

URBAN•ADVENTURES

# THE SINKING

GREAT CITY CAMPAIGN SERIAL



**PATHFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE



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# THE SINKING

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# THE ADVENTURES

## EPICENTER RISING (SEASON I, PILOT) BY TIM HITCHCOCK

PAGE 6

Over the centuries Azindralea, The Great City, has witnessed and bore numerous changes that come with the passage of time. It has survived miracles and devastation, revolution, and even the threat of apocalypse. Though still struggling to recover from recent uprisings that tore apart the throne, the City has fallen into a quiet peace. Yet there are several who eerily proclaim this peace shall be short lived. Among them stand faceless prophets who wander the streets hidden beneath shadowed cowls and whose dark whispers insinuate the genesis of a new era soon to befall the City...

## INFESTATION (SEASON I, EPISODE 1) BY ROB MANNING

PAGE 16

In the days following the wake of the Great City's recent devastating events, Father Malkmus sent his congregants to take temporary shelter in the rarely used Temple of Harvest. Upon their arrival, they found the temple newly inhabited by a displaced gang of vile, parasitic humans known as roachkin. Father Malkmus calls upon the PCs to investigate the temple, seek out survivors, and drive the roachkin out. Unfortunately, the task proves more difficult when PCs uncover the horrific and terrible unholy raising of the gang's former leader by one of his depraved and devoted followers. Can PCs save the Temple and defeat this creatures before he attempts to spread his ghastly infestation through the Temple Ward.

## TUNNELS OF DESPAIR (SEASON I, EPISODE 2) BY STEFAN HAPP

PAGE 26

Freed by powerful tremors which cracked the slave-pens of their nefarious captors, a group of refugees fled into the sewers beneath Pounder Festhall seeking the aid of an elusive slave-helper who protects and shelters outcasts in a secret, subterranean shantytown "utopia". Attempting to pilfer some food from in the drinking hall basement, they accidentally startle a barmaid and are forced to hostage her for safe passage. Sent to rescue the barmaid, the PCs soon find things more complicated when they cross paths with the slavers seeking to recapture the refugees. PCs must choose sides, but find themselves embroiled in a conflict that takes place aboard one of the slave-rings harbored vessels.

## ANIMATION (SEASON I, EPISODE 3) BY TOM GANZ

PAGE 36

Set to rid the Merchant's Haven Inn of a gremlin infestation, the PCs find themselves thrust into a whirlwind of chaos when strange vaporous wisps race through the streets of the Trades Ward, animating dozens objects which erupt on unsuspecting citizens with violent fury.

## THE DEVIL'S SMUGGLER (SEASON I, EPISODE 4) BY JOHN E. LING, JR.

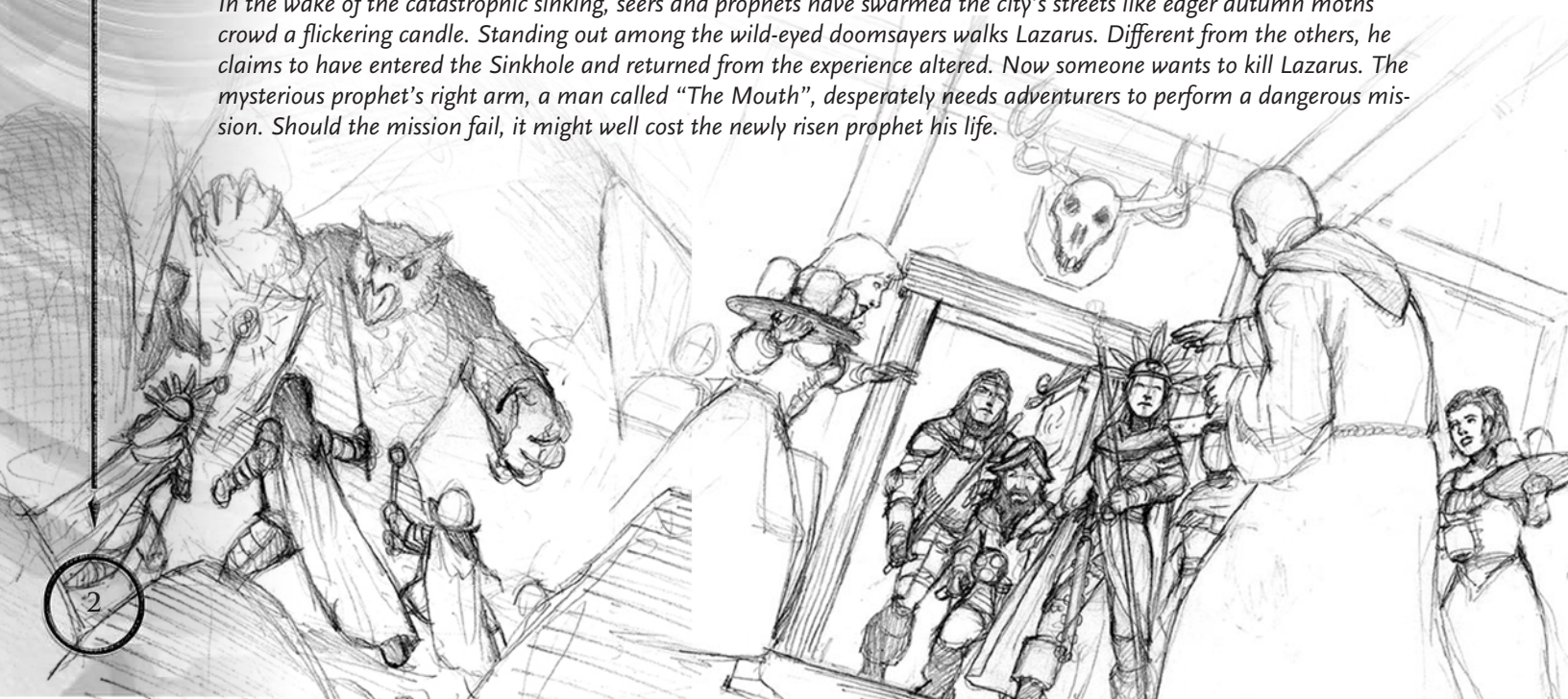
PAGE 46

In desperate times, the scum rises to the surface where everyone can see it. Street crime has reached an all time high, wallowing amidst a sea of homeless and indigent beggars. Yet beneath the surface, there lurk darker things. Spurred to action by a rash of abductions, the adventurers run afoul of one of the Great City's long standing crime families. But like everyone else, the Sinking has dealt them a fateful hand. With Orim Menach, the patron of their organization missing, the Menach boys have slipped into the trap of an even greater threat, one the adventurers must uncover for themselves.

## ASCENSION OF THE PROPHET (SEASON I, EPISODE 5) BY MARIO BARBATI

PAGE 54

In the wake of the catastrophic sinking, seers and prophets have swarmed the city's streets like eager autumn moths crowd a flickering candle. Standing out among the wild-eyed doomsayers walks Lazarus. Different from the others, he claims to have entered the Sinkhole and returned from the experience altered. Now someone wants to kill Lazarus. The mysterious prophet's right arm, a man called "The Mouth", desperately needs adventurers to perform a dangerous mission. Should the mission fail, it might well cost the newly risen prophet his life.





Since the event known as *The Sinking*, a general uneasiness descended upon the Great City, but that's no reason not to party! The PCs attend a covert masquerade thrown by a troupe of thrill seeking young nobles. Matsoni Gimbros, the clique's ringleader, declares the party's theme to be *The Sinking*. To complement his theme, Matsoni chose the perfect venue: an abandoned bathhouse on the edge of the sinkhole. Rumors that a ghost haunts the bathhouse only add to its allure. Privileged, promiscuous young people in a haunted condemned building: what could possibly go wrong?

## THE PLUMB LINE (SEASON I, EPISODE 7) BY TITO LEATI

PAGE 74

The PCs undertake a wild search for a missing architect, real-estate entrepreneur, and arcane scholar of the Great City's ancient secrets. Struggling against their quarry's persecutors, they learn the architect secretly uncovered one of Azindralea's legendary treasures—a revelation that soon leads them into an epic and dangerous exploration at the edge of the sinkhole.

## POLITICS UNUSUAL (SEASON I, EPISODE 8) BY ROB MANNING

PAGE 86

When a headstrong Azindralean politician seeks to launch a campaign to seize control of his district, his chief security officer hires the PCs to ensure his enemies cannot transform his opening speech into a riot. Emphasizing wit and subtlety; they must siphon through the crowd of followers and disperse potential troublemakers as peacefully as possible. Under no circumstances should they besmirch the campaign of hope with bloodshed. Yet even if they succeed, a final enemy plots their demise. He only waits for their victory to trick them into lowering their guards.

## BEAR HUNTING (SEASON I, EPISODE 9) BY MARIO BARBATI

PAGE 96

When a Bloodfang mercenary murders his captain and goes A.W.O.L., the Kharel seeks the aid of outsiders to track him down before he flees the city. However, once they capture the killer, a second question awaits, and the heroes must decide whether to surrender him to the justice of the military or the murdered captain's vengeful widow.

## THE MALCHORT CABAL (SEASON I, EPISODE 10) BY TIM HITCHCOCK

PAGE 108

After the PCs new patron mysteriously disappears, the PCs are drawn into the dark dealings of powerful cabal of nobles whose secret interests in the Sink they would kill to protect. Yet even within their inner circle, cabal members keep secrets from each other, forcing the PCs to scramble for answers to stop an unknown madman from stirring whatever horrors he believes lie within the lightless depths of the massive sinkhole.

## THE TRIBUNAL EDICTS (SEASON II, EPISODE 1) BY TIM HITCHCOCK

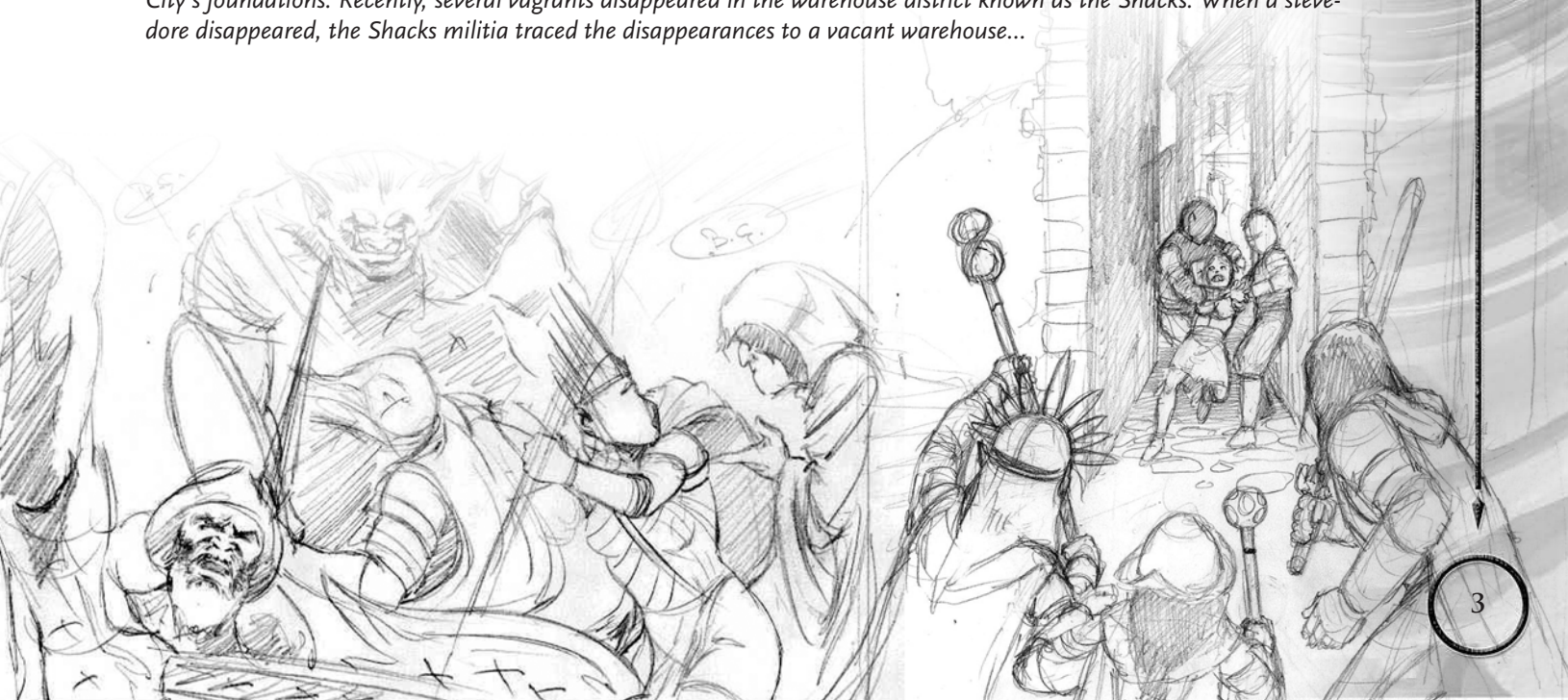
PAGE 128

Following the trial of the Malchort Cabal and the revelation that something of great danger lurks within the Sinkhole, the Kortezean Government ordered an immediate evacuation of the Sinkhole area. In addition to the possibility of outside threat, the strong anti-Azindralean sentiment of various Cabal members struck a raw nerve with the native Azindraleans, forcing the ruling class to act preemptively in order to avoid civil uprising. Almost two hundred soldiers deployed to the Sink site and, overnight, they barricaded the area from the rest of the city.

## THE MOLE (SEASON II, EPISODE 2) BY DAVID SCHWARTZ

PAGE 146

The earthquake that caused the Sinking and the aftershocks that followed have opened up numerous cracks in the Great City's foundations. Recently, several vagrants disappeared in the warehouse district known as the Shacks. When a stevedore disappeared, the Shacks militia traced the disappearances to a vacant warehouse...





**THE SKULLFIRE INQUISITION (SEASON II, EPISODE 3) BY MICHAEL O'DAY****PAGE 156**

At the instigations of the Trypus Academy, the Lazarites initiate a brutal inquisition of various churches in their search for mysterious items secreted away by an aged priest of the god of mysteries. In order to aid their newest ally, Blood Senator Vulgrax, the PCs must infiltrate the inquisition, find the priest, retrieve his mysteries, and if possible save the man's life.

**WIDOW'S WALK (SEASON II, EPISODE 4) BY DAVID SCHWARTZ****PAGE 170**

After long several years of disappearance at sea, Captain Hasserbruk has returned home. Yet, the captain's formerly widowed wife fears something about her beloved husband is not quite right. Fearing an imposter, the PCs are called in to investigate the truth.

**THE FREEDOM GAMBIT (SEASON II, EPISODE 5) BY THURSTON HILLMAN****PAGE 180**

After interpreting some of the Information gathered from Skullfire Inquisition, Blood Senator Vulgrax prematurely makes several harsh public accusations against the Lazarites. This earns him the wrath of the Trypus, and he is sentenced to death. To save his life, the PCs need to smuggle him out of the city.

**SEEKING DAWN (SEASON II, EPISODE 6) BY STEFAN HAPP****PAGE 192**

Heading high into the mountains, the PCs work to help Vulgrax and his allies create a new settlement. When Erasmus sends Red Mist assassins to hunt them down, the PCs must brace for the long haul, and prepare themselves for the inevitable conflict with its new totalitarian rulers.

**BENEATH THE SHADOWHEART (SEASON II, EPISODE 7) BY TIM HITCHCOCK****PAGE 206**

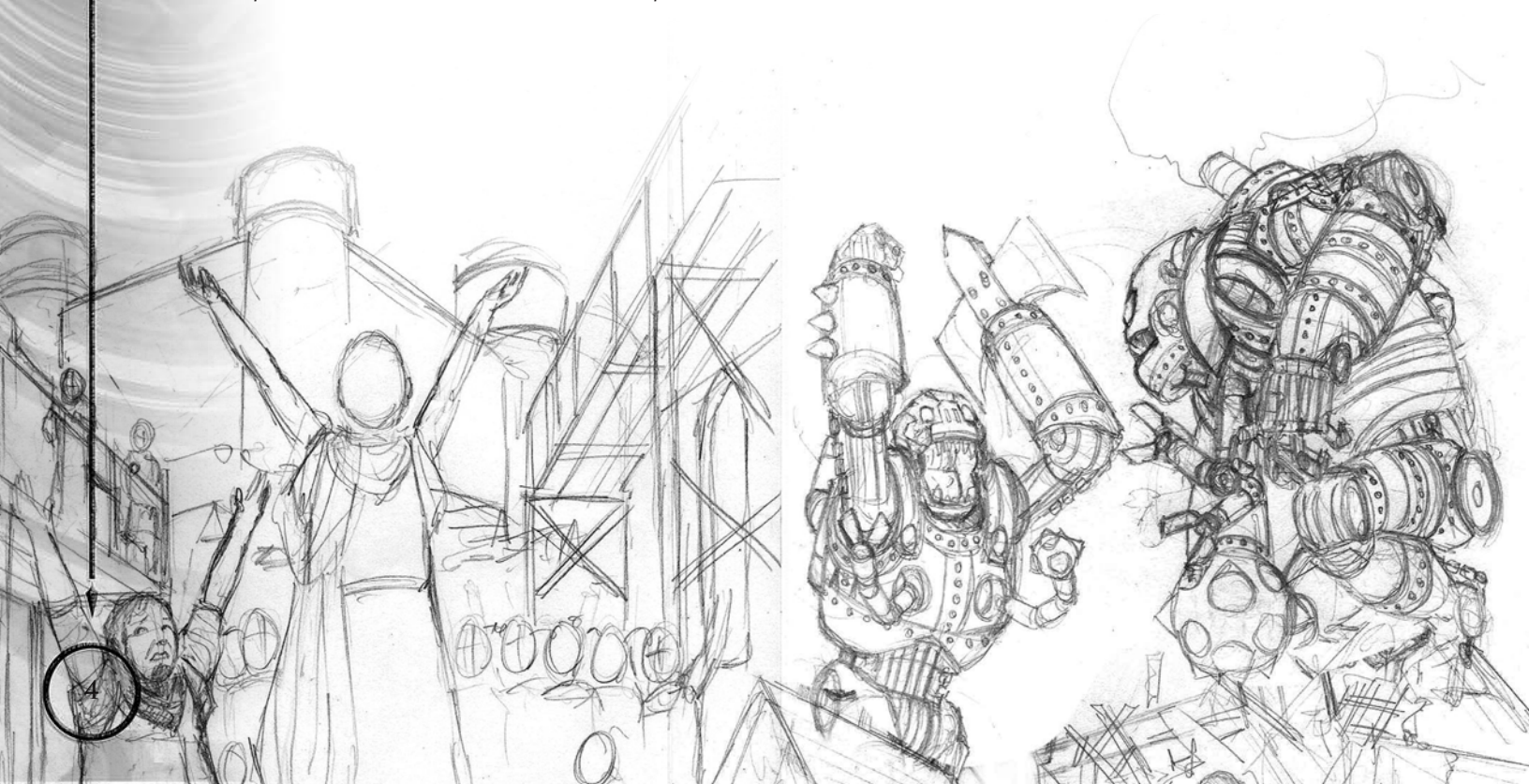
Unable to gather information concerning the Trypus Academy's growing influence in the Great City, the PCs plot to return by making a run through the Dungeon Under the Mountain. They seek to establish an underground safe-route to help others escape from the inquisitions, as well as gather intelligence against their nemesis, the Trypus Academy.

**LOCKS OF THE PANOPTICON (SEASON II, EPISODE 8) BY JOHN E. LING****PAGE 222**

The PCs learn that the Trypus unearthed secrets from within the Sink that have allowed them to build a colossal-sized, monstrous construct death-machine. To counter them, the PCs must find and open a series of mysterious locks that allow them to access the fabled Panopticon.

**DOOM GOLEM RISING (SEASON II, EPISODE 9) BY TIM HITCHCOCK AND SAVANNAH BROADWAY****PAGE 232**

The PCs delve back into the Dungeon under the Mountain into the fabled Panopticon. There they uncover one of the Malchort's most deadly secrets, a colossal biomechanical death-machine in the shape of a great prehistoric beast known as a Doom Golem. The PCs must figure out how to reactivate the machine and return to the surface through the Sink. Emerging in the center of the Great City, they face off against the Trypus Academy's own mecha-kaiju death-machine in an epic battle that threatens to smash the city to rubble.





# INTRODUCTION

It's all Mario's fault — always is. A few years back he contacted me about supporting the *Great City Campaign Setting* with some urban adventures. Since a number of folks had already started using the setting, he had it in his head that he absolutely didn't want to create a serial-style adventure where characters start at first level and continue the same plot all the way through until they hit top tier. What he really wanted was a collection of adventures that could be played in different orders, or as needed but... but that were all tied to a single event to give them "continuity" or something like that.

At the time, the TV show *LOST* was pretty popular and it inspired him to do something similar, but instead of a plane crash we needed a more "sword & sorcery" type of catastrophe; enter the Sinkhole. From years of RPG design work, I know its terrible form to create a fully developed city and then in subsequent years release a product that kind of destroys everything you already built. I'm often bitter when I buy a product only to have subsequent releases tell me everything I just purchased is now useless, so I picked a part of the City which up to that point had been relatively untouched and undeveloped and put a big hole in it.

Next, I called pretty much everyone I could think of to write a short adventure influenced by the recent appearance of a giant sinkhole. After all these wonderful and talented individuals agreed to write something, I then told them that they could pretty much write whatever they wanted to, however they should avoid explaining the cause or reasoning behind the massive sinkhole or even have PCs go into the hole. Overwhelmingly, the response I got from the authors was... "what's the point of having a sinkhole if we can't use it?" Fortunately, whatever my response was convinced everyone to contribute some very cool adventures.

This left me with the daunting task of stringing things together. Two seasons later, we finally exposed our big reveal and drew the Sinking series to a close. I thought perhaps things might wind down a little, however Mario again contacted me — this time with plans to release a Hardcover version of the entire Sinking Series.

With the series complete, the responses of players and product reviewers, message board comments, and plain old hindsight compelled me to revisit the compiled Sinking series in the hopes that I might make a last ditch effort to tweak some story elements and clarify or strengthen parts where needed. The results of our collective efforts lie within these

pages, however they only come to life when sparked by your efforts. By no means are your own efforts underappreciated by the publisher, designers, and authors of this work.

Our sincerest thanks for your support,

*Tim Hitchcock and the rest of the design team at  
oone Games - September 2015*

## RUNNING THE SINKING SERIES

Season I of the Sinking Series followed no obvious plots or grand schemes. Other than the commonality of the massive sinkhole, few of the adventures appear to have much in common beyond the indirect ties to the massive sinkhole and the majority of the adventures plots do not occur in any specific order. In this compilation they are arranged by average party level so a GM may run them as a serial.

Regardless, a GM that desires run them in a different order can easily get away with changing CRs on a lot of the adventures, and moving them around and slipping them in between other adventures as she's see fit.

Below is a general breakdown for how to organize the flow of the adventures.

### Season I

#### 1st level Adventures

**Epicenter Rising** needs to be first as it serves as the introduction to the series. **Infestation** and **Tunnels of Despair** are interchangeable and may be played in either order at the GMs convenience.

#### 2nd level Adventures

**Ascension of the Prophet** works best if kept as a 2nd-level adventure. GMs should run it as soon as possible because it sets up situations and events for later adventures.

#### 3rd level adventures

**Bear Hunting**, **Animation**, and **Plumb Line** may be played in any order.

#### 4th level adventures

**Devil's Smuggler**, **Politics Unusual**, and

**Tatterdemalion** may be played in any order.

**Malchort Cabal** should be run to close the events in Season I and set up the opening adventure in Season II.

The remainder of the events in Season II occur chronologically and should be played in the succession they appear in this book.



# EPICENTER RISING

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To those new to the Great City— welcome!

To those of you who are returning, thank you!

I couldn't be more thrilled with the number of you who've supported our efforts over these past couple of years. To all those who helped the Great City Player's Guide win a Gold ENnie... I dedicate the series to you.

*Tim Hitchcock, Nov 2010*

## THE SINKING

This adventure serves as the pilot to an ongoing series set in the Great City. This is not the first adventure in a path, but instead, it concerns a mysterious event that will forever alter the Great City, setting the tone for future events. Throughout the year, Øone Games will release a number of short adventures whose various plots are all somehow entwined with the event. Each will be a stand-alone adventure, designed to be played independently without a specific sequence and can be completed in a single evening's play.

## EPICENTER RISING

*Epicenter Rising is an Adventure for the Pathfinder RPG System for 1<sup>st</sup>-level Player Characters*

*Over the centuries Azindralea, The Great City, has witnessed and bore numerous changes that come with the passage of time. It has survived miracles and devastation, revolution, and even the threat of apocalypse. Though still struggling to recover from recent uprisings that tore apart the throne, the City has fallen into a quiet peace. Yet there are several who eerily proclaim this peace shall be short lived. Among them stand faceless prophets who wander the streets hidden beneath shadowed cowls and whose dark whispers insinuate the genesis of a new era soon to befall the City. Dubbed fear-mongers, the Korteziian guard has posted warrants for those who falsely spread terror and incite the public. They arrested a handful of these so-called prophets, only to identify them as the bourgeoisie's idle youth in the midst of performing an elaborate prank. Yet many believe that behind every seemingly innocuous hoax, lies deep-rooted conspiracy.*

## PLOT

While investigating a ring of silver smugglers operating in secret tunnels beneath the City, seismic activity causes parts of the tunnels to collapse, trapping both the PCs and smugglers below. PCs must navigate the tunnels and catch up with the smugglers in order to figure out how to get to the sewers and back to the surface.

## INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins when PCs undertake an investigation of a small group of smugglers supposedly working out of a cheese shop.

The GM can use any of the following theme-based hooks to get the PCs involved:

**Civic Duty:** The Night Watchmen (the Great City's quasi-vigilante neighborhood protectorates) have received a small stipend from their Tax-Warden to address the growing smuggler problem. The Night Watchmen's leader, Judge Bao has publicly posted a reward to anyone who can break up the ring, along with a nomination into his elite order.

**Competition:** A rival criminal operation seeks to muscle in on the convenient smuggling tunnels and hires the PCs to "take care of" their more successful competitor. The organization's crime boss, Wealdon Pag offers them 250 gp to find the secret entrance to their smuggling tunnels.

**Political Assassins:** PCs work for the Korteziian government and have been tasked with breaking up the City's cancerous smuggling operations. Higher-ups within the government demand the smuggler's leader dead, thus they turn to the PCs as outsiders in order to keep their hands clean of actions that may be construed as politically motivated assassination. The PCs are approached by a cloaked figure identifying himself as Lord Atregan's herald with a royal Korteziian signet ring. The herald offers them 250 gp to make the problem "disappear" without drawing attention to the throne.

**Vengeance:** The PC or someone in the PC's family has suffered at the indiscriminate hands of smugglers. The PC decides to undertake the challenge of bringing down the smuggler's entire ring.

Once the GM chooses a plot hook, PCs begin the adventure by fishing for leads in the Trades Ward. PCs who complete a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to Gather Information are able to uncover the following lead. After a successful check, read or paraphrase the following to get things underway:

*After asking around a bit, a filthy, stump-armed beggar approaches and identifies himself as Brissen, a former revolutionary who lost his hands to the cruel interrogations of the Korteziians during the last uprising. He claims to know something about local criminal activities and offers to divulge some of his recent observations for the price of a hot meal.*

If PCs accept, he reveals the following information:

*I get about the City a lot, so I see a lot. There's a*



*small cheese shop in the Trades Ward's East Market district run by a man named Osmont Rudridge. For the past month or so, about once or twice a week, it closes at odd hours during the middle of the day, for no apparent reason. Still, during these interludes I've seen a few people slip in and out of the shop, one I recognized as a two-bit street pickpocket named Krymor Lok.*

## RUDRIDGE'S CHEESE SHOP (CR 1)

Rudridge's Cheese Shop sits on the corner of East Market in the Trades Ward. The small stone storefront-cottage is wedged between two larger brick buildings of new construction that built up around it as the neighborhood became more populated. Osmont Rudridge, the shop's owner possesses the unfortunate reputation of a portly, hen-pecked sod who splashes his noontime coffee with enough spirits to put him to sleep before the shop closes at dusk. Still, word about the Ward is he makes a damn good cheese. Anyone attempting a DC 15 Diplomacy check to try to glean further information from the locals learns that a few times during the past month, he's been seen having lunch in the company of Aaros Maldigrin, a rebellious young man whose reputation as a con and a crook seems to be growing steadily. According to recent rumors, he's assumed control of a local street gang known as the Cobbleston Maulers. While the display catches local curiosities, no one the PCs speak to have had the desire to know anymore about their relationship, and tell the PCs they should do their best to keep clear of Aaros, as he's well connected on both sides of the law. If the PCs request further information on the gang, those they interrogate tell them horrific stories of cruelty and force inflicted upon citizens and their loved ones to assure the group's secrecy.

When PCs arrive at the cheese shop, read or paraphrase the following:

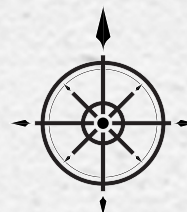
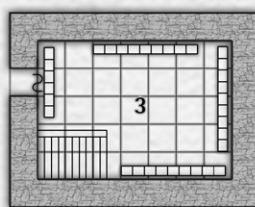
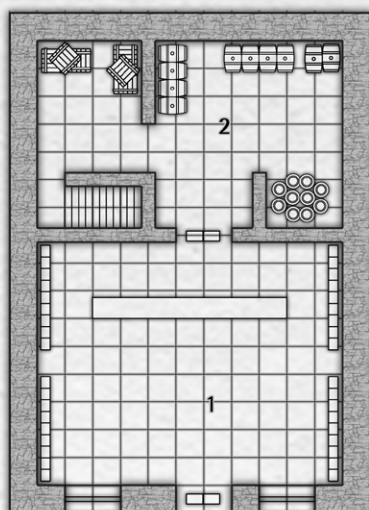
*A short flight of stairs leads up to an arched walnut door set with tiny panes of glass. A dangling wooden placard hangs, suspended from a wrought-iron frame above a broad display window crammed with cheese.*

The cheese shop door is locked with a simple lock and can be picked with a DC 12 Open Lock skill check. The door is of decent quality (1½ inches thick, hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18).

Allow PCs a DC 12 Perception check to notice a portly balding man in a white muslin apron running about the shop, cleaning in a panic.

If PCs bang on the door and peer in, they can better see the man. At first he freezes, holding still as to not be seen, however when his eyes fall on the door and the peering PCs, he realizes he's been spotted. Once this occurs, he rushes to the door and apologizes for his behavior. Though he blocks PCs from entering and tries to shoo them off quickly by claiming he's late for something extremely important and about to leave himself, and could they come back later.

When the PCs encounter the shopkeeper, allow them a DC 14 Sense Motive check to discern something amiss. Those successful notice he twitches nervously, and sweat beads around his temples. If PCs engage him in conversation, he comes off as slightly agitated but pleasant. He dismisses his condition, saying it's because it's his anniversary and he needs to run out and get something for his wife. He apologizes profusely and tries to usher the PCs out, stressing that he really needs to close up shop for a bit.



1 square = 5 ft

- 1 - FRONT ROOM
- 2 - BACKROOM
- 3 - CELLAR

### RUDRIDGE'S CHEESE SHOP



If Rudridge successfully shoos off the PCs, he leaves the shop momentarily, makes a quick trip around the block, then ducks into a narrow ally and follows it back down the adjacent street. He then cuts through another ally and reenters his shop through the backdoor. Upon exiting, PCs can attempt to tail him on this route, though he checks every few hundred feet to see if he's being followed.

If PCs enter the shop, Rudridge begins sweating like crazy, then begs them not to go into the backroom. Again, it's a ploy. He knows the thugs are waiting there, and discussing the PCs' movements through his shop is his way of cluing them in. An opposed Sense Motive check reveals that Rudridge is still plotting something, or hiding something in the room he doesn't want anyone to see. Regardless, successful skill checks fail to discern the precise nature of his agitation, or the ambush.

**Creatures:** Two thuggish smugglers hide, positioned behind the draperies that lead into the adjoining room. They have threatened Rudridge's life, and he's scared. These thugs listen intently, waiting with drawn blades to ambush PCs if they attempt to proceed.

#### Smuggler (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200

Male/female rogue 1

**N** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp** 10 (1d8+2)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk short sword +4 (1d6+2/19–20), dagger +3 (1d4+3/19–20)

**Ranged** light crossbow +3 (1d8/19–20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** The smugglers attempt to keep hidden, positioning themselves to sneak attack PCs entering the backroom.

**During Combat:** After sneak attacking opponents, the rogues follow up with a few round of melee, in which they attempt to drop opponents.

**Morale:** As soon as either rogue takes more than 7 hp of damage, both quickly flee for the nearest exit, taking on-the-run shots at any pursuers.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Appraise +5, Bluff +3,

Climb +6, Escape Artist +9, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Perception +4, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +9, Swim +6

**Languages** Common, Kortezian

**SQ** trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** quiver with 20 bolts; **Other Gear**

leather armor, mwk short sword, dagger, light crossbow, backpack, common lantern, 3 pints of oil, chalk, 50 feet rope, cloth wrapped bundle of pilfered silverware (30 gp).

**Developments:** Once the PCs defeat the smugglers, they are free to search the shop. If they save Rudridge, he claims to be incredibly grateful and that the thugs had been harassing him for years. This information is true, however he leaves out the fact that he helps them and lets them use his basement.

**Treasure:** A DC 13 Perception check reveals a false bottom in one of the chests that conceals more contraband, mostly stolen silverware and similar items to be melted down for their valuable metals; in all, there is about 200 gp worth of valuable metal.

## THE BASEMENT

A DC 12 Perception check notices a trapdoor concealed by a throw rug. The unlocked hatch leads down into a basement filled with wine racks. Scuff marks on the floor indicate where the wine racks have been slid about. One of the wine racks blocks a doorway. Anyone attempting to move the wine rack triggers the trap.

#### Collapsing Wine Rack Trap

CR1

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

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Effect** Acid (1d6 acid damage; DC 15 Reflex save for half); **multiple targets** (all targets within 5 ft. of rack).

Fiddling with the wine rack causes it to collapse, shattering its acid-filled wine bottles upon the floor. A successful Disable check locates a locking latch on the back of the rack used by the smugglers to keep it from collapsing when they move it around to access the tunnels.

**Developments:** Once PCs disarm or trigger the trap, they can move the rack. The door behind allows them to gain entrance into a labyrinthine tangle of subterranean warrens used as smugglers tunnels. The tunnel is pitch black and those requiring a light source to see must provide one. A DC 18 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check determines the tunnel likely leads down into the sewer.



## T1. THE TREMORS START

The first tremor occurs about 300 feet into the tunnel anywhere along the line that reads T1. It lasts only for a minute, then subsides. When the PCs reach T1 on the map, read or Paraphrase the following:

*Suddenly a low rumble rises from the tunnel. The earth shakes violently and loose dust and pebbles fall from the ceiling filling the passage with choking dust.*

Everyone balanced on two legs or less must make a successful DC 18 Reflex save or fall prone. Dust fills the tunnel, causing a -2 penalty to Perception checks made to see for the next 1d3 minutes. PCs traveling back up the passage discover it's hopelessly blocked with rubble. DC 12 Knowledge (dungeoneering) skill reveals the resultant collapse taking no less than two several weeks to clear. There is little choice but to continue.

**Developments:** PCs making a successful DC 14 Perception check to listen hear the sounds of barking coming from the tunnels ahead in the distance, as well as the sound of rushing water.

## T2. THE SECOND TREMOR (CR1)

The second tremor is worse than the first. It loosens a hail of loose scree and rock on those in the tunnel.

**Hazard:** All creatures in the tunnel are pelted by falling rocks and similar debris for 1d4 damage. A DC 14 Reflex save negates.

## T3. THE CISTERN LEECH (CR2)

*Splashing gouts of water jet from cracks that tear through the sides of the crumbling passage. The ground has turned to a wash of mud while the runoff forms a sort of brook of sludge that continues on down the channel into darkness.*

Here the sewer passage hits an abandoned cistern, its waters long gone stagnant. As the damage is recent, the mud is quite shallow and fresh. The floor is slippery, and PCs attempting to move across it at a speed faster than their move action must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid slipping and falling prone.

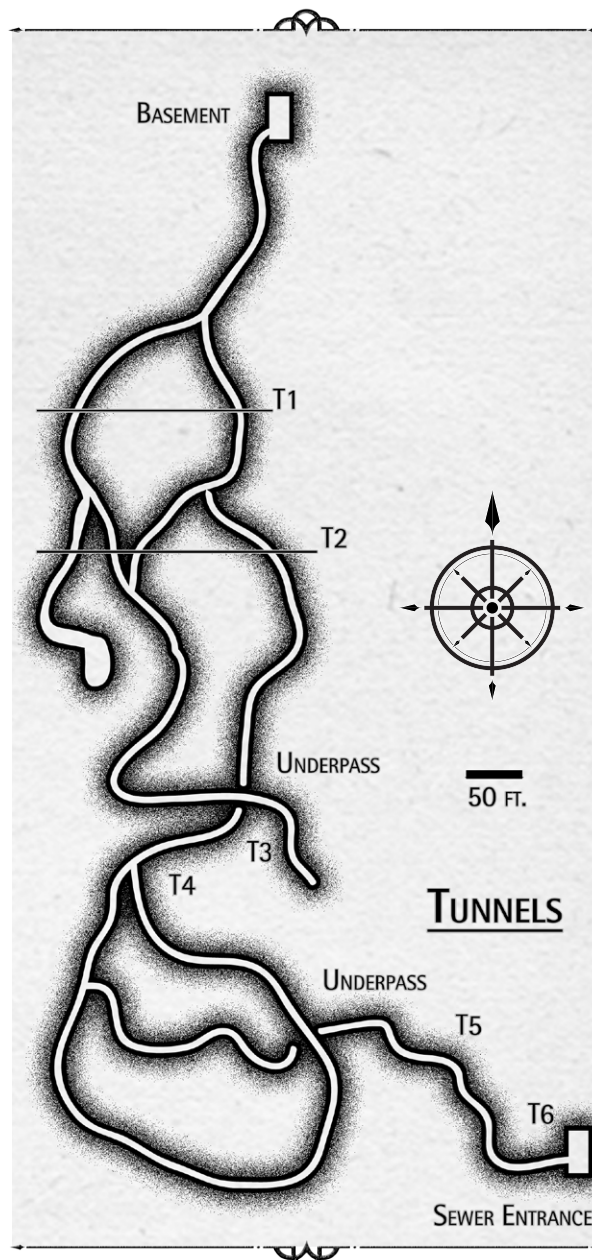
**Hazard:** Anyone exposed to the stagnant water must make a successful DC 13 Fortitude save or contract *filth fever*.

**Creatures:** a monstrosously-sized leech flops about in the mud. The famished parasite attacks the very moment it senses a potential meal.

## INTO THE SEWERS

While in real life, sewers are filthy and crawling with diseases, it may seem like the disease-riddled encounters in this section might overwhelm the PC. GMs should remember that disease, unlike poison, has an onset time, thus encouraging the PCs who become diseased to get back to the surface and grab a cure. Unlike being in a dungeon far from resources, the sewers sit only a few yards below all the resources the PCs need. Use the disease as motivator to speed up the

PCs, not punish them. That was the designer's intent.







## GIANT LEECH

CR 2

XP 600

hp 19; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 187.

### T4. LOST DOGS (CR 1)

*At this location, the passageway forks off. Lying in the rubble, the fresh carcass of a small dog marks the intersection, its head sloppily crushed by a large ceiling stone and its blood pooling beneath it.*

**Creatures:** Soon after PCs get to this point they hear howls rising from deeper down the tunnel. 1d6 minutes later, a pack of wild dogs comes screaming down the passage. The thugs often navigate the passages with dogs, which they use to lead them by scent. Three dogs sent by their masters to check passages became separated from them during the first collapse. They are covered in dust from the collapse, which initially got up their noses and in their eyes. Their eyes have recovered, however they've lost the scent path and cannot find their masters.

## DOGS (3)

CR 1/3

XP 135

hp 6; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 87.

**During Combat:** The confused dogs have been whipped into a frenzy and readily rush to attack opponents as soon as they spot them.

**Morale:** Unless, somehow calmed, the dogs fight until one of them is killed and the second falls below 3 hp, at which point they break off the attack and flee into the sewers.

### T5. THE THIRD TREMOR (CR 2)

*Again there is a loud cracking sound, followed by a hail of dust and rubble. Above, a huge crack begins to split down the center of the tunnel's ceiling.*

The PCs have mere seconds to decide their fate before the ceiling in this tunnel collapses. Before determining the outcome, the GM should ask the PCs which direction they want to run (backwards, or forwards). Once they respond, have all PCs in the tunnel make a DC 13 Reflex save. Those successful take 1d3 damage from falling debris, but reach their destinations safely. Those that fail take 2d4 damage and are knocked prone and buried with dust and dirt. If unconscious, others must successfully attempt a DC 14 Perception check to find them. The tremor leaves 10 + 1d4 feet of passageway partially clogged with debris. Party members who chose to run back up the passage rather than forward when the tremor began must now contend with the collapsed tunnel before them. They can pass through the debris-choked corridor by crawling atop the rubble through a cramped 3-foot-wide space near the sewer ceiling.



**Developments:** From this point on (until PCs reach the surface) minor tremors continue, striking every 2d4 minutes. During a tremor, passages choke with dust and grinding sounds causing a -2 Penalty to all Perception checks. Furthermore, each round PCs risk being struck by falling debris. Calculate as a ranged +2 attack that deals 1d2 bludgeoning damage.

## T6. SMUGGLERS CAMP (CR 3)

*Here the passage widens and the muddy trickle flows out into a spacious cistern-like structure that appears like it's part of the Azindralean sewer system.*

**Creatures:** a small band of smugglers has set camp at the edge of the tunnels that open into the City sewers. Unaware they have followers, they surround a moderately ripped parchment with a map of the City's sewers.

As soon as PCs enter, one of the smugglers (Krymor) grabs the map. He whispers something along the grounds of "I'm going to run for it, cover me." Then, at first opportunity, he tucks the map beneath his arm and bolts out of the passage and into the sewers. Only after he's fled does it dawn on

the remaining thugs that the man has run off with their means of escape.

Of the four remaining NPCs, only two of them are ready to fight, the others remain unsure, and are willing to form alliances with those PCs who seem interested in escaping. Alliances may be accomplished using opposed Diplomacy checks. The rogues start with an attitude of Hostile.

**Smugglers (4)**

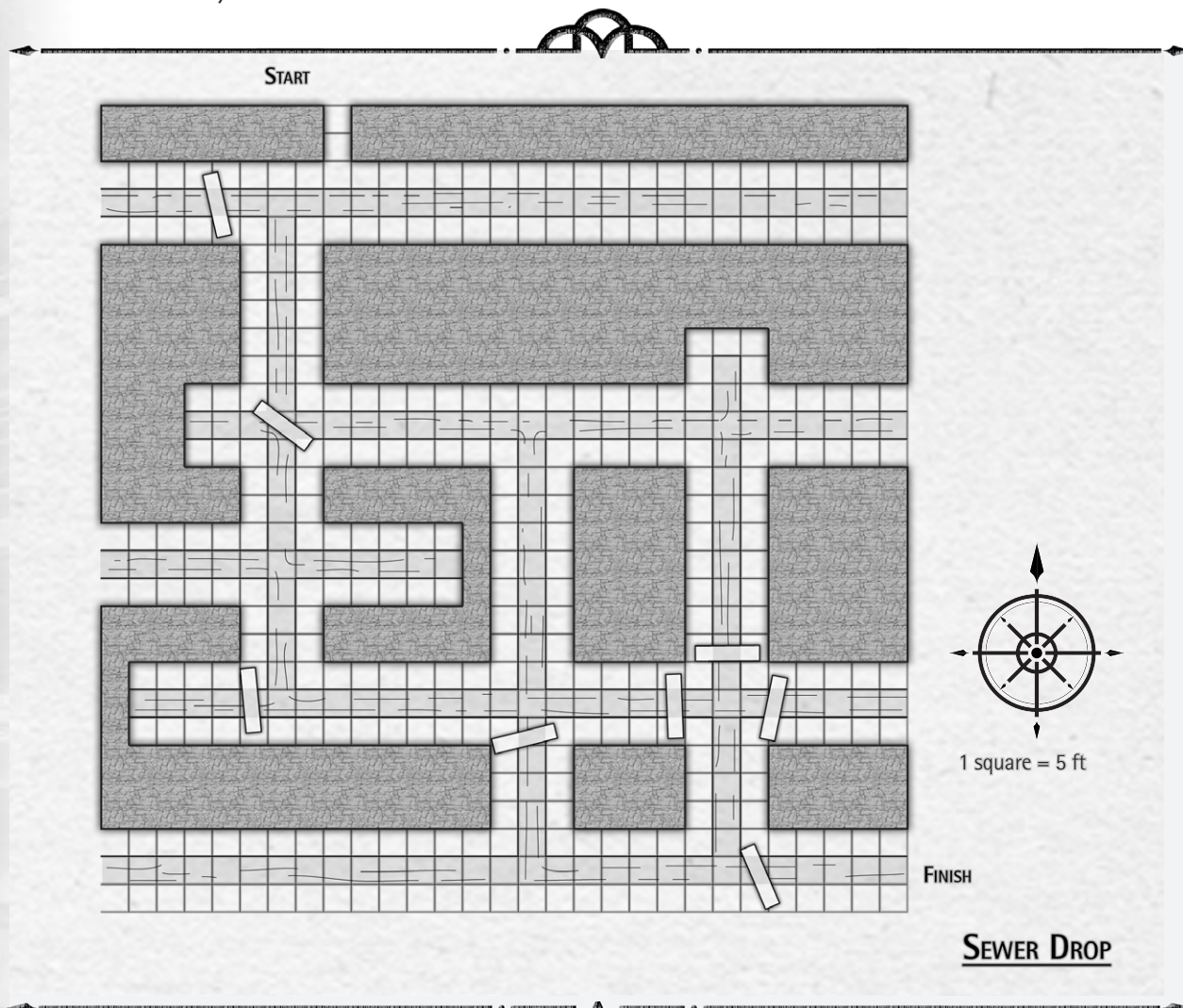
**CR ½**

**XP 300**

hp 4; use smuggler stats from Encounter 1.

**Add Hoc XP:** If instead of slicing up all the roguish smugglers, the PCs can get them to converse and convince them to side with them, they gain full XP for the encounter.

**Developments:** The first thug to flee is a two-faced coward named Krymor Lok. Unfortunately, he has fled with the PCs' best hope for escape, a map detailing the precise routes the smugglers use while navigating the sewers. PCs seeking to get to Krymor's boss must track him down to find it.





Fortunately, he has left behind an easy trail to follow in fresh mud.

## THE SEWER DROP (CR1/2)

*Here the tunnels open into a wider chamber connecting to a series of tile-inlaid, high-arched sewer tunnels. Trenches snaking in and between the archways permit rivers of sewage to flow. In some sections, planks span the channels, creating precarious footpaths set to allow individuals to traverse the sewers.*

When PCs arrive here, grant them a DC 12 Perception check to spot Krymor fleeing in the distance. To catch up to him, PCs must cross a series of 8 planks. Each time the PCs cross a plank, they must make a new Perception check (DC 10 +1d4) to attempt to keep tabs on Krymor. Provide at least one person spots him, they can continue tailing him, otherwise, he gets away.

**Developments:** To begin with, the planks are narrow and precariously placed. Those PCs attempting to cross the planks by moving faster than a move action must make a DC 14 Reflex save or fall. What's more, Krymor has kicked a few of the planks so that their balance is even more tenuous (marked **X** on the map). Anyone placing weight upon these two planks causes them to drop 10-ft into the sewers. The drop deals 1d6 damage, and furthermore anyone falling into the knee-deep sewage must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d6 rounds.

## KRYMOR'S LAST STAND (CR 3)

In this scene, PCs catch up to Krymor as he reaches a section of the sewers near his desired exit. For a moment, he pauses to check his map. Without warning, a horrid creature rises from the sewers. Displaced and agitated by the violent tremors, the obese tentacled blob locks onto the smuggler's scent and has tracked him down for its next meal. PCs arrive just in time to witness the creature's rising and its sudden attack upon the smuggler. They may choose to interfere or not, however if the later options is chosen, as soon as the creature finishes its feasts it turns its attentions upon the PCs. To begin the encounter, have PCs attempt a DC 12 Perception check to spot Krymor. Once they spot him, read or paraphrase the following:

*Ahead in the shadows, you spot your quarry. Moving with cautious stealth, he seems to have stopped for a moment to check some papers — either a scroll or map. Slowly, he raises his head and peers around the sewers. He starts to look your way, but as he does, a great dark shadow slowly rises behind him. At first, the shadow has no shape, then two serpentine tendrils emerge. As if unnerved by a sixth sense, the man turns around only to*

*see a large rotting mass of fetid flesh surfacing from the sewers.*

**Creatures:** The horror from the sludge is an otyugh, a foul aberration that hunts the City's deeper and forgotten sewers, driven up from the depths by the recent tremors. It is both agitated and hungry for human flesh and attacks all creatures it encounters. It chooses Krymor as its initial prey. Unless PCs decide to get involved immediately, the creature slays the rogue in three rounds. Once finished with the rogue, it readily turns its violence upon the PCs.

If instead, the PCs rush to Krymor's aid, he instinctively fights alongside them against the creature, opting to explain himself once the gruesome thing has been slain.

**GM's note:** In no way should this turn into a three way battle, nor should you roll results for combat if PCs leave Krymor to the otyugh's mercy — PCs do not want to sit around and watch the GM make attack rolls between opposing NPCs.

### KRYMOR

CR ½

XP 300

hp 4, use smuggler stats from Encounter 1.

### YOUNG OTYUGH

CR 3

XP 800

N Medium aberration

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; **Perception** +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)

**hp** 27 (6d8)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

**Immune** disease

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +6 (1d6+2 plus disease), 2 tentacles +2 (1d4+1 plus grab)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tentacle)

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d4+2), disease

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 9, **Int** 5, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +6 (+10 grapple); **CMD** 18

**Feats** Alertness, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacles)

**Skills** Perception +9, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +8

**Languages** Common

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Disease (Su):** Bite—Injury; save Fort DC 12; onset 1d3 days; frequency 1 day; effect 1d3 Dex and 1d2 Con damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.



**Developments:** Once PCs defeat the otyugh, they can recover the sewer map from Krymor and attempt to decipher it with a DC 12 Linguistics check. The map leads to a nearby ladder, leading to a locked hatch.

Open Locks DC 16. If PCs previously searched him, Krymor has the key on his person. Anyone opening the hatch discovers that it connects to a small shop.

If PCs flee and attempt an alternate route, the GM should alter their position on the map such that they eventually double back and find the exit to the Smuggler's Shack through happenstance. During their explorations, they should encounter both more tremors as well as displaced sewer beasts such as rat swarms, or monstrous vermin.

## THE SMUGGLER'S SHACK

*The hatch opens into what appears to be some sort of storage shed, now cramped with fallen timbers and rubble and other obvious signs of destruction. A sizable hole in the ceiling spills streaks of daylight into the room, which glow amber in the dust filled air. Stacks of crates line the walls, though several have toppled and their contents, piles of fenced silver goods, lie strewn about the floor.*

Scanning around and a quick DC 10 Perception check identifies the surface location as somewhere in the Dock's Ward.

**Creatures:** The remains of the shack belong to Aaros Maldigrin, the rebellious son of Lt. Adlus Maldigrin and currently one of the Ward's up-and-coming criminals. The sudden chain of events has thrown him into a nervous panic, though he's doing his best to keep it together. However, intruders entering his storage shack using his own secret passage set him over the edge and he attacks.

### AAROS MALDIGRIN

CR 3

XP 800

Male fighter 3/rogue 1

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; Senses Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 27 (4 HD; 3d10+1d8+5)

Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+2/18–20\*)

Ranged light crossbow +7 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

\*oil of keen edge

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** As soon as Aaros spots intruders, he douses his blade with *oil of keen edge*, then rushes the hatch, attempting to prevent more intruders from entering.

**During Combat:** Aaros concentrates on sneak attacking opponents attempting to enter through the hatch and keeping his enemies separated so he doesn't become outmatched.

**Morale:** Aaros isn't interested in dying, at least not at this juncture in his career. As soon as he drops below 8 hp, he realizes he is outmatched and attempts to flee. When he does so, he tosses three vials of alchemist's fire into the crates, attempting to torch his property and destroy whatever evidence he can. This takes him at least three rounds, before he surrenders or escapes.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 18

Feats Improved Initiative, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Appraise +8, Bluff +3, Climb +6, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Perception +6, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +12, Survival +5, Swim +6

Languages Common, Korteziian

SQ armor training 1, trapfinding +1

Combat Gear alchemist fire (3 vials), *oil of keen edge* (2), 20 bolts; Other Gear +1 chain shirt, mwk longsword, light crossbow, 700 gp.

**Developments:** Once PCs defeat Aaros, they can attempt to search the property for evidence establishing his guilt. A DC 18 Perception check uncovers his half-desk within the rubble. The top drawer holds a ledger detailing cryptic codes that track the finances of his covert activities, including target lists, competitors, and profits made from assorted hauls. PCs that get ahold of the book may present it to interested parties, likely their employers, in exchange for 500 gp.

If Aaros successfully dropped all three flasks of alchemist's fire, this task becomes significantly more difficult. The warehouse ignites, leaving PCs 4 rounds to search the property for this text before flames engulf everything and burn it to the ground. Anyone caught in the conflagration takes 1d6 points of fire damage per round and risks catching on fire or being hit by falling timbers (1d6 plus 1d6 fire; DC 15 Reflex negates). Once burnt, little evidence can be collected against Aaros. In either event, should Aaros escape, he plots future revenge against the PCs.



## CONCLUSION

Once Aaros is defeated and the PCs exit his property, they emerge into panic-stricken city streets. Crowds of people race about covered in dust, shrieking for loved ones. Others riot and loot. Prophets walk the ruins burning incense from small braziers and chanting doom. Suddenly, a torrent of city guards race past, violently pushing through anyone blocking their path. The guards head in a southwesterly direction towards the center of the City. PCs can attempt a DC 12 Diplomacy check to Gather Information concerning the current state of panic. If successful, they encounter a terrified merchant who claims a massive sinkhole suddenly appeared, swallowing the center of the City. Should PCs attempt to confirm his tale, they only travel so far before encountering a great many city guards and soldiers creating a living wall that surrounds the

perimeter of a massive and inexplicable sinkhole. All citizens are told to stand clear and vacate the premises. Despite the PCs' best efforts, any attempts made to glean further details about the hole yield nothing. In the weeks that follow, the City attempts to put itself back together and life begins to return to normal. The tremors stop and the sinkhole remains seemingly devoid of any further activity. As a result, the forces initially sent to monitor the hole return to their barracks and other duties, leaving behind a scant few members of the Night Watchmen to keep an eye on the sink in the event something else happens. Still, most have written off the event as a strange fluke of architecture and blame the collapse on the implosion of older cisterns upon which the original city was built, which were not meant to withstand the weight of newer structures erected atop them in later years.



\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations





# INFESTATION

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In the days following the wake of the Great City's recent devastating events, Father Malkmus sent his congregants to take temporary shelter in the rarely used Temple of Harvest. Upon their arrival, they found the temple newly inhabited by a displaced gang of vile, parasitic humans known as roachkin. Father Malkmus calls upon the PCs to investigate the temple, seek out survivors, and drive the roachkin out. Unfortunately, the task proves more difficult when PCs uncover the horrific and terrible unholy raising of the gang's former leader by one of his depraved and devoted followers. Can PCs save the Temple and defeat this creatures before he attempts to spread his ghastly infestation through the Temple Ward.

This adventure is part of Great City The Sinking. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It is designed using the Pathfinder RPG System for 1<sup>st</sup>-level Player Characters.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

A goodly father hires the PCs clean out a temple infested with recently displaced roachkin. After dispatching the upper floors defenses, the PCs find the lower level, where they discover the roachkin's adept having recently completed a dark rite to raise their fallen leader. The PCs must defeat the roachkin before they unleash their undead champion on the surface world.

## INTRODUCTION

The catastrophic results of the recent sinkhole displaced much of the Great City's population. One such group, a colony of roachkin that call themselves the *Huks*, used to live in relative comfort in the massive sewers beneath the Temple District. Making night-time raids on the surface, they stole slaves, food, and supplies. The sinkhole destroyed not only the *Huks*' breeding ground and homes, but also their leader and his consorts. Only a small gang of the roachkin survived; being out on patrol when the devastating catastrophe struck. After discovering their loss, the group made their way to a long-disused temple and began transforming it into their new lair.

Many in the Temple District have opened their doors to the throngs of refugees. One smaller church, dedicated to the goddess of the harvest, is normally only used once a year during the autumn for a single week-long ceremony. When the caretakers for The Lady of the Harvest's temple came to open their doors to help house the displaced,

they found the temple infested with the *Huks*. Only one acolyte escaped the massacre in the temple and immediately reported the incident to his superiors. The cleric-in-charge, Father Malkmus, sent out a plea for help. The PCs could answer Father Malkmus's call for any of the following of reasons:

1. Higher-ups within the Temple District send the inexperienced PCs in to clean up the temple compound as a test to see if they are worthy to advance in the faith. This hook works best for cleric or paladin characters, though it could work as the thieves' guild sending a spy in to scout out the compound's underground layout or the town guard sending in a warrior to help build a bridge with the clergy.
2. A patron of the arts who is also a devout believer in the goddess of the shrine wants to pledge her help and hires the PCs to help clean up the area. Her payment comes in the form of statuary and paintings the PCs can barter off in the marketplace for approximately 300 gp.
3. Rumors surface concerning a wererat hiding within the Temple District and people accusingly finger one of the PCs as the culprit. To avoid mob justice at the end of a rope, the PCs "volunteer" to rout the church of all its uncleanness. Father Malkmus promises to speak on the PCs' behalf and clear their name.
4. The PCs find out about Father Malkmus' need and after he interviews them, he offers them the job of cleaning out the goddess' shrine.

### Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins when Father Malkmus sends a request to meet with the PCs. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy check made to gather information locates an older city guard who directs them to the Father's office. Just west of the Square of Eleven Prayers, a tiny and plainly-painted sign points up a rickety staircase, giving a clue as to the whereabouts of the Lady of the Harvest's business headquarters. On the third floor, Father Malkmus waits within a tiny office cramped with moldering texts and half burnt reading candles. Nearly seventy, the frail priest is beginning to lose both his sight and hearing. He dresses in threadbare brown robes and walks with the aid of a gnarled staff. He politely introduces himself, then gets straight to business describing the reason he summoned them and the nature of the job, and payment arrangements. He finishes with the following statement:

*Sorry for the accoutrements, kind souls. Our faith is a small one and we only really flourish during the harvest. We're almost to lose our office here if the rates keep going up...Wait, you don't want to hear about our financial difficulties. You came here to help us help the Great City. We need you to see what happened to*

*our caretaker Jeeter and clear out the 'savages' who have taken over our shrine so we can house the influx of refugees from the damned sinkhole!*

*I'm regret I do not have a map, as such, but I can tell you Jeeter's villa is just to the west of the shrine and a small barn there holds our small herd of livestock. The temple itself has only three rooms and a small basement. Try not to break any of the artwork or immense pottery, especially the wire cornucopia in the main hall. We have no funds to remake or replace any of those holy relics and we will need them in the autumn.*

*Please hurry, and may the Lady bless you.*

Father Malkmus lives with his slightly older wife and assistant, Rika Novija. Most of the acolytes of the temple join other temples during the non-harvest times of the year and are helping those temples with their needs. Father Malkmus doesn't want to send any other non-combatants into the obviously hostile territory. He lost several followers in their initial foray into the temple and had to leave the bodies there as they retreated from the roachkin defenses. Malkmus is loathe to involve the city guards in this matter as they have their hands full with the growing chaos of the expanding sinkhole. He hoped to open the Harvest Temple as a crisis center, but cannot fulfill this plan without the PCs' help. He promises to get some funds together and says he prays that it is enough. The Temple has fallen on bad times of late and where there was once a surplus of funds, there is now only outstretched hands looking for help.

The catastrophe has transformed the Temple District into a madhouse. Streets are crammed with beggars and refugees, and everywhere citizens run amok. Bandages are in short supply, and the PCs witness a day laborer strip a semi-clean shirt off a corpse in an alleyway and start ripping it into strips and weaving it into a pad, which he applies to a small child's head wound. Other harsh scenes abound in the overcrowded streets. No one stops the PCs or even looks twice, unless they engage in severely disruptive behavior.

Upon reaching the temple, the PCs discover its grounds badly overgrown and in terrible disarray. The upkeep, normally done by Jeeter (see Area A3), has fallen behind due to his demise.

## INFILTRATION OF THE TEMPLE

### AREA A1. OUTER WALL AND GATE

*The cobblestone wall surrounding the compound appears solid and the ironwork across the top is only missing a few pieces. The wooden gate sports a crude*

*'H' shape splashed in red paint and block letters spell out 'go away'.*

The wall 8-foot-tall wall is crowned with pointed ironwork, about another foot tall, yet easily bypassed with a DC 10 Climb check. The cultists built the wall as a defense when the other temple thrived on this spot (see Area T5). The gate provides the only entrance to the compound, though PCs can climb over the wall gaining access the temple's roof with a DC 15 Climb check. Unfortunately, there is no access to the temple's interior from the roof. Beating a DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Bardic Knowledge check identifies the 'H' territorial graffiti used by a local gang called the Huks. If the check result is higher than 20, the PC also recalls the Huks are comprised entirely of feral roachkin who usually operate in the sewers below Temple Ward. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check reveals the ironworks represent an ancient rune meaning 'misfortune'. The Huks covered the gate in excrement and braced it with boards and other obstacles making entry into the grounds a tight squeeze. Any medium-sized or larger person must make successful on a DC 20 Escape Artist check to squeeze through. Alternately, a DC 20 Strength check to forces the gate open. Each person touching the excrement smeared gate risks contracting the shakes.

### Shakes

**Type** disease, contact; **Save** Fortitude DC 13

**Onset** 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

**Effect** 1d8 Dex damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves.

### AREA A2. COURTYARD, GARDENS, AND FOUNTAIN (CR 1)

*Flies buzz in thick droves over and between the corpses littered through the courtyard. The dead are mostly livestock, but a few humanoid bodies litter the overgrown gardens. A 15-foot-tall stone statue of a robed woman dominates a gravel circle in the center of the yard. An outhouse stands in the near corner, its door ripped from its hinges. A small house and barn lie behind the statue and the Harvest temple itself stands stoically in the far corner.*

The courtyard once boasted some of the finest gardens in the Temple District, but in the wake of recent events, the compound now looks like a graveyard. A DC 10 Heal check identifies brutal punctures and gashes covering the livestock carcasses. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the gashes as marks from mandibles (warning of the giant ants in Area A4) however the dozen human corpses show wounds consistent with combat. Judging from their clothing, most of the dead were surface dwellers, though a few bear the stink and pallid complexion of a roachkins' subterranean existence.



A successful DC 12 Knowledge (engineering or dungeoneering) check shows the statue is reworked stone, with the greatest amount of change showing around the hands and face. Jeeter's villa, the barn, and the temple all have their doors shut tight.

The Temple has small fixed windows about six inches wide and two feet tall. The Huks coated the colored glass panes with filth from the inside, blocking all sight through the windows.

**Creature:** Lurking below the outhouse, waist-deep in filth, hides a lone Huk guard named Mecey. Unless the PCs make a deliberate effort to be Stealthy, allow Mecey to make a Perception check to hear their arrival.

#### Mecey

CR 1

XP 400

Male roachkin fighter 1

CN medium humanoid

Init +7; Senses low-light vision; Perception +5

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 7 (1d10+2)

Fort +4 (+5 vs natural diseases), Ref +3, Will +1

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee spiked club +3 (1d6+2 plus filth fever on first

successful hit)

Ranged heavy crossbow +5 (+6 with masterwork) (1d10/19-20)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** As soon as Mecey detects PCs, he drinks his *potion of ventriloquism*, rises from the cesspool and throws his voice to emanate from the statue's mouth; demanding the PCs go away. Next, he throws a thunderstone into their midst and opens fire with his crossbows.

**During Combat:** Mecey only has three bows with him (the others are in his nest in Area T3), and he saves the masterwork bow for last. While firing he uses the outhouse for cover. After firing all three crossbows, Mecey throws another thunderstone at the closest PC and charges them, brandishing a filthy spiked club.

**Morale:** Mecey fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6

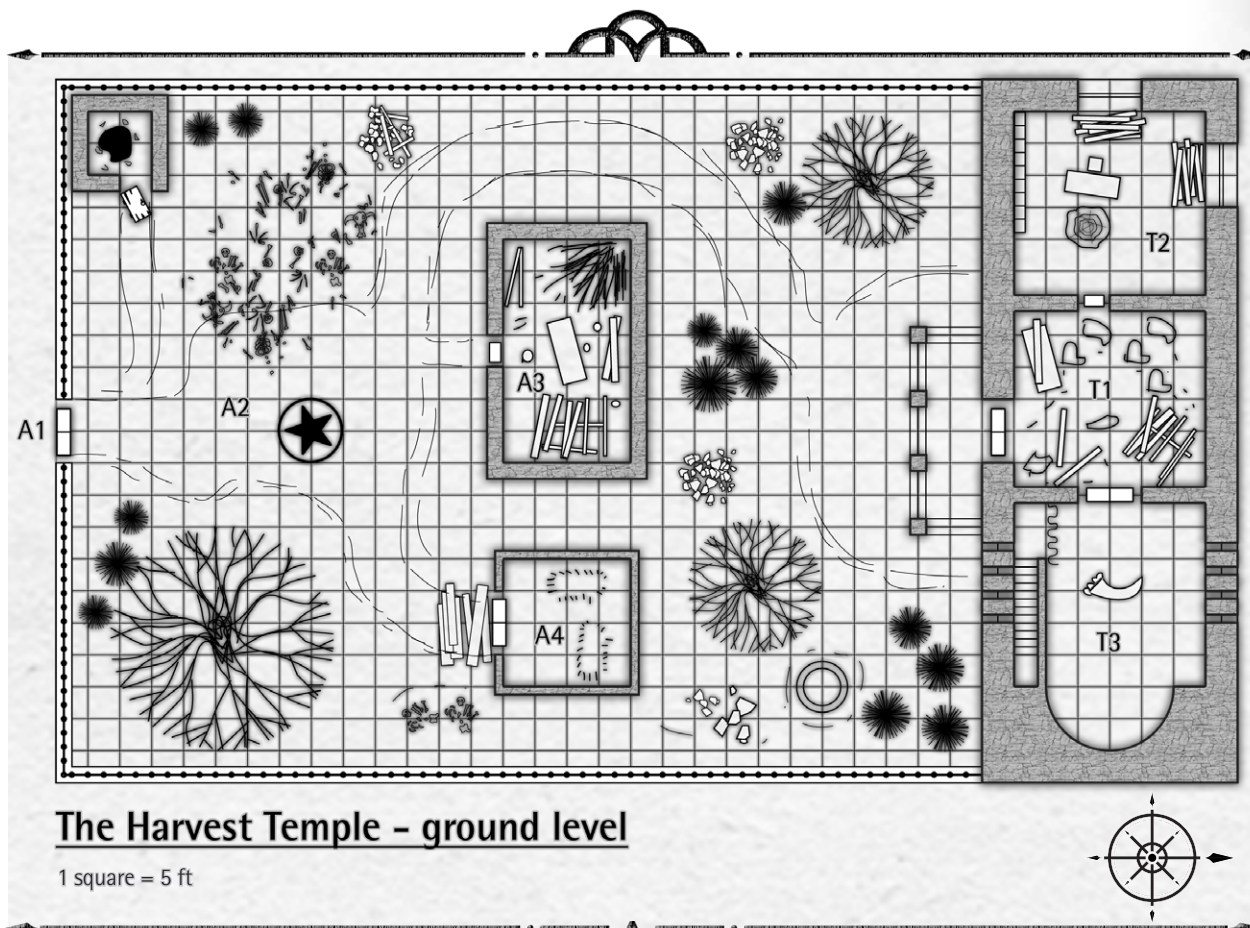
Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD 13

Feats Blind-Fight<sup>(B)</sup>, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (crossbow)<sup>(B)</sup>

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +5

Languages Common, Undercommon

Gear spiked club, 3 heavy crossbows (one masterwork) w/3 bolts, scale mail, 1 *potion of cure light wounds*, 3 thunderstones kept in a small



leather pouch (13 sp).

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Filth Fever:** on first successful hit.

#### Filth Fever

**Type** disease, injury; **Save** Fortitude DC 12

**Onset** 1d3 days; **Frequency** 1/day

**Effect** 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves.

**Developments:** If Mecey throws a thunderstone, there is a chance the noise alerts Zheki and Mitroch in Area T2.

**Treasure:** During his watch, Mecey passes the time searching through the outbuildings for little trinkets. Yesterday, he found a pouch full of thunderstones and a half-dozen loaded crossbows in Jeeter's villa and today uncovered a crudely illustrated book of naughty limericks tucked away in a hidden niche. These possessions lie in a filthy sack in the outhouse.

### AREA A3. JEETER'S VILLA

*This small house consists of a single room and once looked like it could have been a model of efficiency. Drawers, shelves, pulleys and balanced levers once utilized every square inch of the villa for maximum storage. Now, though, the fracas evident here turned*

*the place upside-down. A major fire left massive scorch marks in the corner, but one of the first things the fire destroyed was the supports for a rain barrel full of water perched near the ceiling.*

Jeeter was known as an amateur alchemist, as well as an inventor. Many tinkerers and engineers in the Great City would have paid dearly for the ideas Jeeter had written in his diaries, unfortunately, the Huks burned up most of Jeeter's designs in their assault on his house. The caretaker's body lies under the two Huk corpses.

**Treasure:** A DC 15 Perception check made to search of the villa turns up a scroll describing the directions for building a small clockwork trinket that winds up and plays a simple tune as well as a working model. These items sell for 80 gp to the right buyer.

### AREA A4. LIVESTOCK BARN (CR 2)

*Both doors to the barn structure have piles of timber and other heavy materials blocking them from opening. The larger livestock door suffers from heavy damage. Several gaping holes show through to the darkened interior.*

**Creatures:** The barn now serves as the nest for a colony of giant ants, displaced from their home deeper underground by the sinkhole. Most of the





workers and soldiers retreated to guide their queen to her new home, leaving just a few workers to make the nest ready. The Huks attacked and killed most of the ants here with high numbers of casualties on both sides. Forced to flee, they barricaded the barn from the outside leaving only two workers alive. The pair consumes a honey-based *potion of haste* (included in the stat block) that Jeeter used in the past to boost the draft horses plowing abilities. As soon as the PCs begin to investigate the barn, the ants charge. The ants are hasted for three rounds after which, they return to their base statistics.

#### Ant, giant worker

CR 1

XP 400

N small vermin

Init +0; Senses darkvision, scent; Perception +5

#### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+1 dodge, +5 natural)  
hp 18 (2d8+9)

Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1

Immune mind-affecting effects

#### OFFENSE

Speed 80 ft., climb 50 ft.

Melee bite +4/−1 (1d6+2)

#### Base Statistics

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+5 natural)

Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1

Speed 50 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee +3 bite (1d6+2)

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 17, Int −, Wis 13, Cha 11

Base Atk +1; CMB +3 (+7 grapple); CMD 13 (21 vs. trip)

Feats Toughness

Skills Climb +10, Perception +5, Survival +5.

## AREA T1. TEMPLE ENTRY (CR 1)

The entry hall beyond the temple's outer door once served as a cloakroom and a font for blessings. The excrement and foul detritus strewn through the room serve as a subtle warning to leave, though the block letters on the inner door bluntly state, "Flee this place or DIE!" Cloaks and other clothing cover the floor in an uneven mess.

**Trap:** The Huks tore this room apart looking for treasure and Zheki set an arrow trap after Father Malkmus and his followers tried to stage their re-entry into the temple a few days ago. A few of the temple's acolytes lie dead in the mounds of cloaks, making the entire floor hazardous terrain when determining movement.

#### Arrow Trap

CR 1

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect Atk +15 ranged (1d8+1/x3).

**Developments:** The tripwire for the trap is 5-feet inside the outer door and Zheki hid the bow in a large pile of clothes. When someone triggers the arrow, the trap also releases a suspended cloak full of pewter dinnerware to crash against the floor. Allow Zheki and Mitroch a DC 12 Perception check to hear the ruckus.

## AREA T2. ZHEKI AND MITROCH ON GUARD (CR2)

Judging from the desk and shelves of paperwork, this room likely served as an office. A house of cards stretches across the desk's surface.

Two windows used to allow light into this cramped office, but the Huks have caked filth over the glass giving the room the low-light condition.

**Creatures:** Two roachkin, Zheki and Mitroch wait here, fighting off boredom by building an extensive house of cards. If alerted by Mecey's thunderstone or the falling dinnerware from previous encounters, Zheki and Mitroch respond by using the desk for cover and readying actions to fire on the first person through the outer door.

#### Zheki and Mitroch

CR 1

XP 400

Male roachkin rogue 1

CN medium humanoid

Init +3; Senses: low-light vision; Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +2 armor, +1 dodge)

hp 5 (1d8+1)

Fort +1 (+2 vs natural diseases), Ref +5, Will −2

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d4+2 plus poison)

Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d6/19-20 plus poison)

Special Attacks sneak attack 1d6

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 6, Cha 12

Base Atk +0; CMB +2; CMD 12

Feats Blind-Fight<sup>(B)</sup>, Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +2, Climb +3, Craft (traps) +1, Disable Device +4, Intimidate +2, Stealth +4, Use Magical Device +2

Languages Common, Undercommon

**Gear** dagger, light crossbow w/12 bolts, leather armor, 1 application of small centipede poison (coating weapons) (25 sp). In addition, Mitroch wields a *wand of shocking grasp* (3<sup>rd</sup> level) (11 charges) in his off-hand that he attempts to use each round of combat.



#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Small centipede Poison:** on melee attacks.

#### Small centipede poison

**Type** poison, injury; **Save** Fortitude DC 11

**Onset** –; **Frequency** 1/rd for 4 rds

**Effect** 1 Dex; **Cure** 1 save.

### AREA T3. THE SHRINE

*The sharp stench of body odor and decay fills the air. Thick muck and splotches of filth blot the windows and dot every surface, including the ceiling. Remarkably, a wire cornucopia sits in the center of the room fairly unmolested. While horrifically defiled with the corpses of humans and roachkin alike, only a few dents show in the mesh.*

A large stained tapestry covers a narrow staircase leading to the basement. A sturdy door used to block the basement, but it lies splintered on the bottom step. A DC 12 Perception check uncovers a number of filthy piles of used by the roachkin as sleeping nests.

**Treasure:** Mecey's nest contains a half-full jar of *restorative ointment* (2 applications remaining) as well as two masterwork heavy crossbows (unloaded). Mitroch's nest has a *wand of stabilize* (15 charges) and a *wand of mending* (22 charges) that he has never figured out how to activate correctly. Other nests hide some copper bowls and a pair of silver earrings (20 gp), an inlaid mask of a fish face (12 gp), and a large chunk of discolored jade (25 gp).

### AREA T4. THE BASEMENT (CR 2)

*This large open area appears as if it once served as the Harvest Temple's storage room, however a long gash in the floor exposes a deep chasm that divides the room. The cracks extend through the walls to the north and south. Torchlight flickers from the northern tunnel formed from the crack. A root cellar and a pickling/canning operation occupy most of the space on the other side of the chasm. Near a skewed pallet, a pile of crates and barrels lie open, their contents of pickled meats and vegetables lies scattered across the floor. Farther back, in a small alcove rest two large mounds of dark earth sport many strains of fungus.*

When the sinkhole appeared, seismic waves ripped through the temple leaving behind these scars. This is where the Huks first entered the Harvest Temple. Driven by a collapsing tunnel, the Huks entered the basement from the south. A tunnel stretches to the south, but this adventure does not detail what lurks beyond. This chasm could lead deeper under the city and further adventures as the sinkhole spreads through the Great City.

Anyone can jump the chasm with a simple DC 5 Acrobatics check to search the room and examine the equipment and mushrooms. The pickling jars and canning tubs are worth a few coins, though Father Malkmus would frown on their removal. Only a person with a keen eye can differentiate the various fungi. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check harvests a patch of rare delicate mushrooms worth 80 gp.

**Creatures:** The chasm opening attracted a small flock of stirges from an nearby underground cavern. The pestilent creatures wait below the lip of the chasm until the PCs present themselves as a meal by leaping over the chasm to investigate any of the equipment or crates in the room.

#### Stirge (5)

CR 1/2

XP 200

hp 5 each; Pathfinder Bestiary.

### AREA T5. THE SECOND SHRINE (CR 3)

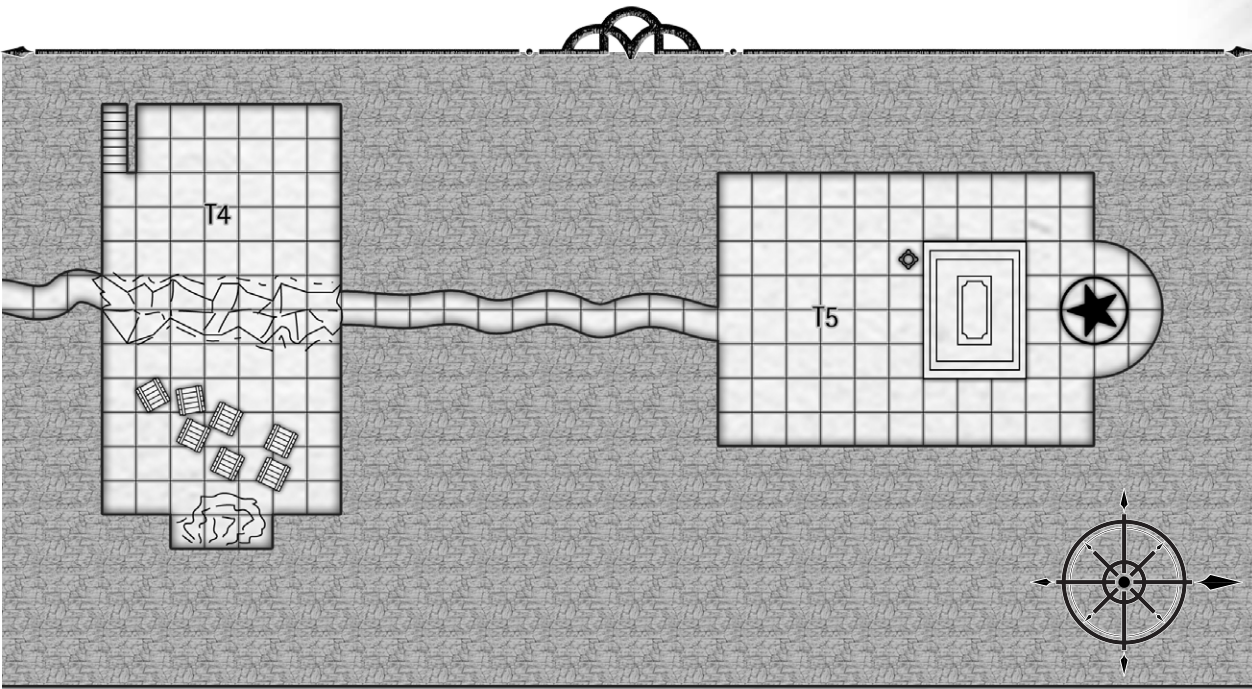
*Several burning torches and a large flaming brazier fill this chamber with oily smoke. An ancient stone altar stands in front of a partially toppled, massive stone statue of a winged demon precariously balanced against the wall. At the statue's feet, cracks in the floor near the altar crumble toward the chasm's edge. A bound humanoid form lies upon the altar wrapped in oily, studded leather armor. At the foot of the alter lies the corpse of another human. Dressed in priestly robes, his body slumps over a clay bowl, seemingly filled with his own blood.*

*Suddenly, the figure screams. Writhing in the leather bindings, it rises from the altar. Indifferently stomping over the corpse it kicks over the bowl, spilling the priest's blood onto the cold stone floor. The leather-bound monster stares wildly with unholy eyes, its pupils dark as graves.*

This area was the shrine of a secret cult dedicated to the god of misfortune and revenge. The compound above originally held dark rites and the statue in the courtyard above resembled the demonic visage in this underground temple. The forces of good eventually drove off the cultists, though the leader secured this vault hoping to return one day and exact revenge.

**Creature:** Gilyani Urovo, the monstrous beast stepping off the altar, once led this gang of Huks. He felt he should volunteer for patrol the day the sinkhole caused their homestead to collapse. He convinced his advisor, an adept named Alsesh, that he was destined to start a new colony of roachkin on the surface after they survived the disaster. But Gilyani failed to live up to his destiny after suffering a fatal blow during his fight with Jeeter in the





## The Harvest Temple – Basement and Second Shrine

1 square = 5 ft

caretaker's villa. Later, he died in the Harvest Temple, the result of a poisoned blade. With his dying breath, Gilyani convinced Alsesh that he was the roachkins' new messiah. Alsesh believed his leader's faith so completely; he gave his life to appease the dark demon of revenge. As Alsesh passed from this life, the altar reanimated Gilyani. The roachkin leader rose as a dread ghast. Upon sight of the gaping chasm, he fills with the burning urge to gather his roachkin followers, kill them, and raise them as an undead army dedicating to the service of his dark master.

