’t return in time to defeat him, the runelord’s emergence into Xin-Shalast has one of two effects, depending upon the status of the Leng Device. Both possibilities are dire for Varisia.

**LENG DEVICE IS SHUT DOWN:** When Karzoug emerges from his prison, it only takes him a few weeks to rally the denizens of Xin-Shalast to his banner. Rune giants, lamia harriidans, and other agents stream down from the Kodar Mountains and begin to subjugate the giant tribes of the Storval Plateau. In only a few months’ time, Mokmurian’s army seems like a ratty band of mercenaries in comparison. Before long, Karzoug manages to transplant his ancient army into Xin-Shalast as well by using the *Leng Device*, at which point he becomes one of Golarion’s most powerful figures. Conquering Varisia is child’s play, and within a year of his rise, Thassilon is reborn. Defeating Karzoug at this point should be a fantastically difficult challenge.

**LENG DEVICE IS OPERATIONAL:** When Karzoug emerges from the Eye of Avarice, the *Leng Device*, which has been secretly altered by the denizens of Leng, siphons away all of the soul energy within the *runewell* and awakens the Great Old One Mhar. The entity, trapped





in the stone of the mountain for countless eons, rouses from slumber with an incredible earthquake felt as far away as Magnimar. Mhar's rise reduces Mhar Massif, Xin-Shalast, and several nearby mountains to rubble, creating an unimaginably vast badland of fissures and crags that quickly becomes infested with lesser creatures that follow Mhar into this world. Mhar's keening howl, is heard across Varisia, and in the northeastern sky, the night glows with ominous red fire. What Mahr is, and what his emergence into Golarion portends, is beyond the scope of this adventure, yet the results should be fundamentally catastrophic in a Lovecraftian sort of way. Karzoug survives this event, but his armies and city do not; the archmage is forced to flee the Kodars and seeks shelter elsewhere, likely in Runeforge. If this occurs, the PCs need all the help they can gather to face the alien monstrosity that is Mhar—and ironically, Karzoug might be their best bet.

## BEYOND RISE OF THE RUNELORDS

If the PCs defeat Karzoug, they have two options: they can retire and enjoy the fruits of their hard work and revel in their rising fame, or they can continue to seek greater adventures. If the PCs retire, you might wish to consider running the Shattered Star Adventure Path for your group next, as that Adventure Path serves as a spiritual sequel to Rise of the Runelords.

Alternatively, if you wish to continue your campaign into higher and higher levels, one of the following two

adventure hooks could well inspire a new campaign that could take your players to the upper height of power!

**WRATH OF JANDELAY:** The Oliphaunt of Jandelay was a creature so powerful and difficult to control that it was summoned but once during the age of Thassilon to destroy an invading army from Azlant—and even so, dismissing it afterward destroyed a quarter of the legion under Runelord Xanderghul's control. In the final days of Thassilon, Runelord Alaznist, desperate to defeat Karzoug (who seemed at the time poised to wipe her nation from the map) attempted to become the second runelord to manage the conjuration of the beast. Only the advent of Earthfall prevented her, but as Karzoug is slain, ripples through the linked *runewells* could finalize the last stage of what Alaznist set into motion 10,000 years ago. Where the Oliphaunt rises is up to you, but an adventure to dismiss the lumbering behemoth would take the best Varisia's heroes have to offer!

**CONQUERING XIN-SHALAST:** Greater perils than rune giants dwell in the deepest corners of Xin-Shalast. As word of the no-longer-lost city spreads, Korvosa, Riddleport, Magnimar, Kaer Maga, Urglin, and Janderhoff all take interest, and the race for control of the city of riches is on! As the greatest heroes of the land, the PCs are quickly contacted by representatives of all six cities. Will they choose one to ally with, or will they try to claim Xin-Shalast as their own? *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Cities* presents additional information about Xin-Shalast you can use in this scenario to vex your PCs.





## APPENDIX TWO: SANDPOINT

THOSE WHO HEAD NORTH FROM MAGNIMAR ALONG THE ROCKY COASTLINE QUICKLY FIND THEMSELVES IN A PECULIAR COUNTRY. FOG DRAPES THE ROLLING LANDSCAPE, FLOATING SPECTRALLY ALONG DAMP AND LONELY MOORS. SMALL WOODLANDS GRACE THE REGION, THEIR TANGLED DEPTHS REDOLENT OF NETTLES AND PEPPERWOOD AND PINE SAP, WHILE FURTHER INLAND, RIVER VALLEYS LINED BY MAJESTIC REDWOODS WIND BETWEEN RAGGED TORS AND LIMESTONE ESCARPMENTS. THE REGION'S VASTNESS AND SENSE OF ISOLATION HAVE EARNED IT ITS LOCAL NAME—THE LOST COAST.



There are pockets of civilization along the Lost Coast. Traditional Varisian campsites can be found in nearly every gulch and hollow along the cliff-lined reaches, and lonely houses sit upon bluffs now and then—domiciles for eccentrics or the rich seeking a bit of peace far from the bustle of Magnimar's streets. Roadside inns grace the Lost Coast road every 24 miles or so, placed by virtue of the distance most travelers can walk given a day's travel. Low stone shrines to Desna, goddess of wanderers and patron of the Varisians, give further opportunities for shelter should one of the all-too-common rainstorms catch travelers unaware. Given time, any of these seeds of civilization could bloom into a full-grown town, or even a city. It's happened once already, along the shores of a natural harbor nestled among the cliffs some 50 miles northeast of Magnimar. What was once a larger-than-normal Varisian campsite in the shadow of an ancient ruined tower has become the Lost Coast's largest town: Sandpoint, the Light of the Lost Coast.

### LIGHT OF THE LOST COAST

As one approaches the town of Sandpoint, the footprint of civilization upon the Lost Coast grows more clear. Farmlands in the outlying moors and river valleys grow more numerous, and the blue-green waters of the Varisian Gulf bear more and more fishing vessels upon the waves. Passage over creeks and rivers is more often accomplished by wooden bridge than ford, and the Lost Coast Road itself grows wider and better-kept. Sight of Sandpoint from either approach (south or east) is kept hidden by the large upthrust limestone pavements known as the Devil's Platter and the arc of the rocky outcroppings and lightly forested hilltops that rise up just east of town, but as the final bend in the road is rounded, Sandpoint's smoking chimneys and bustling streets greet the traveler with open arms and the promise of warm beds, a welcome sight indeed for those who have spent the last few days alone on the Lost Coast Road.

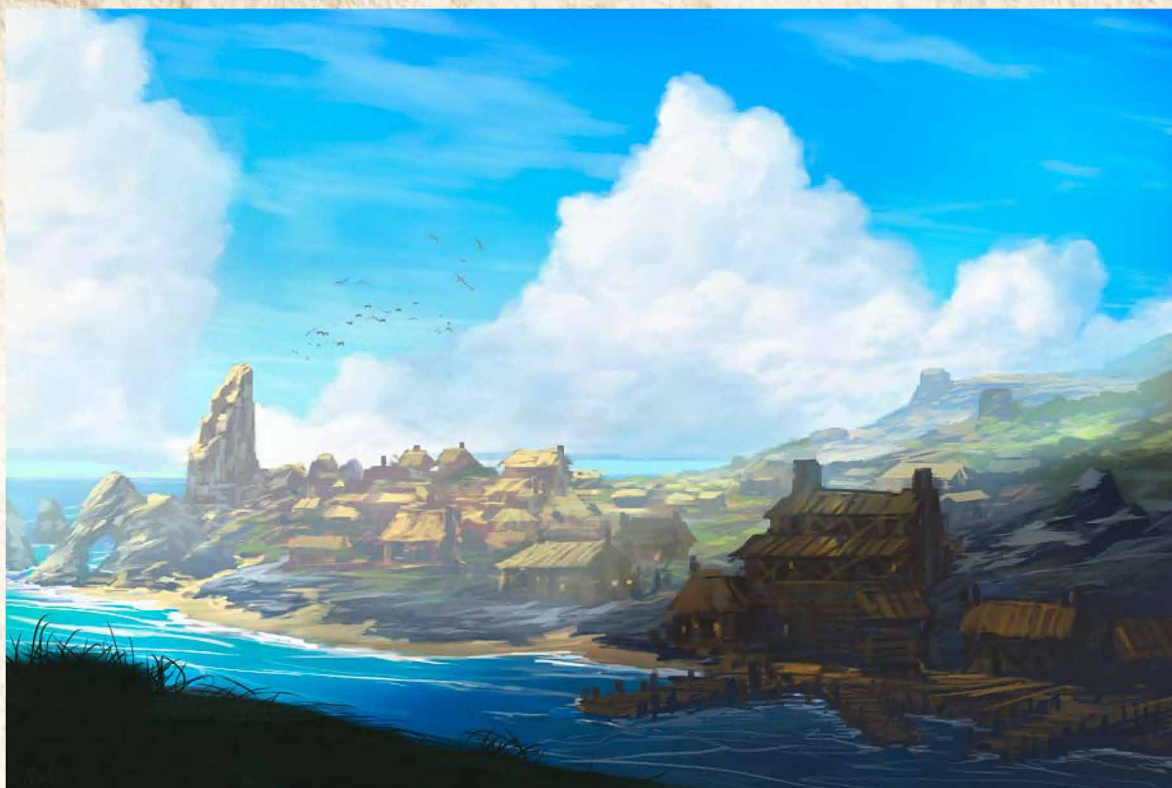
From the south, entrance to Sandpoint is governed by a wooden bridge, while from the north a low stone wall gives the town a bit of protection. Here, the Lost Coast Road passes through a stone gatehouse that is generally watched by one or two guards; the southern bridge is typically unattended. Aside from the occasional goblin, the citizens of Sandpoint have traditionally had little cause to worry about invasion or banditry—the region simply isn't populated enough to make theft a lucrative business. Hanging from a bent nail at both the gatehouse and the southern bridge is a sign and a mirror—painted on each sign is the message: "Welcome to Sandpoint! Please stop to see yourself as we see you!"

### SANDPOINT'S HISTORY

Millennia ago, before the fall of Thassilon, what is known today as the Lost Coast was not a coast at all. It was a series of rocky bluffs and cliffs that ran through a vast moor stretching from the end of the Fogscar Mountains south to the Mushfens. Called the Rasp, this ridge of stony tors and limestone escarpments marked the boundary between the nations of Shalast and Bakrakhan. When Thassilon fell, the nation of Bakrakhan collapsed and slid into the sea, forming what is now called the Varisian Gulf as the Rasp became the region's new coastline.

Before these cataclysmic events, the Rasp was heavily patrolled by the armies of Shalast and Bakrakhan, and violent clashes between the two were common. Runelord Karzoug used his impressive magic and giant slaves to erect immense statues in his image along the Rasp, granite sentinels that stood hundreds of feet in height and from whose stony eyes he could look out upon the nation of Bakrakhan from the safety of his throne in distant Xin-Shalast. In response, Runelord Alaznist built several destructive watchtowers called Hellstorm Flumes along the Rasp. Each of these towers housed a contingent of her soldiers, commanded by sorcerers and demon-worshipping clerics hand-picked





from her personal guard. Atop each Flume burned a constant vortex of arcane fire, one that its commander could direct to scorch intruding armies from miles away. The Flumes did a remarkable job at keeping Karzoug's forces from effectively invading Bakrakhan, while his own Sentinel Statues prevented Alaznist from launching any surprise invasions of her own. And so the two kingdoms existed in tenuous balance until the cataclysmic fall of their world.

After Thassilon's collapse and with the onset of the Age of Darkness, the Rasp became the region's new western coastline. Karzoug's Sentinel Statues collapsed, although here and there fragments of these once mighty guardians still stand. Bakrakhan's Hellstorm Flumes fared no better—most of these watch towers fell into the sea during the cataclysm. Only one remained above the waves, and even it crumbled to less than a quarter of its original height. Varisian travelers preserved in their oral traditions stories of how ruined towers once cast fire down upon the surrounding lands, but over the generations, these tales evolved. The ruin's location at the edge of the sea seemed to indicate that it was once a lighthouse, and in time, old tales of beams of fire became beams of light. Today, the Varisians view the last Hellstorm Flume as nothing more than an ancient ruined lighthouse, a landmark they call the Old Light. No record of the tower's destructive purpose remains in the modern mind, yet clues to its violent legacy remain unsuspected in catacombs that once connected to the tower's dungeons.

## SANDPOINT, LIGHT OF THE LOST COAST

NG small town

**Corruption** +0; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +1; **Law** +0; **Lore** +2; **Society** +0

**Qualities** prosperous, rumormongering citizens

**Danger** +0

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** autocracy (mayor)

**Population** 1,240 (1,116 humans, 37 halflings, 25 elves, 24 dwarves, 13 gnomes, 13 half-elves, 12 half-orcs)

### Notable NPCs

**Kendra Deverin**, mayor (NG female human aristocrat 4/expert 3)

**Belor Hemlock**, sheriff (CG human male fighter 4)

**Abstalar Zantus**, town priest (CG male human cleric of Desna 4)

**Titus Scarnetti**, noble (LN male human aristocrat 6)

**Ethram Valdemar**, noble (NG male human aristocrat 5/expert 2)

**Ameiko Kaijitsu**, owner of Rusty Dragon (CG female human aristocrat 1/bard 3/rogue 1)

**Shalelu Andosana**, local ranger (CG female elf fighter 2/ranger 4)

**Brodert Quink**, Thassilonian expert (NG male human expert 7)


### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 1,300 gp; **Purchase Limit** 7,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 4th

**Minor Items** 3d4\*; **Medium Items** 1d6\*; **Major Items** —

\* Additional specific magic items for sale in Sandpoint are detailed in the pages that follow. Every month, roll 3d4 to see how many new minor items are for sale, and 1d6 to see how many new medium items are for sale. Healing items that might be offered by the Sandpoint Cathedral or other individuals do not count against these limits.





More recently, settlers from the southern nation of Cheliox have come to Varisia. The city of Magnimar was settled by colonists dissatisfied with the strong reliance on Chelish support in Eastern Varisia, and before long the need for additional farmland grew apparent. To the south, the sloppy expanse of the Mushfens made farming difficult, so the settlers turned their eyes north along the Lost Coast. For much of its length, the coast offered little shelter, with one exception—a perfect cove about 50 miles away from Magnimar. A cove overlooked by a curious stone ruin.

The foundation of a new town is not a matter to be taken lightly, nor one to be funded by a single investor. Four powerful families from Magnimar had designs on the region, and rather than work against each other, they consolidated their efforts and formed the Sandpoint Mercantile League. These four families—the Kaijitsus (glassmakers), the Valdemars (shipbuilders), the Scarnettis (loggers), and the Deverins (farmers and brewers)—sailed north to claim their land after securing the rights from Magnimar. Yet when they arrived in the spring of 4666 AR, they found the place already settled by a large tribe of Varisians.

Refusing to be set back, the Sandpoint Mercantile League began a series of talks with the Varisians, promising them an important place in the new township. Unfortunately, after a week of talks that seemed to be going nowhere, an impatient man named Alamon Scarnetti took matters into his own hands. Rounding up a group of his brothers and cousins, the Scarnettis mounted a murderous raid on the Varisian camp, intent on killing them all and leaving evidence to blame local goblins for the deed. Yet the Scarnettis, too drunk and overconfident, managed to kill only five Varisians before they were themselves forced to flee, leaving behind three of their own.

The Sandpoint Mercantile League fled back to Magnimar, and in the months to follow were embroiled in the repercussions of Alamon's assault. Magnimar's Varisian Council demanded punishment for all four families, but the High Court arbitrated a peace between them, in no small thanks to the remarkable diplomatic skills of a young bard and member of one of the families accused—Almah Deverin. Not only did she manage to assuage the Varisians' call for blood payment, she also managed to salvage the plans for Sandpoint by promising not only to incorporate the worship of Desna into the new town's cathedral, but also to pay the Varisian Council a generous share of any profits made by Sandpoint businesses over the course of the next 40 years. One year later, the Sandpoint Mercantile League

began construction on several buildings with the full cooperation of the Varisian people. In the years since Sandpoint's foundation, the settlement has flourished. Although the initial term of the compact with the Varisian Council has passed, Sandpoint's government has elected to extend the compact another 20 years, much to the consternation of a few locals.



KENDRA  
DEVERIN

Today, Sandpoint is a thriving community. Many industries, including fishing, lumber, farming, hunting, brewing, shipbuilding, tanning, and glassmaking, have boomed, luring skilled laborers from as far as Korvosa and Riddleport to relocate here. Yet Sandpoint's location on the Lost Coast has also recently drawn settlers of another bent. As explorers and adventurers begin to piece together the fragments of ancient Thassilon's influence over the region so long ago, Varisia's Thassilonian ruins have acted as a magnet for such lore-seekers. The Old Light is no exception, and a few of Sandpoint's recent arrivals are more interested in this ruin than anything else.

Throughout its history, Sandpoint has been thankfully free of major disasters. Every winter brings its share of strong storms, yet the natural harbor, sandbars, and cliffs do a remarkable job of blunting the force of wind and wave, leaving the town relatively unscathed. Elders in town spin yarns of a few really big storms, but apart from the town's somewhat rocky beginning with the Varisians, only two events have really qualified as disasters: the Chopper and the Sandpoint Fire. These two events, occurring in such close and recent proximity as they have, are generally lumped together as the "Late Unpleasantness," even though the incidents didn't have any obvious links. Natives of Sandpoint are reluctant to talk about either event, preferring to look ahead to brighter times.

## THE LATE UNPLEASANTNESS

When Jervis Stoot made clear his intentions to build a home on the then-nameless tidal island just north of the Old Light, many worried that he'd break his neck climbing up and down the isle's cliffs. Jervis had already garnered something of a reputation for eccentricity when he began his one-man crusade to carve depictions of birds on every building in town. Stoot never made a carving without securing permission, but his incredible skill at woodcarving made it a given that, if Stoot picked your building as the site of his latest project, you seized the opportunity. "Sporting a Stoot" soon grew to be something of a bragging point, and Jervis eventually extended his gift to include ships and carriages. Those who asked or tried to pay him for his skill were rebuffed—Stoot told them, "There ain't no birds in





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that wood for me t'set free," and went on his way, often wandering the streets for days before noticing a hidden bird in a fence post, lintel, steeple, or doorframe, which he'd then secure permission to "release" with his trusty hatchets and carving knives.

Stoot's excuse for wanting to move onto the isle seemed innocent enough. The place was a haven for local birdlife, and his claim of "wantin' ta be with th' birds" seemed to make sense—so much so, in fact, that the guild of carpenters (with whom Stoot had maintained a friendly competition for several years) volunteered to build a staircase, free of charge, along the southern cliff face so that Stoot could come and go from his new home without risking life and limb. For 15 years, Stoot lived on the island. His trips into town grew less and less frequent, making it something of an event when he chose a building to host a new Stoot.

Sandpoint was no stranger to crime, or even to murder. Once or twice in a year, passions flared, robberies went bad, jealousy grew too much to bear, or one too many drinks were drunk, and someone would end up dead. But when bodies began to mount in late 4702 AR, the town initially had no idea how to react. Sandpoint's sheriff at the time was a no-nonsense man named Casp Avertin, a retired city watch officer from Magnimar. Yet even he was ill-prepared for the murderer who came to be known as Chopper. Over the course of one long month, it seemed that every day brought a new victim to light. Each was found in the same terrible state: body bearing deep cuts to the neck and torso, hands and feet severed and stacked nearby, and the eyes and tongue missing entirely, having been plucked crudely from each head.

Over the course of that terrible month, Chopper claimed 25 victims. His uncanny knack at eluding traps and pursuit quickly wore on the town guard, taking a toll on Sheriff Avertin in particular, who increasingly took to drinking. In any event, Sheriff Avertin himself became Chopper's last victim, slain upon catching the murderer in a narrow lane—known now as Chopper's Alley—as he was mutilating his latest victim. In the battle that followed, Avertin landed a telling blow against the killer. When Belor Hemlock, then merely a town guard, found both bodies (Avertin's and the penultimate victim) several minutes later, he rallied the guards and they were able to follow the killer's bloody trail.

The trail led straight to the stairs of Stoot's Rock.

At first, the town guard refused to believe the implications, and feared that Chopper had come to claim poor Jervis Stoot as his 26th victim. Yet what the guards found in the modest home atop the isle and in the larger complex of rooms that had been carved into the bedrock below left no room for doubt. Jervis Stoot and Chopper were one and the same, and the eyes and tongues of all 25 victims were found upon a horrific altar

## CALLING THE WATCH

If the PCs need help, or if they overstep their bounds and get in trouble, the Sandpoint Watch may need to make an appearance. Use the following statistics for Sandpoint Guards as you need them.

### SANDPOINT GUARD

| XP  | CR  | HP |
|-----|-----|----|
| 200 | 1/2 | 21 |

Human warrior 2

NG Medium humanoid

**Init** +0; **Senses** Perception +3

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor)

**hp** 21 (2d10+6)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** longsword +4 (1d8+1/19-20)

**Ranged** longbow +2 (1d8/x3)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 11, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13

**Feats** Alertness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Intimidate +4, Perception +3, Ride +3, Sense Motive +3

**Languages** Common, Varisian

**Gear** chain shirt, longbow with 20 arrows, longsword

to a vile demon lord of winged creatures and temptation whose name none dared speak aloud. Stoot himself was found dead at the base of the altar, having plucked his own eyes and tongue loose in a final offering. The guards collapsed the entrance to the lower chambers, burned Stoot's house, tore down the stairs, and did their best to forget. Stoot himself was burned on the beach in a pyre, his ashes blessed and then scattered in an attempt to stave off an unholy return of his evil spirit.

But as fate would have it, the people of Sandpoint would soon have a new tragedy to bear, one that almost eclipsed Chopper's rampage. A month after the murderer was slain, a terrible fire struck Sandpoint. The fire started in the Sandpoint Chapel and spread quickly. As the town rallied to save the church, the inferno expanded, consuming the North Coast Stables, the White Deer Inn, and three homes. In the end, the church burnt to the ground, leaving the town's beloved priest Ezakien Tobyn and (so the town believed) his beautiful adopted daughter Nualia dead.

All that remains today of the once-loved Stoot carvings are ragged scars on buildings and figureheads where owners used hatchets to remove what had become a haunting reminder of the wolf in the fold. The homes and businesses ravaged by the fire have been reconstructed, and the Sandpoint Chapel has finally been rebuilt as well. With the consecration of this new cathedral, Sandpoint hopes to finally put the dark times of the Late Unpleasantness in the past.



# SANDPOINT







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## SANDPOINT AT A GLANCE

Most of the buildings in Sandpoint are made of wood, with stone foundations and wood shingle roofs. The majority are single-story structures, with a few noted exceptions. The town is often thought of as two districts by the locals. Uptown consists of areas 1–12. Most of these buildings are relatively new, and the streets are open and less crowded. This section of town is also physically above the rest, situated on a level bluff overlooking downtown, which consists of areas 13–46. The majority of the town's buildings can be found downtown, which grows increasingly crowded as available space is claimed by new arrivals. Downtown is built on a gentle slope that runs from a height of about 60 feet above sea level to the west, down to only a few feet above the waterline to the east and south.

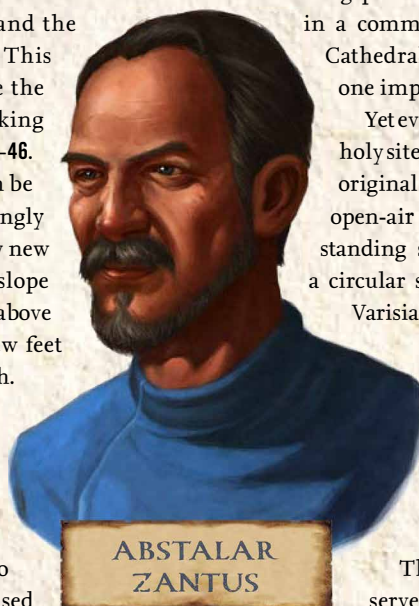
Sandpoint Harbor is a modest-sized natural harbor, 30 feet deep for most of its expanse, with sharply rising slopes near the shore. The languid waters of the Turandarok River wind down from the hinterlands, skirting Devil's Platter to empty into the harbor—the river is often used to transport lumber harvested far upriver down to the local sawmill. South of town rises another bluff on which Sandpoint's most affluent landowners have staked their claims.

Only a few hundred feet north of town rises an upthrust spur of rocky land topped with a few trees—this tidal island is now known as Chopper's Isle, and was once the home of Sandpoint's most notorious criminal. The remote outcropping is accessible only by flight or by a skilled climber, and locals now believe the isle to be haunted by Chopper's ghost; children often dare each other to go out to the isle's base at low tide and touch the barren cliff face that surrounds it, but no one's visited the top in years.

The sight that proves most striking to visitors of Sandpoint at first is the ruins of the Old Light. The original height of this tower is unknown, but those who have studied the ancient architecture of the crumbling remains estimate it might have stood more than 700 feet tall. Today, less than a quarter of that remains. The Old Light rises from sea level and is built into the face of a 120-foot-tall cliff, with the tower extending another 50 feet above that level to culminate in ragged ruins. The remaining shell is yet another reminder that neither the Chelaxians nor the Varisians are the first settlers of this land, yet apart from a few badly weathered carvings signifying that the peak of this tower once held a brilliant light, no insight into the tower's true purpose remains.

### 1 SANDPOINT CATHEDRAL

Easily the largest building in Sandpoint, this impressive cathedral is also the town's newest structure. Built



over the foundations of the previous chapel, Sandpoint Cathedral is not dedicated to the worship of a single deity. Rather, it gathers under its eaves the six most commonly worshiped deities in the region: Abadar, Desna, Erastil, Gozreh, Sarenrae, and Shelyn. The building provides chapels for all of these deities in a communal forum—in a way, Sandpoint Cathedral is six different churches under one impressive roof.


Yet even the previous chapel wasn't the first holy site in this location. The core of both the original chapel and the new cathedral is an open-air courtyard surrounding a set of seven standing stones, which themselves surround a circular stone altar. These stones served the Varisians for centuries as a place of worship; although they generally venerated Desna and various Empyrean Lords at these stones, the stones themselves have a much older tradition. Unknown to anyone alive today, the seven standing stones once represented the seven Thassilonian schools of magic and served as a focus for wizards who wished to direct the destructive power of the

nearby Hellstorm Flume. No one in Sandpoint suspects the standing stones are anything more than an ancient site of worship. Varisian oral tradition maintains that the seven stones represent the seven towers of Desna's otherworldly palace, but this is merely a story perpetuated by early Varisian seers eager to hide yet another bit of their homeland's destructive history.

The original chapel built here was a collection of six different shrines, each its own building and connected to the others by open-air walkways. Desna's worship was incorporated into these shrines as part of the peace accord with the local Varisians, but the original builders included five other deities as well. Four of these (Abadar, Gozreh, Sarenrae, and Shelyn) were patrons of the original founders of the Sandpoint Mercantile Consortium, while the fifth, Erastil, was the most popular among the initial settlers.

When that chapel burnt to the ground several years ago, Mayor Deverin set into motion a bold initiative. Not only would the chapel be rebuilt, but it would be rebuilt on a grand scale. A cathedral would be constructed in place of the chapel, and it would be made of stone and glass. Funding for this project came partially from the founding families, partially from Sandpoint businesses eager to earn favor in the eyes of the gods, and partially from the respective churches. It took years to finish the cathedral, but the end result is truly impressive. To the south, facing Sandpoint's heart, are the shrines of civilization: Erastil and Abadar. To the west, offering a view of the Old Light and the sea beyond, are the shrines





of Shelyn and Gozreh. And to the east, offering a view of the Sandpoint Boneyard and the rising sun, are the shrines of Sarenrae and Desna.

The previous chapel hosted fewer than a dozen acolytes, led by a well-loved cleric named Ezakien Tobyn, who sadly perished in the fire that claimed the church. The new high-priest of Sandpoint is his most accomplished student, a pleasant man named **ABSTALAR ZANTUS** (CG male human cleric of Desna 4). Himself a worshiper of Desna, Abstalar is very open about matters of faith and has slipped into the role of advisor for worshipers of other gods of Sandpoint with ease.

## 2 SANDPOINT BONEYARD

Set in the shadow of the Sandpoint Cathedral and accessible via a gate to the north or from several doors leading into the cathedral itself, this expansive cemetery overlooks the Turandarok River. Stone vaults owned by affluent members of the town stand near the cemetery's edges or at its center, while dozens of humble plots, each marked with a simple gravestone, sit amid trees and shrubberies. The boneyard is well maintained and kept by a man named **NAFFER VOSK** (NG male human rogue 1/cleric of Sarenrae 2), a deformed smuggler Father Tobyn took pity on after his ship wrecked just north of town a decade ago. Naffer has found redemption in Sarenrae, and despite a twisted spine that from birth has given him a sinister lurching gait, he's one of the town's most devout citizens. He keeps the boneyard meticulously clean and is also responsible for ringing the church bells every day at dawn, noon, and dusk.

## 3 THE WHITE DEER

A pair of wooden life-sized deer, carved with painstaking care from white birch, stand astride the entrance to this sizable tavern and inn, which commands an impressive view of the Varisian Gulf to the north. The building is new, recently rebuilt after the previous inn at this location burnt to the ground several years ago in the same fire that destroyed the Sandpoint Chapel. The new White Deer is a grand affair, three stories tall with a stone first floor and wooden upper floors, with a dozen large rooms that can accommodate two to three guests each.

A somber and quiet Shoanti man named **GARRIDAN VISKALAI** (LN male human expert 4) owns the White Deer and runs the place with the aid of his family and a few locals. Although his parents were members of the Shriikirri-Quah tribe, they abandoned their ties to settle in Sandpoint. Garridan regrets their choice, but his love for his wife and family keeps him rooted firmly in town.

Eager to encourage visitors to stay at his inn, Garridan keeps the prices of his rooms and board low, matching those of the Rusty Dragon (area 37) despite the fact that his accommodations are much cleaner and more spacious. Still, his gruff attitude tends to make his establishment less popular than the Dragon. Garridan is the brother of

Sandpoint's sheriff, Belor Hemlock, although the two of them are in a long-running feud stemming from what Garridan sees as his brother's complete abandonment of Shoanti tradition.