### Gilyani Urovo

CR 3

XP 800

Male roachkin dread ghast/fighter 1/rogue 1

CE medium undead

**Init** +9; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 20, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +4 deflection, +1 dodge)

**hp** 15 (2d12)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

**Defensive Abilities** invisibility, **DR** 10/cold iron, **SR** 15

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +6 melee (1d4+4 plus paralysis) and 1 bite +6 melee (1d8+2 plus paralysis)

**Special Attacks** paralysis, stench, unnatural aura

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 21, **Con** –, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Blind-Fight<sup>(B)</sup>, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Finesse<sup>(B)</sup>

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Acrobatics (jump)+19, Climb +8, Craft (traps) +2, Escape Artist +6, Intimidate +2, Perception +5, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +6, Use Magic Device +2

**Languages** Common, Undercommon

**Gear** +1 studded leather.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Command Ghosts and Ghouls (Su):** A dread ghast can automatically command all normal ghosts and ghouls within 30 feet as a free action. Normal ghosts and ghouls never attack a dread ghast unless compelled.

**Create Spawn (Su):** In most cases, dread ghosts feast on the bodies of the fallen. However, any creature killed by a dread ghast that lies undisturbed until the next midnight rises as a dread ghast at that time. The new dread ghast is not under the control of its creator. A protection from evil or gentle repose spell cast on the corpse prevents its conversion.

**Paralysis (Ex):** A creature damaged by a dread ghast's natural attack must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 12) or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds.

**Stench (Ex):** The noxious stench of death surrounds a dread ghast. Any breathing creature within 20 feet of a dread ghast must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 12) or take a –2 circumstance penalty on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature with the scent special quality must make this save at a range of 40 feet and take a –2 penalty on the save. The breathing creature

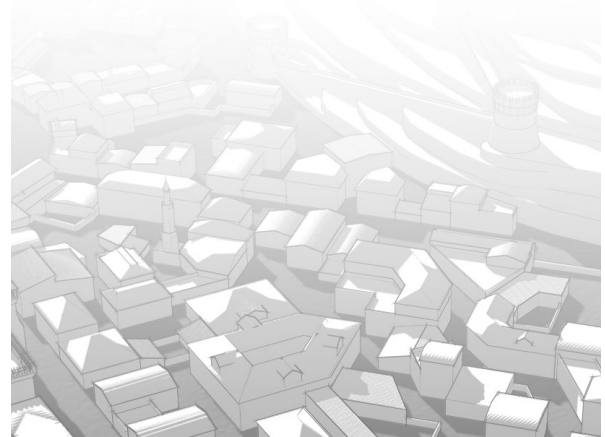
## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Father Malkmus takes in the news of Jeeter's death with a solemn face. Rika openly weeps, explaining through her sobs how Jeeter was their only son. The priest seems to age before your eyes watching his wife mourn. He follows the PCs back to the Harvest Temple, taking the lead when they get through the outer gate.

"Oh my, we have work to do yet, don't we?" he mutters as he takes stock of the damage. He smiles at the relatively unharmed cornucopia. "Thank the goddess for small favors" he says as he starts to peel away the muck from the temple's windows.

Father Malkmus offers the PCs 250 gp for their mission and gives them a healer's kit in an inlaid case worth 70 gp. The case was his own father's. He smiles as he presses the rewards into the PCs hands. "Bless you for all you have done." He begins to work through the crowd of volunteer workers that quickly gather around the courtyard, drawn by something they cannot explain.

With the destruction of the secret shrine, favor shines on the Harvest Temple. Instead of a dwindling congregation, the temple soon bursts with patronage. Spring brings the temple grounds a hardy crop and a rich nobleman donates a large plot of land outside the Great City to the temple to add to the coffers. The temple commissions new statuary and ironworks to erase all traces of the old cult and uses powerful magics to cleanse the basement from evil influence. Sometime later, Father Malkmus sends the PCs a package of *restorative ointment* and *potions of bull's strength* and *owl's wisdom* with some of the temple's profits. His knowledge of local history, as well as his sage advice might aid the PCs in their later adventures.



## ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

If there are more than four players or they average level is higher than 1<sup>st</sup>, feel free to add a second encounter in Jeeter's villa with some scavenging Huks (use the stats provided as a base model). Give the dread ghost a follower using Alsesh's corpse as a 3<sup>rd</sup> level adept. Push Zheki and Mitroch's ambush to Area T3 and add a pet war dog encounter (or hell hounds if the PCs are strong enough) as the Huks keep a pack of dogs and use the office area as a kennel. Add levels or templates to the Huk defenders. The ants need soldiers to defend them, or maybe they are slaves of a formian colony. Using a creature template on the ants can add to the flavor of the adventure as well as add to the difficulty of the encounters. Be sure to compensate the PCs for the added challenge. Add coins and jewelry to a few enemies' belt pouches or nests in Area T3. The secret shrine under the Harvest Temple could hide a set of *bracers of armor* or an *animated shield* +1. The PCs could find a masterwork lock pick set on one of the Huks or a cache of sunrods in one of the crates in the basement. A *silver +1 thundering spear* or its equivalent lies in the secret shrine when fighting a larger group of dread ghosts.





\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations





# TUNNELS OF DESPAIR

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**Y**ou have to watch yourself in this City. The fruit seller you insult may be the lord of a guild of thieves. You can walk into a bar in this City and find yourself in the middle of some big wheel spinning his web and pulling in all the little bugs. Bugs like you. Makes you wonder why anyone ever goes out? Hell, even chasing skirts can get you into hot water. But... we're not gonna stop chasing skirts now, are we?

This adventure is part of Great City: The Sinking. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It is designed using the Pathfinder RPG System for 1<sup>st</sup>-level Player Characters.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

During visit to the Army Ward, suspicious activities draw the PCs into tunnels below the Circus Maximus. Their investigation places them in conflict with Crimson Medusa headhunters searching for escaped slaves.

The adventure begins when a filthy sewer scavenger named Anardo startles a barmaid beneath the Festhall on one of his weekly raids. Fearing her cries might alert others, he takes the woman hostage and flees back into the sewer tunnels, prompting the PCs to pursue him. Their pursuit, leads them to the secret lair of the refugee slaves where they encounter Crimson Medusa agents trying to track down their escaped property. Following a brief encounter, the PCs must choose whether to aid the duplicitous slavers or fight them.

Following the incident with the Crimson Medusa thugs, the refugee slaves make contact with the PCs handing up the barmaid hostage as a peace offer, begging for the PCs not to reveal their hideout.

If the PCs offer to help the refugees by defending them against the slavers, they lead the party to the docks and show them the yacht from which they believe their nemesis operates. If the PCs do not offer to help the refugees, the Crimson Medusa targets them as troublemakers, and attempts to capture them in the City or on the docks soon afterwards. In either event, the PCs must attack the yacht to rid themselves or the escaped slaves of the source of their trouble.

In the final Act, the PCs launch an assault upon the yacht, putting them face to face with a high-ranking Crimson Medusa operative, a guttermage named Granach Phelian who is backed by several tengu and half-giant assistants.

## INTRODUCTION

Among the Great City's many crime organizations, the Crimson Medusa stands out as one of its most vicious and the most brutal; their infamy built upon kidnapping and slavery (see *The Great City Campaign Setting* page 89). Still, their operations aren't flawless and on occasion, slaves escape. When this occurs, the organization's members rally quickly, forming parties of their ruthless members to hunt them down. Overland flights and attempts to flee by sea usually lead to quick recapture. Therefore, despite its filthy and horrid living conditions, only one place offers escaped slaves a chance at true freedom—the tunnels and sewers beneath the city. Only with absolute secrecy can the refugee slaves maintain this freedom, cowering in despair and misery from the slavers that scour the tunnels.

Two Crimson Medusa agents, a half-giant named Zystar and an Azzywog thug named Granach, are currently charged with patrol the tunnels surrounding the harbor to prevent escaped slaves from fleeing on outgoing vessels. When the sinkhole appeared, cave-ins breached their secret slave holding cellar allowing entire lot of slaves to escape en mass. As a result, the Crimson Medusa has placed immense pressure on these agents to recoup their losses as quickly as possible.

Erstwhile, the escaped slaves uncovered an ancient tunnel reopened by the recent seismic activity and worked their way into a warren of tunnels beneath the Army ward. While searching for a new home, the refugees encountered a giant named Saarn, a former gladiator champion who lurks in the tunnels to hide his hideous battle deformities (for more information on Saarn see *The Great City Urban Creatures and Lairs* page 64). One of the refugee slaves recognizes Saarn as the former gladiator champion of Circus Maximus. Sharing some of their last fish with him, the refugees bonded with the misanthrope and he helped them secure a dry living area in the tunnels. The refugees occasionally bring Saarn fish, but unable to understand his motivations, remain wary of the giant.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins within the "The Pounder Festhall" in the Army Ward. Just prior to their arrival, a pair of scavengers breaks into the Festhall basement seeking to pilfer some food. Anardo "The Finder" serves as the brains of the operation, aided by an aging hobgoblin named Flint. Never one of the enslaved, Anardo has lived within the sewers for most of his life, scavenging from the world above. He knows the tunnels like the back of his own filthy hand. He now aids the refugee slaves in exchange

for their help protection. For his end of the deal he secures food and supplies, lends his knowledge of the passages, and brings them information from the world above. The duo dug their way into the Festhall's cellars from the tunnels below using a forgotten waste chute used during the Festhall's fancier days. Desperate for vegetables and fruit to supplement their fish and rat diet, he and Flint made a mad search for casks of apples or other fruit to feed his allies. During his search, the pair frightened a bar wench named Annika (**note:** if the GM is using the first plot hook, Annika is the wench who seduces the PC). Fearing capture, the pair abducts the screaming barmaid and holding her a hostage to assure their safety, flee into the tunnels. The pair plans to release the barmaid once they've safely escaped.

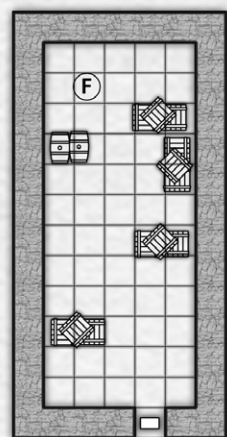
Use any of the following hooks to begin the adventure:

1. **The Lascivious PC:** The PCs are at the Festhall to enjoy a night of rowdy celebration. The most lascivious of the PCs is approached by a pretty and accommodating bar wench who leads him into the Festhall's storage cellars for a private tryst. While sleeping off their debauchery, Anardo "the finder" arrives and upon startling the barmaid to alarming

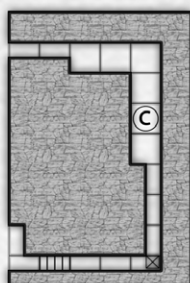
screams, fearfully takes her hostage to help assure his safe escape. The PCs wakes to find her missing, but hears a last muffled scream from within the tunnels.

2. **Basement Thieves:** Numerous supplies have gone missing from the Festhall; its owner offers the PCs free room and board to find the source of the missing supplies. While leading the PCs to the basement, they hear Annika's screams.
3. **In Search of Saarn:** A local historian suspects Saarn, the felled gladiatorial champion, lurks beneath the Army Ward. He hires the PCs to seek proof of his tortured existence. The PCs are sent to begin their search beneath the Festhall, which old blueprints show has passages leading to the warrens. While leading the PCs to the basement, they hear Annika's screams.

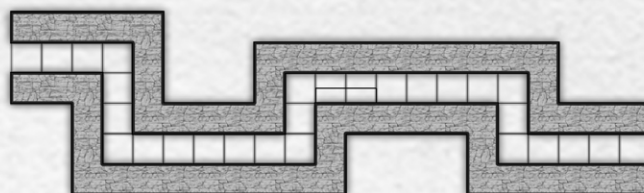
**Developments:** If the PCs choose to leave Annika to her fate, the proprietor of the Festhall ensures that all the drunk off duty soldiers know. This makes the PCs targets for the abuse of brawlers who despise them for their lack of honor—if your tryst with a barmaid gets her kidnapped, honor demands you help save her! The soldiers mount their own party to find Annika, even if drunk and with few weapons. It



T1. The Pleasure Cellar



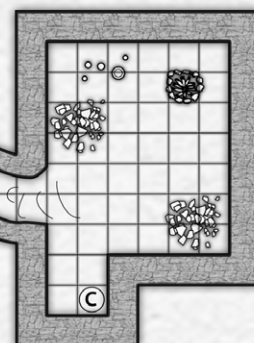
T2. The Chute



T3. The Tunnels of Despair



T4. The Flooded Passage



T5. The Refugee Camp



1 square = 5 ft



should become obvious to the party fairly quickly that they better do the right thing and rescue the wench, for it turn out, the Festhall owner values her and many streetwise guard sergeants have spent a night or two using her bosom as a comfortable pillow.

## ACT I: WHAT LIES BENEATH

### T1. THE STORAGE CELLAR

*Unlit, the damp and dingy cellar is cramped with towering rows of crates and stacks upon stacks of ale casks. It reeks of stale beer.*

PCs searching the area find a toppled barrel of apples. A DC 15 Perception check notes one of them was stomped leaving a easily followed trail of a single wet foot print that leads to the back of storage area. A DC 18 Perception check spots the haphazardly piled boards that now barely cover the forgotten trash chute. PCs need to make a successful DC 18 Climb skill check to safely descend the chute into the tunnels. Failure sends the PC bouncing down the chute at top speed and taking 1d6 damage from slamming into a sewer wall at the bottom.

### T2. THE CHUTE (CR 1/3 OR CR 2)

*The old waste chute empties into the city's sewer system. The tunnel is fairly wide, with a sewage channel cut in the middle.*

**Trap:** Anticipating problems, Anardo set up a trap along his escape route to slow down pursuit. This trap consists of a large clay amphora tied to tripwire and filled with sewage and excrement.

#### Honey Pot Trap CR 1/3

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 10; **Disable Device** DC 10

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Effect** Atk +4 touch (DC 10 Fortitude save to avoid becoming nauseated for 1 round, then sickened for 1 round).

**Developments:** Beyond the trap, the tunnels narrow to 2½ feet width and a narrow staircase leads down. If the PCs are right on Anardo's heels, they can attempt a DC 12 Perception check to hear Annika's muffled cries from somewhere below, otherwise the PCs need a DC 15 Survival check to follow Anardo and Flint's tracks. If the PCs succeed either check, allow them to catch up with Anardo and his assistant for a brief encounter, otherwise the pair rushes ahead to area T3. The Tunnels of Despair.

#### Anardo "The Finder" CR1

**XP** 400

Male human commoner 4

**NG** Medium Humanoid (Human)

**Init** +0; **Senses** Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor)

**hp** 16 (4d6-4)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** club +2 (1d6)

**Ranged** dart +2 (1d4)

#### TACTICS

**Morale:** If the PCs give chase, Anardo uses a round to throw choking powder at the nearest opponent before continuing his flight into the tunnels.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 10, **Con** 9, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12

**Feats** Self-Sufficient, Animal Affinity, Skill Focus: Knowledge (local)

**Skills** Climb +4, Handle Animal +5, Perception +7, Knowledge (local) +7

**Languages** Common

**Combat Gear** 4 doses choking powder\* (DC 12 Fortitude save or staggered 2 rounds), 6 darts;

**Other Gear** leather armor, 2 fire beetle glands.

\*see *Great City Player's Guide* 79

#### Flint CR 1/2

**XP** 200

Middle-age hobgoblin fighter 1; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 175

**N** Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)

**hp** 10 (1d10+5)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1

#### OFFENSE

**Melee** trident +3 (1d8+2)

**Ranged** trident +3 (1d8+2)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** 11, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 9

**Feats** Toughness, Skill Focus: Perception (trapfinding)

**Skills** Perception +2, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Stealth +6

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Gear** studded leather armor, trident.

### T3. THE TUNNELS OF DESPAIR (CR2)

*Here the tightly cramped passage widens. A stream of brackish sewage trickles along the floor channel while*

rats, spiders, and other vermin scamper everywhere. The distant drip of water, whistling winds, and scratching, scuttling noises become a constant companion. Round the corner ahead, a long, rickety-looking, wooden platform rests a few above the foul-scented water.

A DC 12 Perception, Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Knowledge (engineering) identifies recent evidence shows that something caused foundational cracking in this area. The very narrow passages, tightly wound spiral staircases lead to a section where recent collapses (caused by the sink hole appearance) open into saltwater covered halls.

**Creatures:** Tunnel dwellers recently built this platform to use as a dry area to cook and rest. Currently, a Crimson Medusa hunting team sits on the platform, boiling water for tea in a cooking pot over a coal brazier. Their initial attitude is unfriendly and they view everyone encountered in the tunnels as a potential slave. While these goons may temporarily parlay or cooperate with the party if they discover they're both seeking the same group, they turn on the PCs as soon as an opportune moment arises. They first seek to capture them, however if this proves too difficult, they settle for killing opponents and stealing their equipment.

#### CRIMSON MEDUSA GOON (5)

CR 1/3

XP 135

Male human war 1

CE Medium Humanoid (Human)

Init +0; Senses Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 shield)

hp 7 (1d10+1)

Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee battleaxe +3 (1d8+2/x3)

Ranged light crossbow +1 (1d8/19-20)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat:** The goons initiate combat by lighting oil flasks and throwing them at obvious spellcasters or targets they can't reach due to the tight squeeze in the tunnels.

**Morale:** If two slavers are killed or disabled in combat, the rest flee.

#### STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 12

Feats Weapon Focus; battleaxe, Improved Unarmed Strike

Skills Climb +5

Languages Common

Combat Gear 20 light crossbow bolts, one of the goons has a *potion of cure light wounds*; Other

**Gear** leather armor, large wooden shield, 3 flasks of oil, flint & steel, inflated waterskin filled with air, 25 sp and 10 gp.

**Developments:** The leader has a map of the tunnels in this area, with a spot marked that supposedly shows a secret door. All five of these goons carry empty, but inflated waterskins—a clue about the nature of the secret door on the map. If any are interrogated with a successful DC 14 Intimidate check, they reveal that 70 to 100 feet of submerged tunnel impede travel to the refugee camp. A DC 20 Intimidate check gets the thugs to reveal that they traverse the tunnel using the inflated waterskins to take along a couple of spare breaths of air. PCs can of course attempt to hold their breath without using the waterskins, a task easily accomplished by anyone with a Constitution score of 8 or higher.

## T4. THE FLOODED PASSAGE

*At first, the tunnels narrow as they delve ever deeper beneath the city. Then slowly, they again begin to widen. Still, the tunnel's dank, dark misery seems perpetual. The path reveals the construction of the Great City's passing ages as sewer pipes route through ruins of ancient cellars and even more fantastic structures, perhaps even connected to the legendary Dungeon Under the Mountain. The stonework in the hallways grows rougher and more ancient. Everywhere bones, litter, refuse, and offal add to the unpleasant stench of the air. Dark waters begin to flood the floor, growing ever deeper while the unpleasant smell now takes on a briny tang.*

To navigate the maze-like sewers and locate the refugee hideout, the PCs may either use the goon's map or—if they haven't caught up to Anardo and Flint—continue to track them. Once the PCs reach the mire, tracking becomes increasingly difficult, requiring a DC 20 Survival check. Fortunately, the struggling barmaid leaves the PCs telltale signs in the muck and debris.

At the entrance tunnel to **area T4**, the sewer waters increase to a depth of 3 feet. The tunnels themselves are approximately 5-foot-wide and 10-foot-high. This area lies approximately 75 feet below the Golden Ale Brewing House.

Entering the refugees' hideout involves moving through an 80-foot narrow tunnel. Though entirely submerged beneath the sewer waters, a DC 12 Perception check notices some curious marks chipped into the sewer above the entrance that reveal its location. Dangerously cramped, medium-sized characters must squeeze (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*) to move through the passage.



## T4. THE REFUGEE CAMP (CR2)

*The flooded passage emerges into a small crumbling cistern. Everywhere the walls are braced by crudely lashed frameworks sodden timbers. Most of the detritus has been cleared to outer walls and contained by scraps of burlap and materials, though the surface of the water retains an oily sheen. Above, hanging from the precarious scrap-timber framework, salvaged planks and other scrap materials have been angularly cobbled into jagged, crude shantytown.*

**Creatures:** There are 24 refugees (16 men, 6 women, 2 children aged 4 and 8). If the goons got into the hideout, the battle lasts for four rounds. All the goons are killed, but only 9 men and 4 women remain alive. The fear and desperation in the refugee quarters is palpable. Unless killed or captured earlier, both Anardo and Flint are at the camp. Anardo acts as the group's spokesperson. Treat the rest of the refugees as 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> level commoners armed with spears and clubs if combat does ensue.

Once made friendly, Anardo reveals both his tale and the story of his allies to the PCs. He explains that the refugees are hiding from Zystar Hearthhunter, a cruel slaver who works from a yacht in the harbor. No one here knows that the Crimson Medusa is behind the whole slaving operation and think Zystar acts as the head slaver. Anardo has nothing of value to offer the PCs if they ask for a reward to kill Zystar, but tells them that he and his assistant know the tunnels and

sewers under the City very well and can act as guides and informants.

If the PCs agree to aid Anardo's people, he leads them to concealed trapdoor within one of the shanties that leads to the upper sewers. The trapdoor leads to a rusty ladder leading straight up for about 35 feet. Several of the rungs are missing or unstable and a safe ascent requires a DC 10 Climb check. From the upper sewers, the PCs need only trudge for another 10 minutes before they find a chimney leading to the surface.

**Developments:** If the PCs attack the refugees, Saarn seek them out and exact his revenge at some point in the future. Furthermore, capturing the refugees and returning them to Zystar only incites his ire. He doesn't deal with freelancers and immediately pegs them as upstarts attempting to make him look incompetent in the eyes of his organization and muscle in on his position. He wastes no time organizing his cronies and attacking.

**AD Hoc XP:** if the PCs can successfully negotiate the water tunnel and convince the refugees that they are not slavers and wish them no harm. The refugees have hidden away **Annika** (female human con 1, Con 12, Cha 10) but release her without too much prompting. They don't want to have to feed her and hope the PCs will just go away. Annika is not a grateful damsel in distress and demands to be taken back to the Festhall.



## ACT II: AN ACT OF VENGEANCE

Upon completion of Act I, word of the PCs' actions spark Zystar's anger and paranoia. He takes it upon himself to personally see to their demise, preferably as stock in his slave pens. Initially, he attempts to the PCs as slaves, however if his plans start going badly, he remains just as content to attempts to kill them instead.

### ZYSTAR ON THE SPOT (CR<sub>4</sub>)

This encounter can play out in a variety of locations within the Ward. Zystar sets an ambush for the PCs in an alley or late at night. The only place he does not want to fight them is on the yacht or in view of many citizens, as the unwanted attention would make his bribes more expensive. He likes to pepper his targets from high, such as rooftops or balconies, while his goons move in to capture those stunned or downed by his special sling stones.

#### ZYSTAR HEARTHUNTER

CR 3

XP 800

Male gur, bugbear-blooded human, ranger 4

CE Medium humanoid, goblinoid (gur)

Init +3; Senses: darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 shield, +3 Dex)

hp 33 (4d10+8)

Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortsword +6 (1d6+2)

Ranged slingshot\* +7 (1 pt) or javelin +7 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks favored enemies (+2 humanoid human)

\*see *addendum*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** Zystar initiates using his special slingshot bullets to distract and stun targets, then moves in to capture them with the help of his goons.

**During Combat:** Zystar holds back and defends his position while commanding his goons, and does his best to guard them as they bind and capture fallen opponents.

**Morale:** If dropped below 10 hp, Zystar flees for the Vendia Maria to warn his allies. He makes his final stand aboard the ship.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +4; CMB +6; CMD 19

Feats Point Blank Shot, Alertness, Dodge, Endurance

Skills Climb +8, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7,

Perception +10, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +9

Languages Common

SQ favored terrain (urban) +2, hunter's bond, wild empathy

Combat Gear 5 sleep powder sling stones (DC 11

Fortitude save upon direct hit or fall asleep as

per *sleep spell* for 1 round), 5 thunderstone sling stones (same as thunderstone effect, affects only the target hit if successfully attacked), *oil of magic**weapon*, *cure moderate wounds* potion (7<sup>th</sup> level), +1*leather armor*; Other Gear 5 regular sling stones, 3 javelins, buckler

#### CRIMSON MEDUSA GOONS (3)

CR 1/3

XP 135

hp 7; see *area T3*

## ACT III: COVERED IN CRIMSON

Once the PCs have faced an encounter with Zystar, they are free to begin plotting their assault on the Vendia Maria. They have two days to board the ship before it leaves port. A DC 15 Diplomacy check made to gather information reveals the ship is a noted "pleasure vessel" that takes rich aristocrats upon cruises of the surrounding coast. It pulls into port every few weeks, staying docked for only a few days at a time to re-supply and take new passengers.

### THE YACHT "VENDIA MARIE" (CR<sub>4</sub>)

The "Vendia Marie" belongs to the Crimson Medusa, but is operated by Granach Phelian. He seeks out escaped slaves on the waters and patrols the beaches to ensure slaves don't find watery exits from the tunnels to escape overland. As such, the yacht cruises the harbor and proximal waters constantly, only putting in to take on supplies every few weeks. When docked, passengers disembark and new ones come on board. Granach and his crew force boarding slaves to dress and act like smiling rich tourists in order to give the outward appearance of a pleasure vessel. Granach's first mate, Mutton, keeps everyone away from the vessel while it's docked. "Not for hire", he smiles.

If the PCs defeat Granach and try to claim the yacht as their own, a ranking City Guardsman reminds them that the yacht is owned by a conglomerate of investors and acts of piracy are punishable by death, especially in the harbor.

Wise players can take advantage of the slow response in the docks, attack the yacht and get away. Murder and assault are easier to escape from when the city watch doesn't get there in time and there isn't a great deal of damage to public property.



If attacked, Mutton runs to the yacht and tries to pull up the deck plank. He yells an alarm. See the descriptions of the NPCs below to see their reactions and actions during a fight.

*The slender yacht bobs gently in the waves. The main mast sail is struck, but beautiful lanterns give the yacht a pleasant reddish glow. Its lacquered sides gleam with care and polish. Two smaller masts, one aft and one forward are strung with silvery nets that appear more decorative than useful for fishing.*

## THE MAIN DECK

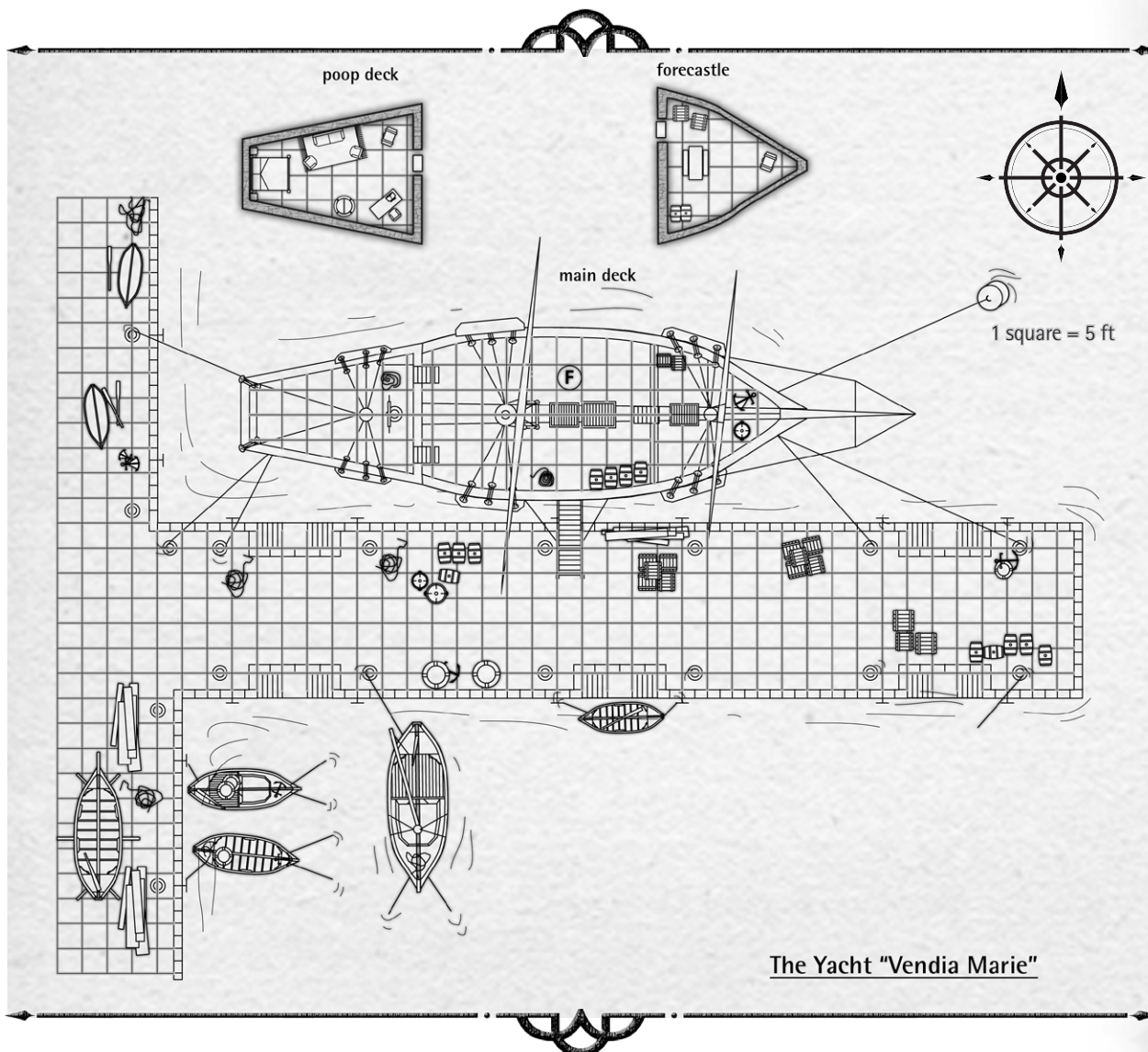
The center mast is 40-feet-high and masterfully crafted from sturdy hardwood. Fine silk rigging leads to a stout crows nest made of thick oak planks. Six decorative oil lanterns strung from a silk rope hang between the main mast and the two smaller masts forward and aft. These lanterns are valued at 100gp each. The railing on the main deck stands 2-ft-high and made of finely carved and inlaid teak and the deck is lacquered and stained with a thick varnish. A stack of fine folding deck chairs rests near the yacht's

forecastle doors. These weigh 25 lbs each, but are valued at 10 gp due to their fine craftsmanship.

A DC 10 Perception skill check reveals a trapdoor hidden behind some decorative planking that leads to a narrow, 3-ft-high lower deck area. The storage area below holds three fine statues of a human teenage boy, an elf woman and a heavily muscled half-orc. The statues are recent 'acquisitions' of the Crimson Medusa and scheduled to be put into 'harbor storage' next time out. The Crimson Medusa's mistress turned all of them to stone.

## THE FORECASTLE

The yacht's forecandle is a fine galley, a gourmet kitchen equipped with expertly crafted ovens and exquisite pottery and silverware. The silverware is stored in a chest locked with a masterwork lock. It is worth 250gp. The food stored here does not match the quality of the galley's furnishings. Only when Chloe herself chooses to cruise on the yacht are fine foodstuffs brought on board, along with her personal chef. The tengu sleep here, their bedrolls rolled



up and stored inside a cabinet, along with three sacks of treasure containing a total of 85 1gp gems, 3 10 gp gems and 1 50 gp necklace of carved ivory and a tiny but sparkly diamond.

## THE QUARTERS (POOP DECK)

The door to this area is trapped.

### Poisoned Dart Trap

CR 1

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

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Effect** Atk +10 ranged (1d3 plus greenblood oil)

**Treasure:** The quarters are opulently furnished, but the beautiful canopy bed at the far aft end is not used. Granach sleeps on a folding cot he keeps hidden under the bed. Near the cot rests an ironbound sea-chest locked with a masterwork lock. Granach stores his personals inside the chest along with a silk bag stuffed with 50 pp and a silver necklace with tiny dolphin teeth worth 100 gp. Beneath the bed hides a copper chamber pot worth 15 gp while the two ornate wall mirrors each fetch 75gp.

### GRANACH PHELIAN

CR 3

XP 800

Male human guttermage 4

**CN** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

**hp** 27 (4d8+8)

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

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft

**Melee** dagger +4 (1d4+1)

**Ranged** 3 darts +5 (1d4+1) Range 20'

**Guttermage Spells Known (CL 4<sup>th</sup>)**

2<sup>nd</sup> (2 per day)—*blindness/deafness*, *darkness*

1<sup>st</sup> (4 per day)—*magic missile*, *cure light wounds*, *sleep*, *detect secret doors*

o (at will)—*dancing lights*, *flare*, *laundry defense*\*\*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*, *read magic*

\*\*curtains, clothes and other items twist to become equivalent of padded armor until released; see *The Great City Player's Guide*.

**Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4<sup>th</sup>)** guttermage "jinxes"

At will—*cat's eyes*, *mimic*\*

\*Special guttermage jinx ability, can transform to appear as someone else for 24 hours if he possesses a patch of clothing, lock of hair or

trinket of target. Does not give mannerisms or voice and is equivalent to a 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell. See *The Great City Player's Guide* for more information.

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** Should combat start, Granach climbs the main mast to the crow's nest 30 feet above the deck, then his potion and casts *blindness* on the most powerful enemy spellcaster.

**During Combat:** During combat Granach takes cover in the crow's nest. He unloads his offensive spells upon targets on the deck below and saves his *debris barrage* ability to target any opponents who attempt to reach him by climbing the mast.

**Morale:** If he loses more than 2/3rds of his crew or drops below 10 hp, he grabs a nearby rope and attempts to swing from yacht on to the dock and run off. If necessary, he uses his *mime* ability to finish his getaway.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Deceitful, Quickdraw

**Skills** Bluff +11, Climb +4, Disguise +10, Escape

Artist +9, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +8,

Profession (Sailor) +4, Stealth +6

**Languages** Common

**Gear** *potion of shield* (CL 3<sup>rd</sup>), 3 darts, dagger, 115 gp, 47 sp.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Debris Barrage (Su):** A guttermage can whip street trash into a ranged touch attack, 60 feet range, that does 2d6 points of piercing, bludgeoning and slashing damage, if debris present, equivalent to a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell. Targets who succeed a DC 14 Reflex save take half damage.

A man of small stature in his early 30's, Granach wears tight-fitting clothes, keeping his few personal effects in two small pouches. This helps him maneuver his way through the narrow tunnels under the city. Granach has a pair of pet fire beetles (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 33) that accompany him. They help him light his way in the dark, but are trained to stay out of sight when stealth is appropriate. They do not fight for him unless cornered.

### MUTTON

CR 1/2

XP 200

Male half-giant war 2

**CE** Medium Humanoid (Half-giant)

**Init** +0; **Senses** Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor)

**hp** 21 (2d10+6)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0



## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** halberd +5 (1d10+2)

**Ranged** heavy crossbow +2 (1d10)

**Special Attacks** stomp

## TACTICS

**During Combat:** Mutton reserves his stomp ability for attacks on the yacht, especially when attackers are climbing on board, up the rigging or are somehow more prone to taking damage from a fall. He defends the main mast once Granach climbs it and helps the tengu crew flank opponents.

**Melee:** Mutton fights to the death.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Weapon Focus (halberd)

**Skills** Intimidate +2, Profession (sailor) +2

**Languages** Common

**Gear** chain shirt, 20 heavy crossbow bolts, 45gp, 18sp.

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Stomp (Sp):** Once per day can stomp on the ground. All creatures in a 20 ft. cone shaped burst must make a DC 9 Reflex save or be thrown to the ground, prone and take 1d4 points of non-lethal damage.

Mutton is the chief enforcer on the yacht and its first mate.

## TENGU (3)

CR 1/2

XP 200

hp 9; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 263

## TACTICS

**During Combat:** These tengu crew the yacht. If attacked, they avoid direct combat, but try to flank spellcasters when possible. They jump overboard and climb on the yacht's sides to stay away from enemy front line fighters.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs defeat Granach Phelian, they are free to search the yacht. In the hold, they uncover a half dozen petrified victims soon to be dumped into the harbor for storage—gristly reminders of the ship's powerful owner, the Crimson Medusa. The PCs made a powerful enemy, but taking the heat off the refugees brings them closer to a potential great ally—Saarn. If the GM has *The Great City Urban Creatures and Lairs*, this adventure can lead to a friendship with Saarn's former mentor, stable master Pechuk Lanistae, a well-connected member of the Stable Masters' Guild. This adventure has many role-playing and intrigue ramifications for the party

and can be used to set the stage for many follow-up encounters for the GM to expand upon.

Similarly, if the PCs somehow manage to smuggle the refugees out of the city and give them a viable shot at freedom, award them XP for completing CR 3 encounter. Still, the Crimson Medusa's network of spies possesses a far reach. News of the intervening of upstart adventurers quickly prompts Chloe's retaliation, leading to further encounters outside the scope of this adventure. Conversely, Anardo doesn't leave the city. He remains most comfortable in his home beneath the Army Ward and attached himself to the escapees for his personal benefit. As such, the GM may wish to have him serve as an infrequent contact to PCs in later adventures.

## ADDENDUM

### NEW WEAPON: SLINGSHOT

Simple Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Wt.	Type	Special
Slingshot	1sp	1d2	1d3	x2	20 ft.	½ lb	B	see below

Slingshots are considered a desperate hunting weapon for street beggars and urchins and thus usually not restricted or overlooked in a search. They consist of a small Y-shaped frame with a handle and occasionally an arm-brace for added stability. The frame can be metal wood, bone, or similar sturdy material. Strung tightly between the Y-shaped frame is a flexible rubber cord that can be pulled backwards, creating enough tension to fire a sling bullet or a rock with ample force. Rocks fired from a slingshot use range category of 10 feet and inflict 1 point of damage. Using a slingshot requires two hands. While relatively weak, unlike a sling or a bow, they can be fired from the prone position and in very tight spaces. loading a slingshot is a move action.





# ANIMATION

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**S**et to rid the Merchant's Haven Inn of a gremlin infestation, the PCs find themselves thrust into a whirlwind of chaos when strange vaporous wisps race through the streets of the Trades Ward, animating dozens of objects which erupt on unsuspecting citizens with violent fury.

This adventure is part of the Great City: The Sinking. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It is designed using the Pathfinder RPG System for 3<sup>rd</sup>-level Player Characters.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

While attempting to squash an outbreak of gremlins terrorizing the Merchant's Heaven Inn, an unrelated force causes the chairs and tables to mysteriously animate and attack. After the tavern fight, sounds of a ruckus outside the inn draw the PCs into street where swaths of white smoke fly around animating various objects. The objects, including animated gas lanterns, suits of armor and finally an animated carriage, rampage through the streets attacking whoever or whatever is nearby. Towards the end of these encounters, the swaths lead the PCs to the edge of the massive sinkhole, which recently struck the city. In the finale encounter, the white swaths fly from the hole and dart into the street, animating a huge cobblestone golem.

## INTRODUCTION

While visiting the Merchant's Heaven Inn in Trades Ward, the PCs entertain an offer from the proprietor, Anslon Briarback. His inn is infested with gremlins, a mean sort of them called pugwampis (see *Great City Campaign Setting* page 94). As the pesky gremlins threaten his livelihood, Briarback eagerly offers up to 500 gp to the PCs to get rid of them. He asks the PCs to stay at his inn this evening and wait for the pests to start their usual hiccup, as they've been doing every evening for the past few weeks. So long as they agree to the job, this evening's meals and drinks are free, courtesy of Briarback.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when the PCs enter the Merchant's Heaven Inn in Trades Ward (see *Great City Campaign Setting*, page 95, keyed location #14) and Anslon Briarback, the owner of the inn, gives them a friendly greeting.

## A. CHAOS AT MERCHANT'S HEAVEN INN (CR 6)

Arriving at the Merchant's Heaven Inn, you are immediately greeted by your contact, the inn's owner Anslon Briarback. Ever jovial, he entreats you to a fine supper and plenty of drinks over which he proposes an offer of 500 gold pieces to rid his inn of a troublesome clan of gremlins who have been plaguing his establishment for the past few weeks. Thus far, the evening has been quiet. Still, business seems slow, with just under a dozen patrons sitting about, most of them locals who refuse to be put off by pint-sized impish fey. As expected, the sinkhole remains the primary topic of conversation.

During this time, allow PCs to talk about whatever they want. Anslon Briarback sits at the PCs table, chatting about the latest news, filling them in on new town-gossip, or talking about the job and the gremlins.

**Creatures:** During their conversation with Anslon, a clan of pugwampis sneak into the room and begin their nightly pranking. At this time, allow PCs a DC 15 Perception check to spot them as they enter the taproom; otherwise, the pugwampis get to act on the surprise round.

### Pugwampis (4)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 6; *Pathfinder Bestiary 2* page 144

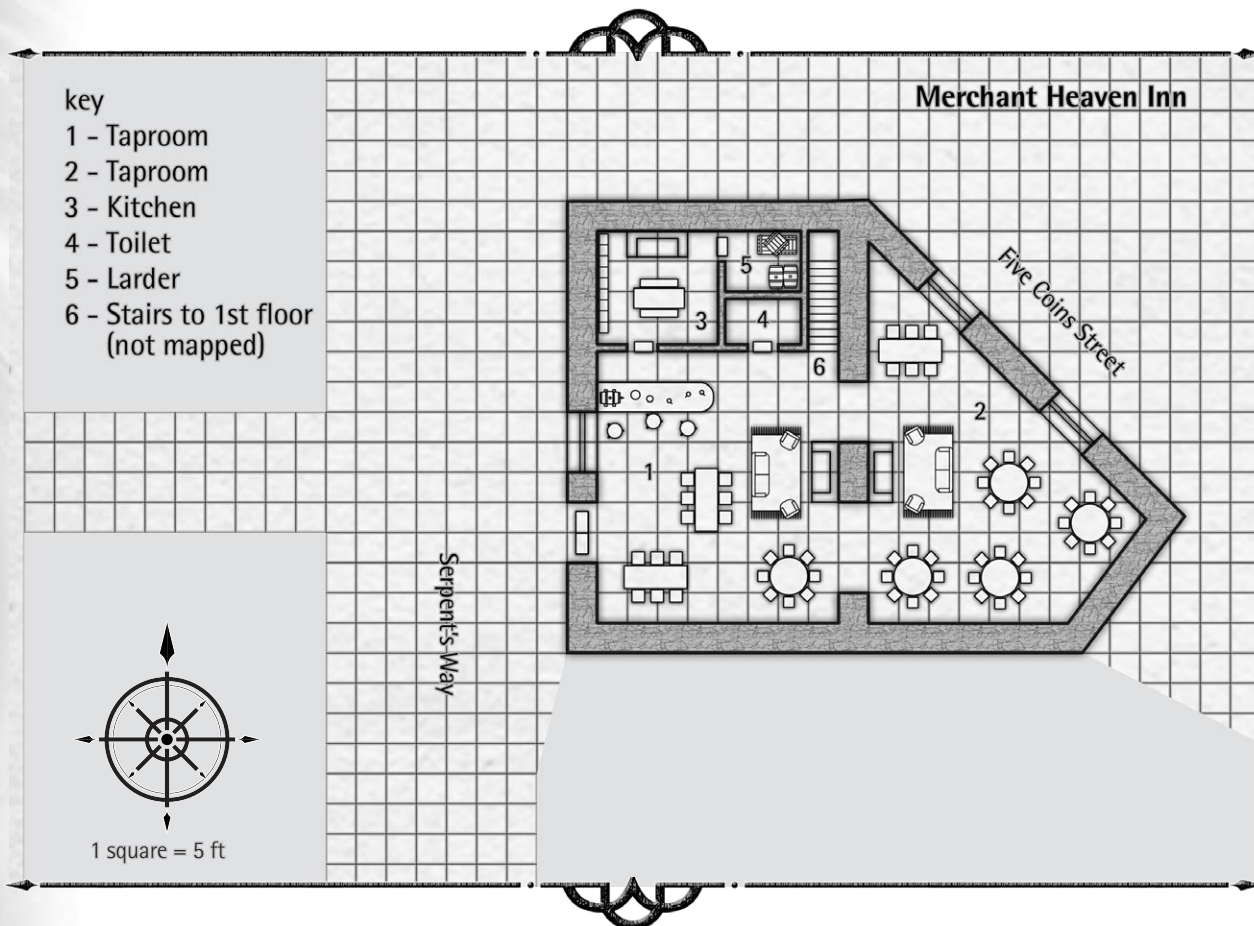
**Tactics:** The pugwampis make extensive use of the *shatter* ability, breaking mirrors, drinking glasses, and one of the many windows of the inn.

**Moral:** The craven pugwampis flee as soon as they drop below 3 hp or if more than half their number are slain or flee due to injury.

**Developments:** As soon as three of the four pugwampis are defeated allow the PCs a round to heal themselves, then initiate the next encounter by reading or paraphrasing the following:

### THE WHITE SWATHS

The white smoky swaths play a significant role in this adventure, yet their specific properties are deliberately undefined. They are not creatures, have no physical forms, and if attacked suffer no damage. Should PCs attempt to attack them, they have the following properties: **size** small, **AC** 18 (Dex +4, size +4), incorporeal. The swaths can pass through solid objects with ease including living creatures, however they avoid contact with living creatures whenever possible.



The remaining windows of the inn suddenly splinter, sending showers of broken glass into the taproom. Swaths of white smoke dart into the room and hover eerily as if searching for something. Without warning, the swaths fly towards chairs and tables then envelope the furnishings. Seconds later, the objects violently spring to life.

**Creatures:** Three chairs animate near the PCs and immediately attack them. Elsewhere, in the room the mysterious flying vapors also animate a table and half a dozen more chairs, though these are immediately engaged and subdued by the remaining patrons.

During the fight, foreshadow the next series of events by describing the sounds of the ensuing chaos outside in the streets such as screams, shattering boards, and little explosions. PCs attempting to get a glimpse of the streets from one of the windows see dozens of mundane objects animated and attacking the nearest passersby.

#### Animated Chairs (3)

CR 5

XP 600 each

N Small construct

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -5

#### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size)

hp 22 (2d10+10)

Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -5

Defensive Abilities hardness 5; Immune construct traits

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +3 (1d4/20/x2)

#### STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

Base Atk +2; CMB +0; CMD 11

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Construct Traits: Additional slam.

## B. TERROR IN THE STREETS (CR 4)

As soon as the PCs step out onto the street, read the following:

The city has erupted into total chaos. Overwhelmed by panic, mobs of fearful citizens run screaming through the streets and it is all one can do to avoid being trampled. Small swaths of pale vapor fly about the vicinity, seemingly guided by some unknown force. One of the wisps envelops a gas lantern on the opposite side of the street. The fiery lantern springs to life and tears free from its base, which results in a small explosion. It flies forward, leaving behind the cracked base, which hisses loudly.

**Creatures:** Throughout the street, the swaths begin animating gas lanterns. Those nearest to the PCs



## FALSE PRETENSES

It could be PCs link the swaths of smoke to the pugwampis, because of the shattered windows. If so, let them. This only makes the whole story even more cryptic, falsely leading PCs to conclude, that the pugwampis are somehow linked to the Sinkhole.

Overwhelmed with calming the chaos in his taproom, Briarback promises to pay his debt tomorrow, eagerly suggesting the PCs help some citizens outside his tavern, where everything seems to have collapsed into turmoil.

## CREATING CHAOS

If desired, a GM can increase the chaos in streets by adding animated more objects. Shutters and/or doors can fly off their hinges. Benches, buckets, flower tubs, shop signs can whip about or swing violently attacking the PCs as they race through the streets. Additional animations should add flavor and not overwhelm the PCs. The animating energy is just enough to let the objects attack once.

Use the statistics below for any additional animated objects.

### Tiny Animated Object (CR ½)

**N** Tiny construct

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 5 (1d10)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** -5

**Defensive Abilities** hardness 5; **Immune** construct traits

#### OFFENSE

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

**Melee** slam +1 (1d3-2/20/x2)

**Space** 2.5 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 6, **Dex** 14, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 9

**Skills** Fly -2, Stealth +10

attack immediately. The gas lanterns when animated rupture into gouts of flame.

Upon entering the street, PCs witness the animation of nearest gas lantern. Upon hearing the hissing base, ask them for a DC 10 Perception check to smell gas. 1d4 rounds later, the lantern base erupts dealing 2d6 fire damage in a 5 foot radius (DC 12 Reflex save for half) and continues to burn for another 8+1d6 rounds after. Anyone coming in direct contact with the flame takes 1d6 fire damage and risks catching on fire.

Thereafter, every 1d4 rounds, the swaths animate a new gas lantern. The PCs are only expected to fight three, however the GM is free to adjust the number as necessary. A total of eight lanterns animate, before the swaths leave. Elsewhere in the streets, those citizens able to fight, deal with the remaining animated gas lanterns. After 5+1d4 rounds, the gas lanterns lose their animated quality, suddenly dropping from the sky. When they strike the ground, the lanterns explode as described in the creature stats below.

### Animated Gas Lantern (3)

CR 1

**XP** 400 each

**N** Small construct

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+4 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 15 (1d10+10)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** -5

**Immune** construct traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor)

**Melee** slam +3 (1d3+1)

**Special Attacks** exploding destruction

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 10, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11

**Skills** Fly -4

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Exploding Destruction (Ex):** When an animated gas lantern reaches 0 hp it explodes dealing 1d6 points of fire damage to all creatures in a 5-ft-radius (DC 12 Reflex save for half).

## C. ARMOR ON THE LOOSE (CR 4)

Run this encounter 1d4 rounds after the encounter with the gas lanterns.

*Looking down the street you spot two suits of empty armor hovering about two feet off the ground. Suddenly they lurch into motion flying straight towards you. Chasing after them runs a dwarf screaming, "Stop 'em!"*

*Those belong to my shop! Don't destroy 'em!"*

The dwarf is Durum Anvilshaker of Anvilmaker's Masterworks, a popular armor and weapon shop in Trades Ward (see *Great City Campaign Setting*, page 95, keyed location #5).

**Creatures:** The swaths flew through Durum's shop and animated two recently commissioned suits of ceremonial armor. Not as sturdy as standard armors, the highly detailed platemail suits were extremely time consuming and expensive to manufacture and he fears they might become damaged. If the PCs manage not to damage the suits too much (using a net to catch them, etc.), Durum shows his extreme gratitude by offering the group a one-time only discount of 20% on his wares (see *Concluding the Adventure*).

**Animated Suits of Ceremonial Armor (2) CR 3**

XP 800 each

N Medium construct

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision; Perception -5

**DEFENSE**

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 natural)

hp 19 (3d10+20)

Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4

Immune construct traits

**OFFENSE**

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +5 (1d6+3/20/x2)

**STATISTICS**

Str 14, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 15

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Construct Traits.**

**Developments:** Despite defeating the armor, the chaos in the streets is far from over. As the next encounter takes place near Market Square, the GM needs to direct the PCs' focus there. A DC 12 Perception check determines Market Square as the direction where the vaporous swaths have headed. Still, describing further actions such as additional gas lantern explosions, cries for help, or even a few pillars of smoke coming from the vicinity of Market Square may be necessary to motivate the PCs to investigate.



\* Please refer to *The Great City Campaign Setting* or *One's Blueprints: The Great City* for numbered locations



## THE PASSENGERS IN THE CARRIAGE

The descriptive text for the Carriage Encounter assumes the PCs to act altruistically. However, some GMs may need to provide a stronger motivation for their PCs than saving a screaming woman and her child. To encourage the PCs to help the passengers, the GM may need to alter the NPC descriptions in this encounter to give them greater importance to the PCs. GMs should feel free to use any NPC with whom the PCs had contact in earlier sessions. It could be a relative or someone who has helped the PCs in the past.

For less altruistic characters, choose victims whose rescue would be in the PCs best interest. Examples might include a tax-warden or ranking city official, a jailer from who the PCs need a pardon, or a Korteisian noble or someone of similar stature able to provide a monetary reward or political favor. Whoever you use, be sure to change the descriptive text to reflect the alternate NPC.

## D. THE FUNERAL PROCESSION (CR 3)

Run the following encounter as the PCs arrive at Market Square.

*For a moment, the wispy vapors hover over in the streets as if contemplating something. Moments later, a small funeral procession rounds the corner from Trader's Way it on its way towards the City of the Dead. A horse-drawn black carriage leads the way, transporting the coffin. The carriage driver has his hands full keeping the horses under control amidst the confusion and chaos.*

The moment the coffin passes the PCs, it animates. The lid of the coffin flies open, throwing the corpse out onto the streets, where it immediately animates. Next, the coffin jumps off the carriage and starts attacking the PCs. The survivors of the deceased stand in shock, unable to act as the "zombie" staggers towards its nearest relative. As it attacks, the carriage drive desperately tries to calm his panicked horses. A few of the family members cry out for help, but all nearby are too overwhelmed with their own troubles to come to their aid.

### Animated Corpse

CR ½

#### XP 200

(altered zombie, see *Pathfinder Bestiary* page 288). Use the stats of the zombie but with the following changes:

Change type to construct

hp 12

No DR

**Immune** construct traits

No staggered condition.

PCs attempting to channel energy or turn undead to harm the corpse find their efforts wasted. The corpse is only an animated object and not a true undead creature, therefore individuals cannot harm it or turn it by channeling positive energy. Observant PCs might notice attempt a DC 12 Perception check, to observe that the "zombie's" actions do not seem staggered, which might be enough to conclude that it's not really a zombie. Likewise, a DC 11 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the animated corpse as something other than undead.

### Coffin (Medium animated object)

CR 3

#### XP 800

hp 36; see *Pathfinder Bestiary* page 14.

**Developments:** As the PCs fight the coffin and defend the family from the attacks of their deceased relative, high-pitched screams of terror rise from the carriage's passenger cabin. When the PCs finally defeat the coffin, the vaporous swaths fly out of it and animate the carriage.

## E. THE CARRIAGE (CR 5)

*The swaths of white smoke dart into the carriage, animating it. Already panicked by the chaos, the horses erupt into a violent frenzy. Yet instead of dragging the carriage on a wild ride around town, the carriage wheels lock, holding the vehicle fast. Then slowly, on their own accord, the wheels begin turning again. This time they rotate in the opposite direction, pulling against the draft beasts. The terrified animals struggle against the carriage, though its obvious that the beasts are quickly tiring and shall soon be pulled to the ground and dragged through the streets to their deaths.*

*Erstwhile, the carriage driver clings desperately to the driver's rail, so that he doesn't fall from his seat and land beneath his horses' wildly kicking hooves.*

*From within the carriage rise the horrified screams of a panicked mother and her daughter, desperately trying to force their way out. The mother doesn't seem to be able to open the carriage doors.*

From within the locked carriage, the mother screams for help and looks desperately towards the PCs. The PCs have 5 rounds to jump on the carriage, before it starts careening towards the sinkhole. After

5 rounds pass, the carriage lurches from its position, throwing the horses from their hooves and dragging through the street as the vehicle suddenly rockets off towards the sinkhole.

### Animated Carriage

CR 5

XP 800

N Large construct

**Init** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft. low-light vision; Perception -5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (-1 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 50 (4d10+30)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** -4

**Defensive Abilities** hardness 5; **Immune** construct traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** slam +9 (1d6+6)

**Special Attacks** trample (1d6+9, DC 18)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 8, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Construct Traits** (3 CP): Faster, trample.

The carriage doesn't attack the PCs per se, but

anyone attempting to climb onto the carriage, risks being flung off, landing within range of its trample attack. The driver manages to hold onto the carriage for three rounds. In the end however, he falls off, landing beneath the hooves of his horses (use the trample attack of the carriage to determine any damage done by someone who falls between the horses).

So long as the carriage remains animated, individuals attempting to hold onto carriage must make a CMB check each round or be thrown off and onto the street taking 2d6 points of damage.

The doors of the carriage are stuck (DC 30 Strength check), though a successful DC 15 Escape Artist check is sufficient to safely pull one passenger out of the small, side door window. Assume the passengers have a Dex of 12 (which gives them a +1 to the balance check to hold on).

Once the carriage drops below 25 hit points, it comes to a stop. When this occurs, the vaporous swaths leave it and head towards the sinkhole.

If instead, the PCs fail to stop the carriage before it reaches the sinkhole, it crashes into the golem (see next encounter), spilling the PCs and anyone else prone at the feet of the cobblestone monstrosity. If this occurs, be sure to adjust the read-a-loud text of the golem encounter.





## F. THE GOLEM (CR 6)

Whether or not the PCs stop the carriage, it become readily apparent that it was following the vaporous swaths towards the center of the city. Indeed, a trail of wreckage leads straight for the sinkhole where dozens of white smoky swaths fly about, darting in and out of the hole and around the street. When PCs reach the sinkhole, read the following aloud:

*Here the earth lies split open by a massive sinkhole. The size of several city blocks, the gaping hole is surrounded by the rubble and remnants of dozens of nearby buildings. A score of white swaths playfully swoop in and out of the earthwound. As if sensing your approach, they suddenly rocket forward into the jaggedly torn cobblestone street. All goes quiet for a few moments, then without warning the street itself rises, forming a hulking humanoid shape twice the height of man and completely formed out of cobblestones.*

**Creatures:** The swaths animate a hulking monstrosity called a cobblestone golem (see Appendix I). As the golem practically forms from under the PC's feet, they have to make a DC 15 Balance check or fall prone. After forming, the golem immediately attacks.

### Cobblestone Golem

CR6

XP 2,000

See Appendix I

hp 74

### TACTICS

**During Combat:** The golem enters combat using its shooting stones ability. He mindlessly attacks until destroyed, continuing to use shooting stones even if it means its destruction.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After the PCs defeat the cobblestone golem, the city again returns to a relative quiet. All animated objects cease moving and fall to the ground. A successful DC 15 Perception check spot dozens of white, cloudy swaths disappearing into the depths of the sinkhole. Still, where they go or what caused their appearance remains a secret. If the PCs decide to question bystanders if they might have seen anything prior to their appearance, a DC 10 Diplomacy check uncovers a local drunken vagrant who claims he witnessed a person throwing "something" into the sinkhole shortly before the swaths appeared. Not surprisingly, he claims cannot recall any details until given a bottle of wine. If provided a bottle, he takes a few sips and his memory returns enough to remember that after the chaos erupted, the person

disappeared into the direction of the Temple Ward, obviously fleeing.

If playing this module as a stand-alone adventure, He gives a description of a brutish young man with tangled black hair and a queer brand on his left forearm that resembled a shovel. A DC 12 Knowledge (local) check identifies the brand as one used by a crossroads club known as the Drudge spades (see *The Great City Campaign Setting* page 59). The PCs can track down this individual, a newly admitted gang member who foolishly tossed a flask of animation (see Appendix II) into the sinkhole as part of his initiation hazing.

If playing this module as part of the Sinking series, for the time being, the PCs cannot glean further details about the mysterious man. However, they will eventually learn his identity in a future Sinking installment.

At this point, the PCs are free to go back to Briarback's to receive their well-earned gold pieces for ridding his inn of the gremlins. Anslon happily gives the group the promised 500 gp, and offers them free drinks whenever they visit his establishment.

If the PCs managed not to damage Durum's suits of armor, the thankful dwarf seeks them out with an offer of a one-time 20% discount at his armory.

A broadside reporter might seek out the PCs after hearing about their deeds from people in the streets. The reporter offers to publish their story, which could earn the group a little notoriety in the city (at least around the Trades Ward). If PCs accept, each of them gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their next Diplomacy check made in the Trades Ward.

Lastly, if the PCs rescued the carriage passengers, these individuals feel indebted to the PCs for saving their lives and display their thanks appropriately by providing favors. Determine specific favors according to the nature of the passengers. If you used the woman, you can provide the PCs with jewelry worth 500 gp. A tax-warden might offer to look the other way come collection time while an official might promise to aid them if they ever have a future run in with the authorities. A noble or soldier might grant them access to a restricted area or provide them with confidential information.

## APPENDIX I

### NEW MONSTER: GOLEM, COBBLE STONE

*Almost twice as tall as a human, this towering golem is made entirely of cobblestones. As it moves, the single*

cobblestones seem to shift around, nevertheless keeping the form of a bulky humanoid.

## Golem, Cobble Stone

CR6

XP 2,000

N Large construct (stone)

**Init** +0; **Senses** low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft; Perception +0

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (-1 size, +10 natural)

**hp** 74 (8d10+30)

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

**DR** 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +12 (2d6+4)

**Special Attacks** explosive destruction, shooting stones

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +13, **CMD** 23

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary or gang (2-4)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Explosive Destruction (Ex):** When reduced to 0 hit points, a cobblestone golem explodes in a hail of cobblestones. All creatures within a 15-foot burst take 6d6 points of bludgeoning damage; a DC 16 Reflex save halves the damage.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex):** A cobblestone golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

- A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows a cobblestone golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute*

*mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points.

- A *stone to flesh* spell fails change the golem's structure, but negates its damage reduction and immunity to magic for 1 full round.

**Shooting Stones (Su):** As a standard action, a cobblestone golem can cause parts of its body to shoot out. These flying stones function as a breath weapon (20-ft. cone; 3d6 bludgeoning damage; Reflex DC 16 half; usable once every 1d4 rounds). For every usage the golem takes 1d3 points of damage, as it gives up some parts of its body.

## APPENDIX II

### Flask of Animations

**Aura** strong transmutation; **CL** 12th

**Slot** none; **Price** 12,960 gp (lesser), 25,920 gp (greater); **Weight** 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

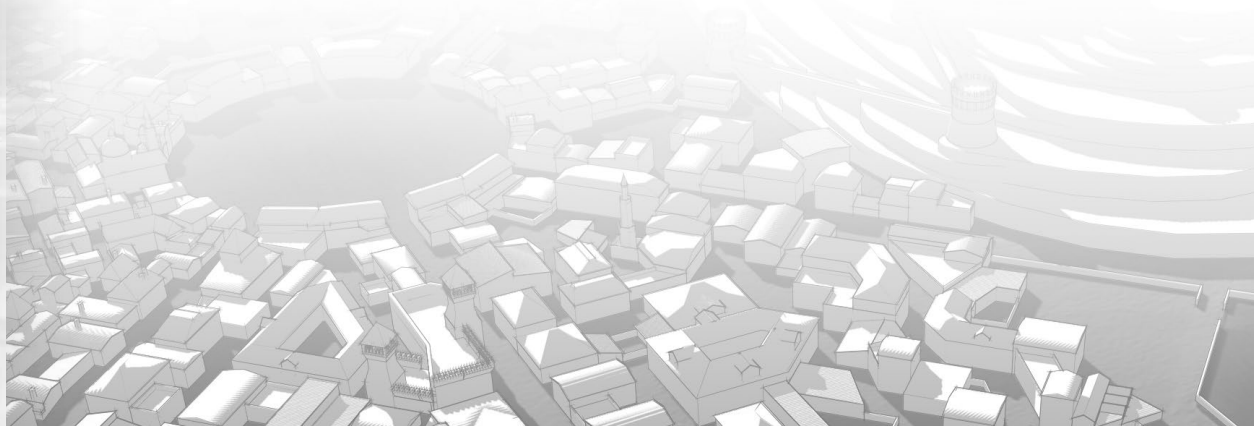
This strange steel flask is emblazoned with etchings of interlocking cogs and gears of various sizes. Upon a command word, a pale vaporous cloud exits the flask. The flask's owner can then command the swath to enter a nearby object, causing it to animate as per the spell *animate objects*. A *lesser flask* contains 12 swaths, a *greater flask* has 24 swaths. Consider each swath as a spell level for determining the size of the object to be animated.

Only a single object can be animated at one time.

If the user attempts to animate more than one object, the first object loses its animated properties and returns to normal. Once the flask is empty it becomes a normal, non-magical flask.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*, *unseen servant*; **Cost** 6,480 gp (lesser), 12,960 gp (greater).







\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations





# THE DEVIL'S SMUGGLER

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**I**n desperate times, the scum rises to the surface seeking to feast upon easy prey. As the city wallows amidst a sea of homeless and indigent beggars, street crime has reached an all time high. Worse, the immediate chaos has only served to wet the appetite of far more insidious beings that lurk within the fear and confusion, manipulating it for their own profit.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

In this adventure, the heroes discover that the sons of the notorious crime boss have entered into the illegal slave trade in their father's absence. Alerted to their activities by a sudden increase of foreign coin in the local economy, the PCs uncover clues leading them to the Menach's establishment where they must confront the brothers and the hellish commander charged with overseeing the expansion of the Great City's growing blackmarket source for free slaves.

## INTRODUCTION

The Sinking had a profound effect on the Menach family. The location of the sinking couldn't be worse, at least as far as the half-orc smugglers were concerned. A large portion of their tunnels collapsed, removing access to their private cove, thereby bringing an abrupt end to their smuggling operation. To make matters worse, the patriarch of the family, Orim Menach, was in the tunnels at the time of the collapse. He has not been seen or heard from since.

Orim Menach has long held a reputation for allowing any form of illicit trade to move through his shop and into his tunnels—for the right price. While he has occasionally dabbled in the trafficking of humanoid slaves, such dealings were far from the main scope of his business. Orim justified it to himself simply—he wasn't buying or selling flesh; he was merely accepting money to allow access to his tunnels. If he didn't, the slavers would find another way. But in the wake of his absence, his sons Evars and Irre have been seduced into a precarious partnership with a sadistic tiefling slaver from Porttown who goes by the name of Gaura. The majority of Guara's clients hail from the Western Salt Isles and thus, much of her tender consists of Salt Isle guilders. However, the greed driven Menach brothers have been both eager and careless in spending their spoils, and freshly freed from the heavy-handed rule of their father, their meager attempts at laundering their spoils have begun to attract attention. With hard times, the gap widens between the lower wards and the King's hill. Within the destitute streets, the flash of a gold coin invitation to murder, while the common folk hardly have enough food and water to keep their skin from clinging to their ribs. Strangely however,

an increasing number of foreign coins have started appearing in the Trade's Ward, most from Western Salt Isles where slavery is common.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when the PCs witness a gruesome murder in a shadowed Trades Ward street just south of the Sink. To begin, read or paraphrase the following passage.

*Fearing the rising chaos, the mud splattered streets clear after dusk, transforming into blackened and desolate corridors that wind silently through the haunted city. Ahead in the darkness a small form darts across the street, slow and furtive like some monstrous gutter rat. Suddenly, he pauses fast. Scanning his surroundings he seems to spot something, and quickly turns to run. Moments later, another figure is upon him, and then another. In a few short seconds it ends. The first man makes a hideous gurgling and slumps to the cobbles in a crumpled head. Swiftly, his attackers pull what appears to be sizable purse from within the folds of his cloak*

**Creatures:** The two attackers are common street thugs, hoping to quickly cash in on a target they've been tailing, a smuggling colleague recently promoted to the position of Evars Menach's coin runner. Unfortunately for the runner, his promotion has cost him his life. As soon as the thugs become aware that someone has witnessed the attack, they dash off through the streets, attempting to escape.

### Thugs (2)

CR 2

#### XP 600 each

Male human rogue 3

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 Dodge, +1 shield)

**hp** 27 each (3d8+9)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1,

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk heavy mace +7 (1d8+3)

**Ranged** heavy crossbow +3 (1d10/19–20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Thugs dart off when approached and attempt to hide to avoid combat. If they have time, they drink their *invisibility potions*. Once hidden, they prepare to sneak attack opponents if necessary.

**During Combat** The thugs fight defensively, always looking for the opportunity to take cheap shots

and sneak attacks, and attempt to dash off whenever possible. Neither seems interested in aiding his partner.

**Moral** The thugs are far more interested in getting rich than dying and if cornered by a superior foe offer the coins to pay for their release.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

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

**Feats** Athletic, Dodge, Weapon Focus (mace)

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Bluff +6, Climb +11, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +7, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +7, Stealth +7, Swim +5;

**Languages** Common

**SQ** rogue talents (fast stealth), trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure light wounds (2), potion of invisibility, potion of bull's strength*; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, mwk heavy mace, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, backpack, grappling hook, 5 pitons, climber's kit, thieves' tools, 11 gp, 12 sp.

**Developments** If the PCs catch the thugs, they recover the victim's stolen purse containing a remarkable sum of nearly 200 gold coins of a foreign minting. A DC 15 Bardic Knowledge, or appropriate Knowledge skill check identifies the coin's origin as the Western Salt Isles, a grim and rocky archipelago whose people are known for bloody piracy and breaking free men into slaves.

Anyone interviewing the thugs can make opposed skill checks to attempt to force them to reveal, the man they killed worked for the Menach crime family and was attempting to launder some foreign coins for them after the sale of a slave. If pressed further, another check can get them to reveal that the Menach's goons, themselves included, have been preying on homeless and indigents and selling them to some woman in Porttown whose been paying the Menach's in foreign coin.

If the PCs kill the thugs, then they get the coins but may have a rougher time interviewing the dead victim. If the thugs escape, the PCs may attempt DC 15 Perception check to search murder scene and uncover a few of the strange coins so that they may identify them as described above. In either event, a DC 15 Knowledge (local), or Diplomacy check to gather information reveals the corpse once worked for the infamous Orim Menach. Lastly, any PC searching the corpse quickly spots his iconic tattoo which either of the previous checks will reveal that he belongs to Menach's gang of thieves, cutthroats, and smugglers.

**Ad Hoc Experience** If the PCs determine that the gold indicates slavers and infer the relationship between the gold and the Menach's, grant them XP as if they'd defeated a CR 4 encounter

## A VISIT TO THE LAMP SHOP (CR2)

The next obvious location for the heroes to investigate is Orim's lampshop. When they arrive, the shop is curiously closed. Asking around reveals it closed shortly after the sink occurred. No one seems to recall if anyone's even been about the shop. Still a little coin or a little persuasion gets locals to recall that while they have not seen Orim since the sink, his gruesome sons have been lurking about the shop, but not with great frequency. A more in depth check reveals that on occasion, people unknown go into the shop, but never come out, and thereafter strange and terrible cries usher from within.

*On the southern side of Silk Way, a block west of Market Square stands an aging two-story frame house sided in rustic graying wood shingles. Its broad porch faces the street framed neatly by wide bay windows displaying dozens of lamps fashioned in nearly every style along the Azindrean coast. Softly swining in the light breeze, a large wooded sign dangles upon creaking chains attached to the porch beam above the stairs. It sweeping cursive it reads "The Lantern and Oils Shop".*

The shop's windows are shuttered and the door bound with a great lock. Though every so often, allow the hero with the highest Perception to attempt a DC 20 check to spot the furtive creature within.

**Creatures** Inside the shop, another of the Menach brother's thugs is loading up several boxes of manacles to help transport a newly gathered collection of slaves waiting in the tunnels below. As soon as he spots intruders he slams the box shut, shoots his crossbow at the closest target and then races for the stairs leading into the tunnels below to warn the Menach Brothers. If the heroes allow him to reach the bottom of the stairs, he rings the great iron warning bell mounted to the stairwall, alerting everyone within the tunnels that intruders have arrived.

#### Thug

CR 2

XP 600

hp 27; see page 47

**Ad Hoc XP** If the heroes prevent the thug from ringing the bell and alerting his allies in the tunnels, award them XP as if they'd defeated a CR 1 encounter.

## INTO THE TUNNELS

The stairwell in the Orim's shop leads to a series of tunnels below which the master smuggler used to covertly run goods through the Great City. Though many of these tunnels collapsed as a result of the Sinking, Evars and Irre have successfully uncovered a route to Porttown through which they may export



slaves. Guara has made every effort to protect her new investments, most recently by sending one of her dearest allies to support the Menach boys, a barbed devil she calls Harrblix.

## A1. STAIRS (CR 4)

*A flight of torch lit rickety stairs spill downwards, their mix-matched treads making the descent precarious at faster speeds.*

The slipshod construction of the stairs makes them difficult to speed through and anyone attempting to move faster than base speed must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping and tumbling to the bottom. Those who fall take 2d6 nonlethal damage from the tumble. Worse, halfway down the stairs they barrel through a devilish trap.

**Trap:** Orim Menach rigged the third to last step as a trigger for a deviant trap. He and his ilk easily bypass the trap by stepping over the tread. Anyone touching the step, cracks it, causing the victim to make a DC 15 Reflex save or tumble into the chamber below. Worse, the breaking step hits a tripwire that dumps several glass jars into the stairwell, each holding a ghost scorpion.

### Scorpion Rain Trap

CR 4

**Type** mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Effect** DC 15 Reflex save or trip plus 6 ghost scorpions

### Ghost Scorpion (6)

CR 1/2

XP 200

**hp** 13; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 3

**Poison (Ex)** Sting—injury; save Fort DC 13; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1 Str damage; cure 1 save.

## A2. RECEIVING ROOM (CR 3)

Harrblix set up this room to receive newly arriving captives. He charged a low-level flunky named Harrin Fathol to guard any slaves within the room, as well as to pay for any new arrivals. Harrin expects heavily armed people to arrive in this room, so doesn't think anything of the PCs' arrival at first. As the PCs enter the room, read or paraphrase the following:

*This room appears to be carved from the underlying stone bedrock. In the middle of the room sits a large oak desk buried beneath crumpled parchment sheets, an inkwell, and a pen. A steel cage dominates the far corner. Locked within, several people dressed in threadbare rags sit in a huddled mass, as far from the door as they can possibly get. Each shows obvious signs of abuse—bruises and cuts about the face, arms and legs.*

## INVOLVING LAW ENFORCEMENT

Your players may want to take their information—and the thugs—to the Army Ward, especially if one or more PC is lawful good. That's OK; if that's the path they head down, the officer who first receives them should heap praise upon them for attempting to deal with the thugs and breaking the case wide open. She promises that the army will act swiftly to smash the smuggling ring.

And then nothing happens. The Menach Family has always been adroit at placing bribes in the right locations; that hasn't changed just because Orim has gone missing and the smuggling operation has shifted. PCs who return to the Army Ward to follow up find their original contact cold and distant. "We have a lot on our plates, what with The Sinking and all. We'll get to your petty criminals as time allows." It should be clear to the PCs that if they want anything done, they're going to have to do it themselves.

The heroes have a chance to parlay with Harrin, and even bluff the hapless sod if they so choose. The newly arrived slaves in the cages cast their eyes downward, hoping not to draw any attention. All told, four people crowd about the cage—two female humans, a male half-elf, and a female gnome. Harrin keeps the gold used to pay for slaves in a sack kept under the desk. A ledger book in the desk's drawer documents many of the slaves who have come through this room—72 people in total. Unfortunately, it doesn't detail the destination, just their arrival and departure dates.

### Harrin Fathol

CR 3

XP 800

Male human ranger 3/rogue 1

**NE** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +5; **Senses** Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex)

**hp** 38 (4 HD; 3d10+1d8+11)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** mwk scimitar +6 (1d6+4/18–20), mwk kukri +6 (1d4+2/18–20)

**Special Attacks** favored enemy (elves)+2, sneak attack +1d6

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +5, Intimidate +7, Perception +10, Sense Motive +3, Survival +6

**Languages** Common

**SQ** track +1, trapfinding +1, wild empathy +3

**Combat Gear** *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** masterwork breastplate, masterwork scimitar, masterwork kukri, iron key, 1127 gp.

The key unlocks the cage. While the caged people are grateful for their liberation, they're in no condition to travel without an escort. A DC 12 Diplomacy or Intimidate check convinces the slaves to remain in the cage while the heroes go to deal with the Menach family threat, as long as the PCs give some sort of solemn oath to release them upon their return.

**Ad-Hoc XP Adjustment:** If the PCs defeat Harrin and safely escort all of the prisoners out of captivity, award XP for this encounter as though Harrin were CR 4 rather than CR 3.

### A3. SUPPLY ROOM

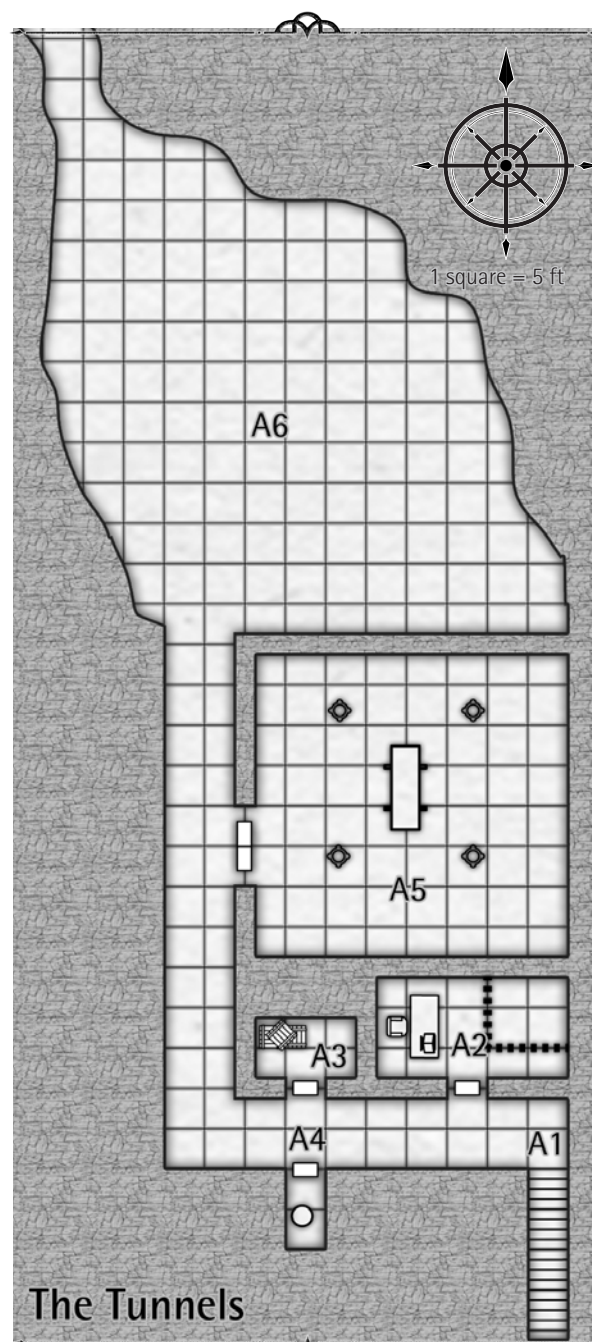
The door to this room is locked with a drop bar held in place by an iron chain with a simple lock. The broad room beyond is unlit, and only light within filters in from outside. Individuals requiring a light source need to provide. Once the heroes get a glimpse of the room read or paraphrase the following description.

*The door opens into an unlit, broad almost corridor-like chamber lined with wide shelves stacked near to the ceiling and crammed with sealed barrels and boxes. The air stinks of brine and coffee and the floor is strewn with gritty wet grounds.*

The supply room holds numerous goods of varying cost and purpose. Towards the front a number of bin hold basic food staples such as dried fruits, salted meats, and barrels of water as well as other odds and ends from about the shop. The rest of the crates hold lamp oil, wicks, lamps, lanterns, glass lenses, and similar items involved in the lamp business. Anyone prying further into the crates or the room quickly discovers a number of the crates have false bottoms, or have other items hidden behind them. They contain things like drugs, weapons, poisons, illegal liquor, foreign shipping documents with blank signatures, a hand full of signet rings, exotic pelts, and erotic art among other things.

A DC 15 Perception check to rifle through the contraband can roll on the salvage chart below.

- 10 scimitars
- A cold-iron dagger and glass box holding 3 sets of pixies wings.
- A set of masterwork thieves tools
- 1 dose of wolfsbane
- 5 fire wolf pelts (25 gp each)
- A necklace of elaborately carved ivory skull beads (50 gp)
- A box containing signet rings for each of the Great Cities noble houses worth 20 gp each
- A brass water pipe (100 gp) and 6 doses of aether.
- A bottle of elven absinthe
- 12 doses of flay leaf.
- A leather scroll case containing 6 watercolor paintings of erotic art (250 gp)
- A box holding 20 sheets of parchment printed with the official letterhead of the Trypus Acadaeme.
- A skeleton key with 3 uses.
- 3 doses of large scorpion venom.



The Tunnels



15. What appears to be a lich's phylactery framed small glass case (500 gp)
16. A shrunken head (250 gp)
17. A leather bag holding enough malyass root to make 2 dose of malyass paste.
18. A collection of 4 masterwork shuriken
19. A pile of 50 counterfeit gold-painted lead coins
20. An arrow of slaying humans

#### A4. PRIVY

The door opens to a small room the size of a closet with no windows and that smells slightly of urine.. There are two water basins within, one with clean water, one with water a slightly darker shade with rags sunk in the bottom. A half dozen more rags hang on wooden pegs over the barrels. In the corner is a small ceramic chamber pot.

**Treasure:** The chamber pot is actually an aristocrat's pot (see Appendix).

#### A5. SORTING AND DISTRIBUTION (CR 6)

The door opens into a large square chamber. Light spills from torches held in sconces around its perimeter, as well as from a few lanterns set throughout the room. The room is dry but the air is moist. An aged, splintery-looking workbench sits in the middle of the room, with several implements likely used for torture laid upon it. Two pairs of manacles hang from the east wall, both empty. Blood stains the floor below the manacles.

The Menachs use this large room to sort their new "merchandise" and prepare it for travel. While a large section of their previous smuggling tunnels collapsed during the Sinking, much of it is still passable—and, importantly, it still leads to a cove north of the Dock Ward. Slaves are brought here from the front room, where the Menach brothers inspect—and often abuse—the chattel before sending them further down the tunnels, where their diabolic companion arranges for their transport.

**Creatures:** Currently both Evars and Irre occupy this room. Since neither brother expects company at this time, thus if the PCs fail to take the precaution of attempting to enter silently, allow the Menachs to attempt an opposed Perception check to hear PCs coming. If successful, they attempt to hide, set and ambush, and prepare for combat.

##### Evars

CR 3

XP 800

Male half-orc fighter 4

NE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

**Init** -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, Perception +4

##### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+5 armor, -1 Dex)

**hp** 46 (4d10+20)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +0, **Will** +3 (+1 vs. fear)

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, orc ferocity

##### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *greatsword* +8 (2d6+6/19–20)

##### Tactics

**Before Combat** If Evars heard the warning bell and has time to prepare, he consumes his *potion of haste*.

**During Combat** Evars fights in a wild frenzy, his blades slashing and spittle flying. He works to position himself to grant his brother the opportunity to flank opponents.

**Moral** Evars fights to the death. If his brother drops in combat, he ferociously attacks the character that caused the death, even if doing so requires drawing an attack of opportunity from movement.

##### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 8, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Cleave, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*greatsword*), Weapon Specialization (*greatsword*)

**Skills** Bluff +3, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +4; Racial Modifiers +2 Intimidate

**Languages** Common, orc

**SQ** armor training 1, orc blood

**Combat Gear** *potion of haste*; **Other Gear** scale mail, +1 *greatsword*

##### Irre

CR 3

XP 800

Male half-orc rogue 4

NE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

##### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +4 Dex)

**hp** 35 (4d8+12)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, orc ferocity, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

##### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk short sword +2 (1d6–1/19–20 plus poison), mwk short sword +2 (1d6–1/19–20 plus poison)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6

##### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If Irre heard the warning bell and has time to prepare, he quaffs his *potion of cat's grace*.

**During Combat** Irre attempts to distract and incite opponents in order to provide his brother the opportunity to flank his enemies. As soon as Irre gains the opportunity to strike at a flat-footed opponent, he targets them with sneak attacks.

**Moral** Irre fights to the death. If his brother drops in combat, he ferociously attacks the character that caused the death, even if doing so requires drawing an attack of opportunity from movement.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (short sword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Intimidate

**Languages** Common, Orc

**SQ** orc blood, trapfinding +2, weapon familiarity

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of cat's grace*; **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, mwk short sword, mwk short sword.

## A6. DEVIL'S DEN (CR 6)

The passages leads to a dark gaping cave entrance. Approaching the mouth, the sounds of a nearby underground stream's lapping waters can be heard somewhere in the distance.

Anyone attempting to listen to the river that succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check also denotes a low and desolate moaning sound from within.

### ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

There's several ways to adjust the adventure up or down, as needed, to accommodate larger or smaller parties, or parties with an average level high or lower than 4th.

**Increasing the Challenge:** To increase the challenge, add a second guard to area A2, using the stats for the thug in the introductory encounter. Add a pair of imps to area A5 and four lemures to area A6. Alternately for area A6, you can opt to either increase Harrblix's Hit Dice or apply the Advanced Template.

**Decreasing the Challenge:** To decrease the challenge, alter the trap in area A1 to use acid arrow in place of the electricity arc. Reduce Harrin's levels by a number corresponding to your party. Either reduce the levels of Evars and Irre, or simply remove one of the brothers from the encounter. Finally, remove one or both imps from the encounter with Harrblix.

In either case, remember to adjust treasure commensurate with the changes to the adventure.

*Spatters of blood droplets decorate the darkening walls of this great limestone cave. Running along all the cave walls, great iron spikes have been driven into the bedrock. From these hang thick manacles forged from black iron, one double manacle for the wrists and a larger one for the neck.*

*At least a half-dozen of the manacles hold prisoners; a softly moaning troop of gaunt and hollow-eyed Azindraleans who hang, barely conscious and dangerously close to death.*

**Creatures:** Guara's soulless pawn Harrblix uses this room as his den. Equal parts cunning and ruthless, the bearded devil gleefully sacrifices his imp minions if doing so ensures his continued safety. Harrblix keeps the room dark, as everybody who needs to be here can see just fine in total darkness. The lapping sound comes from a second tunnel on the far wall that meanders off towards the cove.

#### Harrblix

CR 5

**hp** 57; bearded devil (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*).

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Harrblix prefers to fight with his glaive rather than his claws, keeping foes at reach. After he makes a full attack with his weapon, he take a 5-foot step directly backwards, making it so his foes need to move 10 feet to reach him—and provoke an attack of opportunity in doing so. When he reaches half his hit points, he makes use of his summon spell-like ability to call forth six lemures, hoping the creatures will occupy his foes enough to allow him to make a few attacks unhindered.

**Moral** If Harrblix drops to less than one-quarter his full hit points, he teleports away, opting to live and fight another day. His destination is the hidden cove where he holds slaves to prior to sale. From there, he musters his remaining minions and begins to plot revenge against the PCs.

#### Imps (2)

CR 2

**hp** 16 each (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*).

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** the imps alternate attacks, using their invisibility spell-like ability, focusing attacks on lightly-armored foes. One of the imps uses its suggestion ability on a character wielding a ranged weapon, suggesting the character should intentionally break her own weapon. If none of the PCs uses a ranged weapon, the imp instead targets its spell-like ability at a melee fighter, suggesting the target throw her weapon down the hall.

**Moral** so long as their master is present, the imps fight to the death, though should their master vanish, the flee, if dropped below 3 hp or within 1d4 rounds.



**Developments:** Once Harrblix is killed or driven off, the PCs may rescue the slave. There are six commoners in all, allow of whom are native Azidraleans left homeless and destitute by the sink, and who were devilishly set upon by the Menach brothers while they slept in the streets. While grateful for their freedom, they have little with which to repay the characters for their efforts. Still, they readily offer to provide testimony of the Menach brothers' deviant operations.

**Treasure:** Harrblix keeps his possessions stashed in a corner of the room, inside a small sack. His hoard consists of 512 gp, 338 sp, 10 pieces of obsidian (10 gp each), a red garnet (100 gp), a copper bracelet inlaid with 8 tiny freshwater pearls (50 gp), and an arcane *scroll of alarm*, *grease*, and *hold portal*.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If Harrblix escapes, he immediately begins plotting revenge against the PCs. He takes his time, putting in the effort to research the group. At any time in the future the bearded devil could reappear to harry the PCs.

Assuming the PCs prevail and bring an end to the Menach brothers' operations, the Trade Ward is a bit safer for those displaced by the Sinking. The kidnappings end—at least, those brought about by the Menachs and their minions. If the PCs recovered the ledger in area A2, the watch is thankful for the information about the missing persons documented within. Unfortunately, the ledger only documents inbound chattel, not the final destination.

If either Menach brother survives, he hunts the PCs—from jail, if necessary. The Menach family

has plenty of contacts as a result of their life as smugglers, and either brother is capable of calling in favors with hunters and assassins capable of pursuing the heroes.

If both Menach brothers perished, a void in the city's underground economy opens briefly. Various groups, such as the Blood Fang Mercenaries or the Crimson Medusa, vie to take over the lucrative smuggling operation run for so long by the Menach family. Such a battle, between any number of gangs, could quickly become bloody—not just for gang members but also for everyday citizens caught in the crossfire.

Regardless of any outcome, for the time being Orim Menach remains missing (and presumed dead).

## APPENDIX

### NEW WONDROUS ITEM

#### Aristocrat's Pot

**Aura** faint universal; **CL** 1st

**Slot** —; **Price** 750 gp; **Weight** 1 lb

#### DESCRIPTION

This finely crafted ceramic chamber pot is a favored item of the aristocracy of Azindralea. Up to three times per day, when a command word is spoken, the aristocrat's pot cleans itself, completely eliminating any soil, fecal matter, and other biotic materials contained within.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, prestidigitation; **Cost** 375 gp.





# ASCENSION OF THE PROPHET

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In the wake of the catastrophic sinking, seers and prophets have swarmed the city's streets like eager autumn moths crowd a flickering candle. Standing out among the wild-eyed doomsayers walks Lazarus. Different from the others, he claims to have entered the Sinkhole and returned from the experience altered. Now someone wants to kill Lazarus. The mysterious prophet's right arm, a man called "The Mouth", desperately needs adventurers to perform a dangerous mission. Should the mission fail, it might well cost the newly risen prophet his life.

This adventure is part of Great City: The Sinking. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It is designed using the Pathfinder RPG System for 2nd level Player Characters.

## INTRODUCTION

Much has changed in the Great City since what is now known as "The Day of The Sinking". For the first time in centuries, the Blood Triperium is no more the focus of the citizens' attention and lines of tension between native Azindrealeans and their Kortezean immigrants have eased to address common needs. Still, while the concerns of the common folk lie upon the recovering from the disaster, others desire to exploit the event. In response to the Sinking and subsequent strange events occurring in its wake, there have arisen numerous seers and prophets. These individuals wander the streets spouting portents and prophecy, and inciting the fear and superstition of the citizens. Yet among these charlatans stands one among the seers whose tale sets him apart from the others.

On the day of the sinking, Lazarus was swallowed by the hole. Days later and against all odds, he returned- not as the same man, but somehow changed. Lazarus claims to have seen "beyond" and that the secrets lying deep beneath the sinkhole shall shatter reality of the Great City. Some claim Lazarus now possesses supernatural powers. Tales now spread that he walks upon the air above the sinkhole and that he healed a child of a terminal illness with a simple gaze.

Lazarus soon became object of curiosity, gained followers, and eventually a cult blossomed. One of the most adamant disciples and founding cultist, a man known only as "The Mouth of Lazarus", became the prophet's spokesman. The Mouth has commissioned the construction of a church in his prophet's honor that rests on the very edge of the sinkhole. Though its construction is incomplete, The Mouth has announced that tonight, for the first time, Lazarus will speak to the faithful.

## THE PLOT

The Mouth is an avaricious man of few morals, who's sole desire is power. Posing as Lazarus' first disciple, he secretly plots to murder the prophet, transforming him into a martyr. As the prophet's first disciple, the Mouth would carry on his teachings after his death and so become the "Word of Lazarus", a position he believes will bring him significant wealth, prominence, and power.

The Mouth's murderous plot requires a scapegoat, a role perfectly suited for a band of adventurous PCs. To accomplish his plan, The Mouth sends the PCs after an imaginary assassin to steal his famed crossbow to prevent him from shooting Lazarus during his speech to the faithful. Lazarus is set to make his speech later in the day, on the grounds of a new, partially-constructed church raised in his name. When the PCs return to the church to deliver the weapon, The Mouth intends to slay Lazarus using sleight of hand and an urbanist dart launcher (see *The Great City Player's Guide*, page 34) that fires the same unique darts that the crossbow shoots. This act places PCs at the crime-scene, in possession of the apparent murder weapon.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

While in the Trades' Ward, a man calling himself "the Mouth of Lazarus" approaches the PCs. This encounter may happen in any tavern, near Lazarus's partially constructed church, or anywhere around the edge of the sinkhole. To begin, read or paraphrase the following:

*A fat man sporting a small beard and richly-dressed in some sort of clerical robes stares at you with gleaming eyes.*

*"Holy Beyond! You! You are those of my dream! Come here please, lend your hand to the Church of Lazarus!"*

*Excitedly, he continues, "I am the Mouth of Lazarus, our prophet's first disciple. Please, come inside and speak with me, for the streets are not a safe place to talk."*

At this point, the Mouth invites the PCs into the newly finished lobby of the partially constructed church of Lazarus. If the players seem reluctant, he pleads further, "See, I have powers, less than Lazarus of course, but I saw the Beyond! I was in the Sinkhole in my dreams, and I saw you saving the Church, you MUST help us! At least come inside and listen to my offer. I have gold." The Mouth punctuates his final sentence by jangling a fat, leather coin-purse.

Once inside, he tells the PCs that the church is in dire need of help as a rival cult has hired an assassin to kill their prophet Lazarus.

If the PCs show reluctance to help, The Mouth offers them 500gp for their aid, with half the sum paid upfront. If the PCs accept, he continues.

*"A trustworthy source has informed me that a rival cult has hired an assassin called Deathbolt to kill Lazarus. I've been told he plans to strike this evening, during a Lazarus' speech to the faithful. I have located the assassin's hideout but, see, I'm not a man of action. I need someone to take care of him. We are not killers and do not believe in repaying violence with violence. I only ask that you break into Deathbolt's hideout and steal his infamous crossbow. The crossbow is his signature weapon, he'll never kill without it. Maybe then, the word of our prophet may reach even his hardened heart, for we believe all men can be saved. I have spoken with Judge Winch, and given time he will ensure the rival cult will be brought to justice, but the assassin must be stopped before the speech. Still, Judge Winch plans to attend tonight's speech, ready to intervene if necessary.*

*Go now, do the job, and return to me at the speech tonight, an hour past dusk."*

The Mouth passes to the PCs the address of the assassin's hideout, an abandoned building in Cutthroat's Alley, in the Dock Ward. At this point, the PCs may want to gather information concerning the Mouth, Lazarus, the rival cult, or Deathbolt. Allow them to perform any of the following checks, but warn that the speech will start in less than three hours.

### INTERACTING WITH LAZARUS

If the PCs insist, the Mouth can arrange a meeting with Lazarus. He leads PCs to a small, one-roomed shack. Within, Lazarus sits upon a carpet in the middle of the empty floor, legs crossed and eyes shut. When the PCs enter he, without opening the eyes, asks to the Mouth to leave. Then Lazarus turns to the PCs opening his gleaming clear eyes.

Lazarus speaks cryptically, always answering the PCs' questions with other questions. Feel free to roleplay Lazarus as you wish. You can portray him as a true prophet or simply a smart man knowing how to manipulate the crowd. However, the PCs should feel that something strange happened in the Sinkhole with Lazarus, even if they never learn precisely what.

**Deathbolt (Diplomacy DC special):** The PCs need to be streetwise to perform this check. If the PCs have no ties to the city's criminal community, inform them the check has a significant penalty. Regardless of the roll, the PCs are unable to glean any information about the assassin. Nobody knows Deathbolt because he doesn't exist.

**Lazarus (Diplomacy DC 15):** Lazarus is widely known in the city and most of the people believe he's a true prophet. Many have witnessed his powers, even if the tales differ from person to person. If the PCs wish to speak with Lazarus, refer to the "Interacting with Lazarus" sidebar.

**Rival Cults: (Knowledge, Religion DC 25):** Searching for enemy cults proves to be a waste of time. Too many cults have feel threatened by Lazarus as many have abandoned their former practices to join Lazarus who has been attracting disciples quickly and steadily.

## DEATHBOLT'S HIDEOUT (CR 3)

The hideout is a stage, set by the Mouth himself. Disguising himself as a famed assassin named Deathbolt, the Mouth hired a band of low-level thugs to maintain surveillance over the abandoned building in Cutthroat Alley. The Mouth hired the thugs to make the scene seem more realistic and still any suspicions that that the event might be staged.

**Creatures:** Three thugs keep watch over the hideout. They hide in the shadows nearby and target anyone trying to open the door.

### THUGS (3)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Male human rogue 1

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +7

### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 9 (1d8+1)

Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +2 (1d6+2/19–20)

Ranged mwk dart +4 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** The thugs keep a sharp watch on the alley. Allow them to make Perception checks to spot the PCs' arrival. They shadows to their advantage, staying hidden for as long as possible in order to gain surprise.

**During Combat:** The thugs prefer using sneak attacks



or attacking from a distance using their darts.

**Morale:** The thugs aren't devoted to the Mouth and have little interest in dying over a few gold pieces. They flee if dropped below 5 hp or if they witness a powerful display of magic (a *magic missile* suffices).

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Alertness, Dodge

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Appraise +4, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +7, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

**Languages** Common

**SQ** trapfinding +1

**Gear** leather armor, short sword, mwk dart, 70 gp.

#### MAKROS

CR 1

**XP** 400

Male human rogue 1/warrior 2

**NE** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 Dodge, +1 shield)

**hp** 15 (3 HD; 1d8+2d10+)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk longsword +6 (1d8+2/19–20)

**Ranged** shortbow +5 (1d6/3)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** Makros hides in the shadows with his bow drawn, watching the door.

**During Combat:** Makros shoots anyone attempting to break into the building, if he can keep his distance and attack with his bow he does so, otherwise he draws his sword and pursues anyone entering the building.

**Morale:** Makros flees if dropped below 8 hp or if his thugs die or desert him.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Alertness, Dodge, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Appraise +5, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +7, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +8

**Languages** Common

**SQ** trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other**

**Gear** masterwork studded leather, masterwork

light wooden shield, masterwork longsword, shortbow, with 20 arrows, 677 gp.

After the fight the PCs are free to investigate the hideout. If they manage to catch a thug alive, they can attempt to obtain information however, their boss Makros is the only one to have seen or spoken with Deathbolt (or rather the Mouth in his Deathbolt disguise). PCs can gain the information through opposed Intimidation checks or by bribery.

Attempting to bribe a thug requires an opposed Diplomacy check along with a minimum of 5 gp bribe. Grant PCs a +1 circumstance bonus for each additional 5 gp offered. Attempting to bribe Makros requires a minimum of 10 gp. If the Diplomacy check fails, the thug refuses the bribe. PCs can only make further attempts by increasing their bribe offers.

#### Thug

*Who hired you?* "Makros hired me. He frequently uses me for these sort of jobs."

*Who hired Makros:* "I didn't see the guy who hired Makros, but Makros spends most of his time at Shy Mermaid tavern. That's probably where whoever hired him, found him."

*What do you know about Deathbolt:* "I ain't heard of no one named Deathbolt."

#### Makros

*Who hired you?* "Some guy calling himself Deathbolt. He claimed he was a renowned assassin, though I ain't never heard of him. I doubt he was an assassin though...he looked a little portly for that sort of work. I didn't really care who he was though, he made me a damn good offer for easy work."

*What does Deathbolt look like?* "Like I said, he was kind of fat, but his cloak had a pretty deep cowl on it, so I never got a good look at his face."

*How did you meet Deathbolt or Why did Deathbolt hire you?* "I met him last night at the Shy Mermaid Tavern. One of the whores introduced us, but it was the first time I ever saw him there."

**Special:** If the PCs kill Makros, a quick search of his corpse locates a small piece of paper scribbled with the phrase: "Shy Mermaid Inn, dusk, Deathbolt".

Once PCs defeat the thugs, they can attempt to enter the hideout. The door to the hideout is locked.

**Stout Wooden Door:** hardness 5; hp 15 (Break DC 15, Disable Device DC 12).

Read or paraphrase the following description when PCs enter:

*The hideout consists of a single room with a barred*

window. A sleeping pallet rests in one corner along with a worn pillow. In the middle of the room stands a table and single chair, set with empty platters, a mug, and a bottle of ruby red wine. Beneath the window lies an old, battered trunk.

PCs inspecting the platters or the sleeping pallet can attempt a DC 12 Perception check to determine that none of the items have been used recently and their placement seems staged.

The trunk is unlocked and appears to hold nothing but some old clothes and a rusty dagger. PCs searching the trunk can attempt a DC 15 Perception check to locate a false sliding bottom. The slide mechanism is locked (harness 5, hp 5 - Break DC 12, Disable Device DC 18). Secreted within the compartment rests a masterwork light crossbow on a bed of red velvet. The superbly crafted weapon is made of darkwood with golden decors and polished steel frame. If the PCs closely examine the crossbow they note the weapon is a custom design unable to fire standard crossbow bolts, though strangely there are no bolts within the case.

A DC 15 Craft (weaponsmith) check further reveals that the weapon was newly constructed and has fired only two or three times. A DC 12 Appraise check determines the weapon's value at approximately 400 gp.

**Developments:** Depending on how much time PCs have before the speech, they could undertake some further investigation, especially if they have any suspicions about the Mouth's story of the would-be assassin or his signature weapon.

Working off clues, the two most logical choices for investigation are the Shy Mermaid Tavern and the Weaponsmith Shop (both discussed below). If they do not harbor any suspicions and want to return the crossbow to The Mouth, then jump to The Speech.

**Ad Hoc Experience:** Award PCs who successfully interrogate the thugs 200 xp. Award PCs who successfully inspect the crossbow 200 xp.

## THE SHY MERMAID TAVERN

If the PCs spoke with Makros and his thugs, or have retrieved his note, they have a location, the Shy Mermaid Tavern, and maybe a quite generic description of Deathbolt. The tavern, located in Dock Ward (location 10, Dock Ward on the Great City map), is a whorehouse run by Gervaise Falsely. For more information about the tavern see *The Great City Campaign Setting* page 50.

The Shy Mermaid Tavern is a dangerous place. PCs should take care to avoid provoking conflicts

with the thieves and pirate scum that frequent the establishment. In the event an altercation arises, use the stats for the Mouth's Men (see page 60). As soon as a fight breaks out, Gervaise summons the watch. They arrive 1d6+4 minutes later. After breaking up the fight, they detain all patrons (including the PCs) for questioning. This process takes about a half hour.

If the PCs use caution, they can approach Gervaise and give her the description of Deathbolt. Gervaise refuses to speak with anyone unless they pay her at least 10 gp upfront (she is after all, a whore). About the best information she can provide is that she saw a man corresponding to their description talking with Makros (one of the Mermaid's habitual patrons) last night. She cannot describe the man since he was hooded, but she says the man spent some time in the tavern, before meeting with Makros. A DC 14 Sense Motive can infer she meant he was entertained by one of the prostitutes. If PCs request to speak with the woman, Gervaise summons her.

Moments later, the madame introduces a busty Azindralean woman to the PCs as **Ambrosia Lotus** (female human commoner, Diplomacy +3, Perception +5, Sense Motive +1). She has worked out of the Mermaid for several years, so she knows all the regulars. Ambrosia claims she had never seen the fat man before the previous night, though could easily identify him by sight. She provides the PCs with a basic description, however it's still not specific enough to positively identify the man as The Mouth (after all, there are hundreds of fat, bearded men in the Great City). If the PCs suspect that the Mouth is somehow orchestrating events, they confirm their suspicions by bringing the woman to the speech and getting her to look at the Mouth. Still, Ambrosia needs Gervaise's permission to leave the tavern, as well as 50 gp, up front, for the first two hours.

**Ad Hoc Experience:** If PCs successfully get Ambrosia to accompany them to the speech as a witness, award them 200 xp.

## THE WEAPONSMITH SHOP (CR2)

If at least one of the PCs has lived in the Great City for any length of time, they know the Weaponsmith Shop in the Castle Ward is the only place where the crossbow could have been built. The shop is run by Langos Marwuckle and Sons (see *The Great City Campaign Setting* page 37). Similarly, a DC 10 Diplomacy check made to gather information yields the same results.

Arriving at the Weaponsmith Shop they are welcomed by Langos's eldest son, Barnus Marwuckle. If questioned about the crossbow he remembers it perfectly, since it was one of the few ranged weapons they produced in the last months.



Though their shop mainly produces blades and axes, the individual who commissioned the bow paid for it, handsomely. He remembers that the customer also brought his own bolts and requested the crossbow be made to fire only these kind of bolts.

If asked about the man who bought the weapon, Barnus politely explains that their shop does not provide information about customers, since, among them, there are high-ranking persons who want to remain anonymous. He flat out refuses to provide any client information unless ordered to do so by a city judge. Barnus cannot be bribed and, if threatened, he summons three smiths working at the forge behind the shop to his defense. Still, showing Marwuckle the weapon aids the PCs in later events, should Judge Winch summon the smith to provide testimony.

### SMITH (3)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Male expert 2

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Perception +0

### DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor)

hp 19 (2d8+7)

Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee hammer +3 (1d3+2/3)

### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD 13

Feats Skill Focus Craft (weaponsmithing), Toughness

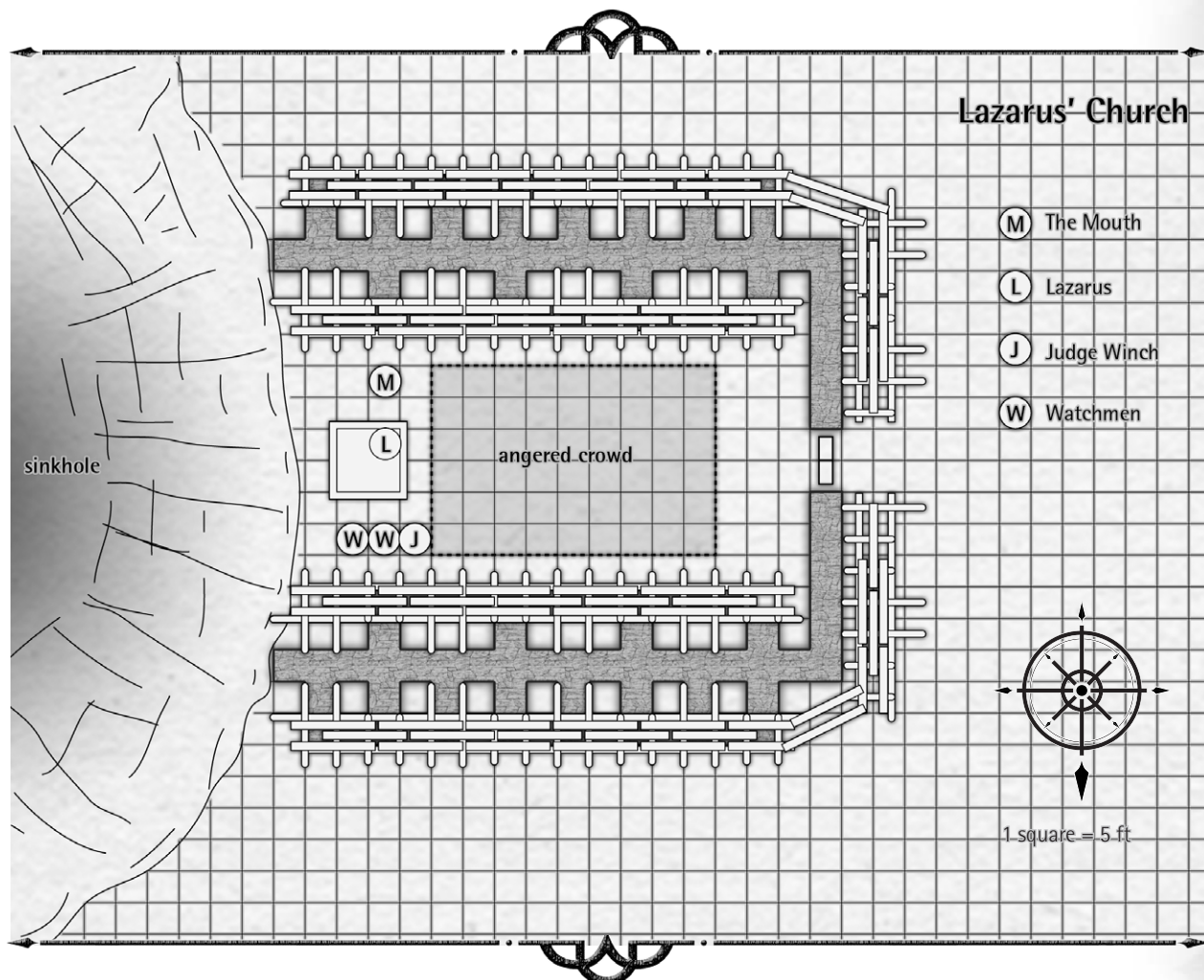
Skills Appraise +4, Craft (weaponsmithing) +7, Craft (armorsmith) +4, Craft (blacksmith) +4, Craft (bowyer) +2, Craft (locksmith) +1

Languages Common

Gear masterwork leather armor, hammer, 225 gp.

**Developments:** The act of engaging the smiths, convinces Barnus that the PCs are wrongdoers and he quickly calls the watch. Being inside the Castle, guards arrive in 1d6 rounds. Guards hold the PCs for about an hour of questioning before releasing the PCs with a 25 gp fine and warning. Assuming the PCs do not further provoke the watch and don't get themselves arrested, they have barely enough time to return to the church to witness Lazarus's speech.

**Ad Hoc Experience:** If PCs seek out Marwuckle and show him the crossbow, award them 200 xp.



## THE SPEECH (CR VARIES)

Once the PCs recover the crossbow and wrap up their investigations (if any), they should return to the site of the half-constructed church to meet with the Mouth, witness Lazarus's speech, and assure any assassination attempts fail. Lazarus holds the in the main room of the half-constructed church.

### BEFORE ENTERING THE CHURCH

Exceptionally suspicious PCs may attempt to use stealth or disguise themselves as disciples to covertly enter the half constructed church without first contacting the Mouth. In this case, allow the Mouth an opposed Perception check to spot them as he carefully screens the crowd. The GM should consider the modifiers for Disguise and Perception as stated in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

If the Mouth fails to detect the PCs (or if they do not enter at all), he executes his plot to kill Lazarus as described below. When questioned by Judge Winch, he blames the homicide on the PCs, claiming to have seen one of them wielding the crossbow just after the fatal shot- before they disappeared into the crowd. If at this point, the PCs flee, the adventure concludes with the PCs hunted by the city watch, wanted for murder. However, this option isn't detailed in this adventure, leaving it up to the GM to determine the outcome of such events.

Unless interrupted, Lazarus speaks for about one hour. Assuming the PCs perform at least one of the two investigations, they arrive with the speech already in progress. Scores of people cram the church to listen to the prophet's words. Judge Winch stands among the faithful, accompanied by two men of the city watch.

When the PCs enter, the Mouth stands to the left of Lazarus, watching him as he leans over the dais. With his back to the Sinkhole (to the right side of the entering PCs) The Mouth lifts his arms to the sky as if worshipping. On his left arm, carefully concealed beneath the folds of his robe, he keeps the dart launcher loosely aimed at Lazarus.

Yet all the while, The Mouth studies the crowd for the PCs. As soon as he spots them, he shoots Lazarus with a poisoned bolt, killing him on the spot. Then, before the prophet's body even hits the floor, the Mouth shouts: "Murderers!" and points an accusing finger upon the PCs.

Allow the PCs a full round to react before the angry and vengeful crowd descends upon them, their prophet's slayers. Meanwhile, the Mouth instructs his men to block the door from the outside to prevent the PCs from escaping.

## MOUTH'S MAN (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Male human warrior 2

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +2

### DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 20 (2d10+5)

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4+2/19-20)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d4+2/19-20)

### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 15

Feats Alertness, Toughness

Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +4, Perception +2, Ride +5, Sense Motive +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; Other Gear leather armor, mwk dagger, dagger (2), 24 gp.

The crowd gathers in between the PCs, the Mouth, and Judge Winch, making movement extremely difficult (see the map for the starting positions of these men).

Judge Winch and his two watchmen stand beside

## RUNNING THE ANGERED CROWD

Despite their numbers, only those crowd members surrounding the PCs can make attacks, however the crowd itself prevents the PCs from moving through the area and making an exit. PCs can attack the crowd, however, despite their poor behavior, city authorities frown upon the injuring (or worse, killing) of its citizens. Winch and his men attempt to arrest any PC responding to the crowd with violence, and if caught and prosecuted, such individuals will need to defend their actions in court to avoid a formal sentence.

Alternately, PCs can attempt to calm the crowd with opposed Diplomacy checks. These can be determined en mass, with a single check. The angered crowd begins with an attitude of *hostile*. Each round the PCs succeed in changing the mob's attitude, reduce the number of attacks by 1d4. If the PCs can change their attitude to neutral, they cease their attacks allowing Judge Winch to perform his investigation.



the dais. From this location, it takes 4 rounds for them to reach the PCs, as they struggle to settle the riotous crowd. Erstwhile, the PCs must defend themselves (and Ambrosia, if present) from the violent mob, the Mouth, and his automaton.

#### ANGERED CROWD MEMBER (30) CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Male/female human commoner 1

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +7

##### DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 9 (1d6++3)

Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +1

##### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +0 (1d3)

##### TACTICS

**During Combat:** Seeking to avenge their fallen prophet, the enraged crowd members rush to attack the PCs.

**Morale:** Dealing lethal damage to a commoner immediately causes the individual to break from the mob and flee. Alternately, successful use Diplomacy can calm the mob as described in the *Running the Angered Crowd* side bar.

##### STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 9

Base Atk +0; CMB +0; CMD 11

Feats Alertness, Toughness

Skills Climb +4, Diplomacy +0, Handle Animal +3, Perception +7, Profession (any) +5, Sense Motive +1

Languages Common

**Ad Hoc Experience:** award PCs who successfully calm the mob 400 xp.

**Creatures** The Mouth tries to keep some distance between himself, the mob and the PCs. If he spots Ambrosia Lotus in their company, he infers the PCs have brought her as a witness, and at first opportunity attempts to kill her by shooting a second poisoned bolt. Reloading the dart launcher takes him a full round, since he has to extract the dart from a hidden pocket in his boots. Once loaded, he steps on the raised dais in order to get a clear shot. The soft cover of the crowd provides Ambrosia with +4 AC bonus.

If one or more of the PCs shields Ambrosia with his own body, the bonus doubles (+8 AC bonus).

Immediately after firing, the Mouth sends Nail, his automaton, to kill Ambrosia. Nail scuttles between the legs of the crowd, ignoring the human wall and reaching the prostitute in one round. Then it bites

her, letting its alchemical saliva to finish her off.

Ambrosia is non-combative and possesses the following defensive statistics:

#### AMBROSIA LOTUS CR—

Female human commoner 1

hp 6

##### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 cover, +1 Dex)

Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0

#### THE MOUTH OF LAZARUS CR 4

XP 1,200

Male human urbanist 5

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Senses Perception +9

##### DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 25 (5d8+5)

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4

##### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk dart launcher +8 (1d4–1) plus poison

**Special Attacks** poison (The Mouth coats his darts with a custom-made alchemical poison; see below); urban expert (+2 circumstance to attacks with dart launcher; already figured in stats)

##### STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 17

Base Atk +3; CMB +2; CMD 14

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (dart)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +11, Craft (alchemy) +12\*, Craft (mechanical devices) +12\*, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Use Magic Device +11

(\*) +2 master tinkerer (class ability)

Languages Common

**SQ** alchemical spell replacement\*\*, construct automaton, master tinkerer, minor trinket\*\*, urban energy (5 units, coal or liquid)\*\*\*

(\*\*) used in crafting; not necessary for this adventure

(\*\*\*) used to power the automaton

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, 4 doses of alchemical poison; **Other Gear** masterwork leather armor, mwk dagger, mwk dart launcher, with 5 bolts, *bracers of armor* +1, 288 gp.

#### Urbanist's Farewell

Type poison, injury; Save Fortitude DC 20

**Onset** —; **Frequency** 1/rd for 6 rds  
**Initial Effect** death; **Secondary Effect** 2 Con damage;  
**Cure** 2 consecutive saves.

**Nail (The Mouth's Automaton)**

**CR** —

**N** Tiny construct

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;  
 Perception +2

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge)

**hp** 12 (1 HD)

**Immune** construct immunities

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft. (average)

**Melee** bite +4 (1d3–4)

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

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +1 **CMD** -2

**Special Attacks** alchemical saliva

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 3, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 5, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 4

**Feats** Dodge, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +10

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Alchemical Saliva (Ex):** An automaton's construction includes building the equivalent of salivary glands, which are filled with alchemist fire. Three times per day, the automaton can deliver a dose of

alchemist fire to a target when it successfully delivers a bite attack dealing an additional 1d6 points of fire damage. If the guardian makes use of this ability, its master must refill the gland in order to replenish any used alchemist fire.

Judge Winch heads for the PCs, as soon as he reaches them, he attempts to use Intimidation to calm the riot. As the Judge is well known and respected, grant him +10 circumstance bonus to quell the mob. If the PCs cease fighting, the two watchmen move to disarm them and attempt to collect all their weapons. If the PCs refuse surrender and opt to fight, they face both the watchmen along with the Mouth's men, who open the doors and join the fray to help the justice.

**Watchmen (2)**

**CR** 1

**XP** 400 each

Male human fighter 2

**N** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +5; **Senses** Perception +1

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

**hp** 24 (2d10+9)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1 (+1 vs. fear)

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft.





**Melee** mwk heavy mace +7 (1d8+3)

**Ranged** shortbow +3 (1d6/3)

#### TACTICS

**Morale:** As soon as the Mouth suspects that Judge Winch stands to incriminate him, he attempts to flee.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Toughness, Weapon Focus (heavy mace)

**Skills** Climb +2, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +2

**Languages** Common

**Gear** chainmail, masterwork heavy steel shield, mwk heavy mace, shortbow, with 20 arrows, 118 gp.

Once everything settles down, Judge Winch assumes the control. Placing the church on lockdown, he attempts to run an impromptu investigation to determine who killed Lazarus.

The results of the investigation strongly depend on the PCs prior actions. Determine the outcome of the module using the following guidelines.

If the PCs failed to conduct any investigations (or if their witness Ambrosia is killed) and they possess the crossbow, Winch automatically assumes their guilt. He immediately takes them into custody to stand trial for murder. Only if they spoke with Barnus Marwuckle do the PCs have any hope. In concluding his investigations, Judge Winch interrogates Barnus and in doing so, discovers that The Mouth is actually behind the assassination. Unfortunately, the Mouth catches wind that the PCs spoke with Barnus and flees town before he can be apprehended. At the GM's discretion, he may return at a later time to extract his revenge.

Conversely, PCs performing some or all of the investigations increase their potential for a more favorable outcome. Instead of arresting the PCs, Judge Winch instead detains them for questioning, allowing the PCs to explain the situation. The Judge listens attentively and giving them the potential to plead their innocence by convincing him of the Mouth's guilt with a DC 20 Diplomacy check. A list of modifiers is provided below.

#### Modifiers based on the PCs' previous actions

- The PCs aren't in possession of the murder weapon: +4
- Ambrosia accompanies them as a witness and gives Winch her testimony: +4
- The PCs a chance to speak with Barnus: +2
- PCs are in possession of the murder weapon during the speech: — 6
- PCs recover parts of the automaton and present

## SCALING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure is intended for a group of 2nd level PCs. Although it features an investigative style of play, action can erupt at every point of the adventure. To scale the adventure up or down by one level, simply increase or decrease the number of thugs from Deathbolt Hideout encounter, the number smiths in the Weaponsmith Shop encounter. In the Speech section, you can increase the number of the Mouth's men and Judge Winch's guard. To scale down the encounter, remove the Mouth's automaton and remove a 1 level of urbanist (or to a quick scale give him one negative level)

them as evidence: +4

- PCs recover the dart launcher and present it as evidence: +6

#### Diplomacy Check Results

**DC 18:** There isn't quite enough evidence to incriminate The Mouth and sensing trouble, he manages to hide his dart launcher just before Judge Winch takes him into custody for further questioning. He is detained for the remainder of the investigation. If PCs work to supply further evidence, the Judge eventually convicts him, otherwise, he is released a few days later and begins plotting his revenge against the PCs.

**DC 20:** The presented evidence and testimony prompts Winch to search The Mouth. Upon discovering the dart launcher and the remaining (if any) poisoned darts, he immediately places the Mouth and his accomplices under arrest.

## AFTERMATH

As the PCs leave the church one of them is struck with a strange need to glance back at the Sinkhole. When they do, they experience a strange vision. The GM can select the most appropriate PC or determine one at random. Describe the vision as follows:

*As you are leaving, a strange urge fills you with the desire to take a final glance at the Sinkhole. It wells within you almost like a voice or a suggestion. Turning to look you see a pale and shimmering form hovering above the center of the immense, gaping maw of the Sinkhole. It is Lazarus; staring at you with gleaming clear eyes. As quick as it comes, the vision disappears, leaving you with a sense of hollow.*





# TATTERDEMATION

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This adventure is part of Great City: The Sinking. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It is designed using the Pathfinder RPG System for 4th level Player Characters

## INTRODUCTION

Since the event known as The Sinking, a general uneasiness descended upon the Great City, but that's no reason not to party! For nearly a decade Lady Hasserbruk—a doyenne of the Dock Ward—threw the most debauched masquerades in the Great City, but since the disaster she has withdrawn from public life (more on Lady Hasserbruk will be revealed in *The Sinking: Widow's Walk*, a season II episode). In her absence, a group of young nobles have decided to throw their own masquerade. Matsoni Gimbros, the clique's ringleader, declares the party's theme to be The Sinking. To complement his theme, Matsoni chose the perfect venue: an abandoned bathhouse on the edge of the sinkhole. Rumors that a ghost haunts the bathhouse only add to its allure.

Privileged, promiscuous young people in a haunted condemned building: what could possibly go wrong?

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs attend a covert masquerade thrown by a troupe of thrill seeking young nobles. After breaking into the bathhouse, they attract the attentions of its current resident, a wily guttermage who assumes the persona of a ghost in an attempt to sabotage their fun and drive them off. The situation turns worse when some of the nobles get left behind and the guttermage realizes he must take hostages in order to protect himself. In the end, it falls upon the PCs to make sure everyone escapes safely.

## HOOKS

The PCs might attend the masquerade for a number of reasons, including any of the following:

- The PCs receive an invitation to attend the masquerade because they are either young nobles themselves, or they have friends in high-society. If the PCs gained notoriety as a result of The Sinking, Matsoni invites them not so much as guests, but as curiosities to amuse the nobles.
- Scroungers and squatters have taken over the area around the bathhouse. Matsoni Gimbros hires the PCs to escort guests to the party and act as bouncers to keep out the riffraff. As a preface,

## PACING

This adventure consists of a series of encounters that occur during the course of a single night. These events do not occur to a set timetable. Instead, the module describes specific encounters in the rooms in which they are most likely to occur. The GM should choose when these events occur to maximize the players' enjoyment. Don't allow them to become bored, but neither should the players feel harried (it is a party after all!). Not all of the events need to happen in the order presented and the GM should feel free to rearrange them as desired.

Matsoni may hire muscular or roguish PCs to help him break into the building.

- The PCs' noble patron asks them to gate-crash the masquerade in order to keep an eye on his wayward heir. Benzente Dumoign (an over-protective father and secret crime boss) may hire less than upstanding PCs to attend the party to spy on his daughter Sadira.

## DRESSING UP

Regardless of how the PCs attend the masquerade—as guards or guests, invited or not—Matsoni refuses entrance to anyone who fails to dress appropriately. This means both a party costume (which consists of a mask and a few accoutrements) worn over a courtier or noble's outfit. If they lack proper attire, the PCs' noble patron or friend might provide it to them.

No attendee should wear armor heavier than reinforced clothing. Partygoers are permitted, if not expected, to carry dueling weapons. However, the attending aristocracy frowns upon bringing in other sorts of weapons, which they consider crude at best.

A PC who dresses or arms himself inappropriately suffers a –2 penalty on Charisma-based skill checks to influences the young nobles. Conversely, PCs wearing elaborate costumes (any costume with a cost exceeding 200 gp) gain +2 circumstance bonus to such checks.

## YOUNG NOBLES

In addition to the PCs, approximately two-dozen guests attend the masquerade, divided evenly between the sexes. At least half wear costumes based on stock characters of the *commedia*, such as the Beggar, the Devil, and the Serving Girl. Many tie their

fine clothing with contrasting scarves to simulate the ragged clothes of the lower classes resulting in a riotous display of color in sharp contrast to the stark white bathhouse interior.

Almost all of the partygoers are in their late teens or early twenties, all scions of city nobles or wealthy merchants. To best allow the GM to integrate this adventure with an ongoing campaign, most of the guests remain intentionally unnamed. The GM should include among the partygoers those NPCs or their young relatives important to her campaign. The statistics below represent a typical masquerade guest.

### Young Noble

CR 1

#### XP 400

Female or male human aristocrat 4

**N** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception –1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +1 Dodge)

**hp** 18 (4d8)

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

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** dagger +4 (1d4/19-20) or rapier +4 (1d6/19-20)

**Ranged** dagger +4 (1d4/19-20)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** 11, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

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

**Feats** Dodge, Persuasive, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Perform (any one) +8, Sense Motive +6

**Languages** Common

**Gear** masterwork dagger and/or masterwork rapier, jewelry (worth 100 gp), mask, noble's outfit.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Ill-equipped (Ex):** The young nobles' CR is reduced by 1 because they do not have the full complement of gear for their level.

**Developments:** Four of the attending nobles serve as bouncers. They use the same statistics as the other guests, but distinguish themselves with their leather masks (a sign of membership in the Dandyman). Each also carries a *potion of cat's grace* and a *potion of bull's strength* that they drink before combat (raising their Challenge Rating to 2). A PC can convince a Dandyman to give him a potion only if made helpful. All four bouncers begin with an initial attitude of indifferent.

## THE DUKE'S BATHHOUSE

Named for the nearby thoroughfare and not a sign of noble endorsement, the Duke's Bathhouse served as a popular destination for numerous Great City residents, particularly for its novel reputation. Patrons reported strange incidences at the pools: unexplained splashes and ripples, sudden shifts in water temperature, and misplaced trinkets. Popular opinion attributed these phenomena to a ghost, usually a supposed youth who drowned or a worker scalded by the boilers.

As with many things, the Sinking put an end to the bathhouse, and not just because of its proximity. The seismic event caused the spring that fed the pools to dry up. No longer serviceable as a bathhouse—and as yet impractical to convert to another use—the owners simply abandoned the building.

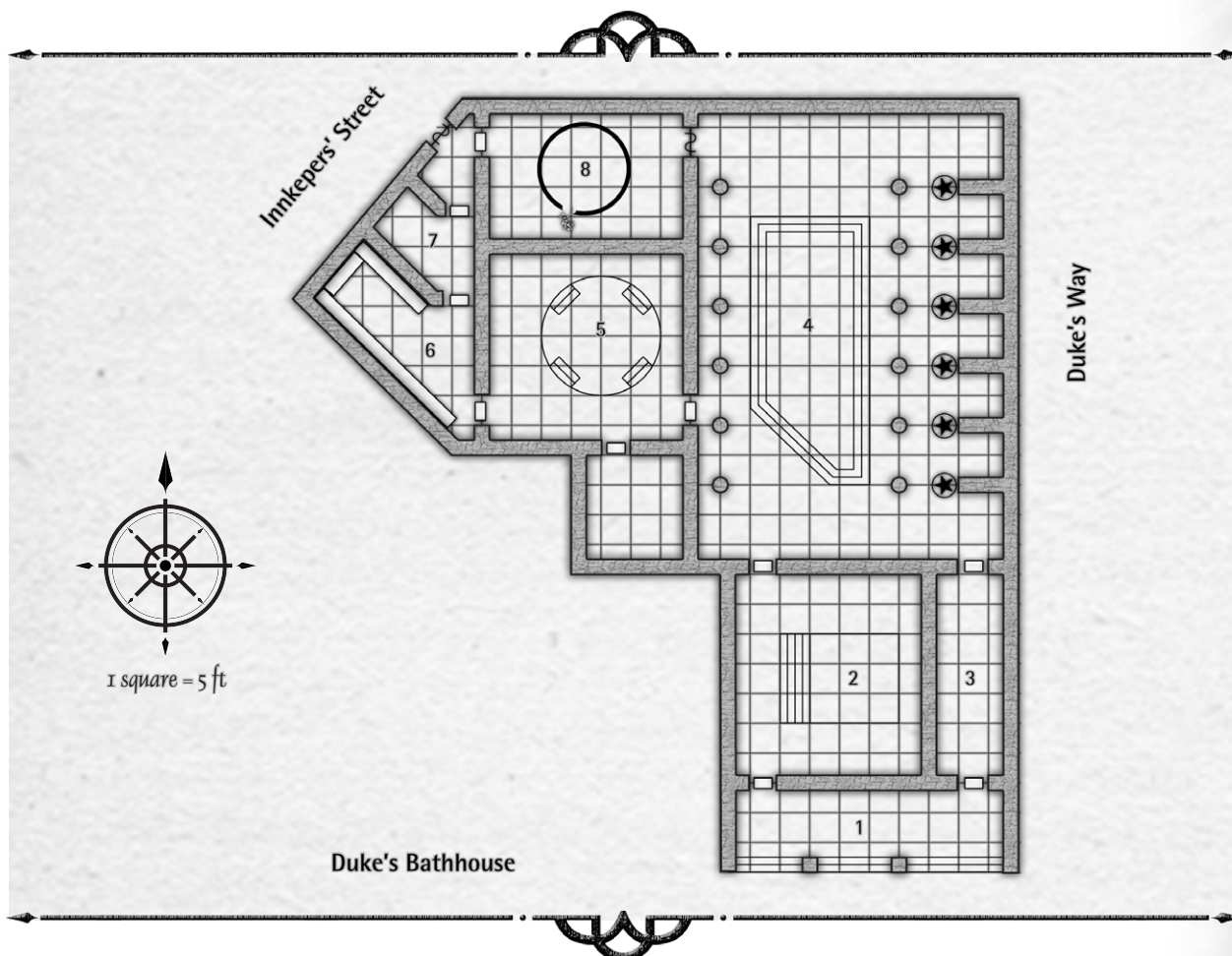
As far as anyone knows, the bathhouse has remained vacant since its owners abandoned it. Despite a few stress fractures and some graffiti, the marble walls remain sturdy (treat as superior masonry). The visible doors are made of strong wood; the concealed doors are stone (Perception DC 20 to spot from either side). All the doors have inbuilt average locks, though only the exterior doors (including the secret door) are secured, and these have rusted from disuse imposing –2 circumstance penalty to any checks made to open them.

### THE SPIRIT OF THE SPRING

The original ghost of The Duke's Bathhouse was not an unfortunate lost soul, but a water elemental. In years past, the elemental acted the genius loci of the spring. The construction of the bathhouse did not disturb the spirit; indeed it welcomed the people's reverence however unwitting. The Sinking, however, caused the spring to fail. The spirit went into hibernation, crystallizing into an *elemental gem*.

The magical gem now sits as the centerpiece of Burlstaff's shrine. The crystallized spirit functions as a normal *elemental gem (water)*. Even when controlled, however, the elemental ignores any direction to attack Burlstaff. If the controller returns the elemental to a body of water sufficient to hold it, the spirit gratefully takes up residence there. If released away from water, the elemental returns to its home plane when the period of control ends.





The bathhouse's dust-covered interior is scattered with the remains of items not valuable enough to remove. The ceiling arcs to height of 25 feet at the building's spine. The empty pools are 5-feet deep from the lip to the bottom. Any one falling into one of these hard marble basins takes 1d3 points of nonlethal damage. Underground pipes connect the boilers and cistern to the various pools and drainage. Though all remain dry, the tubes barely provide enough space for a Diminutive creature to crawl through.

## AREA A1: THE PORTICO

One end of this narrow lane turns off the Duke's Way at an irregular angle, the other end falls suddenly into the sinkhole that swallowed the city's center. The sounds of people fade away the farther one travels away from the main thoroughfare. The Duke's Bathhouse sits into the block on the south side of the sinkhole, bounded by Architect' Street, Five Coins Street and Innkeepers Street.

Litter and a fallen lamppost do little to detract from the bathhouse's impressive southern façade, itself narrow compared to the building's size. Stairs ascend between tall columns into the covered portico. Bas-relief images of frolicking water sprites decorate the front hall, separated only by large wooden doors on opposite sides.

Whatever their reasons for attending the

masquerade, the PCs arrive at the bathhouse with the first lot of guests. Yet before the party can begin, they must first find a means to open the locked doors (Disable Device DC 27). A PC skilled in Disable Device or able to cast *knock* earns the approval of the partygoers. Otherwise, Matsoni suggests they break down the door. If PCs do not possess weapons capable of damaging the door, they can use the fallen lamppost as in improvised battering ram. Allow up to 5 characters to aid another in a Strength check to break the door (DC 25).

Outside the bathhouse the streets remain quiet, and few if any people approach the building during the party. Matsoni politely insists that guards keep an eye on the entrance from within the bathhouse. Even he admits that there is more likely to be trouble inside than out.

## AREA A2: THE FRIGIDARUM

A rectangular hole—once a cold pool—takes up most of this room. A short flight of stairs leads down into it from the near end. A zigzag pattern, echoing the lines of the steps, is carved into the walls of the pool.

Matsoni leads the guests past the relatively small Frigidarium, though he won't stop the PCs if they want to examine the room. A DC 10 Perception check spots bits of bone and other spoor indicating some

animal lives at the deep end of the pool.

**Creatures:** Not long after the bathhouse closed, a white-scaled snake crawled in through a drainage pipe. It found an abundant supply of small prey. Now too large to squeeze back through the pipes, it spends much of its time digesting at the bottom of the former Frigidarium. Roused by the sound and light of the revelers, the hungry snake follows the scent of fresh prey.

If spotted, the constrictor slithers forward to defend its lair. Otherwise, it sneaks into the Tepidarum and at some point during the party makes a surprise attack against one of the partygoers, preferably someone apart from the crowd. The snake stays in the shadows. Its white scales resemble the bathhouse's marble: when the snake freezes in place, an observer could easily mistake it for part of a marble statue.

#### Albino Python

CR 2

XP 600

Medium Constrictor

hp 19 (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, page 255)

#### STATISTICS

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Climb +11, Perception +12, Stealth +11 (+15 on white stone), Swim +11; **Racial**

**Modifiers** +4 Perception, +4 Stealth (+8 on white stone), +8 Acrobatics.

### AREA A3: THE OFFICE

*This chamber is devoid of furnishings of any sort.*

At one time, this room served as the onsite operations room for the bathhouse. Scuffmarks on the floor indicate where it once housed several large pieces of furniture that were roughly removed.

### AREA A4: THE TEPIDARUM

*This single cavernous room encompasses about half the area of the bathhouse. In the middle, a stair-lined rectangular recess in the floor creates an empty stage that once served as the communal bathing pool. Half a dozen arches pierce the walls leading to private alcoves. Marble statues of idealized men and woman stand beside some of the arches.*

Shortly after the attendees arrive, they attempt convert the dry Tepidarum into a ballroom. Under Mastoni's direction, some sweep away the dust and debris, while others hang oil lanterns. Several of the young nobles thought to bring musical instruments and set up an impromptu bandstand at one corner of the pool. Bottles of wine and baskets of hors d'oeuvres sit conveniently around the room.





It takes workers 2+1d4 minutes to get all the lanterns up. The lanterns illuminate the recessed pool in normal light, leaving the main floor and alcoves in low-light conditions light. The lanterns have enough oil to last through the night.

The GM and players should feel free to role-play as much or as little of the party as they want. The GM is encouraged to augment the events described in this adventure with role-playing encounters tailored to his or her campaign. The masquerade provides a good opportunity to introduce characters or plots that may figure into later events, or resolve loose ends from previous adventures. Here the PCs can begin or develop relationships (whether friendly or adversarial) with interesting NPCs. Over the course of the party, the following events take place.

**The Duel:** Shortly after the party starts, tempers flare between two of the guests, Enzo Taramin and Giovanni Magorthus, over the attention of the fair maiden, Melit Voor-Andwan. The raised voices of the rivals readily attract the attention of the other guests. As expected, the conflict escalates until the only way to settle things is with a duel to the death. The blasé young nobles don't interfere, though they don't stop the PCs from getting involved.

A PC can attempt to talk down Enzo or Giovanni with an opposed Diplomacy check (each begins an initial attitude of unfriendly). If both are made at least indifferent, they agree to a controlled duel (first to three hits or a single critical hit). If Enzo and Giovanni both have their attitudes improved to friendly, the PCs can convince them not to duel at all—though they continue to spar verbally for the maiden's affection. If either would-be duelist becomes hostile (from a botched Diplomacy check), he immediately attacks his rival with intent to kill. An effect that changes a character's attitude temporarily—such as Intimidation or *charm person*—delays the duel only as long as it remains in effect.

At any time, PCs can attempt to physical break up the duel, though the young nobles consider this bad form. A PC who takes physical actions to interfere with a duel suffers a –2 penalty on Charisma-based skill checks to influence the young nobles for the rest of the night.

**The Flirt:** During the party, the PCs encounter Sadira Dumoign, a youthful half-elf with striking green eyes. She's an incorrigible flirt, her costume features a low-cut dress and a high wig. Sadira soon begins making advances towards one of the PCs, either one who distinguished himself during an earlier encounter, or whomever she finds attractive. If the PC fails to reciprocate, Sadira wanders off and later hooks up with another of the attendees. This individual should be someone of interest to the PCs.

At a later point in the evening, she takes her beau (or belle) into the Steam Room for some privacy. Sadira and her lover remain in the Steam Room for the duration of the adventure (see *Climax Event*).

## AREA A5: THE SCALDARUM

*A circular pit occupies most of this room, leaving little space between its edge and three of the walls. Four sets of stairs, arranged radially, descend into the former hot pool. Cold air wafts up from the rust-speckled pool bottom.*

**Hazards:** A 5-foot patch of brown mold grows from the drain at the center of the pool. This weak variety deals only 2d6 points of nonlethal cold damage each round. However, it was a continual problem before the bathhouse shut down. Now, with no one to clear it, the brown mold has taken root, though without the presence of steam the patch remains small. Fortunately, even if the mold grows, it cannot escape the floor of the pool.

### Lesser Brown Mold

CR 1

XP 300

(see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, page 416).

**Developments:** If the PCs don't destroy this patch of brown mold early on, sometime during the night a venturesome young noble named Kergan Belano approaches the mold while his girlfriend Vysana Semheyl looks on. The endothermic mold snuffs the flame from Kergan's lamp shrouding the room in darkness. Vysana screams—alerting the other rooms—while Kergan stumbles around in the dark unable to find his way out of the pool. Allow rescuers only 3+1d4 rounds to react before the brown mold drains Kergan of his body heat. If the PCs are unable to respond, a Dandyman pulls Kergan out before he dies.

Following the incident, Vysana and one of the Dandymen move Kergan into the adjacent foyer and try to nurse him back to health. They remain in the foyer for the duration of the adventure (see *Climax Event*).

## AREA A6: THE STEAM ROOM

*Wooden benches line the walls of this room. Vents which once projected steam now gape empty along the marble walls.*

## AREA A7: THE BOILER ROOM

*Dozens of pipes powdered pale-green from oxidation give this chamber the appearance of some alien metal*

jungle. The room is unusually hot and the tang of copper hangs in the air.

Treat entire boiler room as difficult terrain. The tangled maze of pipes also provides any creatures in the room with partial cover.

**Treasure:** Those searching the room can attempt a DC 20 Perception check to uncover a flask of *liquid ice* lodged behind a copper apparatus (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game - Advanced Players Guide*, page 185). The workers at bathhouse used it both to cool overheating boilers and to kill infestations of brown mold.

## AREA A8: THE CISTERN

An enormous concrete cylinder fills most of this chamber. Various pipes connect from the cistern into the walls and pocked stone floors. A ladder once used to scale the cistern sits propped against one side of the tank, though it is no longer necessary as part of the cistern collapsed creating an opening wide enough for a person to climb through.

Built over a natural spring, the cistern room once served as the heart of the bathhouse. Spring water once bubbled up from these pits, before the Sinking cut them off from the aquifer far below. Now dry, the tunnels connect by a circuitous route to service tunnels beneath the city. Exiting through the narrow tunnels requires a DC 20 Escape Artist check.

Upon entering, the PCs spot what looks like a still crouched humanoid figure in the dim lamplight. A DC 20 Perception check identifies the figure as a cherubic statue decorated with mud and scraps of cloth. The marble boy stands with his hands cupped in front of him holding a small gemstone.

Formerly located in the Tepidarum, the statue's resemblance to a crossroads spirit drew Burlstaff's interest. He dragged it here to create a shrine to the spirits.

**Treasure:** The gemstone in the statue's hands is *elemental gem (water)*. The stone holds the Spirit of the Spring (see *The Spirit of the Spring* sidebar).

**Developments:** Whenever Burlstaff leaves the bathhouse he casts a mental *alarm* in the cistern. Once partygoers begin to break off and explore the baths, they eventually stumble upon this room and unwittingly trip the alarm. If revelers discover this room, they playfully vandalize the cherub statue before growing bored and returning to the Tepidarum.

Regardless of who enters the room (partygoers or PCs), once the *alarm* triggered, Burlstaff immediately races towards his shrine. He arrives 15 + 1d10

minutes later at which point the GM should run the Climax Event described below.

## CLIMAX EVENT: THE GHOST IN THE BATHHOUSE (CR 7)

The climax occurs in response to the triggering of Burlstaff's *alarm* spell in the cistern.

Just before entering the cistern, Burlstaff casts *ventriloquism* and *blur* (he also benefits from *mage armor* which he cast earlier). The guttermage then uses the secret door to sneak into the Tepidarum and hides in the shadows. If the PCs previously discovered the secret door and have been keeping an eye on it, allow them a Perception check against the guttermage's Stealth skill to spot him.

Incensed by the intrusion, Burlstaff begins by casting *dancing lights* to form a faintly glowing figure that appears in the midst of the young nobles. Next, he casts *ventriloquism* on the figure and says, "Be gone from this place! Let the spirits of the dead rest in peace!"

While a few of the partygoers shriek with surprise, most assume that one of their peers perpetrated this illusion. Allow the PCs to interact with the "ghost" if they wish, but once it becomes clear to Burlstaff that his illusion has failed to scare off the intruders, he dispels it and steps from the shadows.

The *blur* effect and the reflection from his *cat's eyes* give Burlstaff a somewhat ghostly appearance. As he steps from the shadows he casts *fear*. Several of the young nobles flee in panic and even those unaffected by the spell are nevertheless unnerved. The following round, he casts *fear* again, directed at another clump of partygoers. For the remainder of the confrontation, Burlstaff attacks anyone who fails to flee his domain (see *Burlstaff* for Tactics). His debris barrages consist of dust and animal droppings, bits of broken marble, and discarded party supplies.

Allow two thirds of the young nobles to escape. The remaining eight nobles find themselves in alcoves and back rooms unable to reach an exit without crossing the guttermage. Those remaining within the bathhouse include the following:

1. Sadira Dumoign and her companion have disrobed and engage in indiscriminate acts within Steam Room (Area A6).
2. Vysana, her injured lover Kergan, and a Dandymen rest in the foyer adjacent to the Scaldarum (Area A5). Unprepared to fight, as soon as they hear a commotion, they try to hide in the shadows and wait for danger to pass.



3. A pair of masked nobles named Artishod and Fotigaine dart into one of the middle alcove along the east wall, not realizing they have stumbled into a dead end.
4. While fleeing, Parcyphé Atregan tripped over her gown and twisted her ankle. She hides in the Office (Area A3).

PCs worth their salt will attempt to rescue those left behind, thus bringing them face-to-face with the guttermage. If they seek assistance, they can attempt a DC 15 Diplomacy check to convince the Dandymen to help.

## BURLSTAFF

Burlstaff looks no different from any other Residential Ward vagrant, at least in the eyes of the higher classes. Tall and lean, the guttermage's ragged clothes hide beneath a well-worn traveling cloak while a grizzled beard conceals his weatherworn face. Burlstaff takes his moniker from the gnarled and stippled walking stick he carries.

Burlstaff embraces his inconspicuous appearance. He regularly casts *magic aura* on his cloak and staff—sacred implements of Ceghon—to conceal their power from suspicious eyes.

While exploring the pathways beneath the Great City in the aftermath of The Sinking, Burlstaff discovered a series of passages leading into the dry spring beneath the Duke's Bathhouse (see Area A8: *Cistern*). Soon after entering, he stumbled upon the *elemental gem* in the cistern; he recognized the spirit that had drawn him to this place. Since then, Burlstaff made the bathhouse his home and shrine.

Prior to the arrival of the partygoers, the bathhouse's sturdy doors and ghost stories deterred intruders.

Most days, Burlstaff spends much of his time wandering the city, professedly following the will of the spirits. At night, he returns the bathhouse to meditate and sleep.

### Burlstaff (Tagyrius Drem)

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human fighter 1/guttermage 7 (*The Great City Player's Guide*, page 19)

**N** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +3; **Senses** lowlight vision; Perception +10

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 Dodge, +1 shield)

**hp** 66 (1d10+7d8+25)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1/+1 *quarterstaff* +7/+2 (1d6+3) or

+1/+1 *quarterstaff* +5/+5/+0 (1d6+3)

**Ranged** debris barrage touch +9 (4d6)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7<sup>th</sup>; concentration +10)

At will—debris barrage (DC 17)

**Guttermage Spells Known** (CL 7<sup>th</sup>; concentration +10)

3<sup>rd</sup> (2/day)—*dispel magic*, *fear* (DC 16)

2<sup>nd</sup> (4/day)—*blur*, *dead end\**, *cure moderate wounds*, *touch of idiocy* (DC 15)

1<sup>st</sup> (5/day)—*alarm*, *grease* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *magic aura* (DC 14), *ventriloquism* (DC 14)

o (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*

\**The Great City Player's Guide*, page 100; if you are not using that book, replace with *web*.

### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** Burlstaff's before combat actions are detailed in *The Ghost in the Bathhouse* section.

**During Combat:** Burlstaff uses Acrobatics and Stealth to keep his distance. The guttermage prefers to attack with a debris barrage, shaping it into a cone to target multiple opponents in close proximity. Burlstaff uses *dead end*, *grease*, and *open/close* to divide intruders and reduce their mobility. He casts *cure moderate wounds* on himself as needed. If forced into melee, he fights with his eponymous staff enhanced with Arcane Strike (included above). Burlstaff tracks down all trespassers within his domain, though he will not give chase to characters that escape the bathhouse. If he corners trespassing partygoers, he quickly identifies them as nobles and attempts to take them hostage, plotting to hand them over to contacts in various rebel groups. He doesn't want to be identified, and knows he must move his shrine. He hopes that by ransoming hostages, he can buy himself some time to save whatever's left of his shrine and relocate.

**Morale:** If reduced to less than 11 hp (and out of *cure* spells), Burlstaff retreats to the cistern and makes his last stand there.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Dodge, Arcane Strike, Luck of the Crossroads, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Bluff +13, Escape Artist +14, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +10, Stealth +13, Survival +10

**Languages** Common, Old Azindralean

**SQ** jinxes (cat's eyes, odds and ends [*mage armor*], shape barrage)

**Gear** +1/+1 quarterstaff, cloak of resistance +1, satchel full of random litter (acts as spell component pouch).

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Debris Barrage (Sp):** As a standard action, the guttermage can make a ranged touch attack at an enemy to send a barrage of random bits of debris to a range of 60 ft. (no save). Alternatively, Burlstaff can shape his debris barrage to instead affect a 15 ft. cone-shaped burst (no attack roll, Reflex half). This attack is equivalent to a 3rd level spell and is subject to spell resistance. This attack deals 4d6 points of slashing, bludgeoning, and piercing damage.

**Luck of the Crossroads** A Crossroad Spirit graces Burlstaff with special favor. Once per day, when making an attack roll, saving throw, skill check, or ability check, Burlstaff may roll twice and use the better of the two rolls. This feat appears in *The Great City Player's Guide*.

### CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs attended the masquerade as guest, consider them successful if they manage to protect the partygoers from the various dangers throughout the night. If the PCs were charged with guarding one or all of the guests, make sure they receive a 1,500 gp reward for their efforts. Perhaps more importantly, the PCs' actions bring them the attentions and gratitude of influential people within the Great City. This newfound recognition is sure to bring more adventure opportunities.

Burlstaff's fate falls in the PCs' hands. If the PCs kill the guttermage, they can easily claim self-defense as exculpation. Indeed, the cliquish young nobles are willing to help to dispose of the body and/or defend the PCs' actions to the authorities (who are mostly also their relatives). The PCs might also attempt to capture Burlstaff and bring him to the authorities. For the crimes of illegal occupancy, blasphemy, and assault on nobles, the court hands down a harsh sentence (hard labor or perhaps even execution).

If Burlstaff manages to survive and escape, he slips off to rebuild his shrine and plot his revenge. If he successfully acquired hostages, he delivers them to the Hardy Brutes (see *Great City Campaign Setting*). The rebels begin ransoming off the captured scions, buying Burlstaff enough time to salvage his shrine and flee to another safe harbor within the city. He could make an excellent reoccurring villain to thwart the PCs at some point in the future. The guttermage specifically targets those individuals who disturbed the shrine. Certainly, anyone who pilfers the *elemental gem* should expect a visit from the guttermage and his crossroads gang allies.

### THE ORIGINS OF BURLSTAFF

In his youth, Tagyrius Drem burned with the anger. Like all Azindraleans, he was treated as a second-class citizen in his own homeland. At age 17, he joined the Green Spear Guard not to please the Kortezean elite, but to better his job prospects, and perhaps to prepare himself for a future rebellion.

Though not particularly strong, Tagyrius was wiry and determined. He might have done well in the Guard if the fire that made him a good combatant had not also fueled his resentment. One day Tagyrius lost his temper with his Kortezean superior. If his fellow guardsmen had not held him back, he might have given the arrogant sergeant more than a tongue lashing. Tagyrius was lucky to get off with only a thrashing and a dishonorable discharge.

Shadowed by his insubordination, Tagyrius was unable to find honest work. He eventually took up with the crossroads club at Pigsquabble Square. Though he joined to get back at the Kortezeans (and their sympathizers) who ruined his life, Tagyrius soon became an honest adherent of the crossroads spirits. Tagyrius claims his guttermage spells and abilities are gifts from the spirits, though others might see them as his own anger made manifest.

Shedding his past life, Tagyrius is now better known by the gnarled staff he carries. Burlstaff uses his magic to punish those who disrespect the shrine spirits, as well as to help those who show proper deference. He believes the Sinking is a sign from the old god Ceghon and communes daily with the spirits in order learn what it means. Perhaps the time for rebellion is once again nigh.

On the other hand, if the PCs return the *elemental gem* to a body of water or to another spirit worshipper, Burlstaff comes to believe that the PCs are sympathetic to his cause. Should this occur, at some point shortly after, an anonymous beggar presents the PCs with *bottle of air* as a thank you gift from the elusive guttermage.





\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations



# THE PLUMB LINE

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This adventure is part of the Great City: The Sinking. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It is designed using the Pathfinder Role-Playing Game for 3rd-level characters.

## SUMMARY

This adventure revolves around two past events, one centuries old and one recent. The first concerns the death of the monarch of an ancient nomadic people, King Furam, and his burial in a hypogeum deep below the city grounds. The second involves an ill-fated attempt by local architect Labienus Gouille to penetrate King Furam's tomb and recover his legendary treasure.

Some time ago, after learning of the tomb's position, the architect purchased the property above the treasure cache to dig it out. The sudden appearance of the sinkhole along with a few other minor complications completely disrupted his plan, casting him into both debt and danger. Investigating the architect's sudden disappearance at the supposed hand of vindictive loan sharks, the PCs learn about a mysterious door in the bowels of the earth, right next to the horrible wound that tore open the city's grounds. Beyond the door, the tomb of King Furam and the curse that killed him await.

## BACKGROUND

Legends say that in the middle of the Old Azindralean Age, when the Great City was no more than a small village, the powerful ruler of a vast nomadic nation traversed the region after returning from a victorious war. During his stay in Azindralea, the newly crowned King Furan became stricken with a mysterious disease and died shortly thereafter. His followers supposedly buried him at the foot of the Lord's Hill in the years before a disastrous flood swept over the region. Old accounts say that Furan's followers buried him with mountains gold coins, but to date, none have uncovered the tomb nor any treasure traceable to the ancient king. Long sought by the Great City's sages, Labienus Gouille, an architect with wizardly powers recently identified the treasure's position after extensive studies and calculations. Trusting his intuition and topographical skill, Gouille sequestered a substantial loan from the city's moneylenders to purchase the property directly above what he believed to be the location of Furam's treasure chamber and began probing the ground under it. Finding nothing near the surface, Gouille acquired a small elemental familiar and sent it to scout much deeper underground. The elemental, nicknamed Ashlar, soon discovered a

man-made hypogeum some 150 feet below the Insula Rubra. Besides some artifacts and precious items in a treasure chamber, Ashlar found the king's sarcophagus and a large lead coffer in an area sealed shut by a stone door. The familiar also discovered another, more covert passage into the hypogeum at the bottom of a well within the Old Oxda Guesthouse, a decrepit building belonging to the church of Adhelmus Oxda. To gain access to the well, Gouille offered the Oxdam to restore their property and rented it under the conditions of a long-term, emphyteutic lease. Next, he borrowed the necessary startup money from the Stallers, a cabal of loan sharks willing to finance already indebted entrepreneurs for an exorbitant interest rate. In the building's foundation Gouille excavated the well and using spells, cleared a subterranean passage that connected it to the ancient hypogeum. Navigating the dark passages and magically overcoming many obstacles, the architect located the treasure chamber. Thanks to the semi-precious silverware recovered from the site, the architect was able to repay most of his regular debts, although each month, he still owed a hefty fee to the Stallers. As the planned restoration at the Old Oxda Guesthouse continued, Gouille began smuggling artifacts from the treasure chamber, selling them almost immediately to keep up with his considerable debts. At the time, a local fence named Sörgo Cobagan served as his primary buyer in this operation, readily purchasing the illegally recovered artifacts without questioning their provenance.

Erstwhile, the architect began exploring the hypogeum's southernmost tunnels where he finally found the door to King Furan's resting place. Gouille was at home, planning the exploration of the tomb, when the sinkhole appeared, engulfing most of the hypogeum, the treasure chamber, and the lucrative property the architect had bought above it. Only the peripheral structures of the complex survived the calamity, including the access to the tomb in the south. In the end, the sinkhole spelled disaster for Gouille, who found himself buried beneath ever-growing debt. Worse, the sinkhole obliterated most of his property as well as his subterranean source of pawnable artifacts. As his debt maturities approached, Gouille came to believe his sole hope hid within the lead coffer in Furam's tomb. Fearing the perils of a bone-filled crypt, as well as rumors of King Furam's curse, the architect began seeking out trusted agents willing to venture into the terrible sinkhole. He started by asking Cobagan, also a petty wizard, to supply him with some of his own bodyguards.

In the end, Gouille was still struggling with a plan to break into the tomb when the patience of his less indulgent creditors, the Stallers, ran out.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Shortly after the appearance of the sinkhole, Labienus Gouille, one of the Great City's most prominent architects, went missing. The PCs are asked to look him, either by the church of Adhelmus Oxda, with who he held a emphyteutic lease for the restoration of their historic guesthouse, or by one of the prominent NPCs of the city (GM's choice), who incidentally was a friend to the architect. Alternatively, the PCs might be seeking Gouille for his famed expertise concerning the buildings, monuments, and sewers of the Great City. Rumors hint that Gouille might even have a tangible theory explaining of the origins of the sinkhole; an issue obviously plaguing all the city's wise men.

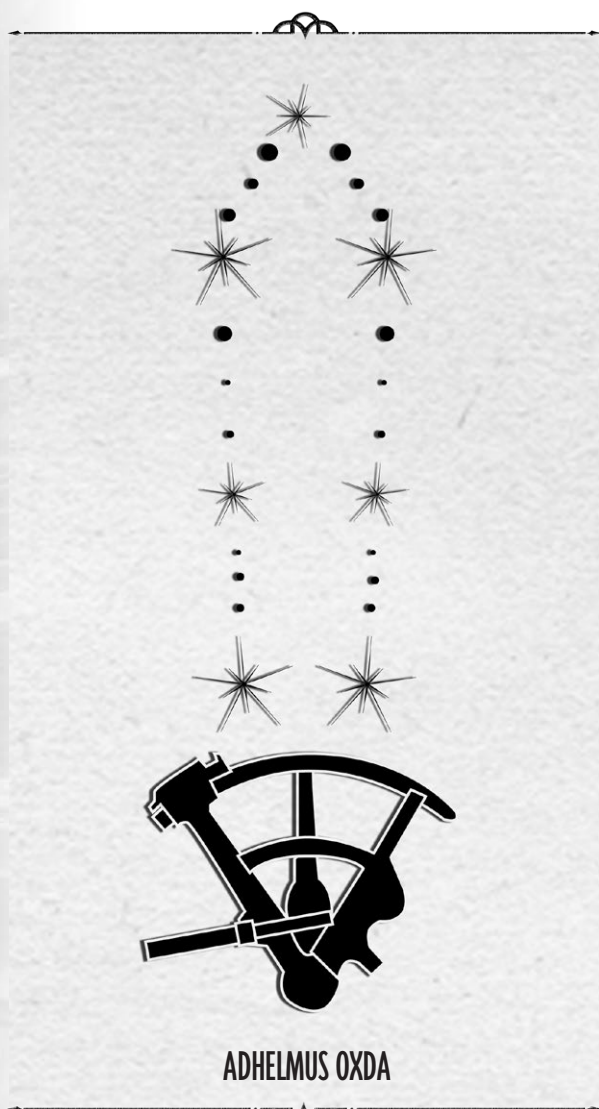
Once the PCs decide to seek out Gouille, their employers direct them towards the following two people, both of whom are extremely troubled by Gouille's disappearance.

**The High Priest Adhelmus Oxda:** High priest Sessevirus-Ondi-Ahman is currently busy handling

his congregation's twofold reaction to the sinkhole's appearance. The disastrous event has created rift in his flock between those who interpret it as a omen of an imminent, far greater catastrophe, and those who see it as a divine action to wipe out some underground iniquity. According to a stipulation in the terms Gouille's emphyteutic contract, the Old Oxda Guesthouse only returns to the church's possession a full two years after the architect's insolvency, therefore the Oxdam obviously want to know what happened to him. The architect's disappearance has also created confusion at the guesthouse construction yard, where many workers recommended by the church are now unemployed. If the PCs attempt to gather information in the sphere of Adhelmus Oxda's church, a DC 15 Diplomacy check to ask either the high priest or the workers at the Old Oxda Guesthouse yields a rumor that on several occasions, individuals have spotted the architect conferring with "some kind of gargoyle" or a "devil living in stone" (actually Ashlar's earth elemental familiar).

**The Architect's Servant:** The missing architect's middle-aged servant **Jebbo** (commoner 3) was the last individual speak to him. Unmarried, Gouille lived alone. Jebbo remained the sole individual to maintain regular contact with the architect as part of his daily visits to the townhouse to perform his duties. Jebbo last saw Gouille at his home the evening before an unknown band of looters burned it to the ground. As he often did in recent times, Gouille busied himself by drawing a map that included a "big circle" and "lots of numbers and doodles". A DC 15 Knowledge (architecture) or (dungeoneering) skill check correctly speculates these circle as the mouth of sinkhole and the triangulations some sort of calculation measuring the relative positions of tunnels and chambers in the vicinity of the sinkhole, both on the surface and underground. The architect's corpse cannot be not found among the remains of the fire, though everything in the house was stolen or destroyed.

If interrogated further, Jebbo describes his employer's increasing debt that resulted from his risky real estate business, and desperately claims that the Gouille disappeared owing him three full months of unpaid salary (12 gp, 6 sp, and 9 cp to be precise). An opposed Diplomacy or Intimidate skill check, or offering to pay Jebbo's pending wages gets the servant to reveal that his employer recently attended several evening meetings with a rich antiquarian named Sorgo Cobagan. If the PCs carefully interrogate the servant about the architect's drawing, which basically corresponds to the map of the hypogeum, the servant might remember that "there were many squares and lines drawn within the big circle", a hint to the fact that most of





the subterranean complex, including the treasure chamber, has been annihilated by the Sinking.

**Developments:** Shortly after the PCs exit Gouille's manse, Zobota and his agents pay Jebbo a visit (see *Kuril Zobota* page 78 for more details). Posing as city watchmen, Zobota and his thugs craftily interrogate the servant to determine what he knows and what he told the PCs. Later that evening, one of the thugs brutally mugs Jebbo on his way home, breaking his jaw. With the aid of some family members, Jebbo now rests in the care of Temple Ward healers, unable to speak to the PCs for the remainder of the adventure.

## GOUILLE'S DEMISE AND LEGACY

At this point, the PCs don't know that the man they seek is already dead. After the appearance of the sinkhole triggered Gouille's insolvency, the Stallers' agents ransacked the architect's house in an attempt to recoup their losses as well as interrogate him about his curious source of extra income. The Stallers assigned Kuril Zobota, a violent debt collector to spearhead the assault. Zobota had his thugs torture Gouille, but failed pry anything out of him before he lost his patience and threw him into the sinkhole.

If the PCs attempt to question those few people still living in the vicinity of the sinkhole, a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check to gather information provides the PCs with a half dozen vague testimonies concerning sounds of a late night street scuffle on the eve in question. Accounts vary, but only slightly. They include hearing an invocation for help and a terrible, echoing scream that sounded like someone being plunged into the sinkhole.

Regardless, no one responded for most locals fear going out at night due to a recent rash of murders which they attribute to a vampire. In truth, their "vampire" is actually a dire bat that now lairs in one of the truncated tunnels exposed by the sinkhole (see *Area 3*).

After acquiring several testimonies, the PCs are approached by a homeless drunkard named **Wipps** (commoner 1) who hints that he can provide an account of a scene he witnessed on the night in question in exchange for a bottle of booze. If the PCs supply him with a full bottle, he eagerly pops it open, takes a long swig, and then gives the following wide-eyed account:

*"Their was a whole gang of men, tough ones with clubs. They were dragging another guy around by the throat. I don't know who he was, though, cause they'd tied a sack over his head. He looked pretty well beat up too, but they kept beating on him. Then before I knew it, one of them*

*kicked the poor guy into the sinkhole. His scream seemed to last forever. Man, what a terrible end..."*

While Wipps' account doesn't prove anything, the circumstances might persuade the PCs that someone murdered Gouille— as it effectively happened. Yet, despite the destruction of his property and his body swallowed by the bottomless sinkhole, something of the architect still remains; Ashlar, his elemental familiar. Free of bounds and maddened by his master's death, the creature now lurks within in the hypogeum.