## 4 THE WAY NORTH

As with several other buildings in the vicinity, this one-story structure was recently rebuilt after the Sandpoint Fire. Originally a stable, the building has been converted by its owner, an aged but spry gnome named **VEZNUTT PAROOH** (NG male gnome wizard 2/expert 4), into a cramped and cluttered library to house his tremendous collection of maps and sea charts. Maps of local regions, from the immediate vicinity up to the whole of Varisia and the Storval Plateau, can be purchased from him for prices ranging from 5 gp to 100 gp, depending on the size and level of detail. When not here crafting copies of old maps, Veznutt can usually be found arguing over history with his best friend Ilsoari at Turandarok Academy (area 27).

## 5 JEWELER

This squat stone building escaped the fire that ravaged northern Sandpoint, much to the relief of its owner, a wild-haired jeweler named **MAVER KESK** (LG male human expert 3). Maver retains a half-dozen local toughs (LN human warrior 3) as guards, but he has a habit of leaving doors and vaults open—a trait his wife **PENNAE KESK** (LN female human commoner 2) often berates him for publicly.

## 6 JUNKER'S EDGE

Garbage gathered by Gorvi's boys (see area 7) is routinely dumped over the edge of this cliff to gather on the beach below. Several of the town's Gozreh worshipers (in particular Hannah Velerin; see area 45) rankle at this practice, but until an equally cost-effective and convenient option is presented, the town council is reluctant to change its ways. In any event, the sea generally makes short work of the junk, ensuring it never piles up too high.

Unknown to the citizens of Sandpoint, another reason the garbage never grows too high is the fact that goblins from the Seven Tooth tribe regularly sneak along the coast to raid the beach for bits of metal, scraps of food, not-quite-broken tools, and other "valuable" prizes. As a result, the Seven Tooth goblins have made a name for themselves among the local goblin tribes as the best traders.

## 7 GORVI'S SHACK

This dilapidated shack is home to one of Sandpoint's few half-orcs, a fat, heavily tattooed lummo named **GORVI** (CN male half-orc warrior 3). Despite the ramshackle look of his home, Gorvi has made quite a pretty penny for himself serving as Sandpoint's dungsweeper, enough that he employs about two dozen vagrants and curs



who would otherwise be causing trouble along the boardwalk, paying them regularly in copper to haul one of his distinctive red wheelbarrows through the streets to collect refuse and garbage. Sandpoint pays him handsomely for his services, a job that no one else really wants but everyone wants to see done. Lately, Gorvi's been making a menace of himself more than usual, spending evenings down on the boardwalk, harassing women, and raising hackles at the Hagfish (area 33). Mayor Kendra has had to ask him several times to ease up on the drinking and carousing lately, but Gorvi has grown complacent, believing that he won't be run out of town as long as he continues to ensure the streets are clean.

## 8 SAGE

The sole occupant of this ancient building is an old man named **BRODERT QUINK** (NG male human expert 7), a balding scholar of Varisian history and engineering. Brodert claims to have spent 2 decades of his youth studying with dwarven engineers at Janderhoff and 3 decades as a cataloger at the Founder's Archive in Magnimar, and is continually baffled and enraged that his learning and obvious intelligence haven't afforded him more prestige. Brodert has been studying ancient Thassilonian ruins for the past several years and has recently become obsessed with the Old Light. No one believes his theories that the tower was once a war machine capable of spewing fire to a range of more than a mile.

## 9 LOCKSMITH

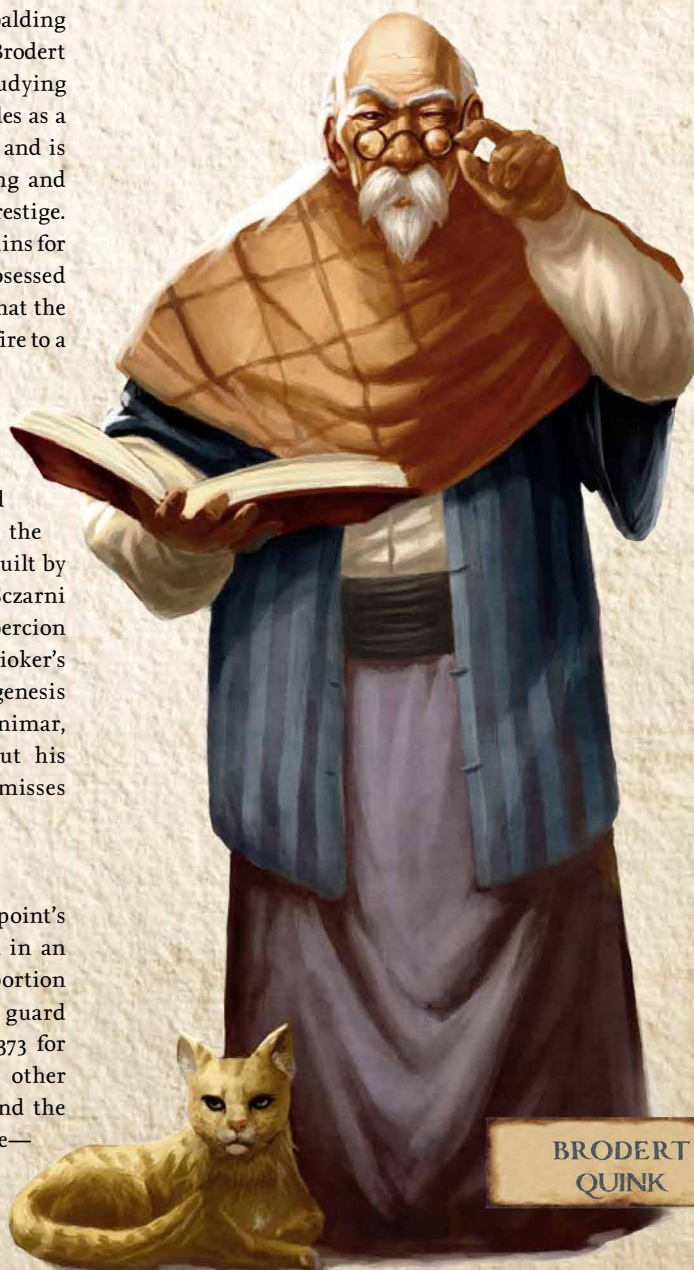
A flamboyant dwarf named **VOLIOKER BRISKALBERD** (LG male dwarf rogue 2/expert 3) has owned and operated Sandpoint's locksmith business since the town's founding. Most of the town's locks were built by Volioker. He's long been an enemy of the local Sczarni (see area 42), who have used both diplomacy and coercion in their attempts to recruit him to their side. Volioker's distaste for thievery and scoundrels may have its genesis in his childhood as a street orphan in Magnimar, although he's traditionally close-mouthed about his past. He's a tremendous fan of the arts, and never misses a new show at the playhouse.

## 10 SANDPOINT GARRISON

This stone fortress serves double duty as Sandpoint's militia barracks and its jail. The jail is located in an underground wing, while the above-ground portion houses the town's guard. Sandpoint's town guard consists of a dozen full-time guards (see page 373 for statistics); about twice this many servants and other experts (smiths, cooks, bookkeepers, couriers, and the like) dwell here as well. Guards patrol the city alone—there's generally not much trouble beyond the odd drunk for them to handle, so usually only three or four are on duty at any one time.

Sandpoint also maintains a militia of 62 able-bodied men and women (human warrior 1) who are expected to attend training and exercise here at least once a week. This militia can be brought to service in 1d3 hours.

The garrison is currently under the watchful eye of Sheriff **BELOR HEMLOCK** (CG male human fighter 4), a Shoanti who inherited the post of sheriff when the previous holder, Casp Avertin, was murdered by Chopper. Belor saw the town through that last terrible night and is generally held to be the man who stopped Chopper's rampage. In the emergency election that followed a week later, the people of Sandpoint made his role official, and Belor became the first Shoanti sheriff of Sandpoint. Honored and eager to live up to Casp's legacy, Belor changed his last name from Viskalai to its Chelish translation, Hemlock—a choice that has



**BRODERT  
QUINK**



endeared him to Sandpoint's mostly Chelish populace but hasn't sat well with his brother Garridan (see area 3). Belor's not-as-secret-as-he'd-like romance with Kaye Tesarani (see area 43) has put further strain on his relationship with his family.

The jail below the garrison is generally empty save for a few drunks or Sczarni doing time for some minor crime. Murderers and other hardened criminals generally stay for only a few days before an escort from Magnimar arrives to bring them to trial in the big city. The garrison's jailor is a heavily scarred brute named **VACHEDI** (CG male human barbarian 3), a Shoanti tribesman who hopes to someday earn enough money to buy back his two sons from Kaer Magan slavers.

## 11 SANDPOINT TOWN HALL

The majority of the ground floor of this two-story building consists of a meeting hall large enough to seat most of Sandpoint's adults, although town meetings have rarely been even half so well attended. The upper floor contains offices and storerooms, while a vault in the basement below has functioned as the town bank for decades. Plans to build a proper bank have been stalled for various reasons since the town was founded. Sandpoint's mayor, **KENDRA DEVERIN** (NG female human aristocrat 4/expert 3), can often be found in this building, tending to the town's needs.

## 12 SAVAH'S ARMORY

The northeast corner of this building bears a few scars from the Sandpoint Fire, but fortunately for its owner, **SAVAH BEVANIYK** (NG female human fighter 2/rogue 1), the building escaped significant damage. Savah's shop sells all manner of weapons and armor, including several masterwork items and exotic weapons like a spiked chain, a dozen masterwork shuriken, and a +1 repeating crossbow with a darkwood and ivory stock that bears the name "Vansaya." She's not sure what the name means—she bought the weapon from an adventurer on the way to Riddleport a year ago, and its high price and complexity have ensured its semi-permanent stay in her shop.

## 13 RISA'S PLACE

**RISA MAGRAVI** (NG female human sorcerer 4) operated this tavern for the first 30 years of Sandpoint's history, and even now that she's gone mostly blind in her old age and has left the day-to-day affairs of the job to her three children **BESK**, **LANALEE**, and **VOOGER** (NG human commoner 2), the mysterious Varisian sorcerer remains a fixture of the tavern. Known as much for Risa's tales

of ancient legends and myths as for its spiced potatoes and cider, this tavern is a favorite of the locals if only because its out-of-the-way location ensures strangers rarely come by.

## 14 ROVANKY TANNERY

**LARZ ROVANKY** (LG male human expert 3) runs Sandpoint's tannery, situated at the edge of town, with ruthless efficiency. He expects perfection from his workers and his products, and as a result often works long hours on his own during the stretches when he's temporarily fired the help. His leather and fur goods are of high quality, enough so that locals generally don't mind the extra wait for custom orders while Larz fusses with getting things perfect.

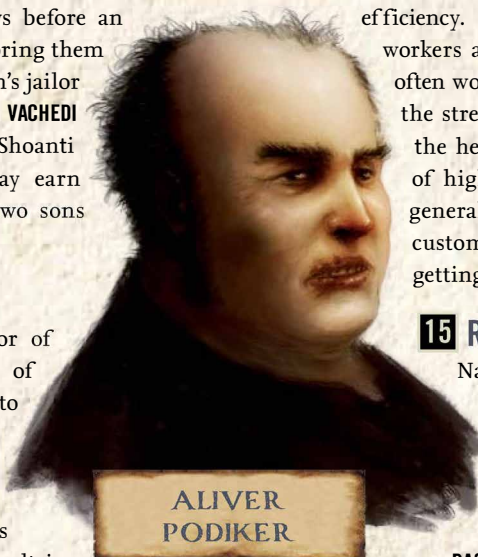
## 15 RED DOG SMITHY

Named for its owner's affection for large red mastiffs, two to three of which can always be seen lounging about nearby, Red Dog Smithy is owned by a bald and powerfully muscled man named **DAS KORVUT** (LN male human fighter 1/expert 3). Das's temper is, perhaps, his true claim to fame—he has little patience for customers, and even less for everyone else. Sandpoint suffers his foul-mouthed attitude and frequent drunken midnight rants because he really does know his job, and as long as he's busy hammering metal, he stays relatively calm and confined to his smithy. The local children have recently been circulating a somewhat cruel rhyme about Das that they've taken to chanting at hopsquares, a doggerel sure to come to an end once the smith hears it.

"Here comes crazy-man Das Korvut,  
Mad as a cut snake in a wagon rut.  
See how his chops go bouncity-bounce?  
How many people has he trounced?  
One! Two! Three! Four..."

## 16 THE PILLBUG'S PANTRY

Nestled at the base of a cliff and tucked between several old tenements, nothing but a painting of a pillbug perched on a mushroom indicates this building is anything more than yet another home. The proprietor of this establishment is a short, rotund man named **ALIVER "PILLBUG" PODIKER** (LE male human alchemist 5), an accomplished herbalist, gardener, and secret poisoner. Although he's of mixed Chelish and Varisian blood, the Sczarni (see area 42) have taken to treating him as a full-blooded Varisian. While his primary source of income is from legitimate sales of medicine and potions, he maintains a healthy side-business selling poison to Sczarni locals as well. Before he'll





even admit to being a poison merchant, though, a potential customer first has to ask him, “Have any happy pillbugs turned up lately?”

## 17 BOTTLED SOLUTIONS

This cluttered shop is filled with shelves upon shelves of bottles, bags, and other alchemical containers, some covered with dust and others so new that the pungent stink of their brewing still fills the air. **NISK TANDER** (NG male half-elf alchemist 1/expert 2) fancies himself a more gifted potion-maker than he really is—items purchased from this shop have a 5% chance of not working as intended, either being subdued, inert, or wildly unpredictable in their actual effects (such as a flask of alchemist’s fire bursting in a flash of light that acts as a *daze* spell in a 5-foot-radius, or a vial of antitoxin functioning instead as a vial of acid). A successful DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check can determine whether something purchased at Bottled Solutions will work or not, but Nisk doesn’t take kindly to people looking too closely at his wares before they buy.

## 18 CRACKTOOTH’S TAVERN

A particular favorite of patrons of the Sandpoint Theater, Cracktooth’s Tavern is always full after the latest show at the nearby playhouse lets out. A large stage gives actors, singers, and anyone else the opportunity to show their stuff. Every night a crowd of would-be entertainers packs the taproom in the hopes of being discovered. Owner **JESK “CRACKTOOTH” BERINNI** (NG male human expert 3) might look like a thug, but he’s actually quite well read and possesses a scathing wit—nights when he takes the stage to deliver his observations on the political situation in Magnimar are quite popular.

## 19 HOUSE OF BLUE STONES

This stone building is primarily a single large chamber, the floor decorated with polished blue stones set within winding pathways of reed mats. This structure was built 10 years after Sandpoint was founded by a wandering monk named Enderaki Sorn—today, the monastery is tended by Enderaki’s daughter, **SABYL SORN** (LN female human monk 4), her father having passed away 7 years ago. A worshiper of Irori, the god of self-perfection and knowledge, Sabyl maintains a large collection of old books and scrolls in the basement chambers below. She opens both the meditation floor and her library to fellow worshipers, but others must convince her of their good intentions with a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check before she’ll let them in. Use of Sabyl’s library grants a +4 bonus on Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (the planes) checks.

## 20 SANDPOINT GLASSWORKS

One of the oldest industries in town, the Sandpoint Glassworks has been owned by the Kajitsu family

from the town’s inception. The glassworking trade has been in the family for generations, and many of their techniques—perfected in distant Minkai—result in dazzling and impressive works that fetch top price among the nobles of Magnimar, Korvosa, and beyond. The Sandpoint Glassworks is detailed in full in Chapter One.

## 21 SANDPOINT SAVORIES

The smells issuing from this bakery fight against the salty tang of the sea every morning except on Sunday. The shop has been owned and operated by the Avertin family for the past 2 decades. **ALMA AVERTIN** (LG female human expert 7) still hasn’t quite recovered from the brutal death of her son Casp several years ago under Chopper’s blade, and her twin daughters **ARIKA** and **ANEKA** (LG female human experts 2) all but run the business these days. Aneka doesn’t mind, but Arika is growing increasingly restless with the job.

## 22 THE CURIOUS GOBLIN

The sign out in front of this shop shows a wide-eyed goblin reading an upside-down book nearly as tall as him. Inside, this bookshop is a testament to one man’s obsession with the printed word. **CHASK HALADAN** (CG male human bard 3/expert 3) has maintained his love affair with books for nearly 70 years and shows no sign of giving it up anytime soon. His store is surprisingly complete, and while almost all of his wares are far too pricey for any of the locals to shop here with any frequency, a nest egg gathered in his adventurous youth combined with a frugal lifestyle makes the success of his business secondary to his own satisfaction. Several locals, including Brodert Quink (area 8), Sabyl Sorn (area 19), and Ilsoari Gandethus (area 27) can often be found here, either chatting with Chask or sitting in one of several large chairs, reading.

## 23 SANDPOINT THEATER

Brand-new cathedrals and ancient ruins aren’t the only incongruities Sandpoint boasts. This massive playhouse, financed entirely by its larger-than-life owner, **CYRDAK DROKKUS** (CN male human bard 6), features one of the most impressive theaters on this side of Varisia—it certainly competes with the playhouses of Magnimar, a fact that Cyrdak takes great pride in, since he was forced to flee that city for mysterious reasons he’s eager to hint at but reticent to expound upon (although they certainly involve another Sandpoint local of note—Jasper Korvaski). The Sandpoint Theater often showcases local talent, but it’s the three weekend shows that locals generally look forward to. Cyrdak uses his contacts in Magnimar to great extent, ensuring that the most exciting new productions in the big city are available here as well. Although Cyrdak enjoys flirting with all of Sandpoint’s young women, his romantic relationship with Jasper (area 40) is one of the town’s worst-kept secrets.



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## 24 CARPENTER'S GUILD

The vast majority of the buildings in Sandpoint were erected by members of the town's large and eternally busy Carpenter's Guild. Currently overseen by Guildmaster **AESRICK BATTLEHORN** (LG male dwarf expert 5), a dwarf who left his homeland because of his a nearly heretical fondness for working with wood rather than stone, the Sandpoint Carpenter's Guild has recently been accepting a growing number of projects in the outlying farmlands as well as work about town. The guild has been in a minor feud with the Sandpoint Shipyard (area 46) for years, one that most often flares up over which guild has claim to the best lumber from the mill.

## 25 SANDPOINT LUMBER MILL

This long building was one of the first to be built when Sandpoint was founded. Owned by the industrious Scarnetti family, the mill and its daily operations have recently been left more and more to a penny-pinching businessman named **BANNY HARKER** (NG male human expert 3) and his partner **IBOR THORN** (NG male human expert 2). Neighbors have been complaining that the two have been running their insidiously noisy logsplitter into the wee hours of the night as they rush to keep up with demand in the face of Magnimar's increased hunger for lumber, but Harker's influence with the Scarnettis has so far kept any mandates against operating the logsplitter from coming to pass.

## 26 GENERAL STORE

Owned and operated by **VEN VINDER** (LN male human commoner 7) and his family, Sandpoint's oldest and best-stocked general store has a little bit of everything—farm equipment, weapons, tack, tools, furniture, food, and even homemade pies baked by Ven's wife **SOLSTA** (LG female human commoner 4). Ven even keeps a shocking supply of alcohol in his basement, although a customer has to ask to see the "wine cellar" before Ven'll admit to his special stock. Ven has a particular fondness for bitter grog and rotgut imported from places as far as the orc city of Urglin. His true prides, though, are his daughters, whom he dotes upon. Lately, he's been increasingly distracted by what he believes is a budding romance between his daughter **KATRINE** (NG female human commoner 1) and that no-good Harker from the lumber mill. Unfortunately, Ven's obsession with Katrine's nightlife has rendered him all but blind to the shameless actions of his other daughter **SHAYLISS** (CN female human commoner 1), whose reputation is growing by the month.

## 27 TURANDAROK ACADEMY

As families thronged to Sandpoint, the town founders quickly came to realize that they needed somewhere to handle the education of children, to house unfortunate orphans, and to busy older children and keep them from becoming delinquents. The answer was the Turandarok Academy. Part school, part orphanage, the academy is run by retired adventurer **ILSOARI GANDETHUS** (LN male human wizard 4/rogue 2). He volunteered to be the academy's headmaster if he could have the basement of the two-story building to himself.

The town agreed, and today, the rooms below the Academy are almost a museum of the strange things and trophies Ilsoari has collected over his years. He keeps these chambers locked, but the children who attend classes on the ground floor and the orphans who live on the upper floor have countless stories about what's down there, ranging from a goblin farm to a nest of phantom spiders to the Sandpoint Devil itself. Although the contents are much less sinister (Ilsoari

is all too happy to show off his collection of exotic weapons, strange maps, and monster trophies to anyone who asks nicely), the old wizard does nothing to dissuade the children's tales.

## 28 MADAME MVASHTI'S HOUSE

Although from outside this appears to be an ancient, decrepit manor house with several rooms, only one person lives in this old building—ancient and mysterious **NISKA MVASHTI** (N female venerable human druid 3/sorcerer 4/mystic theurge 1). Old even when Sandpoint was founded decades ago, Madame Mvashti (as she prefers to be called) is a Varisian historian and seer, part of a long tradition of oracles in her family. As with many seers, the current age's unexpected departures from established prophecies have left her with a lifelong sense of brooding worry. She performs most of her readings with harrow cards or carved bones but seems only very rarely to enjoy casting her predictions.

Madame Mvashti had long complained that the yearly travels of her extended family hurt her bones, and when Sandpoint was founded, as part of the accord with the Sandpoint Mercantile League, the local Varisians demanded a large manor house be built for their respected elder. Once she passed away, the house was to revert to the town's property, but Madame Mvashti has proven exceptionally tenacious and long-lived. She survives primarily on support and volunteer help from local Varisians and her only daughter, **KOYA**







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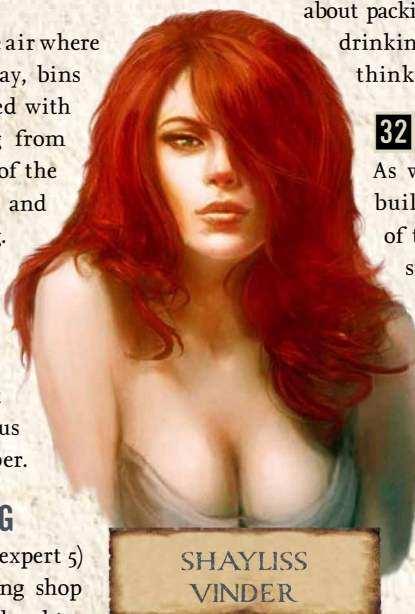
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**MVASHTI** (CG female human cleric of Desna 4), although she spits and curses at those she knows belong to the Sczarni. Druids from the hinterlands make weekly visits to her home, often helping her along on the long walks she still enjoys in the nearby countryside.

### 29 GROCER'S HALL

This building's facade is open to the air where it faces the market. During the day, bins and trays and tables here are heaped with produce brought in that morning from the outlying farms. Near the back of the store are tools, seeds, feed, tack, and other supplies useful for farming. The other half of this building is filled with living quarters, meeting halls, file rooms, and storage. **OLMUR DANVAKUS** (LG male halfling expert 4) took up the post of guildmaster here after the previous guildmaster was murdered by Chopper.



SHAYLISS  
VINDER

### 30 VERNAH'S FINE CLOTHING

**RYNSHINN POVALLI** (NG female half-elf expert 5) has owned and operated this clothing shop for the last several years. The only daughter of a kindly woman named Vernah, Rynshinn never knew her father, Iremiel, only that he was killed by goblins less than a week after she was born. At the time, Vernah's tempestuous affair with the mysterious elven bard was the talk of the town. Every year on the anniversary of Rynshinn's birth, a small package of elven coins, medicine, and toys mysteriously appeared somewhere in the upper floors of this building. Vernah always claimed the gifts were placed by Iremiel's ghost, but locals generally believe the gifts were granted by one of his living relatives. Rynshinn, for her part, holds out against hope that her father somehow survived and that it's him and not his ghost who leaves these mysterious birthday presents.

Since her mother's death several years ago during Chopper's murder spree, Rynshinn has used much of the money from those gifts to expand her mother's tailoring business, and even founded a guild that brings together dozens of quilters, crafters, sewers, and tailors so they can sell their wares here. She's looking into opening a shop in Magnimar as well, but has yet to find a partner there whom she trusts. A number of Sandpoint's young men idly court Rynshinn, whom many hold to be the town's most beautiful citizen, but to date, she has politely eschewed all possible suitors for reasons she has not shared.

### 31 WHEEN'S WAGONS

A lanky man named **BILIVAR WHEEN** (N male human expert 3) owns this workshop. Bilivar is a down-on-his-luck wheelwright who's lately been spending more time

at various taverns (especially the Hagfish—area 33) than here working—ever since his daughter Tanethia drowned in the Mill Pond last year, his wife **VORAH** (LN female human commoner 1) has grown more and more shrill and paranoid that her remaining two children's days are numbered as well. Bilivar's been heard to mutter about packing up and skipping town to some of his drinking buddies at the Hagfish, but no one thinks he'll really follow through on this plan.

### 32 SCARNETTI MILL


As with the Sandpoint Lumber Mill, this building is owned by the Scarnettis. All of the flower and grain produced here is supplied by local farmers. Mysterious fires have claimed the Soggy River Mill, the Biston Pond Mill, and most recently the Cougar Creek Mill, leaving Scarnetti's the only functioning grain mill in the region. Accusations of Scarnetti-sponsored arson have been flying high, but the manager of this mill, constantly worried and sneezing **COURRIN WHESTERWILL** (NG male human expert 2), has gracefully lowered the prices for its use to record lows until the outlying mills can be rebuilt, a gracious move that has alleviated, to some extent, extensive public outcry.

### 33 THE HAGFISH

One of Sandpoint's most popular taverns, especially among fishermen and gamblers, the Hagfish is also Sandpoint's best bet for a good old-fashioned seafood meal. Owned by a gregarious one-legged man named **JARGIE QUINN** (CG male human rogue 2/expert 2), the Hagfish gets its name from the large glass aquarium that sits behind the bar, the home of a repellent Varisian hagfish that Jargie affectionately calls Norah (despite the fact that he's had "Norah" replaced dozens of times—Varisian hagfish don't live all that long in Quinn's aquarium). Hanging from a nail next to Norah's tank is a leather pouch bulging with coins: prize money for anyone who can drink down a single tankard of "water" scooped from Norah's tank. It costs a single silver coin to try, but the trick is that, since she's a hagfish, the water in Norah's tank is thick and horrifically slimy and foul-tasting. Few can stomach the stuff, but those who do get to keep however many coins have accumulated in the pouch, and then get to carve their names in the ceiling beam above the bar. To date, there are only 28 names carved there, and the Hagfish has been in business for nearly 10 years.

But there's certainly more to this tavern than Norah. Jargie's game tables are always well attended, with games ranging from cards to checkers to dice to darts.





Tall tales are a favorite pastime here, with one popular game called “yarning” involving seeing how long a local can string along an impromptu fable without contradicting himself. The most popular subject of these tales is traditionally Old Murdermaw, a legendary giant red snapper that might or might not dwell in the depths of the Varisian Gulf. Jargie himself is quite an accomplished yarner, with the ever-changing story of how he lost his leg being his favorite starting point for his tales.

### 34 VALDEMAR FISHMARKET

Like the Grocer’s Guild across the market, the facade of this long building is open to the air. Here, locals can shop for the day’s catch, picking out cod, salmon, tuna, shellfish, and even the odd octopus for the evening’s meal. **TURCH STERGLUS** (LG male human rogue 1/expert 5), a retired fisherman with a lazy eye and a wild white beard, runs the fishmarket in a lovably crotchety manner, constantly complaining about the weather or the day’s catch or the antics of local youth, but always packaging his customers’ purchases with a smile and a wink. The fishmarket itself is owned by the Valdemar family, but most locals act as if the building and business were Turch’s, often tipping the lovable old man a few extra coins. Turch’s five sons, each smarter than the last, have all made careers working for their father as fish cleaners, haulers, and even cooks.

### 35 SANDPOINT MARKET

On most days, Sandpoint’s marketplace is empty save for the odd group of children who enjoy using the

wide-open area to play whistleball or other games. Twice each week, the market fills with vendors. At the start of the week, the farmer’s market radically increases the daily selection of goods available at the Grocer’s Hall, while all day at the end of the week, merchants from Magnimar, Galduria, Nybor, Wartle, and beyond take part in the Town Market. It’s very rare to see any item worth more than a 500 gp base value go on sale at this market, but prices are generally 75% of the regular asking price.

### 36 SANDPOINT MEAT MARKET

Local butcher **CHOD BEVUK** (NG male human expert 3) runs the Sandpoint Meat Market. Half of this building doubles as a slaughterhouse, with the meat itself put on display for sale in the front half of the market. Most of the meat processed here is from livestock or animals caught by hunters. Chod still claims to this day that he encountered Chopper several days before he was ultimately caught and that the two of them fought, leaving Chod with one fewer finger, but most locals believe the wound was self-inflicted in an attempt to get attention. Chod’s penchant for lies and exaggeration in all matters not relating to his business doesn’t help lend credence to his version of how he lost the little finger of his left hand.