Furthermore, Gouille kept a cache of equipment for his upcoming expedition hidden in the tomb within a secret chamber near the bottom of the pit beneath the Old Oxa Guesthouse. Gouille, a 3rd-level expert and 5th-level wizard, was also a set designer, known for using magic in a couple of occasions to create impromptu, wondrous backgrounds for the open-air stages of the Great City's festivals. A DC 20 Diplomacy check made to gather information among the local wizards (including Sorgo Cobagan) reveals Gouille's approximate level of power and his frequent purchase of scrolls whose contents were beyond his casting ability, such as *dimension door*, *disintegrate*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *illusory wall*, and *move earth*.

**Developments:** The morning after selling his testimony to the PCs, a city watchman finds Wipps' body face down in an alley, his blood mysteriously drained. While rumors around the area circulate that the vampire struck again, Stallers agent Zobota (see *Kuril Zobota* page 78 for more details) murdered the urchin in his drunken sleep and then expertly bled out his corpse.

## MEETING COBAGAN

**Sorgo Cobagan** (N male human expert 4, wizard 2), lives in the north western section of the Trades Ward on the first floor of a rather plush house. The two-story structure features a sizeable antiquity shop and a large stable at a ground level. An antiquary by trade, the unscrupulous Cobagan never disdains from fencing stolen goods. He serves as a protégé to the city's Thieves Guild and always travels under the protection of several skilled bodyguards.

While Gouille's disappearance has left him shaken, he remains even more puzzled by the architect's final request for the names of reliable mercenaries for a potentially dangerous expedition underground. While the antiquary no longer fears the threat immediate aggression, he rightfully thinks that Kuril Zobota's men are keeping an eye on his house. Due to his status and illegal activities, the antiquary is suspicious of strangers and therefore quite standoffish. His attitude towards the PCs begins as

indifferent, thus they must use Diplomacy to change his attitude to friendly in order approach him in a constructive way. Buying merchandise from his shop (old standard items, whose cost is double or triple the listed price) eases the antiquarian a bit, granting the PCs a +1 circumstance bonus per 10 gp spent (up to a +4 bonus). Talking to Cobagan in friendly terms, unfortunately, reveals that Gouille didn't reveal much to him, besides the fact that he needed men to explore a dungeon, and that the mission had something to do with the sinkhole.

**Developments:** Shortly after the PCs leave Sargo's company, Zobota and his agents pay the fence a visit to see what he knows and what he told the PCs (see *Kuril Zobota* below for more details). To help loosen Sargo's tight lips, Zobota breaks both of the man's legs, then threatens to cut off his tongue. Thereafter, Sargo divulges everything he knows about Gouille and the PCs to the Stallers agents, then promises Zobota his silence in exchange for several hundred gold pieces and his tongue. Following this event, under no circumstances will Sargo speak to the PCs again—if they can even find him.

## THE DEBT COLLECTORS (CR VARIES)

If the PCs investigate the architect's disappearance, they attract Kuril Zobota's suspicions. After his spies and eyes observe the PCs interacting with Gouille's allies and acquaintances, Zobota determines that the PCs are too snoop and makes attempt to Intimidate them with an ambush to convince the PCs to keep out of his business. Initially, he only attempts scare off the investigators; though if PCs continue to pursue their investigations, his subsequent confrontations turn deadly.

**Creatures:** The band of thugs sponsored by the Stallers consist of five individuals—Kuril Zobota and four goons. Zobota is slightly shorter than average, but very muscular with an unusually deep voice.

### Kuril Zobota

CR 3

XP 800

Human rogue 4

NE Medium humanoid

Init +3; Senses Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

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

hp 22 (4d8+4)

Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sap +5 (1d6+2 nonlethal) or +1 dagger +6 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged mwk sling +7 (1d4) or mwk dagger +7

(1d4+2/19–20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 17

Feats Deft Hands, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Stealthy

Skills Acrobatics +10, Appraise +8, Bluff +7, Climb

+10, Disable Device +14, Escape Artist +12,

Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception

+6 (+7 to find traps), Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth

+12, Swim +8

Languages Common

SQ rogue talents (quick disable, weapon training - dagger), trapfinding +1, uncanny dodge

**Combat Gear** *potion of expeditious retreat*, *potion of feather fall*; alchemist's fire; **Other Gear** +1 dagger, +1 leather armor, masterwork daggers (2), sap, masterwork sling with 20 bullets, climber's kit, 50-ft. silk rope with grappling hook, masterwork thieves' tools, 2 flasks of oil, 2 torches, tinderbox, pouch with 20 gp.

### Loan Shark Thug (4)

CR 1

XP 400

Human fighter 1/rogue 1

N Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Perception +5

#### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 15 (2 HD; 1d10+1d8+6)

Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +5 (1d6+3) or dagger +4 (1d4+3/19–20) or sap +4 (1d6+3 nonlethal)

Ranged sling +3 (1d4)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12

Base Atk +1; CMB +4; CMD 16

Feats Skill Focus (Intimidate), Toughness, Weapon Focus (club)

Skills Bluff +6, Climb +7, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +5 (+6 to find traps), Stealth +7

Languages Common

SQ trapfinding +1

**Gear** studded leather, club, daggers (2), sling, sap, 3 gp.

**Tactics:** The PCs encounter Zobota and his band of thugs twice. As noted above, for the first encounter Zobota only intends to intimidate the PCs. He positions himself on the roof of one of the areas abandoned buildings, preferably on the



flanking sides of one of the narrow alleys where his thugs hide in the shadows. He begins by throwing a flask of alchemist's fire near the PCs. As soon as the flask hits, his thugs emerge from their hiding spots, targeting the PCs with a hail of bullets. After one round of combat (two if they win the surprise round) the thugs retreat, yelling curses and threats from the surrounding dark alleys. As a departing gift, one thug hurls a brick painted with a firm message; it reads: "Keep out of The Stallers business!" A DC 12 Knowledge (local) check identifies the Stallers as a group of violent loan sharks.

If the PCs continue to investigate Labienus Gouille's death, or if they emerge from underground with what looks like a load of treasure, Zobota and his thugs attack them again, this time with the intent to kill. The combat should take place either near the rim of the sinkhole or in the construction yard at the Old Guesthouse. Zobota fights to the death, however his thugs are less fearless, and surrender or flee once the PCs defeat their leader.

**Developments:** The thugs have no remarkable treasure and do not know much beyond the fact that Zobota hired them to assist him in his debt collection duties. If the PCs bring a thug to the city watch for identification, there is a 50% chance that they collect a 10 gp bounty for turning in a wanted petty criminal. If the PC capture Zobota, he defiantly refuses to speak. Only if the PCs threaten to kill him on the spot can they attempt a DC 16 Intimidation check to get him to break his silence, and even then the results prove fruitless. To save his life, Zobota concocts a wild tale that he worked for an assassins guild who hired him to ransack Gouille's house to look like a robbery and that he had nothing to do with the architect's death. He claims he doesn't know the identities of the assassins, as they all wear masks, but he thinks they usually operate out of the Trades Ward. If the PCs surrender Zobota to the city guard, the Stallers bail him out a few days later, after which, he lays low for several months

**Ad Hoc XP:** Ordinarily Zobota and his thugs would be a CR 6. Since they divide their attacks into two distinct encounters, one nonlethal the other lethal, split the experience awards between the two attacks (CR 2 for the nonlethal attack and CR 4 for the lethal attack). If the GM allows the thugs time to heal between these encounters, use the full CR 6 for the second attack.

## THE GUESTHOUSE CONSTRUCTION YARD

Labienus Gouille started his exploration in the construction yard at the Old Guesthouse of the church of Adhelmus Oxda. From the bottom of the dry water well in the building's basement, he cleared

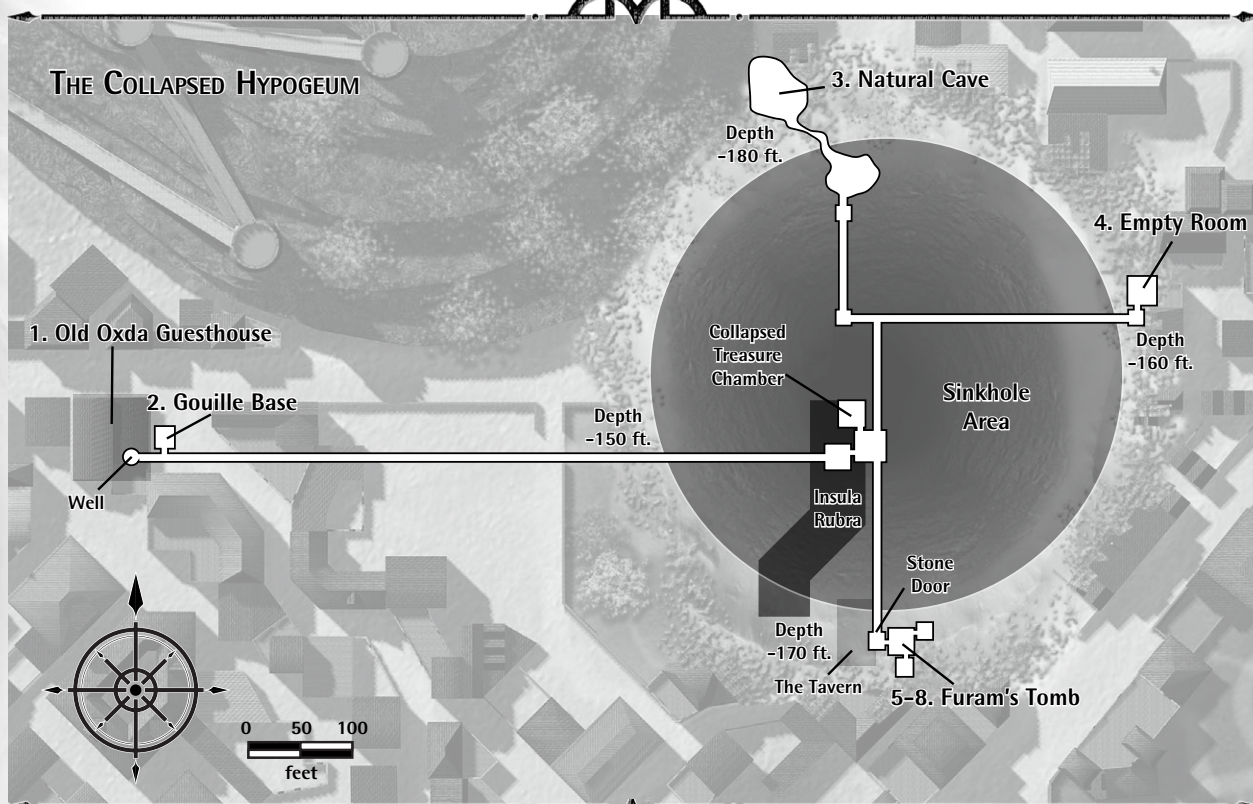
## THE TRUTH ON KING FURAM

Although legends depict him as a handsome and heroic king, as it often happens, King Furam was actually a pudgy, vicious tyrant and an able, ruthless manipulator. King Furam died after acquiring a *periapt of foul rotting* during his last campaign. Unfortunately for Furam, once he fell ill, his shamans began wishing for his death, and instead of curing him simply accelerated his demise. The greedy shamans also stole most of the king's treasure, leaving just a little to save appearances at the King's funeral. To prevent intruders from discovering their sham and to further punish their selfish ruler, they animated a troop of skeletons to guard the tomb. Lastly, they placed another cursed object the dead king's hand—a fetish capable of summoning Furam's soul from the abyss in a hideous and tragicomic demonic form.

a passage into the hypogeum with the aid of a *disintegrate* spell.

Evidence collected by the PCs' prior investigations infer that the architect uncovered something beneath the Guesthouse. If the PCs fail to investigate the site of their own volition, one of the sight workers approaches them with his concerns about a strange incident in which he overheard the architect speaking to an unknown individual about the goings on beneath the Guesthouse. To investigate the site openly, the PCs need to sequester permission from the Oxdam, although sneaking in during the night is not too difficult, since no one checks the construction yard except for sporadic patrols performed by the city watch. During the day, a casual conversation with any of the idle workers readily leads to the subject of the dig site's latest architectural oddity—an abandoned water well curiously half-filled with concrete, seemingly to consolidate the foundations of later structures. Upon discovery of the well, Gouille ordered the workers to clear it out. The well sits in the southeast corner of the Guesthouse, covered by aged wooden planks. Elsewhere in the room, the original builders left behind sacks of gravel, sand and lime necessary to finish the job. Occupying the remainder of the room stands a dust covered hoist and a massive pile debris left over from the recent excavation.

**Developments:** At the bottom of the pit, an *illusory wall* masks the tunnel leading to the hypogeum (see Area 1).



## THE TRUNCATED TUNNELS

Besides the well under the Old Oxa Guesthouse, the PCs can gain access to all the surviving areas of the hypogeum via the sinkhole. The openings of four truncated tunnels, located at different depths of 150 feet or more, lie almost invisible from the surface due to the corrugation of the sinkhole walls and the fact that sunlight hardly reaches them. A PC must stand within 50 feet of an opening to spot it. At greater ranges, the PC must succeed a DC 15 Perception check. Conversely, an *illusory wall* conceals the tunnel to the south, which cannot be detected short of probing its 10-foot-square area of effect. Gouille cast the permanent illusion while using a *levitate* spell to survey the circumference of the sinkhole.

**Developments:** PCs who recovered the plumb line from the architect's subterranean basement (see *Area 2*), can attempt a DC 10 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check to correctly use the device to locate tunnel openings.

## THE COLLAPSED HYPOGEUM

In ancient times, svirfneblin (deep gnomes) dug the hypogeum to mine a calcite deposit, though they abandoned it long before the Great City's recorded history. Despite of centuries of flooding and earthquakes, its barrel-vaulted tunnels remain solid. Moreover, during his solitary explorations, Gouille

used earth-based magic to remove sediments and fill cracks where time and natural damage once created serious hindrances. Unless otherwise noted, the tunnel ceilings are 10 feet high, while its cavernous rooms climb upwards of 20 feet.

## I. DRY WELL (CR 1)

The well beneath the Old Oxa Guesthouse was dug a centuries before the construction of the present building. Originally site of an ancient shrine, there the petitioners once performed ritual sacrifices into the dark and ominous pit. The perpendicular carvings of the well are almost completely smooth, and oddly decorated with primitive bas-reliefs of fish-tailed sprites that ancients carved in the living rock to propitiate locating changing water stratum. Planks now cover the pit while the hoist used to clear it from debris has been disassembled. PCs can attempt a DC 20 Climb check (DC 0 with a rope) or *levitate* down 140 feet to safely descend the pit. At the bottom, an *illusory wall* conceals a sloping passage created with a *disintegrate* spell. The passage continues eastward into the hypogeum.

**Creature:** After Gouille's death Ashlar, his small elemental familiar, went mad. Trapped upon the Material Plane, Ashlar now roams the subterranean passages near the architect's underground base. Aggressively hostile, he immediately attacks any intruders.



## XP 400

Small earth elemental

hp 13; see *Pathfinder Bestiary* page 122.

## TACTICS

**Before Melee:** As soon as he senses intruders attempting to descend into the well, Ashlar uses his earth glide ability to position himself behind a sprite figure about 70 feet above the pit bottom. If the PCs attempt to climb down the well using non-magical means, Ashlar waits for the opportunity for an intruder to pass near his chosen sprite figure, so he can pop out suddenly and startle her. If this occurs, the targeted PC must make a DC 11 Will save or become shaken for 1 round. A shaken character must immediately succeed a DC 12 Climb check or slip and tumble into the pit below.

**During Melee:** Ashlar is an ambush attacker. He relies heavily on hit-and-run tactics, using earth glide to change his position when ever possible. Retaining cover, he emerges from the rock only partially when making attacks. He specifically targets climbing opponents, taking advantage of the fact that they lose their Dexterity bonus to AC and must make DC 12 Climb checks to avoid falling whenever they take damage.

**Moral:** Ashlar attacks only as long as he can keep his opponents precariously positioned in the well shaft. As soon as they reach the bottom, he flees, retreating to Area 2 to defend his master's belongings. There, the maddened elemental fights until destroyed.

## 2. GOUILLE'S BASE

*Water stains on the walls of this subterranean room mark the many times it has flooded over the centuries. Pushed against one of the walls sit a wooden, pitch-coated chest, five clay vases, and a pair of gallon-sized bottles plugged with wax-sealed corks.*

**Treasure:** Both bottles contain strong red wine, while the vases contain five different kinds of pickled edibles—gherkins, olives, onions, shallots and mushrooms. The waterproof wooden chest contains Gouille's spelunking equipment—50 ft. of rope, a heavy woolen blanket with a matching pillow, a miner's steel hat, thick leather gloves, a pickaxe, a hooded lantern, 6 flasks of burning oil, two sunrods, and 12 torches. The chest also contains five leather scroll tubes, of which only two contain scrolls (*illusory wall* and *move earth*). Finally, a smaller casket within the chest contains the following items: 8 pieces of writing chalk, a tinderbox, a silver cup worth 25 gp (taken from the collapsed treasure chamber), and a makeshift plumb line.

**Developments:** The plumb line is made with a

tarnished and ancient-looking piece of lead fixed to the end of a long, 170-foot hemp cord. Anyone inspecting the lead weight can attempt a DC 20 Craft check to determine it was fashioned from an old sling bullet. Gouille created the plumb line to mark the position of the *illusory wall* that hides the entrance to King Furam's tomb. He intended to give it to Sörgo Cobagan to direct his hired aides.

The plumb line radiates faint universal magic. If the PCs inspect it with *read magic*, see *invisibility*, or a more powerful spell, they discover an *arcane mark* inscription. It reads, "Use me at noon." (see *handout #1*).

The inscription can be interpreted to mean that the plumb line must be dropped from the southernmost point of the sinkhole's edge. When this is done, the lead plunges right into the *illusory wall*, revealing its position. If PC get stuck interpreting the message, a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check recalls that the positions on the hands of a clock are often used to tell direction.

## 3. NATURAL CAVE

This truncated tunnel is slightly larger than the others and irregularly shaped. It opens on the sinkhole's wall at a depth of 180 feet. A thin trickle of murky water drips from its jagged mouth and plunges into the abyss below.

The tunnel, roughly hewn in the natural rock, leads to a natural limestone cave, where several subterranean rivulets flow into a shallow pool. A dozen man-sized standing stones encircle the pool.

A DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check infers the stones were probably some type of crudely carved humanoid statues, however centuries of flooding have eroded them almost beyond recognition.

**Creatures:** One stormy night, a few weeks after the Sinking, the gaping hole attracted a passing dire bat. Spotting the cave tunnels, the creature decided they might make a safe place to hide conveniently near an area ripe with the opportunity to feast on fresh blood.

If the PCs descend more than 100 feet into sinkhole to explore its shadowy walls, or make noise near the opening of one of the truncated tunnels, there is a 50% chance that the bat wings across the sinkhole and attacks them, even during the day. Note that the monster's blindsense makes it substantially immune to *illusionary wall*.

## Dire Bat

CR 2

## XP 600

hp 22; *Pathfinder Bestiary* page 30

THE PLUMB LINE

## 4. EMPTY ROOM

This truncated tunnel opens into the sinkhole's wall at a depth of 160 feet. It leads to a completely empty room that contains nothing but shattered pottery. Inside one of the broken vases, now partially scattered on the floor, rest a score of sling bullets. A DC Craft (weaponsmithing) deduces they are of similar origin to the one Gouille used to make the plumb line found in Area 2.

## 5. TOMB ENTRANCE

Gouille's *illusory wall* masks the entrance of this truncated tunnel. Beyond the illusion, a carved passage leads to a massive stone door. The carving of a tall human figure that adorns the door's surface has almost been completely flattened and defaced by centuries of erosion. Hewn from a 1-foot-thick slab of limestone, weathering has cemented it to the surrounding walls and in order to continue, the door must be broken down. Fortunately, phenomena both recent and ancient have considerably weakened it (hardness 7, hit points 90, Break DC 25).

Beyond the door lies a 15-foot-square room with several dozen intact clay urns and amphora. The containers hold only the decayed sediments of food and drink offerings dating to an earlier millennium.

## 6. OSSUARY (CR 4)

This 25-foot-square room serves as a ceremonial ossuary. Strewn into a low depression in the middle of the floor rest the bones of scores of Furam's warriors that fell during the campaign preceding his death. The walls were once carved with many figures and inscriptions, but centuries of erosion have rendered them illegible.

**Creatures:** King Furam's shamans animated six skeletons to guard this location against trespassers. The skeletons lie hidden, buried within the massive repository of bones. As soon as they perceive the presence of intruders, spring out and to attack. The skeletons are unarmed and unarmored.

### Ossuary Skeleton (6)

CR 1/3

XP 135

Alternate skeleton; see *Pathfinder Bestiary* page 250





**NE** Medium undead

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 12, flat footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

**hp** 4 (1d8)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2; channel resistance +2

**DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +2 (1d4+2)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

**Feats** Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>.

## 7. COFFER ROOM

*Within this room rests a large coffer of tarnished lead surrounded by a collection of worthless clay offering vases.*

A successful DC 15 Perception check uncovers ancient letters engraved across the cover lid which read the phrase “Furam-Kator”. The coffer is unlocked, but the lid is stuck and opening it requires some force (hardness 9, hit points 30, Break DC 23).

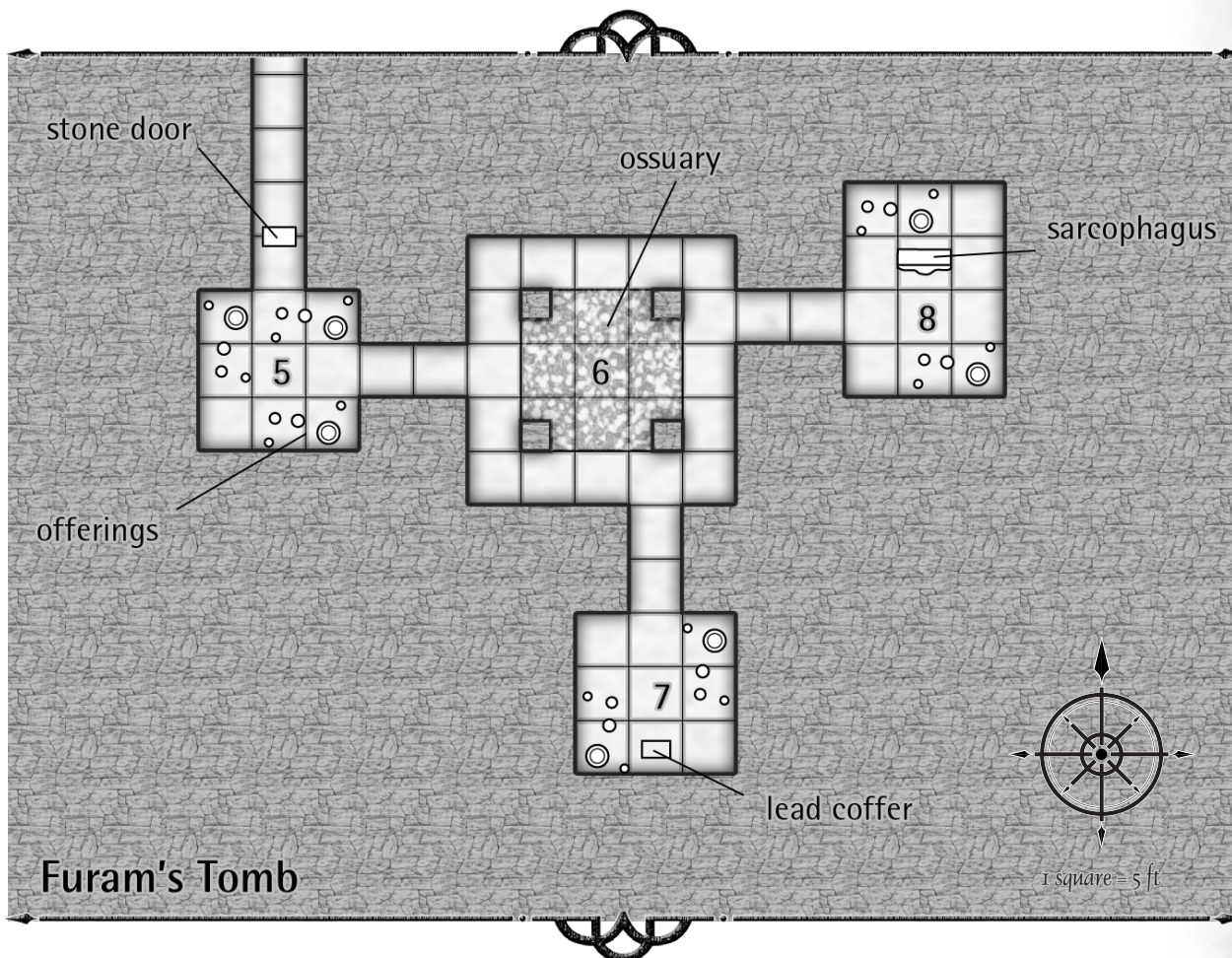
**Treasure:** Inside the coffer, bundled carefully in the

crumbling remains of once precious textiles, rest six sealed urns and a 1-foot-tall, blackened statuette of a cloaked, lion-headed warrior. The clay urns are extremely heavy, and can be opened only shattering them. Each urn holds several hundred tarnished coins. Oddly enough, the coins are blank, valueless pieces of lead coated with a thin, flaking layer of gold leaf. The blackened statuette is made of solid silver and worth 50 gp.

**Development:** “Furam-Kator” is the full name of the deceased king, likely used by his shaman for magical and ritual purposes, as a PC making a successful DC 20 Knowledge check (either arcana or religion) can assume. Should anyone say the King’s full name aloud within the tomb, the fetish in the sarcophagus calls the dead king’s spirit into the Material Plane (see *Area 8*).

## 8. SARCOPHAGUS (CR 5)

This room contains an anthropomorphic limestone sarcophagus, whose features, like the ones of the stone slab at the entrance, have been eroded beyond recognition. Lead cramps keep its impossibly heavy lid fixed to the base (hardness 7, hit points 180, Break DC 27). Opening the sarcophagus reveals the skeleton of the dead king amid decayed textile remains and rusted fragments of chainmail.



**Treasure:** Furam's corpse is adorned with a golden headband encrusted with semi-precious stone worth 400 gp, a matching signet ring with a carved gem depicting a lion's head worth 100 gp, and a score amber beads scattered among the remains of his furry cloak worth 10 gp each. The only funerary trappings that have passed the test of time are an amethyst pendant on the corpse's neck (the *periapt of foul rotting* that caused Furam's death) and a diminutive clay replica of the statuette found in the coffer room (*Area 7*), clenched in his left fist.

**Developments:** The clay replica is a potent fetish capable of summoning the king's soul in demonic form. If the PCs speak the ritual name of King Furam aloud at any time after defeating the troop of skeletons in the ossuary (see *Area 6*), the fetish summons his demonic soul. Its grotesque and demonic tripartite form materializes in the ossuary (see *Area 6*).

It materializes first as a towering, cloaked warrior wearing a golden lion mask. When first encountered, he remains silent for a few moments, maintaining a solemn and terrible countenance. Then the masked warrior bursts into a loud, unnatural, and strangely trine fit of laughter. Shedding his cloak and dropping his mask, he reveals his true aspect—three identical

dretches standing one on top of the other. The small demons, each of which represents a fragment of the king's sordid and capricious soul, immediately jump forward to attack. If defeated, the dretches can again be summoned by speaking Furam's ritual name, but only after a 24-hour period passes. To banish them for good, the PCs must crush the clay fetish (hardness 5, hp 5, Break DC 12) in the sarcophagus or remove it from the tomb.

### Dretches (3)

CR 2

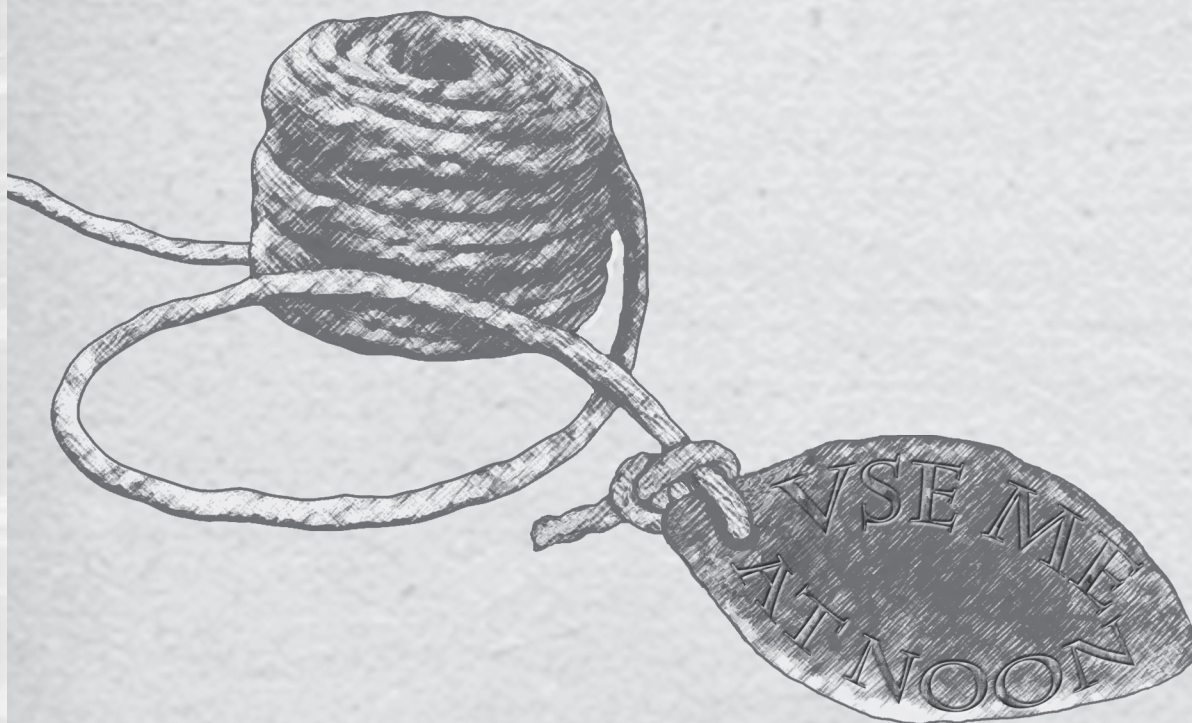
XP 600

hp 18; see *Pathfinder Bestiary* page 60

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Despite discovering King Furam's tomb and surviving its perils, the PCs still cannot claim a reward for finding the missing architect. Neither have they recovered a legendary treasure. Worse, one of the few items they recovered from the fabled tomb carries dangerous curse. Still, the PCs exploits have earned them precious experience and knowledge. Furthermore, they have interacted with the terrifying sinkhole as never before. Having acquired a taste for its secrets, who knows what might come next...

HANDOUT #1







\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations



# POLITICS UNUSUAL

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When a headstrong Azindralean politician seeks to launch a campaign to seize control of his district, his chief security officer hires the PCs to ensure his enemies cannot transform his opening speech into a riot. Emphasizing wit and subtlety; they must siphon through the crowd of followers and disperse potential troublemakers as peacefully as possible. Under no circumstances should they besmirch the campaign of hope with bloodshed. Yet even if they succeed, a final enemy plots their demise. He only waits for their victory to trick them into lowering their guards.

This adventure is part of the Great City: The Sinking adventure serial. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It was designed using the Pathfinder RPG system and intended for a group of 4<sup>th</sup>-level Player Characters.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure offers the PCs the opportunity to partake in the rise of yet another attempt at social reform. Hired to keep the peace during a political rally lead by an Azindralean upstart named Adzas Cienst. The PCs must use their wits and skills to quell several upstarts within the crowd before they can disrupt the event or worse, transform it into a scene of violence. Each time the PCs prevent a disruption, they earn a number of Victory Points, which they can spend throughout the adventure to influence their actions. Once the rally reaches a successful conclusion, the PCs accompany the politician to a celebratory party. Along the way they face a final nemesis, a demonically-possessed wizard intent on slaying Adzas and any who dare to support him.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Recent events have unsettled many of the Great City's citizens, particularly the working class and poor Azindralean's living in the immediate vicinity that were hit hardest by the tragedy. Still, not all the have fallen into hopelessness. For local politician Adzas Cienst, the Sinking has provided him a new angle to advance his political career. A loyal Azindralean, he refused change his name to hide his background; even after his advisors told him it was in his best interest. Adzas has remained very much a people's politician— not a great one, nor one with great power.

In a recent dream, Adzas saw himself speaking to a throng at the edge of the growing sinkhole. He remembers not what he said, but he knows it

was powerful enough to sway all the onlookers into believing in him, enough to make him the most powerful councilman in the Great City. He awoke with an epiphany—the Korteziens have not moved to help anyone near the sinkhole. Adzas perceived their failure to act as an opportunity to charge the common people to his support and wrest some control from the Korteziens majority within the courts. Calling in Janaseva Boroft, his councilor and head of his personal security, Adzas described his dream along with his intentions to reenact it. While Janaseva tried to convince him otherwise, the hardheaded politician remained determined. The inability to dissuade Adzas from the potential danger of launching a very public and large scale, pro-Azindralean campaign in support of his council chair forced Janaseva to take a different tack. He must call on outsiders to keep things calm and safe. Well aware of the PC's recent movements in the City, Janaseva Boroft seeks them out to ask for their cooperation on this delicate mission.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when a pair of finely attired barristers approaches the PCs. These low-level patrons request the PCs accept an invitation to meet with their boss, Janaseva Boroft, at a fine eatery in the Residence Ward. As one of the barristers hands the PCs an envelope, a mummer's play begins. As a casual aside, the other barrister informs the PCs that he recently heard fine reviews about gnomish troupe, much as the PCs themselves have attracted positive notice among those watching over the concerns of the Great City. The pair then moves to a roadside stall and order a meal before roving back to the court library where they work.

The formal invitation reads:

*Having heard of your recent accomplishments, I would very much like to introduce you to my employer, the esteemed Councilman Adzas Cienst. Please join us the Three Swords just after dusk, on the 'morrow.*

*Sincerely,  
Janaseva Boroft  
Advisor to the Councilman*

PCs may attempt Knowledge (local) or (nobility) checks reveal various facts about Adzas and Janaseva.

**DC 10:** The two men are extremely dedicated to furthering the Azindralean strength in the High Council of the Great City.

**DC 15:** Janaseva has many ties to unscrupulous organizations, but no one believes he is a gangster.

## PLOT HOOKS

If PCs have qualms about pursuing the dinner invitation, consider adding the following hooks.

1. The PCs have political aspirations themselves (or belong to the Azindralean Peoples' Front tong)\*. They hold the Azindralean ideals high and want to promote the underdog's platform. Adzas is a persuasive speaker and his followers are fervent in their support. The barristers play up Adzas' ability to make political inroads easier if the PCs help with the plan. This hook plays heavily on any Azindralean PC background.  
\*The Great City's Player's Guide details the APF tong.
2. Even in the best of times, most citizens have difficulty obtaining a private residence within the Great City. The barristers suggest Janaseva could make it very easy for the PCs to acquire a choice piece of property at a reasonable price, as well as have the paperwork filed in an amazingly short time. As an added bonus, they suggest that if the PCs perform especially well, they'll assure the turnover of the title and bill of sale as soon as all the dust settles from the catastrophe.
3. Janaseva keeps a campaign slush fund to pay off bribes and other things of which Adzas is unaware. The barristers suggest Janaseva intends to greatly compensate for their trouble.
4. If the PCs are Korteziian or supporters the Korteziian occupation, any number of important Korteziian contacts requests to see the PCs note. The same individual presses the PCs to accept Janaseva's invitation and act as a spy to determine his true motivations. The more powerful Korteziians perceive Adzas as little more than a pawn in a larger game. They would rather he claim his position openly, making it far easier for them to monitor his actions. They also want to prevent less insightful dissenters from performing some foolish act of violence and turning Adzas into another martyr. They request the PCs play along with Janaseva's plot, enjoy the spoils of whatever he offers them, and if possible get in good with the Azindralean opposition.

Though quick to anger in the courts, Adzas speaks from the heart and keeps his word if he can.

A successful DC 15 Bardic Knowledge check recalls the story of Adzas' ancestor, Adda Edaccs, a notorious rebel leader in the first occupation of the City. Adda was a staunch defender of a small tribe of Azindraleans who fought bravely against the invading Korteziians. Adzas keeps a journal of his ancestor in his home and wears Adda's charm around his neck; handed down through the generations.

## PART ONE: THE DELICATE BALANCE

The Three Swords is a small, upscale restaurant decorated in the style of Old Azindralea and specializes in traditional cuisine. The main dining room contains about a dozen booths and sixteen tables. All the silverware matches and the linens are clean. The back room sits an area separated from the main room by a short hall and a sliding 'pocket' door past the restrooms, and across from the stairs leading to the basement. The room's furnishings consist of low tables surrounded by plush couches and overstuffed chairs. Heavy tapestries cover the walls while a pair of gaslight chandeliers provides dim lighting.

**Janaseva** (N male human rogue 8) spots the PCs enter, and moves to greet them. Short, but well built, hard-faced, and quick to smile. He seems to see everything within his vision. His eyes constantly move, but never ignore those he is talking to as he scans everything in sight. He first introduces himself, and then whisks the PCs to the bar to meet Adzas Cienet. **Adzas** (CG male human expert 7, Diplomacy +14; Cha 19) is clearly a native Azindralean with a stocky build, a dark complexion, and constant 5-o'clock shadow. He greets the PCs with open arms and overabundant joy. He smiles and orders drinks for everyone as they sit around the corner booth, then begs his guests' permission to be excused for a moment while he goes to another table to glad-hand a noble and his family. From the table, Janaseva keeps a cautious eye over Adzas as he kisses the foreheads of noble's children. Once sure that the politician is fully engaged, he turns his attention back to the PCs to give them the following pitch.

*Foul times we are experiencing these days, my friends. If you did your research, you know who we are and what we want for in the Great City. The honorable Adzas Cienet dreamed of capturing the peoples' fervor and riding that wave to a windfall of support for his beliefs. He wants to hold a rally to make an impassioned speech near the site of the destruction and bolster the peoples' flagging spirit. I believe he can do it. He has a way with the people and those damned Korteziians have done nothing for those suffering down where the world*



*is eating itself. We have watched you and noted your thoroughness in your recent successes in fighting for the downtrodden here in the Great City. I would like you to act as adjunct security staff as Adzas makes this speech. Can you do that?*

Just as the PCs attempt to start questioning the details of the project, Adzas returns. He laughs as he asks everyone to not discuss politics at dinner. A few times during the meal he casually asks the PCs if they are ready to join his vision, but stops talking long enough to hear their answer. Servers bring forth a mouthwatering array of breads, exotic wines, thick soups, tasty pastas, and finally, a fruit tart for dessert. Throughout the evening Adzas leaves the table many times to press the flesh of other nobles as they enter the restaurant. Finally, after nearly three hours of visiting and feasting, Janaseva suggests Adzas retire for the evening and rest up for the next few days. With two firm claps, two large men appear, seemingly from the shadows to safely escort the politician home. Janaseva assures him he's in good company and that he'll be along in a few shortly, as soon as he makes sure he leaves the PCs well attended. After Adzas excuses himself, Janaseva leads the PCs to a back room filled with pipe smoke and a tray of coffee and brandy. There, he hastily presents them with the following message.

*Apologies for my unusual proceedings, however I have little time to speak candidly concerning my true purpose. Adzas is a great man, but a reckless politician who has made numerous enemies. I need you to protect him during his appearance the day after tomorrow. He will not accept any sort of trickery on my part. No illusions, no disguises, no magic; though he consented to a mage armor. If you agree, we will scout out a good place to hold this rally tomorrow. During the speech, you cannot attack a disruption openly; we want this to look as if it is completely peaceful. Your expertise in quick decisions is going to be tested.*

Janaseva waits to confirm the PCs response, and to set a price for their services should they request compensation. Initially, he hopes to pay off the PCs with the promise of a converted industrial space (see page 86-87 of *Great City Player's Guide*). The building is theirs for two years completely free before taxes fall on the PCs' responsibility. If pressured for another form of payment Janaseva concedes, though he avoids offering a standard monetary reward if he can get the PCs to accept something else. Offers of legal help, court-side seats for sporting events or actual days in court, brothel visits, and more are at Janaseva's fingertips. He and his organization have connections to a variety of people and can make things happen behind the scenes. If PCs refuse these offers and demand money to complete this mission, Janaseva makes the process very complicated. He attempts instead to get the PCs to

accept compensation in goods such as livestock, art, artifacts, property, or other similar valuables. Payment in livestock require care and permits to sell in the Great City while artifacts and rare trinkets come with added a fees to retrieve from a storage facility. He does give the PCs about half what they demand in coins or ingots (preferably copper or silver pieces) and turns over the rest of the payment in these difficult-to-liquidate items. To make these offers seem more enticing, he offers the PC 1.5 X the amount of treasure for an encounter equal to their APL; however the hidden costs associated with claiming the wealth ultimately bring the net total back to the appropriate level.

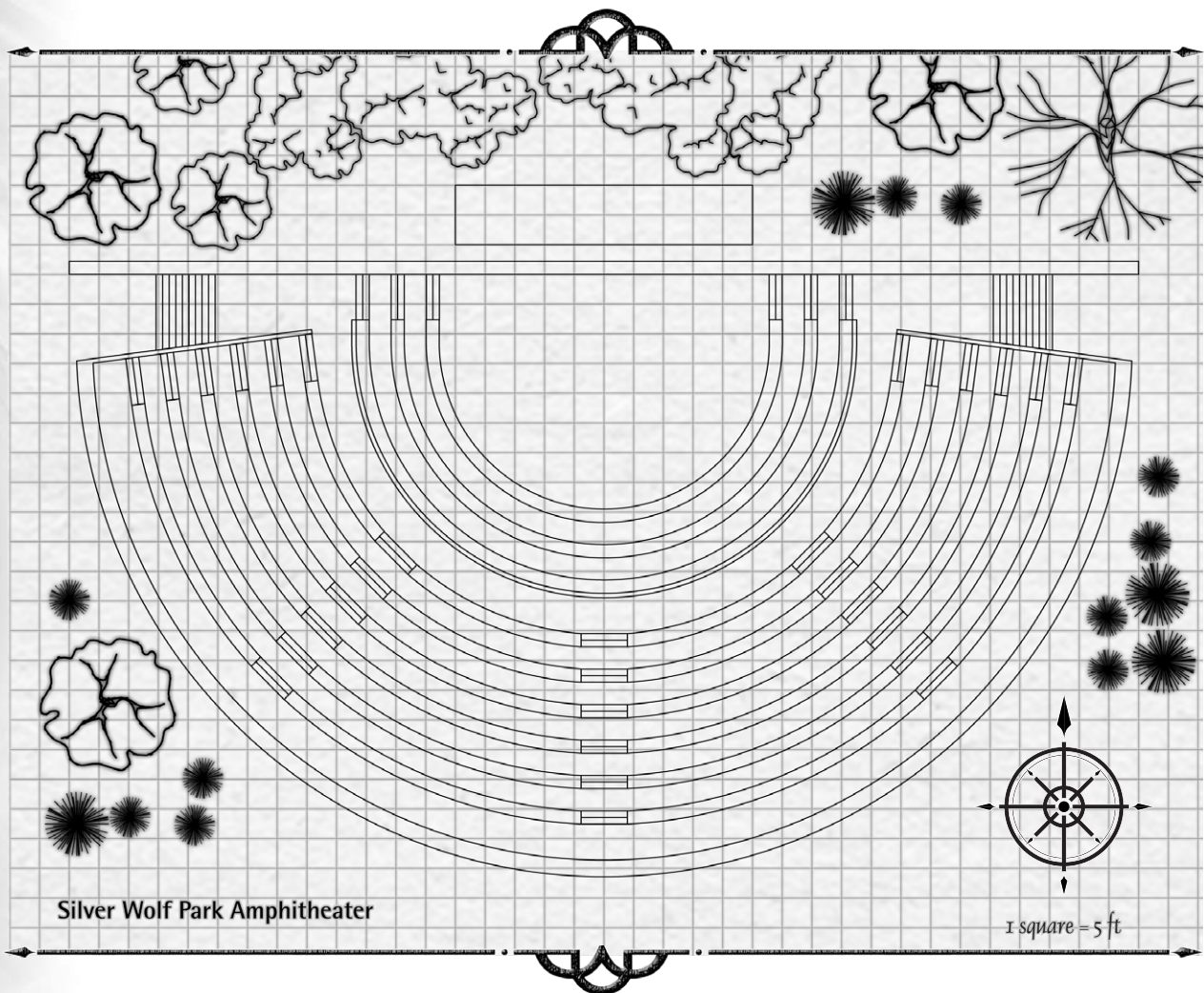
After settling their agreements, Janaseva entreats the PCs to stay as long as they like and drink their fill of coffee and brandy; the pipe tobacco too, is on the house. Then, just before excusing himself from the room, he requests the PCs meet him at the Silver Wolf Park near the sinkhole at noon the next day.

## PART TWO: PLANS UNDERWAY

In this section, the PCs meet with Janaseva to preplan their mission and survey the speech grounds before the actual event take place. The surveying involves a few skill checks. Depending on your group's style of play, GM's whose PCs are unconcerned with the details of the event and just want to get to the action, can bypass this section and proceed to *Part Three*.

Silver Wolf Park is a small green area on the outskirts of the Tradesward. Chest-high rock wall surrounds a grassy area with a croquet field and a few fruit trees, as well as the small amphitheater comprised of a concrete half-shell with a graduated set of landings facing it. It seats near 300 people. A sizable crack runs through the half-shell, though it remains structurally sound. Behind the amphitheater, rise the stone foundations and chimneys of a dozen Azindralean homes burnt during the first Kortezean occupation. Azindralean rebels have since cemented the remains together to create monuments as a memorial to the massacre. Calling them the Amaa Stands, they still rise even in this tragedy. The Stands aren't actually in the Park, but can be seen from the amphitheater. Conversely, the recent seismic activity has pounded all the buildings along the northwestern quarter of the Park to rubble.

Arriving at Silver Wolf Park, the PCs readily spot Janaseva standing near the small shrine at the entrance. He tosses a twist of paper into the bowl and gestures over his heart, then turns to face them. After a pleasant greeting, he explains the basics of the event to them.



To begin, read or paraphrase the following:

*I have scouted this location to utilize as the backdrop for Adzas' speech. He will find inspiration here in the park to tell the throng what he needs to say to get them on his side, for near this site, the ancestor of his clan fell during the sacking of the Great City by those Korteziens.*

*Upon this stage, Adzas will present a 45-minute impassioned speech. Then, he shall descend into the crowd to speak to the common folk up by the barricade. During that time, a bard will play Azindralean protest songs onstage. For the final 15 minutes, Adzas will return to the stage to directly address a few concerns from the crowd. During the entire time, your job is to keep the peace. You must do your job seamlessly. The crowd must never know what is going on. We know a few political enemies caught wind of this stump speech, and are planning to disrupt it. Adzas has a keen ear for crowd reactions and wants to inspire the people to join him in getting a high seat on the council. We cannot have chaos during the event. Do what you have to do, but do it quietly. We can cover most of your moves. Watch for two men in the crowd carrying bouquets of carnations. If you need help, give one of them the high sign and they will create a distraction to allow you to take out an opponent quickly.*

After a brief tour of the area, one of Janaseva's barristers summons him to an urgent matter. He bids the PCs adieu and the leaves the park.

The PCs are free to explore the area as long as they would like. They can attempt Perception checks to learn the following information.

**DC 10:** The amphitheater looks solid and with no visible "sniper nests".

**DC 15:** The sewer system does not run under the Silver Wolf Park or the amphitheater. This check requires an hour of traipsing through the mucky sewers to confirm.

**DC 18:** The "Amaa Stands" provide an obvious choice for a pro-Azindralean rally. The stands are comprised of chimneys and cornerstones; the only structures left standing after a rout and pyre on this very spot. A DC 10 Bardic Knowledge or Knowledge (local or history) check details the history of the bloody battle against families harboring Azindralean rebels during the sacking of the Great City.

**DC 24:** Ominously dark clouds threaten to break over the City, though Janaseva swears the rains will not fall during the speech.



## PART THREE: "THE DAY..."

In this section, the PCs hide within the crowd, poised to diffuse any sign of trouble. During the speech, the PC must face six encounters. The GM may introduce the various encounters using key phrases from Adzas' speech. Each encounter provides the PCs an opportunity to earn varying number of Victory Points. Alter these points based on the player's actions and roleplaying as you see fit. PCs can spend the Victory Points in two ways. They can use them early to summon one of two distractions from Janaseva's bouquet bearers, or to "whatever they do" in the final encounter (see *Part Four*). After the PCs complete the encounters, proceed to Part Four: The Final Solution.

Begin Part Three by reading or paraphrasing the following:

*Despite the promise of rain, a huge turnout of commoners flock to the park, crowding the amphitheater and spilling out onto the greens. The throng continues to grow even as Adzas takes the stage.*

*His voice is clear, strong, and assured as he greets the onlookers, and he speaks candidly without fear.*

*"Good people! Hear me now! The time of tragedy is our time! Where are the Korteziens? Not here! Not in these streets! They know this is not their tragedy, but ours! Because they know that Azindralea is ours! It is time for us to reclaim what we have lost! It is time for us to take back what they owe us! Our rights as citizens of the Great City!"*

Immediately, Adzas sweeps the crowd up with his words and they respond with deafening applause.

Adzas only reads from a few notes as he addresses the crowd, making them feel as if speaking to each of them personally.

### ENCOUNTER ONE: THE MARTYR

*...Yes, the noble people of the Great City know what is going on down here near the sinkhole. But do they want to pay attention? Do they want to get dirty and really count the costs?*

In this encounter, a martyr attempts to immolate himself before the horrified crowd. The PCs have four rounds to prevent him from succeeding. In the first round, the martyr nervously douses himself in a flammable liquid while others nearby move away from him. In the second round, he sits down and digs through his robes for a tindertwig. In the third round, a crowd forms a small circle around the martyr as he prays aloud to the Azindralean god of vengeance. In the fourth round, he finishes his

prayers and attempts to set himself alight.

Anyone making a DC 22 Perception check can spots the martyr's curious movements during the first round. If spotted, the PCs can reach him by the second round. If unsuccessful, allow the PCs a second DC 16 Perception check to notice the circle forming around the man. Again, the PCs have the opportunity to reach him before the end of the next round. If the PCs fail to spot both actions, the martyr succeeds. He catches fire and runs screaming through the crowd forcing the PCs to deal with the consequences.

**The Martyr: Rache Jabel** (male human Com 1; Ref +2, Will +1, 4 hp) is a man with nothing to lose. When the sinkhole opened, he watched his home crumble into the gaping abyss along with his eldest child who was trapped on the roof as the building as it fell. He has spent the last few hours steeling himself on strong alcohol in order to go through with his plan to make people notice the devastation of the sinkhole. He carries a glass jug of the potent drink to douse himself. His morale is extremely low and any sort of 'sign' from above will stay his hand before he lights the tindertwig. Rache's current state makes him extremely susceptible to illusory magic. *Create water* and *mage hand* are two spells that PCs could use to diffuse this encounter quickly and quietly. *Unseen servant* and *jump* could help get to the martyr before his act commences. Using the PCs' Diplomacy skill to calm emotions or Sense Motive skill to predict action could help the PCs quickly determine the best course of action. If the PCs use one of Janaseva's plants for this encounter, the man drops his bouquet of carnations and casts *pyrotechnics* to shoot sparkly trifles into the air, while shouting, "Long live Adzas Cienset!" This draws most everyone's attention in the crowd.

**Developments:** Stopping this display before its fiery conclusion gives the PCs one Victory Point.

### ENCOUNTER TWO: FISTICUFFS (CR 3)

*...How appropriate we stand here today in Silver Wolf Park; site of one of the decisive battles in the Great City. Behind me are the Amaa Stands. The last remaining architecture of my ancestors...*

A Korteziens political opponent planted a few Talquar troops in the crowd with orders to strike if Adzas mentions the Amaa Stands. Encouraged by their boss Kole Refordt, the grunts begin shoving a few people near them to provoke a fight. As soon as they start shoving, Janaseva alerts the PCs and sends them off to disperse the commotion. As PCs head out he whispers "No blood", hoping the PCs won't attack with lethal force. The PCs have 6 rounds to squash this uprising before it turns bloody.

**Special:** If the PCs need help from an Azindralean plant, the man throws a flask into the troopers that creating an *obscuring mist* (allowing PCs to strike to kill under cover). He then moves away from the crowd and disappears into the city streets.

### Talquar Troopers (4)

CR 1/2 each

XP 200

Male human warrior 1

LN medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor)

hp 6 each (1d10+1)

Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** sap +3 (1d4+2 nonlethal/x2) or whip +0 (1d2+2 nonlethal/x2 plus disarm, reach, trip)

#### TACTICS

**Before Melee:** The troopers attempt start a brawl by shoving crowd members.

**During Combat:** The troopers do not attempt any combat maneuvers and only use their whips for intimidation.

**Morale:** As soon as three of his allies fall, the remaining warrior flees.

#### STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 12

**Feats** Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (sap)

**Skills** Intimidate +4

**Languages** Common

**Gear** sap, whip, studded leather, 1 thunderstone kept in a small leather pouch, Talquar troop ring (3gp), 11 sp.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Talquar Fierceness (Talquar trait):** Once per day, if a trooper fails a saving throw against fear, he can attempt a second roll, disregarding the first result. He must use results of the second roll.

### Kole Refordt

CR 2

XP 600

Male human rogue 2

N medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 armor); 20% miss chance

hp 11 (2d8+4)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will -1, evasion

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** *goatsfinger* +3 (1d4+3 nonlethal/x2)

**Special Attacks** rogue talent (combat trick), sneak attack (+1d6), trapfinding

#### TACTICS

**Before Melee:** Kole drinks a *potion of blur* before attacking.

**During Melee:** Kole wields his *goatsfinger* and uses his underlings to set up sneak attacks.

**Morale:** Kole fights until his thugs are defeated or until dropped below 5 hp, at which point he consumes his *potion of invisibility* and attempts to escape.

#### STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 14

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Intimidate)

**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Bluff +2, Climb +3, Disable Device +4, Intimidate +5, Perception +1, Sense Motive +1, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

**Languages** Common

**Gear** *goatsfinger*, +1 studded leather, *potion of invisibility*, 1 thunderstone kept in a small leather pouch, Talquar troop ring (3gp), 11 sp.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Talquar Fierceness (Talquar trait):** Once per day, if a trooper fails a saving throw against fear, he can attempt a second roll, disregarding the first result. He must use results of the second roll.

### Goatsfinger

Aura moderate enchantment; CL 10th

Slot —; Price 4,602 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

A snide social commentary on the ruler of the Great City, a *goatsfinger* is a +1 sap filled with bits of iron and lead used by some members of the local constabulary. In addition to its utility to break up rowdy revelers, 5 times per day, on a successful melee attack, the wielder can choose to paralyze his opponent for 10 rounds (Will DC 17 negates). Each round on its turn, the subject may attempt a new saving throw to end the effect; this is a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *hold monster*; **Cost** 2,301 gp, 185 XP.

**Developments:** Defeating or driving the troopers off without combat gives the PCs two Victory Points. Killing any of the troopers costs the PCs one Victory Point. If instead, the PCs allow the troopers to molest the crowd for more than one round, they lose one Victory Point.



## ENCOUNTER THREE: THE VEGETABLES (CR 3)

...none of the men or the ladies of the Temple Ward deigns to look down at this chaos. Sure, those few servants of the true gods are trying their best to help those in need; but the usurpers' gods? They never conceived...

A trio of Kortezyan adepts arrived with an array of almost-rotten vegetables. These charismatic men pass some of the vegetables around in their immediate area; trying to arm the throng to toss the food at Adzas. Soon after, they begin launching their produce at the stage in attempt to disrupt the rally.

During the first three rounds, the trio tosses vegetables on stage, trying to hit Adzas. The fourth round, 1d4 stressed onlookers join in the onslaught. If the vegetables continue to fly by the eighth round, Janaseva sends out a jester to eat the tossed food and make sport of the original menace. The jester drapes his foppish attire to make a mockery the Kortezyan clergymen's robes and then smears the vegetable all over his body in an orgasmic trance captivating the attention of the crowd. The following round, the humiliated clerics flee.

### Tricky Kortezyan Clergy (3)

CR 1 each

XP 400

Male human cleric (trickery) 1

CN medium humanoid

Init -1; Senses Perception +0

### DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (-1 Dex., +5 armor)

hp 9 each (1d8+5)

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +4

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee punching dagger +1 (1d4+1/x3)

### Spells

1st (3) - *disguise self*<sup>(D)</sup>, *entropic shield*, *sanctuary*

0 lvl (3) - *guidance*, *resistance*, *virtue*

### TACTICS

**Before Melee:** Before hurling their vegetables at Adzas, the clerics use their scrolls to bolster their hit points.

**During Melee:** The clerics attempt to keep at least 40 feet apart in order to make it difficult for the PCs to reach them quickly. If forced to fight, they defend themselves with their punching daggers.

**Morale:** As soon as a cleric takes damage or risks being captured, they flee. Fleeing clerics fight to prevent capture, and surrender only if dropped below 4 hp.

### STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13

Base Atk +0; CMB +1; CMD 10

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

Skills Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +1

Languages Common

Gear punching dagger, scale mail, *scroll of bear's endurance*, bronze cloak clasp (feather motif) (5 gp), 8 sp.



## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Copycat (Sp):** These clerics of trickery can create an illusory double of themselves as a move action. This double functions as a single *mirror image* and lasts for one round, or until the destruction or dispelling of the illusory duplicate. They can have no more than one copycat at a time. They can use this ability five times per day.

**Developments:** If the PCs can take care of this encounter before the jester appears, they receive two Victory Points. If they stop the attack before the tenth round, they receive one Victory Point. If the PCs allow the jester and the vegetable attack to continue another two rounds, they earn no Victory Points for the encounter. Janaseva's other plants provide no help during this encounter.

## ENCOUNTER FOUR: FIRE IN THE THEATER (CR 4)

*...it makes my blood boil. And it should make you angry as well. These so-called "caregivers" are only caring for themselves. I want you to know that I truly care for each and every person gathered here...*

The dark clouds that have threatened the speech all day finally break over the crowd. A chill wind blows through the amphitheater and a few resourceful individuals bring three bonfires to life. The people huddle around these warm fires as Adzas continues to harangue the Korteziens and others who have no mercy on the common folk of the Great City.

**Creatures:** The flames provide a focus for a powerful and evil summoner. Having grown tired of Adzas' ramblings; she attempts to cut his rally short by summoning forth 12 augmented fiendish fire beetles from the bonfires. Moments later, she casts *dimension door* to remove herself from the carnage.

## fiendish fire beetles (12)

CR 1/3 each

XP 125

N small fiendish vermin (augmented)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

## DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+1 natural, +1 size)

hp 6 each (1d8+2)

Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0

SR 5

Resist Cold and Fire 5

## OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +3 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks smite good

## STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 11, Con 15, Int --, Wis 10, Cha 7

Base Atk +0; CMB +1; CMD 11 (19 vs. trip)

Skills Fly +2

SQ luminescence

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Luminescence (Ex):** A fire beetle's glowing glands provide light in a 10-foot radius. A dead fire beetle's luminescent glands continue to glow for 1d6 days after its death.

**Smite good:** 1/day as a swift action (adds CHA bonus (+0) to attack rolls and damage bonus equal to HD (+1) against good foes; smite persists until target is dead or the fiendish creature rests).

**Developments:** Though these beasts initially cause quite a stir, the PCs can easily stomp them out as Adzas continues his speech. If they have difficulty, they can get help from Janaseva's plants or the GM can allow a helpful brute of a man to finish off the last few bugs. If the PCs successfully vanquish the beetles without help, they gain one Victory Point; otherwise they gain no Victory Points.

## ENCOUNTER FIVE: THE BARDS PROTEST (CR 5)

This encounter occurs shortly after Adzas enters the crowd to take questions. A pair of loyal Korteziens half-elf bards seeks to end this assembly on a tragic note. They begin by sowing fear throughout the throng. If left unchecked, they battle any individuals onstage with their aural assault.

Once the mob begins to panic, moving through the crowd becomes difficult. A full move requires a DC 20 Strength check, otherwise they can only move at half speed.

**Special:** If the PCs use one of Janaseva's plants against the singers, he hits the duo with *burning hands* then flees, giving the PCs an additional round to counteract their mayhem.

## Maun Zund and Kurk Mahu

CR 3 EACH

XP 800

Male half-elf bard 3

CN medium humanoid

Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +4

## DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 armor)

hp 15 each (3d8+3)

Fort +2, Ref +4; Will +2 (+2 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep

## OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee rapier +4 (1d6+1/18-20 x2)

Special Attacks bardic knowledge, bardic

performance, cantrips, countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +2, inspire courage



+1, versatile performance, well-versed

### Spells

1<sup>st</sup> (5) – *cause fear, expeditious retreat, grease, silent image*

o lvl (at will) – *dancing lights, daze, ghost sound, mage hand, message, prestidigitation*

### TACTICS

**Before Melee:** The bards begin by performing with their ensemble feat, creating an intricate loop of pro-Kortezian melodies to inspire their powers of skill and persuasion.

**During Melee:** The singers drive the crowd to fascination and then to fear, quickly drowning out the less skilled musicians onstage. Adzas tries to compensate with his oratory skills, but the singers' hypnotic powers soon overwhelm him.

**Morale:** If threatened with capture or if dropped below 4 hp, the bards flee.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13

**Feats** Dazzling Display, Ensemble, Skill Focus (Perform)<sup>(B)</sup>

**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Bluff +6, Climb +4, Intimidate +6, Perception +4, Perform (sing) +9, Stealth +4

**Languages** Common, Elven

**Gear** masterwork rapier, chain shirt, 25 sp.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Ensemble (Teamwork):** When you are performing, allies within 20 feet who also have this feat can aid you with your Perform checks (including those made as part of bardic performance) as if they were aiding another as an immediate action. The allies make their aid another rolls before you make your check. No more than four allies can grant you a bonus with aid another. Allies aiding you do not need to use the same category of the Perform skill that you are using in order to aid you.

**Development:** PCs receive two Victory Points if they eliminate the bards' threat without violence, or lose one Victory Point if the fight ends in blood.

## ENCOUNTER SIX: CROWD PARTICIPATION

*...I look out at this sea of well-meaning, overworked faces and I wonder; how happy our ancestors must be to see us bonding together. We are fighting to restore order in this chaos, together. Like...*

This encounter takes place right at the end of Adzas' speech. He speaks reverently of those whose deeds formed the Great City. He stumbles as he speaks of his own family's saga. People in the crowd begin shouting names of famous heroes of the past.

## VICTORY POINTS

If the PCs have a balance of Victory Points by the time they reach the basement of the Three of Swords, modify the final encounter as follows:

**Less than zero Victory Points** – Yemauf has intimidated a few of the staff members to cause confusion and hinder the PCs as they attack Yemauf. Each round, roll a d20. If 10 or higher, Yemauf, or Lakaj receives a +2 bonus on his AC for the round.

**0-3 Victory Points** – Run the encounter as written.

**4-7 Victory Points** – Yemauf does not carry the *wand of vampiric touch*.

**8-9 Victory Points** – Lakaj Ezheras runs away after casting *grease*, and does not have a wand.

**10 Victory Points** – The staff hinder Yemauf as described for the PCs above. If the roll is successful, one random PC receives +2 to hit or +2 to AC (PCs choice). Lakaj Ezheras runs away and Yemauf does not have a wand.

Adzas ties each hero into his narrative, beautifully sweeping the crowd into a fervor of hope and goodwill.

During the finale PCs can attempt to aid Adzas by recall the name of a minor hero that illustrates one of the points in his speech. Each PC can attempt a single Knowledge (local or history) check. A DC 15 or greater punctuates a minor anecdote and the PCs receive a Victory Point. A DC 26 check or greater recalls a name synonymous with the thrust of Adzas' entire speech; and he holds the PCs hand high over their heads as he tells the glorious tale and folds the story into his speech. The speech goes into history and song as "The Hero's Speech", and the PC gains a permanent +1 on all skill checks when dealing with Azindraleans in the City. The PCs also receive two Victory Points.

## PART FOUR: THE FINAL SOLUTION (CR 7)

Janaseva leads the group from the stage, whether in shame or success. People surround the group, making travel difficult. Originally, Janaseva wanted to have a fantastic dinner in the Three of Swords, however a massive crowd has gathered before the restaurant. Instead, two of Janaseva's barristers escort everyone to the basement to escape the

multitude of well-wishers. As they enter, the serving staff stands aside to let the party through. Suddenly, a gangly and deathly pale man in dark robes throws himself in their path!

**Creature:** The interloper is Lakaj Ezheras, a low-life sorcerer apprenticed to a diehard Korteziar nationalist and powerful wizard Yemauf Gorachen. Though Lakaj knows he is going to die, he fears the torturous wraith of his master more. Yemauf hides behind an *illusory wall* behind Lakaj Ezheras.

#### Lakaj Ezheras

CR 1

#### XP 400

Male human sorcerer (undead bloodline) 1

NE medium humanoid

Init +5; Senses Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex); 20% miss chance\*

hp 5 (1d6+2)

Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger -2 (1d4-2)

#### Spells

1<sup>st</sup> (5) — *cause fear, grease*

o lvl (at will) — *daze, ghost sound, mage hand, resistance* (already in stats)

#### TACTICS

**Before Melee:** If he can, Lakaj casts *grease* on his first action.

**During Melee:** Lakaj lunges for the PCs, sacrificing himself in the first round of attacks.

**Morale:** Lakaj fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 7, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 17

Base Atk +0; CMB +2; CMD 12

**Feats** Eschew Materials<sup>(B)</sup>, Improved Initiative

**Skills** Bluff +3, Spellcraft +3, Use Magic Device +3

**Languages** Common

**Gear** dagger, *wand of web* (12 charges)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Grave Touch (Sp):** Lakaj can make a melee touch attack as a standard action that causes a living creature to take the shaken condition for one round. He can use this ability six times per day.

\* Lakaj is under the effects of Yemauf's *blur* spell.

#### Yemauf Gorachen

CR 7

#### XP 3,200

Male human nalfeshnee-possessed wizard (necromancer) 6

CE medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +11

## ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

If there are more than four players or they average level is higher than 4<sup>th</sup>, feel free to add a few more sorcerers in the basement of the final encounter. Any of the antagonists in the crowd could have the half-fiend template added for higher difficulty. Be sure to compensate the PCs for the added challenge. Add coins and jewelry to a few enemies' belt pouches. Yemauf has a secret hideaway near the river; which could store a suit of +2 armor or a +1 crossbow of frost. The PCs could find a masterwork healing kit on one of the Korteziar clergy.

#### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 bracers of armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 35 (6d6+24)

Fort +6 (+2 vs. poison), Ref +6, Will +8

#### Defensive Abilities

DR 10/cold iron; Resist electricity 20

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.; climb 30 ft.

Melee dagger +4 melee (1d4+2 plus 1d6 profane vs. good-aligned)

#### Special Attacks

Smite

**Spells Known** (CL 6<sup>th</sup>) (4/5/5/4)  
3rd — *gaseous form, magic circle against good, ray of exhaustion, slow*

2nd — *blur, ghoul touch, invisibility, scare, spectral hand*

1st — *chill touch, mage armor, obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement, true strike*

o (at will) — *light, message, read magic, resistance*

**Opposition Schools** Enchantment, Evocation

#### TACTICS

**Before Melee:** Yemauf uses a scroll of arcane eye to monitor the party's approach. Next, he creates a hiding spot by casting an *illusory wall* from a second scroll. He holds his actions until Lakaj attacks.

**During Melee:** Yemauf casts *ghoul touch* on a *spectral hand* and targets Adzas. He focuses all of his attacks (including the *lion figurines*) on Adzas.

**Morale:** Yemauf is a staunch Korteziar and hates all those he deems below his station with great passion. Spittle foams at his mouth as he strikes at his Azindralean foe. He fights until his last breath.

#### STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 24, Wis 16, Cha 14

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 15



**Feats** Cleave<sup>(B)</sup>, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack<sup>(B)</sup>, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Mastery

**Skills** Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (history) +18, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (nature) +18, Knowledge (planes) +18, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +11, Profession (chef) +9, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +20

**Languages** Common

**Special Abilities** detection, familiar (turtle)\*

\*see *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Magic*

**Gear** bracers of armor +3, figurines of wondrous power (golden lions), wand of vampiric touch (15 charges), 33 gp, one pearl (25 gp).

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Detection (Su):** A nalfeshnee-possessed creature continuously detects magic as if with the *detect magic* spell (caster level 12th) and automatically knows the alignment of any creature it looks at.

**Smite (Su):** Three times per day, Yemauf can cause a burst of unwholesome, multicolored light to explode from his body in a 60-foot radius. Every creature other than a demon in this area must

succeed on a Will saving throw (DC 18) or be dazed for 1d10 rounds. Yemauf is immune to this effect.

**Developments:** If Lakaj survives, or the PCs revive him, he swears loyalty to those that spared his craven life and changes his whole outlook on life (treat as a NG-aligned cohort).

## PART FIVE: CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If Adzas survives the final encounter, he makes the PCs his boon companions and offers them property, livestock, art pieces, and more. Janaseva has to hush him physically before he goes too far. Janaseva restates his original offer and tells them they will always be welcome at court. Some weeks later a mysterious box arrives at the PCs residence filled with potions and rings. The rings are +1 *protection* or +1 *resistance*, depending on what the PC needs. The potions are a selection of clearly marked flasks of various sorts. Feel free to hand out 2,500 gp worth of potions as needed.



\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations



# BEAR HUNTING

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When a Bloodfang mercenary murders his captain and goes A.W.O.L., the Kharel seeks the aid of outsiders to track him down before he flees the city. However, once they capture the killer, a second question awaits, and the heroes must decide whether to surrender him to the justice of the military or the murdered captain's vengeful widow.

This adventure is part of the Great City: The Sinking. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. The adventure is designed using the Pathfinder Role-Playing Game for 3rd-level characters.

## BACKGROUND

Following recent events spawned by deceased architect and treasure hunter Labienus Gouille, word of Furam's legendary gold-filled tomb have leaked into the streets. Despite lack of truth to these legends, dozens of greed-stricken locals tossed aside their initial fears and foolishly launch their own sinkhole investigations. The mad rush of would-be treasure hunters forced the Lord of Castle Ward to summon additional troops to secure the area to prevent locals from plunging headlong into the sinkhole and breaking their necks.

With regular troops in short supply, the Kharel sequestered the aid of several patrols of the City's infamous Bloodfang mercenaries under the premise that their monstrous appearance alone would be enough to dissuade most folk from attempting to sneak into the Sinkhole. As luck would have it, using Bloodfangs came with the usual complications.

An unusually foul-tempered bugbear Bloodfang known as Karoc Skullsplitter returned from watch patrol one night, drunk. The reprimands of the senior officer on duty lead to a violent altercation, which ended when Skullsplitter took a bite out of the guard captain's face.

Thereafter, the bugbear fled the scene and the Kharel has since placed a warrant out for his arrest. In order to prevent other Bloodfangs from rioting, they know they must capture Karoc alive in order to give him a fair trial. On the other hand, the captain's human troops want Skullsplitter dead. For this reason, their higher-ups request a third party handle the capture — one that has already proven themselves capable in such matters — the PCs.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Kharel soldiers hire the PCs to bring to justice a bugbear, a savage bugbear named Karoc Skullsplitter. A member of the infamous Bloodfang Mercenaries,

Karoc is wanted for the unprovoked murder of his captain. Karoc has ties to one of the City's more powerful criminal organizations, a group of thuggish caravan bullies known as the Winged Angels. Now on the lam, he seeks his allies to help him escape from the city. Tracking Karoc to the Winged Angel's hideout prompts him to flee in a wagon while gang-members cover his escape. The PCs must defeat the gang-members in order to pursue him, resulting in a wild chase through the city streets. In the end, Karoc manages to elude the PCs, and flees for the nearby woods. There, the PCs finally catch up with Karoc after he attempts to hide in the cave that turns out to be the abode of an angry owlbear.

After capturing Karoc, the PCs return to the Great City where they encounter the murdered captain's widow who pleads for them to release her husband's killer to the custody of her hired retainers. To conclude, the PCs must decide whether to surrender the bugbear or bring him back to face a military trial.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure begins when a pair of soldiers, seek out the PCs to request them for a meeting with their new superior, a hard-nosed officer named Jarek Constine. The initial encounter can occur in any public place the PCs frequent such as a tavern, supply shop, or brothel. A smalltime snitch leads the soldiers to the PCs' location. When this occurs, allow them a DC 15 Perception check to spot a slight figure in dark robes, accompanied by a pair of city soldiers. The robed figure is a local a hedge-wizard named Sleem notorious for selling city gossip to the highest bidder. As the PCs notice him, he catches sight of their faces and points them out to the guards. The soldiers press a couple of coins into the man's boney hands, before he slips off. The guards approach quickly, calling out to the PCs.

The two men approach, their faces twisted with agitation and concern. One of them addresses the PCs.

*"By the will of his Majesty the Emperor your services are requested by our commanding officer, Jarek Constine. Please accompany us to the barracks."*

A DC 14 Knowledge (local) check identifies Jarek as a newly appointed Guard Captain charged with overseeing security around the Sink. He has a reputation for strict legal procedure and faithfulness to the law. He is a just and incorruptible man.

The soldiers lead the PCs to a small military outpost near the sinkhole where they are asked to wait for the captain in a makeshift service tent. Soon after, Constine arrives.

*"Greetings, I'm Jarek Constine, now captain of this garrison. I apologize for the abruptness of my summons, but I have a pressing issue that cannot be solved by my soldiers or by anyone belonging to His Majesty's army. Based on your growing reputation as competent adventurers, my commanding officers have suggested that I contract your services to resolve this matter. I promise, I can make it worth your while."*

If asked about the task, Constine responds:

*"I need you to track down and arrest a renegade bugbear named Karoc Skullsplitter. A member of the Bloodfang mercenaries, Karoc murdered our beloved captain, Titus Helats, during a drunken altercation. The beast must be brought to justice. Unfortunately, the arrest is a complicated one as Bloodfang's comprise at least half of my garrison. My remaining men want to see Karoc dead. Thus I cannot send them after their captain's killer, for if one of my soldiers happens to kill Karoc in the process, the rest of the Bloodfangs in my garrison are apt to interpret the death as an act of vengeance, which would likely incite a bloody feud. For this reason, I need unbiased mercenaries such as yourselves to capture him. My informants have told me they last saw Karoc fleeing toward Trades Ward, undoubtedly to meet his infamous comrades — a gang of caravan bullies known as the Winged Angels. Go first to the Gold for Gold Tavern and ask to speak a man named Sleem. He's one of my more reliable informants. Waste no time and bring me that bugbear scum, alive".*

Should the PCs ask about compensation, Constine quickly replies that their reward shall be to serve His Majesty. Then he adds Kharel has placed a bounty of 500 gp on Karoc, provided the PCs can bring him back alive. If the PCs attempt to haggle with him he'll go as high as 850 gp, but refuses to go higher, truthfully claiming he has other options.

The Gold for Gold Tavern is located in the Trades Ward (*Great City Map #15*).

PCs seeking further information about the Winged Angels can attempt a DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information to learn the information presented in the Winged Angels sidebar.

## THE WOMAN IN DISTRESS

This event occurs a few moments after the PCs exit from the military outpost.

*As you turn a corner a middle-aged woman followed by two hooded soldiers steps from the shadows. Torn by distress, her face signed by tears and anguish. She looks toward you with hope burning in her green eyes.*

The woman is Tyra Helats, the newly widowed wife of the recently murdered captain Titus Helats.

Titus's trusted retainers accompany her, eager to avenge their captain's death. Tyra makes no mystery of her intentions; she wants Karoc's head. She offers anyone willing to undertake her missive 500 gp upfront, with an equal sum paid upon proof of the bugbear's death. If the PCs appear hesitant, she overwhelms them with an explicative torrent decrying Karoc as a murderous bastard and deriding military justice for its cowardice in not simply putting her husband's killer to the sword.

In a sense, Tyra speaks the truth. Constine cannot execute Karoc without his provoking the Bloodfang troops to violence. While Karoc's sentence will be subject to a trial, there remain too many factors involved to assure its fairness.

## THE WINGED ANGELS

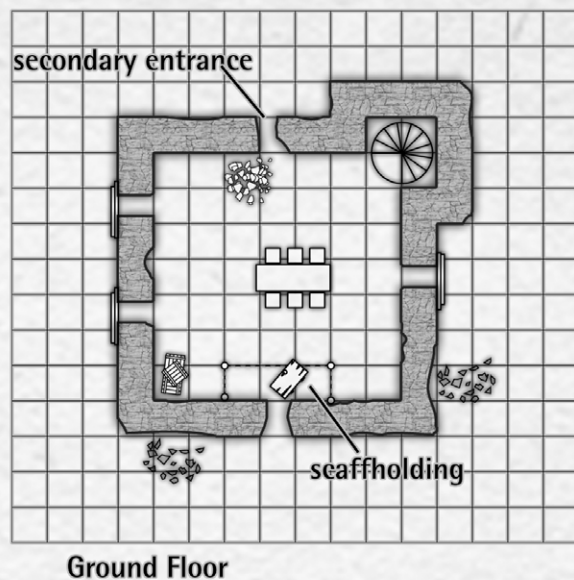
The Winged Angels run a mercenary caravan guard operation whose actual practices are closer to thuggery. Comprised almost entirely of former Bloodfang mercenaries, most members can be readily identified by a tattoo of a depicting a blindfolded angel brandishing a flaming sword. The origin of the tattoo comes from an all-Bloodfang unit of the same name that fought against the Triperium during the rule of Kamir Atregan. As expected, group members possess a natural distain for authority.

The Winged Angels sell their services to caravans headed out of the city, sometimes not returning for months. To supplement their incomes, members occasionally work within the city providing temporary service as merchant guards. They charge steep fees and while their performance records show a higher level of casualties than similar services provided by human counterparts, their violent methods effectively dissuade would-be thieves. Still, they remain a group of self-serving thugs and acquire most of their clients by informing them they "need" their services.

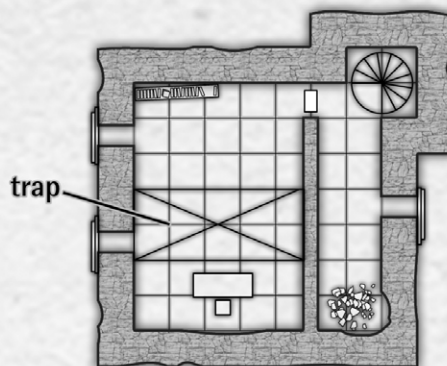
In recent years, the Winged Angel's influence has grown steadily, while they forcefully dissuade potential competitors to "retire". At present, they are close to establishing a monopoly over the caravan guard business in Trades Ward, something the merchants council wishes to prevent. Similarly, the Kharel has voiced concern over their success, citing the profoundly negative potential of a growing community of armed and well-funded goblinoid thugs.



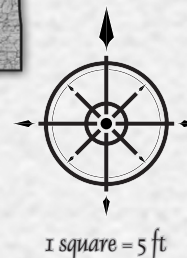
## The Crumbling House



Ground Floor



Upper Floor



**Developments:** At present, whether or not the PCs accept widow Helat's offer holds little weight. She and her late husband's loyal soldiers wait for the PCs to return, ready to convince them to consign Karoc to their custody (see *The Scales of Justice* at the end of the adventure).

anyone making a quick around the house readily spots a hole in a crumbled wall that provides a secondary entrance. Entering via the crumbled wall avoids the ambush on the archway (see *1B. The Squatters*).

## PART I. THE SQUAT THUGLORD

Constine's informant, Sleem, waits for the PCs just outside the Gold for Gold Tavern. A slight, stooped man in drab, oversized robes with a heavy, shadowy cowl, he blends in among the many urchins, beggars, and street peddlers outside the building. Shortly after the PCs arrive, he reveals himself. After a brief introduction, Sleem leads the PCs through a series of narrow alleys to a crumbling two-storey building which, according to his street contacts, is where Karoc was seen entering less than an hour earlier. He adds that the house is a squat known for selling drugs, fenced goods, and other illicit wares. Finally, after informing the PCs that from this point forward they are on their own, he slips into the shadows and disappears.

### 1A. THE CRUMBLING HOUSE

*The house Sleem pointed out is a crumbling ruin. Rotting wooden planks bar every window, both on ground and first floor and its entrance is little more than a dark hole in the building's featureless facade.*

By all appearances, a gaping hole near the main entrance provides sole access to the interior. Still,

### 1B. THE SQUATTERS (CR 4)

This large central room is littered with old bottles, bones, paper, and other refuse, while graffiti covers the walls. Many of the windows are kicked out and broken.

At one end of the room, a creaking wooden spiral staircase leads to a small foyer featuring a single door. The door is opened.

**Creatures:** Five squatters, low-life gurs who make their money on petty crime such as mugging, burglary, and selling illegal drugs, live in the buildings ground floor. Four of them sit around a bare table playing dice and drinking sour-smelling liquor. The fifth, an old gur with only one eye, perches just above the entrance archway on makeshift wood-plank scaffolding, playing with his rusty shortsword. Known as Scareye, he keeps hidden, poised to ambush any troublemakers questioning the price of drugs or careless city watchmen daring to enter in their hideout.

Allow any PCs searching the area before the enter a DC 15 Perception check to spot Scareye, otherwise he remains hidden and sneak attacks them as soon as combat erupts. Entering through the crumbled wall leaves the scaffolding and Scareye in plain sight

and he quietly drops down before the fight, placing himself behind his friends.

The goons are uncooperative until beaten, though mentioning Karoc Skullsplitter's name is enough to trigger a fight.

**GOON (4)****CR 1/2****XP 200 each**

Male gur (goblin blooded human) warrior 2

**NE** Medium humanoid**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4**DEFENSE****AC** 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)**hp** 23 (2d10)+7**Fort** +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** dagger +5 (1d4+3/19-20)**Ranged** dagger (thrown) +3 (1d4+3/19-20)**STATISTICS****Str** 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16**Feats** Alertness, Toughness**Skills** Acrobatics +2, Climb +7, Intimidate +4, Perception +4, Ride +3, Stealth +3**Languages** Common, Goblin**Special Qualities** goblin blood, ledge walker, trapfinding, saddle-born, stealthy, weapon familiarity (goblin weapons)**Gear** rusty dagger, 10cp.**SCAREYE****CR 1****XP 400**

Male gur (goblin blooded human) rogue 2

**NE** Medium humanoid**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft.; Perception +5**DEFENSE****AC** 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +1 Dodge, +2 leather)**hp** 15 (2d8)+2**Fort** +1, **Ref** +7, **Will** +0**Defensive Abilities** Evasion**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** shortsword +5 (1d6/19-20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack 1d6**STATISTICS****Str** 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 16**Feats** Weapon Finesse, Dodge**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Appraise +1, Bluff +4, Climb +5, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +10, Disguise -1, Escape Artist +9, Intimidate -1, Perception +5, Perception (trapfinding) +6, Ride +6, Stealth +11,

Survival +2, Swim +5

**Languages** Common, Goblin**Special Qualities** goblin blood, ledge walker, trapfinding, saddle-born, stealthy, weapon familiarity (goblin weapons)**Gear** leather armor, rusty shortsword, 3gp.

**Developments:** Should the PCs manage to keep one of the thugs alive, they can attempt an opposed Diplomacy or Intimidation check to get him to reveal the following:

Karoc went to the first floor to see their boss, Grimble Snathers, a powerful crimelord with a short fuse and violent temper. The thugs assume Karoc is now dead as that was several hours ago and he has yet to come out.

**1C. TWO BIRDS; ONE STONE (CR 3)**

In order to ingratiate himself to the Winged Angels, Karoc took it upon himself to eliminate one of their more troublesome competitors, local thug-lord Grimble Snathers (male gur goblin-blooded human rogue 2, hp 14). Karoc stopped in to pay Grimble a visit, specifically to kill him and offer whatever territories he controlled to the Winged Angels, before asking them to help him slip out of the city. Furthermore, since Karoc suspects Constine has hired a posse to capture him, he decided to set up a trap to kill both Grimble and his pursuers in one fell swoop.

Barging into Grimble office, Karoc beat him mercilessly, then bound him to a chair, gagged him, and placed him on the opposite the room's entrance, facing the wall. Then he further sabotaged the already weakened ceiling, and ran trip wires to the floor. Stepping into the room triggers the trap causing the ceiling to collapse. It is designed to kill both the Grimble and anyone attempting to free him. Upon finishing his trap, Karoc dislodged some planks from the window in the small foyer, dropped down to the street, and fled toward south Trades Ward to where the Winged Angels.

**Falling Ceiling Trap****CR 3**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** falling debris (3d6 damage); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area).

**Developments:** If the PCs trigger the trap, the tightly bound Grimble fails his Saving Throw and takes full damage. Should he die, he uses his last



breath to shout out the address of the Winged Angels. If Grimble survives he happily provides the address of the Winged Angels hoping the PCs kill Karoc for his treachery.

## PART 2. THE WINGED ANGELS

The Winged Angels secretly work out of a wheelwright shop called the Rolling Wheels located on the Silk Way in the south Trades Ward. It is easily located by asking around in the marketplace. For more information about the Winged Angels see *The Winged Angels* sidebar on page 100.

### 2A. THE ROLLING WHEELS (CR 4)

This wheelwright shop serves as the headquarters for the Winged Angels. A battle-hardened gur dwarf named Viktor Lunsteif runs the shop, well aware of the illicit activities that operate out of the back. The PCs find him working busily in the store's front room, a wide space converted into a well-stocked woodshop.

*The front of the shop serves a workroom crammed with wheels, metal rimming, a lathe and all manner of saws, hammers, pegs, glue, and other types of woodworkers tools. A hideously grim-looking dwarf hammers at the bushings on an oversized wooden wheel. Hide glue and other chemical substances spot his studded leather armor. A big warhammer leans against a nearby workbench.*

Viktor is a gruff and unpleasant fellow who refuses to aid the PCs in any way. If asked, he claims he doesn't know anyone named Karoc, then bluntly requests the PCs leave his shop so he can get back to business. If the PCs continue to press him, he calls for the aid of allies in the next room to force them out.

#### VIKTOR LUNSTEIF

CR 2

XP 600

Male gur-blooded dwarf fighter 3

LE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3

#### DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 36 (3d10)+15

Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +3, +1 Will vs. fear, +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee warhammer +7 (1d8+3/x3)

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 6

Base Atk +3; CMB +6; CMD 17 (21 vs bullrush) (21 vs trip)

**Feats** Cleave, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (warhammer)

**Skills** Climb +7, Intimidate +3, Perception +3, Ride +4, Stealth +5; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth, +1 Perception

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Goblin

**Special Qualities** armor training, bravery, goblin blooded, greed, hardy, hatred, stability, steady, stonecunning, weapon familiarity

**Gear** studded leather, warhammer.

#### WINGED ANGEL HALF-ORC (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Male half-orc fighter 2

NE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+6 chainmail, +2 shield)

hp 20 (2d10)+4

Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1, +1 Will vs. fear

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee longsword +6 (1d8+3)

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +2; CMB +5; CMD 15

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Climb +1, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +2; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Intimidate

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Special Qualities** bravery, orc blood, orc ferocity

**Gear** chainmail, longsword, heavy steel shield.

**Developments:** Despite Viktor's statements, he knows Karoc well. In fact, Karoc is currently scrambling about the stables in the back of the shop, desperately hitching up a rickety wagon to a team of horses, in order to make his final escape.

Four rounds after the combat starts, the loud slam of heavy doors sounds from the back of the shop as Karoc's horse-drawn wagon bursts from the stables and launches wildly into the city streets. Allow the PCs a DC 10 Perception check to spot a hulking bugbear Karoc at the wagon's reins, accompanied by a trio of well-armed goblinoids. To add chaos to his escape, Karoc releases every horse in the stables, and the unsaddled animals trot out into the streets.

As soon as the PCs spot Karoc, they'll likely attempt to pursue him. Even if the PCs break from combat, if they haven't defeated Victor and his comrades, the Winged Angel agents continue to attack. Regardless, Karoc's careening wagon is too fast to pursue on foot. The PCs can use any of the

available horses wandering the streets, however each of the panicked animals must first be calmed with a DC 12 Handle Animal check. The horses are currently unsaddled, which means the PCs must ride bareback (taking the appropriate penalty to and Ride skill checks). Once the PCs mount up, go to the next section, *The Wild Chase*.

## 2B. THE WILD CHASE (CR 4)

The PCs pursue Karoc's wagon as it races wildly through the crowded city streets running over people and things. From the back of the wagon, Winged Angels shoot at the PCs with their heavy crossbows while tossing other objects at them in order to hamper their movement.

To keep up with their quarry, each round the PCs must make riding checks to avoid obstacles along with Karoc's various tricks.

**Note:** the mercenaries shoot from a moving wagon and thus take a -4 penalty to hit.

### Winged Angel Hobgoblin (3)

Cr 1

XP 400 each

Male hobgoblin fighter 2

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 chain shirt)

**hp** 20 (2d10) +4

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0, +1 Will vs. fear

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** light mace +2 (1d6+2) and light mace +2 (1d6)

**Ranged** heavy crossbow +6 (1d10/19-20), within 30 ft. +7 (1d10+1)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Point-Blank Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow)

**Skills** Acrobatics +2, Intimidate +4, Perception +1, Ride +6, Stealth +7; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

**Languages** Common

**Special Qualities** bravery

**Gear** crossbow bolts (10), chain shirt, light mace x2, heavy crossbow.

Depending upon the specific circumstances, Karoc may try any of the following underhanded tricks to rid himself of the PCs:

- **Bolas:** Karoc throws a bolas at the legs of a nearby citizen, entangling him in the middle of the street.

## GET ME OFF THE TRAIN!

In this section, the PCs attempt to chase down Karoc's escaping wagon. As written, the adventure assumes that Karoc wins the chase and escapes the city first. If as GM you feel as though this option is too much of a railroad, consider making the fleeing wagon a decoy loaded with another bugbear. Once the PCs catch the wagon and discover the ruse, they can double back to the *Rolling Wheels* and pick up the real Karoc's tracks, which lead out of the city. You can then pick things up at encounter 2C. *The Gate Falls*.

The PCs must make a riding check at -4 to jump over him.

- **Caltrops:** Karoc empties a barrel of caltrops on the road. To avoid injuring their mounts, the PCs must dismount and clear a passage. Clearing the path delays the PCs of 2d4 rounds.
- **Alchemist's Fire:** Karoc throws some vials of alchemist's fire (see *alchemist's fire Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook page 160*) aimed to spook one of the PCs' mounts. The PCs must succeed a DC 20 Ride skill check to jump over or otherwise avoid getting caught in the fire.
- **Smoke:** Karoc open an *eversmoking bottle* and ties it to the wagon. The smoke reduces visibility and provides both parties with 20% concealment.

## 2C. THE GATE FALLS

Karoc drives his wagon out of the city through the south gate (*Great City Map #28*). Few seconds after he passes through, its heavy portcullis drops covering his escape. If PCs were on his tail, they spot his wagon on the other side of the gate, as it rattles down the road and disappears from view. If they did not participate in the Wild Chase they arrive at the gate to find it closed.

The city guard manning this gate has long been in the pockets of the Winged Angels. As soon as Karoc passes through the gate, he cuts the lift ropes, causing the gate to slam shut. If the PCs are traveling full speed toward the gate at this time, they need to make a DC 15 Ride skill check to turn their mounts away or crash into the gate taking 1d6 points of damage.

The guard is a cowardly liar named Aaron Labyluf. After dropping the gate, he rushes out of the gatehouse to stall anyone following Karoc, questioning them on how they got their horses, where they are going, and other time-consuming questions.



Actually, Aaron is only a common watch soldier with no real authority over the gate, therefore the simple act of summoning one of his superiors is enough to get him to back down. Unfortunately for the PCs, since Aaron cut the lift ropes, lifting the portcullis now requires a DC 25 Strength check.

## PART 3. TO CATCH A BEAR

Whether the PCs lose time at the gate or not, a DC 14 Perception readily spots the tracks left by Karoc's wagon. They continue down the caravan trail for about two miles, to a point where the wagon's wheel broke. To avoid capture, Karoc sent the horses down the trail as a decoy, and then fled on foot into the nearby hills. Staying behind to cover his flight, the remaining Winged Angels mercenaries set up a line of defense behind the upturned wagon.

### 3A. THE BROKEN WHEEL (CR 3)

*Around a sharp turn skirting a low, grassy knoll, a broken wagon wheel lies in the middle of the road. Ahead, Karoc's wagon lies propped on its side, blocking the trail.*

**Creatures:** Any surviving Winged Angels hide behind the full cover of the wagon. As soon as the PCs come into view, they open fire with their crossbows. The PCs are in the disadvantage being caught in an open space roughly 200 feet from the wagon. The mercenaries continue to loose their rain of bolts until the PCs get close enough to engage in

melee, at which point they draw their weapons and attack.

**WINGED ANGEL MERCENARY (varies)** CR 1

XP 400 each

As per *encounter 2B*.

**Developments:** While the mercenaries want to protect Karoc, ultimately they aren't devoted enough to die for him. Their primary goal remains to stall the PCs rather than kill them. Mercenaries dropped below 8 hit points quickly surrender, attempting to convince the PCs they thought they were being pursued by bandits. If questioned about Karoc, they claim the bugbear rode ahead down the trail as evidenced by the tracks of runaway horses.

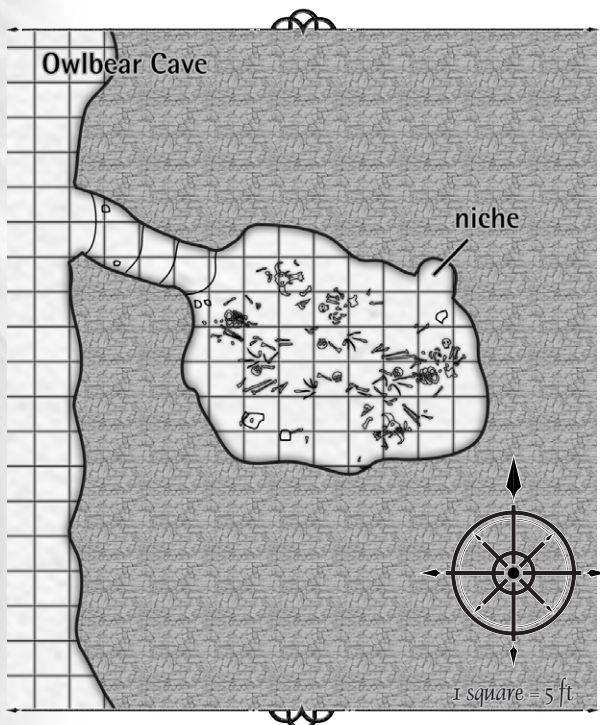
An opposed Sense Motive check readily picks up on their lie, while a DC 14 Perception check reveals a set of footprints leading from the wagon into the nearby woods.

### 3B. BEAR AGAINST BEAR (CR 6)

Following Karoc's trail proves easy enough. It cuts through the woods for a quarter-mile, then heads off towards the nearby foothills. As the PC exit the woods, they begin to smell fire. Once the PCs smell the fire, read or paraphrase the following:

*Up ahead, the wood edges against series of small rocky hills. Near the base of the hills, grayish-black smoke pours out of a rocky cleft.*





Karoc's tracks appear to lead towards the smoke, which emanates from a small cave some 300 yards ahead.

**Creatures:** In his attempt to escape, Karoc spotted the cave and dashed inside seeking shelter. Unfortunately, he failed to notice the cave's occupant, a ferocious owlbear. Trapped inside of the cave, he had little choice but to fight for his life. Both Karoc and the owlbear suffered injuries. Eventually, the massive owlbear forced him to retreat to a niche in the rocky wall where he used his last vial of alchemist's fire to burn a pile of leaves in a desperate attempt to keep the beast at bay.

**Tactics:** The frenzied owlbear attacks anyone entering his lair. Whenever possible, Karoc takes advantage of creature's position to flank and to sneak attack the PCs. Furthermore, the smoke-filled cave provides each creature inside a 20% concealment.

**Special:** The owlbear makes no distinction between intruders — therefore if Karoc moves within the creature's reach — the GM should roll a die to determine the frenzied beast's target.

#### Frenzied Owlbear

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 30 (47); see *Pathfinder Bestiary* page 224.

#### KAROC SKULLSPLITTER

CR 4

XP 800

Male bugbear rogue 1 / fighter 2

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; **Perception** +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 shield, +3 natural)

**hp** 53 (now 41) (3d8+1d8+2d10+20)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +1, +1 Will vs. fear

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *battleaxe* +12 (1d8+7/x3)

**Ranged** masterwork crossbow (heavy) +9 (1d10/19-20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack 1d6

#### TACTICS

**Moral:** Karoc attempts to flee if dropped below 6 hit points. If captured or threatened with death, he surrenders, or at least he tries to, if the owlbear does not kill him first.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 23, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)

**Skills** Craft (traps) +7, Disable Device +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +9, Perception (trapfinding) +10, Ride +7, Stealth +11

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Special Qualities** bravery, scent, stalker, trapfinding

**Gear** +1 *battleaxe*, crossbow bolts (20), chain shirt, light wooden shield, masterwork heavy crossbow.

## PART 4. THE SCALES OF JUSTICE

Once PCs defeat Karoc their next task is to return their captive to the Great City to face the justice of Constine's military court. They can either walk, or attempt to take their horses, provided they find someway to transport their bugbear captive.

The next encounter takes place as the PCs approach the City gates. Within a horse-drawn coach parked a quarter-mile down the caravan road waits Lady Helats, accompanied by her loyal men-at-arms. As soon as her retainers spot the PCs, she has the men draw her carriage to the PCs' location to attempt to convince them to surrender her husband's murderer into her custody. When she approaches, read or paraphrase the following text.

*"Greetings bold heroes, I can see you finally caught the putrid bastard that slew my husband. Deliver him to me and I assure you he shall receive just punishment for his crimes. As promised, I have with me the remainder of the sizable bounty for that thing's mangy hide. Take it and give me my husband's murderer!"*

If the PCs accept, she pays them the remaining 500 gp of her initial offer, or the full 1,000 gp if they didn't accept her at the beginning of the adventure.



If the PCs refuse her request, the bodyguards reach to draw their weapons, but the woman stops them with a swift gesture. She then turns to the PCs, staring them down with venomously cold eyes and hisses:

*"So this is your choice? Very well. Today you've captured an assassin, but you have earned my eternal enmity. I will not forget - stay assured, we shall meet again."*

She punctuates her vehemence by swiftly disappearing within her coach, and drawing the curtains closed. In denying her vengeance, the PCs have gained a new enemy that the GM can use in subsequent Great City adventures. While the widow won't commit outright acts of villainy, she is still a powerful woman with many social and political ties. She can make things difficult for the PCs such as having them ejected from certain taverns, shops, affairs, and the like, have them arrested, or otherwise blackball them. After each such act have her leave a signed courtesy card for the PCs so they know how much Lady Helats still hates them.

Once the PCs finish with Lady Helats, the PCs conclude the adventure by returning to the sink site and speaking with Captain Constine.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs return Karoc to Jarek Constine alive, the captain shows his pleasure by rewarding them

with the agreed bounty plus a +1 *weapon* from his personal armory. In the future, should the PCs need an ally with ties to the Great City's military forces they may call upon Jarek.

If Karoc is dead, Jarek shows only slight disappointment. Still, hiring the PCs remains always a strategic move, as the Bloodfangs cannot directly blame him for Karoc's death. Regardless, he remains good to his word and pays them promised bounty for their efforts.

If the PCs return without Karoc (either because they delivered him to Lady Helats or they lost him in the wood), Constine flushes with anger. He commands his men to seize the PCs and take them in custody. Following his grueling interrogation, he places them before a military tribunal for charges ranging from treason, inciting a riot between mercenaries and City troops, and accepting payment from the Kharel under false pretense. The PCs must defeat these charges in court, though if they surrendered Karoc to Lady Helats, she provides them with a barrister and covers their legal expenses in full. The trial takes two full weeks. Fortunately, Constine has no proof the PCs found Karoc, since nobody witnessed them interacting while they were within the city. Eventually, Constine fails to prove their guilt leaving the court no choice but to absolve them. Still, it appears clear the captain understood more than he can prove. Ultimately, betraying him prevents the PCs from requesting any aid from the Kharel or their agents in the future.



\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations



# THE MALCHORT CABAL

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After the PCs new patron mysteriously disappears, the PCs are drawn into the dark dealings of powerful cabal of nobles whose secret interests in the Sink they would kill to protect. Yet even within their inner circle, cabal members keep secrets from each other, forcing the PCs to scramble for answers to stop an unknown madman from stirring whatever horrors he believes lie within the lightless depths of the massive sinkhole.

This adventure is part of the Great City: The Sinking. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. The adventure is designed using the Pathfinder Role-Playing Game for 4th-level characters.

## ADVENTURE PLOT

Local explorer and archeologist Yag Threed hires the PCs to aid him in his latest venture, a trip into the Sinkhole. Hardly a fly-by-night, Yag is an experienced dungeon delver, infamous for pawning questionable relics, which he recovers from the Dungeon Under the Mountain. Yag claims he's well equipped to handle this particular venture, thanks to a healthy cash flow supplied by an anonymous patron. The coin is so good, he offers the PCs half pay up front, with the remainder of the payment placed in a private account with a signed contingency guaranteeing payment upon proof of completion of the task. The contingency remains valid even if Yag dies—which, mysteriously enough, is precisely what occurs.

Scheduled to meet up with Yag at his new base of operations, the PCs discover the archeologist inexplicably absent, prompting them to launch an investigation as to his whereabouts. After scouring his personal quarters, they find an invitation to a supper party with none other than Almidar Belano—Tymithius Belano's younger and slightly more reckless brother.

As it turns out, Almidar acted as Yag's secret patron, and his interest in the Sinkhole was somewhat personal. Almidar and several other members of an inner council of older Kortezean nobles, known as the Malchort Cabal, frequently used Yag as an errand to compliment their extremely dark dealings. While the cabal stays involved in current politics, the primary interests of its members lie in the assured long-term wealth and success of their individual families. In general, the council seeks those items capable of both building and maintaining their power. Secrecy remains a top priority, as well as a commodity that has become one of their top resources.

Unfortunately for the cabal, things have indeed gone awry. Wvolnar Viterias, one of the group's senior and most influential members has gone mad. A student of forbidden lore who only recently arrived from overseas, Wvolnar is the scion of a powerful family and the head of the newly founded Great City branch of the Academe Trypus, the Blood Triperium's covert organization dedicated to occult studies. Wvolnar came to Azindralea to seek out and call forth a primordial power lurking far beneath the City; a power he believed drew the original clans to claim these lands years ago.

In pursuit of his research, Wvolnar convinced the cabal to perform a series of strange rituals that caused the Sinking. Once the event occurred it soon became clear to the rest of the cabal members that Wvolnar had manipulated them. Ultimately, Wvolnar alone understands the true cause of the sink and his dubious plots further threaten the city. Paranoid his fellow cabalists might expose him and desperate to protect the secrecy of his work, Wvolnar now plots to kill off the remaining members, one by one. While under normal circumstances nobody outside the cabal would really care if its members were hacked to bits, only they know Wvolnar's identity and where to find him. Rest assured, not only does Wvolnar's trail lead to his motives, it also leads down into the Sink.

Regardless, Wvolnar desires something else that lies within the depth of the sinkhole, something that the remaining members of the cabal know little about, except it should make the day of the Sink seem insignificant in comparison.

## INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins when the PCs receive an offer from one of the city's most notorious adventurer archeologists Yag Threed. With contacts all over the Great City, Yag deftly tracks down the PCs wherever they may be. The introduction assumes Yag has located the PCs and is prepared to hire their services. To get things started, read or paraphrase the following:

*A strange man approaches, dressed in a long leather coat, goggles with thick gray lenses, and a bandoleer loaded with all sorts of tools and equipment. In a throaty voice, introduces himself as Yag Threed.*

*"Perhaps you've heard of me? No matter, I have been watching you for a while, and I have come to offer you a proposition. I'll even pay you 500 gold coins upfront, just to hear me out. Do you accept?"*

A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check recalls Yag as an infamous archeologist, covertly trafficking artifacts recovered from beneath the city. More than a few

of his recoveries have been of questionable origin, and the nobility long suspected of grave robbing. Conversely, he is somewhat of a folk hero to native Azindraleans. If PCs fail to identify him, he truthfully tells them he's an architect and somewhat of an adventurer.

If PCs accept Yag's offer, he grins and says "good!", then hands them a sack with 500 gp and continues his pitch.

*I represent certain parties interested in launching an expedition into the Sinkhole. Given my history of success in the dungeons below the Great City, I have been sought out by a wealthy patron to explore it. I have secured exclusive rights to this delve, however I cannot do it alone. Who knows what lurks in those depths. Therefore, I have come to you for aid. Accompany me! My patron is extremely wealthy. I'll pay each of you 250 gp up front, and I can promise you another 500 gp each upon our return. I have even prepared a legal contract with a court barrister that guarantee payment even if I don't return. I only need it drafted into your names and notarized.*

Yag is telling the truth and if necessary, the PCs can verify his offer with Senor Barrister Draim Clempt (LN male human expert 7) at the Court Under The Mountain or meet with him in three days to see the writ. Regardless, he reiterates that he's offering a sizable sum at this time for them to simply show up that the payment should speak for his sincerity.

If PCs accept, Yag presents the PCs with the promised 250 gp each then requests they meet him at his base camp near the edge of the sinkhole in three days. He claims his barrister needs the time to finalize his legal paperwork but by then, he'll have the writ for the remainder of their payment in his personal safebox. He also states he has exclusive rights to delve sinkhole under authority of the Korteziian Empire, courtesy of one of his contacts. A DC 18 Diplomacy check gets him to whisper the name Belicia Atregan, though he begs the PCs not to reveal what he's told them to anyone, as he wants to keep her as a valid contact.

## EVENT 1: THE EXPEDITION

### YAG'S BASE CAMP (CR 5)

Three days later, the PCs arrive at Yag's base of operations which consists of three canvas tents set atop wooden scaffolds within a roped off area between two half crumbled buildings.

**Creatures:** Four armed Korteziian guardsmen keep watch over the camp and greet the PCs upon arrival. After stating their business, the guardsmen reply

that Yag hasn't been around all day, and explain they have explicit orders to deny entrance to anyone unaccompanied by Yag. If pressed, they state they do not work for Yag, but instead Yag works for their employer Almidar Belano. If the PCs ask the guards about Yag's whereabouts, they reply that they do not know offhand, though they suggest he has been spending a lot of time at the Court Under the Mountain to finalize the legalities of his expedition. If the PCs follow up on this lead, they learn that Yag already picked up the last of his paperwork the previous afternoon and hasn't been at the court all day.

If the PCs wish to explore the base camp must either succeed a DC 20 Diplomacy check to convince the guards to enter or find a way to sneak in.

#### Belano Guardsman (4)

CR 1

**XP 400 each**

Male/female human fighter 2

**LN** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp** 24 (2d10)+8

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1, +1 Will vs. fear

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** rapier +6 (1d6+2)

**Ranged** light crossbow +5 (1d8)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon

Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

**Skills** Intimidate +3, Knowledge (nobility) +2, Perception +2

**Languages** Common, Korteziian

**SQ** Bonus Feat, Bravery, Skilled

**Combat Gear** bolts (20); **Other Gear** chain shirt, light crossbow.

### THE THREE TENTS (CR 4)

The three tents consist of a supply tent, Yag's personal sleeping tent, and a research tent. Clues to Yag's strange disappearance lie within Yag's tent.

Lying on Yag's bed, the PCs find a parchment envelope with a broken wax seal. A DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) skill check identifies it as the personal seal of Tymithius Belano's younger brother, Almidar. A supper invitation from Yag's patron Almidar Belano is tacked to one of the tent poles next to the front tent flap.

A DC 20 Perception check to further search the tent turns up loose planks beneath Yag's cot. A



hollow space beneath the planks hides a small metal strongbox. The strongbox is locked with a masterwork padlock. It is also trapped.

#### TRAPPED STRONGBOX

CR 4

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Effect** +10 ranged (1d3 plus shadow essence).

**Developments:** The trapped strongbox contains pre-expedition notes and the writ promising the PCs their payments of 500 gp each. A legal provision states the conditions upon which they should be paid. As written, the archeologist's objective is to delve into the sinkhole to determine its cause. A recently added footnote adds that Yag suspects the sink was caused deliberately by the summoning of some sort of ancient war-machine developed by an ancient civilization whose people called themselves the Malchorts. The conditions of the writ supersede Yag's death and stand payable to any of the PCs who made an agreement with Yag.

A DC 25 Knowledge (history) check reveals that the Malchorts once controlled a massive subterranean empire that stretched the breadth of two continents. A number of scholars attribute the Dungeon Under The Mountain (or at least its foundations) to their construction. Though the skill check is difficult, grant

any PCs who attempt to research the Malchorts using outside resources (such as seeking sage or library) should get a +5 or bonus to this attempt. If the first attempt fails, require the PCs to spend another 2 hours of research before making a new check. For each hour of additional research, grant the PC a +1 insight bonus towards their next Knowledge (history) check to learn about the Malchorts.

## EVENT 2: THE ARCHEOLOGIST AND THE ARISTOCRAT

The PCs recover clues intimating Yag was last seen at the home of his curious patron Almidar Belano. It was there Wvolnar (also one of the party guests) lured Yag into the basement, strangled him, and threw his corpse beneath the wine racks. The cabalist slew Yag to attempt to cast public suspicion upon Almidar—whose recent actions he fears, threaten to expose him. Wvolnar hopes the PCs fall for his ruse and paint Almidar as the primary suspect, and if possible get the courts to convict the nobleman.

## A VISIT WITH ALMIDAR (CR 2)

This section involves three specific tasks, getting into Almidar's house, locating Yag's body, and then confronting Almidar as a primary suspect.

Located on Old Guard Way near Pantheon Gardens, Almidar's stately, classically Korteisian manse sits off the street, behind spike-topped stone



and concrete walls, at the end of a short, cobbled walk. During the day, Almidar keeps his front gate unlocked, however his servants lock it nightly with a masterwork lock and chain. While the walls are an easy DC 10 climb, a trio of guard dogs patrols the grounds. These fierce canines attack anyone entering the property after dark.

### GUARD DOGS (3)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Riding dog

hp 13; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* page 87.

Almidar's elderly butler Winstroph (old male human expert 4; Diplomacy +6, Sense Motive +6) greets anyone who knocks upon his master's door. Dressed in a dark coat with silver-pinned epilates and perfectly tied white cravat, Winstroph's thinning hair and long jowls give him the semblance of a basset hound. Despite the aged butler's pleasant greeting and seemingly taciturn demeanor, he remains firm on his position: No uninvited guests. Without hearing word from Almidar's lips, Winstroph refuses anyone entrance to the manse. As politely as possible, he shoos off the PCs, though if disposing of them requires rudeness, he musters enough gumption to slam and lock the door (and its peephole). If PCs request to send word to Almidar that they wish to speak with him, he agrees to speak to Almidar on their behalf, but tells them his master is currently out of the house and not to wait on the property. Both statements are in fact lies. Almidar is in fact home, frantically trying to decipher notes in his secret room (see *Almidar's Manse Map - Area 9*) and Winstroph has no intentions of interrupting his master with the wants of adventurers.

If the PCs become more forceful, he calls for help from Raolfarg, a ghastly creature that Almidar keeps on hand for just such emergency circumstances.

### RAOLFARG

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female cyclops

hp 65; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* page 52.

**Developments:** The PCs can either attempt to break into the house (as described below) or fight their way in. If the PCs fight their way into his home, Almidar's initial approach to the intruders is hostile. If they slay his butler, any attempts at Diplomacy suffer an additional -8 circumstance penalty.

If they attempt to sneak in, allow them to discover the window to the wine cellar (see *Almidar's Manse Cellar Map - Area 14*).

## WINE AND BLOOD

Player characters seeking covert entrance to the manse, immediately find a locked hatch door (normal lock). Behind the door, a half flight of stairs leads into a dark, dank stone room that serves as Almidar's wine cellar.

As PCs enter the room, allow anyone with the scent ability to make a Perception check to detect the scent of freshly spilled blood.

**Creatures:** Those entering the wine cellar stumble upon a ghastly scene, in which an incredible monstrous guard dog gnaws Yag's corpse, playfully dragging it about the wine cellar like a dried hunk of pig's ear.

### Guard Dog

CR 1/2

XP 200

Riding dog

hp 13; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* page 87.

**Developments:** Once PCs can pacify, trap, or otherwise defeat the dog, they can recover the body. A DC 20 Heal check correctly identifies the cause of death as strangulation. Wvolar waited until Yag had a few glasses of wine, then used a *sleep* spell to subdue his victim before finally strangling him. Once PCs find and identify Yag's body, they possess enough evidence to call the authorities and have Almidar arrested for murder. While he denies any part in the sinister act, he is still charged, arrested, and taken into custody for questioning. The authorities invite the PCs to question him as well.

Should the PCs somehow get Almidar to talk off the record, he can provide them with considerable amounts of information. His initial attitude towards them is hostile, however they can change his attitude with either of the following actions:

1. The PCs can attempt to convince or bribe city officials to clear Almidar of the murder charge. If they succeed, they gain a +10 circumstance bonus on any skill checks made to question him.
2. If the PCs' investigation uncovers any evidence linking Almidar to The Malchort Cabal, or if they can convince or provide the noble with evidence that someone in his organization tried to set him up, they gain a +5 insight bonus on any skill checks made to question him.

Each successful interrogation gets Almidar to give up the name of one of the members of the cabal. Unfortunately PCs only have limited time to get information from Almidar, before he too becomes a victim.



## DEALING WITH ALMIDAR BELANO

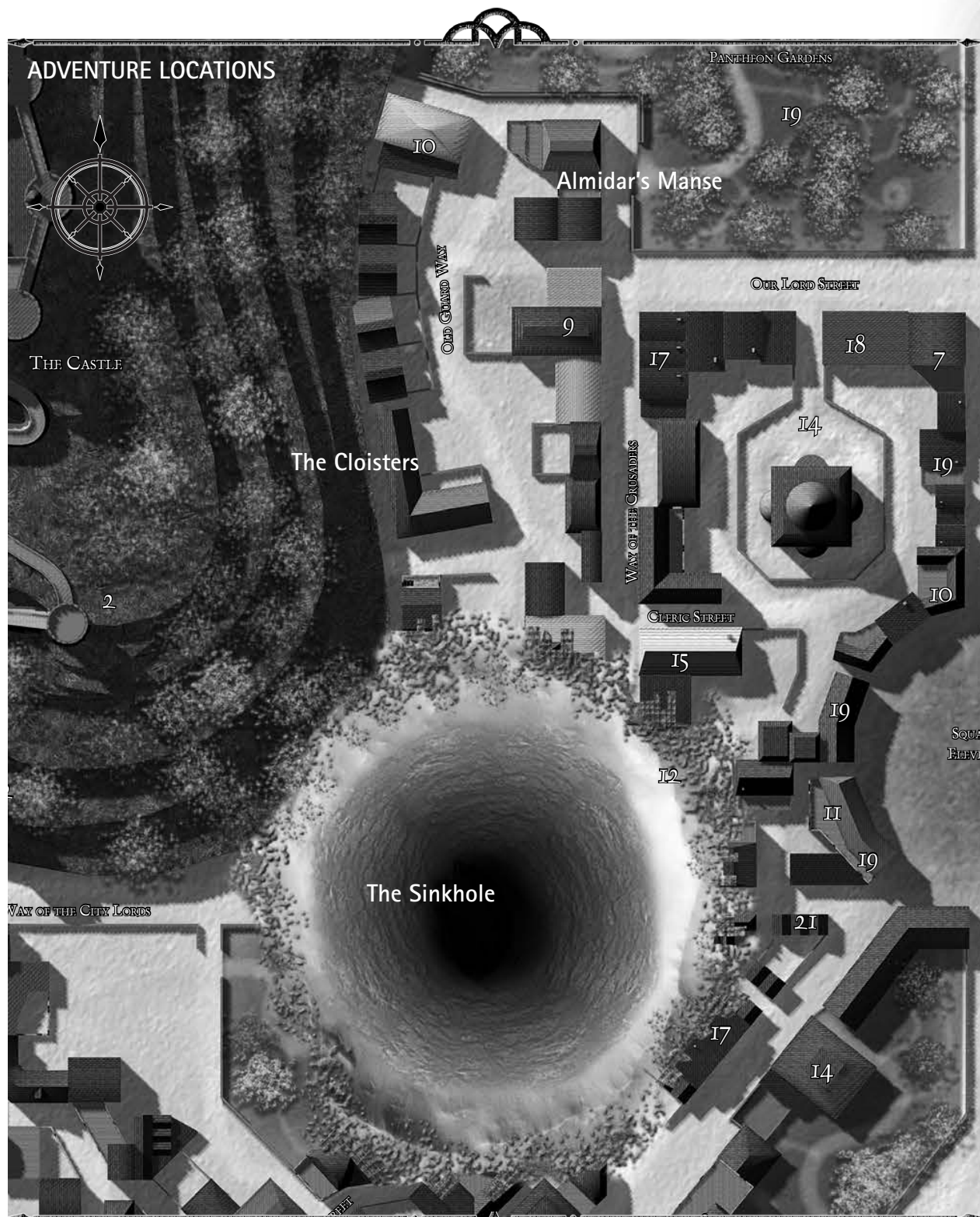
If asked when he last saw Yag, Almidar responds:

*"Yag left his party without so much as a good-bye. I thought it odd, however Yag's odd, so I figured he'd just had enough of the socializing".*

If the PCs ask whom Yag was working for, Almidar truthfully answers that as far as he knew, he was

Yag's sole employer. He then adds that the powers that rule the city are quite interested what's in the Sinkhole. If asked about the Cabal, he denies having a hand in such poppycock.

Ultimately, Almidar reveals little information of his own volition and PCs must use more serious measures to get what they want from the arrogant noble. While threats, ransom, or torture might work, fortunately for the PCs, Almidar has committed



\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations

a crime (if not numerous crimes). If the PCs can secure evidence against Almidar, they might be able to get the noble to stand trial where he would be forced to disclose more information. Still, Almidar belongs to a noble family and even in court, he's fairly untouchable. What Almidar doesn't realize is how much trouble he's really in, as Wvolnar's unwillingness to risk him as a potential leak of information places him securely on the mad cabalist's hit list.

If the PCs can convince or bribe city officials to clear Almidar of the murder charge or uncovering enough additional evidence of his involvement with The Malchort Cabal to blackmail him, he might give up the names of other potential murderer's victims (especially once he learns someone in his organization tried to set him up).

Four days into the interrogation, Wvolnar pays Almidar a late night visit. After a brief conversation, Wvolnar casts *hold person* on his former friend, then he summons a fire elemental and calmly walks out of the house. By dawn, little is left of the residence and its occupants but ash.

This means the PCs have four days to get what they can from Almidar, either by getting him to stand trial, raiding his house for clues, or both.

## ALMIDAR'S TRIAL

Almidar's trial is set to run one week, during which time he is confined to his Manse (as described below).

**Judge Syre Taramin** (LN female human Expert 8, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +10, Sense Motive +12) oversees the trial. Its purpose is to determine what role Almidar played in the Sinking, but more importantly, who else was involved, and if they plan to strike again.

The GM can have this trial run independent of the PCs action (while they run around and search his manse), or have the PCs take a direct part in the trial.

If the PCs choose not to take part in the trial, a city-appointed prosecuting barrister (N human Expert 5 Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +7, Sense Motive +6) attempts to interrogate Almidar. The prosecutor is good, but in need of money. For each day the trial ensues, have both barristers make a single opposed Diplomacy check. If the prosecutor wins, the PCs learn the truth behind that day's specific line of questioning (though they don't earn XP for what they learn). Subsequently, each time the prosecutor wins, Almidar offers him a bribe to skip town. If the prosecutor wins more than twice, Almidar's bribe proves significantly large enough to win him over.

At this point, the trial is delayed until the city can appoint a new prosecuting barrister. If the PCs do not volunteer for the position, Almidar is murdered before the courts can find a suitable replacement.

Should the PCs participate in the trial, use the following guidelines keep things simple: For each day, there is a specific line of questioning.

**Part 1:** The prosecutor calls Almidar takes the stand and can ask him questions about the topic using their Intimidate or Diplomacy skill (whichever is higher). Almidar must make an opposed Bluff check to answer each question successfully. The GM tracks the number of questions asked and the number of successful questions.

**Part 2:** Almidar's defense barrister counters the questions. Taking -6 circumstance penalty, he attempts to beat the prosecution's initial Skill check. If the defense barrister wins the check, the decision is overturned and the information is not successfully revealed.

**Ad Hoc XP:** For each day the PCs run a successful interrogation, award them 600 XP.

## TRIAL OUTLINE

The daily outline for the trial's line of questioning is as follows:

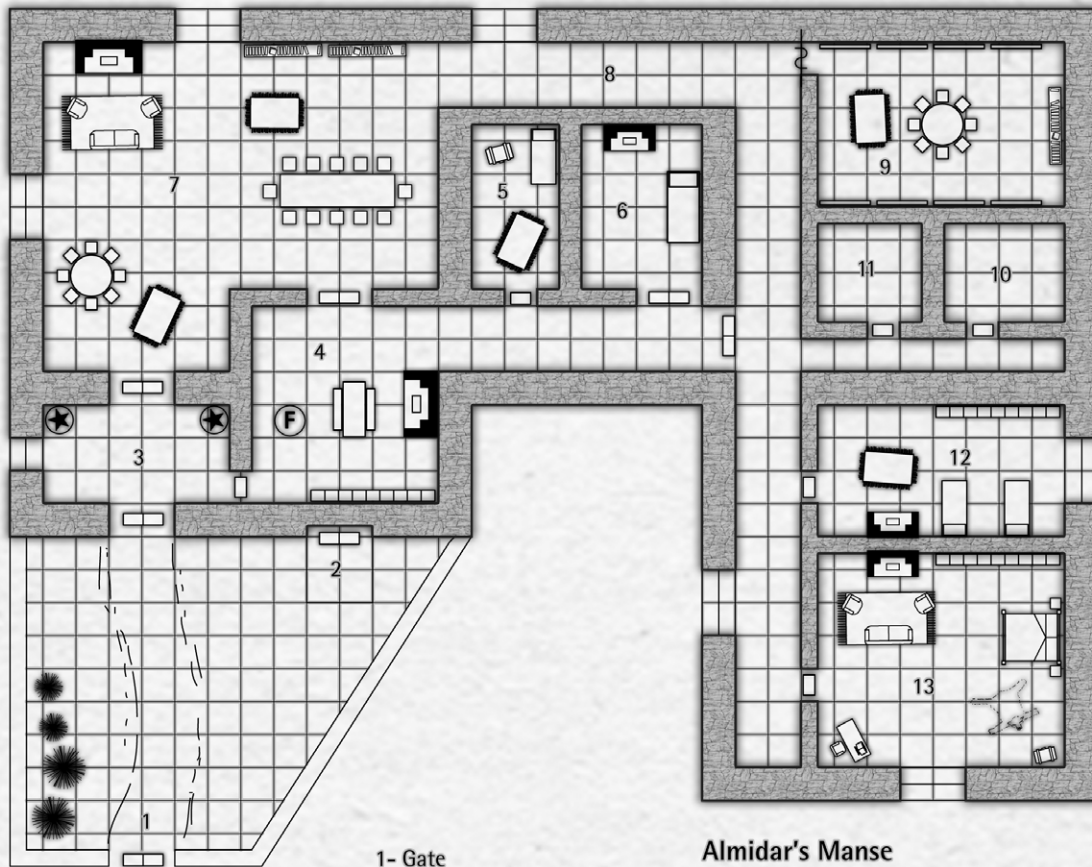
**Day 1:** The prosecutor calls Almidar takes the stand to answer questions concerning whether or not he had some sort of prior knowledge of the Sink and whether or not the Sink was predetermined.

**Day 2:** The prosecutor attempts to prove that Almidar belongs to a covert organization known as the Malchort Cabal. He also attempts to prove a motive for the Sinking in that the Malchort Cabal's members are decidedly anti-Azindralean, thus they orchestrated the Sinking as an act of genocide.

**Day 3:** The prosecutor attempts to get Almidar to reveal the names of his co-conspirators. At 3 pm, the court takes a two-hour recess to summon all those accused of participating in the Cabal to the courthouse. Following the recess the trial resumes. At this time, offer the PCs the opportunity to continue the prosecution. For the rest of the day, replace the prosecutor's Bluff check with the appropriate PC's Bluff or Diplomacy check (determine the results as described in the Almidar's Trial section above, except that the barrister doesn't attempt to bribe the PC).

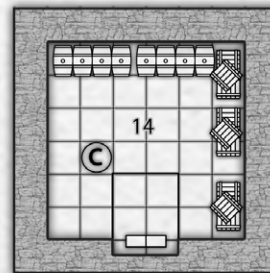
*Note:* even if Belicia Atregan is named, she doesn't





- 1- Gate
- 2- Window to Cellar
- 3- Foyer
- 4- Kitchen
- 5- Winstroph's bedroom
- 6- Raolfarg's bedroom
- 7- Parlour and Dining room
- 8- Hallway
- 9- Secret Meeting room
- 10- Bathroom
- 11- Bathroom
- 12- Bedroom
- 13- Almidar's Bedroom
- 14- Cellar

Almidar's Manse



Almidar's Manse Cellar

show up to the trial, but can instead be found at home, packing to flee the City.

**Day 4:** The prosecution attempts to get Almidar to reveal the name of the lead conspirator and the individual responsible for the plot's conception.

## ALMIDAR'S MANSE

Throughout the trial, Almidar spends little time at home, however he is under house arrest and must be in his house after dusk. If the PCs haven't already defeated Almidar's gruesome bodyguard Raolfarg, she accompanies him.

Almidar spends his days in the courthouse on trial; afterwards he visits his brother Tymithius in his house, accompanied by his legal counsel and other members of his family. Almidar only goes home to eat supper and sleep.

**Creatures:** At all times, court-appointed soldiers guard Almidar's House, though PCs making the proper arrangements can enter and search the premises as part of the court's ongoing investigation.

### Court Guards (12)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Male human fighter 2

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 shield)  
**hp** 25 (2d10)+9

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +0, **Will** +1; +1 Will vs. fear

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** longsword +6 (1d8+3)

**Ranged** shortbow +2 (1d6/x3)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Toughness,  
Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Climb +1, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (Local) +2

**Languages** Common

**SQ** Bonus Feat, Bravery, Skilled

**Combat Gear** arrows (20); **Other Gear** chainmail,  
longsword, heavy steel shield, shortbow.

## THE CABAL'S ROOM (CR 6)

Only one room in the entire house holds any interest to the PCs. A sliding panel in his hallway conceals a secret room in which Almidar hosted several of the Malchort Cabal's covert meetings, including the meetings where cabal members plotted the execution of Sinking. While normally the panel is extremely difficult to spot, while rushing about to prepare his defense, Almidar used a coin to keep the panel propped open just a crack, so he didn't have to bother with the locking mechanism. He forgot to remove the coin the door before entering into custody. A DC 15 Perception check readily spots the seam and reveals the entrance.

If PCs enter the room, read or paraphrase the following:

*This small meeting chamber centers around a circular conference table surrounded by a half dozen, wooden high-backed chairs. Oil paintings of Korteisian nobles hang upon each wall of the windowless room. Flanked by gaslight lamps, each painting has a small name plaque identifying the subject as one of various Belanos.*

**Creatures:** A wood golem guards the room. It attacks any creatures that enter without first displaying a Malchort medallion.

#### Wood Golem

CR 6

**XP** 2,400

**hp** 64; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* page 164.

Once the golem is defeated the PCs can search the room. A DC 15 Perception check to search the room reveals a small safe hidden behind one of the pictures.

**Safe:** hardness 8, hp 60; Open Lock DC 25; Break DC 30

**Developments:** Inside the safe is a collection of leather folders, overstuffed with pages of maps, notes, and transcripts dedicated to an organization called "The Malchort Cabal". The majority of the notes and transcripts are in Almidar's handwriting, however a few transcriptions appear as if other members of the cabal wrote them. The notes are fairly well organized and almost all are dated, some as far back as three years prior. Many of the notes are also signed. If PCs spend a few hours going through the notes, they can come up with six different signatures, belonging to each of the cabal members except Wvolnar.

Perhaps more terrifying, the folders also contain city maps scribbled with notes analyzing supposed effects a massive sinkhole would have on various locations. The notes contain strong anti-Azindralean sentiment, and the tone seems to indicate the group was plotting genocide, or at least to compound the plight of the native Azindraleans. Unfortunately, the notes contain no information on how or even if the Cabal caused the Sink to occur. The entire plot is written in conjecture and hearsay. In one passage, Almidar credits the plots to an individual he calls the Malchort Sage, who he describes as a brilliant iconoclast from overseas.

**Ad Hoc XP:** If the PCs recover the meeting notes from Almidar's secret room award them 1,600 XP.

**Treasure:** Almidar keeps a few more precious items in his safe along with the group's stored finances. These include an arcane scroll with two spells, *tongues* and *protection from energy*, *whip feather token*, a sizable chunk of clear quartz 67gp, and 6 freshwater pearls 68gp.

## EVENT 3: FIRE AND ASH

This event takes place upon the evening of the fourth day of the trial. During this time, if the PCs decide to investigate Almidar's manse, then the event takes place in the early morning after they leave.

At some point after the PCs have retired for the evening, they awaken (or are alerted) by the sounds of city alarms. People rush about in the streets, as the air fills with cinder and smoke. Excited cries that a mansion has caught fire escalate after people learn the conflagration is none other than the residence of Almidar Belano! Throughout the gathering throng of onlookers, dark whispers of arson, murder, and suicide create an eerie undertone. The flames quickly consume the house, and by the time the PCs arrive, there is little left to see but a pile of burnt smoldering timber.



As PCs approach the ruins, read or paraphrase the following:

*Suddenly, a shower of sparks erupts from the pile with a loud explosion and a huge hulking creature of rippling flame strides from the devastating conflagration.*

**Creatures:** While the mastermind behind the wanton destruction is already far from the crime scene, the creature responsible for the blaze, a huge fire elemental, hangs around to see if it can sow any further destruction.

#### Huge Fire Elemental

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 85; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* page 124.

**Developments:** Wvolnar called forth the fire-elemental using an *elemental gem*, though the creature grew some within the blaze. A DC 18 Perception check to search the ashen remains Almidar's manse uncovers the blackened remains of the once magical gemstone. A DC 24 Spellcraft check, correctly identifies the item. A full day's combing the streets and a successful DC 18 Knowledge skill check finds a fence who claims to have sold just such a gem. If threatened with a DC 20 Intimidate check or paid a bribe of 250gp or more, he provides the following description of the purchaser:

*"The guy who bought the gem was dressed as a beggar, wearing dark, threadbare robes with his hands wrapped with bandages. Oddly, the bandages seemed to hide tattoos rather than any injuries. He kept his face shadowed, darkened further with charcoal, though I marked him a middle-aged man, with graying curls and sharp, Korteisian features. He had a strong accent too, from overseas, and I could tell he was well educated, and likely a nobleman."*

**Conclusion:** The fire brings Almidar's trial to a crushing halt. Still, the court has reasonable evidence to cast their suspicions elsewhere. Blame for the Sinking falls soundly on the remaining members of the Malchort Cabal. To the people, it becomes apparent someone in the group, if not all are hiding something (and something to do with the Sinkhole). Worse, hints that aristocrats may have deliberately caused the Sinking as an act of genocide against the native Azindraleans sparks racial tension throughout the city and riotous demonstrators crowd the streets outside the courthouse. Any individuals accused of being involved with the cabal receive death threats.

In response, Judge Syre Taramin calls upon the PCs to investigate any other individuals accused of being cabal members to determine their roles in the Sinking and to try to dig up more information of the mysterious Malchort Sage.

## EVENT 4: UNTURNED STONES

From this point on the adventure focuses upon investigating the remaining members of the cabal. The following investigations can be run in any order, however Wvolnar's putrid cacodaemon familiar Grymwort (see *page 124*) keeps tabs on the various cabal members and reports back to his master each time the PCs begin an investigation. Wvolnar responds shortly thereafter by assassinating his fellow cabal members one-by-one as described in each of their specific entries below.

### BELICIA ATREGAN (CR 4)

Shortly after the trial starts Belicia begins making preparations to flee the city and return to the Empire across the sea. While eager for the power Wvolnar promised the Cabal, she was perhaps the most skeptical of both the plot and Wvolnar's true motives. Wvolnar knows of all the Cabal members, Belicia is the most likely to expose him. Thus, Belicia becomes his primary target for extermination.

After Belicia fails to appear in court, Judge Syre Taramin sends the PCs to find her and bring her to the courthouse for questioning. As soon as the PCs arrive at her house she flees. Allow the PCs a DC 20 Perception check to spot her through an upstairs window, dashing about in a hurry.

**Creatures:** Belicia keeps her house securely locked using good quality locks. As soon as she detects anyone attempting to enter her house, she immediately releases a pair of iron cobras she keeps in a chest, then races for the back door to attempt to flee. If her egress is blocked, she draws her weapons, prepared to fight to the death.

#### Iron Cobra (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 15; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* page 182.

#### Belicia Atregan

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female aristocrat 4/rogue 2

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 Dodge)

**hp** 33 (6 HD; 2d8+4d8+6)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk rapier +9 (1d6/18–20), mwk dagger +8

(1d4/19–20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6**TACTICS****Before Combat:** Upon spotting opponents, Belicia flees immediately, fighting only if cornered.**During Combat:** With few options, Belicia feints as much as possible and tries to sneak attack those opponents she can catch flat-footed.**Morale:** Belicia fears Wvolnar's wrath more than death. She refuses to parlay with words and fights until slain.**STATISTICS****Str** 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Feint, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Appraise +8, Bluff +9, Climb +8, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +11, Use Magic Device +8**Languages** Azindralean, Common, Kortezian**SQ** rogue talents (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1**Gear** +1 studded leather, mwk rapier, mwk dagger, ring of protection +1, 853 gp.

A DC 16 Perception check made to search the premises recovers Belicia's accounting book shrewdly hidden among her possessions.

**Accounting Book:** Belicia served as the Cabal's primary financier and kept keen records to assure she'd recover her investments. If her notes are correct, she personally bankrolled the Cabal over 10,000 gp. According to her accounts, almost two thirds of the money came at the direct request of Raccitore Belano. The money was used to fund research concerning several lost civilizations and pre-Azindralean Gods. A DC 20 Linguistics check deciphers some shorthand margin notes that infer Raccitore doesn't perform the research himself, but instead uses an expert from the Academe Trypus.

A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana, history, or nobility) or bardic knowledge check recalls the Academe Trypus as mystic society of sages and wizards dedicated to obscure and occult gods semi-covertly funded by the Blood Triperium.

The remaining names in her ledger include Orchetta Belano, Gintz Ophalus, Trayford Andwan, Yag Threed, and someone named Wvolnar.

**Developments:** If Belicia escapes, two days later the PCs spot a broadside stating her remains were found in a roadside ditch a few miles outside of town. In order to ease the suspicions and paranoia of her death might cause the remaining cabal members, city officials publicly blame the murder on

bandits. The courthouse expropriates both her body and her belongings as part of the investigation. The PCs are free to examine either, in which case, the PCs recover her accounting books.

If the PCs use *speak with dead* to talk to Belicia's corpse she can tell the PCs that she and her fellow Cabal members were working with expert from the Academe Trypus to locate a vast source of hidden power beneath the city. To protect everyone, no one was ever told the expert's real name and his sole contact to the group was Raccitore. In the end, Belicia became unsure of the Cabal's plans and when the Sink happened, she became terrified by the consequences of her actions. If asked, she can provide a description of Raccitore's contact that matches the description given by the fence in Act 3. Still, she has yet to figure out that Wvolmar and the Trypus contact are one and the same..

**Ad-Hoc XP:** If the PCs recover Belicia's journal and use it to determine that the Cabal hired an expert to perform research prior to the Sinking award them 800 XP.

## THE BELANO COUSINS

The Belano cousins— **Raccitore Belano** (male aristocrat 4, expert 2) and **Orchetta Belano** (female aristocrat 5) — quickly determine the safest place for them during the trial is behind bars. Once Wvolnar begins his killing spree, both cousins voluntarily place themselves into the court's custody. They hope to wait things out in confinement until the authorities catch and try Wvolnar.

The cousins hope to use their considerable finances and political influence to turn on Wvolnar during his trial in order to assure his execution and rid themselves of the Malchort Sage once and for all. Still, the cousins won't readily provide the court with information that might incriminate them in the Sinking. Furthermore, unless the PCs employ some form of potent magical means to interrogate them, neither Belano admits to knowing the Malchort Sage's identity. Yet despite their ability to identify Wvolnar as the Malchort Sage, the cousins understand little of his work and penultimate goals.

If tried successfully, either of the Belano cousins can provide the following testimony:

The cousins willingly admit that after the Malchort Sage convinced the Cabal a tremendous source of ancient power lay hidden below the Great City, they hired him to help recover it. Still, they maintain that the Cabal's sole intent in this matter was to gain access to that power, and not to cause the disaster that followed. The cousins can truthfully claim that, despite providing significant funds to aid



the Malchort Sage, the Cabal isn't to blame for the ensuing disaster, and that the reason the Malchort Sage deliberately caused the Sinking remains unknown to them. They plead for the court's mercy and offer the financial support of their family in the wake of the devastating event. Lastly, the cousins claim that fear of retribution prevented them from coming forth earlier.

In truth, while the cousins didn't necessarily understand Wvolnar's plan or goals; up until the time they were caught, they remained still power-hungry enough to willingly support him in his plans.

**Developments:** Shortly after the cousins are taken into custody, Wvolnar's spying familiar Grymwort relays the event to his master. Thereafter, Wvolnar plots the cousin's immediate execution. He sends Grymwort to spy on the courthouse cell guards, and attempts to mark them. Once he identifies the cell guards, he tracks them to their homes. Early in the morning, he approaches one of the guards in the street and uses *charm person* to get him to place dark reaver powder in the cousin's food.

If the PCs spot the guard entering the courthouse, allow them the opportunity to determine he has been charmed, otherwise he poisons the cousins and they die shortly after. If the PCs stop the guard, they can find the poison on him. Thereafter, the guard proceeds to explain what he remembers about the morning's events (as described below). The cousins learn of the attempted poisoning soon after, and clam up entirely.

The PCs can inspect the corpses. A DC 18 Heal Check reveals both cousins were poisoned with dark reaver powder. The PCs may also interview the guards. If called for interviews, the charmed guard immediately pales and begins sweating for he has a strange feeling he may somehow be responsible for the cousin's deaths. While the charmed guard remains unaware of his actions, he still carries the empty vial of poison which the PCs can find with a DC 12 Perception check to search the lining of his top coat. If accused of poisoning the prisoners, he truthfully swears he cannot recall the day's events except that a strange man approached him earlier that morning. He provides a description of Wvolnar that matches the description given by the fence in *EVENT 3*.

## TRAYFORD ANDWAN

The morning after Trayford Andwan receives a court summons to stand trial for his involvement in the Malchort Cabal, the four of the remaining members receive a gruesome delivery. Each awakens to the discovery of sealed wine barrel on their porch, though the contents contain not wine, but pieces of a

body soon identified as Trayford Andwan. As soon as the court learns of these grisly incidents, they send the PCs to search Trayford's house for clues.

When the PCs arrive at Trayford's house, they find things eerily quiet and seemingly closed up. All the doors and windows are locked with average locks, nothing too tough for an experienced adventurer to break into.

Inside, scorch marks mar the furnishings and everywhere shattered splinters and overturned furniture. Anyone assessing the wreckage can attempt a DC 25 Perception check to notice subtle inconsistencies in the damage patterns in the room. Neither fighting nor looting caused the damage. Instead, the wanton destruction likely took place after Trayford was murdered. Clues imply a single person could have easily perpetrated the acts as an attempt to throw any investigators off track.

In an attempt to distance himself from his allies, Trayford cleared his home of all evidence of his involvement with the Cabal. Unfortunately for the nobleman, this preparatory tactic did little to assuage Wvolnar's paranoia.

Despite his cleverly plotted murder, Wvolnar's left behind one clue which can be found in the office within a pile of death threats sitting upon Trayford's desk. Anyone inspecting the letters can attempt a DC 18 Linguistics check to determine one of the threats is a forgery. While the forger intended the note to appear as if written by the leader of an angered resistance group to divert any investigation of the man's murder, the handwriting on the letter indicates the writer received an education overseas. Uncannily, the described threat proves to be an identical match to the details of Trayford's murder.

**Ad Hoc XP:** If the PCs uncover the forgery and learn the murder was educated overseas, award the PCs 800 XP.

## GINTZ OPHALUS

Gintz Ophalus despises the fact he was born into a minor noble family. A duplicitous and charming sociopath, he exploited what little privilege his family name provided him into a life of petty crime and blackmail. As things turned out, Gintz was good at both and became far wealthier as a result. A brief tryst with Belicia led Gintz into the company of the Cabal, and through one of his street connections, Gintz brought in Wvolnar into the fold. As it turns out, his former connection is none other than the acclaimed prophet Lazarus. Prior to his mysterious transcendence, Lazarus ran a thriving business selling illegally recovered artifacts, and traveled about the City contacting various patrons using the guise of

a street prophet. Lazarus's primary source of these objects was the notorious grave-robber/archeologist Yag Threed and his most important patron was the Academe Trypus. In fact, both Yag and Lazarus were on location on the day of the Sinking, something Gintz arranged for Wvolnar. With Yag dead and Lazarus hopeless mad, Gintz remains the sole individual who can connect Wvolnar to the Academe Trypus. Quick enough to realize this fact, as soon as the other members of his Cabal start getting killed, Gintz hits the streets hoping to disguise himself within Lazarus' growing fold. The PCs' challenge is to figure out where Gintz is hiding out before Wvolnar.

Gintz long ago removed himself from public record. Claiming himself an immigrant from overseas, he now keeps a guest room at Almidar's residence. No record exists of him owning his own property, though a successful DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) check recalls that the Ophalus family was suddenly bankrupted, and forced into selling their properties in order to return to their overseas homeland. Unbeknownst to his family, Gintz not only aided in orchestrating the bankruptcy, he pocketed a fair amount off the property sale. He used about half of the money to start up an exporting company with a man named Lazario Greadle. Together Lazario and Gintz embezzled about half of the company's earnings and shortly thereafter filed for bankruptcy. According to court record, the bankruptcy occurred in part as a result of Lazario's newfound religious fervor. During the proceedings, he even changed his name to Lazarus, though the prosecutor intimated the change as clever maneuver to prevent his past from surfacing in future business endeavors. However, once Lazarus took to the streets to preach, and remained there for several months, the court dropped all pending allegations.

Once their court case closed, the two swindlers used both the money and the foreign connections they made from the exporting business, created their own blackmarket and went underground. Up until the second bankruptcy, everything Gintz and Lazario did remains in the public record, ironically kept in the courthouse.

The PCs can gather bits and pieces about Gintz's background with a DC 20 Diplomacy check gather information around the area of the sink. Offering local street urchins at least 10 gp tips for information provides individuals with a +5 insight modifier towards this check.

In addition, the PCs can attempt to search public records for information about Gintz's associates. A DC 20 Perception check to search the records uncovers four different citations against Lazarus for trafficking of illegal relics, though all were dropped due to lack of evidence. In all four cases, the

barristers failed to prove Lazarus was intentionally trafficking relics. Suspiciously, two of the citations involved Yag and one of the citations involved Gintz. Alternately, the PCs may spend 60 gp to hire a barrister to secure the incriminating records.

### Gintz Ophaleus

**CR 5**
**XP 1,200**

Male aristocrat 3/rogue 4

**LN** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 31 (7 HD; 4d8+3d8+)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *short sword* +9 (1d6/19–20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6

**Rogue Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 4th, concentration +6) 3/day—*read magic*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 9, **Dex** 17, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Appraise +7, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +9, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +9, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Knowledge (religion) +6, Linguistics +8, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +11

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Dwarven, Korteisian, Infernal

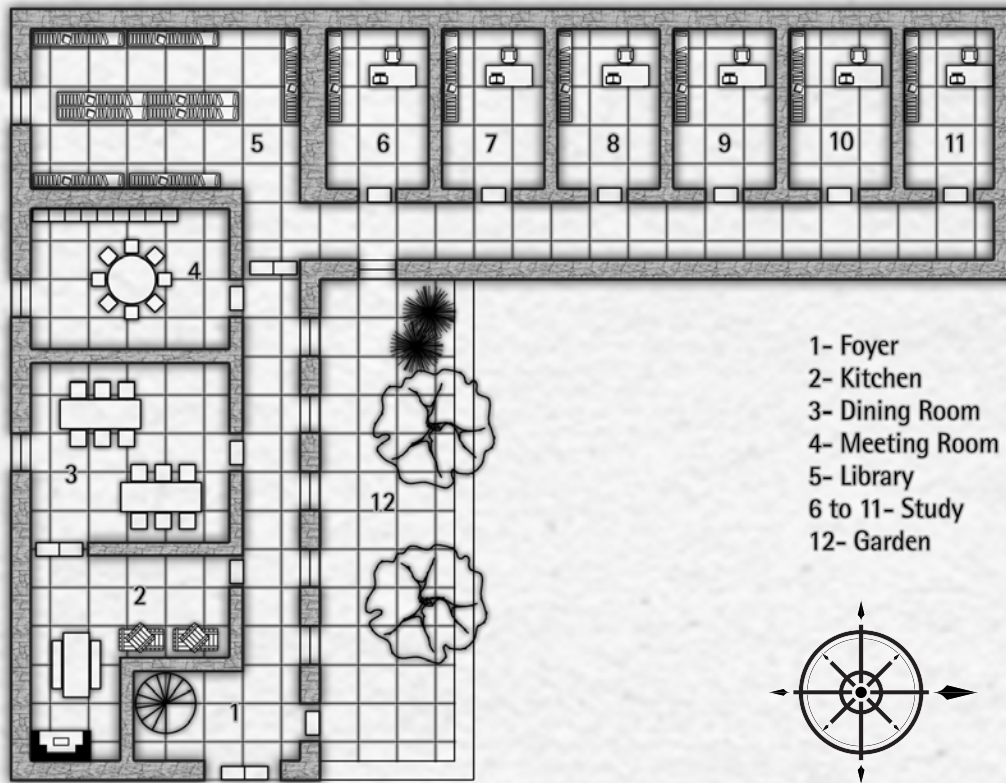
**SQ** rogue talents (fast stealth, minor magic), trapfinding +2

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *short sword*, *amulet of natural armor* +1.

**Developments:** Gintz hides in Lazarus' church, wearing plain cotton robes and milling about with the other disciples. Even if the PCs have a good description of Gintz, he's shaved his head to fit in giving him a +2 modifier to his disguise check.

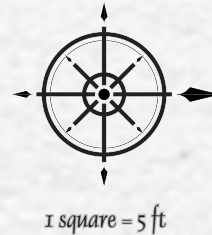
If he thinks the authorities are on to him, he slips out of the crowd at the first convenient opportunity and flees. If the PCs catch up to him, he puts up a great fight. Still, Gintz remains a coward. Uninterested in dying, he offers to surrender and sit through an interrogation so long as he can barter for





The Cloisters - Ground Floor

- 1- Foyer
- 2- Kitchen
- 3- Dining Room
- 4- Meeting Room
- 5- Library
- 6 to 11- Study
- 12- Garden



his life. If the PCs accept, Gintz adds a stipulation. The PCs must conduct a non-legal interrogation outside of the courthouse; nothing public, nothing on the record. He promises to answer truthfully, so long as they give him their word that they'll release him immediately following the interrogation. He lets the PCs know that he is only willing to help them because the man they seek is both brilliant and ruthless, and will stop at nothing to kill him. If the PCs fail to stop Wvolnar, Gintz knows he's as good as dead, even if he is held in custody.

## Event 5: The Final Suspect

Through their investigations, the PCs eventually acquire enough information to attempt to identify their primary suspect, the Malchort Sage. If the PCs ask around, a DC 20 Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check reveals Wvolnar serves as the Azindralean representative for Academe Trypus. This would explain his formal style of writing and identifies him as being educated overseas. An additional check reveals that the Academe Trypus purchased a lot of pre-Azindralean artifacts of the blackmarket, both for collections and exports. The source of this information also reveals that the Academe's curator seems well versed in Pre-Azindralean culture.

Once the PCs identify Wvolnar as the Malchort Sage, their next step is to seek him out. Gintz as well as anyone involved in the trial, can aid point the PCs towards the Academe Trypus' research center in Temple Ward. As the Academe's appointed foreign delegate, Wvolnar runs the research center, a small building on the border of Lower King's hill and the Temple Ward. Out of convenience, he keeps his personal residence on the second floor.

## The Cloisters (CR 5)

Made of cobblestone and carpeted in ivy, the two-storey building once served as a cloister for an order of monks who served at the Temple of Our Lady of Night.

**Trap:** Before fleeing for the Sink, Wvolnar cast a *fire trap* spell on the cloister entrance.

### Fire Trapped Door

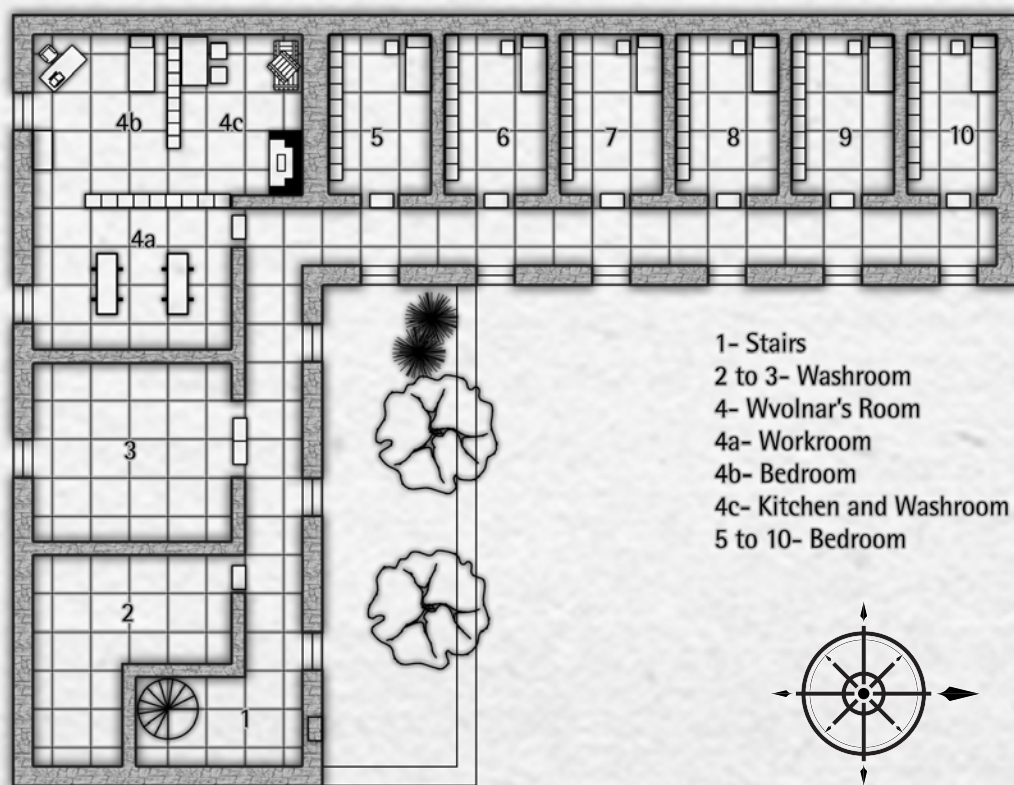
CR 4

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Effect** *fire trap* spell (all creatures in a 5-ft-radius, 1d4 +7 fire damage, DC 18 Reflex save for half damage).



The Cloisters - First Floor

The cloister's ground floor consists of a small foyer, a meeting room, a small library connected to six private studies, a dining hall, and a kitchen. The upstairs consists of a half-dozen small bedrooms, and two washrooms.

**Creatures:** Wvolnar hired a small band of ex-Bloodfang mercenaries to keep watch over the cloister and to take the heads of any intruders.

#### Ex-Bloodfang Mercenaries (3)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Male bugbear

hp 16; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* page 38.

**Treasure:** One of the bugbears carries a large sack holding some gold coins and an assortment of other semi-valuable items, which Wvolnar used to pay them. In his absence, the bugbears helped themselves to a few items around the cloisters. In all, their horde consists of 500 gp and coins and 1,000 gp of assorted jewelry and upscale home furnishings.

**Developments:** Defeating the bugbears, leaves the PCs free to search the remainder of the building without trouble. The cloisters hold little of interest, except Wvolnar's room.

### WVOLNAR'S ROOM

Wvolnar keeps a small apartment in the southwest corner of the cloisters. It consists of a single large room with partitions dividing his sleeping quarters from his work area, washroom, and kitchen. Having left in a hurry, his apartment is somewhat of a wreck.

**Bedroom:** The bedroom is lightly furnished with a bed, a closet, and a chest of drawers. A small reading table sits near the bed with a kerosene lamp.

Though the bed appears freshly made, a DC 18 Perception check notes a wrinkled depression in the middle of the sheets where Wvolnar placed the sack he used to hold his belongings as he was packing.

Three silk topcoats hang in the closet. A DC 15 Perception check to search the pockets uncovers a note with Trayford Andwan's address. Concealed within the inside pocket of the same coat hide a garrote and a neatly folded pair of lambskin gloves stained with blood.

**Treasure:** In his rush to flee Wvolnar forgot to grab a small wooden box on the top shelf of his closet. The box holds one of his most prized items, a *ring of sustenance* he'd been saving, unsure of whether or not he should pawn it to help fund his work.



**Workroom:** A DC 18 Perception check to search the workroom notes recent scratches and ring marks on the desk indicating the table held an assortment of equipment, which someone removed quickly. Oddly, the bookshelves have gaping holes where handfuls of books were removed. Similarly, the work desk is suspiciously empty, as Wvolnar took all the notes from his research. The single piece of evidence is torn corner piece from one of his notes still pinned to the wall above the desk. Written in pre-Azindralean Malchortian runes, a successful DC 25 Linguistics check deciphers the note fragment as part of a translation of a treatise on so-called living war-machines in which Malchort sorcerers attempted to battle ancient gods.

On a stand in the far corner rests a small, 2-foot-square frame made from thin tubes of an unknown alloy. A pile of notes crammed into a drawer in the stand can be used to identify the structure as a model. A conversion for the scale indicates the frame as several hundred feet tall. Wvolnar left no evidence of what the model represents. A DC 15 Appraise check marks the model as a masterwork worth 350 gp to the right art dealer or architect.

**Metal Cube:** hardness 3; hp 12; Break DC 15; weight 10 lbs.

**Developments:** Paranoid that his adversaries were attempting to keep a watch on him, Wvolnar exited the cloisters through the window, then climbed down the trellis. He left the window ajar. The aged trellis barely held his weight, and when part of the latticework snapped, he dropped his bag to avoid a fall. A DC 15 Perception check notes the broken rungs and the depression in ground beneath where the bag fell. A DC 18 Perception check picks up his tracks, which lead southeast. His trail disappears once it reaches the end of Old Guard. A DC 10 Intelligence or Wisdom check correctly assumes Wvolnar has headed towards the Sinkhole.

## EVENT 6: INTO THE SINK

Upon reaching Yag's base of operations, Wvolnar stopped into the research tent to check the deceased archeologist's notes. These lie spread across the floor of the tent. The notes indicate Yag was working on a rope and timber scaffolding to make his descent into the sink. Anyone analyzing the design can attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or (dungeoneering) check to determine that Yag never completed the structure and it still has several flaws, which makes using it risky. If the PCs determine the scaffolding still has flaws, grant them a +2 insight bonus to any saving throws they need to make in conjunction with maneuvering or combat that takes place on the scaffolding.

**Creatures:** By the time the PCs arrive, Wvolnar has already descended into the sinkhole via the series of rickety, partially constructed platforms Yag was erecting at the time of his death. His daemonic familiar Grymwort, a vile fleshy lump with a gnashing maw of jagged teeth, accompanies him, keeping a constant watch for any would-be antagonists. He begins 30 feet below the sinkhole lip, moving slowly and attempting to keep unseen, in the shadows. As soon as Wvolnar or Grymwort spot pursuers, they hold their positions, remaining hidden until the PCs either leave or spot them. As soon as either of them think they have been spotted, they attack.

### WVOLNAR

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human enchanter 8

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+4 shield, +2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 54 (8d6+24)

Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +7

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk quarterstaff +4 (1d6–1), mwk dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)

Special Attacks aura of despair (8 rounds/day)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th;

concentration +12)

7/day—dazing touch

Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +12)

4th—*confusion* (DC 18), *fire trap* (DC 18)\*, *globe of invulnerability (lesser)\**, *ice storm* (DC 18)

3rd—*dispel magic* (DC 17), *hold person* (DC 17), *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *sleet storm* (DC 17), *stinking cloud* (DC 17)

2nd—*blur*, *glitterdust* (DC 16), *gust of wind* (DC 16), *scorching ray* (DC 16), *shatter* (DC 16)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 15), *charm person* (DC 15)\*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *shield\**, *shocking grasp* (DC 15)

o (at will)—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

Opposition Schools necromancy, illusion

\*already cast

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** Prior to combat, Wvolnar casts *shield*, then *globe of invulnerability*.

**During Combat:** Wvolnar initiates his attack with ranged spells, attempting to weaken targets as they approach. He hopes to lead opponents onto the scaffolding, then uses *shatter* to destroy it, and send them tumbling into the sinkhole. He follows up with *stinking cloud*, hoping to create a more

precarious situation for opponents attempting to maneuver around the edges of the sinkhole. He saves *dispel magic* for flying opponents or opponents with magical defenses. He saves his *dazing touch* ability to place opponents trying to force him into melee at a disadvantage.

**Morale:** Once reduced to 20 hit points, Wvolnar erupts into mad laughter, casts *feather fall* and leaps into the Sinkhole, and floats down into the darkness. As he drops, he summons more sink



beasts, which quickly occupy the PCs' attentions and cover his escape.

**Base Statistics** Without his *shield* spell Wvolnar has the following stats:

**AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Improved Familiar, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Bluff)

**Skills** Appraise +11, Bluff +7, Craft (alchemy) +13, Diplomacy +4, Fly +11, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +11, Spellcraft +15

**Languages** Common, Korteisian

**SQ** arcane bond (cacodaemon), enchanting smile

**Combat Gear** *wand of chill touch* (50 charges); **Other**

**Gear** mwk quarterstaff, mwk dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *bracers of armor* +2, 448 gp.

#### Grymwort (Advanced Familiar)

CR —

Cacodaemon; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* page 64.

**NE** Tiny outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect good, detect magic; **Perception** +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+4 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 19 (3d10+3); fast healing 2

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

**DR** 5/good or silver; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** bite +6 (1d4+1 plus disease)

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

**Special Attacks** soul lock

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

**Constant**—*detect good*, *detect magic*

At will—*invisibility* (self only)

3/day—*lesser confusion* (DC 12)

1/week—*commune* (CL 12th, six questions)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat:** Grymwort flies about attempting to draw the PCs' attention away from his master. He targets opponents with *lesser confusion*, then swoops in to make bite attacks, hoping to get opponents to lose their footing.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 11, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12



**Feats** Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes  
**Skills** Bluff +7, Fly +18, Knowledge (planes) +5, Perception +7, Stealth +14  
**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.  
**SQ** change shape (2 of the following forms: lizard, octopus, small scorpion, venomous snake)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Disease (Su):** Cacodaemonia: Bite—injury; save Fortitude DC 12; onset 1 day; frequency 1/day; effect 1d2 Wisdom damage, cure 2 consecutive saves. In addition to the normal effects of the disease, as long as a victim is infected, the cacodaemon can telepathically communicate with the creature over any distance (as long as they remain on the same plane).  
**Soul Lock (Su):** Once per day as a full-round action, a cacodaemon can ingest the spirit of any sentient creature that has died within the last minute. This causes a soul gem to grow inside of the cacodaemon's gut, which it can regurgitate as a standard action. A soul gem is a fine-sized object with 1 hit point and hardness 2. Destroying a soul gem frees the soul within, though it does not return the deceased creature to life. This is a death effect. Any attempt to resurrect a body whose soul is trapped in a soul gem requires a DC 12 caster level check. Failure results in the spell having no effect, while success shatters the victim's soul gem and returns the creature to life as normal. If the soul gem rests in an unholy location, such as that created by the spell *unhallow*, the DC of this caster level check increases by +2. The caster level check DC is Charisma-based. Any evil outsider can, as a standard action, ingest a soul gem. Doing so frees the soul within, but condemns it to one of the lower planes (though the soul can be returned to life as normal). The outsider gains fast healing 2 for a number of rounds equal to its Hit Dice.

## UP FROM THE DEPTHS (CR 7)

For weeks now, Wvolnar has been chumming the sinkhole with various items, relics, stray animals and occasionally people, in an attempt to attract the attentions creatures he believes guard this power source. He even started a minor ruckus with a flask of *animate objects* (see *The Sinking: Animation*). His chumming did the trick, calling forth a trio of alien predators from the depths below. Known to him only as sink beasts, these feral aberrations were once the war-beasts of choice of the Malchort Empire and have enough intelligence to respond to his actions. Thus when called, they eagerly rise from the depths and attack.

## SINK BEAST (3)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 42; see *Appendix*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** As soon as they hear Wvolnar's signal, the sink beasts scurry up the sides of the sink. Targeting the nearest opponents, they strike with their acidic stingers.

**During Combat:** Taking advantage of their reach attacks, the sink beasts, strike and move, trying to keep out of melee range as they attack.