### 37 THE RUSTY DRAGON

This large structure is Sandpoint’s oldest inn, notable for the impressive (and quite rusty) iron dragon that looms on the building’s roof, doubling as a lightning rod and decoration. Owned and operated for the past 6 years by the lovely and popular **AMEIKO KAIJITSU** (CG female human aristocrat 1/bard 3/rogue [rake] 1), the Rusty Dragon is not only one of the town’s most popular eateries (made so, in large part, by the spicy and exotic food served here), but also a great place to meet visitors from out of town, since most newcomers to Sandpoint come upon this inn first, as the northern stretch of the Lost Coast Road is less traveled. It certainly doesn’t hurt that Ameiko’s beauty is more than matched by her skill at music, and few are the evenings that pass without at least two or three songs being performed by the talented woman. Some bad blood exists between Ameiko and Cyrdak, and one never seems to miss a chance to badmouth the other, but no one in town really understands the reason behind their rivalry. Of greater concern to Ameiko is her long-running feud with her family—leaving town to become an adventurer scandalized her family enough. But when she retired from adventuring a year later after a disastrous mission (the nature of which she never speaks of), she returned to Sandpoint and bought and renovated the Rusty Dragon—an act that only further scandalized and shamed her father. Ameiko claims not to care



NORAH



about her father's opinions of her choices, but becomes evasive when anyone asks her why she gave up the adventuring life. Some believe she has a secret lover in town, while others theorize that something happened on her last adventure that took the bravery out of her. In any event, the Rusty Dragon is probably the most adventurer-friendly establishment in town, with its ubiquitous "Help Wanted" board near the bar and Ameiko's policy of discounting rooms for any who tell exciting adventure stories.

### 38 GOBLIN SQUASH STABLES

The sign above this door perpetuates one of the greatest fears of the lowly goblin—being trampled underfoot by a horse. The stables are tended by a retired hunter named **DAVIREN HOSK** (N male human ranger 4), whose hatred of goblins is nearly legendary in Sandpoint. In a somewhat grisly display, over the entrance to the stable's covered barn is his collection of goblin ears: preserved and nailed to three different rafters, each bearing the goblin's name burned into the leathery flesh—mostly because Daviren knows that writing down a goblin's name is one of the worst things you can do to desecrate its memory. The bitter ranger's pride and joy is a large glass bottle filled with brine in which he's preserved the body of Chief Whartus of the now-extinct (due in large part to Daviren) Bonegrinder Tribe.



Although ownership of the league remains split evenly between Sandpoint's four noble families, few of them take part anymore in the actual day-to-day business, leaving such matters in the capable hands of **SIR JASPER KORVASKI** (LG male human paladin 3/expert 1). In his younger years, Jasper was a paladin of Abadar, and although he's long since given up the more dangerous lifestyle of a crusader, he remains loyal and devout. Despite his best efforts, his romance with Cyrdak Drokus (area 23) has become one of Sandpoint's worst-kept secrets. The Scarnettis, easily Sandpoint's most conservative and least open-minded family, claim to find the rumors of this relationship scandalous and offensive, but it's unclear whether they're more offended by the relationship itself or by the fact that the majority of Sandpoint is so accepting of it. In any event, the Scarnettis have been doing their best to make things difficult for Jasper in an attempt to not-so-subtly

convince him to move back to Magnimar, but the support of the other three families has, so far, kept the Scarnettis from becoming too obnoxious.

### 41 SANDPOINT BOUTIQUE

This large boutique and shop sells all manner of clothing, weapons, toys, artwork, books, and tools imported from throughout the world, although most of the wares here are Varisian in nature. The place is owned by **HAYLISS KORVASKI** (LN female human cleric 2/expert 2), who is, like her brother Jasper, a devout worshiper of Abadar. Yet unlike her brother, her temper isn't balanced by a desire to keep everyone happy. Hayliss isn't afraid of making enemies and wears her disdain for the Scarnettis on her sleeve. She's even gone as far as sometimes upcharging her goods for members of the Scarnetti family, in spite of Mayor Deverin's repeated requests to keep the peace.

### 42 FATMAN'S FEEDBAG

If the Hagfish is Sandpoint's most popular tavern, Fatman's Feedbag is its most notorious. Bar fights are common, and Sheriff Hemlock typically has to come down here two or three times a week to sort them out when they grow particularly violent or loud. The majority of the clientele here are Varisian scoundrels or less-than-reputable sailors.

Most believe this tavern is owned and operated by an enormous man named **GRESSEL TENNIWAR** (CN

### 39 TWO KNIGHT BREWERY

While Sandpoint's taverns offer a wide variety of spirits, they all proudly serve the mead, ale, and rum brewed here at the Two Knight Brewery. The brewery was established by two brothers (both worshipers of Abadar and cousins of Mayor Deverin) only a few years after Sandpoint was founded, and their expertise at brewing has only increased over the years. Tragically, Wade Deverin was one of the first of Chopper's victims, a murder that has shaken the faith of his brother, **GAVEN DEVERIN** (LG human male paladin 2/expert 3). Locals whisper that since Wade's death, the brew from here simply hasn't tasted as good, but they would never say something to this effect to Gaven's face.

### 40 SANDPOINT MERCANTILE LEAGUE

This large building serves many purposes. One can book passage on a ship bound for other ports, arrange for caravans or carriages for overland travel, or send messages to folk in town or as far away as Korvosa or even Riddleport. Inquiries into land ownership, building construction, and establishing new businesses, both in Sandpoint proper and in the surrounding hinterlands, must begin their processes of official foundation here.



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male human rogue 2/expert 1), but in fact the owner is a lanky thug named **JUBRAYL VHISKI** (NE male human rogue 7), one of the Feedbag's regulars. Jubrayl is also the leader of the local gang of Sczarni, an extended network of Varisian thieves, highwaymen, con artists, graverobbers, smugglers, and murderers. Nearly two dozen of the Varisians in Sandpoint are Sczarni as well, all cruel and self-serving men and women who take care to maintain respectable jobs as laborers, fishermen, and hunters, but who draw their true income taking part in various scams and stunts. Sheriff Hemlock suspects that Jubrayl is the local leader, and would like nothing more than to bring him in, but the Sczarni are experts at walking the line between legalities and taking the blame for their direct superiors. So while Sheriff Hemlock has sent many of Jubrayl's boys to jail over the last several years, he's never even come close to the ringleader himself, much to the continued amusement of Jubrayl.

#### 43 THE PIXIE'S KITTEN

Many of Sandpoint's crasser locals have a much more colorful name for this establishment, but **KAYE TESARANI** (CG female human rogue 3/sorcerer 1) runs the town brothel with class and distinguished grace. She pays her girls and boys quite well, and the three Shoanti bouncers she employs (CG human male barbarian 3) are more than enough to handle troublemakers. Although prostitution isn't illegal in Sandpoint, the Scarnettis have long lobbied for it to be outlawed, publicly condemning the Kitten as a place where vice and criminal activity can take root. Behind closed doors, however, Jubrayl has tried for the last several years to get in on the brothel business himself, but Kaye's not-so-secret friendship (and romance) with the town's sheriff make this a delicate, long-term goal for the Sczarni at best.

#### 44 THE FEATHERED SERPENT

This cramped and cluttered shop smells of a strange mixture of incense, spice, and dust. Its sole proprietor, **VORVASHALI VOON** (LN male human wizard 2/rogue 2/expert 2), an exotic-looking character with bright blue eyes, long red hair, and almost bronze-colored skin, is gregarious and excited about every customer. Not everything in his shop is for sale, rendering the shop's eclectic collection of strange relics, statues, and monument fragments part museum. Vorvashali's stock changes constantly, as his dozens of contacts from Magnimar come in weekly to buy and trade

stock. Adventurers seeking magic items and other tools of the trade can find what they're looking for here more often than not.

#### 45 HANNAH'S

While Abstalar Zantus (area 1) does his best to take care of Sandpoint's truly sick and needy, he can't help everyone. For minor aches, pains, and illnesses, most of Sandpoint's citizens depend on **HANNAH VELERIN** (NG female elf cleric of Gozreh 3/expert 1). Hannah spends most of her mornings out in the surrounding wilds, gathering herbs or simply enjoying Gozreh's bounty. In the afternoons, she returns to her shop and home here to prepare medicines and receive patients. Hannah's ironically the one to go to when one either wants to end a pregnancy or needs a midwife to aid in a birth; Hannah encourages all of the women she sees to carry to term, and advises the use of pinberry extract to young women as a way to prevent any unwanted pregnancies from happening in the first place, but in cases where there's no other option, her other services are discreet and confidential.

#### 46 SANDPOINT SHIPYARD

The southern facade of this long building is open to Sandpoint Harbor, allowing its small army of shipwrights, ropemakers, and sailmakers to work their trade in one of four dry docks right on the shore. The shipyard is owned by the Valdemarks, with **BELVEN VALDEMAR** (NG male human aristocrat 1/expert 5), old Ethram's eldest son, overseeing the constant work here. Belven is a handsome and quite available bachelor, but his dedication to his craft and family have so far left him little time to entertain the dozens of young women who've been trying to catch his eye for the past several years.

#### 47 VALDEMAR MANOR

This manor house commands a breathtaking view of the town of Sandpoint and the harbor below, as befits the home of the family most connected to the town's shipbuilding and fishing industries. The family itself remains under the patriarchal rule of old **ETHRAM VALDEMAR** (NG male human aristocrat 5/expert 2), the only one of the original members of the Sandpoint Mercantile League who is still alive. Ethram's years are numbered, though, for the old man has a persistent lung infection that keeps coming back, no matter how often the family pays to have it cured.



TITUS  
SCARNETTI





## 48 SCARNETTI MANOR

The Scarnettis are Sandpoint's most notorious noble family, and many of Sandpoint's elderly Varisian locals still haven't forgotten or forgiven Alamon Scarnetti's assault on their people more than 40 years ago, even with Alamon 20 years in the ground at the Sandpoint Cemetery. The Scarnetti family, now headed by Alamon's only surviving son **TITUS SCARNETTI** (LN male human aristocrat 6), controls Sandpoint's mills and the lumber industry. Their control over the lumber the Valdemars need for their enterprises is not lost on the Scarnettis, and they use this fact as often as possible to leverage Valdemar support. The Scarnettis are easily Sandpoint's most traditional family, who cling to old Chelish values that are, in many cases, outdated today.

## 49 KAIJITSU MANOR

This manor is the smallest of the four noble houses overlooking Sandpoint, yet the Kaijitsus are perhaps the richest family in town. What this manor lacks in stature and size it more than makes up for in the exotic and impressive furnishings within. **LONGJIKU KAIJITSU** (LN aristocrat 3/expert 2) has carried on his father's proud work as glassmaker, and the Sandpoint Glassworks is perhaps the town's most prosperous business, with its products regularly shipped as far as Korvosa. Longjiku's accomplishments are all the more impressive when one takes into account that he and his family are relative newcomers to Varisia, the survivors of an exiled family from Minkai who fled over the Crown of the World a half century ago for unknown reasons. Longjiku was born in Magnimar and has never visited his motherland, but he carries memories of its wonders in the form of stories told to him by his now-deceased parents. Yet for all of his success at business, Longjiku has found the role of father to be one he's particularly ill suited for. His eldest son Tsuto, in addition to being proof of his wife's affair with an unknown elf, left the region several years ago after an argument that resulted in Longjiku striking his son with his cane. His eldest daughter Ameiko shamed him not only by becoming an adventurer, but also by opening and running a tavern and flophouse—"hardly women's work," he's fond of telling anyone who'll listen. Of course, those who know Longjiku know his short temper is his real problem.

## 50 DEVERIN MANOR

Living within the largest manor, the Deverins have traditionally held leadership roles in Sandpoint. Old Amos Deverin served as the town's first mayor for 23



years, and his son Fenchus served as its second. Both Deverins perished after unfortunate accidents (Amos was trampled by a runaway horse on Festival street and Fenchus was killed by a snakebite while on a boar hunt), leaving Amos's youngest daughter as the heir to the family fortune and a likely candidate for mayor.

**KENDRA DEVERIN** (NG female human aristocrat 4/expert 3) didn't initially want the job, but after she was nominated for the role by her close friend Casp Avertin, she won the election by a landslide, something her primary opponent in the election, Titus Scarnetti, has never quite come to terms with. For some time there was talk of her and Casp becoming wife and husband, but Casp's death at Chopper's hands cut that short. Kendra's recovered now from the shock, but has put aside all interest in romance for politics. She shares this manor with her brother's rather large family, and although her sister-in-law Vana constantly complains about needing even more space and luxuries, Kendra has done a saintly job so far in keeping her temper under control.

## THE HINTERLANDS

On page 386, you'll find a map of the farmlands and wilderness that immediately surround the town of Sandpoint. Chapter One sends the PCs to Thistletop and on a short boar hunt into Tickwood, and a significant portion of Chapter Two takes place outside of town and along the Lost Coast.

But these locations are only a few of the numerous adventure sites located within a few hours' walk of the town of Sandpoint. The remainder of this appendix describes several different locations in the Sandpoint hinterlands beyond those locations detailed in Chapters One and Two of this book.

**ASHEN RISE:** The smaller of the two limestone escarpments in the area is the so-called Ashen Rise. Unlike Devil's Platter, Ashen Rise is relatively safe—the only peril that explorers are likely to face up here are flocks of stirges or uncommonly aggressive ravens and crows.

**BISTON'S POND:** Named after an eccentric Varisian druid who lived his whole life on the western shore, this pond lies at the convergence of Weasel Creek and the larger Turandarok River. Goblins from Mosswood often fish along the eastern shore, and the dilapidated shack that once served as Biston's home still sits on the western shore, supposedly haunted by the old druid's spirit.

**BRINESTUMP MARSH:** This tangled, overgrown swampland is infested with giant insects, goblins, and other unpleasant monsters. The marshland is relatively



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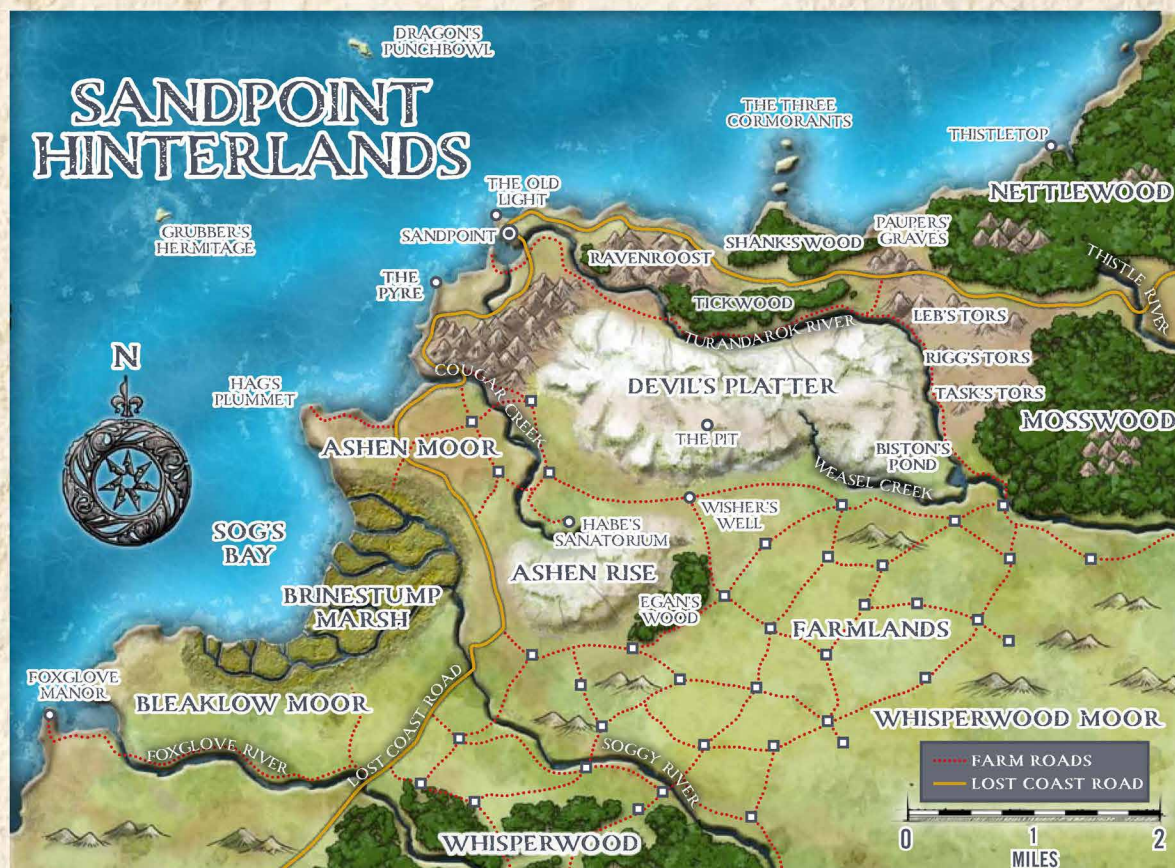
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unexplored as a result, despite its close proximity to the well-traveled Lost Coast Road.

**DEVIL'S PLATTER:** The edges of Devil's Platter are known haunts for the Birdcrunchers—a small tribe of relatively nonaggressive goblins that dwells in numerous caverns along the Platter's western edge. Deeper in, it's rumored that the place is controlled by devil-worshiping bugbears who avoid the light of day but emerge at night from caves to light their fires.

**DRAGON'S PUNCHBOWL:** This bowl-shaped island is little more than a series of stony ridges surrounding a small lake. Wyverns roost in caves here, and rumors hold that a dragon visits the place once or twice per year for unknown reasons.

**EGAN'S WOOD:** This small copse of trees grows along the lee of Ashen Rise, a thick tangle of pine trees once owned by a local eccentric named Egan who forbade any clearing of the land for farming. His shack lies hidden somewhere in the woods. Although Egan died long ago, the giant spiders that infest his beloved woods remain very much alive.

**FARMLANDS:** The farmlands south of Sandpoint are relatively safe, but farmers are always getting into trouble with local wildlife or various local dangers—particularly goblins or mites. At any given time, at least two or three farms need help in running off predators or mischief-seeking troublemakers.

**FOXGLOVE MANOR:** This area is detailed in Chapter Two.

**GRUBBER'S HERMITAGE:** Notorious as a generator of shipwrecks, Grubber's Hermitage is a small, isolated island containing a thorp of a dozen fishing families—insular folk who generally don't welcome visitors. Sandpoint citizens theorize that lepers, ghosts, or worse infest the island. Of late, little has been heard from the Hermitage; with no love lost between this thorp and Sandpoint, no one has gone to investigate the silence as of yet—despite sightings from passing ships of strangely large numbers of carrion birds nearby.

**HABE'S SANATORIUM:** This area is detailed in full in Chapter Two.

**HAG'S PLUMMET:** Old Varisian tales recount the tragic story of young Bevanaka, who found a gray hair and sought out an old witch for an elixir of beauty. The witch gave her the potion, but warned her that the effects would last only as long as she didn't fall in love. For many years, Bevanaka lived as a lonely but beautiful woman, until the day her loneliness grew too great and she fell in love with a young man. Bevanaka grew old in the blink of an eye, but hoped her true love would still remain true. Alas, she was wrong. Horrified by her sudden age, he spurned her. In a fit of despair, Bevanaka threw herself from the cliffs at Hag's Plummets. Since then, these cliffs have been a popular place both for young lovers to sneak away and profess their love and for suicides.





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**THE MOORS:** The three moors that stretch through much of the hinterlands consist of poor-quality soil and stony ground. The northernmost is Ashen Moor, a stretch of low-lying land that slopes gradually to the west toward Hag's Plummert. On the far side of Brinestump Marsh from Ashen Moor lies Bleaklow Moor, a higher-altitude swath of land said to be infested by ghouls below its barren expanse. Whisperwood Moor, the largest of the three moors, lies to the southeast and is often shrouded in fog well into the day. Goblin dogs, wolves, worgs, and worse hunt here, often coming north to prey on the livestock of outlying farmlands.

**MOSSWOOD:** Mosswood's primary inhabitants are goblins, and the Mosswood tribe remains the largest of the Sandpoint goblin tribes today. Part of the Mosswood goblins' tenacity doubtlessly comes from the tribe's chieftain, Big Gugmut, who claims to be the son of a hobgoblin and a wild boar. The Mosswood tribes are numerous, and bickering over which of the goblin hero gods (or Lamashtu herself, for that matter) is the best god leads to more goblin death in Mosswood than all the adventurers and misadventures combined. Mosswood's trees tend to be larger, mostly redwoods, resulting in much more open forest floor than exists at undergrowth-heavy Nettlewood to the north.

**NETTLEWOOD:** North of Mosswood lies Nettlewood, a frustratingly tangled forest. Whereas the trees of Mosswood grow tall and stately, those north of the Lost Coast Road in Nettlewood are lower and share their forest floor with snarls of nettles and thorny underbrush.

**PAUPERS' GRAVES:** Before Sandpoint was settled, Varisians often visited the coastline here, one of their many traditional graveyard sites in the region. When Sandpoint began construction, a large influx of poor and desperate laborers from Magnimar came to the region, hoping to be rewarded for helping build a new town by being given a place in it; those who died during construction were buried here. Today, these bodies are gone, devoured by the ghouls now inhabiting the twisting warrens beneath the area.

**THE PIT:** The most notorious site on Devil's Platter is a dark, circular pit hidden somewhere near the escarpment's center. From above, the Pit is only accessible by flight or via a winding network of mazelike furrows in the Platter's surface, while from below, the numerous caves that branch off of the Pit's walls connect to underground lairs throughout the hinterlands. In this way, the Pit forms the nexus of a "mini-Darklands" below the region. Something like a sinkhole, the circular shaft stretches nearly a hundred feet across, its inner walls crisscrossed with ledges and rope ladders leading deeper into the mist-shrouded depths. Numerous cave entrances along these ledges lead into complexes within the escarpment itself—goblin tribes, infestations of gremlins, sinister lairs inhabited by derros and dark folk, and troglodyte

warrens are among the dangers one faces in these numerous caverns. The deepest reaches of the pit contain an ancient temple devoted to Kabriri (the demon lord of ghouls) and the lair of the infamous Sandpoint Devil.

**THE PYRE:** The ancient Varisians of the region used this promontory for many rituals, including their yearly Swallowtail Festival, but the Pyre hasn't been used since Sandpoint's founding.

**RAVENROOST:** This ragged range of broken hills is decorated here and there with isolated copses of eucalyptus, pepperwood, and pines. Not a lot lives here apart from relatively harmless wild animals.

**SHANK'S WOOD:** This small pine and eucalyptus forest is relatively small. The goblins of the Seven Tooth tribe claim this forest as their territory.

**SOG'S BAY:** This shallow bay has a notorious reputation for being a shipwrecker. Dozens of sandbars and hidden perils fill the area, and the masts of unfortunate ships protrude from the shallows in multiple spots. The waters of the bay are thick with reefclaws, giant crabs, and other tidal predators and scavengers.

**THISTLETOP:** This area is detailed in Chapter One.

**THE THREE CORMORANTS:** Three towering sea stacks protrude from the waves here, their crowns supporting miniature forests of eucalyptus and cypress trees. A small group of harpies dwell amid these trees, but apart from periodically tormenting goblins, the monsters don't meddle with mainland concerns.

**TICKWOOD:** Although giant ticks are known in this wood, the primary denizens of this long, narrow forest of pines, firs, and redwoods are boars. As a result, the wood is a popular hunting ground among the wealthier residents of Sandpoint.

**THE TORS:** Situated to the east of Devil's Platter, these three groups of stony hills are known collectively as the Tors. Named after three adventurers who explored many of the nooks, caverns, and old Varisian tombs here before Sandpoint was founded, the Tors still hide many secrets and small, hidden complexes that await discovery by adventurers.

**WHISPERWOOD:** Only the northern tip of this large forest intrudes into the Sandpoint hinterlands. Whisperwood runs along much of the Lost Coast, its towering redwoods a humbling testimony to the grace of nature. Tales of hidden Thassilonian ruins from both Shalast and Bakrakhon often lure adventurers into these woods, but most fall prey to the wolves, bugbears, and thugs who lie in wait for intruders.

**WISHER'S WELL:** One of the lesser-known Thassilonian ruins in the region, this landmark consists of a circular stone tower only 30 feet high from the outside that drops away into a 100-foot-deep shaft ending in a deep pool of water on the inside. All manner of monsters dwell in the flooded caverns below the well, including a small tribe of skum and a larger tribe of faceless stalkers.



## APPENDIX THREE: MAGNIMAR

MAGNIMAR ENDLESSLY ENDEAVORS TO SURPASS THE OVERWHELMING SCALE AND GRANDEUR OF THE ANCIENT WONDERS THAT LITTER THE VARISIAN LANDSCAPE. A PLACE OF GREAT OPPORTUNITY, SOCIAL STRESS, AND COLD BEAUTY, THE CITY EXUDES THE AIR OF A SOUTHERN METROPOLIS, SEEKING TO RISE ABOVE ITS IGNOBLE BEGINNINGS AS A REFUGE FOR KORVOSAN OUTCASTS TO BECOME A BEACON OF CULTURE AND FREEDOM IN AN UNFORGIVING LAND. YET ITS TOWERING MONUMENTS AND OSTENTATIOUS ARCHITECTURE FORM BUT A CRACKED MASK OVER A STRUGGLING GOVERNMENT AND A DESPERATE PEOPLE IN NEED OF HEROES.

The information presented on the following pages is intended to give merely a brief overview of the city of Magnimar. The Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path doesn't tarry long in the so-called City of Monuments, but there's far more opportunity for adventure in Magnimar. If your group wishes to spend some extra time in the city, you should consult *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Magnimar: City of Monuments* for more information.

### CITY OF MONUMENTS

Magnimar's sprawling slate rooftops and marble avenues stretch from the foundations of the Irespan—a ruined stone bridge of impossible size—to beyond the western banks of the Yondabakari River. A sheer cliff, the Seacleft, cuts through the city's heart, dividing Magnimar into its two major sections: the Summit, upon the cliff's top, and the Shore, below.

The second-largest city in Varisia, Magnimar wages an open war of coins and lies with Korvosa to the east. Both city-states vie for control over vassal communities, natural resources, and trade with the cosmopolitan south. In its constant striving to outdo and exceed Korvosa, Magnimar has opened its gates and harbor to all comers, encouraging traders from many lands to discover the wonders of Varisia away from the excessive taxes and regulations of Korvosa, yet in greater safety than is offered by pirate havens like Riddleport.

Today, more than 16,000 people make their homes in Magnimar, with the majority of that populace consisting of humans of Chelish decent—although an increasing number have Varisian blood. Shoanti are often thought of as little more than brutes, and aren't often trusted. Magnimar also hosts a second transient population: thousands of regular traders from far-flung nations. Many of these merchants, emissaries, and adventurers have homes that they reside in while passing through but that otherwise remain empty.

### MAGNIMAR, CITY OF MONUMENTS

N large city

**Corruption** +2; **Crime** +2; **Economy** +5; **Law** +2; **Lore** +6; **Society** +1

**Qualities** academic, prosperous, rumormongering citizens, strategic location, tourist attraction

**Danger** +0

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** autocracy (lord-mayor)

**Population** 16,428 (13,307 humans, 821 halflings, 657 dwarves, 657 elves, 493 gnomes, 329 half-elves, 164 half-orcs)

#### NOTABLE NPCS

**Haldmeer Grobaras**, lord-mayor (N male human aristocrat 9)

**Verrine Caiteil**, spokeswoman of the Council of Ushers (NG female elf aristocrat 3/wizard 6)

**Bayl Argentine**, leader of the Justice Court (LN male human aristocrat 6/fighter 3)

**Remeria Callinova**, leader of the Varisian Council (CG female human expert 4/rogue 2)

**Sabriyya Kalmeralm**, de facto ruler of the Bazaar of Sails (CN female human rogue 12)

#### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 12,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 8th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

### LIFE IN MAGNIMAR

Since the establishment of a formal city government in 4608 AR, Magnimar has been led by two political bodies: the Council of Ushers and the Office of the Lord-Mayor. When the city was established, this egalitarian arrangement was meant to ensure that no one person would have too powerful a voice in the city-state's governing. After more than a hundred years, however, this noble effort has become embroiled in officialism, paper shuffling, and the ambitions of its members.

Undisputedly the most politically powerful person in Magnimar, Lord-Mayor Haldmeer Grobaras is a paunchy, self-serving politico more concerned with his



# MAGNIMAR

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own comforts than the needs of the underprivileged he hears so much about. Having managed Magnimar for many years, Grobaras half-heartedly handles the immediate needs of the city, indifferently settling matters relating to the distribution of city funds, use of the city watch, and the concerns of countless citizens groups, all while welcoming bribery and lavish gifts. Although his dedication to the finest Chelish fashions and his numerous chins make the lord-mayor's self-indulgent foppishness blatantly apparent, they hide a silver tongue and the private wealth to fulfill nearly any promise. While his station would have him uphold the mandates of the Council of Ushers, he often ignores such duties, proving more attentive to whether or not his personal declarations are enforced.

A third political body operating outside of the city government is the Varisian Council. Formed at the request of the city's elders more than 80 years ago, the Varisian Council ensures that the Magnimarian government does not infringe upon the rights and traditions of Varisia's native peoples—peripherally including the Shoanti—who live in close-knit neighborhoods and transient tent and wagon communities throughout the city.

As a city founded by those who refused to live under the reign of tyrants, Magnimar has relatively few laws. From its barracks within the Arvensoar, the towering fortress of Magnimar's small military, the city watch patrols the length and breadth of the city—although Lord-Mayor Grobaras's decrees see that the richest quarters of the Summit receive the most attention. When the law falls into dispute or cannot be meted out by the watch, quarrels are taken before the esteemed Justice Court. Thirteen justices—led by **LORD JUSTICE BAYLARGENTINE** (LN male human aristocrat 6/fighter 3)—form the highest court in the city, settling arguments and deciding the guilt or innocence of those who come before them.

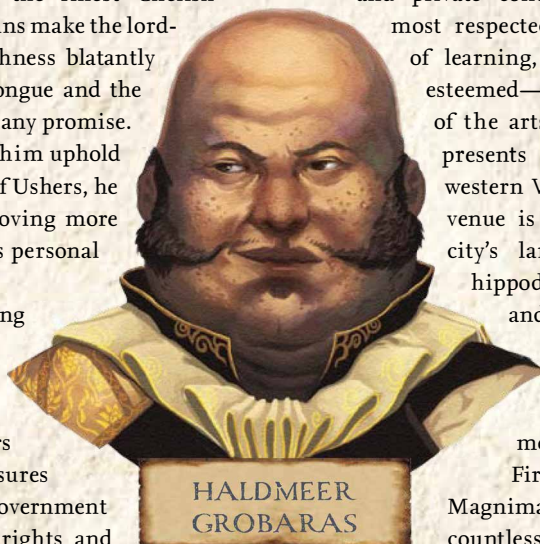
Numerous criminal elements operate throughout Magnimar. The oldest of these groups, the Night Scales, see themselves as the rightful masters of the city's criminal underworld. The Varisian criminals known as the Sczarni also operate in great numbers in Magnimar, each group taking names like the Creepers, the Tower Girls, or the Washside Wringers; adopting criminal specialties; and operating in locally known turfs. **JASTER FRALLINO** (CE male human fighter 5/rogue 4), an aging, merciless tough with thick scars around his neck, leads the largest and most influential group, the Gallowed, from a caravan of wagons almost directly below Lord-Mayor Grobaras's palatial home, Defiant's Garden.

In an attempt to elevate the city-state beyond merely an aggrandized trading post, the local government has done much to encourage education and the arts. The majority of its contributions to city-wide enlightenment goes to the Founder's Archive and Museum of Ages. Occupying a small campus just north of Usher's Hall, these grandiose structures house the histories, findings, and private collections of some of the city's most respected citizens. Beyond these halls of learning, Magnimar also hosts several esteemed—and not so esteemed—houses of the arts. While the Summit's Triodea presents the grandest performances in western Varisia, the most popular public venue is easily the Serpent's Run. The city's largest structure, this gigantic hippodrome hosts decathlons, horse and dog races, displays of magic, circus performances, and—on rare occasions—small-scale naval engagements and mock-gladiatorial battles.

First and foremost a trade city, Magnimar owes its prosperity to the countless foreign merchants who readily make use of the city's reputedly safe and free port. Enforcing no taxes on harborage or imports, the city welcomes business from all lands and makes the bounty of Varisia available for trade. As a result, several of the most prestigious trading companies, mercantile families, and shipping concerns do regular business in the city, with some having even established offices and private local shipyards.

Magnimar welcomes religions from all corners of the world, so long as they don't pursue any ongoing crusades or violate city law. The churches of Abadar, Calistria, Iomedae, and Pharasma have strong citywide followings, and Desna is well-represented among the Varisian population. Tradition and local legends surrounding the Arvensoar have also attracted a number of celestial mystery cults, which practice strange rituals outside the public eye, and assemblies devoted to several empyreal lords are known to gather in the city.

Finally, there is the Irespan. Visible for miles out to sea, this ancient basalt bridge dominates Magnimar's coastline. Jutting from a prominent foundation upon the Seacleft, the Giant's Bridge, as it is sometimes called, soars more than 300 feet above the city below, giving the eclipsed area its name: Underbridge. The Irespan has long been a source of wonderment, mystery, and ill-fortune. Although the founders of Magnimar chose their community's location primarily for its natural harbor and proximity to the Yondabakari River, the ancient rubble of the Irespan that once littered the surrounding beaches proved an opportune source of building materials for the fledgling community. Today,







many of Magnimar's oldest and most elegant structures boast foundations, supports, and statuary constructed of Irespan basalt.

## MAGNIMAR'S DISTRICTS

The city of Magnimar houses nearly two dozen smaller neighborhoods, many of whose boundaries shift and adjust over time. The nine major districts of the city, on the other hand, have well-recognized and stable borders. These nine districts are summarized below.

**ALABASTER DISTRICT:** Home to many of Magnimar's finest and richest aristocrats, the Alabaster District's skyline is dominated by the towers of Fort Indros and the sprawl of the Serpent's Run (the city's largest arena for public events).

**BEACON'S POINT:** The waterfront reaches of Beacon's Point house many of Magnimar's industries (such as shipbuilding and fishing), as well as house the city's naval yards. The further one travels inland from the shore, though, the further one delves into the tangle of slums in Beacon's Point's heart—a wretched region known as Rag's End.

**CAPITAL DISTRICT:** Perhaps the largest of Magnimar's districts, the Capital District houses the majority of the city's government buildings, including Usher's Hall and the Pediment Building. This district of fine stone structures also holds other notable sites, such as the Golemworks (a school and industrial workshop dedicated to the crafting of constructs) and the eclectic collection of beasts on display at the Lord-Mayor's Menagerie.

**DOCKWAY:** Magnimar's merchants' district also contains the largest free market in Varisia—the Bazaar of Sails, a sprawling set of buildings and streets ruled by the so-called Princess of the Market, Sabriyya Kalmeralm.

**KEYSTONE:** The district known as Keystone is a relaxed and relatively quiet one—a mostly residential district that also houses the majority of the city's larger temples (including churches to Desna, Calistria, Erastil, and Pharasma).

**LOWCLEFT:** This is Varisia's entertainment district, a neighborhood that only fully comes to life after sunset. Here visitors can find distractions and diversion among numerous game halls, taverns, brothels, theaters, and similar means of relaxation.

**NAOS:** The majority of Varisia's upper class dwell in this district, amid elegant stone townhouses or small villas. The tallest building in Magnimar, the Arvensoar, rises above this district, and the largest temple in Magnimar, the cathedral of Abadar, can be found here as well.

**ORDELLIA:** Almost its own suburb rather than a fully integrated district of Magnimar, Ordellia is also known as the Foreign District. It is here that the majority of Magnimar's non-human citizens live, along with many other visitors from other nations throughout the Inner Sea region.

**UNDERBRIDGE:** Known more commonly as “the Shadow,” Underbridge is Magnimar's most dangerous slum. Nestled in the perpetual gloom under the Irespan, this district is a haven for criminals, smugglers, and even a few monstrous predators.



## APPENDIX FOUR: TURTLEBACK FERRY

TURTLEBACK FERRY IS A SMALL TOWNSHIP PERCHED ON THE RAIN-DRENCHED NORTH SHORE OF CLAYBOTTOM LAKE. THREE DISTINCTIVE FERRIES CRAFTED FROM THE SHELLS OF GIANT TURTLES SLAIN BY AUTEK LAVENDY, ONE OF THE TOWN'S FOUNDERS, MAKE TURTLEBACK FERRY THE CENTRAL TRADING TOWN FOR THE REGION. NEARLY 80 MILES FROM ILSURIAN, THE NEXT TOWN OF SIMILAR SIZE, TURTLEBACK FERRY HAS NOMINALLY BEEN UNDER MAGNIMARIAN RULE FOR 45 YEARS, AN ARRANGEMENT THE SETTLEMENT AGREED TO IN RETURN FOR PROTECTION FROM THE REGION'S OGRES AND OGREKIN.

**T**urtleback Ferry remains independent in many ways, for its remote location ensures that official visits from Magnimar are few and far between. Turtleback Ferry's current mayor is an aged cleric of Erastil named Maelin Shreed, a selfless soul who manages the village church as both a safe haven for travelers and a hospital wherein he tends the village's sick. Turtleback Ferry also boasts a trading post (the Turtleback General Store), an inn (the Turtle's Parlor), a tavern (Bottoms Up), and a smith (Irontooth's Metal Goods). Most of the village's other buildings are the homes of farmers, hunters, fishers, and trappers—and very few of them ever travel farther south than Ilsurian. To the people of Turtleback Ferry, the arrival of the PCs in the region would be big news, even during a time when the weather hadn't been so ominous... or when word from Fort Rannick hadn't been so sparse!

### ARRIVING AT TURTLEBACK FERRY

Visitors to Turtleback Ferry find the locals friendly enough, although many of them seem nervous and skittish, quick to lock their doors at night and often overreacting to the sound of dogs barking or other unexpected noises. This feeling is only partially due to the early arrival of the winter rains, and it shouldn't take long for the PCs to figure out that Magnimar's worries about Fort Rannick are anything but idle.

Questioning any of the villagers about the fort verifies that there's been no contact from the Black Arrows for several weeks now. Normally, one or two of the rangers visits Turtleback Ferry every few days for supplies, news, or entertainment, but since the rains began in earnest several weeks ago, no one's heard from the rangers at all. In addition, the wilds nearby (particularly Kreegwood) have grown more dangerous. Wild animals like bears, firepelt cougars, and boars are becoming increasingly common along the edges of these woodlands, and several of Turtleback's hunters and trappers believe

### TURTLEBACK FERRY, REMOTE VARISIAN VILLAGE

LN village

**Corruption** -1; **Crime** -2; **Economy** +0; **Law** +1; **Lore** +0; **Society** -1

**Qualities** Insular, Strategic Location

**Danger** +0

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** autocracy (mayor)

**Population** 430 (391 humans, 22 gnomes, 17 halflings)

#### Notable NPCs

**Maelin Shreed**, mayor and priest (LG male Garundi cleric of Erastil 5)

#### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 550 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd

**Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** —

these predators are being forced from the depths of the woodlands by the increased activity of local monsters like ogres, trolls, and worse. Earlier in the week, a patrol headed north to try to make contact with Fort Rannick, but it never returned.

### LIFE IN TURTLEBACK FERRY

The village of Turtleback Ferry isn't at its best when the PCs arrive at the start of Chapter Three. The rains have come early, dampening the settlement's already gloomy spirits—for something is off in the region. Livestock's been going missing for months, and more recently the number of hunters and trappers who've gone missing has increased as well. In a village of only 430, every loss is felt keenly—none more so than the tragic sinking of the pleasure barge *Paradise* and the loss of nearly two dozen lives. That only half of those who were on board at the time were locals does little to ease the sting of the controversial barge's loss.

When *Paradise* was operating, opinions on the so-called "pleasure barge" were split in Turtleback Ferry between those who secretly enjoyed the fact that a





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gambling den and better tavern had come to town and those who viewed the *Paradise* as a threat to business or morality. The barge's owner and proprietor, a beautiful red-haired woman named Lucrecia, aroused a similar debate between those who were enthralled by her charms and those who were threatened by them. In an ironic twist, the tragedy of the *Paradise's* sinking has unified opinions—the people of Turtleback Ferry now recall Lucrecia with fondness and sadness alike, realizing perhaps too late that the additional income the *Paradise* brought to the village was quite nice. The tragedy didn't happen long ago (the point at which Lucrecia sank the barge was less than a week after Fort Rannick fell to the ogres—about a month before the PCs arrive in Turtleback Ferry), so it's still in everyone's thoughts, with several of the townsfolk still in mourning for lost loved ones. The barge itself sank near midnight while it was drifting idly out on Claybottom Lake. There were no survivors—in fact, had a hunter returning home late not spotted the barge's lights out on the lake winking out one by one as it slipped into the water, no one would have noticed the loss until the next morning. In the days following the tragedy, investigations into the event took place. Local attempts to dive down to the wreck to recover bodies failed due to a combination of the depth and the particularly vicious fish that have converged on the area (see *Wreck of the Paradise* on page 397). During the same week, a half-hearted inquest by a lone official

from Ilsurian turned up no additional clues as to why the barge sank. If any locals are asked about this inquest, the bitter villagers imply the investigator was more interested in simply going through the motions of the inquest so he could get back home.

Today, half of the people of Turtleback Ferry believe a lake monster (either Black Magga or the legendary giant gar known as Pinkeye) sank the *Paradise*, while the other half suspect that the barge was sunk by the combined weight of the sins of those on board (a not-so-subtle way of saying “they sank because Erastil punished them”). None in town suspect the truth—that Lucrecia was responsible for the tragedy, and that she yet lives.

But despite the driving rains, strange disappearances, and the loss of the *Paradise*, what has really set the people of Turtleback Ferry on edge is the unsettling silence from Fort Rannick. The Black Arrows do an excellent job at keeping the roads and forest edges relatively safe for hunters and travelers, but for the past several weeks there's been no sign of the rangers in the hinterlands or in town. Normally, an official delegation of rangers from Fort Rannick would visit Turtleback Ferry on every Fireday—in addition to their individual off-duty visits—so when two weeks passed without any sign of them, messengers were sent to the fort to investigate. None returned. Fearing the worst, Mayor Shreed sent word to Magnimar to ask for aid in the investigation. The PCs are to be the first reply to that request for aid.



# TURTLEBACK FERRY



## TURTLEBACK FERRY LOCATIONS

There are nine locations of interest in Turtleback Ferry.

**1 THE TURTLE'S PARLOR:** With no Black Arrows in town of late, innkeeper **CESTEN ORLANDI** (N male human expert 3) has been in a particularly foul mood as he watches his profits dwindle—if the PCs attempt to secure rooms here, he initially tries to charge them 5 gp per room.

**2 BOTTOMS UP:** This tavern is owned by a garrulous halfling couple, **YADS** and **BERTHANDY KESKER** (NG halfling experts 2), and is patronized by hunters, fishermen, and trappers. The halflings loathed the *Paradise*, for it robbed them of much of their regular patronage.

**3 CLAYBOTTOM FERRY:** This ferry provides once-daily round-trip service to Pendaka on the far side of the lake, for the affordable cost of 2 cp per passenger.

**4 IRONTOOTH'S METAL GOODS:** Named for its no-nonsense proprietor and owner, **IRONTOOTH JORVENI** (LN male middle-aged human expert 2/commoner 3), this building is Turtleback Ferry's only smithy. Irontooth left Iser after a hobgoblin hit him in the face with a club—he forged metallic false teeth to hide his ruined smile.

**5 TURTLEBACK GENERAL STORE:** Run by an old maid named **WENDA LEENEE** (NG middle-aged human commoner 3), the Turtleback General Store is functional but unimaginative in its wares.

**6 CHURCH OF ERASTIL:** This is the largest building in town—it serves as both Turtleback Ferry's religious center and its town hall, and its pastor is both its spiritual and its political leader. Maelin Shreed is the one who sent for help from Magnimar, and is the man most of the village locals point to when the PCs arrive. Maelin offers free spellcasting services as long as they're in town (although he'll still appreciate tithes in Erastil's name). Despite his zeal and good intentions, Maelin is relatively clueless as to the true nature of the dangers that face Turtleback Ferry, and unfortunately has very little information to give the PCs other than to recommend they head north to investigate Fort Rannick.

**7 SKULL FERRY:** This ferry provides as-needed service across the Skull River for 1 cp per trip. A large bell on the far side of the river allows the ferry to be called if travelers approach from the west.

**8 TURTLEBACK SCHOOLHOUSE:** This one-room schoolhouse is run by **TILLIA HENKENSEN** (LN female expert 4), a prim but attractive woman who's managed to work wonders over the past few years with Turtleback's youth, having replaced an ill-tempered and old-fashioned teacher who drowned in the river under suspicious circumstances.

**9 TURTLEBACK GRAVEYARD:** The bodies buried here represent generations of farmers, hunters, and pioneers. The local children like to tell stories about the place, but the graveyard is remarkably free of haunts and spooks.





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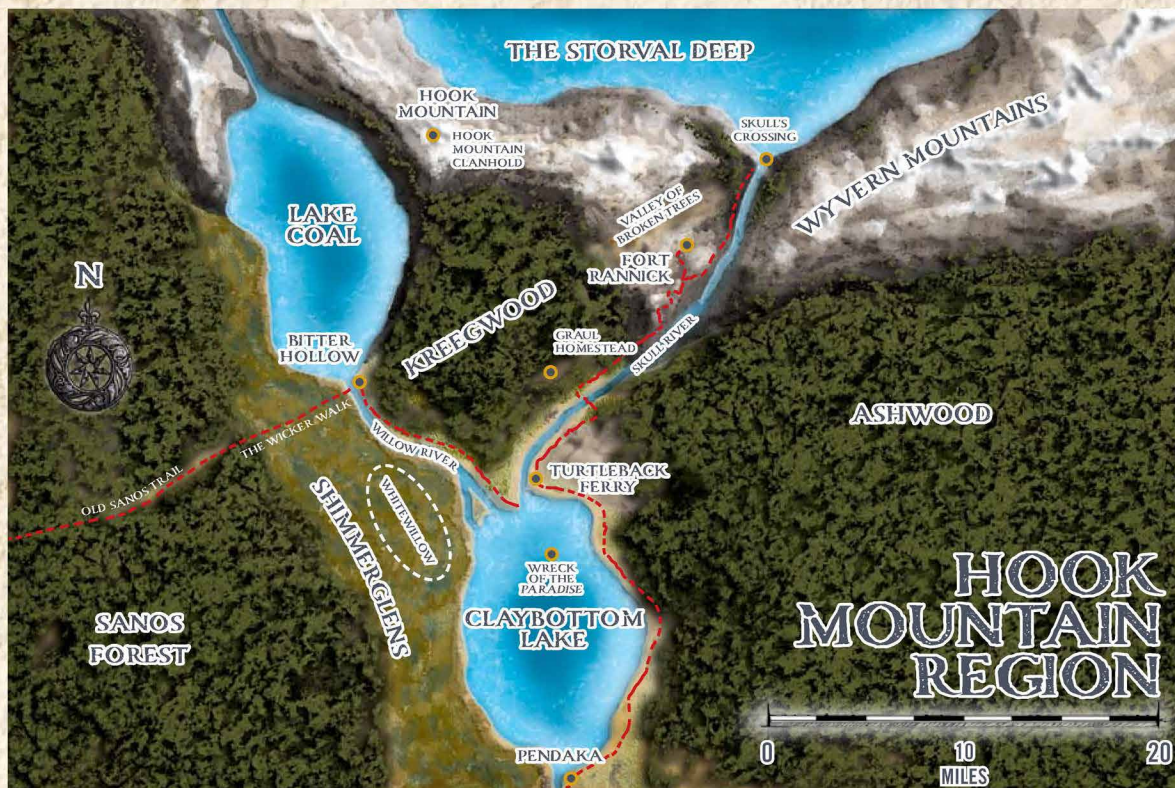
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## TURTLEBACK FERRY RUMORS

The villagers are quiet and sullen of late, but asking anyone about news is sure to get a rumor out of them! Each rumor on the following table is followed by “(True)” for a true rumor and “(False)” for a false rumor—note that false rumors can still cause the PCs to investigate an area pertinent to the adventure, even if their initial reason for visiting the area is based on an incorrect assumption.

| D12 ROLL | RESULT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1        | Black Magga, the monster of the Storval Deep, doesn't stay in that lake. Underwater tunnels connect it to Claybottom Lake, and she comes down here to eat fishermen now and then! I'm sure that's what happened to the <i>Paradise</i> —Black Magga came down and gobbled up all those filthy sinners! (False)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2        | It's been weeks since we've had a visit from the Black Arrows. I'll be the first to admit they're not a friendly lot, but they do a good job keeping the ogres and critters in the woods and hills under control. Hope nothing has happened to them! (True)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 3        | The rains came early this year. Gonna flood out my crops if they don't let up soon. Last time it rained this early this much, we got floods. That were, what, 40-some years ago? Turned out there were a witch behind it all—she were tryin' to turn us all into frogs or somethin' with all the rain! (False)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 4        | People been disappearin' lately. And not just them who's been going into the deep woods. I'm talkin' fishermen, travelers, people just out on the roads. My money's on them Grauls—that family's got ogre blood in them, and once you get ogre blood in you... you just ain't right! (Partially true)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 5        | Heard a bunch of fishermen from Pendaka got themselves eaten by Pinkeye the Gar a week ago. Serves the fools right for tangling with a fish bigger than their boat! (False)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 6        | Heard a few months ago, before all these rains started, that some of the hunters who brave the Valley of Broken Trees for boar found a bunch of enormous footprints. Giant-sized footprints! It's bad enough we've got ogres, but if a giant's moved into the valley, I sure hope the Black Arrows take care of it soon! (True)                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 7        | The ogres up on the Hook are the cause of all the rain. They done recruited a dragon or something to fly around in the clouds and stir up the storms! (False)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 8        | Been some weird lights across the lake in the Shimmerglens lately. They don't show up all the time, but now and then you can see them in the early dawn hours, movin' around like they was a bunch of people over there carryin' around lanterns and dancin' and stuff. Place is haunted, I tells ya! (Partially true)                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 9        | <i>Paradise</i> sunk—it's a tragedy, I'll agree. But know what? Good riddance, I say. I know it ain't nice to wish ill on no one, but I hope that strumpet Lucrecia's at the bottom of the lake as well. Tartin' around town with her chest all pushed out and flashing leg with every other step.... That type of walk might go over well down in Korvosa, but we're respectable folk here! Wouldn't be surprised to find out <i>Paradise</i> sunk on account of her bringing down Erastil's judgment on the whole sinful lot of 'em! (False) |
| 10       | So I noticed my uncle had a weird star-shaped tattoo on his shoulder the other day. I asked him about it, and he just got all angry and tol' me to mind my own. Thing is, though... that ain't the first time I seen that kinda tattoo. Lotsa folks got 'em here. They hide 'em good enough, but you keep an eye out, you'll see one on an ankle or arm or back here and there, sure enough. I don't got one, though, I tell you! Tattoos is sinful business! (True... at least about the spread of tattoos in town)                           |
| 11       | The dam up north, between the Storval Deep and Skull River, is haunted by all of those who have drowned hereabouts. The skulls carved on the dam let the ghosts watch you when you approach! (False)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 12       | No one believes me, but that leader of the Black Arrows—Bayden's his name, I think—he's got something going on over across the lake. I seen him comin' and goin' from Whitewillow, and so's my friends. I'm pretty sure he's up to no good. Nothing friendly lives in swamps, after all! (Partially true)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |





## HOOK MOUNTAIN REGION

The area south of Hook Mountain is dominated by thick forests, lakes, and the swamps known as the Shimmerglens. Note that locations featured prominently in Chapter Three are not detailed below.

**ASHWOOD:** While many forests in Varisia bear dark reputations, Ashwood's is legendary. It seems that everyone within a hundred miles claims to have a relative or friend of a friend who personally encountered a ghost, werewolf, or other spook within the wood's brooding borders.

**BITTER HOLLOW:** Bitter Hollow is a filthy, remote thorp of about 50 hunters and trappers and their families. A single trading post called the Gator's Nest sits in the center of this settlement, and regular trade with the gnomes of the nearby Sanos Forest means that there are often unexpected items for purchase here.

**CLAYBOTTOM LAKE:** The fishing in Claybottom Lake is always good, but fishermen are quick to warn newcomers about the nightbelly boas (see page 162), ravenous giant gars, and deadly giant snapping turtles that infest the lake's western reaches.

**KREEGWOOD:** This woodland is named for the ogres of Hook Mountain, although those who dwell here are mostly the half-human results of ogre lusts. The ogrekin that dwell in the Kreegwood bicker among themselves, and rarely cause problems for outsiders. Anyone who ventures too far into these woods is fair game for dinner (or worse), however, so local villagers and hunters avoid this region entirely.

**LAKE COAL:** The waters of Lake Coal are dark with silt and black algae. Fishing is poor in Lake Coal—not for lack of fish, but for the ferocity of the large dark gars that dwell therein.

**OLD SANOS TRAIL:** This narrow, claustrophobic forest trail winds deep into the Sanos Forest, eventually connecting to several secluded gnome villages deep in the woods. Rumor holds that magic causes the trails to move when those who use them seek to bring trouble to the gnomes.

**PENDAKA:** This tiny fishing thorp is perched on a rocky promontory overlooking the southern shores of Claybottom Lake. With its single combination inn/trading post, the Walleyed Wife, Pendaka's only claim to fame is local baker Olam Keecher's delicious cranberry turtle egg pies.

**SANOS FOREST:** Although gnomes as a race are extremely tight-lipped about what goes on in the Sanos Forest, there are whispers that somewhere deep in its heart they maintain a gateway to the First World.

**STORVAL DEEP:** Filling the entire valley between the Iron Peaks and the Wyvern Mountains, the Storval Deep is a massive lake held back by an ancient dam, Skull's Crossing, at its southern tip.

**VALLEY OF BROKEN TREES:** In this dry gulch, the trees find it difficult to grow due to poor soil and frequent ogre vandalism. Recently, a hill giant named Razmus has claimed this valley as his own. Smarter and cagier than most of his kin, Razmus had little interest in joining Mokmurian's growing army and stole his way south of the Storval Rise in secret. After making his way into



this region a few years ago, Razmus claimed the Valley of Broken Trees as his domain. Whether Razmus serves as an enemy or an unlikely ally to your PCs depends as much upon your whim as it does on the PCs themselves.

## RAZMUS

| XP    | CR | HP  |
|-------|----|-----|
| 9,600 | 10 | 139 |

Male hill giant fighter 2/ranger 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)

CN Large humanoid (giant)

**Init** -1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +10

### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 8, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, -1 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 139 (13 HD; 10d8+3d10+78)

**Fort** +18, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, rock catching

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *thundering earth breaker* +19/+14 (2d6+9/19-20/x3)

**Ranged** rock +9 (1d8+12)

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

**Special Attacks** favored enemy (dwarves +2)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 27, **Dex** 8, **Con** 23, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 28

**Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (earth breaker),

Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus

(Stealth), Stealthy, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (earth breaker)

**Skills** Escape Artist -3, Perception +10, Stealth +17, Survival +17

**Languages** Common, Giant

**SQ** track +1, wild empathy -2

**Gear** breastplate, +1 *thundering earth breaker*, ring of counterspells (contains dominate person)

**WICKER WALK:** Built by the founders of Bitter Hollow in an attempt to encourage trade with the gnomes of the Sanos Forest, the Wicker Walk is a local marvel. The 3-mile-long boardwalk is hung regularly with long-burning

pitch lanterns, and its often-creaking boards offer the only completely dry path across the Shimmerglens.

**WRECK OF THE PARADISE:** The *Paradise* lies under 40 feet of water here, amid thick silt and sharp rocks. Diving down to the wreck is complicated by the presence of Pinkeye, a particularly foul-tempered albino giant gar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 128), but if the PCs can deal with the gar, an investigation of the wreck turns up several interesting facts. First, among the fish-eaten skeletons of those who died, none wearing Lucrecia's fancy clothing are in evidence. Second, the barge's hull bears several obviously artificial holes, the boards burst out rather than in, indicating that the damage that caused the barge to sink was inflicted from onboard—perhaps deliberately. Lucrecia was careful to leave no evidence of her actual nature or plans on the vessel.

**WYVERN MOUNTAINS:** This range's name says it all, and travelers here are advised to keep a sharp eye out for roving packs of the poisonous draconic predators that subsist on the mountains' wild goats and free-roaming llamas.



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## APPENDIX FIVE: XIN-SHALAST

THE SPRAWLING EMPIRE OF THASSILON WAS POWERED BY CONQUEST AND ITS SOPHISTICATED RUNE MAGIC. THAT MAGIC DEFINED THE EMPIRE'S RULERS AND INCLUDED VARIOUS FORMS OF BLOOD SACRIFICE, POWERFUL GLYPH-LAYING, AND DIMENSIONAL WARPING. WITHOUT RUNE MAGIC AND THE BINDING OF THE RUNE GIANTS, THASSILON'S LEGIONS WOULD NEVER HAVE CONQUERED THEIR VAST LANDS. WITH THEM, THEY WERE UNSTOPPABLE—OR AT LEAST UNTIL THE AGE OF LEGEND ENDED AND THE AGE OF DARKNESS BEGAN. FOR WHEN EARTHFALL SHATTERED AZLANT, THASSILON WAS TORN APART AS WELL.

**T**hassilon consisted of seven individual domains, each of which was ruled by one of the seven runelords. Under distinct and exploitative law, each domain embodied its ruler's favored virtue of rule. Each runelord had a capital city that shared the name of his domain, but was prefaced by the word "Xin"—ancient Thassilonian for both "imperial" and "throne of," after the first emperor. Thus, the capital of Shalast was called Xin-Shalast.

Bakrakhan, the domain of wrath, shared its eastern border with Shalast, and the two domains were locked in an enduring war until Bakrakhan was destroyed and sunk under the sea during the cataclysm that precipitated Thassilon's fall. Bakrakhan was a place of many warring tribes who all served Runelord Alaznist but hated each other. Its thick forests were said to be home to hundreds of tribes of sinspawn and humanoids, with goblins, gnolls, and bugbears chief among them. Enslaved hill giants were common in Bakrakhan, as were demons and qliploth—for Runelord Alaznist had forged dark pacts with strange Abyssal powers.

Cyrusian, representing pride, was traditionally regarded as the most powerful domain. At Cyrusian's height, its rune giants and enslaved dragons built more and greater monuments to Cyrusian glory than any other domain. Cyrusian was ruled by the most powerful of the runelords—Xanderghul, one of only two runelords to reign over a nation from the dawn of Thassilon to its legendary fall.

Edasseril, the domain of striving ambition and envy, was rich in timber, precious gems, and iron. The original runelord of envy, her name now lost to time, obsessed over the beauty and power of the nearby elven nation of Celwynvian, and it was from the elves that she stole the name Edasseril for her nation. At the time of Thassilon's fall, this realm was ruled by Runelord Belimarius.

Eurythnia, the domain of fertility and lust, was largely built on its seagoing traffic and trade with distant lands, counting on spices and brothels to fill

its coffers. Marsh giants guarded Eurythnia's shipping from piracy. This land was ruled by Runelord Sorshen, who (like Runelord Xanderghul) commanded her realm for the duration of Thassilon's existence.

Gastash was the domain of abundance and gluttony, but was largely a peaceful and plentiful home for its citizens. Such were Gastash's advantages, yet its people lived in fear of their necromantic leaders. Ankheg infestations were common, bulettes ate many farmers and servants of the runelord, and bandits from other kingdoms were frequent visitors. It was ruled by Runelord Zutha.

Haruka, the domain of rest and sloth, was slow, indolent, and cunning. Ruled by Runelord Krune at the time of Thassilon's fall, most of the Harukans worked as slavers, selling flesh from their markets or enjoying the abuse of their property. It was widely considered a cruel and often hypocritical domain, lazy by nature. The main enemies to peace in Haruka (other than the riots), were boggard tribes and the free hill giants who frequently sided with rebel slaves hiding in the hills against their masters.

Of the seven realms of Thassilon, the wealthiest was the central realm of Shalast. As the second-largest domain after Cyrusian, Shalast collected wealth not only from its gold, mithral, copper, and gemstone mines, but also from its vast quarries, which produced the materials used to build the monuments of the age. The largest and most productive of these quarries exists today as the massive lake known as the Storval Deep. But the wealth these mines and quarries produced was never enough. Runelord Karzoug always wanted more, and the capital of Xin-Shalast was said to be paved with gold—though in fact most of the gold went into the treasury and the alchemical furnaces of the capital and never returned.