**Morale:** the sink beasts fight to the death.

## CONCLUSION

This adventure concludes once the PCs defeat the sink beasts and regain control of Yag's base camp. At that point, they're ready to resolve many of the theories and questions surrounding the Sinking using evidence and clues collected throughout the adventure. Whether or not Wvolnar lives, there should be enough evidence to imply that something terrible lurks at the bottom of the sinkhole, something poised to destroy the Great City. They should also learn that despite grim projections, nothing is inevitable. While nothing happens immediately, their most obvious choice is to descend into the Sinkhole and prevent dire apocalypse from occurring.

This adventure also wraps up Season One, setting the stage for Season Two's opener, in which the PCs must research and finance a trip into the Sink by seeking the aid of wealthy, powerful nobles who might stand against the Malchort Cabal. Thereafter, the adventures will focus upon descending into the hole and uncovering the truth that lies within.

## APPENDIX

### SINK BEAST

A horrifying creature scuttles forth on four spindly, insect-like legs covered with thorny chitin that protrude from a small body resembling a maggot covered with toad's skin. Its sphincter-like mouth is filled with multiple pairs of cross-crossing black pincers. Three, 10-foot-long spiny tendrils extend from the torso, two behind the legs and one from the center of the spine, each topped with a long, black, glistening spike.

#### Sink Beast

CR 4

XP 1,200

NE Small aberration

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 42 (5d8+20)

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

**Immune** acid, poison

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** 3 stinger +7 (1d2+2 plus 1d6 acid), bite +4 (1d4+1)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with gore)

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 15, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Endurance, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (stinger)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Climb +16, Perception +6, Stealth +9, Survival +6; **Racial Modifiers** +6 Acrobatics

**ECOLOGY**

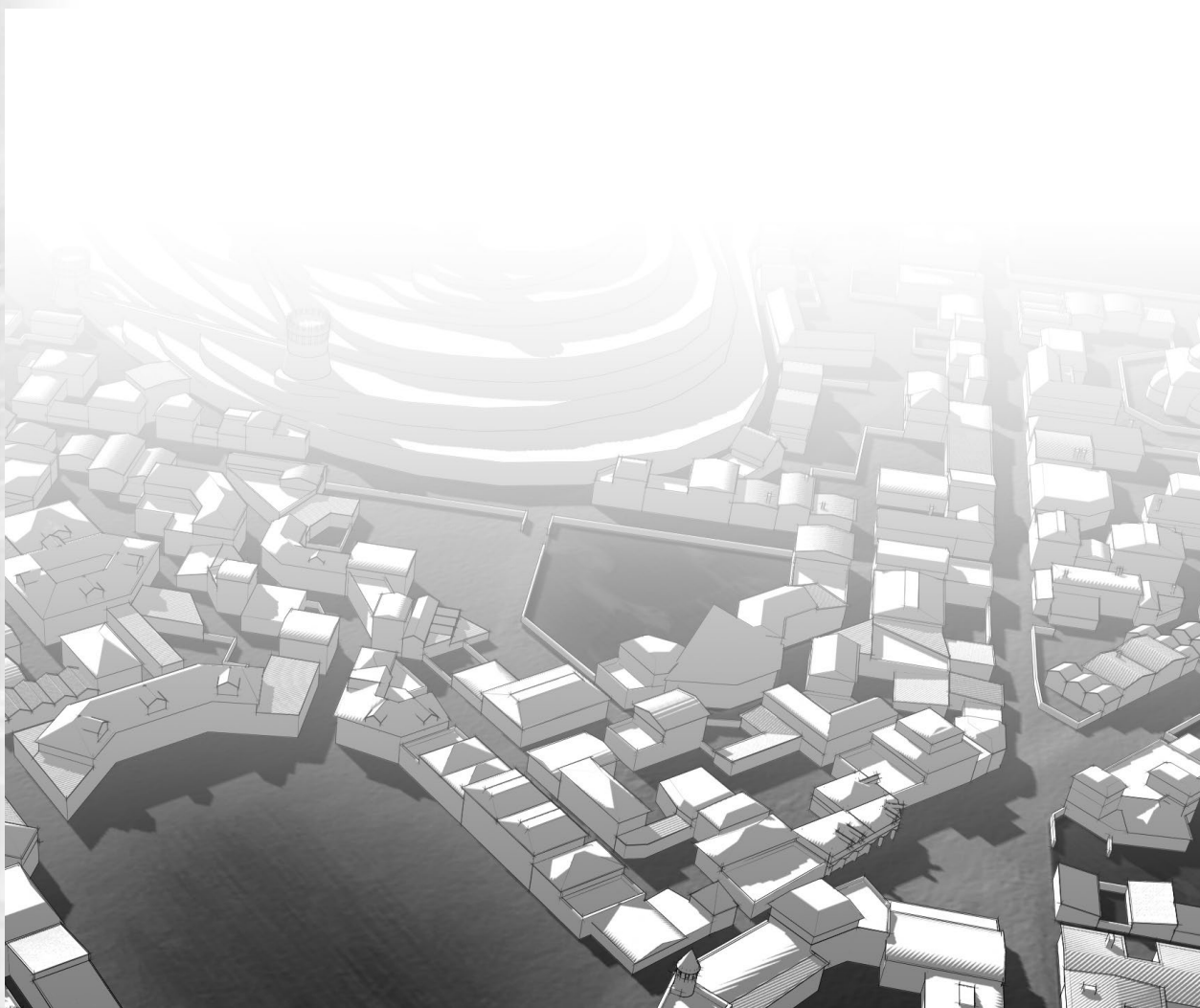
**Environment** subterranean

**Organization** solitary, pair, or gang (3-8)

**Treasure** none

For lack of a better name, sink beasts are alien creatures found in the deepest darkest caverns of the earth. Only rarely do surface dwellers see them, though they surface occasionally to hunt meat, a rarity in their lightless depths. Sink beasts hunt prey with long ropy tendrils, which lash out in great lengths and deliver excruciating acid burns when they pierce flesh. They are great climbers and decent trackers, often hunting in groups that employ primitive strategies. They also possess a reasonable intellect, and can thus alter their strategies allowing them to adapt quickly to various changes.

Many centuries ago, the people of an ancient empire known as the Malchorts bred these creatures in great numbers. They primarily employed the beasts for war and hostile conquest. After the Malchort's empire crumbled, the creatures went feral and their population scattered throughout the lightless under realms.





URBAN•ADVENTURES

# THE GREAT CITY

## CAMPAIGN SETTING



UA001 - The Great City  
Campaign Setting

UA015 - The Great City  
Player's Guide

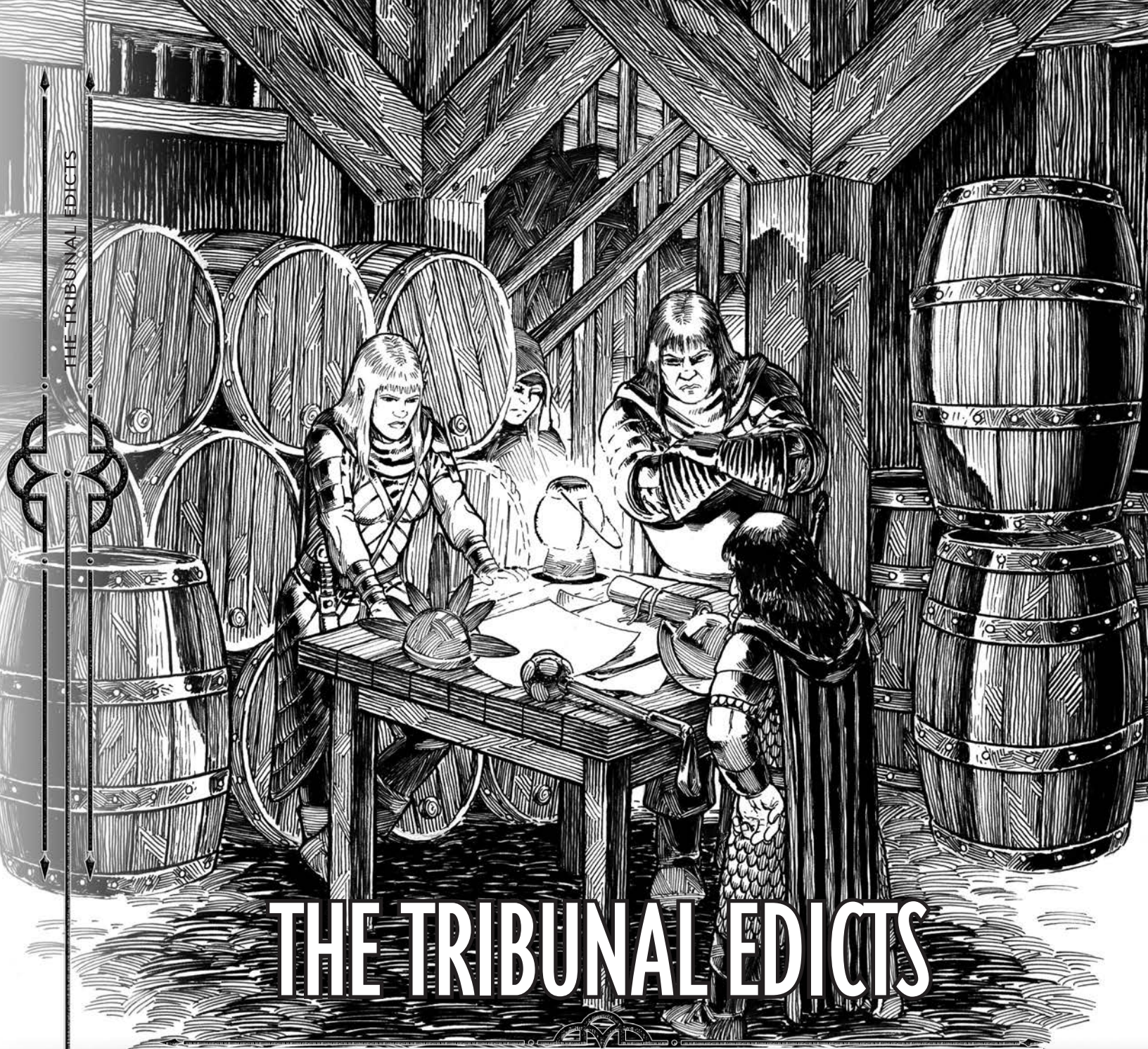
UA019 - The Great City  
Urban Creatures & Lairs

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The Tribunal Edicts is the introductory adventure for Season 2 of the Great City: The Sinking adventure serial. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It was designed using the Pathfinder RPG system and intended for a group of 5th-level Player Characters.

## BACKGROUND

Following the trial of the Malchort Cabal and the revelation that something of great danger lurks within the Sinkhole, the Kortezean Government ordered an immediate evacuation of the Sinkhole area. In addition to the possibility of outside threat, the strong anti-Azindralean sentiment of various Cabal members struck a raw nerve with the native Azindraleans, forcing the ruling class to act preemptively in order to avoid civil uprising. Almost two hundred soldiers deployed to the Sink site and, overnight, they barricaded the area from the rest of the city.

Despite the efforts of the Kortezean government, the citizens sleep upon a bed of nails. The Sink is an unknown, an endless looming wait that taunts them. Fear still grips the masses and all want answers.

In an unprecedented and borderline treasonous maneuver, Blood Senator Eldron Vulgrax has used his position to evoke one of the oldest rites of the native Azindralean people, a public hearing known as The August Tribunal. During the pre-Kortezean era, such Tribunals were more frequent, and served to resolve communal political problems. After Kortezean occupation, the Kharel (see *Great City Campaign Setting* for more details on the Kortezean military) initiated a heavy-handed campaign to monitor Tribunals and all similar gatherings for revolutionary activity. While the Atregans never enacted a formal ban against the right to call a Tribunal, after hundreds of arrests, the practice slowly died out. Vulgrax however, is the first non-Azindralean to call for a Tribunal, and as a Senator, the residents of his Ward have an obligation to participate. Although this act seemingly defies House Atregan, thus far none within the Castle Ward have raised objections. While some might question Vulgrax's motives for calling the Tribunal, at present it would be foolish for anyone to cast open accusations of treachery and treason upon him.

The Tribunal is set to take place at the Court Under the Mountain just prior to the start of the adventure.

## SUMMARY

When Blood Senator Eldon Vulgrax calls for a August Tribunal to determine how the city will handle

the Sink in light of the revelations of the Malchort trials, the city's most influential powers quickly divide into factions, each with their own agenda. During Act 1, the PCs aid in swaying the results of the Tribunal. As a result of the event, four edicts are put into place that affect the remainder of The Sinking Series.

Following the Tribunal, the infamous Cwell the Butcher approaches the PCs to invite them to the Pigoteria for a post-Tribunal celebration. Cwell seats them at a back table with none other than Blood Senator Eldon Vulgrax. Fearing the ever-increasing totalitarian influence of the Kortezean Empire, Vulgrax claims his clan has decided to shift their allegiance to support the liberation of Azindralea and people. During the meal, a drunken celebrant stumbles into their table. The drunk is actually an assassin sent by Vulgrax's rivals and clever PCs spot the man's attempt to poison their food. The assassin quickly attempts to flee, prompting a chase. The assassin's allies cover his escape, leading to further conflict as they attempt to bait the PCs into a death trap.

Following the assassination attempt, the PCs return to the Pigoteria where Blood Senator Harlo Belano has engaged Vulgrax in an informal, but highly accusative interrogation.

After Harlo leaves the premises, Cwell sends the PCs to an abandoned villa to recover some maps stashed in secret bunker by members of the Azindralean resistance. Cwell intends to use these maps to help those who stand against the Kortezean's imperial rule to launch their own secret exploration of the Sink. Once the PCs recover they maps, they face their final challenge. One of Cwell's allies turns out to be a doppelganger double agent and the PCs must destroy her to prevent her from seizing their newly acquired maps.

## INTRODUCTION

News of the August Tribunal spreads through the Great City's streets like wildfire. Judge Taramin's assistant Erynna tracks down the PCs, issuing them a friendly subpoena to attend the August Tribunal in which she expects them to provide testimony as experts on the subject matter of both the mysterious Malchort Cabal and the Sink. The Tribunal is set for high noon in two days time. Erynna gives the PCs signet passes that identify them as key witnesses, under full protection of Lord Atregan and the High Courts.

Shortly after Taramin's assistant leaves, a teenage boy arrives at the PCs' locale bearing a huge smoked pig shank wrapped in brown paper. The delivery boy works for a man named Cwell, a somewhat infamous butcher from the Residential Ward who runs an

eatery called the Pigoteria, rumored to be a hotbed for pro-Azindralean activists. The boy graciously hands the shank over to the PCs and recites the following statement:

*"A good day to you fine folk. I bring you a gift from my employer, Butcher Cwell. He wishes to thank you for your considerable efforts in breaking the Malchort Cabal. I believe there's also a note inside, in which he further expresses his gratitude."*

Allow the PCs to attempt a DC 10 Knowledge (local) check to recall Cwell (CG male half-orc fighter 5; for more details see *The Great City Campaign Setting*) as a sensationally popular native Azindralean known for his celebratory pig roasts during which he performs sarcastic parodies of the ruling class which, on several occasions, have brought him dangerously close to arrest.

After delivering the shank the boy tips his hat, bids the PCs farewell, and dashes off down the street, headed towards the Residential Ward. As Cwell's assistant departs, allow the PCs to attempt a DC 18 Perception check to notice an individual in a dark cloak watching from the shadows across the street.

**Creatures:** The mysteriously cloaked figure is an assassin (see *Shadowblade Sniper* page 136) belonging to the infamous Shadowblades, a secret order of foreign assassins hired by the Trypus to spy on Blood Senator Eldon Vulgrax. After Vulgrax called for the August Tribunal, the Academe immediately became suspicious of him. Then, upon discovering the Senator's recent visits to the Pigoteria, the Shadowblades also began spying on Cwell and his associates.

The assassin remains perfectly still and waits for the PCs to return to their business, then quickly slips off to report his findings to his superiors. If instead, the PCs spot him, the assassin flees quickly—downing a *potion of gaseous form* as he rounds the corner and disappears into a nearby sewer. As noted above, the Shadowblade immediately reports the PCs' actions to his superiors, prompting attacks that take place in Act 2.

## THE NOTE

Inside the shank, the PCs find an unsigned note written on a small piece of brown wrapping paper (give to the players *Handout #1*)

*Heroes to the people, beware the dubious intentions of the Edicts! Far more is afoot than simply protecting the city. I have ample reason to believe that the Atrégans intend to manipulate the Sink, much like the secret Malchort Cabal. At the very least, they plot to use the disaster as a boogeyman in order to drive the fear-*

*stricken public towards their protection, allowing them to create and enforce increasingly strict measures of civic control. Any Edicts they propose during the August Tribunal stand to support their efforts and should be vehemently opposed.*

Following the Introduction, the subpoenaed PCs have a little time to prepare themselves before the August Tribunal begins. At this point, the GM can either have the PCs play out the two days or skip ahead to the day of the Tribunal.

## ACT I: THE AUGUST TRIBUNAL

When the PCs arrive at the Tribunal, read or paraphrase the following passage:

*A mixed crowd of mostly Azindralean middle class citizens and lesser nobles plows into the Court Under the Mountain. Like a chattering gaggle of geese, all seem to keep their eyes peeled eagerly for both an easy meal and a hungry fox. The throng shuffles into the stone seats, with individuals gravitating towards those they recognize, or others who might support their causes. As expected, the Kharel makes their presence felt by posting Talquar and other elite guards about the court's perimeter. Still, most seem oblivious amidst the excitement and speculation. After the better part of an hour passes, Judge Taramin finally arrives to address the crowd.*

Taramin's opening is brief, mentioning the history and precedent for such Tribunals and so forth. Since Vulgrax called for the August Tribunal, he doesn't participate on the grounds that his vote would show "conflict of interest". Neither does Erasmus Atrégan, who instead delivers his own statement to the crowd which he proudly punctuates with the phrase "*And so... let the people speak for themselves!*" While the statement earns him a massive round of applause, those wise to The Goat's political strategies can safely assume it another of his cheap ploys to show solidarity to the masses. Finally, the court directs itself to the matter at hand—the public's concerns over and wishes for how to proceed in the face of terrible disaster and what may prove to be imminent danger.

Unless the PCs take precautions to keep their presence concealed, numerous individuals lurking within the crowd note their arrival. Due to their previous experiences with the Sink, almost all of the factions are curious as to the PCs' knowledge of the Sink, their current political position as well as to their future plans or concerns. Throughout the Tribunal, various factions question the PCs to gain further insight when voting. The PCs may attempt to sway the votes, either by using Diplomacy to answer truthfully or Bluff. Both checks are DC 20. If the PCs



succeed, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to their next skill check made to influence the votes on a specific edict (the voting for the Edicts is described in the section below).

## THE FOUR EDICTS

The August Tribunal is set to debate four major issues concerning how the City shall handle matters concerning the Sink. For each concern, the court shall offer an Edict to be openly debated by the city. Each edict will then be voted on and either accepted or rejected. In the event that an Edict is rejected, Erasmus Atregan has prepared a final Edict as an alternative. In such an event, the Goat's word is law.

The Four Edicts are as follows:

**Edict 1:** The Sink area is to be evacuated and to remain so until further notice. The evacuated area shall become responsibility of the Kharel, who shall maintain a vigilant guard of the Sink and surrounding territory. All properties therein shall become the properties of the Triperium. Thereafter, unauthorized trespassers shall be prosecuted for jeopardizing the safety of the city and if found guilty, shall be hung.

*Edict 1 Revised:* If Edict 1 fails to pass, Judge Taramin attempts to renegotiate by offering the displaced residents some sort of equitable replacement for their loss in the form of new homes or financial compensation.

**Edict 2:** For his ability to sense disturbances within the Sink, the Cygil Karn, first seer to the church of the Prophet Lazarus is to be appointed to the Kharel as the official Oracle of the Sink.

**Edict 3:** All those exposed to the sinkhole must document their activities with the Kharel. Afterwards they must undergo a mandatory examination as a preventative measure against possible exposure to unknown creatures or diseases. The examination consists of both mental and physical tests. Failure to submit to examinations shall be accepted as an act of treason, in which case the offender shall be fined a penalty of 1,000 gp and taken into custody where he shall be held until such a time that it can be determined he poses no threat to the public.

*Edict 3 revised:* If Edict 3 fails to pass, Taramin offers this revision. Anyone exposed to the Sink must document their activities with the Kharel. Thereafter, they shall meet with Kharel agents once a month for an informal assessment to assure the public that they pose no threat.

**Edict 4:** Until such time as it can be determined what threats (if any) lie within the Sink, the sinkhole

shall remain under quarantine to all except the highly skilled occult researchers of the Academe Trypus and their personal assistants. Trypus shall hold sole responsibility for the Sink's exploration as well as for any damaging results of their research.

## THE FACTIONS

During the Tribunal the crowd divides itself into five distinct factions. When an Edict is proposed, each of the following factions casts a single vote to either support or oppose the Edict. A faction that is undecided opts out of the vote. The GM tallies the votes and whichever side has the majority wins.

The PCs may contribute to the Tribunal by using Diplomacy checks to influence the votes of various factions. During each round of voting, a successful Diplomacy check allows the PCs to influence the decision of a single faction. This becomes tricky because certain groups favor the Edicts, while others are decidedly against them. Prior to voting, the PCs can attempt a single DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information to reveal a faction's position on a proposed Edict allowing them a clue as to who they'd like to attempt to influence. Once the PCs gather information, they can attempt a second Diplomacy check to influence one faction of their choice. A successful check sways the faction's position one step closer to the position of the PCs (for example an Undecided faction may be swayed to take an Opposed position, or a Supporting faction may be swayed to take an Undecided position) Swaying an Undecided faction requires a DC 15 Diplomacy check, while swaying the position of a Supporting or Opposed faction requires a DC 20 Diplomacy check.

**Delvers:** Comprised chiefly of Azindralean middle class adventurers and merchants, these individuals seek to launch investigations into the Sink to determine the true nature of whatever lies beneath.

*Edict 1:* Oppose. The Delvers have concerns about living accommodations for the displaced victims. They are Undecided about Revised Edict 1. They see the Sink as a very real threat; therefore, they can be convinced to uphold the evacuation in the name of safety, provided citizens are given proper recompense.

*Edict 2:* Oppose. The Delvers openly distrust Cygil Karn and his motives as based on his personal history and former business associates. Most faction members remain unconvinced the Lazarite possesses any sort of supernatural powers.

*Edict 3:* Oppose. The Delvers perceive this edict as a Korteizian ploy to gain full control over whatever lies within the Sink. They also oppose the revised edict.

*Edict 4:* Oppose. The Delvers adamantly oppose any attempt by the Trypus Academe to assume full control over the Sink.

**Fortifiers:** Comprised of both Azindraleans and concerned Korteziens, this group's primary objective is to build a defense around the Sink staffed with a vigilant military team.

*Edict 1:* Undecided. The Fortifiers have concerns about living accommodations for the displaced victims. They fully support Revised Edict 1.

*Edict 2:* Undecided. The Fortifiers are not sure about the Lazarites either way.

*Edict 3:* Undecided. To the Fortifiers, the initial edict seems eerily totalitarian. They fully support Revised Edict 3.

*Edict 4:* Undecided. The Fortifiers divide on this issue. The great majority of the group's Azindraleans distrust the Trypus Academe, while most of the Korteziens are willing to trust their expertise.

**Lazarites:** This faction is comprised of the disciples of Lazarus. They claim their prophet knew what lies within the depths of the Sink and how to contact the powerful supernatural entities that live within. While few know of his powers, Lazarus was in fact capable of contacting sinkbeasts and other such beings and pacting with them on a primitive level and taught these powers to his closest disciples, among them the current head of the Lazarite church, Cygil Karn. Karn worked with Lazarus in his days as a smuggler, and while he supported his friend, he never quite developed his sense of faith or integrity. Essentially, Karn intends to manipulate his strange alliances by summoning forth creatures from the Sink to terrorize the city, then calling off their attacks after receiving certain political favors and payments—his plan is to become a sort of enforcer using sinkbeasts as his goons.

*Edict 1:* Support. While it appears the Lazarites support the Korteziens, they have their own reasons for wanting the area secured, in accordance with Edict 2.

*Edict 2:* Support. The Lazarites fully support all efforts to pass Edict 2 as it directly benefits their needs.

*Edict 3:* If Edict 2 passes, the Lazarites support Edict 3. If not, they secretly oppose Edict 3 as a Kortezen ploy to keep their future motives safeguarded. They do not openly vote against the Korteziens, but merely withhold from voting in the final round. The GM should tally their vote as Undecided.

*Edict 4:* If Edict 2 passes, the Lazarites secretly

oppose handing sole control of the Sink over to the Academe. Again, they do not openly vote against the Korteziens, but merely withhold from voting in the final round. The GM should tally their vote as Undecided.

**Proactivists:** Comprised almost entirely of native Azindraleans, this radical group seeks to proactively destroy whatever is in the Sink first, and explore it later. They favor any plans to create some sort of incendiary or toxic device and drop it into the hole to kill whatever lurks below.

*Edict 1:* Opposed. The Proactivists desire to destroy what lurks within the hole. They're certain that if the Korteziens establish a strong military presence in the area, it would be to extend their control over the private sectors and therefore they'd oppose any Proactivist efforts.

*Edict 2:* Oppose. The Proactivists condemn Cygil Karn as an egocentric fraud and view the Lazarites as buffoons, parasites, and sycophants. Educated on Karn's dubious past, they believe he has nothing but dubious intentions for manipulating his appointed position and would therefore thwart their efforts.

*Edict 3:* Oppose. The Proactivists see Edict 3 as nothing more than the Korteziens' transparent attempt to dominate anyone they think might question their authority.

*Edict 4:* Undecided. Most of the Proactivists could care less whether or not the Trypus idiots want to climb down into the hole. While some argue the Trypus would stall their efforts, an equal amount think it would be to their advantage to perform "accidental bombings" while members of the Trypus were down in the Sink performing their research.

**Trypus Academe:** The Academe Trypus represents foreign interest and work specifically for the Kortezen Empire. They aren't interested in sharing their findings with outsiders.

*All Edicts:* As allies of the Atregans and the Empire, the Trypus adamantly support all the edicts.

## DETERMINING THE TRIBUNAL RESULTS

Use the following guidelines to determine the results of the Tribunal and define the final Edicts.

**If Edict 1 and Revised Edict 1 fail:** Martial law enacts with strict curfews while the Kharel's physical presence within the immediate Sink area increases. Kharel agents frequently subject residents to random stop and searches.

**If Edict 2 fails:** Due to the conniving efforts of Cygil Karn, sinkbeast attacks increase and the sink zone



becomes a terrifying place, encouraging residents to evacuate of their own accord. Karn steps up to offer his services, for a fee.

**If Edict 3 or Revised Edict 3 fail:** Trypus creates a new branch of occult inquisitors and places spies on anyone they perceive as a threat.

**If Edict 4 fails:** The Trypus finds ways to sabotage anyone attempting to launch their own explorations into the Sink. In this objective, the Academe proves most devious, initially be supporting the efforts of their competitors, allowing them to perform the initial and more dangerous “dirty work” of exploration, then creating “accidents,” or getting Cygil Karn to plague them with summoned sinkbeasts.

The Academe’s intent remains to either destroy their rivals or drive them off to perform their explorations elsewhere.

## STRANGE INVITATIONS

Following the resolution of the Tribunal and formal presentation of the Four Edicts, the PCs literally bump into a burly half-orc who they recognize as one of the more disruptive and loud-mouthed participants from the open forum. Allow the PCs an opposed Sense Motive check to determine the half-orc deliberately bumped into them, despite the fact he intended the bump to appear accidental. If the PCs call the half-orc on the fact, he admits it while throwing his finger upon his lip as a sign of caution. Immediately and gleefully, he makes them a happy offer.

*“Why if it isn’t our own local heroes? I tell you good people it is an honor to meet you. My friends and I were just heading back to the Residential Ward to partake in a tremendous feast to celebrate the conclusion of the Tribunal. After all, it’s not often we get to enact our ancient laws. We’d be thrilled if you’d accompany us. But how rude of me, I assume too much. I’m Butcher Cwell, owner of the Pigoteria!”*

*“I shall see you good people later then, yes?”* he exclaims as he excitedly shakes the hand of the nearest PC. As he does so, Cwell deftly slips a gold coin into the PC’s hand, then slips off into the crowd. Curiously, the coin is stamped with a hippocampus in a crested wave. A DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) check identifies the imprint on the coin as the house symbol of the Semheyl Clan.

At this point, it falls upon the PCs to decide whether or not attend the event. If the PCs fail to stop by the Pigoteria, Cwell again sends his butcher-boy to pay them a visit and extend another invitation. This section concludes whenever the PCs decide to pay a visit the Pigoteria.

## ACT 2: A MEETING WITH VULGRAX

When the PCs arrive at the Pigoteria, read or paraphrase the following passage:

*Cheers of revelry echo from the fenced-off courtyard behind the Pigoteria. Within, celebrants crowd about rows of wooden tables set with haunches of roast pig, wooden bowls of apples, baskets of bread, and various other trappings. Near the Pigoteria, a heavily tattooed half-orc bartender struggles before a wall of tapped casks in order to keep the patrons’ tankards full with ale.*

As soon as the PCs enter the Pigoteria’s courtyard, the crowd surrounds them, entreating them to celebrate and offering them food and drink. During the mayhem, Cwell slips beside the PCs. Smiling like an old friend, he invites them to the back of the courtyard, stating he has a friend who would like to meet them. Cwell leads the PCs to a small wooden table at the back of the courtyard, near the rear entrance to the Pigoteria. There, dressed in commoners clothes and seated by himself, sits none other than Blood Senator Vulgrax (LN Male human Ari 5/Rog 1/Mnk 2; for more details see *Great*



BUTCHER CWELL

*City Campaign Setting*). Behind Vulgrax stand two burly half-orcs guards. The Senator gives the PCs a welcoming smile and invites them to sit. He asks the PCs if they're surprised to see him— then, requests they hear him out.

If the PC's ask Vulgrax why he has come to Residential Ward, he replies, that while it is certainly a risk, he felt it necessary to speak to the PCs in person in order to prove his sincerity. He then reveals the following information:

*"What I am about to speak of is nothing short of treason, which means you now hold my life as well as the fate of Clan Semheyl. My clan has long worked within the Docks Ward. Worked! Like the rest of the good people of Azindralea. While prejudices still exist between our cultures, we too have been long burdened by the tyrannical rule of the Korteziar Empire. In this respect, we have more in common with the Azindralean people than with the other clans. This is not a recent deduction and our conflicts with the Atregans and the Triperium are well documented. This time, however, we are prepared to cross a line."*

At this point, allow the PCs participate in a discourse with Vulgrax as well as Cwell, during which the Blood Senator discloses the following information in order to sequester the PCs to his cause. Encourage the PCs to interject and ask questions. Note that when the discourse draws to a close, an assassin attempts to poison the Senator.

## THE DISCOURSE

Vulgrax begins by revealing that his Castle Ward spies have reported that the Korteziar Empire plans to reclaim their control over Azindralea, turning it into the Empire's capital in the new world. As his longtime rivals, Clan Atregan still sit upon the Korteziar throne, they would seize total control of the entire city, once again dominating the Azindralean people and weakening the political influence of the other Clans.

Like the members of the Malchort Cabal, the Atregan's believe that whatever lies in the Sink contains great power, enough to dominate all Azindralea. Thus, they are making every effort to take over the Sink, first by evacuating the area and then by aiding members of the Academe Trypus in launching an extensive exploration of its depths. Given the gravity of the situation and its dire implications, Vulgrax states he and his clan have decided to break from the Empire and have formed a covert alliance with former resistance general, Lop Rek.

The PCs readily recall General Lop Rek as a prominent commander in the Backwater Rebellion, thought to have fled the city. Vulgrax informs them

that while Lop Rek is in hiding, he never left the Great City and remains very much active within the resistance. To protect Lop Rek, Cwell serves as his liaison.

To aid in their stand against the Empire, both Vulgrax and Lop Rek would like to start their own investigation of the Sink, though their efforts need to be clandestine to avoid attracting the suspicions of Lord Atregan or the Kharel. This means they must secure a new entrance into the Sink. Vulgrax tells the PCs that Lop Rek revealed to him that beneath the city lay numerous passages to the Dungeon Under the Mountain, a labyrinthine dungeon whose construction may also link to the Malchorts. He theorizes that somewhere the Dungeon connects the Sink, or at least its power source.

Vulgrax also suspects Wvolmar (see *The Sinking: Malchort Cabal*) is very much alive and likely allied with high-ranking members of the Blood Triperium. Still, none of his agents have evidence to support either theory.

Ultimately, Vulgrax petitions the PCs to help him counter the efforts of Clan Atregan and the Trypus Academe by exploring and routing out possible new entrances to whatever lies below. He believes if a source of ancient power lies beneath the city, it is imperative that it be found before the Empire can get a hold of it.

## THE POISONER'S HAND (CR 5)

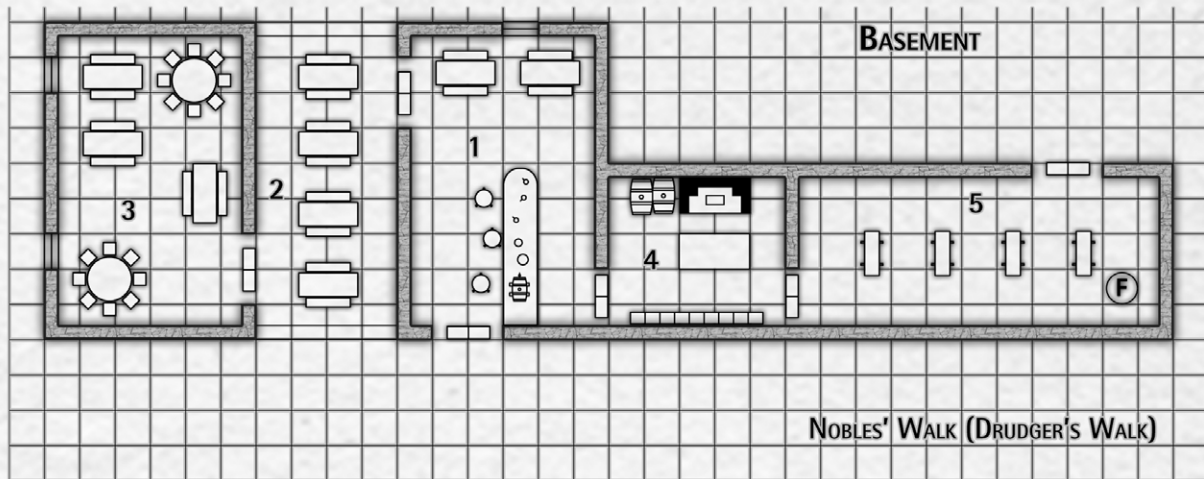
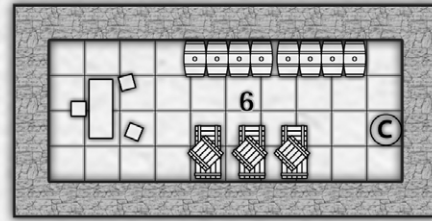
*Moments after Vulgrax offers his petition, a drunkard stumbles from the crowd and crashes into his table. A shaggy bearded man in the loose robes of a street vendor, carries a large tankard of ale. Reeking of alcohol, his nose is a bulbous mass of gin-blossoms and his wide grin shows off a few missing teeth.*

Almost instantaneously, Cwell's half-orc bodyguards pounce upon the ragged drunk, as he awkwardly slurs an apology. As the guards drag him to the gate, to eject him, Vulgrax collects his thoughts to continue.

**Creatures:** The drunkard is a talented assassin, who used *dust of illusion* to give himself the appearance of a vagrant. During his feigned drunken stumbling, he deftly slips a dose of dark reaver powder (ingested DC 18, onset 10 min., 1/min. for 6 minutes, 1d3 Con and 1 Str, 2 saves) into Vulgrax's ale cup. When this encounter occurs, immediately allow the PCs to make an opposed Perception check to spot the assassin's act of treachery. If a PC questions the man's drunkenness, she can also attempt an opposed Sense Motive check against the assassin's Bluff skill to see through his ruse. Whether or not the PCs unveil the assassin, as soon



- 1 - Taproom
- 2 - Courtyard
- 3 - Dining Room
- 4 - Kitchen
- 5 - Butchery
- 6 - Basement



**BUTCHER CWELL'S PIGOTERIA (RESIDENTIAL WARD #18 - GREAT CITY MAP)**

as he places the poison in Vulgrax's cup, he attempts to flee.

The assassin is a member of the Shadowblades. From the nearby rooftops, two more Shadowblade snipers wait with loaded crossbows to cover his escape. Should the PCs or anyone else capture the poisoner and attempt to question him, the snipers immediately open fire, targeting the poisoner with poisoned bolts to prevent him from talking. The poisoner has also painted his lips with an alchemical paste his superiors derived from deathblade poison (injury DC 20, 1/rd. for 6 rounds, 1d3 Con, 2 saves). If he fails to escape and the PCs capture him, he bites his lip, poisoning himself. Once the poisoner falls, the snipers attempt to flee to report the event to their superiors. When this occurs, the GM should begin to Act 3: The Chase.

#### Shadowblade Poisoner

CR 3

XP 800

Female/male ninja 4

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; Senses Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 25 (4d8+4)

Fort +1, Ref +8, Will +2

#### Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike

Ranged mwk shuriken +8 (1d2+2 plus blue whinnis poison)

Special Attacks blue whinnis poison (Fort DC 14, 1/round for 2 rounds, 1 Con / unconsciousness for 1d3 hours, cure 1 save), sneak attack +2d6

#### TACTICS

Morale: The poisoner fights to the death. If captured, he bites his lip and poisons himself.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 19

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +11, Appraise +6, Bluff +6, Climb +9, Craft (alchemy) +6, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +6, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +11, Swim +6, Use Magic Device +3

Languages Common (Azindralean, Korteisian)

SQ ki pool (1), ninja tricks (flurry of stars, smoke bomb), no trace +1, poison use

Gear 10 masterwork shuriken, 4 slicked with blue whinnis poison, 1 dose of dark reaver powder.

**Shadowblade Sniper (2)****CR 3****XP 800 each**

Female/male ninja 4

**LE** Medium humanoid (human)**Init** +8; **Senses** Perception +6**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex)**hp** 25 (4d8+4)**Fort** +1, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2**Defensive Abilities** uncanny dodge**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk kusarigama +6 (1d6+2/18–20) and mwk kusarigama +6 (1d3+1/18–20), or short sword +7 (1d6+3/19–20)**Ranged** heavy crossbow +7 (1d2+2 plus poison)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. if kusarigama is being swung (but cannot strike adjacent squares))**Special Attacks** blue whinnis poison (Fort DC 14, 1/round for 2 rounds, 1 Con / unconsciousness for 1d3 hours, cure 1 save), sneak attack +2d6**TACTICS****Before Combat:** The snipers keep their crossbows locked on the poisoner in courtyard below. They do not act unless the PCs or others reveal him as an assassin.**During Combat:** If anyone reveals the poisoner's purpose, the snipers open fire (as described in the following events).**Morale:** The snipers fight to the death. If captured, a sniper bites his lip and poisons himself.**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19**Feats** Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Appraise +6, Bluff +6, Climb +9, Craft (alchemy) +6, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +6, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +11, Swim +6, Use Magic Device +3**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Kortezean)**SQ** ki pool (1), ninja tricks (flurry of stars, smoke bomb), no trace +1, poison use**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds* (2), blue whinnis poison (4); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, mwk kusarigama, short sword, heavy crossbow, shuriken, with 20 shuriken, arsenic pouch, 2 gp.**ACT 3: THE CHASE (CR 5)**

Run the following section if the PCs decide to give chase to the assassins, who (as noted above) attempt to flee as soon as the poisoner is struck down, either by his own poisons or their arrows.

At the start of the chase scene, the Shadowblade snipers hold positions on adjacent rooftops about 25 yards apart, each giving them a clear shot down into the courtyard. Both shoot from range just under 300 feet. After the first shot, each attempts to take cover, hide, and reload, in order to take a second shot. So long as they haven't been spotted, they attempt to fire off a second volley, chiefly at Vulgrax, but also at any of the other guests sitting at his table (including the PCs). After the second volley, the snipers flee. If the PCs attempt to pursue the assassins, the GM may begin the chase. If the PCs do not give chase, the GM can skip ahead to the alternate encounter, the Belly and his Beasts.

The Chase consists of seven sequential challenges. To run The Chase, first determine the starting distance between the snipers and the PCs. In subsequent rounds, the snipers attempt to flee, using Skill checks to distance themselves from the PCs in order to escape. If the PCs outperform the Shadowblades with their Skill checks, they can close ranks upon their enemies and fight them.

1. The Chase begins when the assassins make a mad dash across the roof. The first obstacle in the chase is the roof itself. Comprised of slippery clay shingles, both the assassins and pursuing PCs must succeed a DC 12 Acrobatics check to avoid stumbling on the slanted roof and losing a full round of movement.
2. For the second obstacle, the assassins attempt a 5-foot running jump across a narrow alley to the roof of a neighboring building. The jump requires a DC 15 acrobatics check. If the check fails, the drop to the ground is 20 feet. An individual who falls is delayed accordingly. If an assassin falls, his partner attempts to drop safely to the street level; skip ahead to chase obstacle 7.
3. The third obstacle is another rooftop dash. Similar to the first, it requires a successful DC 12 Acrobatics to avoid slipping and losing a round of movement.
4. For the fourth obstacle, the assassins take a daring, 10-foot flying leap to the balcony of a neighboring building. The leap requires a successful DC 20 Acrobatics skill check. If the check fails, the drop to the ground is 20 feet. An individual who falls is delayed accordingly. If an assassin falls, his partner attempts to drop safely to the street level; skip ahead to chase obstacle 7.
5. Anyone who successfully completes the fourth obstacle must next succeed at a DC 14 Climb check to pull themselves up and onto the balcony. If the check fails, the drop to the ground is 20 feet. An



individual who falls is delayed accordingly. If an assassin falls, his partner attempts to drop safely to the street level; skip ahead to chase obstacle 7.

6. For the sixth obstacle, individuals must scamper down a nearby ivy-covered trellis to street level. This requires a simple DC 10 Climb skill check. If the check fails, the drop to the ground is 20 feet. An individual who falls is delayed accordingly. If an assassin falls, his partner attempts to drop safely to the street level; skip ahead to chase obstacle 7.
7. At this stage, the fleeing assassins take to the street. The assassins do their best to put some distance between themselves and the PCs. If they can outdistance the PCs by more than 200 feet, then they attempt to use their Stealth skill to disappear into a nearby alleyway, hide themselves, and stage an ambush. The PCs must succeed at opposed Perception checks to avoid losing site of them. If instead, the PCs can close in on them, the assassins have little choice but to hold their ground and fight without the added advantage of surprise.

**Developments:** Like others of their order, the Shadowblades refuse to talk if captured, and instead poison themselves at first opportunity. While they provide no information to the PCs, slaying the assassins slows their chain of communication and neither Academe Trypus nor Clan Atregan gain any

counter intelligence concerning Vulgrax's association with the Azindralean resistance or the PCs.

In any event, if in one hour, the Shadowblades fail to report to their superiors, they immediately suspect the worst and send four more assassins to scour the area for their missing agents (use Shadowblade Sniper stats from the previous encounter). These agents attempt to use Diplomacy to gather information on the whereabouts of their fellow assassins. A successful DC 30 Diplomacy check identifies the PCs as the individuals responsible for the demise of the Shadowblade agents, in which case the Shadowblades plot an elaborate plan to take vengeance upon the PCs at some point in the near future. If the PCs left the assassin's bodies behind as evidence, the Shadowblades gain a +15 circumstance bonus to the check. Similarly, grant the Shadowblades a +1 circumstance check for every eyewitness to the final altercation. Do not count any of the PCs direct allies (such as Cwell, his henchmen, or Vulgrax) as witness.

**Ad Hoc XP:** If the PCs successfully chase down the Shadowblades and engage them in combat, give them an ad hoc XP award equal to a CR 5 encounter.

Once the PCs defeat the Shadowblades, they likely return to the Pigoteria to seek answers. As they approach, Cwell's trusted bodyguards stop them in the street. The bodyguards quickly inform the PCs that shortly after they left, Vulgrax's longtime rival



Blood Senator Harlo Belano (LE male human Ari 5/Rog 1; for details see *The Great City Campaign Setting*) burst into the courtyard with a number of his personal guardsmen, in what they claimed was an impromptu raid for suspected acts of conspiracy against the throne. Harlo quickly cleared the courtyard and made a beeline for Vulgrax. While Harlo has little authority over his fellow Blood Senator, at the moment he is detaining him with an informal questioning inside the Pigoteria. Cwell's bodyguards offer to sneak the PCs into the Pigoteria's basement to spy upon the interrogation. Once the PCs accept, proceed to Act 4. If instead, the PCs choose to flee, consult the *Fleeing the Scene* sidebar.

## THE BELLY AND HIS BEASTS (CR 5)

If the PCs allow Shadowblades to flee and instead, remain behind at the Pigoteria, they witness the arrival of Harlo Belano, the Ward's Blood Senator. Harlo is a ruthlessly ambitious Korteziian, thus as soon as he hears Vulgrax is at Pigoteria he excitedly rushes to confront him. More than anything, Harlo wants to expose his rival visiting a locale infamous for its supposed support of the Azindralean resistance.

Before the assassin incident has a chance to wind down, Harlo storms into the Pigoteria's courtyard with half-a-dozen of his brutish personal guards. The bullying guardsmen quickly clear the courtyard, and anyone attempting to resist are accused of defying

### FLEEING THE SCENE

If at anytime, the PCs opt to flee the Residential Ward, the GM can set additional Shadowblades after them to make their flight more challenging. A few days after their flight, Harlo Belano attempts to track them down, seeking to question them for their involvement in politically subversive activities. At this point, Cwell gets word that the PCs might be in trouble and sends his butcher-boy to where ever they have decided to hole up. The butcher-boy informs the PCs that Harlo is looking for them, and if they need a place to lay low, Cwell will help them out. At the very least, he suggests they drop by the Pigoteria as soon as possible so he can fill them in on things. Once the PCs head back to the Pigoteria, the GM can skip ahead to the *An Aunt on the Butcher's Block* section in Act 4. In this scenario, assume Harlo placed the Pigoteria under the halfling sorceress' surveillance.

the Blood Senator's law and subsequently beaten and arrested. At present Harlo remains ignorant to the PCs' association with Vulgrax. In fact, he sees them as insignificant and lumps them in with the rest of the rowdy patrons. Allow the PCs a few rounds try to break away from the round up and flee before more of Harlo's guardsmen arrive.

**Creatures:** While being herded out of the Pigoteria with the rest of the crowd, four of Harlo's guardsmen attempt to pick a fight with the PCs and arrest them. While the crowd doesn't assist in their fight, they do try to cover for the PCs by surrounding the violence and blocking off additional guardsmen from joining the ruckus.

#### Belano Guardsman

CR 2

XP 600

Female/male fighter 3

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 30 (3d10+9)

Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +3; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+2/19–20), mwk light mace +6 (1d6+3)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)

#### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +5 (+7 sunder); CMD 16

Feats Improved Shield Bash, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Climb +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Knowledge (engineering) +5, Survival +6

Languages Common (Korteziian)

SQ armor training 1

Gear masterwork scale mail, masterwork heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork light mace, masterwork light crossbow.

**Developments:** Before reinforcements arrive, Cwell's two bodyguards burst through the crowd and try to get the PCs to follow them to safety. Cwell's bodyguards lead them around the side of the Pigoteria and back into the main building through street side door that leads to the cellar. If the PCs choose to accompany Cwell's bodyguards, proceed to Act 4. If they choose to flee, go to the *Fleeing the Scene* sidebar.



## ACT 4: BLOOD UPON BLOOD

*The unlit and gloomy basement of the Pigoteria stinks of butchery. Everywhere, shanks of pork dangle from the crossbeams on thick hemp cords and grease drippings slick the flagstones. The loosely spaced floorboards creak overhead, allowing both dim light and conversation to spill into the gloom.*

The basement provides the PCs with an excellent location to spy on Harlo's pitiful attempt to interrogate Vulgrax. Of course Harlo has no right to detain Vulgrax, however Vulgrax agrees to humor Harlo to avoid public suspicion.

In addition to his guardsmen, Harlo is also accompanied by one of his creepier associates, a disheveled halfling sorceress known as Aunt Grialsloth (NE female halfling sorcerer 5) who uses her mysterious arcane powers to route out spies. Throughout the interrogation, the PCs must remain silent or alert her suspicions. Each minute they hide out, the PCs must make an opposed Stealth check against Aunt Grialsloth's Perception skill to avoid attracting her attention. If she suspects spies, the sinister halfling excuses herself to seek out the PCs, whom she refers to as "the rats in the walls." Using *detect thoughts*, she scans a few areas in the Pigoteria. Once she finishes, she returns to the interrogation to hear its finale. If she fails to detect the PCs, she leaves with Harlo, if she detects them, she pretends to leave, but instead turns *invisible* and stays behind (as described in the *Aunt on the Butcher's Block* section).

### THE INTERROGATION

The entire interrogation only runs about six minutes. The PCs can listen to as much or as little of the conversation as they desire. During this time, be sure to make Perception checks for Aunt Grialsloth. If the PCs consider interrupting the conversation, Cwell's bodyguards attempt to talk them out of it, truthfully informing them that Harlo (being the Ward's Blood Senator) will likely attempt to have them arrested. Indeed, should the PCs interrupt the meeting, Harlo orders his guards to arrest them on charges of conspiracy and treason. This forces Vulgrax to step in and take them into his personal custody, pending a formal trial.

**Minute 1:** Harlo begins by questioning Vulgrax about his association with Cwell.

Vulgrax replies, *"What's the deal? Cwell's just a butcher. A bit of a rabble-rouser, but in the end, a butcher nonetheless. Recently, one of my shipping companies has begun handling some of his exports, and as a result I began frequenting his establishment.*

*I must say I find it refreshing, returning to my old neighborhood. He runs a fun restaurant and I felt like it would be good business for me to accept his invite to the post-Tribunal party."*

**Minute 2:** Harlo attempts to press Vulgrax further, at which point Vulgrax cuts him off by asking him if he's openly accusing Cwell of some sort of treason. Then he adds threateningly, *"I hope you are not accusing me of plotting a treasonous act with my host. That is a serious accusation, with serious repercussions."*

**Minute 3:** Harlo switches his line of questioning and asks Vulgrax if he plans to recoup any of his former properties in the Residential Ward. Vulgrax's answer remains deliberately vague, feigning possible interest, but claiming his family's formal villa is haunted.

**Minute 4:** Before Harlo can ask a question, one of his guardsmen enters. Apologizing for the intrusion, he requests Harlo speak with him for moment in private. Harlo then excuses himself. Meanwhile Vulgrax, left alone in the room mutters, *"What a fat turd."* If any of the players chuckle the GM should give Aunt Grialsloth a +2 circumstance bonus to her next Perception check to detect the PC's presence.

**Minute 5:** Harlo returns and says, *"It has come to my attention that several others accompanied you at your meal."* Vulgrax responds by saying he was pleased to have such company, otherwise he'd be dead. Harlo queries as to Vulgrax's intentions in meeting with a group of such esteemed adventurers. Vulgrax responds by claiming the meeting was unplanned, but nonetheless a welcome introduction.

**Minute 6:** Harlo begins to imply that Vulgrax prearranged the meeting. At that, Vulgrax noisily slides his chair across the floor, stands, and bids Harlo adieu with the following statement:

*"Well Harlo, I can't say it's been anymore of a pleasure since last we talked, however I'm done with our conversation. Sorry to disappoint you that I'm not involved in some sort of secret conspiracy.*

*If your informants tell you otherwise, they are wrong, and should you desire me to prove as much, I shall happily oblige their curiosity in court. Let them show their faces before a judge or let them hold their tongues. Either that or go ask your relatives whether I attended any of their secret cabal meetings that wound up blowing a giant sinkhole in the middle of your ward."*

**Ad Hoc XP:** If the PCs wait out the discussion without being detected award them XP equal to a CR 4 encounter.

## AN AUNT ON THE BUTCHER'S BLOCK (CR 4)

Once Vulgrax closes the conversation, he calls for Cwell to come back into the room so he can settle his tab and leave. Harlo attempts to continue his questions, but Vulgrax cuts him short again.

*"Harlo, if you'll excuse me, I'm tired and I'm going home. But please, I entreat you to visit my manse at some point in the near future, it's been some time now since you've visited the Dock Ward."*

Vulgrax then thanks Cwell for his hospitality and departs for the Dock Ward. Once Vulgrax leaves, Harlo grumbles a threat to Cwell.

*"You're entering into a very dangerous game, butcher...remember that."*

Cwell keeps silent, waiting for Harlo to leave. When he thinks the coast is clear, he stomps on the floor three times, signaling for his men to bring the PCs out.

**Developments:** Once things settle down, Cwell sits with the PCs to finish the night off. If the PCs alerted Aunt Grialstoth to their presence, she remains *invisible* and attempts to hang around the Pigoteria to spy on their conversation. Each minute, allow the PCs an opposed Perception check against Aunt Grialstoth's Stealth skill check to detect the invisible sorceress.

### Aunt Grialstoth

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female halfling sorcerer 5

NE Small humanoid (halfling)

Init +4; Senses Perception +3

#### DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+1 armor, +1 deflection, +1 size)

hp 30 (5d6+10)

Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +8; +2 vs. fear

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d3–1/19–20)

Special Attacks long limbs (+5 ft.)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +9)

7/day—acidic ray (1d6+2 acid)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +9)

2nd (5/day)—detect thoughts (DC 16), invisibility, invisibility

1st (7/day)—disguise self, enlarge person (DC 15), ray of enfeeblement (DC 15), silent image (DC 15), unseen servant,

o (at will)—detect magic, ghostsound, mage hand, message, open/close, read magic

### Bloodline aberrant

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** Aunt Grialstoth remains hidden

until Cwell finishes his proposal, then attempts to leave the Pigoteria undetected. Before leaving, she summons a fiendish viper to poison Cwell.

**During Combat:** If forced into combat, Aunt

Grialstoth first casts *fly* to improve her movement so she can use ranged and reach-based touch attack spell or her *wand of magic missiles*. While she fights aggressively, her primary concern is staying alive.

**Morale:** If given the opportunity to flee, Aunt Grialstoth does so, using her spells to aid in her escape. The sorceress only works for Harlo because he pays well, thus she isn't entirely loyal to him. Therefore, if captured she offers to trade her life in exchange for keeping her mouth shut and disappearing.

#### STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 18

Base Atk +2; CMB +0; CMD 11

Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Acrobatics +2, Acrobatics (jump) -2, Climb

+1, Craft (alchemy) +7, Fly +10, Intimidate

+9, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge

(dungeoneering) +6, Perception +3, Spellcraft +10, Use Magic Device +9

Languages Common (Azindralean, Korteian), Draconic, Halfling

SQ bloodline arcana (+50% duration on polymorphs)

Combat Gear *potion of fly*, *wand of magic missile* (22 charges); Other Gear *ring of protection* +1, *bracers of armor* +1, 120 gp.

Cwell informs the PCs that Vulgrax departed for the Dock Ward, in the company of some personal guards, just to keep up appearances. Then he continues:

*"As Vulgrax said before, we need to find our own passage into the Sink. Vulgrax and I have discussed this and we believe the most probable route would be to somehow access the Sink through a connecting passage from the Dungeon under the Mountain. Lop Rek has given me the location of a secret resistance storeroom, long forgotten, long unused, which contains, among other things, a collection of maps that detail portions of the under city of areas rumored to have lost entrances to the Dungeon Under the Mountain. For obvious reasons, I cannot go seek these maps. I need your help, the people need your help. Will you'll stand with us?"*

Cwell waits for an answer, hoping the PCs will work with him. To help convince them, he promises them he'll have a crossroads gang escort them to the



site, to avoid problems with Harlo or others. Lastly, from the back of a deep cabinet, he drags out a worn chest with a heavy lock within which he hides a small cache of items he offers the PCs to aid them on their mission.

**Treasure:** Cwell's cache contains a *potion of keen edge*, a *wand of cure light wounds* (22 charges), 20 +1 arrows, and a *ring of climbing*.

If PCs accept his offer, he sends one of his men to contact the Drudgespades, a crossroads gang led by another former resistance fighter and close friend—**Eshdon Radiath** (CG female human fighter 4). At this point, the GM should proceed to Act 5.

## ACT 5: FREEDOM IN DESOLATION

Cwell tells the PCs to make themselves at home in the Pigoteria while they wait for the Drudgespades to arrive. The GM should allow the PCs a little time to rest, eat, and equip themselves. Once the Drudgespades show up, Cwell introduces the PCs to Eshdon and four others: Thistle (CG male half-elf rogue 2), Braug Thirm (NG male human fighter 3), Ashra Mirrin (N female human rogue 3), and Phyris Droad (see below). After the introductions, Cwell presents a final briefing in which he reveals that Lop Rek's hidden vault lies beneath an abandoned rococo villa within the Drudgespades' turf. Once the expansive home of a wealthy Kortezyan, the two story rococo building has fallen into disrepair and is currently overrun with all sorts of squatters, including drug dealers, prostitutes, and common street thugs. The area isn't safe, so the Drudgespades agree to accompany the PCs to the site, then hold posts around the vault's perimeter to cover the PCs while they attempt to break in and search for what they need.

**Creatures:** A deadly adversary lurks among the Drudgespades. Shortly after Vulgrax called for the August Tribunal, The Academe Trypus hired the Shadowblades to keep an eye on the Blood Senator and investigate any of his more unusual contacts. Once Cwell came into the picture, he immediately aroused their suspicions. To learn more, the Shadowblades infiltrated Cwell's fringe associates, the Drudgespades. The Shadowblades sent in their greatest deep-cover agent, a reclusive master of disguise known as The Charlatan. The Charlatan has never shown the organization her face, for it would undoubtedly stir their fear. In truth, she is an inhuman monster, a doppelganger named Ilthysl. The Charlatan enjoys her position within the Shadowblades, for it allows her free reign to assume the position of numerous individuals with little question. Upon accepting the assignment, Ilthysl immediately targeted one of Radiath's less fortunate

men, a weak-willed warrior named Phyris Droad who she quickly slew and whose identity she then assumed.

Disguised as Droad, Ilthysl accompanies the PCs to the secret bunker. Upon their arrival, the Drudgespades surround the location, guarding the building's exterior to prevent potential enemies from trapping the PCs within. Ilthysl takes one of the more remote positions in order to slip off and tail the PCs into the building. Once inside, the doppelganger keeps her distance, until the PCs locate and search the hidden bunker in the villa's basement.

## THE VILLA

When PCs arrive at the Villa, read or paraphrase the following:

*Set back from the street, behind a crumbling wall stands a rundown rococo manse half buried with thorny tangles and weeds. Graying planks cover its dark windows and its plaster façade is chipped and flaking. The property is littered with trash and broken glass, and the lawn is trampled into the dusty footpaths of vagrants and drunks.*

The villa is easy enough to enter, however it provides a home and hangout to numerous vagrants and thugs. At all times, these urchins watch the property, eager for any opportunity. Entering the grounds unnoticed requires a virtually impossible DC 35 Stealth check.

## THE GROUND FLOOR (CR 4)

The ground floor is comprised of six rooms, though many of the interior walls have been blown out, leaving gaping holes that connect various locations. The rooms themselves have been gutted of any valuables and looters left nothing behind except refuse and graffiti.

**Creatures:** After watching the Drudgespades lead the PCs into the squat, the local thugs muster enough courage to approach them, seeking to demand some sort of payment or tribute from the "trespassers." The aggressors barely have enough power or nerve to place their demands and a DC 25 Intimidation check is enough to avoid martial conflict. However, if the combined efforts of the Drudgespades and the PCs fail to drive them off with Intimidation, the thugs retaliate with violence.

### Squatter Thug (6)

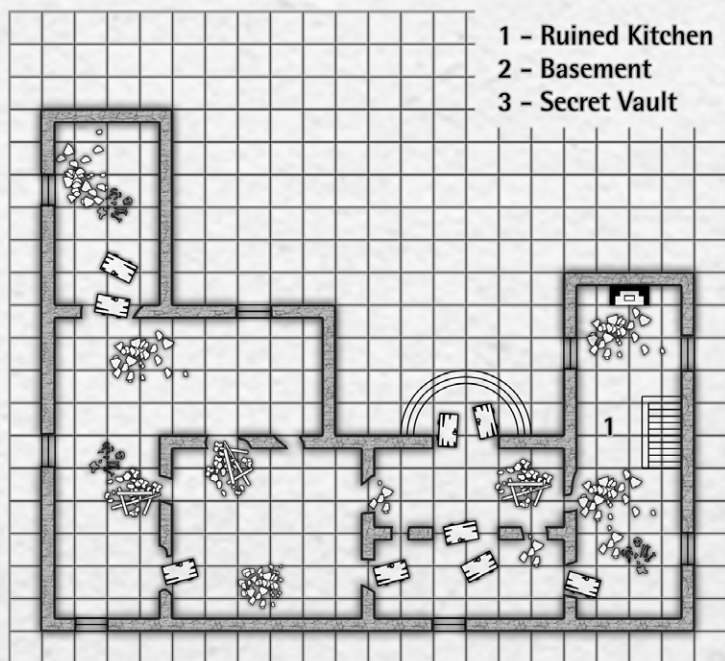
CR 1/2

XP 200 each

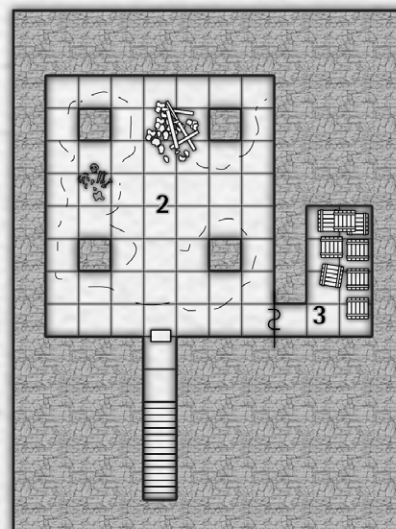
Female/male human rogue 1/warrior 2

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; Senses Perception +5



OLD ROCOCO VILLA



BASEMENT

1 square = 5 ft

**DEFENSE****AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)**hp** 24 (1d8+2d10+6)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** club +5 (1d6+2), dagger +4 (1d4+3/19–20)**Ranged** club +5 (1d6), dagger +4 (1d4+2/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16**Feats** Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (club)**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Acrobatics (jumping) 0, Climb +4, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +5, Perception +5, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +5**Languages** Common (Azindralean)**SQ** trapfinding +1**Gear** hide armor, club, 2 dagger.**THE BASEMENT (CR5)**

After dealing with the squatter thugs, the PCs are free to look around. In a room that might have once been a kitchen, they locate a completely collapsed staircase. The drop into the stairwell is 10 feet and the floor beneath is strewn with rubble and garbage that reeks potently of urine and stale booze.

At the bottom of the stairwell, a narrow, debris-covered passage leads to a moisture-swollen wooden door with heavily rusted hinges. The door is jammed shut but is forced open with a DC 18 Strength check. It opens into a dark and cavernous room with a dirt floor. The air within smells dank and stale. Individuals requiring a light source to see must provide one. Once the PCs are able to see within the room, read or paraphrase the following:

*The entrance opens into a large basement with cramped low ceilings and a dirt floor. Throughout, wide stone-block pillars support the subfloor above, giving the cellar the appearance of a filthy miniature temple.*

**Creatures:** In the decrepit and rotting basement, a monstrous and fetid ooze languishes in the dark, feeding off rodents, strays, and the occasional vagrant. As soon as it senses living things, it slithers forth to claim its meal.

**Ochre Jelly****CR 5****XP** 1,600**hp** 63; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 218

After defeating the creature, the PCs can safely explore the rest of the basement. Set into western side of the south wall, a DC 15 Perception check



reveals a cleverly concealed sliding panel. Behind the secret panel hides a vault where Azindralean resistance fighters kept a cache of weapons. It opens to reveal a small, dust-covered room stacked with sealed storage crates.

**Treasure:** Prying the tops from the crates reveal a sizable cache of simple martial weapons and light armor. In total, the crates contain two dozen light maces (120 gp), 15 suits of studded leather armor (375 gp), 30 light wooden shields (90 gp), 20 spears (60 gp), 25 light crossbows (875 gp) and three crates filled with bolts (250 gp). There are also crates filled with rope, iron spikes, tools, torches, and similar materials (300 gp). One crate holds three tanglefoot bags (150 gp), a masterwork net (320 gp), and four doses of *oil of bless weapon* (400 gp).

A quick DC 12 Perception check to search the vault uncovers a sealed leather tube containing several dozen maps showing several earlier layouts of the Great City sewer systems. Thorough study of the map uncovers four possible entrances to the fabled Dungeon Under the Mountain, as well as several handwritten diagrams and notes suggesting that numerous dungeon passages run beneath the sewers.

**Developments:** Watching from the shadows, Ilthysl waits for the PCs to explore the secret room. A few minutes after the PCs enter, she rushes into the vault disguised as Phyris Droad. In a feigned panic she attempts to rile the PCs to action by claiming assassins have showed up and murdered her entire gang. She attempts to convince the PCs to flee quickly, then tries to get them to separate in order to target whoever managed to recover the maps. Once she isolates his target, she attempts to kill or incapacitate the individual, take the maps, and flee.

#### Phyris Droad (The Charlatan, Ilthysl)

CR 5

XP 4,800

Male doppelganger ninja 5

LE Medium monstrous humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 Dodge, +1 natural)

hp 67 (4d10+5d8+23)

Fort +6, Ref +12, Will +6

**Defensive Abilities** uncanny dodge; **Immune** charm, sleep

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +12 (1d8+5), club +12/+7 (1d6+7)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 18th; concentration +21)

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC14)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** Ilthysl attempts to use her ruse to surprise and sneak attack the opponent she deems most threatening.

**During Combat:** Ilthysl fights with her claws, trying her best to feint opponents in order to make sneak attacks that target damaging pressure points.

**Morale:** If badly injured, Ilthysl attempts to even things up by drinking her *cure serious wounds* potion. In the end, she refuses to be taken alive and fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 17

Base Atk +7; CMB +12; CMD 28

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Extra Ki, Great Fortitude, Improved Feint

**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Appraise +7, Bluff +17 (+21 while using change shape ability), Climb +15, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +17 (+37 while using change shape ability), Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Linguistics +6, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +13, Survival +10, Use Magic Device +11; Racial Modifiers +4 Bluff (+8 while using change shape ability)+4 Disguise (+24 while using change shape ability)

**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Kortezean), Orc  
**SQ** perfect copy, mimicry, ki pool (7), ninja tricks (ki charge 1d6 fire, DC 15, pressure points), no trace +1, poison use, change shape (humanoid, alter self)

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** leather armor, club, *ring of protection* +1, 390 gp.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mimicry (Ex):** As a doppelganger, Ilthysl is proficient in all weapons, armor, and shields. In addition, she can use any spell trigger or spell completion item as if the spells were on her spell list. Ilthysl's caster level is equal to her racial Hit Dice.

**Perfect Copy (Su):** Ilthysl can use *change shape* to assume the appearance of specific individuals.

**Ki Charge (Su):** Ilthysl can invest a portion of her ki into a single thrown weapon, such as a shuriken, and throw it as a standard action. The thrown weapon explodes on impact in a 5-foot burst, dealing 1d6 points of fire damage plus 2d6 points of fire damage. Creatures caught in the blast receive a DC 15 Reflex save to halve the damage. If the thrown weapon hits a creature, that creature takes a –2 penalty on the saving throw. If the thrown weapon misses, treat it as a thrown splash weapon. Using this ability expends 1 ki point from Ilthysl's ki pool.

**Pressure Points (Su):** Ilthysl can strike at an opponent's vital pressure points, causing

weakness and intense pain. Whenever she deals sneak attack damage, she also deals 1 point of Strength or Dexterity damage (Ilthysl's choice). Unlike normal ability damage, this damage can be healed by a DC 15 Heal check. Each successful check heals 1 point of damage caused by this trick. Ilthysl receives a +10 insight bonus on this Heal check.

## CONCLUSION

Once the PCs recover the maps they gain valuable insight into the substructures of the Great City, including the city sewers as well as the information they need to use the passages that access the Dungeon Under the Mountain. Reemerging from the cellars, the Drudgespades greet the PCs, prepared to accompany them back to the Residential Ward. Eshdon Radiath is shocked to learn her ranks

were compromised by a doppelganger and before continuing, requests the PCs test herself and the rest of her gang to make sure all of them are as they seem, either by magical means or a trial combat that renders one of the participants unconscious. Upon the PCs' return to the Pigoteria, Cwell greets them with a small feast. He is incredibly excited about the maps and fervently begins to discuss using them to plot explorations into the Sink to counter the efforts of the Korteziian oppressors. Cwell also sends word of the PCs' accomplishments to Vulgrax, and upon their return home a courier delivers them a small package sealed with a single gold coin stamped with the crest of the Semheyl Clan. The coin is identical to the one Cwell handed them after the Tribunal. Inside the package is an *earth elemental gem*.



\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations



Heroes to the people, beware the dubious intentions of the Edicts! Far more is afoot than simply protecting the city. I have ample reason to believe that the Atregans intend to manipulate the Sink, much like the secret Malchort Cabal. At the very least, they plot to use the disaster as a boogeyman in order to drive the fear-stricken public towards their protection, allowing them to create and enforce increasingly strict measures of civic control. Any Edicts they propose during the August Tribunal stand to support their efforts and should be vehemently opposed.



# THE MOLE

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This adventure is part of the second season of *The Great City: The Sinking* series. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It was designed using the Pathfinder RPG System and intended to be played with a group of 6th-level Player Characters.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The earthquake that caused the Sinking and the aftershocks that followed have opened up numerous cracks in the Great City's foundations. Recently, several vagrants disappeared in the warehouse district known as the Shacks. When a stevedore disappeared, the Shacks militia traced the disappearances to a vacant warehouse. There, they discovered that a tremor had exposed a long sealed basement connected to natural tunnels leading into the Undercity. Assuming the missing people wandered into the Undercity and got lost or killed, the militiamen cordoned off the building and considered the matter settled.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

As soon as news of the rediscovered tunnels reaches the PCs, they suspect the passages might provide them with a new route into the Undercity and the source of the Sink. As it turns out, the property is still owned by a wealthy widow known as Lady Hasserbruk. In order to gain the Lady's permission to explore the warehouse, the PCs must seek her audience by attending one of her celebrated masquerade parties. During the party, their attempts to impress the noblewoman are hampered by another guest, a pawn hired by their Trypus enemies who seeks to embarrass them in front of Lady Hasserbruk.

If during the party, the PCs charm the Lady, she gives them permission to enter her warehouse. Inside, the PCs delve into the passages beneath the basement where they face the undead horrors that lurk within. Though their exploration fails to uncover another entrance into the Undercity, the PCs instead discover a tragic incident from the Great City's past.

## INTRODUCTION

The PCs could wish to explore the caves under the warehouse for a number of reasons, including any of the following:

- If you are running this adventure as part of The Sinking campaign, the PCs should already have an interest in discovering alternative entrances to the sinkhole. The PCs or their employer might learn

about the newly discovered tunnels from contacts in the Dock Ward.

- The PCs or their employer knew one of the people who went missing; perhaps she was one of their Dock Ward informants.
- The owner of a neighboring warehouse is worried that the fissures run under his property. He hires the PCs to survey the caves.
- The Lady invites the PCs to her masquerade because of their status. If they happen to impress her, she asks them to explore the caves on her behalf.

The adventure begins once the PCs decide to investigate look at the warehouse.

## THE WAREHOUSE

From the outside, the warehouse in question looks no different from its neighbors in the Shacks. A patrol of Shacks militia veterans (see *sidebar*) is assigned to the warehouse, ostensibly to keep trespassers away, but also in case anything should come out of the building.

The mercenaries refuse to allow anyone to enter the site without the permission of the owner. The PCs can discover the owner of the warehouse by asking around or by consulting the public records. Either route requires 1d4 hours and a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check.

The recorded owner of the warehouse is Captain Albrion Hasserbruk. Further inquiry reveals that Captain Hasserbruk is dead, and his estate passed to his widow, Lady Mellinora Hasserbruk.

## BREAKING AND ENTERING

As written, breaking into the warehouse without permission it is an act of foolishness. Still, some PCs may decide to break in. If this occurs, use the following information to help determine the results.

The warehouse has good wooden doors (Hardness 5, 15 hp, break DC 18) now secured with good locks (Disable Device DC 30). In addition, half a dozen Shacks militia captains (fighter 5, see *The Great City Campaign Setting page 134*) patrol the area and their initial attitude is unfriendly. The militiamen will not follow the PCs into the basement, but secure the area in case they return. The legal repercussions of breaking and entering are beyond the scope of this adventure.

## AN AUDIENCE WITH THE LADY

Lady Hasserbruk has not remarried since the death of her husband nearly a decade ago. Yet she has managed his estate well and remains independently wealthy. Mellinora uses her money to host elaborate masquerades. There is much speculation on the identities of Lady Hasserbruk's masked guests, though it is widely accepted that they are the *crème de la crème* of the Great City. Wilder is the speculation about what goes on at these parties. The uninvited assuage their envy with tales of debauchery and sin. The truth, perhaps, is not far off.

### LADY HASSERBRUK

Mellinora Hasserbruk (CE intellect-devourer-controlled human aristocrat 8) is both more and less than she appears. Full details will appear in *The Sinking: Widow's Walk*. For now it is sufficient to know that she is keenly interested in seeing any new fissures in the city sealed, but also suspicious of anyone who specifically seeks her out.

Lady Hasserbruk's secret is not significant to this adventure and, all going to plan, should not come up. Lady Hasserbruk does not remove her mask during the party, and thus there is almost no chance the PCs would notice a momentary delay in her facial expression when reacting to what others say. Her immunity to mind-affecting effects can easily be mistaken for strong willpower. Her steward Jaym cast *undetected alignment* on Lady Hasserbruk each day; if it is dispelled, she detects to divination as faintly chaotic and evil (as might some other nobles of the Great City).

### THE LATE CAPTAIN HASSERBRUK

It is common knowledge that Mellinora's husband Albrion Hasserbruk died nearly a decade ago, when the ship he captained—*The Destrier*—sank with all hands aboard. Even more tragic, the galleon was within sight of the Great City's harbor when the tragedy struck.

The possibility exists that one or more of the PCs knew Captain Hasserbruk. He was a scion of the Semhyel clan and thus related (closely or distantly) to any PC who belongs to that noble line. In his youth, a PC might have been the Captain's cabin boy, or he might have a close relative who served under Hasserbruk (perhaps even on his fateful last voyage).

Lady Hasserbruk's last such party was before the Sinking. After the disaster she became a virtual recluse. Recently, however, the lady has made it known that she will be hosting another masquerade. The city's elite are abuzz with speculation about who she will invite.

The PCs will need permission from Lady Hasserbruk to enter the warehouse. Unfortunately, arranging a meeting with the reclusive noblewoman requires the PCs to go through her Dock Ward agents who use the full extent of their bureaucratic power to prevent this. Within days of their initial inquiries, however, a courier approaches the PCs with an invitation to Lady Hasserbruk's masquerade.

## THE MASQUERADE

The masquerade is the PCs' best (perhaps only) opportunity to obtain Lady Hasserbruk's permission. If the PCs are going to attend, however, they will need proper attire: a costume (which consists of a mask and a few accoutrements) worn over a courtier or noble's outfit. The masquerade's theme is The Jungle.

Visible armor is inappropriate, but attendees are permitted to carry dueling weapons. A PC who dresses or arms himself inappropriately suffers a  $-2$  penalty on skill checks to gain Lady Hasserbruk's favor. Conversely, a PC wearing elaborate costume (with a cost exceeding 200 gp) gains a  $+2$  circumstance bonus to such checks.

The event is held at Hasserbruk manor, a three-story, wooden building in an upscale part of the Dock Ward. Guests mingle between the entry hall, parlor, and great hall, which take up most of the ground floor. Servants move between these front areas and the kitchen, which sits at the back. Doors to the upper stories are locked and these areas are dark and unoccupied.

## GUESTS AND HOST

There are roughly two-dozen guests attending the masquerade evenly divided between the sexes. As befits the party's jungle theme, they are all attired in bright costumes, mostly exotic birds, great cats, and reptiles, though a few sport witch-doctor masks or (faux) grass skirts.

To best allow the GM to integrate this adventure with an ongoing campaign, most of the guests remain intentionally unnamed. The GM should include among the partygoers NPCs important to her campaign.

Lady Hasserbruk (see *sidebar*) is an attractive Kortezean woman with dark brown hair and eyes.



Though in her mid-forties, she appears ten years younger. Her speech is soft and well mannered. Lady Hasserbruk wears a full-face bird mask. She has bright, multicolored feathers in her hair and upon her gown.

Lady Hasserbruk is attended by her loyal steward Jaym (LN human bard 7), a statuesque man in his late twenties. His pale skin, hair, and eyes accentuate his refined features. His exposed upper body is painted with leopard spots, and he wears a feline mask to match.

## THE SOCIETY WIT

The PCs' interest in the newly discovered fissure has not gone unnoticed. Imperial agents from the Trypus Academe seek to control the sinkhole and have no desire for the PCs to find an alternate entrance into the tunnels below. Unwilling to tip their hand, the Trypus Academe recruits another party guest, Jerob Taramin, to embarrass the PCs in front of Lady Hasserbruk.

Like many members of his clan, Jerob Taramin holds a supervisory position in the treasury. However, he much prefers to spend his time schmoozing with other nobles in the halls of power. Some might call him a malicious gossip, but Jerob prefers to think of himself as an information broker.

Jerob is not a member of the Trypus Academe, nor is he privy to their plans for the Great City. Yet, Jerob can sense the way the winds blow in the royal court. An agent of the Trypus Academe only had to casually mention that certain influential nobles might view discrediting the PCs favorably in order to gain Jerob's cooperation.

### Jerob Taramin

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male human bard (court bard) 7 (see *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* page 82)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 42 (7d8+7)

Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +8; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +6 (1d6/18-20)

Ranged mwk dagger +7 (1d4/19-20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 19 rounds/day: countersong, distraction, fascinate (DC 16), satire –2, mockery –3, suggestion (DC 16)

Bard Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +10)

3rd (2/day)—dirty laundry\*, dispel magic

2nd (4/day)—calm emotions (DC 16), cure moderate wounds, detect thoughts (DC 15), eagle's splendor

1st (5/day)—charm person (DC 15), disguise self (DC 14), hideous laughter (DC 15), hypnotism (DC 15), unseen servant

0 (at will)—detect magic, light, lullaby (DC 14), magic aura (DC 13), mending, prestidigitation

\*see *The Great City Player's Guide* page 100, if you are not using that book replace with *clairaudience/clairvoyance*.



## TACTICS

**Before Combat:** Jerob's magic items are concealed with *magic aura*. His dagger and wand are secreted in his costume (Perception DC 15).

**During Combat:** If forced into combat, Jerob uses his satire bardic performance to weaken his opponent's attacks. He wields a rapier in melee, but uses his *wand of sound burst* to wound and disarm ranged attackers.

**Morale:** A coward at heart, Jerob surrenders or flees if reduced to less than half his hit points.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Alertness, Eschew Materials, Skill Focus (Perform—comedy), Spell Focus (enchantment), Still Spell

**Skills** Diplomacy +16, Disguise +13, Knowledge (local) +15, Knowledge (nobility) +15, Perception +13, Perform (comedy) +16, Perform (dance) +13, Sense Motive +13

**Languages** Common

**SQ** heraldic expertise +3, versatile performance (comedy, dance), wide audience

**Combat Gear** *wand of sound burst* (9 charges); **Other Gear** reinforced clothing (noble's outfit, see *The Great City Player's Guide* page 78), masterwork rapier, masterwork dagger, cloak of resistance +2, *feather token* (bird), crocodile mask, jewelry (worth 150 gp).

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Bardic Performance:** As a court bard, Jerob has the following unusual bardic performances.

**Satire (Su):** Jerob can use performance to undermine the confidence of enemies who hear it, causing them to take a –2 penalty on attack and damage rolls (minimum 1) and a –2 penalty on saves against fear and charm effects as long as the bard continues performing. Satire is a language-dependent, mind-affecting ability that uses audible components.

**Mockery (Su):** Jerob can subtly ridicule and defame a specific individual. The bard selects one target that can hear his performance. That individual takes a –3 penalty on Charisma checks and Charisma-related skill checks as long as the bard continues performing. Mockery is a language-dependent, mind-affecting ability that relies on audible components.

**Heraldic Expertise (Ex):** Twice per day, Jerob can reroll a Diplomacy, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), or Knowledge (nobility) check, though he must take the result of the second roll even if it is worse.

**Wide Audience (Su):** A court bard can choose to affect a 60-foot cone instead of a 30-foot radius with bardic performances that affect an area.

## THE LADY'S FAVOR

Lady Hasserbruk acknowledges the PCs request, but politely refuses to discuss business during the party. She intimates that the PCs must impress her before she is willing to grant them permission to examine the warehouse. Indeed, the masquerade provides several opportunities for PCs to gain the lady's favor, in the form of favor points (FP). Lady Hasserbruk will only grant the PCs' request if they earn sufficient FP during the evening.