Shalast was known for wild ogres and forest giants, as well as enslaved stone giants and exotic otherworldly artificers. Its treasures were sometimes carried on powerful mammoth-drawn caravans. The general





population survived largely as miners, smiths, and traders, providing further wealth. Many abandoned mines still litter the Storval Plateau; the mountain passes of Shalast still contain monasteries and ruins now abandoned to the wilderness.

Karzoug, Runelord of Greed, was known for his calculating mind and utter mercilessness. He was rumored to be either half-vampire or descended from draconic stock, yet it may be more terrible to know that he was nothing more than a man. Absolute greed powered his every action. Certainly Karzoug was covetous and deeply corrupt—famed for ordering the immolation of an entire city for its tax collectors' shorting of a few silvers—but that was the reward granted him by the runes for his power and dedication to magic. He long fought a silent war of assassins, mage-poison, and demon-fetches against Alaznist, the queen of Bakrakhan. In the end, something sank her kingdom below the waves even as the Thassilonian empire fell. Karzoug was enough of a master of the arcane that many suspect his hand in triggering the murder of an entire kingdom. His weapon of rule was a burning glaive, studded with priceless meteoritic gemstones. And the city of Xin-Shalast was his throne.

## MORE ABOUT THASSILON

The rest of this appendix focuses primarily on the ruined lower city of Xin-Shalast, a location that features heavily in the final chapter of *Rise of the Runelords*. As you run this campaign, you shouldn't

need much more information about the rest of the ancient empire of Thassilon beyond what is presented in this appendix or woven into the text of each of the individual chapters of this book, but if you're craving more information about Thassilon than what is presented on page 211 of the *Inner Sea World Guide*, you can consult the chapter on Thassilon in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Kingdoms*.

## XIN-SHALAST'S DENIZENS

The ruined city of Xin-Shalast is almost as dangerous today as it was at the height of its glory. While its runelord is trapped within the Eye of Avarice and the city's infrastructure and armies are long shattered, the monsters that dwell here now are among the most terrible and destructive in the Inner Sea region. Many giants dwell in Xin-Shalast, mostly cloud giants and frost giants, but with small tribes of stone giants, taiga giants and storm giants thrown into the mix. Without exception, these giants have all fallen under the control of the revived rune giants of Xin-Shalast. Before Karzoug's wakening several years ago, the cloud and frost giants of Xin-Shalast lived in a dozen different bickering tribes, but under the new regime they have reverted to the enslaved minions of Thassilon's glory days.

Many of the giants encountered in Xin-Shalast possess telepathic links with rune giants within the city itself as a result of the rune giants' *dominate person* abilities. (As a general rule, you can assume









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that at least one giant in every group the PCs fight in Xin-Shalast is so dominated.) A dominated giant can use this telepathic link to inform its lord of the PCs' presence, actions, and tactics, and in so doing alert the city of their approach. A giant freed from his rune giant master becomes panicked and attempts to flee the environs at once—only if magically compelled does a freed giant even contemplate a return to Xin-Shalast.

Other monsters dwell in Xin-Shalast as well. Some, such as the blue dragon Ghlorofaex, the ice devil Gamigin, or the undead and alien Hidden Beast are featured directly as opponents for the PCs to fight in Chapter Six, while others can be encountered more often as wandering monsters (see the table on page 405). With the exception of the truly mindless or animalistic monsters, all of Xin-Shalast's denizens know that Runelord Karzoug is quickening in his tomb, and it's a common thing for the defenders of the city to regard defeating the PCs as an excellent opportunity to earn fame and rewards from the soon-to-rise runelord.

## ARTISAN DISTRICT

The southernmost district of Xin-Shalast is the Artisan District. Shops and bazaars lined the Golden Road, with its many foundries, workshops, and mills being situated farther to the east and west. Cisterns fed by subterranean aqueducts from the Entertainment District now stand empty. The majority of this district's populace was humanoid and represented the provider caste in Xin-Shalast—their descendants became the heritors of Varisia. Of all the city's districts, this one was the least repressive and enjoyed a modest amount of freedom from scrutiny by the ruling class. Karzoug was not fool enough to believe that his extravagant penchant for greed could be satisfied by the fruits of oppressed artisans, and thus let them be for the most part as long as they remained loyal and filled his coffers with their taxes. The district even had a separate gate into the city to avoid the main gate—a well defended structure called Krak Naratha. The northern portion of the Artisan District has a wide colonnade leading to a pyramidal structure set atop a large dome. This served as the headquarters of the Guild of Master Masons and Architects, the grandmaster of which typically served as the district's consul.

## ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

Like all great tyrants and dictators, the runelords realized they could never maintain control of their empire unless they were able to keep the masses distracted. To this end, one of the most opulent districts of the Lower City was the Entertainment District. Here could be found just about any hedonistic diversion imaginable (with those unavailable found in the Hypogeum). Massive works of architecture were erected to awe visitors and cater to the citizens of Xin-Shalast.

Great spectacles were staged in the various venues available in this district. While not the most heavily populated district of the city, it was certainly the most heavily visited by those seeking everything from fine foods and innocent entertainment to the vilest depths of depravity. A constant stream of purchases from the Slave District came through this district to replenish losses due to attrition. The spectacular architecture of the northern part of this district remains largely intact, while the southern portions have been buried under a tide of unnaturally fecund lichen growth.

## THE HYPOGEUM

Each time Xin-Shalast came under the rule of a new runelord, many of the city's older structures became obsolete, as noble families and tastes in pleasure and architectural style changed. Rather than demolish the structures that existed in the city, new structures were merely built atop the older ones, and in this way Xin-Shalast's buildings grew mighty and tall indeed. This was done through laws of eminent domain passed by the runelord, and was often accomplished without bothering to purchase the original buildings or gain the permission of their owners. Connections to these lower levels were unnecessary, and stone walls traditionally sealed entrances to lower chambers. As additional structures were added, this region of hidden buildings likewise expanded, creating a multilevel warren composed of the old dwellings, businesses, and ground-level streets. The entire region of lower structures became known as the Hypogeum.

The twisting catacombs of the Hypogeum have weathered the years well, and many still exist in the quarter-mile-wide section of the city adjoining the Golden Road, forming a maze of catacombs, smugglers' tunnels, and trap-laden hideouts. The skulk tribes of the Spared avoid these tunnels and seal all openings into them, as all manner of dangerous monsters dwell within.


## JOTUNBURG

This section of the city is squeezed between Temple Row and the Artisan District. Here the buildings are oversized for a reason, as they housed the majority of Xin-Shalast's giant population. These massive edifices extend all the way up the shoulder of the valley overlooking the Lower City and are accessed via gigantic unsupported spans hundreds of feet in the air that extend from the Golden Road to this mountain spur. Today, Jotunburg is the home of several tribes of giants, including cloud, frost, and even a few taiga and storm giants.

## RISING DISTRICT

The Rising District begins immediately beyond the Rune Gates and served as the residential quarters for the nobility of the city—Harridans of the Mountain,





high-ranking lamias, and so on—as well as those non-monstrous inhabitants with enough power, influence, or gold to earn a spot upon the sacred Face of Mhar Massif. The highest dwelling typically served as the residence of the priestess holding the rank of Most High at the House of Divine Consumption. The dwellings are usually towers protruding from the rock face, due to the lack of ground to build upon, and they grow larger and more elaborate as they climb the mountain.

The Golden Road runs through the center of the Rising District on its way to the spires of the “upper city.” This makes the road extremely steep and, in some places, nearly vertical, with great steps carved into its surface almost like a ladder. Unfortunately for PCs, these steps are sized for giants and are most comfortable for those of Huge or larger size. Smaller creatures must make numerous DC 15 Climb checks as they ascend the steps, each of which has only a narrow ledge abutting the risers. In addition, ice tends to form on the steps and the incredible cold, high winds, and other hazards of the high mountains are faced by anyone who chooses to clamber up this treacherous trail. The Golden Road climbs 8,500 feet to the Spires of Xin-Shalast, though the Rising District ends around the 24,000-foot elevation, about 2,000 feet below the citadel. Actually climbing this expanse of steps can require mountain-climbing gear and take days to complete even in good weather. Unlike the rest of Xin-Shalast, those mighty towers outside the occlusion field have not fared well over the years. Many have collapsed and tumbled down the mountain, taking those below with them, and many more are unstable, so climbers who plan on sheltering in these structures might be in for a rude surprise as one shifts and begins to slide down around them, out into open space for a very long free fall.

## SLAVE DISTRICT

All of the slaves in the city, except for those privately owned as personal servants in the various households, were considered property of the state and served the communal needs of the city. They were usually humanoids captured in raids upon neighboring lands or criminals punished with a sentence of lifelong servitude, but occasionally included giants who had fallen out of favor or deserted from the army, yet didn't warrant transformation into a runslave (see page 412). All of these slaves were quartered here in extremely cramped conditions, in poorly made buildings of clay brick rather than stone, and were under constant scrutiny by special units of Xin-Shalast's army trained as slave takers and overseers. Shoddy workmanship and overcrowding killed thousands of slaves each year due to building collapses, yet there were always more slaves to replace those lost.

When Earthfall devastated the region, a volcano east of the city finally erupted after ages of quiescence.

Whether this was caused purposely by Karzoug or simply resulted from the power of the meteor falling from the sky remains open to speculation. Whatever the cause, the effect on the Slave District was devastating. Earth tremors and the pyroclastic flow that crashed into the Slave District swallowed it whole. Only a few of the hardier stone buildings survived, and in the ages since, they have slowly been consumed by the advance of a great glacier creeping over the old lava flow, its leading edge icy and razored, its body a dark mass of gritty ice. The district exists now as a haunted landscape of blasted terrain and occasional ruins projecting up at crazy angles where they have managed to oppose the glacier's advance.

The nigh-incalculable loss of life that occurred here in a matter of moments has spawned a multitude of undead over the years. Fortunately, most of these creatures are corporeal monsters like wights or ghouls, and remain encased in their tombs of ice, waiting for an unwary digger to set them free. Yet there are also quite a few wraiths, spectres, and ghosts that haunt the region, and they have no such constraints stemming from their remains still being buried. The most dangerous of the undead that dwell here include vampires, winterwights, and at least three ravener dragons, although these undead generally keep to the deepest reaches of the ruins. The skulk tribes of the Spared have done much to check the spread of the undead. Approximately half of the tunnels below the Slave District are under skulk control and relatively free of undead today. Unfortunately, these skulks themselves have recently fallen victim to the monstrous undead Hidden Beast.

## TEMPLE ROW

The exotic, cyclopean architecture of Xin-Shalast is nowhere more apparent than this stretch of temples built along the Golden Road where it meets the mountain. Here were built the religious centers of Xin-Shalast in a plethora of styles, shapes, and materials, with only two things in common: multiple towers and prodigious dimensions. That the majority of these temples were dedicated to Karzoug speaks volumes about the mindset of his people and the philosophies of his entire nation, yet here and there stood cathedrals dedicated to the actual deities of Thassilon—Lissala, Minderhal, the Peacock Spirit, and even Desna. Intermixed with these temples are darker, brooding structures and statues of a singularly sinister mien—these were once shrines and fanes dedicated to various demon lords and archdevils, including such horrors as Mammon, Orcus, Pazuzu, Rubicante, and Lamashtu.

The Golden Road passes by these edifices before climbing upward through the Rune Gates toward the Spires of Xin-Shalast above. A self-indulgent and godless faith called Divine Consumption (a thinly



veiled tiered organization geared primarily toward lining the pockets of the few with the riches gathered and earned by the many) served as the only officially sanctioned religion of Xin-Shalast, but Karzoug pragmatically allowed other faiths to build their houses of worship here as well, as long as they paid their temple taxes and their doctrines did not contradict his rule. Behind the temples, on the west side of the road, stretches an area of residences for the clergy and lay workers, huge storage complexes to hold the temple tithes and supplies, and various private shrines and amusements claimed by the hierarchy of one temple or the other. These buildings remain largely intact and are under the control of the lamiakin of Xin-Shalast, the leaders of whom have converted the onetime temples into personal mansions.

## LENG

Leng is a remote location on another plane, one mostly unknown to Golarion's brightest scholars but referred to obliquely in certain ancient and blasphemous tomes. The runelords of Thassilon knew of it and often drew creatures from its frozen, inhospitable reaches to do their bidding. Leng is a desolate realm inhabited by semi-human cannibals, immense intelligent spiders, flying draconic creatures, and other horrific monsters. Immense mountains, some of which seem impossibly tall, hedge in Leng from every side.

Leng has normal gravity and time, is finite in size, and is divinely morphic, though what kind of gods exist therein who can transform the realm is unknown. Leng is strongly chaotic-aligned and mildly evil-aligned.

Leng and Kadath are the creations of H. P. Lovecraft, immortalized primarily in his short novels "The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath" and "At the Mountains of Madness." Leng seems to serve several roles in Lovecraft's writings, and it's unclear if it's a real place in the Antarctic or the Himalayas or a fantastic place in the mystical realm of Earth's Dreamlands. In the world of Golarion, Leng exists as another plane, one that overlays the Material Plane slightly in the Kodar Mountains but is itself another place entirely that exists in a forgotten and remote corner of the Outer Planes and is inhabited by creatures inimical to sane life.

If you're looking for more information about Leng and Kadath in the context of RPG games, you should check out Chaosium's excellent *Call of Cthulhu* RPG, particularly their sourcebook *H. P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands*.

## LOOTING XIN-SHALAST

The amount of wealth in Xin-Shalast is staggering, with precious metals and gems and other rare materials having been used in the construction of the city's buildings, to say nothing of the countless hidden vaults of treasure and gold in areas not covered by this adventure. A character could become comfortably

rich just scavenging gold leaf or gems from the walls of Xin-Shalast's structures, but for 15th-level PCs, this level of "rich" might seem relatively poor. A day's work scavenging precious metals and gems from Xin-Shalast's architecture yields 10d6 gp worth of commodities. The true treasures of the city are hidden in its vaults, which are, in most cases, still guarded by ancient and deadly traps and creatures. Since on average it'd take a group of four PCs 2 solid weeks of scraping and scavenging to pull together enough gold to buy a single +1 dagger, ideally your group soon realizes its time is better spent elsewhere.



RUNE GIANT



# APPENDIX SIX: BESTIARY

VARISIA HAS A LONG TRADITION OF LEGENDS AND TALES OF THE NUMEROUS STRANGE AND FRIGHTENING MONSTERS THAT DWELL WITHIN ITS WILDS. IN SOME CASES, THESE MONSTERS ARE LITTLE MORE THAN GOBLINS, OGRES, OR TROLLS—CREATURES WELL KNOWN AND WELL FEARED THROUGHOUT THE INNER SEA REGION. YET THE LEGACY OF THASSILON HAS VISITED UPON VARISIA A LARGE NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL HORRORS, INCLUDING STRANGE AND FEROCIOUS VARIETIES OF LAMIA-KIN, OTHERWORLDLY INVADERS, AND STALKING GUARDIANS OF ANCIENT TOMBS.

This appendix presents seven new monsters and two new templates for use in your Rise of the Runelords campaign. Note that these monster entries utilize the most recently published set of Universal Monster Rules, as presented in Appendix 3 of *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3.

## TEMPLATE: LAMIA HARRIDAN

Rarely, a lamia of great divine power undergoes an unholy and dramatic transformation, increasing in size and speed to become a truly intimidating foe. Manipulators and slavers, spiritual leaders and oppressive tyrants, lamia harridans are megalomaniacal, corrupt, and brutal. Only Large-sized lamias (or rarely, lamia matriarchs—but never kuchrimas or hungerers) who are at least 10th level in a class that grants divine spellcasting can gain the benefits of this template. A lamia harridan retains all of the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here. Note that all bonuses and penalties associated with changing size are incorporated into the rules below.

**CR:** Same as the base creature +1.

**SIZE:** Increase from Large to Huge.

**AC:** Size penalty to AC becomes –2, but natural armor increases by +3.

**DEFENSIVE ABILITIES:** A lamia harridan gains DR 10/magic and SR equal to her CR + 11.

**ATTACKS:** Size penalty on attack rolls becomes –2. Increase base claw damage to 1d6.

**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** A lamia harridan gains the pounce ability and drains 1d8 points of Wisdom each time she hits with her touch attack. When a lamia harridan uses her pounce ability, she also gains a rake attack with her two hind claws (these attacks are identical in other regards to her normal claw attacks). The lamia harridan's caster level for her spell-like abilities increases to match her divine spellcasting class level.

**ABILITIES:** Apply the following size modifiers as a result of growing from Large to Huge: +8 Str, +4 Con. A lamia harridan suffers no penalty to Dex from becoming Huge, and in fact gains +4 Dex. She gains +2 Wis and +2 Cha.

## WANDERING MONSTERS

The following wandering monster tables are provided to help you generate additional encounters for your game. The rate at which wandering monster encounters occur is up to the GM. The Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path assumes a 20% chance of an encounter occurring during a day of travel or a night of rest, but you can adjust this rate as you see fit, increasing it if the party needs a few more encounters in order to gain some desperately needed experience points, or decreasing it if the number of combats per session has begun feeling like a grind.

These tables are designed to provide appropriate challenges for an appropriately leveled party in the corresponding part of the Rise of the Runelords campaign.

## SANDPOINT HINTERLAND ENCOUNTERS

| d% roll | Result              | Avg. CR | Source                                         |
|---------|---------------------|---------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1–10    | 1d6 dire rats       | 1       | <i>Bestiary</i> 232                            |
| 11–20   | 2d4 mites           | 1       | <i>Bestiary</i> 207                            |
| 21–28   | 1 dire bat          | 2       | <i>Bestiary</i> 30                             |
| 29–33   | 1d4 carrionstorms   | 3       | Page 408                                       |
| 34–39   | 2d6 human skeletons | 3       | <i>Bestiary</i> 250                            |
| 40–53   | 2d6 goblins         | 4       | <i>Bestiary</i> 156                            |
| 54–62   | 1d6 goblin dogs     | 4       | <i>Bestiary</i> 157                            |
| 63–74   | 1d4 rat swarms      | 4       | <i>Bestiary</i> 232                            |
| 75–81   | 1d6 boars           | 5       | <i>Bestiary</i> 36                             |
| 82–91   | 2d4 ghouls          | 5       | <i>Bestiary</i> 146                            |
| 92–99   | 1 will-o'-wisp      | 6       | <i>Bestiary</i> 277                            |
| 100     | 1 Sandpoint Devil   | 8       | <i>The Inner Sea</i><br><i>World Guide</i> 311 |

## YONDABAKARI RIVER ENCOUNTERS

| d% roll | Result                 | Avg. CR | Source                |
|---------|------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1–17    | 1 mosquito swarm       | 3       | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 193 |
| 18–30   | 2d6 bandits            | 4       | <i>GM Guide</i> 258   |
| 31–40   | 1d6 goblin snakes      | 4       | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 132 |
| 41–49   | 1d6 constrictor snakes | 5       | <i>Bestiary</i> 255   |
| 50–58   | 2d8 stirges            | 5       | <i>Bestiary</i> 260   |





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|--------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 59–64  | 1d4 hydras              | 6 | <i>Bestiary</i> 178   |
| 65–71  | 1 shambling mound       | 6 | <i>Bestiary</i> 246   |
| 72–82  | 2d6 boggards            | 7 | <i>Bestiary</i> 37    |
| 83–89  | 1d4 giant gars          | 8 | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 128 |
| 90–94  | 1 marsh giant           | 8 | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 129 |
| 95–100 | 1 giant snapping turtle | 9 | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 273 |

## VARISIAN LOWLAND ENCOUNTERS

| d% roll | Result                     | Avg. CR | Source                |
|---------|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1–9     | 1 giant black widow spider | 3       | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 256 |
| 10–17   | 1d4 lyrakien azatas        | 4       | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 38  |
| 18–32   | 1d6 horses                 | 4       | <i>Bestiary</i> 177   |
| 33–44   | 2d8 goblins                | 4       | <i>Bestiary</i> 156   |
| 45–52   | 1 manticore                | 5       | <i>Bestiary</i> 199   |
| 53–60   | 1d4 ogres                  | 5       | <i>Bestiary</i> 220   |
| 61–68   | 1d6 firepelt cougars       | 5       | <i>Bestiary</i> 40    |
| 69–82   | 2d4 wanderers              | 6       | <i>GM Guide</i> 290   |
| 83–88   | 1 hill giant               | 7       | <i>Bestiary</i> 150   |
| 89–96   | 1d6 harpies                | 7       | <i>Bestiary</i> 172   |
| 97–100  | 1 wolf-in-sheep's clothing | 8       | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 285 |

## HOOK MOUNTAIN HINTERLANDS ENCOUNTERS

| d% roll | Result              | Avg. CR | Source                |
|---------|---------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1–12    | 2d4 ogrekin         | 5       | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 204 |
| 13–22   | 1d4 trappers        | 5       | <i>GM Guide</i> 276   |
| 23–29   | 1d6 dire wolves     | 6       | <i>Bestiary</i> 278   |
| 30–42   | 1 ettin             | 6       | <i>Bestiary</i> 130   |
| 43–48   | 1d6 giant scorpions | 6       | <i>Bestiary</i> 242   |
| 49–55   | 1d4 grizzly bears   | 6       | <i>Bestiary</i> 31    |
| 56–59   | 1d4 flame drakes    | 7       | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 106 |
| 60–67   | 1d8 ogres           | 7       | <i>Bestiary</i> 220   |
| 68–75   | 1d6 pixies          | 7       | <i>Bestiary</i> 228   |
| 76–82   | 1 giant tarantula   | 8       | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 256 |
| 83–90   | 1d6 trolls          | 8       | <i>Bestiary</i> 268   |
| 91–96   | 3 annis hags        | 9       | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 16  |
| 97–100  | 1 nereid            | 10      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 198 |

## STORVAL PLATEAU ENCOUNTERS

| d% roll | Result                    | Avg. CR | Source                |
|---------|---------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1–9     | 1d8 giant geckos          | 5       | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 186 |
| 10–17   | 1d6 giant eagles          | 6       | <i>Bestiary</i> 118   |
| 18–27   | 1d4 venomous snake swarms | 6       | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 249 |
| 28–36   | 1d6 giant vultures        | 7       | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 284 |
| 37–45   | 3d6 aurochs               | 8       | <i>Bestiary</i> 174   |
| 46–55   | 2d4 ogres                 | 8       | <i>Bestiary</i> 220   |
| 56–60   | 1d4 bulettes              | 8       | <i>Bestiary</i> 39    |
| 61–72   | 1d6 raiders               | 8       | <i>GM Guide</i> 280   |
| 73–78   | 1d8 army ant swarms       | 9       | <i>Bestiary</i> 16    |
| 79–82   | 2d6 gargoyles             | 9       | <i>Bestiary</i> 137   |
| 83–86   | 1d4 hill giants           | 9       | <i>Bestiary</i> 150   |
| 87–92   | 1d6 wyverns               | 9       | <i>Bestiary</i> 282   |
| 93–95   | 1d3 runeslave hill giants | 10      | Page 412              |
| 96–100  | 1d4 stone giants          | 10      | <i>Bestiary</i> 151   |

## RUNEFORGE ENCOUNTERS

| d% roll | Result                   | Avg. CR | Source                |
|---------|--------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1–6     | 1d8 incubus demons       | 10      | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 73  |
| 7–16    | 1d4 stone giants         | 10      | <i>Bestiary</i> 151   |
| 17–22   | 1d6 Thassilonian mummies | 10      | Page 259              |
| 23–32   | 1d6 warriors of wrath    | 10      | Page 292              |
| 33–40   | 1d8 sinspawn axemen      | 11      | Page 293              |
| 41–48   | 1d8 succubus demons      | 11      | <i>Bestiary</i> 68    |
| 49–58   | 1 stone golem            | 11      | <i>Bestiary</i> 163   |
| 59–67   | 2d8 wraiths              | 11      | <i>Bestiary</i> 281   |
| 68–74   | 1 coloxus demon          | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 72  |
| 75–82   | 1 omox demon             | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 79  |
| 83–88   | 1 shining child          | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 245 |
| 89–94   | 1 glabrezu demon         | 13      | <i>Bestiary</i> 61    |
| 95–100  | 1 fiendish mustard jelly | 14      | Page 257              |

## KODAR MOUNTAIN ENCOUNTERS

| d% roll | Result               | Avg. CR | Source                |
|---------|----------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1–16    | 2d4 yetis            | 8       | <i>Bestiary</i> 287   |
| 17–27   | 1d6 archaeologists   | 9       | <i>GM Guide</i> 297   |
| 28–37   | 1 roc                | 9       | <i>Bestiary</i> 236   |
| 38–46   | 1d4 spectres         | 9       | <i>Bestiary</i> 256   |
| 47–52   | 1 adult white dragon | 10      | <i>Bestiary</i> 100   |
| 53–62   | 1d8 wyverns          | 10      | <i>Bestiary</i> 282   |
| 63–66   | 1 thunderbird        | 11      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 264 |
| 67–74   | 1d6 frost giants     | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 149   |
| 75–78   | 1 frost worm         | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 126 |
| 79–83   | 2d4 kuchrimas        | 12      | Page 411              |
| 84–85   | 1 rusalka            | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 3 232 |
| 86–88   | 1d8 shantaks         | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 244 |
| 89–92   | 1 taiga giant        | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 131 |
| 93–96   | 1d4 cloud giants     | 13      | <i>Bestiary</i> 147   |
| 97–99   | 1 hungerer           | 15      | Page 410              |
| 100     | 1 wendigo            | 17      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 281 |

## XIN-SHALAST ENCOUNTERS

| d% roll | Result                 | Avg. CR | Source                |
|---------|------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1–15    | 1d8 kuchrimas          | 12      | Page 411              |
| 16–22   | 2d4 hill giants        | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 150   |
| 23–28   | 1d6 frost giants       | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 149   |
| 29–32   | 1d6 vampire skulls     | 12      | Page 331              |
| 33–37   | 1 frost worm           | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 126 |
| 38–44   | 1 scarlet walker       | 12      | Page 414              |
| 45–48   | 1d8 denizens of Leng   | 12      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 82  |
| 49–53   | 1d4 cloud giants       | 13      | <i>Bestiary</i> 147   |
| 54–57   | 1 storm giant          | 13      | <i>Bestiary</i> 152   |
| 58–66   | 2d4 stone giants       | 13      | <i>Bestiary</i> 151   |
| 67–75   | 1d6 abominable snowmen | 13      | Page 328              |
| 76–80   | 1d4 lamia matriarchs   | 14      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 175 |
| 81–87   | 1 mountain roper       | 15      | Page 336              |
| 88–91   | 1 hungerer             | 15      | Page 410              |
| 92–95   | 1d3 rune giants        | 16      | <i>Bestiary</i> 2 130 |
| 96–97   | Gamigin                | 16      | Page 335              |
| 98–100  | Ghlorofaex             | 17      | Page 338              |



## BLACK MAGGA

This enormous creature's serpentine neck supports a leering reptilian head—its body is a wriggling mass of tentacles.

### BLACK MAGGA

CR 15



XP 51,200

CE Gargantuan outsider (aquatic, native)

**Init** +4; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 6, flat-footed 30 (+24 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 232 (15d10+150)

**Fort** +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

**DR** 15/cold iron and magic; **Immune** death effects, mind-affecting effects, petrification, polymorph; **Resist** acid 20, cold 20; **SR** 26

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +24 (2d8+13/19-20 plus energy drain), 4 tentacles +19 (2d6+6 plus grab)

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

**Special Attacks** breath of madness, constrict (2d6+11), energy drain (2 levels, DC 22)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +20)

Constant—*invisibility purge*

At will—*death knell* (DC 17), *prayer*

3/day—*demand* (DC 23), *dimensional anchor*, *divination*, *dominate person* (DC 20), *greater command* (DC 20)

1/day—*commune*, *dream*, *unhallow*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 37, **Dex** 10, **Con** 31, **Int** 25, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +32 (+36 grapple); **CMD** 42 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike

**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (nature) +22, Knowledge (planes) +25, Knowledge (religion) +22, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +25, Stealth +6, Survival +19, Swim +36

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Thassilonian

**SQ** transdimensional tentacles, warp dimensions

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** the Storval Deep

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** triple

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Breath of Madness (Su)** Black Magga can exhale a cloud of foul-smelling, poisonous breath as a standard action once every minute. This cloud of black smoke fills a 60-foot cone. All creatures in the area take 1d6 points of Wisdom damage and become confused for 1d6 rounds (a DC 27 Will save halves the Wisdom damage and negates the confusion effect). This is a mind-affecting poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based. This breath weapon cannot be used while underwater.

**Transdimensional Tentacles (Su)** Black Magga's tentacles allow her to see into and infiltrate the Ethereal Plane and the Plane of Shadow while she is on the Material Plane. This allows her not only to be aware of these planes and the creatures there, but also to shift her tentacles through these planes to attack their inhabitants. She can even phase her tentacles in and out of existence, effectively reaching through walls and other solid barriers to attack foes on the other side, provided that area is not warded by a *dimensional lock* or similar effect. She can grapple foes with her tentacles normally, but cannot pull grappled foes or objects through planes as her tentacles shift between them.

**Warp Dimensions (Su)** Black Magga's presence distorts the dimensions. Any creature that attempts to utilize a teleportation effect while within 300 feet of Black Magga must succeed at a DC 21 caster level check or the teleport effect fails. If the effect fails, the creature that attempted to create that effect must succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Black Magga is one of the favored servants of Lamashtu and an embodiment of the goddess's reign over beasts, monsters, and madness. As an unholy auger of her will, Black Magga originally sought to confound the works of the civilized world, spread fear of monsters and the wilds, and direct Lamashtu's lesser servants in acts of depravity and bloodshed. Black Magga arrived in the Storval Deep not long after Karzoug flooded the immense quarry, and her presence in the newly formed lake brought much misery and dread to the Thassilonians who dwelt on the lake's shores or sailed its surface. Karzoug's interest in the region waned quickly, and he never bothered to take steps against the monster, prompting many to whisper that the runelord made a bargain with Lamashtu to place the monster in the Storval Deep, perhaps to hide some sort of great secret he had sunk beneath the waters. In any event, it was said that the goddess spoke directly to Black Magga, and for many, the words of the monster were equal to the commands of Lamashtu herself.

Bearing a head like a plesiosaur atop a thrashing mass of tentacles and eyes, Black Magga is an immense creature indeed. Although she is effectively immortal until slain, she has spent many of the more than 10,000 years since she first came to Varisia in deep hibernation. These slumbers could last for a dozen centuries or more at a time, and are punctuated by relatively short periods of activity that generally last for only a few decades. These long periods of sleep have had something of a debilitating effect on Black Magga, for with each century of slumber, she grows weaker. She is now but a shadow of her original power. That she remains as powerful as she does today speaks volumes to the terrible wrath she must have possessed back during the height of Thassilon, before the advent of Earthfall changed everything.



## THE MYTH OF BLACK MAGGA

Fisherfolk and woodsmen who have ventured near the Storval Deep have long told tales of a fell monster rising from the depths. Below are a few commonly held but mistaken beliefs about Black Magga—although they may well have been true during the times of ancient Thassilon, when she was at the height of her power.

**BLOOD TONGUE:** Many who have seen Black Magga and lived can never speak of their experiences. Supposedly, when they attempt to tell the tale, black blood wells from their throats and into their mouths, choking their words. Thus, far fewer claim to have seen Black Magga than actually have.

**GOD-PROOF:** Black Magga is older than many gods. Divine magic is said to have little effect whatsoever on her abominable form. Anyone who cuts Magga's black heart from her vile chest and bathes in its putrescent blood will likewise become invulnerable to the power of the gods.

**STORM BRINGER:** Sightings of Black Magga often herald powerful storms and hurricanes. It is said that the beast summons these storms to pull victims into her watery domain, whereupon she captures them, consumes them, and transforms them into monstrous, vermicular horrors.

## MOTHERS OF OBLIVION

Lesser versions of Black Magga are said to dwell in deep lakes in other parts of the world. Known as Mothers of Oblivion, these creatures have the same basic statistics as Black Magga, except that they have only 10 Hit Dice and are Huge rather than Gargantuan.

Monstrous creatures of chaos and madness, the abominable Mothers of Oblivion are said to have been created by the goddess of monsters to serve as mouthpieces and leaders among her savage minions. Some esoteric texts—sacrilegious even to Lamashtu's profane church—claim that the Mothers of Oblivion are actually sisters of Lamashtu, subjugated by the goddess, robbed of their divinity, and cast down to Golarion as her twisted servitors. Whatever their heritage, for uncounted centuries the Mothers of Oblivion have been among the favored servants of Lamashtu and throughout history have risen to mete out her unholy wrath. Rare in the extreme—and despite what the fearful mortal races call them—these monstrosities seem to have no ability to reproduce, though some whisper that a select few are capable of biting off their own tongues to produce strange, wormlike spawn.

Mothers of Oblivion slink in the darkest, deepest reaches of the world, shunning the light of day as well as the gaze of insectlike

mortals, who would gawk and abandon their pathetic minds at the merest glimpse of such unknowable horrors. The deepest reaches of oceans and the oldest lakes serve as redoubts for these forsaken queens of madness. From these depths, they sate themselves on sea creatures, the offerings of their servants, and the occasional unwary victim dragged screaming from the surface. They are careful to keep their presence secret from those of the world above. From the depths, Mothers of Oblivion form intricate hierarchies of servants and go-betweens, reaching their black tentacles through the societies of amphibious intermediaries into the demesnes of greater monstrosities and larger cities and civilizations alike.





# CARRIONSTORM

*Bits of feather and flesh buzz around this swarm of rotting ravens like flies, countless lifeless eyes staring out from the chaos.*

CARRIONSTORM

CR 1



XP 400

NE Tiny undead (swarm)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

## DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 size)

**hp** 11 (2d8+2)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** swarm traits; **Immune** undead traits

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to channeled energy

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

**Melee** swarm (1d6 plus distraction)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 1, **Dex** 11, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** -1; **CMD** 4 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Improved Initiative

**Skills** Fly +12, Perception +6

**SQ** pallid bond

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any near ghouls

**Organization** solitary, flock (2–4 swarms), or murder (5–12 swarms)

**Languages** Necril

**Treasure** none

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Pallid Bond (Ex)** A carrionstorm never initiates an attack on a creature that openly wears a symbol of Urgathoa or that is itself undead. If attacked first by such a creature, the carrionstorm's swarm attack deals only 1d3 points of damage to that creature rather than the usual 1d6 points.

**Vulnerable to Channeled Energy (Ex)** A carrionstorm takes 150% as much damage as normal from channeled positive energy.

Where the dead walk, the carrion birds follow. In most cases, the unfortunate birds that feast on the remains of fallen undead creatures simply grow diseased and die. Yet the flesh of some ghouls has an altogether different effect upon such scavengers, and when they die of the poisoned repast, they do not stay dead for long. Alone, an undead crow or vulture is little more than a hideous mockery, but in rare cases where ghoulish activity is thick, entire colonies of carrion birds can succumb to undeath, retaining their flock mentality yet no longer seeking the flesh of the freshly dead to sate their hunger. Carrionstorms, as these flocks of undead birds are called, find brief respite from their morbid hunger only when their meals are warm and screaming.

Carrionstorms are typically found near graveyards, haunted structures, or abandoned villages where ghouls

have been active. Many necromancers and cultists of Urgathoa have a particular fondness for carrionstorms, and since the birds have a strange respect for the symbol of the Pallid Princess, rookeries of them are often found roosting in the nooks of the goddess of undeath's macabre cathedrals.

Although the individual undead birds that make up a carrionstorm are little more intelligent than they were in life, as a whole, a carrionstorm forms a rudimentary hive mind that grants its members a slight bit more intellect than the typical bird. This not only allows the undead birds to utilize basic tactics, but allows rudimentary speech as well. Most carrionstorms understand a few dozen words in Necril, the language of the dead, and the sound of thousands of these undead carrion birds croaking out strange words can be truly unsettling to those who aren't prepared for the horror. This same hive mind allows necromancers to treat an entire carrionstorm as a single undead creature with regard to the effects of spells like *command undead* and *control undead*, or feats like *Command Undead*. The swarms make excellent scouts, and even better threats against small towns and superstitious communities.





## FORGEFIEND

A massive, fire-filled maw splits the belly of this lumbering iron-skinned fiend, whose short arms end in razor-sharp claws.

**FORGEFIEND (SCANDERIG) CR 10**



**XP 9,600**

LE Large outsider (earth, extraplanar)

**Init** +6; **Senses** see in darkness; Perception +15

### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+2 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 137 (11d10+77)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10

**Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., earth glide

**Melee** bite +17 (2d6+7 plus rend armor), bite +17 (1d6+7), 2 claws +17 (1d6+7)

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

**Special Attacks** adamantine bite, searing spew

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +12)

Constant—*pass without trace*

At will—*major image* (DC 15), *passwall*, *shatter* (DC 14), *stone shape*

3/day—*deeper darkness*, *dimensional anchor*, *flesh to stone* (DC 18), *quicken produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *wall of stone*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 14, **Con** 25, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Greater Sunder<sup>®</sup>, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Sunder<sup>®</sup>, Iron Will, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*produce flame*), Vital Strike

**Skills** Acrobatics +16 (+12 when jumping), Climb +21, Craft (traps) +16, Disable Device +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +16, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +12

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Infernal, Terran

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any underground (Plane of Earth)

**Organization** solitary or team (2–6)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Adamantine Bite (Ex)** A forgefiend's bite attacks are treated as adamantine for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

**Rend Armor (Ex)** When a forgefiend hits with a bite attack, it chews any armor worn by the target—this grants the forgefiend a free sunder attempt against armor worn by the target if the victim fails a DC 22 Reflex save. A forgefiend also gains Greater Sunder and Improved Sunder as bonus feats. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Searing Spew (Su)** A forgefiend can belch forth a searing pile of slag from its body maw as a standard action once every 1d4 rounds. This blob of molten metal affects any 10-foot-square area adjacent to the forgefiend. Any creature

in this area takes 14d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 22 halves). The slag quickly cools, forming a rugged pile of worthless scrap and misshapen metal that is treated as difficult terrain—this stuff crumbles to powder in 1 hour. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Scanderigs, more commonly known as “forgefiends,” look like large, heavily armored, barrel-shaped giants, with enormous mouths in their bellies in addition to the normal-sized ones in their heads. They are native to the Plane of Earth, but sometimes make their way through subterranean portals onto the Material Plane, where they gorge themselves on rich and relatively uncontested mineral veins. A forgefiend might live quite happily inside a mountain's heart for centuries, only causing trouble when the ore runs out or interlopers attempt to mine its territory.

Forgefiends are particularly feared in many dwarven societies. In addition to their penchant for destroying deep forges, they are often portrayed as boogeyman-like figures for frightening dwarven children and instilling good smithing habits—for it is said, “For every scrap of slag you waste, a scanderig is making haste. Those who use excessive ore find forgefiends scratching at their door!”



APPENDIX ONE:  
CONTINUING THE  
CAMPAIGN

APPENDIX TWO:  
SANDPOINT

APPENDIX THREE:  
MAGNIMAR

APPENDIX FOUR:  
TURTLEBACK FERRY

APPENDIX FIVE:  
XIN-SHALAST

APPENDIX SIX:  
BESTIARY

APPENDIX SEVEN:  
NEW RULES

APPENDIX EIGHT:  
MAGIC ITEMS



## LAMIA-KIN, HUNGERER

A hideous mound of shuddering, pustule-encrusted flesh, this bloated creature's gaping maw is filled with terrible teeth.

### HUNGERER

CR 15



XP 51,200

CE Huge monstrous humanoid

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision; Perception +28

**Aura** stench (30 ft., DC 25)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 31, touch 10, flat-footed 29 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge, +21 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 220 (21d10+105)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +18

**DR** 10/cold iron and piercing; **Immune** acid, poison; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 26

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +29 (2d8+10/19-20/x4 plus 2d6 acid damage and 2 Wisdom drain), 2 claws +29 (1d8+10 plus 2 Wisdom drain)

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

**Special Attacks** devastating bite, vile spew

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +19)

Constant—fly

At will—*grease* (DC 15), *major image* (DC 17), *ventriloquism* (DC 15)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 18), *gust of wind* (DC 16), quickened *stinking cloud* (DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*deep slumber* (DC 17), *mass charm monster* (DC 22), *mirror image*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 30, **Dex** 13, **Con** 20, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +21; **CMB** +33; **CMD** 45 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Critical Focus, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (*stinking cloud*), Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

**Skills** Fly +32, Intimidate +28, Perception +28, Sense Motive +25, Stealth +17

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Giant, Thassilonian

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** cold mountains

**Organization** solitary or feast (2-5)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Devastating Bite (Ex)** A hungerer's bite deals x4 damage on a successful critical hit. If this damage is enough to reduce a victim to negative hit points, the victim must succeed at a DC 30 Fortitude save to avoid being decapitated, bitten in half, or otherwise instantly killed by the horrific wound. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Vile Spew (Su)** Whenever a hungerer takes damage, the resulting wound spews a great gout of vile blood and acid. Any creature adjacent to a hungerer when it is wounded takes 2d6 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 25 negates). The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Wisdom Drain (Su)** A hungerer drains 2 points of Wisdom each time it strikes a foe with its bite or claw attacks. Unlike with other kinds of ability drain attacks, a hungerer does not heal any damage when it uses its Wisdom drain.

Once regular lamias, these hideously deformed creatures are the result of terrible fleshwarping experiments that have rarely been repeated since the fall of Thassilon. The heads and torsos of these creatures are nearly 10 feet in diameter, and a typical hungerer weighs about 20,000 pounds.

Hungerers are unnatural creatures, re-released into the world with Karzoug's awakening. These terrors live in constant pain and serve as living embodiments of hunger, insatiable in their constant quests for sustenance. Although they prefer to tear and rend living flesh, hungerers can consume almost any organic material, and might even gnaw on stone or metal without ill effect when nothing else is available.





## LAMIA-KIN, KUCHRIMA

*This vaguely humanoid creature has a vulture's head and wings for arms, and wields an enormous bow in its taloned feet.*

### KUCHRIMA

CR 8



XP 4,800

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent;

Perception +19

### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+6 Dex, +6 natural)

**hp** 104 (11d10+44)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +13, **Will** +6

**Immune** disease, *magic missile*

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +16 (1d6+5 plus disease), 2 talons +16 (1d4+5)

**Ranged** mwk Large composite longbow +18/+13/+8 (2d6+5/+3)

**Special Attacks** catastrophic shot, disease

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 22, **Con** 19, **Int** 7, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple); **CMD** 32

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Improved

Initiative, Point-Blank Shot,

Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Skill

Focus (Perception)

**Skills** Fly +24, Perception +19

**Languages** Common, Giant,

Thassilonian

**SQ** oversized weapon

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any mountains

**Organization** solitary, pair, flight (3-7), or

gluttony (8-12)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Catastrophic Shot (Ex)** Whenever a kuchrima

makes only a single attack in a round with a bow, it increases the critical threat range of that shot to 18-20.

**Disease (Ex)** Bite—Filth Fever; *save* Fort DC 19; *onset* 1d3

days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

**Oversized Weapon (Ex)** A kuchrima can wield an oversized

longbow in its talons while flying without incurring any penalty—this longbow can be one size category larger than normal (Large for most kuchrimas).

These foul creatures are a disgusting cross between humanoids and condors. Also known as the Eaters of the Dead, the kuchrimas are the lowest order of the lamia-kin, lacking even standard lamias' capability for spell-like abilities. They not only serve the function of common soldiers and scouts, but are also left to take care of the disposal of bodies, garbage, and other waste—most of which they feed upon. This habit results in their foul appearance and disease-ridden

bite. Kuchrimas often wield giant bows in their powerful talons, holding the weapon in one talon and pulling the bowstring with the other in order to fire arrows with devastating effect.

Kuchrimas have much in common with the condors they resemble, and are opportunistic hunters and scavengers. Bands of kuchrima hunters might fly dozens of miles from their communal aerie, using their keen sight to locate prey both small and large. In the extreme mountainous areas they inhabit, such meals often take the form of giant rams, mountain aurochs, and even the occasional mountaineer, though these disgusting creatures prefer their meals dead and rotting.

Kuchrimas dwell principally in the thin air among the upper peaks of desolate mountain ranges, where they have gathered in enclaves or "gluttonies." They have lived in a state of static barbarism since the diaspora following the fall of the Thassilonian Empire. In the thousands of years since that civilization's collapse, these lamia-kin have migrated to many mountainous regions throughout Golarion. These disease-ridden hunters strive to remain well out of sight of land-bound races, which they mistrust and fear in numbers. Should a new runelord or powerful harridan come into power and manage to locate these disparate gluttonies, however, the kuchrimas could be gathered into a formidable airborne force once again.





## RUNESLAVE

*This lumbering giant has a strange, vacant expression, as well as a large glowing rune carved into its flesh.*

### RUNESLAVE HILL GIANT

CR 8



XP 4,800

CE Large humanoid (giant)

**Init** +0; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 9, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +9 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 95 (10d8+50)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** resist pain, rock catching; **Immune** exhaustion, fatigue, fear

**Weaknesses** arcane decay

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft. (50 ft. in armor)

**Melee** greatclub +16/+11 (2d8+13) or  
2 slams +15 (1d8+9)

**Ranged** rock +7 (1d8+13)

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

**Special Attacks** arcane surge, rock throwing (120 ft.)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 29, **Dex** 10, **Con** 19, **Int** 4, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 27

**Feats** Diehard<sup>®</sup>, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatclub),  
Power Attack, Toughness<sup>®</sup>, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

**Skills** Climb +14, **Perception** +7

**Languages** Giant

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary, pair, or patrol (3–12)

**Treasure** standard (hide armor, greatclub, other treasure)

The ageless monuments and awesome cities of Thassilon rose upon the backs of countless slaves, but none bore the sin-poisoned civilization's burden more than the giants. Able to perform the work of dozens of human slaves, Thassilon's titanic servants—hill giants, stone giants, taiga giants, and others—crafted marvels nigh unparalleled in any era before or since, and shaped the face of what is now modern Varisia. Yet as viciously as the runelords worked their slaves and for all they demanded, the giant-crafted marvels were not enough. And thus, working the corrupt rune magic that was theirs alone, the runelords manufactured a damning curse and laid it over their most tireless and effective workers, and in so doing created a new breed of servant: the runeslave.

Numerous severe-looking runes spark and flicker upon a runeslave's body, seemingly seared into the creature's flesh. One of the runes is larger and more prominent than the others—this is always one of the runes of Thassilonian magic. Although a runeslave's mind is dulled, its muscles bulge grotesquely, as if barely contained beneath a thin layer of skin, and such

behemoths move with unnatural agility for creatures of their ponderous size.

Note that while the runeslave template does make a giant more powerful (and thus increases its CR), few, if any giants would seek to gain a runeslave's powers. Despite the advantages the runeslave gains, what it loses in free will and longevity typically vastly outweigh the benefits. In combat, a runeslave is deadly and terrifying, but in life, the condition is rightly feared among giants as a devastating and debilitating curse.

## CREATING A RUNESLAVE

"Runeslave" is an acquired template that can be added to any giant (referred to hereafter as the base creature). A runeslave uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**CR:** Same as the base creature +1.

**DEFENSIVE ABILITIES:** A runeslave becomes immune to fear effects, exhaustion, and fatigue. In addition, all runeslaves gain the following additional defensive ability.

**Resist Pain (Ex):** Runeslaves can continue to function even after taking great punishment. They are immune to nonlethal damage. Against effects that inflict pain (such as a *symbol of pain* spell), a runeslave gains a +4 bonus on all saving throws.

**WEAKNESSES:** Runeslaves gain the following weakness.

**Arcane Decay (Su):** The symbols etched upon a runeslave's body put great stress on its physical form, choking its mind and ultimately killing the giant in time. Each runeslave has a predominant Thassilonian rune associated with one school of magic inscribed on its body. Traditionally, this rune is of a school of magic directly opposed to the runelord the runeslave serves—all of the runeslaves encountered in this adventure bear the sign of wrath upon their bodies as a sort of brand of shame. The slow decay of a runeslave's mental faculties manifests as a gradual loss of life and sanity, represented by the accumulation of rune-shaped scars all over the body. The disease has no additional physical or mental effect until these magical runescars completely overwhelm their host, at which point the accumulated pain the giant has endured since becoming a runeslave is released in a fatal surge of unleashed suffering. All runeslaves are "infected" with this disease. Only *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* can prevent or cure arcane decay, but in so doing removes the entire template, reverting the runeslave back to the base creature. Multiple successful Fortitude saves only delay the decay and do not cure the creature of the disease.

**Arcane Decay:** Inherited—non-contagious; *save* Fortitude DC 15; *frequency* 1/week; *effect* gain one runescar; *cure* none (but see above). When a runeslave's number of runescars equals its Hit Dice, it dies.

**SPEED:** A runeslave's base land speed is 20 feet faster than the base creature's. Other forms of movement, such as flying or swim speeds, are unaffected.



**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** A runeslave gains the following special attack.

**Arcane Surge (Su):** Once per day as a swift action, a runeslave can gain the benefits of the spell *haste* for 6 rounds. Using this ability forces the giant to make an additional Fortitude save against arcane decay, even if it has already made its weekly save to resist the disease.

**ABILITIES:** Change from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +2, Int -2, Wis -2, Cha -2.

**FEATS:** Runeslaves gain Diehard and Toughness as bonus feats.

## THE RUNESLAVE CURSE

As the act of turning their giant servants into runeslaves swept across Thassilon, each of the seven runelords came to employ the corruptive magic in various ways. While in most of the runelords' holdings the giants merely continued to serve as expendable labor, in Bakrakhian, Runelord Alaznist incorporated runeslaves into her vast armies, using them as living siege engines. In Cyrusian, the domain of Pride, Runelord Xanderghul used the magic as a punishment upon any slave who garnered his fickle ire.

While the magic used to create runeslaves resided almost exclusively in the hands of the runelords, the number of giant slaves they deemed would benefit from this ultimately fatal "improvement" far exceeded the rulers' ability to transform. Thus, a number of different methods of creating runeslaves were created, each originating in a separate domain but eventually spreading throughout the empire.

**ANCIENT RITE:** In the Grand Sybaritum of Xin-Haruka, Runelord Krune grew weary of cursing filthy giant after filthy giant, and so devised a method to transform hundreds of his slaves at a time. Summoning whole legions of his giants before him, Krune called down the might of the rune goddess Lissala and cursed his slaves en masse, sending countless faithful slaves to their doom.

**MINDERHAL'S CURSE:** Minderhal's worship was never more prevalent than during the height of the Thassilonian empire, and as such, fear of his displeasure was a motivating force among the giants of that era. Legend held that Minderhal himself was involved in the creation of the first runeslaves, and that in a fit of anger at his giant worshipers, he granted humans the secrets of creating runeslaves. Regardless of this legend's veracity, there have been several cases of particularly blasphemous giants spontaneously transforming into runeslaves, supposedly as punishment from their god.

**POISONING:** In Edasseril, the domain of envy, the alchemists of Runelord Belimarius's vile and sprawling laboratories discovered a way to turn arcane decay into a toxin, allowing the disease to be delivered via

poison. The poisoners never did find a way to cure the crippling madness caused by the poison—the toxin's high cost and the frustrating requirement of having to cure the giant's Wisdom drain before it could be put to work kept this poison from seeing greater use.

**Runeslave Poison:** Poison—ingested; save Fort DC 20; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect confusion for 1 round and 1d4 Wisdom drain (if this results in the giant's Wisdom being drained to 0, the giant immediately transforms into a runeslave); cure 3 consecutive saves; cost 10,000 gp.

**RUNESLAVE CAULDRON:** Brought forth from Gastash, the domain of gluttony, these massive cauldrons were large enough to fit an adult stone giant and infused with necromantic energies. Any giant placed in a cauldron and then slain is immediately resurrected as a runeslave—see page 424 for further details on these sadistic magic items.





# SCARLET WALKER

This crimson horror walks upon six long, thin legs. Its face is neither that of a skull nor spider, but some horrid mix of the two.

## SCARLET WALKER

CR 12



XP 19,200

LE Huge outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)

**Init** +9; **Senses** bloodsense, darkvision 60 ft., *detect thoughts*;

Perception +24

## DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 168 (16d10+80); fast healing 10

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +19, **Will** +15

**Defensive Abilities** evasion; **Immune** acid, cold, poison; **SR** 23

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to electricity

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +23 (2d6+7/19-20 plus bleed), tentacles +18 (4d6+3 plus bleed and paralysis)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.

**Special Attacks** bleed (1d6), blood-draining gaze, paralysis (1d4 rounds, DC 23)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +17)

Constant—*air walk*, *detect thoughts*

At will—*sending*

3/day—*confusion* (DC 19), *demand* (DC 23), quickened *lesser confusion* (DC 16)

1/day—*feeblemind* (DC 20), *insanity* (DC 22), *true seeing*

## STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 29, **Con** 21, **Int** 14, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 45 (53 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (claws), Mobility, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*lesser confusion*), Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +28 (+32 when jumping), Climb +15, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (nature) +21, Knowledge (planes) +21, Perception +24, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +20

**Languages** Aklo, Infernal; telepathy 300 ft.

**SQ** compression, no breath

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary, pair, or crowd (3-8)

**Treasure** standard

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Blood-Draining Gaze (Su)** All creatures within 20 feet of a scarlet walker are subject to the monster's eerie blood-draining gaze. Affected creatures must succeed at a DC 23 Fortitude save or thin streams of blood pour from their eyes, flowing through the air and into the eye socket-like pits in the scarlet walker's face. This does not impact the victim's vision, but does deal 1 point of Constitution damage and sickens the victim for 1 round from the hideous pain. A creature already suffering from a bleed effect takes a -4 penalty on the saving throw. This is a bleed effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Bloodsense (Su)** A scarlet walker can sense living creatures with blood in their veins, or undead creatures that feed on blood (such as vampires). This ability functions like blindsight to a range of 60 feet.

The scarlet walker is an alien entity from some other dimension, often conjured by the wizards of Thassilon to serve as a minion. Scarlet walkers were particularly favored for their adeptness at interrogating prisoners, either via torture, or via the creatures' uncanny ability to mentally compel both actions and compliance. Once an interrogation was over, the scarlet walker's master typically commanded the monster to render the victim insane or feebleminded if mere death wasn't appropriate.

Scarlet walkers themselves hail from the nightmare realm of Leng, where they walk amid strange, stony deserts and stride through the skies above. No mere predators, scarlet walkers build immense hives of coagulated blood and tissue in nameless mountain valleys, and the flavors of various creatures' blood is an inexhaustible topic of discussion among their kind.





## SKULL RIPPER

*This chittering, scorpion-shaped monstrosity appears to be made of a hideous mix of chitinous limbs and human skulls.*

### SKULL RIPPER

CR 9



XP 6,400

CN Large construct

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

**Aura** dread visage (30 ft., DC 18)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 112 (15d10+30)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

**DR** 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits; **Resist** cold 10; **SR** 20

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +20 (2d6+6/19–20 plus grab), sting +20 (1d10+6 plus poison)

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

**Special Attacks** behead, constrict 2d6+9

### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 5, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +22 (+26 grapple); **CMD** 35 (47 vs. trip)

**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (claw), Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Vital Strike

**Skills** Climb +19, Stealth +15

**Languages** Thassilonian (cannot speak)

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary, pair, or nest (3–8)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Behead (Ex)** A skull ripper is an expert at collecting its favorite trophies—skulls. Once it has pinned a foe, it can attempt to behead the victim with a single gut-wrenching rip of its claws. This attempt is made as part of the grapple check to maintain an existing pin, and if successful, deals 4d6+18 points of damage to the victim. If this damage is enough to bring the target below 0 hit points, the victim must succeed at a DC 23 Fortitude save to resist having its head torn from its body, which results in instant death for most creatures. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Dread Visage (Su)** All creatures within 30 feet that can see a skull ripper must make a DC 18 Will save at the start of their turn in order to avoid becoming frightened for 1 round. If the victim recognizes any of the heads affixed to the skull ripper's body as having once belonged to friends or allies, that victim takes a -4 penalty on the save. A creature that succeeds at the save is immune to the dread visage of that particular skull ripper for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Poison (Su)** Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dex; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skull rippers were once guardians of the dead, the grim custodians of the great ossuaries of Thassilon. Although most skull rippers are discovered in ancient tombs and sepulchers, occasionally a geological upheaval or massive flood destroys a given catacomb or leaves a skull ripper stranded. In these cases, the construct emerges and ventures forth into the world above, harvesting skulls and causing widespread panic as it searches for a new tomb to guard.

## CONSTRUCTION

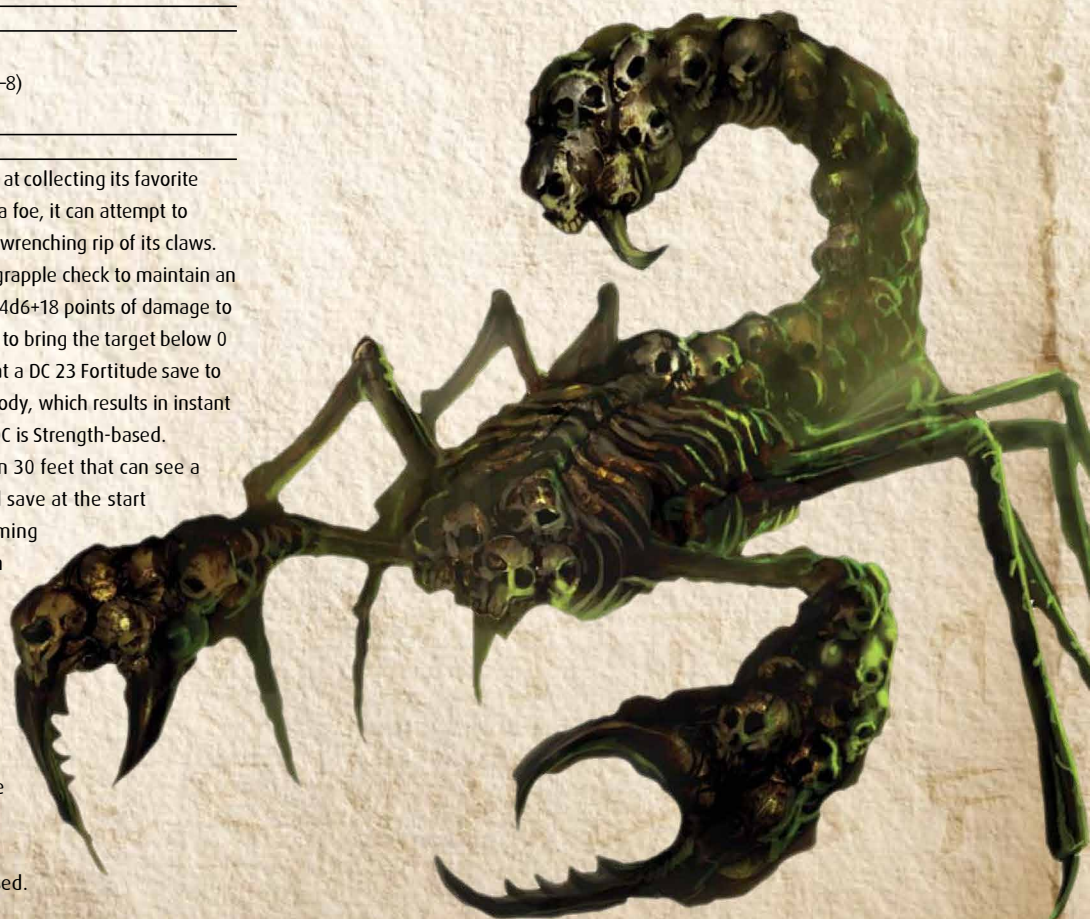
A skull ripper is made from the carcasses of dead vermin and skulls, either harvested by the creator or purchased from shady adventurers for roughly 500 gp in total.