PCs might think to gain the noblewoman's favor by means of charm or compulsion magic. However, Lady Hasserbruk is immune to such tricks. Gauche behavior—such as attacking other guests or sneaking upstairs—will lose the PCs favor.

Further complicating matters is the presence of Jerob Taramin. Jerob does everything in his power to undermine the PCs' efforts. If he sense the PCs are using magic to improve their abilities, he uses *dispel magic* or *calm emotions* to counteract such buffs. *Detect thoughts* and *dirty laundry* might allow him to learn secrets he can use against one or more of the PCs. When a PC makes a Charisma-based skill check, Jerob uses his mockery performance to undermine her efforts; he might direct his heckles at the PC, or stage whisper his criticism to those nearby.

The nobleman does not stray far from Lady Hasserbruk, though the PCs might trick him into stepping away briefly. At best he can be pulled away for the duration of one skill check, and he won't fall for the same trick twice. If the PCs continue to hound him, Jerob uses *disguise self* to appear in a different costume.

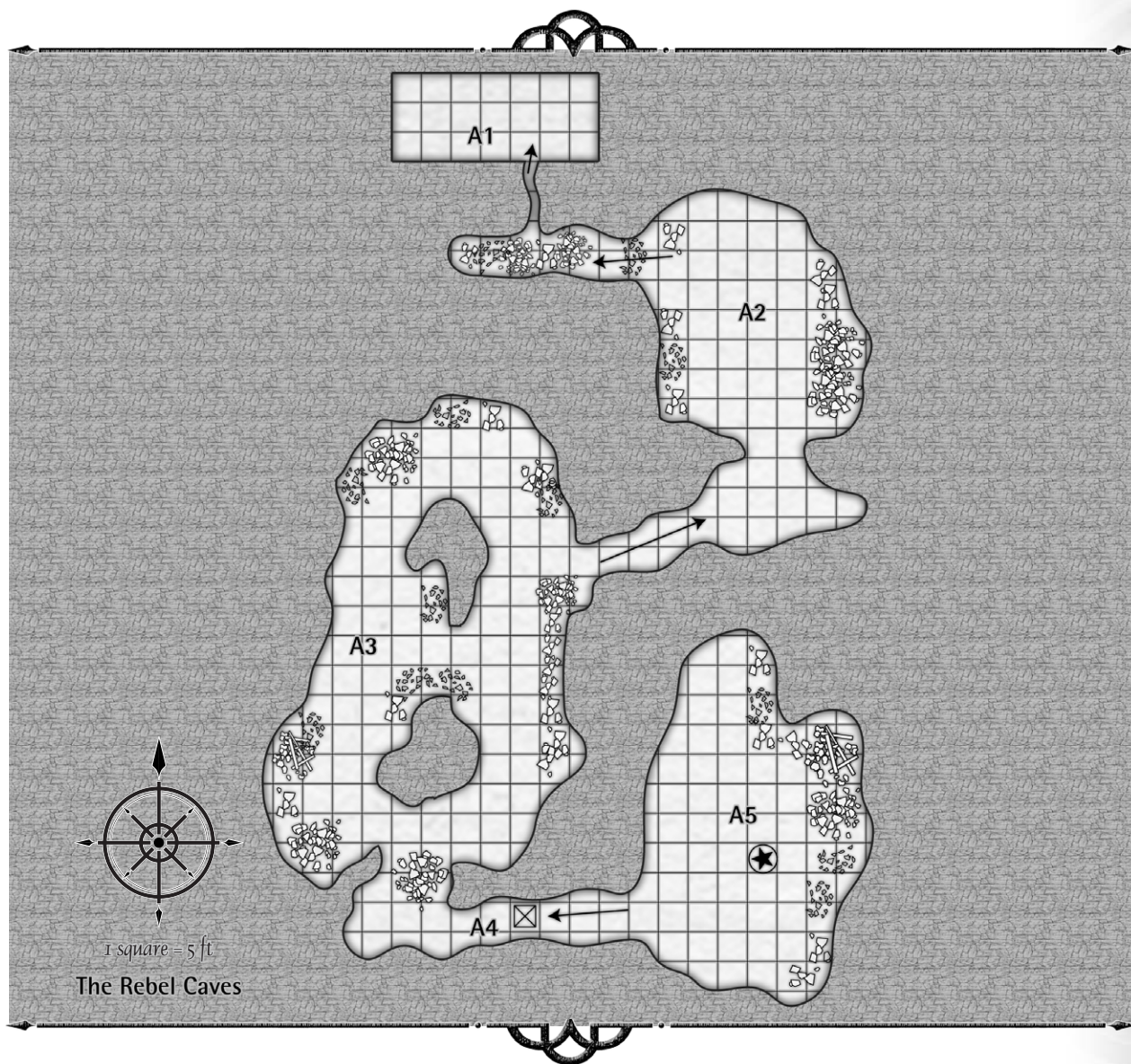
Each PC has the opportunity to make two different checks during the masquerade (or aid another's check), and they earn 1 FP for each successful check.

**Erudition:** A PC can make a DC 15 Knowledge check to impress Lady Hasserbruk with his expertise on a subject. If the topic is Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nobility), Jerob challenges the PC's facts. In this case, the PC must succeed at a contested check against Jerob to gain favor.

**Performance:** A PC can make a DC 15 Perform check to entertain Lady Hasserbruk and her guests.

**Reminisce:** Lady Hasserbruk is eager to hear stories of her late husband. A character that knew Captain Hasserbruk could recall a suitable story with a DC 10 Profession (sailor) check (or a Wisdom check if untrained). Alternatively, a character can pretend to have known him with a DC 20 Bluff check. A failed Bluff check upsets Lady Hasserbruk resulting in a –2 penalty to all further rolls to gain her favor.





**Self-promotion:** With a DC 15 Diplomacy check a PC can spend time regaling Lady Hasserbruk and her guests with tales of their previous adventures. A character can instead make a Bluff check (to add comic exaggerations) or Intimidate check (to include grisly details) at the same DC.

**Seduction:** A PC (of either gender) can attempt to woo Lady Hasserbruk with a DC 15 Bluff or Diplomacy check. A failure by 5 or more offends the noblewoman resulting in a -2 penalty to all further rolls to gain her favor.

The PCs do not learn of their success or failure until the following day. If they collectively earned 4 FP, they receive an envelope containing a note from Lady Hasserbruk granting them permission to examine the warehouse along with the key. If they earn 6 FP, the package also contains a *scroll of move earth* (arcane or divine, as appropriate). If the PCs gain Lady Hasserbruk's permission award them XP for a CR 6 encounter. A few days later, Jerob Taramin disappears; the Trypus Academe does not treat failure lightly.

If the PCs fail to earn enough FP, Lady Hasserbruk refuses their request. However, about a week later, the PCs receive an envelope from her agents. Inside is a key and a note explaining that another group went into the basement and never returned. The PCs are hereby given permission to explore under the warehouse.

## THE WAREHOUSE, AGAIN

When the PCs return to the warehouse with the letter and the key, the Shacks militia permits them to enter without hassle.

The interior of the warehouse is as nondescript as the outside, except for a large hole in the floor. Some time in the past, a wooden floor was put in erasing all evidence that the building had a basement. However, the recent seismic activity shifted the support beams, and a section of floor has collapsed into the previously hidden lower level. During the day, the interior of the warehouse receives dim illumination.

**Trap:** The floor around the hole is structurally unsound; treat it as a spiked pit trap (see *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* page 420).

## THE REBEL CAVES

The warehouse is built on the foundations of an earlier building dating from the late Empirical Age. Approximately 200 years ago, the caves beneath that building were used as a secret base by the Azindralean resistance against the occupying Korteziens. After several years of operation, the resistance base was compromised by a mole. Accusations flew as members of the resistance tried to determine who they could trust. In the end, suspicion fell on a man named Laurick.

Sadly, Laurick was not the double agent. In truth, he had fallen in love with a Korteziens girl. They could not openly profess their love, so they met in secret and exchanged letters. The real mole, meanwhile, took advantage of Laurick's secret affair. She convinced the resistance cell leaders that Laurick was sending and receiving coded messages when he wasn't sneaking off to meet with the enemy. The day before Laurick planned to elope with his paramour, his former allies chained him to a cave wall. The resistance abandoned the base, collapsing the tunnels behind them. Laurick was crushed to death by falling rocks, but his spirit would not pass on. He was tethered by the betrayal of his peers and his own perceived betrayal of his beloved.

When aftershocks from The Sinking reopened the entrance to the caves, Laurick's spirit animated as a guecubu, an undead creature of stone and bone. He cleared out much of the rubble from the caves' collapse, trying to remake the base as he remembered it. Though a compulsion prevents him from leaving the site of his death, the guecubu lures people into the caves to share his ghastly fate.

**Cave Features:** The walls of the caves are unworked stone (Climb DC 15) and the ceilings average 10 ft. high. The floors are hewn stone (DC 10 Acrobatics check to run or charge) and some areas (indicated on the map) are covered in dense rubble. There is no light in the caves, save what the PCs bring with them.

## AREA A1: THE FISSURE

*In one corner on the basement, a crack runs from just below ground level, down to the base of the stone wall, and continues several feet across the floor. At its widest, the crack is no wider than the length of a man's arm. The fissure descends sharply into the gloom.*

A natural staircase makes descent relatively easy, though a Medium size creature must squeeze to fit.

After 10 feet, the crack opens into a wider tunnel that continues the descent.

**Creatures:** Laurick waits for new victims in the tunnel just beyond the crack. Once the PCs begin to squeeze through the crack, he *earth glides* into the wall and waits for them to pass. The extant rubble masks his broken ground aura.

### Laurick

CR 8

hp 104 (see *Area A5*).

**Development:** Once the PCs are engaged in Area A2, Laurick use *stone shape* to seal the entrance. The resulting wall is roughly 4 inches thick (Hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 28). He then returns to Area A5.

## AREA A2: ROOT CELLAR (CR 6)

*A dry, dusty cavern extends out from the tunnel mouth. A tracery of fine roots seems almost to hold in place the sandstone that composes the ceiling. In the center of the chamber, larger roots descend almost to the floor.*

Despite the extensive roots, the ceiling is in no immediate danger of collapse.

**Creatures:** The root curtain is in fact a motile plant that feeds on moisture. A character must succeed at a DC 20 Knowledge (nature), Perception, or Survival check to recognize the danger the assassin root poses before it attacks. The assassin root moves along the ceiling of the chamber and gains a +1 bonus on melee attacks for being on higher ground. Small creatures cannot make melee attacks against the plant unless using a weapon with reach. The assassin root's entangle ability only affects creatures climbing on or flying near the root-bound ceiling.

A creature killed by the assassin root is soon drained of all moisture. The presence of the guecubu causes a humanoid killed in this way to rise after 24 hours as a thurr-draugr. Two such undead hide behind rock walls at the back of this cavern. They reveal themselves 1 round after the assassin root attacks.

### Assassin Root

CR 4

XP 1,200

N advanced assassin vine (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* pages 166, 294)

hp 38.

### Thurr-draugr (2)

CR 2

XP 600

Variant draugr commoner 1 (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 page 110)



**CE** Medium undead (earth)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 14 (+2 armor, +2 natural)  
**hp** 25 (3d8+1d6+8)

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

**DR** 5/bludgeoning or slashing; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** earth breaker +6 (2d6+6/x3 plus nausea) or slam +6 (1d10+6 plus nausea)

#### STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Power Attack, Toughness

**Skills** Climb +9, Perception +6, Stealth +7

**Languages** Common (cannot speak)

**Gear** earth breaker, leather armor.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Nausea (Su):** A creature that is damaged by a thurr-draugr must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Earth Breaker:** Half the thurr-draugr are armed with large hammers called earth breakers. These two-handed, martial, bludgeoning weapons weight 14 lbs.

### AREA A3: DOME (CR 7)

*The roof of the cavern arcs into a rough dome, held aloft by a pair of thick natural pillars. The floor is strewn with rubble, but also, here and there, pieces of loose parchment peek from under the scree.*

The cave ceiling rises to 20 feet in this chamber.

**Creatures:** The bulk of the thurr-draugr dwell in this cavern. There are six undead here, unless the PCs failed to win Lady Hasserbruk's favor, in which case there are seven (the additional draugr was another Trypus Academe patsy). If the PCs are looking for a missing person, that individual is one of the undead.

#### Thurr-draugr (6 or 7)

CR 2

**XP** 600

**hp** 25 (see Area A3).

**Treasure:** A score of loose parchments are scattered about the cave. The parchments contain partial maps and notes written in Old Azindralean. They appear to contain intelligence on the movements of troops and the whereabouts of important individuals. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check allows a character to recognize names and places from the Great City during the late Empirical Age.

A DC 20 Perception check uncovers a satchel partially buried in the rubble. Inside is a journal and *figurine of wondrous power (silver raven)*. Deciphering the journal requires a DC 25 Linguistics check. The journal is dated nearly 200 years ago and recounts the last weeks of operation at the resistance base, in particular the hunt for the mole. The last entry details the arrest of Laurick and plans to abandon the base.

### AREA A4: TRAP (CR 6)

In this tunnel, an old trap placed as a defense by the resistance base remains active. The thurr-draugr are aware of the trap and avoid it.

**Trap:** A pressure plate disguised as a flat stone triggers scything blades on either side of the tunnel. A character who makes a successful Perception check against the trap can avoid the trigger mechanism if she treats the trapped square as difficult terrain.

#### Double Scythe Trap

CR

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

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic reset

**Effect** Atk +20 melee (2d4+6/x4) and Atk +20 melee (2d4+6/x4).

### AREA A5: LAURICK'S DOOM (CR 8)

*The tunnel opens into a semicircular cave. The far end appears to have collapsed some time in the past, leaving only a impenetrable wall of rubble. Before the rubble stands a stone statue of a young woman. She holds a real sheaf of papers in her right hand and wears a gold ring on her left.*

Laurick was chained to the wall of this cave when the roof collapsed.

**Creatures:** If the PCs defeat his minions, Laurick waits for them in this room, hidden in one wall. The guecubu waits until all the PCs enter, or one of them touches the statue, before he attacks.

#### Laurick

CR 8

**XP** 4,800

Male guecubu (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* page 145)

**CE** Medium undead (earth)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +18

**Aura** broken ground (30 ft., DC 20)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 16 (+4 Dex, +1 Dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 104 (11d8+55); fast healing 5

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2; **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** electricity, undead traits; **Resist** cold 10

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 15 ft.; earth glide

**Melee** bite +14 (1d8+6 plus misfortune), 2 slams +14 (1d6+6 plus misfortune)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +13)

At will—*stone shape*

3/day—*soften earth and stone*, *spike growth* (DC 18)

1/day—*spike stones* (DC 19), *transmute mud to rock* (DC 20), *transmute rock to mud* (DC 20)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat:** Laurick casts *transmute rock to mud* above the PCs, dealing damage and covering the room with mud. If the PCs are clustered, he uses full attack to attempt to curse as many opponents as possible. Once damaged, he uses Spring Attack, often starting and/or ending inside the cave walls. If combat moves to another cave, Laurick casts *spike stones* in the new locale.

**Morale:** Laurick fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +18

**Languages** Common, Old Azindralean

**Gear** broken manacles of cooperation (see *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* page 307).

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Broken Ground (Su):** The ground in a 30-foot radius around a guecubu becomes difficult terrain. A guecubu can move through this area with no

penalty. A *magic circle against chaos* or a *magic circle against evil* negates this effect.

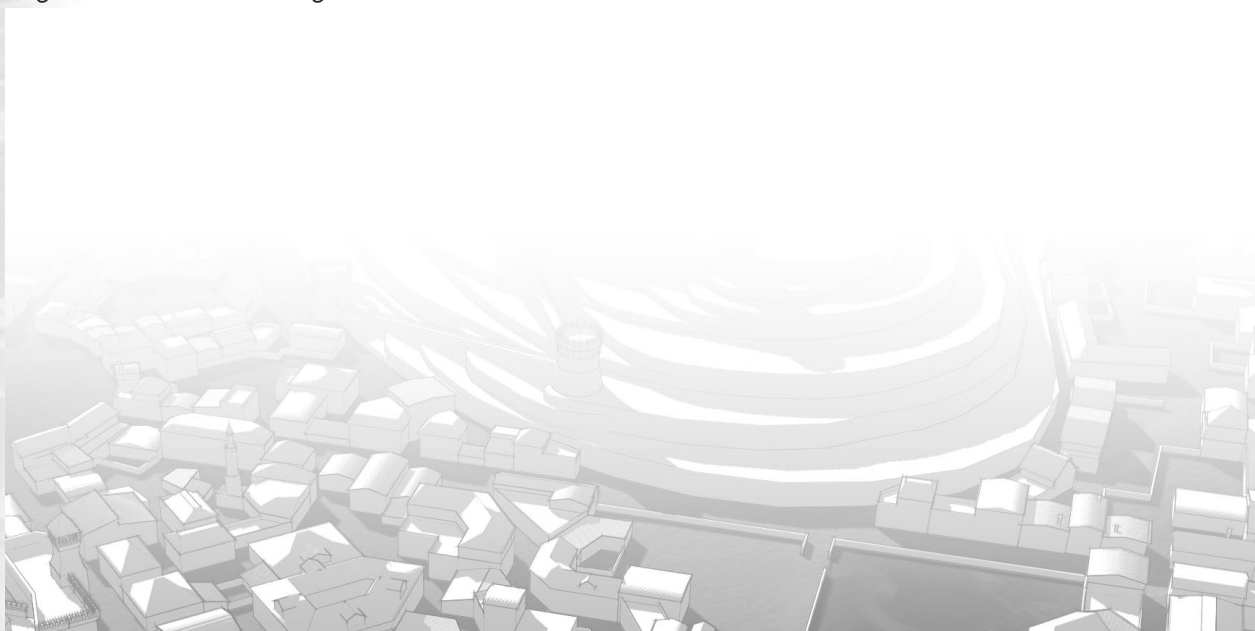
**Misfortune (Su):** A creature struck by a guecubu must make a DC 20 Will save or become permanently cursed with misfortune. The victim of this curse takes a –4 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks, and any critical threat against the victim automatically confirms. If a guecubu hits a creature already suffering from this curse, the victim must make a DC 20 Will save or be staggered for 1 round. This is a curse effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Treasure:** Laurick created the statue of his beloved using *stone shape*. The papers are love letters to Laurick from her (signed Miss Lavender). The last letter asks him to meet her near the city's south gate on certain date (now two centuries past)—the day after the last entry in the journal in area A3. The statue wears a *ring of protection* +1 which was to be her wedding ring.

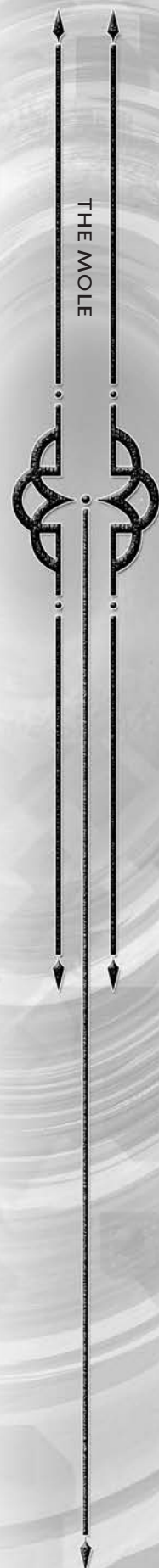
## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

A thorough search of the caves reveals no connection to the Undercity nor the Sinking and the tunnels appear stable (as stable as anything in the City these days). Though the caves offer no clues regarding The Sinking, the PCs can consider themselves successful if they defeat Laurick and his minions. The City Guard and/or Lady Hasserbruk give the PCs a reward worth 2,000 gp for their heroics.

If the PCs fail to destroy the guecubu, he eventually sends his minions out to terrorize the city, perhaps even kidnapping a descendant of his former love.







\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations



# THE SKULLFIRE INQUISITION

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This adventure is part of the second season of *The Great City: The Sinking* series. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It was designed using the Pathfinder RPG System and intended to be played with a group of 7th-level Player Characters.

## BACKGROUND

The scoundrel, thief, and confidence man known as Lazarus left behind many mysteries, chief of which is whether his exposures to the mysteries beneath the Great City did indeed cause him to ascend to divinity. From the sordid ranks of his prior associates, the sort of people who descended into the darkest parts of the world and trafficked in the dangerous things they found there, a cult has arisen. They view the emergence of the Sinkhole as a divinely-ordained opportunity to elevate that cult into a true church.

Towards that end, a secret cabal of inquisitors has formed. Tasked by the Trypus to seek a silvered sextant reputed to provide cross-planar navigational insight, which they believe might make it possible to navigate the Sinkhole, the Lazarites have expanded their search and hunt for the information they need to acquire portfolios for their new “god.” Under the leadership of a former adventuring companion of Lazarus named Melchior Fromme, and with the assistance of a decidedly nasty artifact discovered in their delvings called the Skullfire Crown, the Inquisitors of Lazarus have been rounding up priests and oracles of dying or disreputable sects and extracting information from them. They hope to cobble together a means of establishing a true clergy, and even a means to absorb the domains and portfolios of other deities, from the knowledge stolen from their targets.

Unfortunately, one of the Inquisition’s targets is an aged “priest”, one of the last devotees of an ancient God of Knowledge, who also serves as one of Blood Senator Eldon Vulgrax’s primary sources of information on activities within the Temple Ward. Even worse, this oracle, one Myron Galdemarr, has fled to a safe house within the Temple Ward controlled by the Hardy Brutes. As his enemies would immediately seize upon any connection between Vulgrax and the seditious Brutes, it remains imperative that Galdemarr be brought to safety as soon as possible.

As the adventure begins, Galdemarr already languishes in the clutches of the Inquisition. Unaware of his capture, a second team of inquisitors stands poised to ransack the safe house.

## SUMMARY

Blood Senator Eldon Vulgrax arranges a secret meeting with the PCs to explain the delicate situation. He asks them to go to the safe house under cover of night and guard Galdemarr while escorting him back to Vulgrax. Unfortunately, when they arrive at the safe house, they interrupt a team of Inquisitors in the process of ransacking the place. Unbeknownst to the thugs, the items they seek, Galdemarr keeps about his person – the silvered sextant, and a large metallic key. Earlier, a different team of inquisitors apprehended Galdemarr on the streets. This team remains unaware of these items.

Clues provided by the defeated Inquisitors lead the PCs to the Trades Ward. There, they determine that the Inquisitors have recruited a particularly dull-witted member of the Menach crime family, who is allowing them to use one of their warehouses as a base of operations. The PCs must find and infiltrate this warehouse, and dispose of the chimera which has been smuggled into it to stand guard, without attracting the attention and ire of the rest of the Menach syndicate.

Once inside, the PCs discover the true nature of the Lazarite Inquisition. Torturers flay the prisoners with poisoned whips, while the truly unlucky must endure the serenades of a bardic inquisitor – all calculated to assault the minds of their hapless victims. Their wills sufficiently weakened, the prisoners are then taken to Melchior Fromme and his assistant, a gargoyle nicknamed ‘Soulburner.’ As Melchior questions them, a terrible unique magic device called the “Skullfire Crown” burns away their thoughts and memories into a vapor which the looming gargoyle greedily inhales, relaying the information obtained thereby to Fromme.

With these Inquisitors defeated, the PCs must find not only Galdemarr, but the key and sextant which he has still managed to keep secret on – or, more accurately, in – his person, and get back to Vulgrax without attracting further attention from the Lazarites, Menachs, or officials.

## INTRODUCTION

The PCs receive a visit from one of Vulgrax’s agents with whom they are already familiar – if not Cwell the Butcher himself, then his teenage servant, or perhaps one of Vulgrax’s bodyguards. The agent’s manner is friendly but brusque; he has an invitation for the PCs and hands it off to them quickly, saying “*open this as soon as you can, and make sure nobody watches you read it.*” The herald then dashes off before the PCs have a chance to question him.

The note reads:

*"There is a matter of some urgency which has just been brought to my attention, and for which I am willing to compensate you handsomely if you are able to assist me with it. Please dine with me tonight at my official residence. Formal dress not required – come as you are."*

At this point, the GM can roleplay the intervening hours, or proceed directly to the encounter with Vulgrax.

## ACT I: THE SAFE HOUSE

The PCs find the Blood Senator dining alone, in something of an agitated state. After the customary pleasantries, he gets right to business:

*"I'm afraid there's been a rather disturbing development, another typically stupid decision by our beloved leader Erasmus which could have terrible consequences for the city – and embarrassing consequences for me. You see, while access to the Sink is severely restricted, the Lazarites have convinced The Goat that its ancient nature implies that some of the older gods and faiths of this city must be involved somehow – and he's given them a mandate to 'investigate' them. Which means that some of the quirkier preachers at the various public shrines in Temple Ward seem to be going missing."*

*"I'm sure once the public catches on to this, they'll be BroadSides deriding our Goat-Faced puppet on every wall around the Castle Ward. But here's the thing – there's a priest of the old God of Mysteries named Byron Galdemarr who has been providing me with periodic information about the doings in the Temple Ward. And worse yet, when he's not going itinerantly from temple to temple or hanging about someone else's library, his residence is in a safe house used by the Hardy Brutes. If the Lazarites, or anybody, can make a connection between him, the Brutes, and me – well, I'm sure you can imagine the fun they'd have with it."*

While the PCs are likely familiar with the Hardy Brutes, if necessary a DC 12 Knowledge (local) check recalls them as a guerilla resistance group working to overthrow the Korteizian occupation. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check recounts the God of Mysteries as one of the oldest deities worshipped in the Great City, although his lack of a formal temple and small congregation size has relegated him to a degree of obscurity in the modern age.

Vulgrax continues:

*"Old Byron was working on a project for me – he was examining an ancient key which he thought might be connected to what's been going on down there. He'd sent me a message a few days ago that he thought it*

*might be connected to another object he was going to try and get his hands on. I need Byron and the key, and whatever else he needs to bring, escorted here right away so I can keep him protected."*

Vulgrax takes out pendants for each of the PCs, explaining that they can use them to show that they are about his business to anybody they meet on the street, and specifically to avoid harassment by the Oxdam. He is also willing to offer the PCs a total of 1,750 gp as payment. PCs that want to haggle with him can attempt an opposed Diplomacy check to drive him up to an even 2,000 gp.

## BYRON'S RESIDENCE (CR 7)

Vulgrax asks the PCs to go to the safe house immediately following the dinner. If they demur, asking to be given time to replenish spells or the like, Vulgrax reluctantly agrees but asks that they undertake the mission at nightfall on the next day, to avoid attracting attention. In either event, Vulgrax's pendants prove sufficient to get them to Byron's residence unmolested. You may roleplay the journey, or skip directly to the residence, at which point read or paraphrase the following:

*You follow the narrow side streets of the Temple Ward, the cool marble facades of the buildings barely visible in the cloudy night sky. As you come to the address provided by the Blood Senator, you see a two story residential building, unprepossessing, neither bedecked with any kind of ostentatious ornament, nor noticeably run-down. Indeed, the building looks like it is going out of its way not to be noticed.*

Allow the PCs a Perception check as they near the building. If they succeed at a DC 20, they hear the sounds of people ransacking the house, although there is no sign of forced entry. If they succeed at a DC of 30 or better, they can hear a conversation between a male and female voice: Hazelett Jargesh, the leader of this Lazarite Inquisition team, and his diviner associate Shian XiTong. If they are able to make a Move Silently check against Hazelett's Perception check, they hear a protracted conversation:

*"I'm telling you, it isn't here!"*

*"You keep scanning, I'll keep looking. The old man is crafty, he could have hidden it anywhere."*

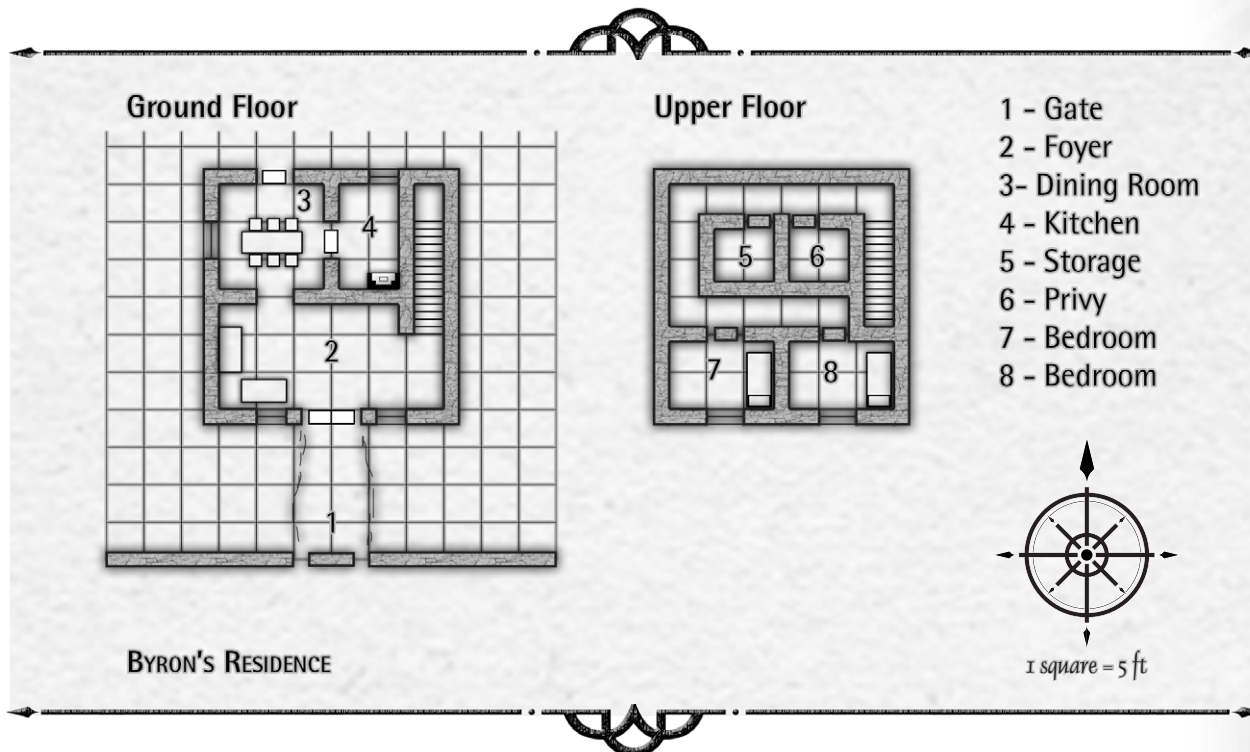
*"Right – and he's crafty enough to have hidden it on his person instead!"*

*"Then Melchior will take care of it."*

*"We should head back to Brom's warehouse now and join him, then, I'm telling you we've been here too long."*

*"Just keep searching a little longer –"*





If the PCs listen this far, or if they simply wait outside to try and ambush the Lazarites, one of their number tries to ambush them instead – a gurgling halfling rogue named Skladdath assigned to search the second story allowing him to spy the PCs from the adjacent window. If Skladdath succeeds at his Climb and Move Silently checks, he sneak attacks the closest PC, then raises a cry to his companions.

If the PCs instead choose to confront the Lazarites inside the house, they see two humanoid figures, each wearing a black cloak with a black burlap half-mask worn over the top halves of their faces. The masks have the upper half of a human skull painted in white upon them. In this case, Skladdath attempts to sneak downstairs and ambush the PCs after two rounds. Skladdath finds the mask hinders his abilities, and removes it when he confronts the PCs – which prompts his teammates to scold him on his arrival for appearing “out of uniform.”

#### Hazelett Jargesh

CR 4

XP 1600

Male human inquisitor 5

NE medium human

Init+6; Senses perception +11

#### DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flatfooted 22 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 36 (5d8+5)

Fort +5 Ref +5 Will +7

**Defensive Abilities** Cypicat (1 additional image as *mirror image*, lasts 5 rounds, 6x/day)

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft

**Melee** +1 *shortsword* +8 (1d6+2/19-20, +1d6 precise strike)

**Ranged** light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20)

**Special Attacks** Judgment 2x/day, bane (5 rounds)

**Domain** trickery

**Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 5<sup>th</sup>; concentration +8)

2<sup>nd</sup> (3/day) – *cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 15)

1<sup>st</sup> (5/day) – *divine favor*, *forbid action* (DC 14), *interrogation* (DC 14), *sanctuary*

○ (at will) – *create water*, *daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Given sufficient notice, Hazelett casts *divine favor* and activates his cypicat.

**During Combat** If possible, Hazelett uses *hold person* and *forbid action* in the first two rounds before attacking with his short sword, in order to allow Skladdath to join the fight. He makes every effort to flank with Skladdath to allow him to use his sneak attack. He invokes the *bane* property and pronounces the *destruction* judgment before attacking.

**Morale** If either of his teammates are killed, Hazelett casts *sanctuary* and attempts to flee, trying to lose the PCs before retreating to Brom Darrach's warehouse in the Trade Ward.

#### STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3, CMB +6; CMD 17

**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Dodge, Precise Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shortsword)

**Skills** Intimidate +8 (+10 with *stern gaze*), Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7 (+9 with *monster lore*),

Perception +11, Sense Motive +11 (+13 with *stern gaze*), Stealth +11, Survival +11 (+13 to track),  
**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Korteziar)  
**SQ** monster lore, stern gaze, cunning initiative, *detect alignment*, *discern lies*  
**Combat Gear** +1 *shortsword*, +2 *breastplate*; **Other Gear** *ring of protection* +1, inquisition cloak and mask

**Shian XiTong**

CR 4

**XP 1600**

Female half-elf wizard 5 (diviner)

**NE** medium humanoid (half-elf)**Init** +3; Senses Perception +1**DEFENSE****AC** 15 (+1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 natural)**hp** 30 (5d6+5+5)**Fort** +4 **Ref** +4 **Will** +5**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** masterwork dagger +2 (1d4-1/19-20)**Ranged** light crossbow +5 (1d8/x3)**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 5<sup>th</sup>; concentration +8)3<sup>rd</sup> – *arcane sight*, *dispel magic*, empowered *magic missile*2<sup>nd</sup> – *acid arrow* (x2), *defensive shock*, *locate object*1<sup>st</sup> – *comprehend languages*, *detect secret doors*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*o (at will) – *detect magic*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic***Prohibited schools** illusion and enchantment**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Shian XiTong casts *mage armor* just prior to the PC's arrival as a routine precaution. Given time to prepare for an attack, she casts *shield* and *defensive shock* as well.

**During Combat** Shian XiTong uses her *magic missiles* first, then her *acid arrows*. She uses *dispel magic* if necessary to remove some unwanted magical effect from one of her teammates. She tries to keep as much distance from physical combat as possible.

**Morale** If dropped to 10 hp or less, or if her teammates are killed, she activates the *gaseous form* spell stored in her masterwork dagger and flees to Brom Darrach's warehouse.

**STATISTICS****Str** 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Empower Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Toughness

**Skills** Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spellcraft +13

**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Korteziar),

Draconic, Elvish, Goblin, Orc

**SQ** arcane bond-bonded object (masterwork dagger, currently holds *gaseous form*)

**Combat Gear** masterwork dagger – serves as bonded object (spell currently stored – *gaseous form*)

**Other Gear** *ring of protection* +1, *amulet of natural armor* +1, 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds*

**Skladdath**

CR 4

**XP 1600**

Male goblin halfling rogue 5

**CE** small goblinoid**Init** +5; Senses Perception +10**DEFENSE****AC** 21 (+5 armor, +5 Dex, +1 size)**hp** 40 (5d8+10)

**Special Defense** evasion, uncanny dodge, +2 on saves vs. fear

**Fort** +4; **Ref** +10; **Will** +2**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** +1 *short sword* +11 (1d4/19-20)**Ranged** 4 throwing daggers +9 (1d3/19-20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Skladdath is upstairs when the encounter begins; he attempts to move silently and sneak up behind one of the PCs in order to sneak attack.

**During Combat** Skladdath is an experienced combatant and tries to continually maintain a flanking position with Hazelett in order to continue sneak attacking, making liberal use of Spring Attack to do so.

**Morale** Skladdath is a rather fanatical and blood-thirsty sort, and keeps fighting unless both of his teammates fall. If that happens, PCs can attempt an opposed Intimidate or Diplomacy check to get him to surrender. If further threatened, he offers to provide the PCs with the location of Brom's warehouse in exchange for his life. Otherwise, he attempts to flee as best he can.

**STATISTICS****Str** 10; **Dex** 20; **Con** 14; **Int** 13; **Wis** 10; **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Climb +10, Disable Device +11, Escape Artist +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +10, Stealth +11, Swim +8, Sleight of Hand +11

**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Korteziar), Goblin, Halfling

**SQ** Trapfinding +2, trap sense +1, rogue talents



(Finesse Rogue, Weapon Training)  
**Combat Gear** +1 mithril shirt, +1 short sword; **Other Gear** potion of cure moderate wounds

**Developments:** If the PCs are somehow defeated, Hazelett and company attempt to subdue them and bring them back to the warehouse for interrogation. Should any of the inquisitors flee, they head straight to the warehouse to report to Melchior. If this occurs, it remains possible (albeit difficult) for the PCs to track them to the location. Furthermore, on Shian XiTong her person keeps a note from her sister saying that her personal effects will be kept safe with her “at Brom’s.” A search of the safe house proves Shian XiTong’s contention that, indeed, the key is not to be found here.

## ACT II: THE WAREHOUSE

A successful DC 22 Knowledge (local) check reveals that Brom Darrach is the owner of a run-down warehouse in the trade ward. A second successful check at the same DC reveals that he is related (through his sister’s marriage, to be precise) to the notorious Menach crime family; it is a safe conclusion that this warehouse likely serves a front for their crime syndicate.

In fact, Brom has become something of the black sheep of the Menach’s crime family. Not especially clever or ruthless, he has been given this low-priority warehouse to manage as something of a family favor. This, in turn, has made him a prime recruitment

target for the Lazarites. He is an enthusiastic, if none-too-bright, convert, and allows the Inquisition to use the secret storage chambers underneath the warehouse without the Menachs’ knowledge.

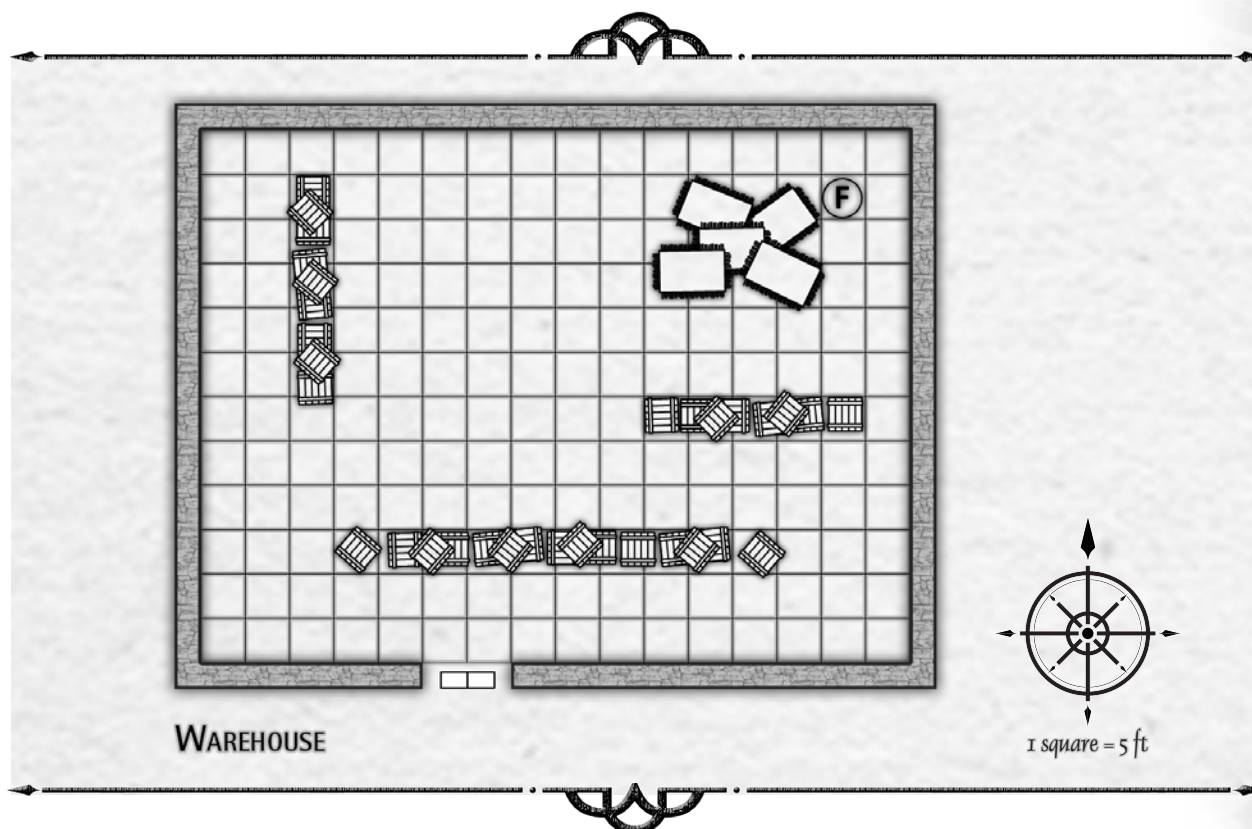
If the PCs present evidence (such as Shian XiTong’s note) to somebody in the Menach family, and succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check, they look the other way as the PCs confront the Lazarites, and even lead the PCs to the location, so long as no further authorities come to the warehouse. PCs that succeed a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check in nearly any seedy public house in the Trade Ward public house find it easy enough to arrange a meeting with a family representative.

Alternately, if the PCs fail to track the escaping Inquisitors to the warehouse or make arrangements with the Menachs, taking the name “Brom” to a barrister with payment of 100 gp or more receive this information 1d2 hours later, after the barrister completes his research.

If the PCs do not follow directly after the Inquisitors, Vulgrax inquires after them the next morning and insists they continue pursuing them at once. He provides any necessary information they still need to locate the warehouse, provided the PCs act immediately.

## THE WAREHOUSE GUARDIANS (CR 7)

Whenever the PCs make their way to the warehouse, read or paraphrase the following:





The cramped and bustling streets of the Trades Ward wind out of the crowds and down towards the street of rundown warehouse. Gradually the noise and bustle of commerce, along with the crowds drift off. Moments later, the quiet seems almost ominous, as if unseen denizens were holding their breath and waiting for something to happen. The warehouse that appears to be Brom's is particularly run-down, with no signs of activity apart from two orc guards slouching, apparently bored, at the front door.

If the PCs possess the Inquisition cloaks and masks taken from Hazelett's team, they can use them to gain a +4 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks to pass by the guards. The orc guards (there are 4 at present, 2 inside the warehouse as well as these two out front) have been instructed to give free passage to anybody wearing these cloaks and masks, and they aren't particular about remembering exactly who is part of the Inquisition.

Even if the PCs approach the guards and ask to be admitted, the orcs let them inside the warehouse. Brom's standing orders are to allow unwanted visitors inside the warehouse where his "watchdog," a chimera smuggled into the warehouse by the Inquisition can take care of them. The chimera hides behind a large stack of crates in the center of the room, waiting to ambush when instructed to do so (see below).

As soon as anyone confronts Brom inside the warehouse, he orders the chimera to strike while he and the remaining orcs stay out of the fight,

barricading the door instead and preventing the opponents from escaping. Should the PCs slay the chimera, the orcs flee while Brom tries to escape down the trap door to warn his fellow Lazarites.

If the PCs manage to slip through completely unnoticed (through *improved invisibility* or the like), the chimera attacks as soon as the PCs find and try and open the trap door. If this occurs, Brom and his orcs respond as noted above. Even if Brom has been *charmed* or *dominated* by the PCs, they need to make a second DC 20 Bluff check to sneak past the chimera, and then only if they have the cloak and masks (which the chimera does recognize).

**Creatures:** The chimera has a green dragon head; it dissolves whatever it doesn't eat with its acid breath, the better to leave no trace of unwanted visitors behind.

#### Brom Darrach

CR 1

XP 400

Male half-orc fighter 2

CE Medium humanoid (half-orc)

Init +1; Senses Perception -1

#### DEFENSE

AC 18 (armor +6; dex +1; natural +1)

hp 20 (2d10+6)

Fort +5; Ref +1; Will -1

SQ Bravery (+1 to saves vs fear)

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft



**Melee** greataxe +6 (1d12+4/x3)  
**Ranged** light crossbow +4 (1d8/x3)  
**Special Attacks** orc ferocity

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If Brom senses a fight coming, he orders the orcs to barricade the door to the warehouse, while he maneuvers himself into a position to order the chimera strike

**During Combat** Brom and the orcs let the chimera do all the work, if possible, with Brom shooting at spellcasters and other stray characters with his crossbow. If directly engaged, he takes out his great axe. **Morale** If the chimera is killed, Brom attempts to flee down into the cellars and warn the other Lazarites.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16; **Con** 16; **Dex** 13; **Int** 8; **Wis** 8; **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 14

**Feats** Ironhide, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (greataxe)

**Skills** Intimidate +8

**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Korteisian), Orc

**Combat Gear**; masterwork greataxe **Other Gear** potion of *cure light wounds*

#### Orc Warrior (4)

CR 1/3

XP 135

hp 6 each; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* page 222

#### Chimera (green dragon head)

CR 7

XP 3200

hp 85; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* page 44

**Treasure:** In the corner of the warehouse lies a large sack filled with various items the inquisition thugs confiscated throughout the day's work. Pilfered from various temples and priests, the cache contains numerous sacrosanct masterfully crafted items of gold and silver, tapestries, carvings of semi-precious stone and similar items given to Brom as a payoff. In total, the haul is worth around 8,000 gp on the black market. Conversely, should the PCs return these items to their rightful owners, they receive an even greater reward. The various temples provide them with double that amount in free services, including the casting of cure spells or preparation of divine scrolls.

**Concluding Act II:** Near the collection of mats and befouled rugs serving as the chimera's nest lies the corpse of one of the Inquisition's unfortunate victims, which the chimera has been snacking on. A DC 20 Heal check reveals that the bite wounds in the body appear post-mortem, and that the victim had likely been killed before being offered up to the chimera. Instead, the death appears to have

been caused as the result of severe burn marks that appear in a neat circumference around the victim's head. A DC 15 Perception check to search the premises reveals a trapdoor beneath the rug. Beneath the trapdoor, a ladder descends into the northeast corner of map 2 area 1 in the cellars.

## Act III: The Inquisition

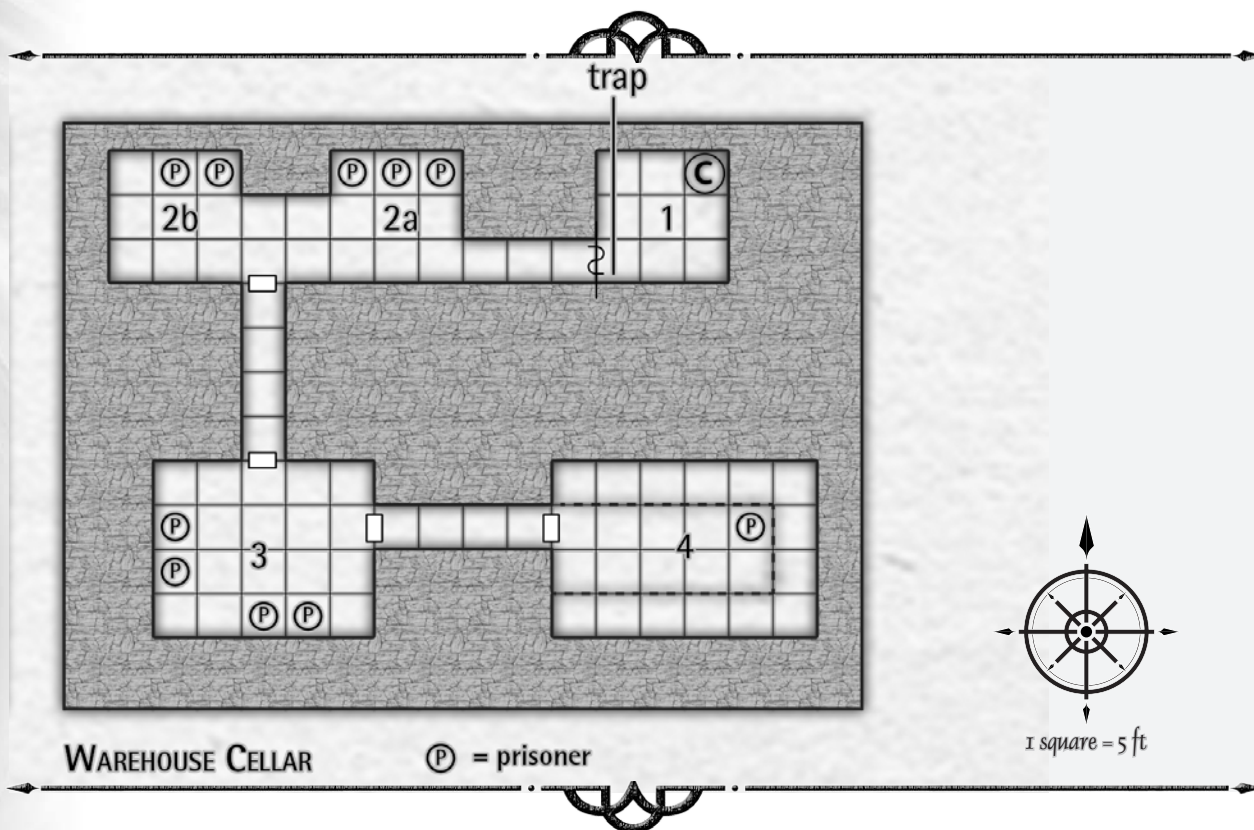
Melchior Fromme set up a methodical system for breaking his prisoners. First, he tortures their bodies, using poison to sap their physical and mental strength. Then, he cracks their will through the efforts of the half-elf Lazarite bard Shian MeiTrang, sister of the diviner encountered in the previous Acts. After sufficiently softening up the prisoners, guards finally bring these unfortunates before Melchior and his gargoyle ally. Melchior questions without bothering to give his prisoners the chance to answer. Instead, their thoughts are literally burned out of their heads and inhaled by the gargoyle, who dutifully reports his findings back to his friend and ally.

Before the later portion of the inquisitions, Shian MeiTrang took significant efforts to soundproof the torture rooms. As a result, unless one of her allies (such as Brom) is able to alert her or Melchior, none of the Inquisition's important members are unaware of the PCs presence. This is not true for the torturers, however, who coordinate a response as soon as they hear the PCs coming. It is also worth noting, that the Fromme's allies expect the chimera to do away with any interlopers, and have grown somewhat complacent as a result.

### I. ENTRANCE CHAMBER

This bare 15 ft. by 15 ft. room seemingly hits a dead end. Still, a number of cloaks and masks hang on pegs in the south wall. In the event that the PCs infiltrated the entrance chamber without anybody being aware of their presence, they provide a +2 circumstance bonus to any Disguise checks made to get past the torturers in area 2. Disguises fail to fool Shian MeiTrang and Melchior, as they know exactly which members of the Inquisition are out on the streets and expected back at all times.

**Traps:** An easy DC 20 Perception check reveals that the western wall hides a secret door. The door leads to the remainder of the cellar rooms. While easy enough to find, the real difficulty remains in noticing and removing the trap. One of the empty pegs on the south wall must be found and depressed (Perception DC 25, Disable Device DC 25) before the secret door opens, or else a scything blade springs out of the south wall and strikes at whoever opens the door.



WAREHOUSE CELLAR

Ⓟ = prisoner

1 square = 5 ft

**Scythe trap****CR 3****XP 800****Attack** +15 melee (2d6+4/x4)**2. TORTURE AREAS (CR 6)**

These two interconnected storage rooms have been repurposed for torturing the Inquisition's prisoners. In each one is a pair of half-orcs – one fighter, one rogue – whipping three men chained to the wall. There is no pretense of asking the men questions; the whips are coated with bloodroot poison, in order to sicken the prisoners and break their willpower before being taken to the remaining stations of the Inquisition.

Springing the scythe trap in area 1 alerts the torturers to the PC's presence, negating any chance of surprise. Nor will they be surprised if any of the other members of the Inquisition have survived their encounters with the PCs. With the exception of the diviner Shian XiTong, who (if still alive) joins her sister in area 3. Likewise, fleeing survivors flock to this area and join in any attack against the PCs. They do not remain confined to any one section of this area, but work to co-ordinate any attacks.

By contrast, if the PCs took precautions to be stealthy and up until this point and availed themselves of the Inquisitor's cloaks and masks, then a successful Bluff check (DC 25, +2 circumstance bonus applies) allows them to enter the room unmolested and pass through to Shian MeiTrang in area 3 if they choose.

**Half-orc fighters (2)****CR 2****XP 600 each**

Male half-orc fighter 3

**NE** Medium humanoid (half-orc)**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +0**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 11, flatfooted 17 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural)**hp** 30 (3d10+9)**Fort** +5; **Ref** +2; **Will** +2; +1 vs fear**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft**Melee** whip +6 (1d3 + poison), longsword +6 (1d8+2/19-20)**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +5 (1d8/19-20)**Special Attacks** bloodroot poison (Injury DC 12, onset 1 rd, frequency 1/rd for 4 rds, 1 Con and 1 Wis, 1 save to cure)**STATISTICS****Str** 15, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5 (+7 grapple); **CMD** 16 (18 vs grapple)**Feats** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Whip), Improved Grapple, Ironhide, Weapon Focus (Whip)**Skills** Climb +5, Intimidate +7**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Korteziian), Orc**SQ** Armor training 1**Gear** breastplate, masterwork longsword, masterwork light crossbow



## XP 600

Male Half-orc rogue 3

NE Medium humanoid (half-orc)

Init +6; Senses Perception +11

## DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flatfooted 14 (armor +4, Dex +2)

hp 25 (3d8+6)

Fort +3; Ref +5; Will +4

Defensive Abilities evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1

## OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft

Melee mwk shortsword +4 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged throwing daggers +4 (1d4/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

## STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14; Int 10; Wis 12; Cha 8

Base Atk +2

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Bluff +5, Climb +6, Disable Device +7, Escape

Artist +7, Intimidate +7, Perception +11, Sense

Motive +7, Stealth +7

Languages Common (Azindralean, Kortezean), Orc

SQ rogue talent (perceptive rogue)

Gear mwk chain shirt, mwk shortsword

**Developments:** Each rogue carries a set of keys to the doors in the remainder of the cellar, all of which are locked. The four half-orcs and any other Lazarites who have escaped to this area are loyalists and fight to the death.

Melchior keeps a total of six prisoners penned up in this area, three in each subsection. At present, none of them are in any condition to fight. If questioned, all they have to say about their ordeal is that the Lazarites grabbed them off the street, told them they had the right to investigate their “forbidden studies,” and brought them here. There are still a few other prisoners no one has seen for some time. Before disappearing, all recall the prisoners were told they were being taken to a place where somebody would “sing them their lullaby.” A quick investigation of the prisoner’s backgrounds reveals that the Lazarites have taken an extremely broad interpretation of their mandate to investigate “forbidden studies.”

**Area A:** Stavros Toll, librarian (human Exp 3); Mauritus Mayhook, private tutor (halfling Exp 4); Tong Pau, temple gardener (half-elf Com 1/Druid 1)

**Area B:** Prett Hanzor, private tutor (human Exp 3), Laxiom Groll, temple scribe (human Exp 1/Clr 1), Chang Trey, bookbinder (half-elf Com 2)

## 3. THE LULLABY ROOM (CR 7)

Both doors in the hallway leading to this room are locked, in order to keep the sound from this room from traveling through the rest of the cellar. When the PCs reach the second door, a DC 20 perception check allows them to hear the bard on the other side singing “the lullaby” to some of the other prisoners. Since the PCs are unable to see Shian MeiTrang at this point, they cannot yet become shaken by her *dirge of doom*, but her lyrics prove disturbing enough in their own right (and provide some insight into the thinking of the Lazarites):

*Down into the darkness traveling  
Secrets of the depths unraveling  
To the god's throne path revealing  
Hidden steps our master's stealing  
Reveal, confess, lay open your mind  
Our loyalty repaid in kind.*

When the PCs enter, they discover Shian MeiTrang in the center of the room serenading four prisoners (two chained to the north wall, two the south) in order to make them submit willingly to the *skullfire crown*. The PCs cannot fool the bard by wearing cloaks and masks for she knows every one of the Lazarite groups that work the cellars rounding up the prisoners. Despite her performance, allow Shian to make a Perception check against the PCs’ Stealth check to hear them coming (at a -4 penalty due to the locked door). Note: if her sister, the diviner Shian XiTong, survived her encounter with the PCs, she is also present here in order to aid her sister. If this occurs, there is no chance of surprise.

## Shian MeiTrang

CR 7

## XP 3200

NE Female half-elf bard 8

Medium Humanoid (half-elf)

Init +2, Perception +13

## DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 deflection)

hp 55 (8d8+8)

Fort +3; Ref +8; Will +6

Special Defenses +4 to saves vs bardic performance, sonic, and language-dependent effects

## OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft

Melee +1 rapier +9/+4 (1d6-1/18-20)

Special Abilities Bardic performance 22 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage, inspire competence, suggestion, dirge of doom, DC 19)

Bard Spells Known (CL 8<sup>th</sup>, Concentration +12)3<sup>rd</sup> (3/day) *charm monster* (DC 18), *confusion* (DC 18),

*cure serious wounds*

2<sup>nd</sup> (5/day) *cat's grace*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 17)

1<sup>st</sup> (5/day) *cause fear* (DC 16), *chord of shards* (DC 15), *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *hideous laughter* (DC 16)

o (at will) *daze* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Given sufficient notice, Shian MeiTrang casts *mirror image*, *cat's grace*, and *resistance*, in that order, and positions herself as far away from the PCs as possible. She has already been performing her Dirge of Doom and is able to continue to do so while casting.

**During Combat** Shian MeiTrang begins the encounter by casting *confusion*, following that with *charm monster*, *suggestion*, and *hideous laughter* against any unaffected PCs. She maintains the Dirge of Doom as long as possible. She prefers to use *chord of shards* against any characters she can't neutralize with enchantments, drawing her rapier only as a last resort.

**Morale** If brought to 10 hp or less, Shian MeiTrang casts *invisibility* and attempts to sneak out past the PCs, escaping the warehouse.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8; **Dex** 15; **Con** 13; **Int** 12; **Wis** 10; **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +6/+1 **CMB** +5 **CMD** 18

**Feats** Harmonic Spell, Lingering Performance, Skill Focus (perform), Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +13, Perform +17, Sense Motive +11, Stealth +13

**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Korteisian), Draconic, Elvish

**Special Qualities** Loremaster 1/day

**Combat Gear** +1 rapier, +1 mithril chain shirt; **Other Gear** ring of protection +1, potion of expeditious retreat, mandolin

**Developments** Like the prisoners in area 2, the four prisoners here suffer from exhaustion and are too injured to be any use in combat. If questioned about events that take place in this chamber, they say that "the creature" periodically comes in from the next room and places "the ring of fire" onto the head of one of the prisoners before escorting them into area 4. They do not understand the item's purpose.

The four prisoners are: Volton Markash, temple scribe (human Cleric 4), Grosh Nakk, a non-clergy clerical attendant (half-orc Com 1), Phillidus Forkin, who helps clean the various unaffiliated shrines (gnome Com 3), and Taldddec Troth, temple record-

keeper (human Cleric 3). By talking to them they clarify to the PCs that the Lazarite Inquisition has been targeting members of faiths involving gods of knowledge and secrets. Moreover, Taldddec knows Byron, and if asked he informs the PCs that only a few minutes ago "the creature" took Byron into the adjoining chamber (area 4), an area from which no prisoner has ever left.

## 4. SKULLFIRE (CR 9)

As with area 3, there is a short passage with two locked doors leading into this area. If the PCs listen at the door leading directly into the chamber, they hear nothing but wild screams of pain. When they enter the room, read or paraphrase the following:

*This chamber is large, perhaps twenty feet by thirty feet, with a tiered gallery ringing the three walls facing you about halfway up the fifteen foot walls. Directly in front of you is a stern-looking human holding aloft a greataxe, regarding you impassively. At the far end of the room, the person you believe to be Byron Galdemarr is tied to a chair and gagged. He is elderly, wears an eyepatch over one eye, and would appear none the worse for wear even though he had been subjected to the inquisition. A greenish band has been placed down upon his head like a crown. What appear to be green flames seem to lick up and rise from his head as he writhes in agony. Leaning over him is a bent, winged, deformed creature, who snickers and cackles as he inhales the flames coming off of Byron. The axe-bearing human regards you, raising his axe, and says, "such is the fate of all non-believers. Like you."*

Melchior cast an *alarm* spell upon the passageway leading to this room, preventing him from being surprised. Therefore, both he and "Soulburner" stand fully prepared to meet the PCs as they enter. Without intervention, the *skullfire crown* remains fastened upon poor Byron, killing him in eight rounds.

Melchior and "Soulburner" are old adventuring associates of Lazarus; indeed, it was Lazarus who discovered both the crown and the gargoyle's unusual knack for the arcane. He gave the gargoyle the crown as a gift, and the gargoyle firmly believes that inhaling the burned-off memories of his victims enhances his sorcerous powers. Both are experienced combatants who support each other, and neither has the slightest compunction about letting Byron die.

#### Melchior Fromme

CR 7

**XP** 3200

Human Fighter 3/Inquisitor 5

**NE** Medium Human

**Init** +2 Senses Perception +10



## DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+10 armor)

**hp** 62 (3d10 + 5d8 +7)

**Fort** +8; **Ref** +4; **Will** +7

**Special Defenses** Copycat (from trickery domain) 5 rounds, 5x/day; +1 on saving throws vs. fear

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft

**Melee** +1 *greataxe* +12 (1d10+7/x2); unarmed strike +10 (1d3+4)

**Special Abilities** judgment 2x/day, bane 5 rounds/day

**Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 5<sup>th</sup>; Concentration +6)

2<sup>nd</sup> (2) – *cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 14)

1<sup>st</sup> (4) – *alarm*, *comprehend languages*, *shield of faith*, *spiked armor*

0 (6) – *brand*, *daze* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Melchior casts *shield of faith* and *resistance* and activates his copycat ability prior to combat.

**During Combat** Melchior wades into combat with his greataxe, making liberal use of his destruction judgment ability. He reserves *hold person* for any character who appears to be a rogue, trying to move into a flanking position. He invokes his *bane* ability against whoever appears to be his toughest combatant. If disarmed of his greataxe, he grapples his attacker, activating his armor's adhesive property and casting *spiked armor*, trusting Soulburner to place the Skullfire Crown upon the victim.

**Morale** Fanatical and convinced he is on the verge of a discovery that promises to transform Lazarus into a true god, Melchior fights to the death.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 17 (19 with belt); **Dex** 10; **Con** 13; **Int** 12; **Wis** 16; **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +11 (includes Co-ordinated Maneuvers); **CMD** 19

**Feats** Cleave, Co-ordinated Maneuvers, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Greataxe)

**Skills** Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Heal +10, Intimidate +9 (+11 with *stern gaze*), Knowledge (Religion) +9, Perception +12, Sense Motive +10 (+12 with *stern gaze*), Survival +12

**SQ** armor training I, cunning initiative, *detect alignment*, *discern lies*, monster lore, *stern gaze*,

**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Kortezean), Terran

**Combat Gear** +1 greataxe, +1 full plate, +2 belt of giant strength

## "Soulburner"

CR 6

**XP** 3200

Gargoyle Sorcerer 4

**CE** Medium monstrous humanoid

**Init** +6 Senses Perception +5

## DEFENSE

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

**hp** 68 (5d10+4d6+27)

**Fort** +5; **Ref** +7; **Will** +8

**DR** 10/magic

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft, fly 60ft (average)

**Melee** 2 claws +11 (1d6+4), bite +11 (1d4+4), gore +11 (1d4+4) (*bull's strength* already factored in)

**Special Attacks** acidic ray 5/day (1d6+2), long limbs

**Sorcerer Spells Known:**

2<sup>nd</sup> (4) – *bull's strength*

1<sup>st</sup> (7) – *ear piercing scream* (DC 14), *enlarge person*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*

0 (at will) – *bleed*, *daze* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue*

**Bloodline** aberrant

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** "Soulburner" begins combat by casting *bull's strength* on himself. If he has sufficient time to prepare he also casts *mage armor*, *shield*, and *resistance*.

**During Combat** "Soulburner" tries to hold off on physically engaging the PCs for as long as possible, addicted as he is to inhaling the fumes from the skullfire crown's victims. He opens with his *ear-piercing scream*, then follows with *ray of enfeeblement* against whoever tries to engage Melchior. He enjoys using *shocking grasp* in conjunction with his elongated limbs, delivering the spell while remaining out of melee range himself. Once melee combat is inevitable, he makes use of flyby attack to swoop to the balconies on the far side of the room, as well as Hover to cast spells out of the PCs range. If Melchior appears to be in trouble, he uses *enlarge person* on his friend to enhance his strength.

**Morale** "Soulburner" is devoted to Melchior; he fights as long as he lives, and attacks the PCs out of blind heedless rage if he falls.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 15 (19 with *bull's strength*), **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

**Feats** Hover, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Fly), Spell Focus (Evocation)

**Skills** Fly +14, Perception +5, Stealth +11 (+17 in stony areas), Use Magic Device +5

**SQ** Freeze

**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Kortezean), Terran

**Gear** skullfire crown (see sidebar for full details)

## DEVELOPMENTS

If the PCs rescue Byron Galdemarr (male human oracle 6; mystery, lore; curse, lame) in time he only agrees to accompany them if they can convince him of their loyalty to Vulgrax. This shouldn't be a problem provided the PCs held onto the pendants the Blood Senator gave them. Once convinced, he happily accompanies the PCs, though his condition makes for slow going.

If instead the priest did not survive, allow the PCs to examine his body. He is indeed missing an eye. A DC 20 Heal check reveals that the false eye under the patch was only recently placed there. The "eye" is actually a hollow ceramic container. From scrolls he'd purchased earlier, Byron placed the eye and its contents under the effects of *shrink item* and *nondetection* spell. Byron cast them himself and happily explains this to Vulgrax if alive to do so. Within this container hide a large metal key and a silvered sextant.

## CONCLUSION

If the PCs managed to establish some kind of arrangement with the Menachs before entering the warehouse, then leaving the Trade Ward should be comparatively easy. The Menachs are far more concerned with getting the Lazarites out of their affairs than they are with the PCs, and make no effort to search or stop them provided the PCs remain cooperative.

Once Vulgrax gains the key and the sextant (and is able to interview Byron himself, hopefully), he pays the PCs his promised reward and begins analyzing the two objects. Both items, and the circumstances surrounding them, have significant ramifications in future events.

### Skullfire Crown

**Aura** Strong Divination and Evocation, Strong Evil

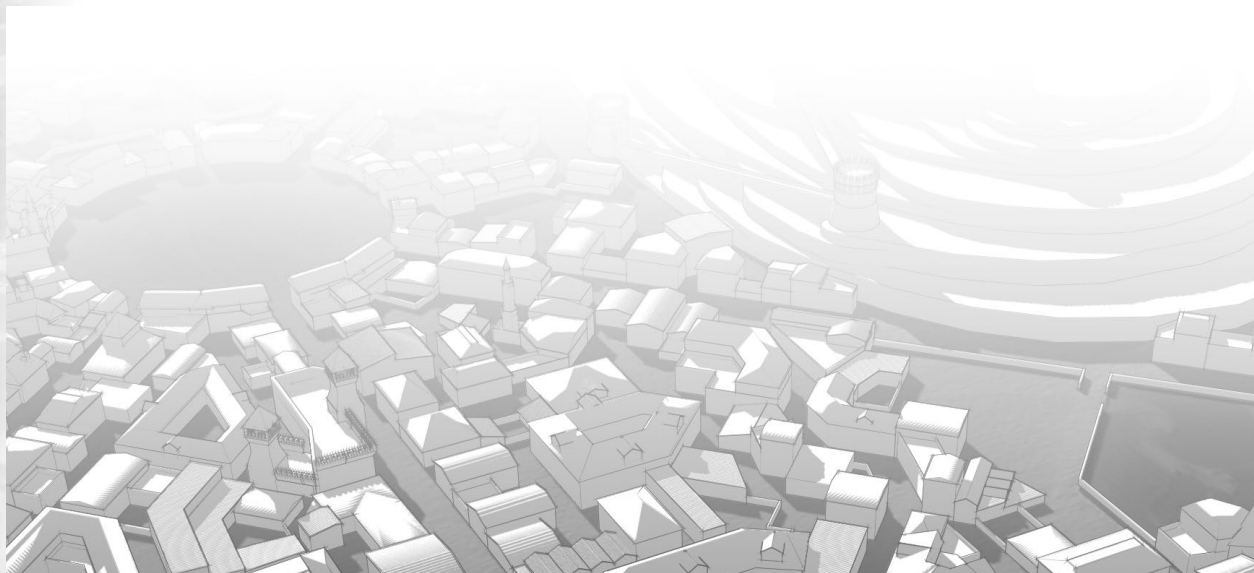
**CL** 7<sup>th</sup>

**Slot** Neck (special)

**Price** 42,000gp

**Construction Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *detect thoughts*, *fire shield*, caster must be evil. Cost: 21,000 gp

An evil device of ancient and unknown origin, the *skullfire crown* provides interrogators with a near-foolproof means of extracting information from their victims, provided they don't care about the consequences. Once it is placed upon a victim's head and a command word is uttered, the small jade headband begins to burn with a greenish flame. Once it begins to burn, the victim must succeed at a DC 16 Will save every round the crown is worn. Failure allows anybody standing over the victim to read their surface thoughts and memories, as per the *detect thoughts* spell, by inhaling the smoke caused by the green flame; an interrogator generally discusses a topic in order to guide those thoughts. For each round that thoughts are read, the victim suffers one point of Wisdom damage. If the save is successful, the victim is able to resist the detection, but at the cost of 1d6 fire damage. If either the victim's current hp or Wisdom score reaches 0, the flame completely consumes their head, killing them without damaging the *skullfire crown*.











# WIDOW'S WALK

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Widow's Walk is part of *Great City* series, *The Sinking*. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It is designed using the Pathfinder RPG System for a group of 8th-level player characters.

## INTRODUCTION

Ten years ago, a galleon—*The Destrier*—sailed toward the Great City laden with goods from the heart of the Kortezyan Empire. Moments after spotting land, a sudden storm swallowed the sky. Wind and wave battered the ship, lightning struck its masts, and within minutes the ship sunk in sight of its homeport. All aboard were lost including the captain, Albrion Hasserbruk.

The news of tragedy left the captain's widow, Mellinora Hasserbruk, grief stricken. However, after a respectable period of mourning, she resumed her duties as a woman of good breeding. Although she never remarried, shrewd investment of her late husband's estate made her independently wealthy. Now one of the Dock Ward's most popular socialites, all know well that Lady Hasserbruk throws lavish parties attended by only the worthiest guests.

Just a few days ago, a Kortezyan man debarked from a foreign caravel. Claiming to be Captain Hasserbruk, the man spun a fantastic tale of how he survived the sinking of *The Destrier* and of many marvelous adventures he had making his way back to the Great City.

Lady Hasserbruk, however, insists that the man is not her husband but an impostor. Refused entry to his ancestral home, the alleged Albrion Hasserbruk seeks out mediation. In truth, Lady Hasserbruk keeps a darker secret.

Around the time *The Destrier* sank, another drama was unfolding in the pleasures pits of intellect devourers far, far below the Great City. One of these aberrations, Jagged-Euphoria, developed an unnatural affection one of the brood's slaves, a handsome male specimen called Jaym. Conflict arose when another intellect devourer, Vermilion-Sadness, having tired of its current form, selected Jaym as its next host. In an unprecedented act of mercy, Jagged-Euphoria prevented Vermilion-Sadness from taking the young man's body. For the unforgivable sin of favoring chattel over its own kin, the brood stripped Jagged-Euphoria its body and damned it to exile. In a strange turn of events, Jaym pledged his life to his savior, and before the pair fled, he helped Jagged-Euphoria abscond with one of the brood's prized possessions, *Mortal's Vanity*, an enchanted *mirror of necropsy* (see appendix) that allowed the intellect

devourers to maintain the ersatz liveliness of their corpse shells.

Fleeing to the surface, the unlikely duo collapsed tunnels behind them, ever fearful of the vengeful broodmate's pursuit. Eventually the tunnels became sewers and above that the Great City. They say the City finds a place for all arrivals, and so it was that Jagged-Euphoria and Jaym happened upon Hasserbruk Manor. They say the City finds a place for all arrivals, and so it was that Jagged-Euphoria and Jaym happened upon Hasserbruk Manor.

Within the manor they found its mistress in a state of rigor mortis, poisoned by her own hand. Using details pulled from the dead women's lips (as reflected in *Mortal's Vanity*) and records kept at the house, Jagged-Euphoria was able to take the place of Lady Hasserbruk seamlessly. Any momentary lapses in knowledge she blamed on the grief and stress of her husband's passing. Not always a convincing lie, but one polite folk are loath to question.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs are called to investigate the sudden and mysterious reemergence of a lost sea captain, whose widow questions his identity. After investigating the captain and determining his identity to be authentic, suspicion shifts to his widow. Soon after, the PCs discover an intellect devourer possesses her long dead flesh, kept perfectly preserved with the aid of a magic mirror. Complicating matters, the intellect devourer has been using the woman's body to hide from its kin whom it betrayed. For years, its vengeful broodmates have been trying to hunt it down, though thus far the creature's disguise has thwarted them. Chasms caused by the Sinking now provide the creatures with new routes to the surface and they now scour the Great City for their traitorous brethren. Soon after the rogue intellect devourer is exposed, its vengeful broodmates arrive seeking to invoke its long awaited punishment.

## Hooks

Use any of the following hooks to get the PCs involved in the adventure:

- One or more of the PCs knew Captain Hasserbruk and is able to identify him. Perhaps the PC served under the Captain in her youth. Maybe her father or uncle was aboard *The Destrier* on its last voyage. A PC of the Clan Semheyl may be related to the Hasserbruks.
- Having earned reputation for solving mysteries, an interested party hires the PCs to investigate the Captain's identity. Possibilities include a local

Ward official, members of the Clan Semheyl, or the company that insured *The Destrier*. Alternately, Captain Hasserbruk might offer a reward to those who can convince his wife of his identity.

- Lady Hasserbruk uses one of her allies to hire adventurers to defraud her husband. Options include one of the more powerful companies supported by Lady Hasserbruk's silent partnership or a noble patron who has been courting the widow.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins once the PCs agree to investigate the Captain or investigate for him. The PCs can attempt to speak to whomever NPCs they like provided they can find them. Lady Hasserbruk typically remains within her manse. Conversely, since Lady Hasserbruk barred Captain Hasserbruk from the premises, he rents a weekly room at *The White Whale*, an inn just down the street that caters to wealthy merchants and ship's officers.

Although the PCs' investigations may take them elsewhere in the city, the focus of this adventure is Hasserbruk Manor, a multistory wooden house in an upscale Dock Ward neighborhood. The exterior doors are good quality, the interior are simple. All have average locks, though the interior locks are seldom used.

## CAPTAIN ALBRION HASSERBRUK

Captain Hasserbruk is a stout Korteisian man of the Clan Semheyl in his early fifties. His hair is silver-grey and his face tanned and weather-beaten, a testament to his many adventures both before and after his disappearance. Though slightly below average in height, Captain Hasserbruk possesses a commanding presence and a strong voice that can become thunderous when necessary. Since his return, he has acquired clothes of the current fashion, but seems uncomfortable in them.

Albrion has a blue hippocampus tattooed over his heart, though few have seen him shirtless. If the PCs learn of his tattoo with a DC 28 Knowledge (local) check or Diplomacy check to gather information around the Dock Ward, they can use it to confirm his identity.

Captain Hasserbruk believes himself to be a cursed man. In his hurry to bring *The Destrier* back home to the Great City, Hasserbruk neglected to perform the proper obeisance to Adhelmus Oxa before setting sail. Clearly, the storm that sank *The Destrier* was the beginning of the sailing god's wrath, but not the end. For though the captain survived, he suffered many hardships attempting to return to his home (see *The Odyssey* sidebar). Albrion believes his wife's rebuff is merely the latest of Adhelmus' tests.

CAPTAIN ALBRION HASSERBRUK





## THE ODYSSEY OF ALBRION HASSERBRUK

As the raging waters dragged down *The Destrier*, Captain Hasserbruk expected to drown. Embraced by luck that day, he was saved by a school of fish-men, only to awaken imprisoned in an air bubble. The fish-men sold Hasserbruk to a ship bound for a slave market in the south. In the crowded bazaar, he managed to escape, thereafter embarking on a decade-long journey back to the Great City. A journey filled with challenges and setbacks: a giant raptor, a greedy prince, an army of skeletons, a lascivious witch, and all manner of sea monsters. Along the way, Hasserbruk managed to acquire a number of useful items, including a bag that is larger inside than out, a horn that summons the morning mist, and a dagger that cuts stone.

Captain Hasserbruk's initial attitude is indifferent, or friendly if one or more of the PCs is a member of Clan Semheyl or has a previous connection to him. He is not lying about his identity. Though his tales of his last ten years may be exaggerated – as sailors are wont to do – none are untrue. Attempts at intimidation fail to force him to admit to a false identity, but instead worsen his attitude towards the PCs. If the PCs accept his identity, the good captain humbly asks them to convince his wife of the same truth.

### Captain Albrion Hasserbruk

CR 7

#### XP 3,200

Male middle-age human expert 4/fighter (free hand fighter) 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 105)

**N** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +0; **Senses** Perception +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+0 Dex, +2 dodge)

**hp** 55 (4d8+4d10+12)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** elusive +1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** adamantine dagger +9/+4 (1d4+6/x3)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If he has time before combat, Captain Hasserbruk consumes his *potion of barkskin* (+2 AC) and *potion of cat's grace* (+2 Init, +2 AC, +2 Reflex, +2 Acrobatics).

**During Combat** Hasserbruk draws his dagger from his *haversack* and moves into melee. He uses Power Attack (included above), unless he is missing often.

**Morale** If defending what he believes to be his beloved wife, Captain Hasserbruk fights to the death. Otherwise, the captain flees when reduced to half his hit points, using his *horn of fog* to slip away.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 11, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9 (+10 to disarm); **CMD** 19 (20 vs. disarm)

**Feats** Diehard, Dodge, Endurance, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack<sup>B</sup>, Step Up, Weapon Focus (dagger)<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Specialization (dagger)<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Appraise +9, Climb +10, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +9, Profession (sailor) +9, Sense Motive +9

**Languages** Common

**SQ** deceptive strike +1

**Combat Gear** *potion of barkskin*, *potion of cat's grace*;

**Other Gear** *handy haversack*, adamantine dagger, *horn of fog*, miscellaneous exotic coins and trinkets worth 150 gp altogether

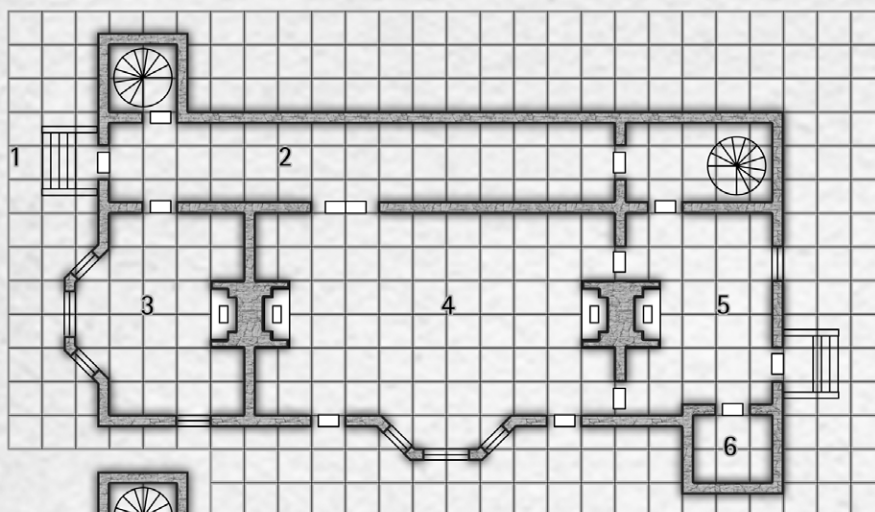
## LADY MELLINORA HASSERBRUK / JAGGED-EUPHORIA

Lady Hasserbruk is an attractive Kortezean woman with dark brown eyes and hair that complement her olive complexion. Mellinora wears fashionable clothing as befits her station, accented with tasteful pearl and coral jewelry. Although in her mid-forties, she appears ten years younger and uses soft, well-mannered speech.

While Lady Hasserbruk insists the man claiming to be her husband is an impostor, in truth, the real Mellinora Hasserbruk died nearly a decade ago. Believing that her husband had passed into the afterlife, the grief stricken woman took poison in an attempt to reunite with him in the afterlife. That might have been the end of her story had her lifeless body been found by one of the servants. Instead, an alien entity known as an intellect devourer discovered the corpse first – an opportunity it was quick to use to its advantage.