### SKULL RIPPER

**CL** 13th; **Price** 30,500 gp

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Construct, *animate dead*, *fear*, *geas/quest*, *keen edge*, *limited wish*; **Skill** Heal or Knowledge (engineering) DC 15; **Cost** 15,500 gp





# APPENDIX SEVEN: NEW RULES

THIS APPENDIX PRESENTS RULES FOR TRACKING SIN POINTS, DETAILS ON THASSILONIAN MAGIC, A NEW FEAT, AND SEVEN NEW SPELLS DESIGNED BY ANCIENT THASSILONIAN WIZARDS.

In Chapter Five of *Rise of the Runelords*, the PCs visit the ancient complex of Runeforge—an arcane laboratory infused with more than 10,000 years of sin, to the extent that the powerful magic within Runeforge has become infused with the personalities and obsessions of those who have been trapped therein for so long.

As a result, the very structures of Runeforge react differently to characters who are themselves paragons of specific sins. These effects are explored in detail in that chapter—but how can you determine whether a PC is sinful in the first place?

## SIN AND VIRTUE POINTS

When you begin your *Rise of the Runelords* campaign, you should take a moment to write down the names of all the PCs in your game on a large grid set up with 14 different boxes per PC—one box for each sin and corresponding virtue. A sample chart is presented on the facing page. As your *Rise of the Runelords* campaign progresses, keep an eye on the choices the PCs make. Each time a PC acts in a way that strikes you as particularly sinful or virtuous, place a mark in the appropriate box on that character's line. If a character commits a sin but already has marks in that sin's corresponding virtue box, instead simply erase one of the marks in the virtue box (and vice versa). At any one time, only one of the two boxes should have marks in it—a character who manages to balance her sins and virtues out (or who never exhibits either sin or virtue) may well have no marks at all on her line.

You should only make marks for significant events in your game—don't bother marking minor events. If a PC loots a dead goblin, she shouldn't gain a point of Greed—such spoils of war are considered a normal part of the game. If, on the other hand, she gleefully steals the life savings of an NPC and spends all the money on herself, that should certainly earn her a point of Greed.

A character is considered sinful whenever she has 5 or more marks (sometimes referred to as "sin points") in a particular sin. Likewise, a character is considered virtuous whenever she has 5 or more marks in a particular virtue. In Runeforge, only a character's most sinful aspect matters—if she has 5 or more points in multiple sins, the one in which she has the most points is the one that matters for determining bonuses and penalties in that dungeon. In the case of a tie, you should

make a judgement call based on your knowledge of that character as to which of those sins is the primary.

Specific examples of acts that can earn sin points and virtue points are listed below.

**ENVY:** Complaining loudly or frequently about another party member's good fortune, skill, or luck. **CHARITY:** Spending significant time tending the wounded, free of charge, after the goblin attack on Sandpoint.

**GLUTTONY:** Getting drunk multiple times during the game session. **TEMPERANCE:** Spending a game session without drinking at a tavern when at least two other PCs engage in such acts during the session.

**GREED:** Robbing another PC, or hiding a significant amount of treasure for yourself. **GENEROSITY:** Turning Hambley's life savings over to Mayor Deverin.

**LUST:** Eagerly accepting Shayliss's solicitations under the pretense of hunting rats in her father's shop basement. **LOVE:** Giving a PC or NPC a romantic gift worth at least 1,000 gp per level your character possesses.

**PRIDE:** Bragging about how nothing in Foxglove Manor was scary. **HUMILITY:** Refusing to accept an NPC's reward for a mission, or giving all credit to others.

**SLOTH:** Encouraging the party to stop and rest for a day after only having one or two significant encounters in that day. **ZEAL:** Encouraging the party to continue adventuring after the group has already dealt with at least five significant encounters that day.








**WRATH:** Eagerly torturing a prisoner. **KINDNESS:** Releasing an enemy that has surrendered and healing its wounds so it has a better chance at surviving.

## THASSILONIAN MAGIC

While the concept of wizard specializations along the classically recognized schools of magic certainly dates back to the time of Azlant—and perhaps beyond, into the dim recesses of time before humanity rose to prominence—it was the runelords of Thassilon who explored school specialization to its full extreme.

Focusing their research on the discovery that each school of magic was opposed by two specific opposition schools, the runelords developed methods of further enhancing their mastery over their chosen arcane specialties. Essentially, they defined these seven schools as much by what they couldn't do as by what they could. By excising "impurities" introduced by fixed oppositional schools, they traded arcane versatility for greater strength in their chosen



| SIN AND<br>VIRTUE<br>POINTS |  |         |  |            |  |            |  |      |  |          |  |      |  |          |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
|                             | ENVY                                                                              | CHARITY | GLUTTONY                                                                          | TEMPERANCE | GREED                                                                             | GENEROSITY | LUST                                                                              | LOVE | PRIDE                                                                               | HUMILITY | SLOTH                                                                               | ZEAL | WRATH                                                                               | KINDNESS |
| PLAYER CHARACTER            |                                                                                   |         |                                                                                   |            |                                                                                   |            |                                                                                   |      |                                                                                     |          |                                                                                     |      |                                                                                     |          |
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#### ENVY (ABJURATION):

The art of suppressing magic other than your own.

**PROHIBITED SCHOOLS:** evocation, necromancy.



#### GLUTTONY (NECROMANCY):

Magic that manipulates the physical body to provide for an unending hunger for life.

**PROHIBITED SCHOOLS:** abjuration, enchantment.



#### GREED (TRANSMUTATION):

Magically transforming things into objects of greater value or utility, and enhancing the physical self.

**PROHIBITED SCHOOLS:** enchantment, illusion.



#### LUST (ENCHANTMENT):

Magically controlling other creatures to satisfy your desires, and manipulating others' minds, emotions, and wills.

**PROHIBITED SCHOOLS:** necromancy, transmutation.



#### PRIDE (ILLUSION):

Perfecting your own appearance and domain through trickery and illusions.

**PROHIBITED SCHOOLS:** conjuration, transmutation.



#### SLOTH (CONJURATION):

Calling agents and minions to perform your deeds for you, or creating what you need as you need it.

**PROHIBITED SCHOOLS:** evocation, illusion.



#### WRATH (EVOCATION):

Mastery of the raw destructive power of magic, and channeling those destructive forces.

**PROHIBITED SCHOOLS:** abjuration, conjuration.

fields. The seven schools of Thassilonian magic are presented above.

## THASSILONIAN SPECIALISTS

Only wizards can truly follow the ancient philosophies created by Thassilon's runelords. The choice to specialize in a Thassilonian school of magic must be made when a character first becomes a wizard. Once the choice to do so is made, it cannot be changed.

**BENEFITS:** A Thassilonian specialist wizard receives two additional spell slots of each spell level he can cast. These bonus spell slots must both be used to prepare the same spell from the wizard's school of specialization, allowing the wizard to cast that spell twice (as he has prepared the spell twice). The wizard cannot use these slots to prepare two different spells, even if they are of the school he is specialized in.

**RESTRICTIONS:** A Thassilonian specialist does not get to customize his choice for opposition schools—his opposition schools are determined for him when he chooses his specialization. These restrictions are more significant than those most wizards follow,



and are known as prohibited schools. A Thassilonian wizard can never prepare a spell that is in one of his prohibited schools—he treats these spells as if they were not on the wizard spell list. If using a spell trigger or spell completion item to cast a spell from one of his prohibited schools, he must use the Use Magic Device skill to do so.

## NEW SPELLS

Despite having been originally invented by wizards, these spells also function for other classes.

### BLOOD MONEY

**School** transmutation; **Level** magus 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, witch 1

**Casting Time** 1 swift action

**Components** V, S

**Range** 0 ft.

**Effect** 1 material component

**Duration** Instantaneous

You cast *blood money* just before casting another spell. As part of this spell's casting, you must cut one of your hands, releasing a stream of blood that causes you to take 1d6 points of damage. When you cast another spell in that same round, your blood transforms into one material component of your choice required by that second spell. Even valuable components worth more than 1 gp can be created, but creating such material components requires an additional cost of 1 point of Strength damage, plus a further point of damage for every full 500 gp of the component's value (so a component worth 500–999 gp costs a total of 2 points, 1,000–1,500 costs 3, etc.). You cannot create magic items with *blood money*.

For example, a sorcerer with the spell *stoneskin* prepared could cast *blood money* to create the 250 gp worth of diamond dust required by that spell, taking 1d6 points of damage and 1 point of Strength damage in the process.

Material components created by *blood money* transform back into blood at the end of the round if they have not been used as a material component. Spellcasters who do not have blood cannot cast *blood money*, and those who are immune to Strength damage (such as undead spellcasters) cannot use *blood money* to create valuable material components.

### COVETOUS AURA

**School** abjuration; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 5, witch 5

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S

**Range** personal

**Area** 25-ft.-radius emanation centered on you

**Duration** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

Anytime a harmless (so noted by a spell's saving throw description) spell of 3rd level or lower is cast within a *covetous aura*'s area of effect, you may choose to immediately gain the benefit of that spell as if it had also targeted you. The intended target still gains the effect of the spell. You gain the benefits of this duplicated spell only if the caster is in range of the *covetous aura*. Each time

a *covetous aura* duplicates a spell effect, the remaining duration of the *covetous aura* is reduced by a number of rounds equal to the spell level of the spell effect that is duplicated.

### DEATHWINE

**School** necromancy; **Level** alchemist 2, cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

**Casting Time** 1 minute

**Components** V, S

**Range** touch

**Target** 1 potion touched/level

**Duration** 1 hour/level

**Saving Throw** none (object); **Spell Resistance** no (object)

This spell allows you to turn a potion into a temporary pool of necromantic energy. Only a potion created using a conjuration (healing) spell can be affected by this spell. An affected potion turns dark red and reveals a necromantic aura if *detect magic* is cast on it while it remains under this spell's effects.

When you drink a potion affected by this spell, you do not gain the potion's normal effect. Instead, the first necromancy spell you cast within the next minute is cast at a higher caster level. The bonus to caster level is equal to the spell level of the spell used to create the potion that *deathwine* affects. For example, a 5th-level wizard who drinks *deathwine* made from a *potion of cure serious wounds* would cast his next necromancy spell as an 8th-level caster, as *cure serious wounds* is a 3rd-level spell.

In addition, any undead creature (or other creature healed by negative energy) that drinks a potion affected by *deathwine* is healed of 1d8 points of damage. Any potion not imbibed before this spell's duration expires is destroyed at the end of the *deathwine*'s duration.

### RAIMENT OF COMMAND

**School** illusion (glamer); **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** personal

**Target** you

**Duration** 1 hour/level

**Saving Throw** Will; **Spell Resistance** No

You are cloaked in an illusion of authority. Others perceive you to be a legitimate figure of authority, such as a higher-ranking official, a religious figure, or a more powerful warrior. This illusion grants you a +5 bonus on all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks. If you attempt to disguise yourself as a specific authority figure whom you have met in person, you gain a +10 competence bonus on the Disguise check and any Bluff check related to impersonating that authority figure.

In addition, others are uncomfortable acting against you. Creatures with an Intelligence of 3 or more take a –2 penalty on all opposed checks made against you, such as Sense Motive checks made to determine if you're bluffing, or Perception checks made to notice you when you're using Stealth to sneak (a result of their not wanting to question whether you belong there, and thus giving you the benefit of the doubt).





## APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE:  
CONTINUING THE  
CAMPAIGN

APPENDIX TWO:  
SANDPOINT

APPENDIX THREE:  
MAGNIMAR

APPENDIX FOUR:  
TURTLEBACK FERRY

APPENDIX FIVE:  
XIN-SHALAST

APPENDIX SIX:  
BESTIARY

APPENDIX SEVEN:  
NEW RULES

APPENDIX EIGHT:  
MAGIC ITEMS

### SIGN OF WRATH

**School** evocation (force); **Level** cleric 6, sorcerer/ wizard 6

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, F (a gem worth 1,000 gp inscribed with the Thassilonian symbol of wrath)

**Range** personal

**Area** 25-ft.-radius burst centered on you

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** yes

A giant, glowing symbol of wrath appears below you, forcibly repulsing all nearby creatures. All creatures within the area of effect take 1d6 points of force damage per caster level (maximum 15d6) and are subjected to a bull rush that attempts to push them directly away from you. The blast's bull rush effect has a CMB bonus equal to your caster level + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier (whichever is highest). You are unaffected by both the spell's damage and its bull rush effect, and may select up to one creature per 4 caster levels to also be ignored by the spells effects.

### SWIPE

**School** conjuration (teleportation); **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 3

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Target** one held item

**Duration** instant

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

By flicking a finger in the appropriate direction and proclaiming ownership, you attempt to magically wrest an item from the target's grip and summon it to your hand. To claim an object held by an opponent, you must make a CMB check—this check has a bonus equal to your caster level + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier (whichever is highest). If you fail this check, the target retains the item and the spell fails. If you succeed, the item teleports into one of your free hands or comes to rest at your feet.

### UNCONSCIOUS AGENDA

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [language-dependent, mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 6, inquisitor 6, sorcerer/wizard 6, witch 6

**Casting Time** 10 minutes

**Components** V

**Range** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Target** One humanoid

**Duration** One week/level or until discharged (D)

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

This spell plants a subconscious directive in the target's mind that forces him to act as you dictate when specific circumstances arise. The target humanoid can be either conscious or unconscious, but must understand your language. Upon casting this spell, you must state a course of action you wish the target to take. This course of action must be described in 20 words or fewer. You must then state the condition under which you wish the target to take this action, also describing it in 20 or fewer words. Actions or conditions more elaborate than 20 words cause the spell to

fail. *Unconscious agenda* cannot compel a target to kill himself, though it can compel him to perform exceedingly dangerous acts, face impossible odds, or undertake almost any other course of activity. You cannot issue new commands to the target after the spell is cast.

If the target fails his save against this spell, he is not compelled to act in any way until the specified trigger circumstances are encountered. He also has no knowledge of the details of the spell affecting him, and has no memory of the last 10 minutes (although he might come to notice the missing time or the presence of the caster). He can function as he wishes until the events you detailed as the condition take place. Upon experiencing the prerequisite condition, the target is forced to perform the course of action you described as per the spell *dominate person*. (If the compelled action is against the victim's nature, he immediately gains a new saving throw at a +5 bonus against the spell to end its effects.) For the next hour, the target acts as you dictated, doing all he can to fulfill your command. If, at the end of the hour, the target still has not completed your command, the target is released from the enchantment and the spell ends. Once the course of action is completed, the spell ends. The target has full memory of acts performed during this hour.

It's difficult to detect an *unconscious agenda* before the spell is triggered. Casting *detect magic* on one affected by it only reveals an aura of enchantment if the caster of *detect magic* has a higher caster level than the caster of *unconscious agenda*. Even if the spell is detected, it can only be removed by *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *remove curse*, *miracle*, or *wish*. *Dispel magic* does not affect *unconscious agenda*.

### NEW FEAT: LAMASHTU'S MARK

You are marked as one of Lamashtu's favored minions.

**PREREQUISITES:** Con 13, Lamashtu as patron deity.

**BENEFIT:** Your abdomen bears several ugly scars, as if your belly had been torn open by a clawed hand. Lamashtu's Mark identifies you as favored worshiper of the Mother of Monsters, and if it is visible, you gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks but a –2 penalty on Diplomacy checks.

Once per day as a free action, you may invoke Lamashtu's name as you strike a nonevil foe with any melee attack. As you do, you cause the creature struck to become temporarily deformed in some hideous manner. Common deformities caused by this attack include cloven hooves, horns, forked tongues, vestigial limbs like wings and tails, organs inexplicably forming on the outside of the skin, additional (and useless) eyes, and skin that hardens into pus-weeping plates. The deformity reduces the target's Charisma score by 1d4 points for 1 hour; the target can resist this effect by making a Fortitude save (DC 10 + your character level + your Charisma modifier). The physical deformity vanishes as soon as the Charisma penalty fades.

In addition, any offspring you sire or give birth to gain the fiendish template.



# APPENDIX EIGHT: MAGIC ITEMS

ALL OF THE ITEMS LISTED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES CAN BE FOUND IN THE RISE OF THE RUNELORDS ADVENTURE PATH. IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THEIR UNIQUE FEEL, YOU SHOULD NOT ALLOW THE PCs TO PURCHASE ANY OF THESE ITEMS FROM STORES—WITH ONE EXCEPTION. *ELIXIRS OF THE PEAKS* SHOULD BE READILY AVAILABLE IN MOST LARGE CITIES (SUCH AS MAGNIMAR).

## ANATHEMA ARCHIVE

AURA strong (all schools)

SLOT  
none

CL 20th

MAJOR  
ARTIFACT

Weight 2 lbs.



This unusually heavy scroll consists of a rather long sheet of supple, impossible-to-tear parchment wound between two rods. When the *anathema archive* is opened, it presents a tangle of Thassilonian runes to the observer. Each time the scroll is unfurled, the runes are in a different order, the contents of the archive shifting according to the user's state of mind and desires each time it is used. The archive itself can be used for two purposes: to cast ancient spells and to divulge lore about hateful secrets and hidden horrors.

When using the *anathema archive* to cast spells, the user can either simply open it (in which case it randomly opens to one of the new Thassilonian spells presented earlier in this chapter) or the user can attempt to force the *anathema archive* to open to a specific spell from that list or to any arcane spell she knows how to cast. Doing so requires a Spellcraft check (DC = 20 + double spell level)—failure indicates the archive opens to a random spell from this chapter's seven earlier options. Whatever spell the *anathema archive* is opened to, the user may cast that spell from the scroll as if she were casting a spell from a normal scroll, save that the spell is not consumed from the *anathema archive* upon being cast.

When used for research, the *anathema archive* grants a +10 insight bonus into any one Knowledge check associated with sinister or frightening ancient topics (subject to the GM's discretion—sample subjects include evil outsiders, runelords, Thassilon, Leng, evil religions, or undead). This allows a character to make the Knowledge skill check untrained.

Each time a character uses the *anathema archive*, her mind becomes increasingly haunted and unhinged. Upon using the archive, the user must make a Will save (DC = 15 + twice the total number of times the user has used the *anathema archive*). Failure results in the user taking 1d4 points of Wisdom drain and becoming confused for a number of rounds equal to 1 + the total number of times she has used the artifact.

The *anathema archive* closes automatically each time it is used, and cannot be opened again for 24 hours by any force.

### DESTRUCTION

The *anathema archive* must be eaten by an angel who has been rendered deaf and blind by an evil source—the angel must not know that it is eating an artifact.

## ANIMA FOCUS

AURA strong (conjunction and necromancy)

SLOT  
none

CL 20th

MAJOR  
ARTIFACT

WEIGHT 9 tons

The *anima focus* is an immense artifact created by Karzoug in the final years of Thassilon, based upon the research and notes of the Lords of Greed in Runeforge. This artifact maintains the link between the Material Plane and the Eye of Avarice, and siphons fragments of greedy souls that have been prepared by a special ritual through the *soul lens* found within the Eye of Avarice into the *runewell* itself. The *anima focus* has other powers as well, linked to the Pinnacle of Avarice—see page 359 for details.

### DESTRUCTION

The *soul lens* to which the *anima focus* is linked must be destroyed, after which the *anima focus* can be destroyed by physical damage or magic (hardness 20; hp 800; Break DC 50).

## BOOTS OF THE MIRE

AURA faint (abjuration and transmutation)

SLOT  
feet

CL 5th

PRICE  
3,500 GP

WEIGHT 1 lb.

These soft leather boots confer several powers upon the wearer. First, he is granted the power to walk on water in swampy environments, provided the water is no deeper than 5 feet—this effectively lets him move through swampy terrain and mud at no cost to his speed. He leaves no tracks or other sign of his passage as long as he's in swampy terrain, and never becomes uncomfortable or wet from rain, fog, or other forms of non-freezing precipitation. Finally, the boots grant him a +2 resistance bonus on all Fortitude saves made against poison and disease.

### CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 1,750 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *endure elements*, *pass without trace*, *resistance*, *water walk*

## CHELLAN, SWORD OF GREED

AURA strong transmutation

SLOT  
none

CL 16th

MAJOR  
ARTIFACT

WEIGHT 25 lbs.



Of the *Seven Blades of Conviction* wielded by the runelords' champions—weapons known as the Alara'hai to the Thassilonians, the *sword of greed* was the most extravagant—for it was made of magically hardened gold, tempered to the strength of adamantine yet retaining its luster. Although made of gold, *Chellan* functions as an adamantine weapon for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction and bypassing hardness. *Chellan* is a +5 *keen scimitar*, and its density allows it to damage foes as if it were one size category larger than its actual size. It can be properly



wielded only by characters with a Strength of 18 or higher—all other characters must either wield it as a two-handed weapon or take a –2 penalty on attack rolls with the weapon.

Whenever *Chellan* strikes a foe, the target must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or be slowed as per the spell *slow* (CL 16th). If the sword scores a critical hit, the target must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save or be turned into a crystalline statue, as if by *flesh to stone*. Characters turned to crystal by *Chellan* appear to be made of ruby, diamond, or some other valuable gem, but are in fact merely colored quartz of little value to looters.

Fanatical in the extreme, *Chellan* seeks to force its wielder into serving Karzoug and furthering the runelord's goals. To enforce this purpose of their existence, it can use its intelligence and special abilities to aid and manipulate those who think to wield it.

### STATISTICS

**Alignment** LE; **Ego** 25

**Senses** sight and hearing (30 ft.)

**Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

**Communication** telepathy

**Languages** Common, Thassilonian

**Lesser Powers** 3/day—*create food and water*, *cure serious wounds*, *endure elements*

### DESTRUCTION

Karzoug can destroy the *sword of greed* merely by commanding its destruction with his voice (a free action for the runelord).

| ELIXIR OF THE PEAKS         | SLOT<br>none | PRICE<br>2,450 GP |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA moderate transmutation | CL 7th       | WEIGHT —          |



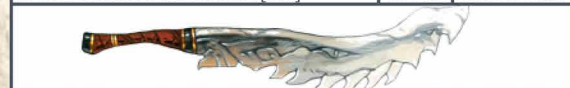
When imbibed, an *elixir of the peaks* gives the user the ability to scale and survive in mountainous terrain with great skill. The imbiber is treated as if acclimated to all high altitudes lower than a death zone, and gains a +2 competence bonus on all Survival checks made at elevations of above 5,000 feet. She also gains a +10 competence bonus on Climb checks and Survival checks in mountainous terrain (these bonuses stack with the altitude-based bonus above). Finally, the imbiber gains the benefits of an *endure elements* spell. The effects of this elixir wear off after 8 hours.

### CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

**COST** 1,225 gp

Craft Wondrous Item, *endure elements*, *spider climb*

| FANGED FALCHION                    | SLOT<br>none | PRICE<br>22,375 GP |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| AURA moderate transmutation [evil] | CL 11th      | WEIGHT 8 lbs.      |



The blade of this brutal-looking falchion is serrated, forming the fangs of the stylized etching of a jackal's profile on the shimmering metal. Such weapons are fashioned in honor of Lamashtu and are favored by her most powerful cultists as weapons not only for battle, but also for sacrifice.

A *fanged falchion* is a +1 *unholy falchion* and wounds caused by the weapon's serrated edge are horrifically ragged and bleed profusely. Whenever a *fanged falchion*'s wielder scores a successful critical hit with it, the sword's blade animates and "chews" at its victim.

In addition to doing damage for the critical hit, this horrific chewing deals 2 points of Constitution damage and stuns the victim for 1 round (Fort DC 15 negates). Creatures immune to critical hits are immune to this Constitution damage and the stun effect.

### CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

**COST** 11,375 GP

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *harm*, *unholy blight*, creator must be evil

| FOG-CUTTING LENSES       | SLOT<br>face | PRICE<br>8,000 GP |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA faint transmutation | CL 5th       | WEIGHT 1 lb.      |

These goggles are made of carefully-polished rock crystal, with frames of polished brass and a simple leather strap and buckle sized for a giant's head (but easily adjustable for smaller wearers). The goggles allow the wearer to see through magical and normal fogs, mists, and similar obscurment. They do not confer darkvision or low-light vision. Further, the goggles distort and skew vision strangely, causing a –4 penalty on Perception checks.

### CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

**COST** 4,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *darkvision*, *fog cloud*

| IMPALER OF THORNS         | SLOT<br>none | PRICE<br>9,000 GP |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA moderate enchantment | CL 7th       | WEIGHT 9 lbs.     |

The *impaler of thorns* is an ancient weapon dating back to Thassilonian times, when it was often used by city guards to aid in breaking up civil unrest. An *impaler's* shaft is made of darkwood, and its head is a thornlike, wide-bladed barb. When an *impaler of thorns* is used in combat, its successful critical hits are accompanied by an unsettling screech, as of some wild beast in anger.

An *impaler of thorns* is a +1 *longspear*. Once per day as it strikes a foe, the wielder can cause it (as a free action) to unleash a 30-foot-radius burst of despair that affects all creatures not wielding an *impaler of thorns*. Creatures affected must succeed at DC 16 Will saves or become overwhelmed with sadness and despair, taking –2 penalties on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls for 6 minutes. The target struck when this effect is triggered must also succeed at a second DC 16 Will save to resist becoming nauseated with despair for 1 round.

### CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

**COST** 4,500 GP

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *cat's grace*, *crushing despair*, *delay poison*

| IOUN STONES, THASSILONIAN | SLOT<br>none | MINOR<br>ARTIFACT |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA strong varied        | CL 12th      | WEIGHT —          |

Whether they were invented by the Azlanti or merely discovered by them, *ioun stones* were an important part of Azlanti society—and by extension, of Thassilonian society. Many of Thassilon's rulers—particularly runelords like Karzoug—took to the art of embedding these stones in their flesh. An *ioun stone* implanted in this manner cannot be sundered or stolen. Further rules on implanting *ioun stones* can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Seekers of Secrets*.

Thassilonian wizards perfected and enhanced many forms of *ioun stones*, such as the four unusually powerful stones listed below. These stones are minor artifacts, and methods of their creation have been lost since Thassilon's fall.

**Amber Spindle:** An *amber spindle* grants a +1 resistance bonus on all saving throws (the bonuses from possessing multiple *amber spindles* stack, up to a maximum of +5).



**Crimson Sphere:** This *ioun stone* grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Intelligence (the bonuses from possessing multiple *crimson spheres* stack, up to a maximum of +6).

**Emerald Ellipsoid:** An *emerald ellipsoid* grants 5 bonus hit points (the bonuses from multiple *emerald ellipsoids* stack; there is no maximum benefit).

**Onyx Rhomboid:** This stone grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Constitution (the bonuses from possessing multiple *onyx rhomboids* stack, up to a maximum of +6).

| KARZOUG'S BURNING GLAIVE         | SLOT<br>none | MAJOR<br>ARTIFACT |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA strong transmutation [evil] | CL 17th      | WEIGHT 8 lbs.     |



Soon after the founding of Thassilon, the ancient emperor Xin crafted the *Alara'quin*, seven icons symbolizing the runelords' mastery of rune magic and dominance over their respective domains. Karzoug's +2 *flaming dancing glaive* is one of these ancient weapons.

*Karzoug's burning glaive* possesses a keen intellect, granted to it by its imperial creator. Meant to embody all that is right and virtuous about the luxury of wealth, the weapon is only concerned with the acquisition of riches and safeguarding the treasures of the rightful runelord of Shalast. It eagerly seeks to immolate non-spellcasters, which it sees as paupers likely to steal what its master possesses. While the glaive endlessly fawns over Karzoug (as it would over any rightful ruler of Shalast), it tirelessly berates other wielders, constantly comparing their flaws to the perfection of its past runelord owners.

#### STATISTICS

**Alignment** NE; **Ego** 22

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., hearing

**Int** 17, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17

**Communication** read languages, speech, telepathy

**Languages** Ignan, Thassilonian

**Lesser Powers** *cure moderate wounds* on wielder 3/day, *faerie fire* 3/day, *major image* (DC 16) 1/day

**Special Purpose** defeat non-spellcasters; **Dedicated Power** *fireball* (CL 17th; DC 16)

#### DESTRUCTION

*Karzoug's burning glaive* can be destroyed by hurling it under the crushing feet of the Oliphaunt of Jandelay, although only so long as no current runelord of greed lives in the world.

| MEDUSA MASK                 | SLOT<br>head | PRICE<br>10,000 GP |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| AURA moderate transmutation | CL 11th      | WEIGHT 1 lb.       |



This intricate mask is made of gold-plated iron. Writhing snake tails radiate from a gemstone upon the brow, almost as if they were medusalike hair. The mask grants a +4 bonus on all saving throws against visual effects, including gaze attacks and sight-based illusions. Once per day as a standard action, the wearer can cause the central gemstone to glow with pale green light, at which point she may target any one creature within 30 feet. The

targeted creature must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be petrified for 1 minute, as if by *flesh to stone*.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 5,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *flesh to stone*, *resistance*

| REAPER'S MASK                    | SLOT<br>head | PRICE<br>12,000 GP |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| AURA moderate enchantment [evil] | CL 7th       | WEIGHT 1 lb.       |



This disturbing mask appears as a single long strip of pliant human skin, stitched into a widening spiral by black thread. Gaps between the stitching allow the wearer to see and breathe through the unsettling mask. A *reaper's mask* functions identically to a *skinsaw mask* (see page 426), but also allows the wearer to cast *confusion* twice per day.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 6,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *confusion*, *deathwatch*

| REVELATION QUILL       | SLOT<br>none | MINOR<br>ARTIFACT |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA strong divination | CL 20th      | WEIGHT 3 lbs.     |



The first *revelation quills* were created by the followers of the Peacock Spirit. Since the fall of Thassilon, the method for creating them has been lost. The few *revelation quills* that remain today continue to function, drawing their revelations, it is said, from the Peacock

Spirit itself. The quill is fashioned from a peacock's tail feather. Its nib is made of bone, and when held in one's hand, the quill seems strangely heavy. If placed in an empty vial or other glass container of similar size and left there for an hour, a *revelation quill* fills that container with ink. The ink created is of a random color 50% of the time, otherwise the ink is black.

While a *revelation quill* can certainly function as a standard writing implement, its true strength lies in its ability to answer questions. Once per day, if the user concentrates on a specific future goal, event, or activity occurring within the coming week, the *revelation quill* takes over and writes out a short phrase in response, often in the form of a cryptic rhyme or omen, much in the same way the *divination* spell functions. Once per week, the user may use the quill in the same way to cast *contact other plane* instead, asking up to 10 questions of the mysterious intellect that guides the *revelation quill*.

#### DESTRUCTION

The quill must be tricked into revealing the method of destroying itself without asking it to reveal that method.

| ROBE OF RUNES             | SLOT<br>body | PRICE<br>44,000 GP |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| AURA strong transmutation | CL 13th      | WEIGHT 1 lb.       |

This robe is made of crimson silk and emblazoned with dozens of spindly Thassilonian runes, each symbolizing a different type of magical effect or syllable of power. Though favored by wizards, this robe can provide some benefit to any spellcasting creature. While worn, it grants a +4 enhancement bonus to Intelligence and allows the wearer to recall, as a free action, up to four levels of spells per day that he had prepared and then cast. Each time a spell is recalled and prepared again in this manner, the sudden rush of magical energy infuses the wearer with power. For 1 round





## APPENDICES

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CAMPAIGN

APPENDIX TWO:  
SANDPOINT

APPENDIX THREE:  
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APPENDIX FOUR:  
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APPENDIX FIVE:  
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after recalling a spell, the wearer's spell save DCs and attack rolls made with spells gain a +2 enhancement bonus.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 22,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *fox's cunning*, *limited wish*

| ROBES OF XIN-SHALAST                   | SLOT<br>body | PRICE<br>198,000 GP |
|----------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| AURA strong abjuration and conjuration | CL 16th      | WEIGHT 1 lb.        |



The traditional robes of the runelord of greed are known as the *robes of Xin-Shalast*. Rarely, a runelord would grant a favored apprentice a set of these robes. Woven of the finest of silks and accented with precious gemstones and gold, the robes are surprisingly light and easy to move in. *Robes of Xin-Shalast* aid and accentuate their wearer's spellcasting ability. They grant a +6 armor bonus and spell resistance 24, but also cause the wearer to cast all spells at +1 caster level. Two of the robe's pockets function as *handy haversacks*. The wearer of these robes is immune to the effects of the occluding field that surrounds the Spires of Xin-Shalast, and can exist comfortably in all high altitudes, including within the death zone at altitudes of 26,000 feet and higher.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 99,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *endure elements*, *mage armor*, *protection from spells*, *secret chest*

| RUNECHILL HATCHET        | SLOT<br>none | PRICE<br>5,312 GP |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA moderate necromancy | CL 5th       | WEIGHT 6 lbs.     |

*Runechill hatchets* are sized for Large creatures, but resizes so it can be wielded by Medium creatures as battleaxes or Small creatures as greataxes. Their blades are jagged and carved with Thassilonian runes, and the weapons always feel cold to the touch. A *runechill hatchet* otherwise functions as a +1 *battleaxe*, but once per day as a free action, its wielder can cause the runes on the blade to flare up with flickering cold blue light. For the next 5 rounds, the axe deals an additional +1d6 points of negative energy damage on a hit. Any creature that takes any amount of this additional negative energy damage must also succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Strength damage. An undead creature struck by a *runechill hatchet* does not gain this negative energy as healing, but instead must make a DC 12 Will saving throw or flee as if panicked for 1d4+5 rounds.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 2,812 GP

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *chill touch*

| RUNEFORGED WEAPON                  | SLOT<br>none | PRICE<br>+2 bonus |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA strong (two variable schools) | CL 13th      | WEIGHT N/A        |

During Thassilon's height, many of the empire's greatest soldiers, mercenaries, and arcane assassins wielded weapons infused with two allied schools of magic that worked together to grant the wielder additional prowess over practitioners of an opposing school of magic. Weapons steeped in enchantment and illusion magic, for example, held great power over wielders of transmutation. Such weapons were often banned in Thassilon, so wary were the runelords of their propagation, yet all seven

kept champions and assassins armed with *runeforged weapons* targeting their enemies' weaknesses in secret.

Each *runeforged weapon* opposes a school of magic. The wielder gains a +2 morale bonus on all saving throws against spells from the weapon's opposed magic. All *runeforged weapons* are, to a certain degree, empathic. They enhance sin or virtue in those who wield them, so a fighter armed with a *dominant weapon* becomes more domineering than before, for example. Anyone wielding a *runeforged weapon* takes a –2 penalty on all Diplomacy checks, as her vices or virtues are magnified at the expense of personality. No weapon can have more than one *runeforged weapon* quality at a time, and a creature that carries two *runeforged weapons* (even those of the same type) takes a –5 penalty on all attack rolls, Will saving throws, and skill checks, as her mind is constantly assailed by multiple empathic urges.

Each of the seven Thassilonian schools of magic is opposed by a single *runeforged weapon* quality—each of these being the combination of that school's opposition schools. The seven correct component combinations and the type of *runeforged weapon* each combination creates are listed below. Note that the first name for each type of weapon listed is its sinful name—the second is the name a virtuous character can use to refer to the weapon. In any event, a *runeforged weapon* functions the same, regardless of whether it magnifies a wielder's sin or virtue.

A wielder who is considered sinful or virtuous (see page 416) with the same type of sin/virtue as a *runeforged weapon* he wields becomes more aware of danger around him—gaining a +2 insight bonus on Initiative checks and a +1 dodge bonus to AC.

The specific effects of each of the seven types of *runeforged weapons* are listed below.

**Covetous/Charitable (opposes evocation):** A union of conjuration and abjuration magic, a *covetous weapon* functions as a *bane weapon* against evokers and creatures with the fire subtype. As long as the weapon is wielded, the wielder gains fire resistance 5.

**Dominant/Commanding (opposes transmutation):** A union of enchantment and illusion magic, a *dominant weapon* functions as a *bane weapon* against transmuters and against creatures with the shapechanger subtype. As long as the weapon is carried, it can absorb up to three harmful transmutation effects (such as *baful polymorph* or *petrification*) inflicted on the wielder per day.

**Jealous/Trusting (opposes necromancy):** A union of abjuration and enchantment magic, a *jealous weapon* functions as a *bane weapon* against necromancers and against undead created by necromancy spells (not against self-manifested undead or undead created by the create spawn special ability). As long as the weapon is carried, it can absorb up to 3 negative levels inflicted on the wielder per day.

**Miserly/Generous (opposes illusion):** A union of transmutation and conjuration magic, a *miserly weapon* functions as a *bane weapon* against illusionists and creatures from the Plane of Shadow. The first three times each day that this weapon strikes an illusion, it automatically makes a *dispel magic* attempt to dispel the illusion.



**Parasitic/Symbiotic (opposes enchantment):** A union of necromancy and transmutation magic, a *parasitic weapon* functions as a *bane weapon* against enchanters and against creatures that are charmed, dominated, or otherwise under another creature's magic control. The first time each day that this weapon strikes a creature under the effects of an enchantment spell, it automatically makes a *dispel magic* attempt to dispel the enchantment. If the attempt is successful, it siphons that energy into the wielder, healing her of 6d6 points of damage (hit points in excess of maximum are gained as temporary hit points that last for 1 hour).

**Sadistic/Compassionate (opposes abjuration):** A union of evocation and necromancy magic, a *sadistic weapon* functions as a *bane weapon* against abjurers and any creatures with an active abjuration spell effect. A *sadistic weapon* shrouds its wielder in an aura of mock magic—when the wielder is subjected to a dispelling effect, that dispelling attempt instead targets only the aura of mock magic. If the aura is dispelled, it replenishes again in 24 hours.

**Tyrannical/Liberal (opposes conjuration):** A union of illusion and evocation magic, a *tyrannical weapon* functions as a *bane weapon* against conjurers and summoned monsters. The first three times each day that the weapon scores a critical hit against a creature with the extraplanar subtype, the weapon casts *dismissal* at the creature struck.

#### CONSTRUCTION

Any weapon can be made into a *runeforged weapon*, but the process of creating such weapons is much more difficult than for most magic items—runeforged weapons cannot be created by the use of the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat. Instead, they must be created by infusing the selected weapon in the waters of the Runeforge itself, a large magical pool at the center of the arcane laboratory bearing the same name.

Before the runeforge pool can enhance a weapon, two runeforge components must be immersed in the pool. If the two objects both share the same opposition school, the pool itself glows golden, and wisps of energy writhe up out of the pool to caress any weapons within 30 feet of the pool's surface. The first weapon to be immersed in the pool glows brightly as several Thassilonian runes etch themselves on the weapon, permanently making it a *runeforged weapon*. (If the weapon anointed was nonmagical, the pool additionally grants it a +1 enhancement bonus.) The runeforge pool currently has enough latent energy stored to effectively enhance one weapon per PC (a separate set of components is required for each weapon). Once a weapon has been runeforged, it cannot be runeforged again. If no weapon is immersed in the pool within a minute, the latent magic reverts back to the runeforge components.

The runeforge components found in Runeforge are as follows:

- GREED:** Elemental arcane water (area G8)
- SLOTH:** Mixed humors (area J5)
- ENVY:** Vial of ethillion (area E3)
- LUST:** Bejeweled dominatrix toys (area H8)
- PRIDE:** Mirror shard (area I3)
- WRATH:** Ashes from wrathful fires (area K6)
- GLUTTONY:** Inib wine (area F3)

#### RUNESLAVE CAULDRON

SLOT  
none

MINOR  
ARTIFACT

AURA strong necromancy

CL 20th

WEIGHT 900 lbs.



This 12-foot-high, 10-foot-diameter cauldron is made of solid iron, cast in one piece and thick enough to withstand great heat. Its side is marked with the Sihedron Rune, while many other Thassilonian runes grace its rim.

A *runeslave cauldron* has the ability to infuse the body of a freshly slain giant, reviving it and transforming it into a *runeslave* (see page 412). Before it can be used, the *runeslave cauldron* must first be activated by filling it with a specially prepared broth of rare necromantic ingredients and rainwater collected from several open graves. The cost of the special ingredients is 10,000 gp, but once the cauldron is filled, a fire lights under it automatically and keeps the broth bubbling and functional for 1 year.

Once the cauldron is filled with broth, one need only sacrifice a giant (the method of killing the giant is incidental) and then place the giant's corpse wholly or partially within the cauldron's bubbling contents. One hour later, the sacrificed giant rises from the cauldron as if *true resurrection* had been cast on it. In addition, the newly revived giant gains the *runeslave* template (see page 412). The cauldron can revive up to five giants a day in this manner. Non-giant corpses placed in the broth are unaffected by the cauldron's magic.

Any living creature (save for a *runeslave*) completely immersed in the boiling broth inside a functional *runeslave cauldron* immediately takes 6d6 points of fire damage per round. In addition, the smoke produced by the cauldron as it boils is particularly noxious to good-aligned beings. It spreads to a radius of 30 feet around the cauldron, and while the smoke isn't thick enough to obscure vision, its foul-smelling vapors sting and burn those of good alignment. Each round such a creature remains in the smoke, he must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be blinded and nauseated for as long as he remains in the area plus an additional 1d6 rounds after leaving the area.

#### DESTRUCTION

By brewing a certain variant mixture of broth and then attempting to use the *runeslave cauldron* to transform a good-aligned giant who volunteers for the job, the cauldron can be caused to crack open across the Sihedron carving. This immediately destroys the cauldron and slays all living *runeslaves* it has created.

#### RUNEWELL, MINOR

SLOT  
none

MINOR  
ARTIFACT

AURA strong necromancy

CL 20th

WEIGHT 900 lbs.

RuneLord Alaznist, inspired by and jealous of Karzoug's success with the *runewell of greed*, experimented with variant *runewells* of her own design. Many of these *minor runewells of wrath* existed in her domain—though today most are lost deep under the waters of the Varisian Gulf or are hidden away in Hollow Mountain, with only the one remaining on mainland Avistan hidden in the Catacombs of Wrath under Sandpoint.

Every time a creature with a wrathful soul (including most goblins and quite a few of the victims murdered years ago by Jervas Stoot) dies within a mile of a *minor runewell*, it gains 1 wrath point. There's no limit to the number of wrath points the *minor runewell* can store, but it currently contains only



20. Each time the well's waters are drawn upon (as detailed below), a number of wrath points are expended. If enough points are expended to put its total at 0 or negative wrath points, the *minor runewell* deactivates, its waters fading away. Reactivating the *minor runewell* requires long-lost rituals—or the reactivation of a major *runewell* somewhere else in the world. Such an event restores a *minor runewell* of wrath to a starting level of 3 wrath points.

A *minor runewell* is only 3 feet deep, yet any living creature that enters its freezing orange waters immediately takes 2d6 points of cold damage and must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or be overcome with wrath. Failure indicates the creature becomes enraged (as if under the effects of a *rage* spell) and immediately attacks the nearest living creature. If no living creatures are in sight, the enraged creature is compelled to seek out a victim, moving at full speed in its search. This rage persists for 2d6 minutes, after which point the creature becomes fatigued. Each activation of a *minor runewell* in this manner costs 3 wrath points.

A *minor runewell* can also be commanded to disgorge a sinspawn. To manifest a sinspawn, a creature need only allow a few drops of its blood to fall into the pool. One round later, a sinspawn emerges from the well and immediately attacks the closest creature in which it cannot scent wrath. Each use of a *minor runewell* in this manner costs 6 wrath points.

#### DESTRUCTION

Once a *minor runewell of wrath* is deactivated, it can be destroyed forever by filling it with holy water that is then set to a boil for no less than 24 hours.

| RUNEWELL AMULET           | SLOT<br>neck | MINOR<br>ARTIFACT |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA strong transmutation | CL 20th      | WEIGHT —          |

This amulet of gold and red crystal grants the wearer a +5 enhancement bonus to her natural armor. In addition, the wearer becomes attuned to both the *runewell of greed* and the *soul lens* that controls it—allowing the wearer to benefit from the fragmentary souls gathered and absorbed by the *runewell*. As long as the *runewell* functions, the wearer does not age and has no need for food or water. In addition, she can fly at a speed of 60 feet with perfect maneuverability and gains fast healing 10. If the *runewell amulet* is removed, the wearer loses all of these abilities. While this does mean the wearer begins aging normally and must eat and drink, she does not suffer any ill effect from the years that passed or the meals she missed while she wore the amulet.

#### DESTRUCTION

A *runewell amulet* must be thrown into an active *runewell* of an opposing magic (a *runewell of lust* or a *runewell of pride* in the case of this particular amulet)—doing so causes the amulet to shatter into four fragments, which then scatter throughout the region that was once Thassilon. If these four fragments can be gathered and placed back in the associated *runewell* (the *runewell of greed* in this case), the amulet reforms and returns to full use.

| RUNEWELL OF GREED      | SLOT<br>none | MAJOR<br>ARTIFACT |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA strong necromancy | CL 20th      | WEIGHT 900 lbs.   |

Currently hidden at the heart of the Eye of Avarice in a demiplane

lodged between Leng and the Material Plane, Karzoug's *runewell of greed* is the key to both his escape from the destruction of Thassilon and his eventual return to life. The *runewell* itself is a core part of the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path, but by the time the PCs arrive at the Eye of Avarice, the circular well (which appears to be filled with molten gold) has already done its job absorbing fragments of greedy souls and is in the process of using that energy to finalize Karzoug's escape.

Beyond this effect, though, Karzoug can utilize the *runewell* in other ways. It grants him the ability to use *scrying* at will, although the *runewell's* range is limited to the Xin-Shalast region or to specific agents like Mokmurian, Xaneshia, and Lucrecia. Creatures that wear magic items marked with the Sihedron take a –4 penalty on saves against this effect. The *runewell* allows Karzoug to see through the eyes and speak through the mouths of anyone who wears a *Sihedron medallion* (see page 426). He can also, given time, call up from the *runewell* a live adult blue dragon minion to serve him as an ally or mount. This essentially functions as a *gate* spell, save that the dragon is actually created by the *runewell* rather than called. Karzoug can only have one such dragon in existence at any one time, and must wait 8 hours after a previous dragon's death before calling a new blue dragon to serve him.

The *runewell* itself is 10 feet in diameter and 10 feet deep. The liquid it contains functions in all ways as molten gold—dealing damage is if it were lava upon creatures splashed or immersed within it. Gold drawn from the *runewell* cools normally and is permanent—the *runewell* immediately replenishes gold taken from its supplies—yet this gold cannot exist more than 30 feet from the *runewell's* rim. If brought beyond this range, it vanishes in an instant.

*Runewells* associated with other runelords and sins exist throughout the ruins of Thassilon; each of these artifacts is a unique item with its own powers.

#### DESTRUCTION

The *runewell of greed* is linked to Karzoug, and as long as he lives, the *runewell* cannot be destroyed. If Karzoug is slain, the molten gold within the *runewell* itself immediately hardens and turns to chalky, worthless stone, destroying the *runewell* in the process.

| SADIST'S LASH                          | SLOT<br>none | PRICE<br>22,301 GP |
|----------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| AURA strong abjuration and conjuration | CL 11th      | WEIGHT 1 lb.       |



A *sadist's lash* is a long whip of thin strips of leather. Created originally by a special sect of wizards who served under Runelord Sorshen, *sadist's lashes* swiftly became quite popular throughout Thassilon. The lash acts as a +7 *wounding whip*, and also aids enchantment spells in two ways. First, it can deliver enchantment spells with a range of touch as if the wielder had touched the creature struck. Additionally, any creature that takes damage from a *sadist's lash* takes a –5 penalty on Will saves against all enchantment effects created by the wielder of the lash for 1 minute unless it succeeds at a DC 15 Will save.

| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS                          | COST 11,301 GP |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>dominate person</i> |                |



### SIHEDRON MEDALLION

AURA faint necromancy

SLOT neck

CL 5th

PRICE 3,500 GP

WEIGHT —



This medallion hangs on a leather cord, a silver disc inscribed with the Sihedron. These medallions were given to favored agents of the runelords; the medallions granted some minor benefits to the wearers, but also allowed the runelords to use the wearer as proxies. By concentrating on a scrying device (such as a *runewell*), a runelord can sense the world through the *Sihedron medallion* wearer's senses, and could speak through her voice—provided the runelord knows of the existence of the medallion and the fact that it is being worn. Thus, Karzoug cannot use the medallion while it's worn by Nualia in Chapter One, as she is unknown to him, but once the PCs come to his attention later in the campaign, that may well change. See page 324 for more details on the ramifications of wearing a *Sihedron medallion* in Xin-Shalast.

While worn, a *Sihedron medallion* grants its wearer a +1 resistance bonus on all saving throws. Once per day, as a free action, it may be commanded to bestow the effects of *false life* on the wearer. Placed on the neck of a dead body, a *Sihedron medallion* preserves the body indefinitely via a *gentle repose* effect.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 1,750 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *false life*, *gentle repose*, *resistance*

### SIHEDRON RING

AURA moderate abjuration and illusion

SLOT ring

CL 9th

PRICE 35,000 GP

WEIGHT —



This otherwise plain ring is adorned with a tiny Sihedron rune. These rings were given to agents and allies of the runelords as badges of office and tokens of appreciation for their work—sometimes, they were given as bribes to those a runelord was attempting to win to his cause. Like the more common *Sihedron medallion*, runelords have special links to *Sihedron rings* that aid in scrying and observation of the world around the wearer of the ring.

A *Sihedron ring* grants a +3 deflection bonus to AC, a +3 resistance bonus on all saving throws, and protects the wearer with a constant *endure elements* effect. At will, as a standard action, the wearer can use the *Sihedron ring* to change the appearance of his clothing or armor into any other kind of clothing or armor. The actual clothing and armor worn retain all their properties (including weight) when glamered. Only *true seeing* or similar magic reveals the true nature of the adornments.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 17,500 GP

Forge Ring, *endure elements*, *resistance*, *shield*

### SIHEDRON TOME

AURA strong transmutation

SLOT none

CL 16th

MINOR ARTIFACT

WEIGHT 5 lbs.



The first *Sihedron Tomes* were said to have been crafted by a dragon in the service of Emperor Xin. Each of these books has a unique appearance, and hold an infinite number of pages for spellcasters to inscribe spells upon. Any wizard who prepares spells

from a *Sihedron Tome*, which potentially holds libraries worth of arcane knowledge, may prepare bonus spells as if her Intelligence were 6 points higher. This is not an actual bonus to Intelligence and grants the user no additional benefit. Karzoug's *Sihedron Tome* contains all sorcerer/wizard spells (save for those of the schools of Enchantment and Illusion) found in the *Core Rulebook* and this book—at the GM's discretion, it can certainly hold more spells.

### DESTRUCTION

A special 9th-level spell must be designed that exists only to destroy the specific and particular *Sihedron Tome* into which it is inscribed. This spell, which has numerous expensive and rare material components, must then be cast on the *Sihedron Tome* by its owner.

### SKINSAW MASK

AURA faint necromancy [evil]

SLOT head

CL 3rd

PRICE 1,500 GP

WEIGHT 1 lb.



This hideous mask resembles a patchwork, deformed face, with one bulbous eye, a grimacing mouth with long teeth, and a flat nose. When worn, the mask fills the wearer's mind with hideous whispers and images of murder and violence. It heightens the wearer's

ability to sense fear. He can smell the cold sweat brought on by terror and hear the thundering beating of a frightened heart. Further, fresh blood glows brightly to him, to the extent that he can see the shimmering traceries of living circulatory systems pumping away in the bodies of those around him. These enhancements grant +2 competence bonuses on Perception checks made against creatures that aren't immune to fear. Further, the ability to plainly see the map of targets' arteries and veins grants the wearer a +1 profane bonus on damage with slashing weapons made against living creatures. Wearing a *skinsaw mask* leaves hideous mental scars; when the mask is donned, the wearer takes 1 point of Charisma damage as his thoughts become tangled with images of murder.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 750 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *deathwatch*

### SKINSEKIN TUNIC

AURA moderate abjuration and transmutation

SLOT chest

CL 8th

PRICE 8,000 GP

WEIGHT 2 lbs.

A *skinskin tunic* is a tight, form-fitting shirt crafted from the scales of a giant snake. When worn, it grants a +1 armor bonus to AC, a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity, and a +2 resistance bonus on saving throws against poison.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 4,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *cat's grace*, *delay poison*

### SOUL LENS

AURA strong necromancy

SLOT none

CL 20th

MINOR ARTIFACT

WEIGHT 8 lbs.



This large lens of green crystal has the Thassilonian rune for transmutation and greed inscribed upon its surface. The lens is fitted in an iron ring, which is attached to an articulated arm that allows the lens's position to be adjusted to any angle and configuration. The *soul lens* has but a single purpose—whenever a creature is subjected to a specific ritual in which its body is branded, tattooed, or otherwise marked with the Sihedron rune, the lens can focus upon that creature's soul.



At any point thereafter when the marked creature dies, its soul passes through this lens on its way into the afterlife and eventual judgement before Pharasma—as the soul passes through, the *soul lens* filters elements of the sin of greed from the soul and focuses that fragment of soul-energy into the *runewell of greed*. This does not significantly damage the soul (although it does cause it a severe amount of spiritual anguish)—a creature that dies and has its soul filtered through the *soul lens* can still be brought back to life as normal.

#### DESTRUCTION

A *dominant weapon* must be used to smash the *soul lens*. The *soul lens* has hardness 20 (this hardness cannot be bypassed) and 200 hit points, but the *dominant weapon* gains the full benefits of its *bane* special abilities when damaging the *soul lens*. The *soul lens* takes no damage from other attacks.

| STAFF OF HEAVEN AND EARTH | SLOT<br>none | PRICE<br>54,000 GP |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| AURA strong transmutation | CL 9th       | WEIGHT 5 lbs.      |

Topped by a swirling cloudy stone and wrapped with black iron filigree, this staff allows use of the following spells:

- *Gust of wind* (1 charge)
- *Stone shape* (1 charges)
- *Air walk* (2 charges)
- *Control winds* (2 charges)
- *Spike stones* (2 charges)

| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS | COST 27,000 GP |
|---------------------------|----------------|
|---------------------------|----------------|

Craft Staff, *air walk*, *control winds*, *gust of wind*, *spike stones*, *stone shape*

| STAFF OF HUNGRY SHADOWS                           | SLOT<br>none | PRICE<br>102,500 GP |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| AURA strong conjuration, evocation and necromancy | CL 15th      | WEIGHT 5 lbs.       |



This staff is made of bone, and the rune of gluttony is burned into a large knob at its tip. It allows the use of the following spells:

- *Darkness* (1 charge)
- *Ray of enfeeblement* (1 charge)
- *Vampiric touch* (1 charge)
- *Enervation* (2 charges)
- *Summon shadow* (as *summon monster V* but summons 1 shadow, 2 charges)
- *Summon devourer* (as *summon monster VIII* but summons 1 devourer, 3 charges)

| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS | COST 51,250 GP |
|---------------------------|----------------|
|---------------------------|----------------|

Craft Staff, *darkness*, *enervation*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *summon monster V*, *summon monster VIII*, *vampiric touch*

| STAFF OF MITHRAL MIGHT    | SLOT<br>none | PRICE<br>55,850 GP |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| AURA strong transmutation | CL 11th      | WEIGHT 5 lbs.      |

This staff is made of silver, with a shimmering sphere of mithral at either end. One end features a golden snake wrapped around the staff and cradling the larger of these two mithral spheres. It allows the use of the following spells:

- *Bull's strength* (1 charge)
- *Enlarge person* (1 charge)

- *Telekinesis* (3 charges)
- *Flesh to stone* (4 charges)

The staff may be used as a weapon, functioning as a +2 *quarterstaff*. It also grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Intelligence as long as it is possessed. These two attributes continue to function after all the charges are expended.

| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS | COST 27,925 GP |
|---------------------------|----------------|
|---------------------------|----------------|

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Staff, *bull's strength*, *enlarge person*, *flesh to stone*, *fox's cunning*, *telekinesis*

| STALKER'S MASK             | SLOT<br>head | PRICE<br>3,500 GP |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| AURA faint illusion [evil] | CL 5th       | WEIGHT 1 lb.      |



This mask is crafted from preserved sections harvested from several different human faces, draped one over another almost like scales and leaving the eyes and mouth exposed—the overall effect is similar to that of a scaled skull. When worn, the mask desaturates the

wearer's color, making him appear insubstantial and shadowy and granting a +5 competence bonus on Stealth checks. Once per day as a full-round action, the wearer may cause the mask's features to take on the appearance of any creature of the wearer's basic size and shape within 60 feet that he observes, allowing the wearer to adopt that creature's appearance and giving him a +10 bonus on Disguise checks made to appear as the creature. As long as he wears this guise, the wearer gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls made against the creature he is disguised as, as the mask builds upon the wearer's rage and jealousy of the target's appearance.

| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS | COST 1,750 GP |
|---------------------------|---------------|
|---------------------------|---------------|

Craft Wondrous Item, *disguise self*, *rage*

| TALONS OF LENG            | SLOT<br>hands | PRICE<br>67,000 GP |
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| AURA strong transmutation | CL 15th       | WEIGHT 1 lb.       |



Finely laid gold filigree lines these ornately worked talons. Once worn, the *talons of Leng* grant the wearer two natural claw attacks, both with a +3 enhancement bonus on attack rolls and damage. A hit from one of the talons deals 1d4 points of damage. On a critical hit,

the talons deal ×3 damage and force the victim to make a DC 20 Will save. Failing this save renders the target permanently insane (as per the spell *insanity*), while success leaves the target confused for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting effect.

The wearer of the *talons of Leng* is immune to the spells *confusion* and *insanity*, as well as to any spell or any ability that produces similar effects. For as long as he wears the talons, however, his Wisdom is reduced by 2, as alien voices constantly whisper through his head. The *talons of Leng* do not interfere with spellcasting, the use of handheld items, or wielding other weapons (though a wielder cannot make an attack with a claw that's holding another weapon or item). If the wielder attacks only with the talons, they are treated as a primary attack, but if he attacks with a weapon or other natural attack, the claws are treated as secondary attacks and take a –5 penalty on their attack roll.

| CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS | COST 33,500 GP |
|---------------------------|----------------|
|---------------------------|----------------|

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *greater magic fang*, *insanity*



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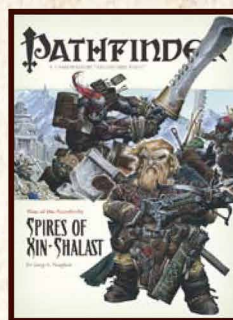
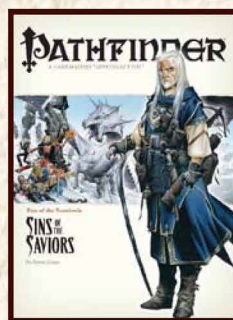
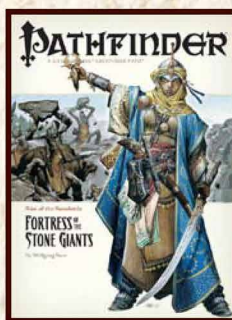
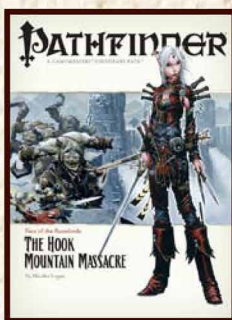
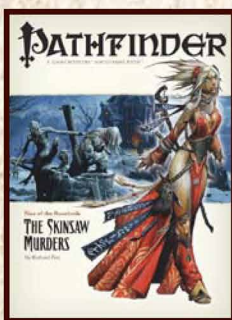
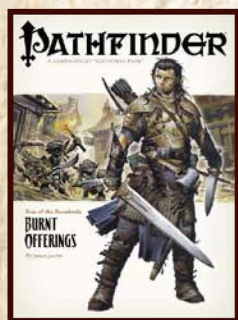
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