The life of a noblewoman suited the intellect devourer. In Lady Hasserbruk's guise, the creature astutely invested her wealth in a number of promising enterprises. Today, "the Lady" is a silent partner in several of the Dock Ward's most successful businesses. The creature uses Mellinora's money to host elaborate masquerades. Copious speculation surrounds the identities of Lady Hasserbruk's masked guests, though it is widely accepted that they are the Great City's *crème de la crème*. Wilder rumors imply the sinister nature of events taking place at these parties and the uninvited assuage their envy with tales of debauchery and sin; these fabrications do not lie far from the truth.

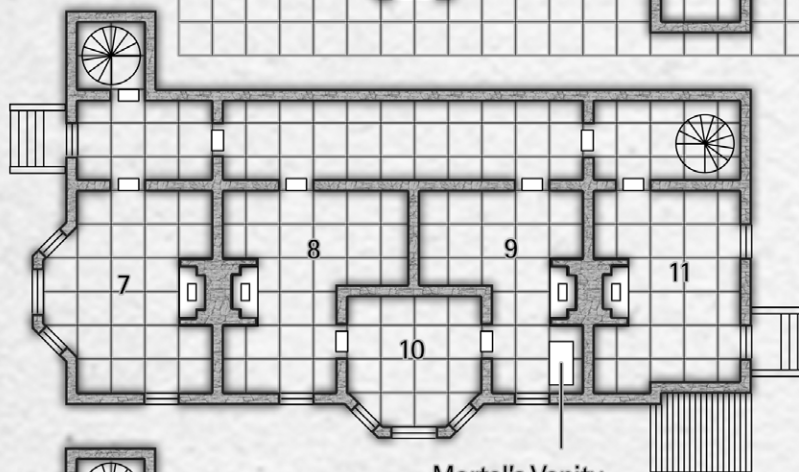
WIDOW'S WALK



## Hasserbruk Manor

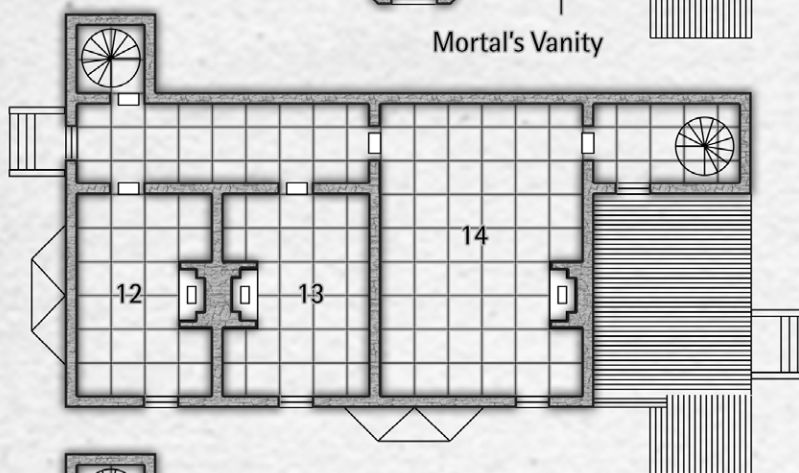
### Ground Floor

- 1 - Front Entrance
- 2 - Entry Hall
- 3 - Parlor
- 4 - Grand Hall
- 5 - Kitchen (back door)
- 6 - Pantry



### Second Floor

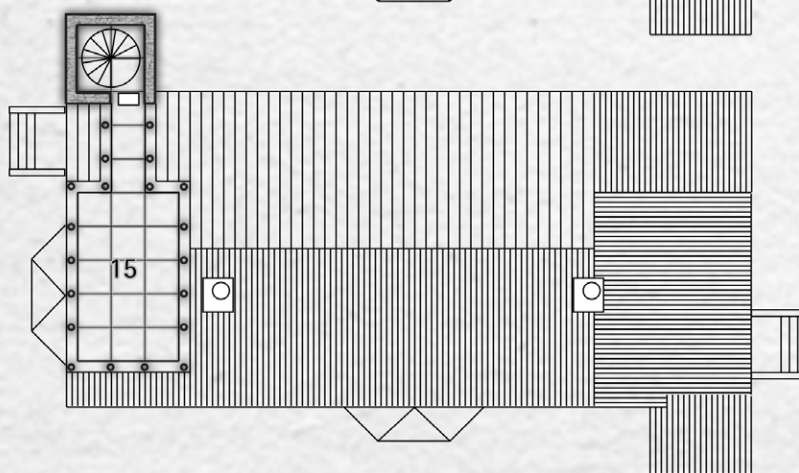
- 7 - Library
- 8 - His Room
- 9 - Her Room
- 10 - Solarium
- 11 - Servant's Quarters



Mortal's Vanity

### Third Floor

- 12 - Jaym's Room
- 13 - Guest Room
- 14 - Gallery Storage



### Roof

- 15 - Widow's Walk





Lady Hasserbruk hosted just one small party since the Sinking occurred (as detailed in *The Sinking: The Mole*). While many wonder when she plans to host her next lavish event, Mellinora has become a virtual recluse. Wary that the rift the Sinking caused may have reopened passages to her homeland, Jagged-Euphoria fears its former broodmates may now make their way to the surface to seek revenge for the theft of *Mortal's Vanity*. The appearance of its host body's erstwhile husband has made matters even more complicated. While it has no fear of the surface races, Jagged-Euphoria knows that if its monstrous identity is ever exposed, its vengeful broodmates will not be far behind.

Lady Hasserbruk's initial attitude is unfriendly. The subject of her husband only incites her ire and she demands the PCs depart from further mention of the "unfortunate matter." She insists the man claiming to be her husband is a con artist and a shapeshifter seeking to rob or ravish an innocent widow, and that his sudden appearance has reopened old wounds. While the PCs can attempt to use Diplomacy to improve Lady Hasserbruk's attitude, she remains unconvinced that the man is her husband (which rings true, as the intellect devourer itself was never married to the Captain). Neither will Intimidation make her change her story, unless the PCs do so while presenting her with evidence of her true nature.

Conversely, the PCs can attempt Sense Motive checks to gain a sense when Lady Hasserbruk is lying. Any character conversing with Lady Hasserbruk for a minute or longer can make a DC 15 Sense Motive check to notice a slight delay in her facial expression when reacting to the words of others. Her sycophants and courtiers attribute this idiosyncrasy to the death of her husband, though they would never mention it unless asked directly. Allow PCs to interpret this apparent tick as a sign that something or someone dominates Lady Hasserbruk magically.

### Lady Mellinora Hasserbruk CR 6

XP 1,600

Female intellect-devourer-controlled human aristocrat 8

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses detect magic; Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 47 (8d8+8)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5

Immune mind-affecting effects

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk bladed scarf +9/+4 (1d6-1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)

Constant—detect magic

At will—*confusion* (DC 17, single target only), *daze monster* (DC 15, no HD limit), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *reduce size* (as *reduce person* but self only)

3/day—*cure moderate wounds*, *globe of invulnerability*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Lady Hasserbruk attempts to avoid melee, relying on Jaym or possibly Captain Hasserbruk to defend her. She uses her spell-like abilities to disable those attackers susceptible to mental attacks and uses *globe of invulnerability* to resist spells. If forced into melee, Lady Hasserbruk fights with her bladed scarf. She uses Combat Expertise for additional defense, and attempts to trip opponents before attacking.

**Morale** If faced with defeat, Lady Hasserbruk flees to maintain her facade. However, if her opponents expose her true nature or attempt to take possession of *Mortal's Vanity*, she emerges as Jagged-Euphoria and fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 9, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 11

Base Atk +6; CMB +8 (+10 to trip); CMD 18 (20 vs. trip)

**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bladed scarf) Improved Trip, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +10, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Perception +10, Perform (dance) +14, Sense Motive +10

**Languages** Common, Aquan; telepathy 100 ft.

**Gear** bladed scarf, +1 reinforced clothing (corset, *Great City Player's Guide*, p. 78), circlet of persuasion, miscellaneous jewelry worth 300 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Bladed Scarf:** Lady Hasserbruk wears a colorful scarf with sharp blades secreted in its folds. A bladed scarf is an exotic, two-handed, slashing weapon with the disarm and trip qualities. The Weapon Finesse feat can be used with it. If any character makes a successful grapple check against the wielder of a bladed scarf, the attacker takes 1d4 points of slashing damage.

### Jagged-Euphoria CR 8

XP 4,800

Intellect devourer (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, p. 180)

hp 84

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Jagged-Euphoria uses *invisibility* on itself and retreats to the *Mortal's Vanity*, if not already there. It makes a sneak attack with all its limbs against any creature that approaches. The following turn, it turns invisible again and repeats the process.

**Morale** If Jagged-Euphoria drops below 21 hit points, or the PCs destroy *Mortal's Vanity*, the intellect devourer uses *invisibility* to flee.

## JAYM

From outside observance, young Jaym joined Lady Hasserbruk's retinue shortly after her husband's apparent death and proved a great help in restoring the widow's spirits. Now in his late twenties, Jaym serves as Lady Hasserbruk's steward, and some whisper, her lover. Jaym stands out for his pale skin, hair, and eyes, which accent his refined features. Combined with his graceful, deliberate movements, many describe him as statuesque.

Jaym's earliest memories recall serving intellect devourers in the pleasure pits in lightless realms far below the Great City. Still, he occasionally exhibits knowledge of things from a lost former life. Most assume he is Azindralean, though Jaym knows nothing of his ancestry. After fleeing from the pits with Jagged-Euphoria, he helped it steal Lady Hasserbruk's body. Once the creature assumed her station, Jaym took on the role of her steward.

Although he outwardly serves Lady Hasserbruk, Jaym's true loyalty belongs to Jagged-Euphoria. He would not willingly betray his master, though whether this loyalty stems from a conviction to honor his life-debt or else some form of mental fracture from his days in captivity is unclear. Jaym is sad that the affection the intellect devourer once held for him seems a product of its previous body, but he hides it well. Since taking on the guise of Mellinora, Jagged-Euphoria's affection cooled. While Jagged-Euphoria considers Jaym a trusted ally and bedfellow, it would not again risk its life for him.

Jaym spends the majority of his time at Lady Hasserbruk's side. His initial attitude toward the PCs is indifferent, though it shifts quickly towards anyone impugning Lady Hasserbruk's character. The steward does not speak unless spoken to, but when engaged in conversation, he proves affable and courteous. Indeed, his versatile performance ability gives him an effective modifier of +14 in Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive. Jaym readily lies to protect his mistress's secret.

Unlike Lady Hasserbruk, Jaym possesses no immunity to mind-affecting effects. Thus, PCs can attempt to use spells such as *charm person*, *detect thoughts*, and *dominate person* to force the steward to expose Lady Hasserbruk's secret.

### Jaym

CR6

Male human bard 7

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +9

## DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 56 (7d8+21)

Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4\*; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

\*+4 vs. Intimidate attempts while in the presence of Jagged-Euphoria

## OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +8 (1d6+1/18–20)

Ranged dagger +7 (1d4+1/19–20)

**Special Attacks** bardic performance 20 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 17], inspire competence +2, inspire courage +3, suggestion [DC 17]) **Bard Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +11)

3rd (2/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*2nd (4/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *cat's grace*, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *heroism*1st (5/day)—*alarm*, *animate rope*, *cure light wounds*, *magic aura*, *undetectable alignment*o (at will)—*detect magic*, *know direction*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** If he has time before entering melee, Jaym casts *heroism* (+2 morale bonus to attacks, saves, and skill checks) and *cat's grace* (+2 Init, +2 bonus to AC, attacks, and Reflex saves) on himself.

**During Combat** Jaym moves to protect Lady Hasserbruk (or Jagged-Euphoria) from harm. At range, he uses his wand. In melee, he enhances his rapier with Arcane Strike (+2 damage). Jaym casts *cure* spells on himself and his master as necessary.

**Morale** Jaym fights to the death to defend Lady Hasserbruk/Jagged-Euphoria. If Jagged-Euphoria is killed, he offers his surrender.

## STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 18

Base Atk +5; CMB +6; CMD 18 (20 vs. disarm)

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Dodge, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier) **Skills** Acrobatics +12, Climb +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +9, Perform (sing) +14, Perform (string) +14, Survival +6 **Languages** Common

**SQ** bardic knowledge +3, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (sing, string)

**Combat Gear** *wand of sound burst* (19 charges, shaped like a recorder); **Other Gear** +1 *glamered chain shirt*, mwk rapier w/ basket hilt, dagger, mwk lute, brass ring (with Hasserbruk sigil; worth 50 gp)



## APPLYING MAGIC

Use the following guidelines to help determine the effects of common spells the PCs might use during their investigations.

- *Deathwatch*: this spell reveals both Captain and Lady Hasserbruk as living things.
- *Detect chaos/evil/good/law*: Jaym casts *undetectable alignment* on Lady Hasserbruk each day. If this effect is dispelled or expires, she detects as faintly chaotic and evil.
- *Detect lies (zone of truth)*: *Detect lies* works as normal, however, Lady Hasserbruk is immune to *zone of truth*. If the PCs fail to ask Lady Hasserbruk and Jaym direct questions, they give statements that are technically accurate, but not particularly revealing.
- *Detect magic (arcane sight, identify)*: This spell reveals no magic affecting Captain Hasserbruk, and only faint abjuration (*undetectable alignment*) affecting Lady Hasserbruk. It also detects their magic items. Jaym casts *magic aura* on *Mortal's Vanity* once a week to conceal its aura. The mirror does not detect as magic unless examined with *identify* (and the caster makes a successful DC 15 Will save) or the illusion is dispelled, dismissed, or expires.
- *Detect thoughts*: This spell does not detect Lady Hasserbruk. It works as normal on Captain Hasserbruk and Jaym. Allow the PCs to interpret this as a clue that the Lady may not be who she professes to be.
- *Dispel magic (break enchantment)*: Although Lady Hasserbruk's *undetectable alignment* can be dispelled, neither of these spells affect the body theft. Allow the PCs to interpret this as a clue that the *dominate* effect is not coming from an external source.
- *Divination (contact other plane)*: These spells only reveal the truth if the PCs specifically ask about Lady Hasserbruk's identity.
- *True Seeing*: This spell reveals that neither Captain nor Lady Hasserbruk is transmuted or illusory.

**Developments:** In the course of investigating Captain Hasserbruk's identity and their interactions with Lady Hasserbruk, the PCs should come to the realization that it is she who is the impostor. Even if they do not figure out an intellect devourer controls her corpse, they should come to realize that her words and actions are not her own.

## MONSTER LORE: INTELLECT DEVOURER

A successful DC 18 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check allows a character to recall stories about the intellect devourers, including their frightful appearance and insidious habits. The character also knows one useful fact about the aberrations, plus one additional fact for every 5 points his check exceeded the DC:

- *Carapace*: The intellect devourer's chitin resists substances less dense than magically enhanced adamantine.
- *Energy resistance*: The intellect devourer is immune to fire and resistant to most other energy types; only acid eats through its alien flesh.
- *Otherworldly: protection from evil* affects an intellect devourer as if it were a summoned creature.
- *Spell-like abilities*: An intellect devourer (or its host) can daze and confuse, cure and inflict wounds, detect and inhibit magic, shrink and turn invisible.
- *Spell resistance*: An intellect devourer is highly resistant to spells that directly affect it. It is immune to mind-affecting effects.

If the PCs force the truth upon Jagged-Euphoria, either by producing sufficient evidence or through threat of violence, the creature speaks to its accusers telepathically. It identifies itself and recounts the events that brought it to this point, though it neglects any mention of *Mortal's Vanity*. If given the opportunity, Jagged-Euphoria attempts to exculpate itself, pointing out that it didn't kill Lady Hasserbruk, and that Captain Hasserbruk is no worse off than if his vulturous relatives had carved up his estate.

If threatened with public exposure, Jagged-Euphoria pleads for its life, claiming truthfully to be a hunted outcast for saving the life of a human. It tells the PCs that if they expose it, its former broodmates will immediately detect its presence in the city. After they hunt it down, they'll waste no time in infesting the remainder of the populace.

The fate of Lady Hasserbruk/Jagged-Euphoria remains in the hands of the PCs. The accusation may lead to a combat, a trial, or in the case of more open-minded parties, a new ally.

## INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (CR 10)

Regardless of how the PCs choose to deal with Jagged-Euphoria, the intellect devourer's former

broodmates have already picked up its trail. The three intellect devourers – Honeysuckle-Outrage, Rancid-Pride, and Vermilion-Sadness – used the recently opened fissures to make their way to the Great City. Arriving without bodies, they easily confused a trio of Dock Ward crimps, inciting them to infighting. Once the weak-willed brutes bludgeoned each other senseless, the intellect devourers seized their bodies. What the creatures do next depends on whether the PCs have exposed Jagged-Euphoria.

If the PCs haven't yet exposed Jagged-Euphoria, the intellect devourer trio's initial target is Captain Hasserbruk. Upon arrival in the city, the creatures hear numerous tales and rumors about the return of the alleged Captain Hasserbruk and quickly conclude that he must be Jagged-Euphoria's current host. Using the bodies of the dock crimps, they hunt down and attempt to slay the Captain. When confronted by the creatures, Captain Hasserbruk quickly identifies the body snatchers as the probable cause of his wife's mysterious behavior. Being a man of great luck and many talents, he convinces the creatures to spare him, and instead seek out his wife and her steward who hole up in his manor house. After the intellect-devourers leave the Captain, he rushes to enlist the aid of the PCs to protect his ancestral manor from the alien creatures attacking it and the one that likely resides within.

If the PCs have exposed Jagged-Euphoria, the broodmates' focus immediately falls upon the Lady Hasserbruk and Hasserbruk manor as their primary target.

Once the broodmates set their sights on Hasserbruk Manor, they quickly plot their plan of attack. Their first order of business involves the recovery of their prized possession, *Mortal's Vanity*, which they infer (correctly) lies hidden somewhere within the manor. They know from experience that if Jagged-Euphoria suspects their arrival, it will grab the mirror and flee, thus they hope to find the mirror first, and use it as a lure to attract their renegade broodmate.

Wearing the shells of the crimps, the intellect devourers arrive under cover of night. They begin the assault invisible, though they reveal themselves if they must open doors or otherwise move objects. Following their *detect magic* sense, the crimps make their way toward any necromancy auras. If Jaym's *magic aura* spell still cloaks the mirror, this plan proves ineffectual, and the broodmates resort to ransacking the house.

The intellect devourers split up, but maintain telepathic contact, planning to converge when one of them finds *Mortal's Vanity* or encounters resistance.

Once they find the mirror, they flee, using alchemist's fire to ignite the building to cover their escape. If they cannot find the mirror, the crimps threaten the occupants in order to learn its whereabouts. If *Mortal's Vanity* is gone or destroyed, they take their frustrations out on anyone present before setting the house on fire.

### Dock Ward Crimps (3)

CR 6

#### XP 2,400 each

Male intellect-devourer-controlled gur (bugbear-blooded human) rogue 4/warrior 3

**CE** Medium humanoid (goblinoid, human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; *detect magic*; Perception +7 (+9 scent, +9 vs. traps)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19 (20 vs. traps), touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

**hp** 50 (3d10+4d8+14) 10 + 5.5x2 + 4.5x4 +7 Con +4 favored

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +8 (+9 vs. traps), **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **immune** mind-affecting effects

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk spiked chain +10/+5 (2d4+12) or sap +8/+3 (1d6+8 nonlethal)

**Ranged** mwk hand crossbow +10 (1d4/19–20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6 plus 2 bleed

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +11)  
Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*confusion* (DC 17, single target only), *daze monster* (DC 15, no HD limit), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *reduce size* (as *reduce person* but self only)

3/day—*cure moderate wounds*, *globe of invulnerability*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The crimps drink their potions as they approach the house (included above). They favor sneak attacks, using *invisibility* or darkness to maneuver into position.

**During Combat** The crimps attempt to knock out enemies as quickly as possible, using Power Attack to increase the damage (included above). Against obvious spellcasters, they attack from within a *globe of invulnerability*. When fighting together, one uses *confusion* to make targets easier for the others.

**Morale** The crimps *cure* themselves when badly wounded. If they haven't found *Mortal's Vanity*, the intellect devourers use the crimp bodies to fight to the death (caring little for bodies that will rot soon anyway). Once one of them acquires the mirror, it flees while the others cover its escape.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11



**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Intimidating Prowess, Improved Initiative, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (spiked chain)<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Bluff +7, Climb +11, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +7 (+9 scent, +9 vs. traps), Profession (sailor) +7, Stealth +17

**Languages** Common, Goblin; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** rogue talent (bleeding attack, weapon training), trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** alchemist's fire (2), *potion of barkskin*;  
**Other Gear** +1 shadow studded leather armor, mwk spiked chain, sap, mwk hand crossbow with 10 bolts

**Honeysuckle-Outrage, Rancid-Pride, Vermilion-Sadness**

**CR 8**

**XP** 4,800 each

Intellect devourer (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 180)

**hp** 84

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The intellect devourers use *invisibility* to confound opponents, holding their natural attacks for the opportunity to make sneak attacks. Otherwise they use their mental attacks to disable foes.

**Morale** The intellect devourers continue to fight as long as at least one ally retains a body. If one of them acquires *Mortal's Vanity*, the others cover his flight. Otherwise, they keep attacking until the last of them disembodies, at which time they flee.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

A number of factors determine the outcome of this adventure. Account the PCs successful if they return Captain Hasserbruk to his rightful estate and protect him from the intellect devourer brood. If instead, the PC's were tasked with exposing him as an impostor, their actions may have further consequences. Still, the Lady's investments have left the Captain wealthy enough to cover the costs of any troubles the PCs might face as a result of aiding him. He offers his saviors a reward of 5,000 gp and their choice of one of the fabled items he acquired during his odyssey.

On another level, the PCs can claim a second success if they prevent the intellect devourers from reclaiming *Mortal's Vanity*. If they fail to kill all of the aberrations, however, this may not be the last the party sees of them. The intellect devourers may seek revenge against the PCs, perhaps by usurping the bodies of influential citizens of the Great City. If *Mortal's Vanity* wasn't destroyed, the intellect devourers may make future attempts to reclaim their prize.

## APPENDIX: MORTAL'S VANITY

This magic mirror was Jagged-Euphoria's former brood's greatest treasure – both in gold piece value and in the luxury it afforded them. Stolen from a drow necromancer, the mirror possesses several useful effects for those who work with the dead. However, the intellect devourers care only that it can stave off the decomposition of their stolen bodies indefinitely. Presently, the macabre vanity hangs in Lady Hasserbruk's boudoir.

### Mirror of Necropsy

**Aura** moderate necromancy; **CL** 7th

**Slot** —; **Price** 20,000 gp; **Weight** 45 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

This item resembles a normal mirror about 4 feet in diameter. It can be hung or placed on a surface and then activated by speaking one of three command words.

A creature who speaks the first command word gains the benefits of the *deathwatch* spell with regard to any creature whose image they see reflected in the mirror, as long as both viewer and viewed are within 30 ft. of the mirror. The same command word deactivates this effect.

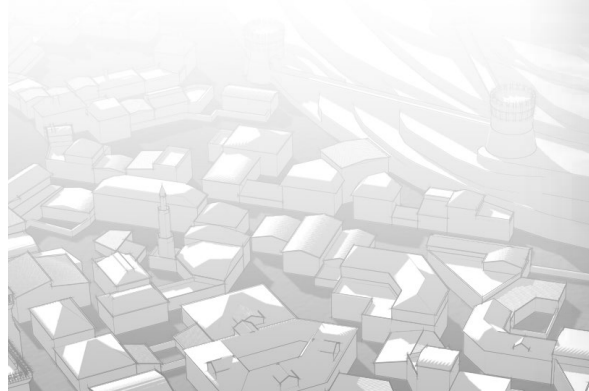
The second and third command words allow the speaker to use *gentle repose* and *speak with dead* (respectively) each once per day. These effects target any corpse the user can see reflected in the mirror.

Destroying a *mirror of necropsy* dispels any current effects. The effects of the mirror's *gentle repose* dispel retroactively, causing objects under the effect to rot rapidly.

*Mirror of necropsy*: hardness 1, hp 5, Break DC 20

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *deathwatch*, *gentle repose*, *speak with dead*; **Cost** 10,000 gp





# THE FREEDOM GAMBIT

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**T**he *Freedom Gambit* is an adventure for Season 2 of the *Great City: The Sinking* adventure serial. It can be played as part of the series or as a stand-alone adventure. It was designed using the Pathfinder RPG system and intended for a group of 8th-level Player Characters.

## BACKGROUND

Maintaining a keen interest on the Sinkhole, Blood Senator Eldon Vulgrax finally acquired two key objects relating to the phenomena—a key and sextant. Upon analyzing these items, Vulgrax believed he held the resources he finally needed to breach the mysteries of the Sinkhole. With his power base established and the items in-hand, Vulgrax made a public statement, harshly decrying the Lazarites and their recent inquisitions. The effect was immediate, skirmishes between Lazarites and Vulgrax's supporters erupted throughout the Great City. Worse, the Blood Senator failed to realize the extent of Lazarus's alliance with the powerful Trypus Academy.

Seeking to permanently quiet the loudmouthed senator, the Trypus Academy offered to aid the Lazarites in orchestrating Vulgrax's demise. Trypus-employed members of the Shadowblade assassins keeping an extended watch on Lord Vulgrax stormed the Blood Senator's home in the night. Slaying dozens of personal guards, the Shadowblades captured the Senator and brought him to a secret location. Soon after, Melchior Fromme publically announced that Vulgrax had been plotting to sabotage the combined efforts of both the Lazarites and the Trypus Academy in their work to resolve future threats posed by the Sinkhole by rumormongering, sowing dissent and provoking acts of rebellion. To pay for his crimes, the high court has sentenced Vulgrax to public execution. The execution is to be carried out by Fromme and the Lazarites, who have thus far kept the exact time and location of the execution secret. As the adventure begins, the citizens of the Great City wait for the Lazarites to make good on their promise.

## SUMMARY

The PCs find themselves approached by a young child, asking for their assistance. The child leads them to the Baroness, Lady Tianda Eialla (see *Great City Campaign Setting*). The lady obviously suffers a form of madness, but she claims to know the Lazarites' plan for executing Blood Senator Vulgrax. She gives this information freely and practically begs the PCs to help the Senator, telling them that the Lazarites have set-up three separate areas where Vulgrax may await his death.

The PCs can vet some of the information relating to the three groups, as only one of them is correct. By using their wits and contacts, the PCs have a chance to discover which site contains Vulgrax, and can rescue the Blood Senator before he is taken to the execution site. Selecting the incorrect group costs the PCs precious time and further pressures them to race to prevent Vulgrax's execution.

With Vulgrax under their protection, the PCs arrange to get the Blood Senator out of the Great City and race him high into the treacherous shelter of the Loomshadow Mountains. Vulgrax believes he has some remaining loyal contacts within the city that can smuggle them out without alerting the Lazarites. The responsibility falls upon the PCs to meet with Vulgrax's contact, an old army soldier in order to arrange the exodus.

Hearing word that the PCs are preparing to attempt to smuggle Vulgrax out of the city, the Trypus step in to clean up the mess left by the Lazarites. Releasing several caged creatures from the depths of the Circus Maximus, the Trypus agents know the military will close off the City gates, allowing their agents to root out the PCs and Vulgrax in the ensuing chaos.

With the army formations converging upon the rampaging beast, the PCs' escape route becomes blocked off as agents of the Shadowblades move in for the kill. Should the successful PCs hold out, the way is finally made clear, allowing them to escape the Great City with the Blood senator in tow.

## INTRODUCTION

Word of Blood Senator Eldon Vulgrax's capture by the fanatics of the prophet Lazarus spread through the Great City like wildfire. If the PCs played in the previous adventure, they likely have an invested interest in the Blood Senator and were probably enjoying some downtime prior to being summoned for another mission. News of his capture should come as a shock, but also leaves the PCs relatively powerless to decipher the Senator's precise fate.

The adventure begins shortly after the Lazarites public announcement of their intention to execute Vulgrax for his acts of heresy against their order. Immediately, the PCs should begin actively working to uncover Vulgrax's hidden location, or seeking out the site of this execution. GMs should start the adventure by asking the PCs how they plan to proceed under the given circumstances. At this time, the PCs should be provided the opportunity to call in old contacts or associates, and let them enact some of those plans.

The Lazarites have been very good at keeping

## WHO'S THIS VULGRAX GUY?

This adventure assumes the PCs have some kind of previous association with Blood Senator Vulgrax and are interested in his continued well being. This should be assumed if the party has played through prior adventures in the Sinkhole Season 2 series, but in the event they have not, GMs should be creative in building the PCs interest in his preservation. If the party has just arrived in the Great City, then they might have been brought by the Blood Senator to act as additional protection, or as investigators in his ongoing feud with the Lazarites. In either case, the PCs should want to find Vulgrax, and the GM should do her best to suit the adventure to that end.

the location of Vulgrax a secret, thus it remains unlikely any of the PCs' associates possess any leads concerning the Blood Senator's whereabouts. Luckily enough, another interested party wants Vulgrax unharmed.

As the PCs enact their plans to find Vulgrax, a local street child cautiously approaches, tugs at their clothing, and bids them to follow her to the Dock Ward. If questioned, the child only replies that "the Baroness" wishes to see them. A DC 20 Knowledge (local) check reveals the identity of a Baroness: a mad woman named Lady Tianda Eialla who keeps a clan of thieving children under her protection. A DC 25 Knowledge (local) check reveals that the Baroness was once promised to marry Blood Senator Vulgrax, but was rejected. For more details on the Baroness see *The Great City Campaign Setting*.

## ACT I: THE BARONESS

Following the curious urchin child, she deftly weaves her way through the twisting cobblestone streets of the Dock Ward, eventually emerging into a slovenly, grime-stained street known as Swordfish Alley located just behind the Captain's Rest Inn. The Baroness waits for the PCs within, away from prying eyes and wandering ears. When the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

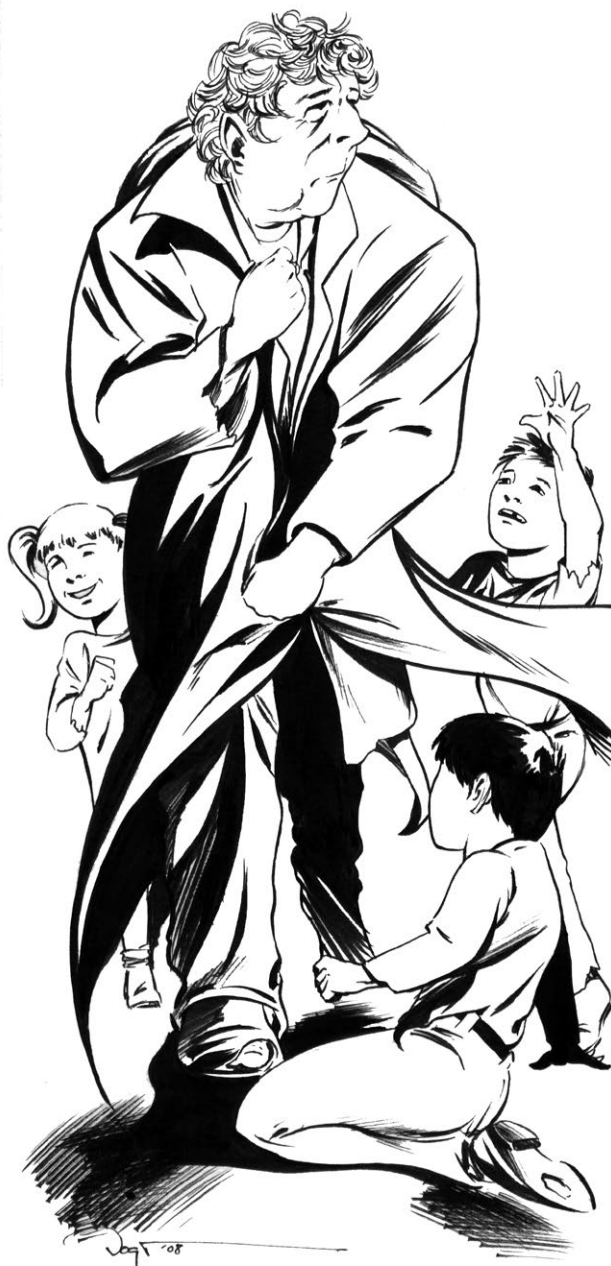
*A middle-aged woman garbed in the oddest assortment of coats, petticoats, and scarves stands sheepishly between two large refuse bins. Over half-a-dozen small urchin children scurry about the woman, tugging at her garish garments, and burying themselves deep in-between the layers. At the approach of intruders, the children begin to cower, clutching fabric as though it offered protection. One child standing atop a garbage*

*bin grabs a scarf, tugging it in such a way that it entirely covers the woman's face.*

*"Now, now." A crone-like voice comes from behind the scarf. "Let mother get a good look at these newcomers."*

The Baroness bids the PCs to come by and present themselves, though she quickly forgets their names and assigns them ones more appropriate to her mindset (see sidebar). Once introductions are complete, she continues with a more direct summary. Read or paraphrase the following:

*"Oh my dear Vulgrax, I heard he was taken by those blabberites. You know, he was quite the jogger back in his day! They took him to a place I could not follow, but my children were able to get close enough and*





hear their blabberings. You see, that's why I call them blabberites, it's quite witty when you think about it, hmmmmmmmmmmmm?"

*The Baroness smiles widely. There's an awkward pause.*

*"Anyways, my beloved Vulgrax is being sent to his constitution... or was that his execution? Bah! I need to think..."*

*Again, she pauses awkwardly*

*"Execution, right! Right! Yes, the blabberites plan on executing my dear Vulgrax. And they want to do it here in the Docks. MY DOCKS! But we aren't going to let that happen now are we? No, no we're not... just to be clear, we're not."*

*The Baroness produces a scarf from the folds of her many clothes. Unlike the other scarves, this one has been embroidered with an intricately detailed map of the Great City.*

## THE MIND OF THE MAD BARONESS

GMs should take some time to craft the madness of the Baroness as she interacts with the PCs. She has various habits that GMs should feel free to take advantage of during the course of the conversation. Summarized below are some suggestions for ways to show the madness of the Baroness.

She refers to others as simple objects. For example, the fighter might get the moniker of 'Swordsy', while the charming rogue could simply be called 'The Mouth'. This applies to everyone with the exception of her children and Vulgrax.

Anytime anyone asks her a question about herself, she responds by answering with a random meal, such as "bacon & eggs", or "Kortezian salad".

During conversation she shakes her hips and the children take it as a queue to move around her various layers of clothing in seemingly random patterns.

At random points during conversations, she stops to speak with her children. She often asks them seemingly inane questions such as "how are you?" or "what's two plus one?"

Whenever a group talks and it's not directed at her, the Baroness pulls out different tattered and ruined scarves from her interior and fashionably tries showing them off.

## THE MAP

The map details the city and marks off three small locations within. Each of these locations includes the word 'Vulgrax' beside it, along with an embellished heart and question mark. A fourth location is markedly different in the center of the Dock Ward, and looks like it has been stabbed through multiple times. All of the small markings represent locations where the Baroness's children believe Vulgrax could be held, while the larger stabbed area marks the site of his impending execution; the open square facing the harbor, where Silk Way empties into Dock's Walk.

Each of the locations is described below, along with appropriate skills the PCs can use to root out information relating to the site. The Baroness and her children can easily be coaxed to reveal information about the sites, but the PCs will need to rely on their own knowledge to learn important clues about them. Only one of the sites has Vulgrax, and the PCs need to correctly guess which one it is.

**Site 1 (Army Camp):** Located within the Army Ward in the southern tent camp, this small group of soldiers allegedly swore an oath of loyalty to the Lazarites. The soldiers supposedly have Vulgrax imprisoned and heavily guarded within one of their storage tents. Patrols of soldiers infrequently monitor the barracks and any non-military intruders are dealt with quickly and severely. At all times, a pair of guards (LN human, fighter 3) wait by the front flap. These men are loyal to the Lazarites. Furthermore, every 10 + 1d10 minutes, a second patrol of 4 + 1d4 guards passes through the area. Once the PCs steal close enough to get a glimpse of the encampment, a DC 20 Knowledge (history or nobility) check is enough to infer that the routine checks by higher-ranking officers would make holding a captive as identifiable as Vulgrax next to impossible. Vulgrax is not held in this compound.

**Site 2 (Market Safehouse):** A home located at the corner of the Way of City Lords and Fang's Way serves as a secret storehouse for the Lazarites where rumor professes they now keep Senator Vulgrax imprisoned in the basement. Furthermore, these same rumors claim the Lazarites living on the first floor trade shifts to keep a 24-hour watch over their prisoner.

While the building's tenants previously allied with the Lazarites, during the past week the owners of the storehouse have turned their back after not receiving rent payments. Currently, the door is boarded shut. A DC 24 Knowledge (local) check is enough to reveal the recent change of events. Should the PCs attempt to explore the building, they must break in and risk running afoul with the city watch. If caught within the storehouse, the PCs are hit with criminal charges and

must pay a 500 gp fine for trespassing. Vulgrax is not held in this compound.

**Site 3 (Warehouse):** Located in the warehouse block of the Trades Ward, associates loyal to the Lazarites recently purchased this large and ramshackle warehouse for their own purposes. While by all appearances the warehouse appears to be abandoned, it is currently occupied by a small group of Lazarite thugs and their prized prisoner, the heretic Senator Eldron Vulgrax. Recently condemned by the city due to safety concerns, a DC 24 Knowledge (engineering) identifies the existence of several locations where the structural integrity of the warehouse is less than optimal. The site remains closed off until the city can muster a proper inspection force.

Vulgrax is being held in this warehouse.

**Execution Grounds:** An open swathe of dock, where the Lazarites have brought material to hastily assemble a gibbet when the Blood Senator is transported from his temporary lodging.

Allow those PCs that spent any time during the past week around the Dock Ward to attempt a DC 15 Wisdom check to recall the arrangement of cargo crates and equipment in the area and realize they could easily be configured into a crude gallows.

**Developments:** Once the PCs have decided on a plan to save Vulgrax, they can leave the Baroness's company.

As the PCs depart, they may find some of their belongings missing. Have each PC make a Perception check opposed by the stealth of the Baroness's children (+8 modifier). The first PC to succeed the check notices the attempted pilfering. Immediately after being spotted, the child becomes terrified and returns the stolen item or currency. Should all the PCs fail this check, the Baroness scolds her children before ordering them to return any stolen goods.

In either case, the Baroness has the children add in an additional pouch containing 18 crudely cut rubies (2,000 gp value). The ruby offering represents her demented way of thanking the PCs for their assistance in rescuing her beloved Vulgrax.

## ACT 2: TO SAVE A SENATOR

Based on the Baroness's information, the PCs have several options on how to save Vulgrax. Assuming the PCs gather enough information concerning the Senator's supposed whereabouts, they most likely head to the warehouse to try and free the Blood Senator. Alternatively, the PCs may decide to

stealthily wait at the Execution Grounds for a chance at rescuing Vulgrax prior to his sentence being carried out.

It is possible the PCs may choose to investigate one of the other locations. The Army Camp and Market Safehouse sites do not possess Vulgrax, and inspections of these areas revealing the following:

**Army Camp:** As the PCs enter the tent, they are offered a seat at the table at which a group of soldiers gamble over a simple game of knucklebones. It should quickly become apparent that the area is well-guarded, thus keeping a hostage here would be next to impossible given the high number of patrols that scout the tents and barracks.

**Market Safehouse:** The PCs may think this the correct site due to its recent increase in security. A group of four guards (LN Fighter 2, Cha 10) watch from the second floor and stop anyone attempting to enter the premises. These guards have orders to keep out any intruders, especially Lazarites. If the PCs engage the guards in conversation and successfully change their attitude from indifferent to friendly, they readily inform the PCs of the Safehouse owners' recent falling out with the Lazarites and controvert any rumors that they might be imprisoning the Blood Senator inside.

## THE WAREHOUSE (CR 9)

Prior to his transportation to the execution grounds, the Lazarites hold Vulgrax in a warehouse in the Trades Ward. Recently condemned, the Lazarites paid off several different organizations (city guard and merchants) to keep quiet on their use of the site.

The warehouse has three primary entrances; one

### TIME TO DIE?

The following section uses a sand box design, meaning the PCs have a wide variety of options for saving Vulgrax. To make it easier to run, the exact timing of the Senator's execution has been left deliberately imprecise. The assumption is that the Baroness acquired her information well in advance of the execution date. This allows the PCs to gather enough information to locate Vulgrax prior to his execution and act accordingly, either by tracking the Lazarites down in the Warehouse, or waiting to confront Ralius and his men when they finally drag the imprisoned Vulgrax to the gibbet.



that acts as a service entrance for staff, a second that is meant to accommodate large shipments, and a third that would normally be opened to the public. The shipment door is sealed by great chains and bears an inscription from the Great City that declares the structure condemned. A DC 30 Strength check is required to break open this entrance from either side. A smaller set of chains locks the public entrance, requiring a DC 20 Strength check to break through. The service entrance remains unchained, having been already disabled by the Lazarites. In order to protect their endeavors, the Lazarites have locked the service entrance with a simple lock, requiring a DC 24 Disable Device check to bypass.

Stacks of crates fill the warehouse's interior, forming a maze inside the main area of the structure. These crates vary from ten to forty feet in height, with the highest stacks just under the fifty-foot tall room.

**Creatures:** The Lazarites maintain a constant guard on Vulgrax prior to his scheduled execution. A group of four lesser acolytes work under the watchful eye of Ralius Ventus, a ranking member of the Lazarites, and the individual entrusted with escorting Vulgrax to his death. Ventus is a no-nonsense man, and has become even harder after the death of his trusted friend Hazelett Jargesh (see *Sinkole Season 2—The Skullfire Inquisition*). Since the death of Hazelett, Ralius has changed his philosophy and wishes only to see the heretics of the Great City burn for their crimes.

During the day, the Lazarites acolytes read scriptures and share stories within the center of the maze. A single member of their number hides atop the crates, scouting for intruders. Ralius spends most of his time angrily staring at a bound and blindfolded Vulgrax, the man he holds responsible for the death of his friend Hazelett. Sometimes the senior Inquisitor breaks the quiet to strike Vulgrax with a gut punch or two.

#### Lazarite Acolyte (4)

CR 3

XP 800

Female or Male human inquisitor 3 / rogue 1

LN medium humanoid (human)

Init+9; **Senses** perception +10

#### DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flatfooted 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 32 each (4d8+11)

Fort +5 Ref +5 (+1 vs. traps) Will +6

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft

**Melee** masterwork longsword +3 (1d8/19-20)

**Ranged** masterwork light crossbow +5 (1d8/19-20)

**Special Attacks** judgment 1/day, sneak attack +1d6

**Domain Spell Like Abilities** (CL 3rd, concentration +4)

6/day – copycat (3 rounds)

**Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

1st (4/day) – *cause fear* (DC 15), *command* (DC 15), *inflict light wounds* (DC 15), *true strike*

0 (at will) – *bleed* (DC 13), *brand* (DC 13)\*, *daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*

\*See *Advanced Player's Guide*

**Domain** trickery

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If the scout spots the PCs, he warns the remaining Lazarites allowing the acolytes to prepare by casting *true strike* and moving into smart flanking positions within the maze.

**During Combat** The acolytes prefer guaranteed attacks on well-armored enemies using *true strike*. When they have the opportunity to flank their targets the assassins often use *inflict light wounds* in conjunction with sneak attacks and their *destruction* judgment. If pressed, they resort to using their copycat ability and *command* enemies to drop their weapons.

**Morale** Indoctrinated into the Lazarite order, the acolytes know that as long as Ralius lives, they must fight to the death. If their leader is slain, the acolytes attempt to escape, using their copycat ability to best effect.

#### STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 12

Base Atk +2, CMB +2; CMD 14

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Lookout, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot

**Skills** Bluff +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +10, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +8

**Languages** Common (Korteisian)

**SQ** monster lore, stern gaze, cunning initiative, *detect alignment*, *discern lies*, trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*;

**Other Gear** chain shirt, masterwork longsword, masterwork light crossbow

#### Ralius Ventus

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human separatist\* cleric 8 (\*See *Ultimate Magic*)

NE medium humanoid (human)

Init+1; **Senses** perception +3

#### DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 11, flatfooted 21 (+11 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 79 (8d8+40)

Fort +10 Ref +4 Will +12

Resist fire 10

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft

**Melee** +1 battleaxe +9/+4 (1d8+3/x3)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 2/day (DC 13, 4d6)

**Domain Spell Like Abilities** (CL 8th, concentration +11)  
At Will – master's illusion (8 rounds/day)

6/day – copycat (8 rounds)

5/day – fire bolt (1d6+4 fire)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +11)

4th– *confusion* (DC 18), *cure critical wounds*, *sending*

3rd– *blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 15), *invisibility purge*, *protection from energy*

2nd– *bear's endurance*, *death knell* (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *sound burst* (DC 15),

1st – *burning hands* (DC 15), *command* (DC 14), *doom* (DC 14), *entropic shield*, *protection from good*, *shield of faith*

o (at will) – *bleed*, *detect magic*, *light*, *stabilize*

**Domains** Fire (separatist domain), Trickery

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Forewarned of combat, Ralius casts *shield of faith* followed by *bear's endurance* and then moves through the maze to find the intruders.

**During Combat** Ralius begins combat by casting *sending* to inform his superiors of the attack. From then on, he uses his *blindness/deafness* spell to blind a well-armored target, opening it up to sneak attacks from the acolytes. When engaged, Ralius prefers to back off with his *invisibility* spell, only to return with a *confusion* or *fireball*. If his enemies are overwhelmed, he spends full rounds taunting them for their failings, enjoying the thrill of watching his underlings press the attack.

**Morale** Knowing guarding Vulgrax is his greatest task in the service of his order, Ralius fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +6, **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Combat Casting, Heavy Armor Proficiency, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (Battleaxe), Toughness

**Skills** Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Religion) +9, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +9

**Languages** Common (Kortezian)

**SQ** aura, forbidden rites

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2);

**Other Gear** +2 full plate, +1 battleaxe, cloak of resistance +1

**Development:** Once the PCs defeat the Lazarites, they can move to free Vulgrax. The PCs discover the senator bound, badly beaten, and barely conscious. Vulgrax is fatigued and has few remaining hit points, therefore he avoids combat unless the PCs free him from his bindings, heal him and allow him to rest. See 'Where to now' for more information on what

happens after the PCs free Vulgrax.

The senator's stats are listed below and have been updated since his first appearance *The Road to Revolution #3: Tides of Blood*.

#### Blood Senator Eldon Vulgrax

CR 8

**XP** 4,800

M middle-aged aristocrat 5/monk 3/rogue 2

**LN** Medium humanoid (human)

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

\*fatigued (normal +2)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (-1 Dex\*, +1 dodge, +3 Wis)

\*fatigued (normally +2)

**hp** 41\* (10 HD; 3d8+2d8+5d8+7)

\*currently at 5 hp

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +6\* (+1 vs. traps), **Will** +10; +2 vs. enchantments

\*fatigued (normal +9)

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee**\* unarmed strike +5/+0 (1d62), 1 dagger +8/+3 (1d4+1/19–20)

\*fatigued (normal unarmed strike +8/+3 (1d6+1), +2 dagger +11/+6 (1d4+3/19–20))

**Ranged** \*+2 dagger +8/+3 (1d4+1/19–20)

\*fatigued (normal +2 dagger +11/+6 (1d4+3/19–20))

**Special Attacks** flurry of blows, sneak attack +1d6, stunning fist (4/day, DC 18)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12 (current 6), **Dex** 14 (current 8), **Con** 7, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +8 (+10 disarm); **CMD** 23

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Disarm, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist, Throw Anything, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger)

**Skills** Acrobatics\* +5 (+9 when jumping), Appraise +10, Bluff +9, Climb\* +5, Diplomacy +15, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (engineering) +6, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (planes) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Linguistics +6, Perception +9, Ride +9, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand\* +3, Stealth\* +3; Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics when jumping

\* fatigued (normal Acrobatics +8 (+12 when jumping), Climb +8, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

**Languages** Common (Azindralean, Kortezian)

**SQ** fast movement, maneuver training, rogue talents (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1



## EXECUTION GROUNDS (CR 10)

If instead of attempting to rescue Vulgrax, the PCs decide to wait a few hours for the Lazarites to escort him to the execution grounds, as the time passes they observe an ever growing crowd swarming the Dock Ward streets and converging around the vacant square. The throng consists mostly of poor and working class citizens, stevedores, fishermen, and the like, who stand about in a growing gaggle. Unbeknownst to the PCs, most of these individuals have been 'hired' by the Lazarites, but remain unaware of the nature of the events that are about to occur. A simple DC 15 Diplomacy check made in attempt to speak with any of the gawkers readily reveals that a stranger gave them a gold coin to spend some time in this area.

As the sun begins to set, a burly humanoid emerges from the alleyways. She wears a brown hood crudely painted in the form of a demon, and carries a large greatsword strapped to her back. The anticipation of the crowd grows as this newcomer begins to assemble several nearby crates and containers into a makeshift stage (actually a gibbet).

Shortly after the woman finishes constructing the stage, the crowd parts, making way for a small processional of robed Lazarites leading a man with a sack over his head. This group consists of Ralius Ventus and the four acolytes that accompanied him in the Warehouse (see above). As the group leads their hostage – Vulgrax – to the stage, the acolytes quietly slip into the crowd as Ralius walks up the stage with the Blood Senator.

Once upon the stage, Ralius makes a short speech:

*"Welcome all to this short demonstration. We, the disciples of slain Lazarus have tried to be tolerant of those that mock or shame our beliefs, but no longer! Today, we show the people of the Great City that the Lazarites are not to be trifled with. Today, I show all of you that no man is beyond our reach!"*

With that, Ralius removes the sack so all present can see the beaten and bloody face of Blood Senator Vulgrax. As the crowd still murmurs in shock, Ralius orders the hooded woman place the Blood Senator in the noose of the gibbet.

From the moment Vulgrax sets foot on the stage, the PCs have one minute to stop the execution until Ralius activates the trapdoor, sending Vulgrax to his death.

**Creatures:** The masked executioner is a hired mercenary named Bretta. She was not given details on her assignment, aside from being told she was executing a heretic to the Lazarites. She only begins to realize how deep she's in when Ralius reveals the

condemned man as Blood Senator Vulgrax. If the PCs attempt to stop the execution, she contemplates her allegiance to the Lazarites as described in the tactics section of her statblock.

### Bretta

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female half-orc barbarian 4 / fighter 4

CN medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init+2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; perception +1

#### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flatfooted 14 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural, -2 rage)

hp 89 (4d12+4d10+36)

Fort +12 Ref +4 (+1 vs. traps) Will +5 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge, bravery +1, trap sense +1, ferocity

#### OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft

Melee +1 greatsword +16/+11 (2d6+12/19-20)

Special Attacks rage (12 rounds/day), rage powers (animal fury, powerful blow +2)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Bretta does not initiate combat unless ordered to by Ralius.

**During Combat** Realizing the man she's been hired to kill is a city official, Bretta soon regrets her decision to side with the Lazarites. Wanting to turn the situation around in her favor, she listens to Ralius' orders and attacks the most heavily armored PC while fighting defensively. During the exchange she whispers to her enemy that she could be convinced to change sides if the PCs can outbid the 1,500 gp offering of the Lazarites. If the PCs give their word on this, she immediately switches sides and fights against Ralius and his acolytes.

**Morale** If the PCs refuse to pay her, Bretta fights until Ralius is defeated, at which point she runs away and books passage on the next boat leaving the Great City.

#### STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +8, CMB +14; CMD 24

Feats Cleave, Diehard, Endurance, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

Skills Acrobatics +10 (+14 when jumping), Climb +14, Intimidate +10, Swim +14;

Languages Common (Kortezian)

SQ fast movement, armor training 1, orc blood, weapon familiarity

Other Gear +1 greatsword, amulet of natural armor +1, a pouch containing 1,500 gp worth of glittering amethysts

**Lazarite Acolytes (4)****CR 3****XP 800 each****hp** 32 each; *See Page 185 above*

**Tactics:** The four acolytes move into the crowd using stealth to remain hidden within. If combat erupts, they try to surprise the PCs with crossbow shots from the crowd, hoping to get a sneak attack in before they are noticed.

**Ralius Ventus****CR 7****XP 3,200****hp** 79; *See Page 185 above*

**Tactics:** Ralius stands on the gibbet and waits for the PCs to break from the crowd, using his *confusion* spell to try and debilitate them. He orders Bretta to engage the PCs and has his acolytes break from the crowd soon afterwards to try and flank with the half-orc executioner.

**Development:** If the PCs offered to pay Bretta, she considers her service done when Ralius and his acolytes are defeated. Vulgrax offers to pay her back, giving her the name of a loyal retainer who she can collect her reward from. If the PCs wish to keep her services, they can pay an additional 2,000 gp, and she offers to assist in escorting Vulgrax out of the Great City.

## WHERE TO NOW?

Once rescued, Vulgrax requires rest and healing, as well as a little time to collect his wits. Fortunately,

### A HITCHCOCK HINT

**Don't Punish Creative Players:** while the adventure assumes the PCs go with Merille's plan, there may be PCs who devise other plans for escape. If this occurs, don't panic. As the GM, feel free to allow the PCs to attempt any means of escape they devise, just put the pressure on them. If they attempt something as foolish as flying over the wall, have archers open fire and attempt to drop them from the skies. If they try a boat, have a privateer light it on fire. Remember, the reward is for a dead Blood Senator, not a living one, so any opposition should be vicious. Ultimately, while Chapter 3 is going to be a fun and interesting challenge, do not be afraid to alter it in order to improvise some other escape if the PCs absolutely must do it "their way". I have always suggested that I believe winging an encounter, is far better than railroading players.

the senator has numerous resources. He requests the PCs bring him to a secluded and secure private home in the western edge of the Dock Ward which he keeps for just such emergencies. Upon their arrival at a modest looking brick house in the northern part of the Ward, Vulgrax knocks out a quirky rhythm upon the door and waits a moment for someone on the other side to undo a heavy latch. At this point the Vulgrax introduces the PCs to one of his most trusted allies, an elderly halfling servant named Merille Baynt. Merille quickly ushers everyone inside, locks the door and then produces more bad news, a crinkled broadside offering a sizable reward for Vulgrax's head. The writ is not only issued by the Lazarites, but also backed by the Trypus Academy and approved by Lord Atregan himself. In addition to the charges of heresy, Vulgrax is also being charged with conspiracy and high-treason for his role raising controversy, starting acts of rebelliousness, and threatening the safety and welfare of the Great City by obstructing and aggravating those attempting to safely bring to resolution all potential dangers concerning the Sink. In short, if Vulgrax remains in the Great City much longer, he is as good as dead.

Still, for the time being the Senator and the PCs are safe inside the small, two-bedroom house. Here the PCs gain a little time to rest and discuss how best to proceed with the Blood Senator.

Vulgrax believes that the Lazarites will stop at nothing to find and silence him. Worse, he realizes that there now remain few people in the Great City he can trust and under the urgings of his servant Merille, he pleads for the PCs to help him escape. Initially, he contemplates leaving by ship, but as Senator of the Dock's Ward, he quickly realizes that his enemies will expect him to use his resources and the docks are likely crawling with mercenaries and bounty hunters waiting to skin the first poor bastard that even resembles him. Ships are too easy to trail, thus he concludes he must flee by land.

At this time, Merille enters into the conversation and offers his advice. While Vulgrax has thus far proved a popular Blood Senator, his predecessor Lord Mykros "Gallows" Semheyl was not. Early in his tenure, Mykros uncovered a covert passage originally used by the Hardy Brutes to secretly exit the city. He left the key to this passage with one of his most trusted agents, a dwarven cavalry sergeant named Drevis. In the years since Mykros' passing Drevis served four tours, ultimately losing a leg in the recent military uprising. He has since been reassigned as a stable master, though Merille remains in contact with him, and has continued to pay the dwarf a monthly stipend for his service in the name of the Semheyl clan. Of course, Merille suggests it might be prudent at this time to pay a visit to the stable master.



## ACT 3: ESCAP-EH MONSTERS! ASSASSINS!

Once fully rested, the PCs can attempt to accompany Vulgrax and his servant Merille to meet with the Drevis in the Army Ward. With broadsides offering gold for the senator's head plastered everywhere, Vulgrax isn't foolish enough to leave the house without some sort of disguise, either magic or a Disguise check.

Upon arriving at the cavalry stables, almost immediately the aging Drevis hobbles forth to inspect them. Merille breaks from his disguise. It has been a few years since Drevis has seen Merille, and initially he fails to recognize the halfling, yet as soon as he does, the realization hits him that something serious has come up and he is finally being called into service. At this point, he goes to an empty stall, pulls up a few floorboards, and retrieves a tiny greasy covered jar holding an aged-looking key. He gives the key to Merille along with directions to the secret passage, which exits the city from the basement of the Sighting Tower set into the city wall south west of the Circus Maximus (see Great City, Army Ward, area 3).

### A CIRCUS OF MONSTERS (CR 10)

While neither the Lazarites, nor the Trypus bore witness to Vulgrax's escape, both organizations are masters of intelligence that possess numerous spies and street informants, as well as few potent

magics which ultimately point them towards Vulgrax's current location in the Army Ward. Still, through clever use of wits and stealth, the PCs manage to keep Vulgrax's precise location unknown. Anticipating Vulgrax's attempted escape, the Lazarites have sought the aid of the Trypus assassins to root out the senator. At present numerous Trypus assassins scour the Army Ward attempting to seek them out.

As the PCs pass the Circus Maximus, they risk drawing the attention of a small patrol of Trypus Agents posing as gladiators. The agents have stolen a wagon holding several beasts bound for the circus games, and upon spotting the PCs, trigger a device that breaks the holding pin on the beast cages allowing them to escape. The assassins stage this event hoping that the creatures either slay their quarry or create enough confusion and chaos for them to kill Vulgrax and any of his allies themselves.

**Bulette (3)**

**CR7**

hp 84, Pathfinder Bestiary 39

**Developments:** If the PCs decide to try and fight some of the monsters attacking the camp, allow them to battle the creatures for only a handful of rounds before army reinforcements come to finish their target off. In such an event, Blood Senator Vulgrax urges the PCs to make way to the gate, as he (correctly) believes these attacks to be a diversion. If the PCs remain, 1d4 rounds later a stampede of



soldiers descend upon the raging creatures while others take positions to block of escape routes to prevent the beasts from tearing through the ward. If the PCs fail to leave the area before the soldiers close ranks around the beasts, they get caught up in the chaos. For the next few rounds, they must squeeze past the soldiers at their normal movement rate, allowing a pair of Trypus assassins to anticipate their actions and set up an ambush. The remaining agents wait at the creature wagon to try to feign panic and distract the soldiers.

## THE SHADOWBLADES (CR 9)

Two elite agents of the Shadowblade Order took on the assignment as a chance for revenge against the PCs for previous acts against their organization (see *The Sinkhole – The Tribunal Edicts* for such an example). Twin-sisters, these Shadowblade agents move among the soldiers with no penalty, moving ahead of the PCs to an optimum position from where they can ambush them.

### Iryra & Valya

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

Female half-elf ninja 8

LE medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init+4; Senses low-light vision; perception +12

#### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flatfooted 15 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 55 (8d8+16)

Fort +4 Ref +11 (+2 vs. traps) Will +2; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, Immune sleep

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft

Melee *twinblade*\* +8/+3 (1d6+3/19-20) and masterwork dagger +7/+2 (1d4+3 / 19-20, plus shadow essence poison)

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The twins approach the PCs using Stealth to get close enough to deliver a single sneak attack to start combat.

**During Combat** Disobeying their primary objective, the twins mostly ignore Vulgrax and concentrate their attacks on the PCs. Communicating in combat with quick commands via their shared Shadowblade Sign Language, the twins prefer to target single PCs and wear them down, before using vanishing trick to hide and re-apply poison to weapons.

**Morale** Seeking to make up for past Shadowblade failures, the twins fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +6, CMB +8; CMD 22

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Skill Focus (Stealth), Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (short sword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Bluff +11, Climb +13, Escape Artist +15, Knowledge (local) +12, Perception +12, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +18, Swim +13;

**Languages** Common (Kortezian), Shadowblade Sign

**SQ** ki pool (4), light steps, ninja tricks (bleeding attack +4, pressure points, vanishing trick, weapon training), no trace +2, poison use, elf blood

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*, +1 *flaming shurikens* (15); **Other Gear** +1 *studded leather*, *twinblade*, masterwork dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, 5 doses of shadow essence poison

## CONCLUSION

If the PCs survive the onslaught and the Shadowblades, they should face no more obstacles or opponents preventing them from reaching the Sighting Tower. Thanks to the recent distraction, the two ground level guards have rushed off to aid their fellow soldiers against the escaped bulettes, while

## NEW MAGIC ITEM

### Twinblade

Aura moderate conjuration; CL 8th

Slot none; Price 4310 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

Coveted weapons amongst the Shadowblade, a *twinblade* is a +1 *short sword* that is always produced as part of a set meant for separate wielders. Up to three times per day, the wielder of a *twinblade* can mark a target struck by the blade. Whenever the matching *twinblade* attacks a marked target, it counts as having the *bane* weapon property against that target. The *twinblade* mark remains until a new mark is set or after 24 hours, whichever comes sooner. *Twinblades* react violently when held together. The weapons lose all magical properties when held by a single individual and bestow two negative levels when wielded together.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *doom*, *summon monster I*; **Cost** 2,155 gp



the guards atop the tower curiously crane their necks towards the chaos. Of course, the door to the tower is barred on the inside, however a simple DC 20 Disable Device check is enough to flip the bar and enter undetected. The GM may make entry feel more difficult than it is, or if desired add a few guards to add a few more rounds of combat. The ground floor consists only of a single room with stairs going both up and down. The basement door is unlocked, and nothing is in the basement except a single iron grate in the center of the floor, which the guards presume to be a storm drain. While it appears to be a fixed grate, a DC 20 Perception check reveals that the bolts are keyed. Not surprisingly, Drevis's key

fits in the keyed bolts and beyond the grate lies the Hardy Brute's secret escape passage. Narrow and unlit, it travels beneath the wall for nearly a quarter mile, emerging in the ruins of an old stone cottage in the woods just north of the city, at the base of the Loomshadows. From here the PCs can easily locate one of several narrow glacial canyons that wind through the foothills before they eventually begin their steady rise up into the surrounding peaks. GMs can choose to add encounters here, or even break from the Sink's overarching plot, however for those who wish to continue the series, it is in these valleys where the next segment of the adventure begins.



\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations



# SEEKING DAWN

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**S**eeking Dawn is an adventure for Season 2 of the *Great City: The Sinking* adventure serial. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It was designed using the Pathfinder RPG system and intended for a group of 9th-level player characters.

## BACKGROUND

Following the Lazarites failed attempts to assassinate the outspoken Semheyl Blood Senator Eldron Vulgrax, the radical cultists turned to the aid of the powerful and enigmatic Trypus Academy to secure the senator's assassination. With no safe-harbor remaining within the city walls, the PCs were forced to smuggle Vulgrax out of the Great City. To hunt down the fleeing senator, the Trypus Academy quickly engaged the services of the nefarious Red Mist assassins, wyvern-riding killers that dominate the skies and seek out invisible, flying, and hidden enemies with deadly precision. Now trapped in the surrounding wilderness, the PCs must take flight up the deep and narrow ancient mountain valley passes, for the thick forests which blanket the lower slopes of the Loomshadows offer the only nearby shelter and sole avenue of escape from the assassins' aerial assaults.

## SUMMARY

Fleeing the Great City, the PCs discover themselves set upon by wyvern-riding assassins. To escape certain death, they race up into foreboding Loomshadow Mountains that encircle the Great City and separate it from the rest of the continent. The PCs must move with slow caution to remain hidden from their pursuers, who eagerly chase them through the narrow mountain valleys that lead up into the forested slopes. Throughout, the PCs must fend off the determined aerial strikes of Red Mist wyvern riders as they swoop down upon them on their wicked, winged mounts. After driving off their attackers, the PCs stumble into a seemingly sheltering thick stand of trees that offers them a place to rest and recuperate. They soon discover the copse serves as an outpost for the Kalks, a shadowy tribe of giants and their human allies that seek to keep the Great City's inhabitants from despoiling the wilderness of their sacred mountains. The Kalks are not evil and do not fight to kill or enslave—yet they do not tolerate interlopers or trespassers. Thus, their first instinct is to attempt to capture the PCs and Vulgrax. If successful, they take the PCs back to their mountain home, a very narrow valley with ledge homes built into the precipitous mountain cliffs, camouflaged by natural rock formations. The PCs gain the opportunity to convince the Kalks to

release them or give them shelter. If the PCs have not treated any Kalks cruelly, the giants can be convinced to aid the PCs by making guerilla attacks against the Red Mist assassins, whittling them down and eventually forcing them to withdraw their pursuit. The adventure ends when the PCs successfully find shelter, whether with the Kalks as allies or on their own. This adventure offers the PCs a chance to gain allies in their struggle against the Trypus Academy. Still, players that hastily raise arms against every creature they encounter soon unleash the furious wrath of the Loomshadow Mountains' frigid and wrenching desolation.

## ACT I: THE LITTLE ESCAPE

Act One takes places shortly after the PCs orchestrate Eldron Vulgrax's escape from the Great City and assumes the PCs have played through the previous adventure in *The Sinking* series, *The Freedom Gambit*. If a GM plans on running this module as an independent adventure, he must assume that the PCs are fleeing the wrath of a powerful and wealthy council or individual, capable of paying assassins to "take them out."

The adventure begins on a narrow, muddy deer track heading up into the forested lower slopes of the treacherous Loomshadow Mountains that surround the Great City. Start by reading or paraphrasing the following passage:

*After the long and arduous flight from the Great City, the cold and shadowed muddy deer path seems to offer a bit of respite, at least an opportunity to slow the pace of flight and catch one's breath. Vulgrax and his assistant Merrille look ashen and spent by the exertions and fear. The halfling pauses for a moment to let Merrille heave some sick into the bushes. About a mile behind and downslope, stand the gates of the Great City. Distant horn blares and the sound of an agitated crowd bespeak of the turmoil that disrupts the city. Wiping his mouth with a clean handkerchief, Merrille takes an uneasy scan the surrounding landscape, and speaks his thoughts with a low whisper. "I like this not. Far as I can recall, The Loomshadow Mountains have been marked as forbidden territory. Mark my words, these hills hide tribes of savage rock-throwing cannibals who crush the skulls of sleeping travelers and boil them into stew."*

*Unbemused, Vulgrax shrugs off the halfling's ominous comment, replying almost dully, "Our skulls are forfeit in the City below, we must find a place to hide for the season, lick our wounds, regroup our efforts, regain our scattered allies."*

*Then gesturing towards the entire party Vulgrax adds, "Our friends here will find a way, Merrille."*

At this point, the GM should allow the PCs to discuss a plan of action, choose a direction to travel, or address whatever other concerns they may have before continuing on their journey. The PCs may attempt a Knowledge (local) skill check to recall the following tales concerning this region.

**DC 10:** The Loomshadow Mountains separate the Great City from the rest of the continent. The mountains have never been fully explored.

**DC 15:** The hills are filled with hostile tribes of savages than are known to attack travelers. Note: this information is only partially true, for the mountainfolk are adverse to killing intruders.

**DC 20:** Occasionally, town merchants hock ancient Korteisian military artifacts, claiming relic-hunting adventurers recovered them from the surrounding mountains. Some say, during the first occupation, Alaxi Atregan attempted to expand his territory into the mountains, but his troops mysteriously vanished.

## BLOOD IN THE HILLS (CR 6)

The mountains loom ahead, a hard climb up forested valleys that appear to provide plenty of cover, game and water. Soon after starting their climb, the PCs encounter a scout troop of humanoid soldiers that appear to be members of the Blood Fang mercenaries. Two large bugbears charge at one of the party's point men from behind a rock formation, with two more bugbears providing cover fire with longbows.

### Bugbear (4)

CR 2

XP 600

hp 20; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*

Ranged longbow +3 (1d6/x3)

The bugbears appear to be returning from a hunting expedition, however anyone searching their bodies can attempt a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check to note all of them wear the brand of Blood Fang mercenaries. Three carry bloodstained sacks stuffed with dead mountain jack-hares while the fourth hauls a deer carcass, but drops it back up the trail the instant he detects the PCs' approach.

**Developments:** While the bugbears put up a brief fight, Vulgrax's enemies arranged the entire encounter as a decoy. Once the tables start to turn on the bugbears, they drop their arms and flee leaving behind some of their equipment, including a pair of ornate sterling silver potion bottles inscribed with runes. A DC10 Linguistics skill check determines the runes mark the contents of each bottle as a *potion of cure light wounds*. In addition to their useful contents, the attractive bottles are worth 75 gp each.

Members of the Red Mist assassins have studied the bottles closely, so they can be easily tracked using a *locate object* spell. These bottles give the assassins their "ace in the hole", for after the PCs pick up the bottles Red Mist seers can use them to track the party down at their convenience.

## ACT II: THE GREEN VALLEY (CR 14)

During this section of the adventure, the PCs are hunted by Red Mist mercenaries, a mysterious group of highly trained soldiers and assassins hired by the Trypus to dispose of Vulgrax (for more details on the Red Mist, see Great City Campaign Setting). These ruthless assassins track the PCs using wyvern-mounted scouts trained to employ guerilla hit-and-run tactics to locate, slow, and wear down their prey. While in flight, these scouts use *locate object* spells to track the PCs by targeting the potion bottles the bugbears dropped during Act 1. If the PCs avoided taking the bottles, the assassins must be more resourceful, and conduct longer, more thorough investigations during their search for the PCs.

Using *see invisible* spells, the high perception skills of their mounts, and their own training, these scouts set out to find the PCs. Once they track them down, they initiate a series of strikes intent on wearing the PCs down and keeping them in flight. They continue these disrupting strikes for the duration of the adventure, either until more than half their numbers are slain or the PCs secure a permanent refuge. Even then, the Red Mist's agents perpetually patrol the region, scouting the area from high overhead on their mighty winged beasts as well as lurking about the woods and scouring the valley floors. Once they confirmed a spotting of Vulgrax, the scouts immediately send for reinforcements, then mark the senator's location with thunderstones and smoke sticks. Attempts to extinguish smoke sticks elicit the scout's relentless missile fire. The sound and smoke is meant to draw the reinforcement mercenaries to Vulgrax's location. The riders mark the PCs location by flying in great circles above them. Working in teams of three they take shifts patrolling the area until the ground troops arrive (about an hour). If the party seeks to escape by flight or other magical means, the scouts use their winged mounts to attack from above, making diving charges with their long lances and peppering targets with missile fire. Relentless and disciplined, the assassins do not willingly engage in a pitched battle. Instead, they remain tactically savvy and play off the strategic advantages of the environment. Furthermore, they are trained to counter martial spellcasting and are therefore able to anticipate the ranges of most attack spells.

Once the ground troops arrive, the battle starts. At



this time, determine everyone's position using the Green Valley map.

### Blood Fang Halberdier (8)

CR 4

XP 1,200

Male hobgoblin fighter 5

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +2; Senses Perception +3, Darkvision 60 feet

#### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 65 (5d10+10)

Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2

Defensive Abilities Dodge, bravery +1

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 halberd +10 (1d10+3/x3, brace, trip),  
scimitar +7 (1d6+2/18-20)

Ranged sling +7 (1d4)

Special Attacks weapon training (polearms)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The ground troops initiate melee and engage the party by raining arrows on spellcasters as they approach.

**During Combat** After charging, the Blood Fangs dismount to engage in melee. They focus on keeping opponents dispersed and use trip attacks when possible to gain advantage.

**Morale** When a Blood Fang drops below 30 hit points he disengages and attempts to flee.

#### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 6

Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 20

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Iron Will, Run,  
Weapon Focus (halberd)

Skills Climb +1, Ride +6, Survival +7, Swim +0,  
Perception +3

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ battle-hardened, armor training 1,

Combat Gear masterwork splint mail

### Horse (8)

CR 1

XP 400

hp 15; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*

### Red Mist Wyvern Scout (6)

CR 8

XP 4800

Female/male rogue 4/ranger 4

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

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

hp 50 (8d8+8)

Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +2

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge, evasion

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee scimitar +9 (1d6+2/18-20), lance +9 (1d8+2/x3, reach)

Ranged +1 composite shortbow +10 (1d6/x3)

Special Attacks mounted archery, mounted ride-by attack, sneak attack +2d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** wyvern scouts circling overhead delay missile fire until they spot a spellcaster preparing a spell, at which time they fire to disrupt the spellcaster.

**During Combat** Any PC seen as exposed or not able to get assistance from other party members may be subject to a physical attack by a scout, who directs his wyvern to attempt a fly-by attack to poison and bite the target. Once the scouts engage, they continue making ranged attacks. Should any opponents attempt to flee they swoop in with diving lance strikes.

**Morale** If a Red Mist scout drops below 25 hit points, she disengages and attempts to heal before re-entering combat. After healing once, a Red Mist assassin returns to combat, this time fighting to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +7; CMB +7; CMD 21

Feats Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Ride-by attack, Endurance, Skill Focus-Use Magic Device

Skills Acrobatics +10, Climb +11, Fly +8, Handle Animal +8, Perception +11, Ride +9, Stealth +12, Use Magic Device +11

Languages Common (Azindralean, Korteisian)

SQ Trapfinding, Evasion, Rogue Talent Minor Magic: *Detect Magic*, Rogue Talent Major Magic *Feather Fall*, Favored Enemy-Humanoids (Human), Track, Wild Empathy, Archery Combat Style Rapid Shot, Favored Terrain Mountains, Hunter's Bond-Companions

Combat Gear *wand of locate object*, 35 charges (CL 7<sup>th</sup>), *potion of see invisible* (7<sup>th</sup> level), +1 studded leather armor, +1 composite shortbow, 20 arrows, 4 thunderstones, 4 smoke sticks, 4 alchemist's fire

### Astrid

CR 13

XP 25,600

Female rogue 3/wizard 7/assassin 4

LE Medium humanoid (human)

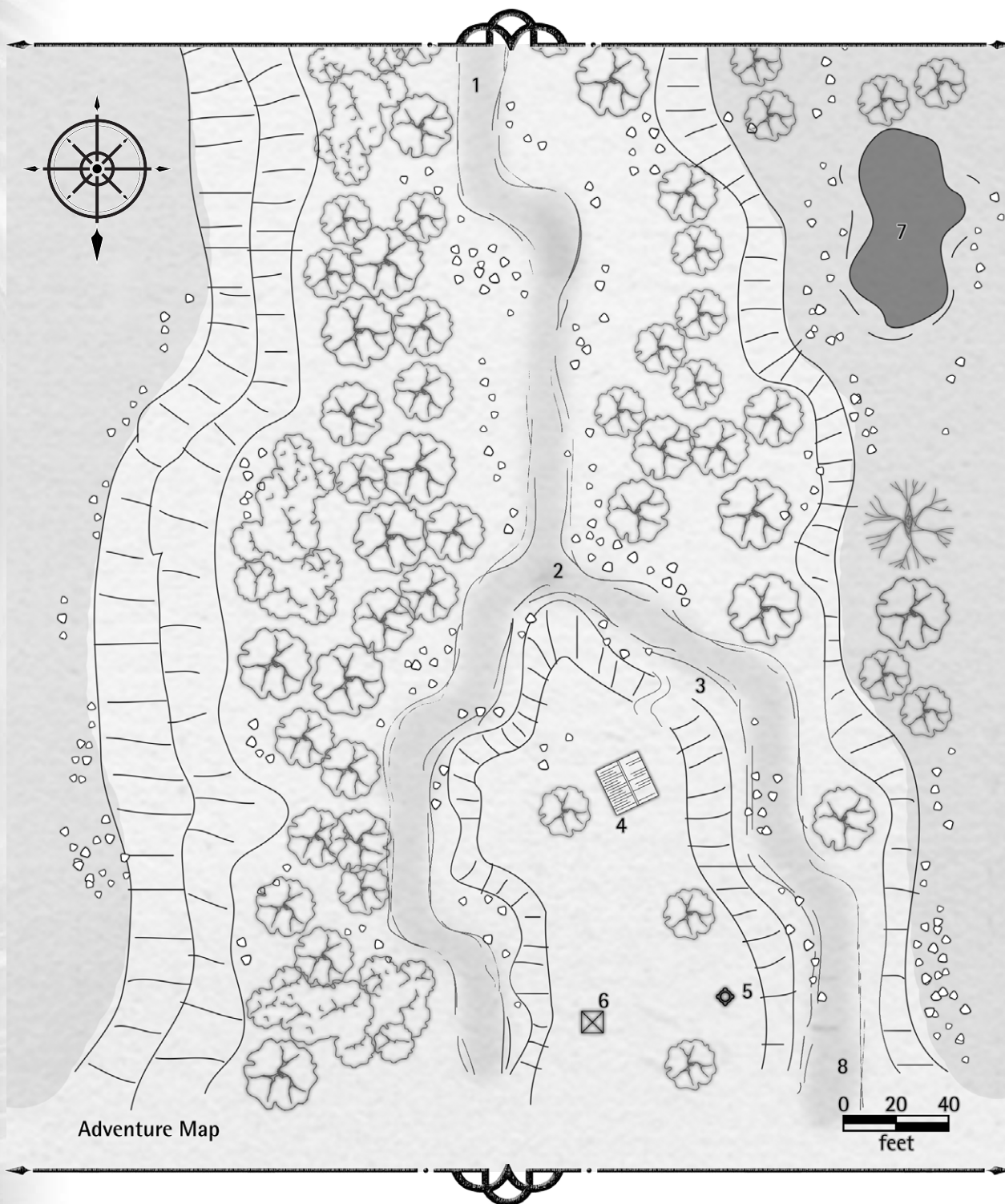
Init +4; Senses Perception +12

#### DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 natural, +2 shield)

hp 79 (14 HD; 3d8+7d6+4d8+21)

Fort +7, Ref +12 (+1 vs. traps), Will +11; +2 vs. poison



Adventure Map

+2 vs. poison

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, +2 vs. poison

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 short sword +9/+4 (1d6+1/19–20)

**Ranged** mwk javelin +14/+9 (1d6 plus poison)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +4d6, hand of the apprentice (6/day), death attack (DC 17), true death (DC 19)

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 7th; concentration +10)

4th— *empowered scorching ray*

3rd— *empowered ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *fly*, *lightning bolt* (DC 16)

2nd— *locate object* (x2), *invisibility*, *silence* (DC 15)

1st— *feather fall*, *shield*, *truestrike* (x3)

o (at will)— *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *spark*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Before engaging in combat, Astrid casts *shield* on herself.

**During Combat** At first, Astrid hangs back, using *truestrike* spells and hurling poisoned javelins from back of her wyvern while sizing up her opponents.



## MAP KEY

The area depicted by the map slopes upwards from north to south. Area 2 is about 150 feet higher in elevation than Area 1. Begin Act II at Area 1

**Area 1—The Pass:** Here a meandering path about 10 feet to 20 feet wide cuts through the woods and up the slope. Thick copses of aspen, yellow pine, and spruce trees blanket the slopes, lining both sides of the path as it rises up towards the thinning, snowcapped peaks. The path consists of hard packed mud, interspersed with rocks and boulders of various sizes. While the passage is easy enough to follow, rains quickly reduce the hardened path to mud. If this occurs, treat the pass as difficult terrain.

**Area 2—The tip of the plateau:** Approximately 80 feet above the floor of the valley, the path splits around a sharply elevated wood that spans the top of a wide plateau. This naturally defensive position serves as the stronghold of the Kalk tribe.

**Area 3—Access to plateau:** Here a sharply winding path, about 8-feet-wide, leads up to the top of the plateau. The Kalk tribe keeps a lookout posted on this path at all times. If the watchman spots intruders, he triggers a log deadfall trap, which also makes tremendous noise. If the PCs are hurrying up the path to escape attack by the wyvern scouts and Blood Fang mercenaries, the watchman allows them to pass safely.

### Deadfall Trap

CR 6

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 22; **Disable Device** DC 25

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** remote activation; **Reset** none

**Effect** A rain of logs and rocks suddenly rain down the trail. Anyone on the trail takes 3d6 points

of damage and must make a DC 22 Reflex save to prevent being knocked off the trail, tumbling 30 feet to the valley floor below and taking appropriate falling damage.

**Area 4—Kalk outpost:** A simple, but sturdy one-room log cabin shelters the human Kalk tribe outpost defenders. Heated by a small fireplace, it also contains cots and a store of basic supplies secured in the rafters.

**Area 5—Signal fire:** The Kalks keep a large stone brazier hidden among the trees. It can be lit from the ground with any fire source and produces a smoky signal fire that can be seen for miles. Should the Kalk watchmen spot a threatening number of intruders, they use it to signal the other outposts.

**Area 6—Hidden supply depot:** Here, beneath a small pile of dead trees, the Kalks have concealed several sealed chests wrapped in oilen linen containing supplies for the plateau defenders. Their contents include 40 arbalest bolts, 1000 arrows, 140 man-days rations, 20 blankets, 20 light maces, 10 medium wooden shields, eight *potions of cure light wounds* (CL 5<sup>th</sup>), four *scroll of restoration* (CL 9<sup>th</sup>), and two *potions of remove disease* (CL 9<sup>th</sup>).

**Area 7—Cold lake:** At this location sits a small, deep, and very cold fresh water lake. The lake is difficult to reach and requires a successful DC 15 Survival check to reveal the deer path that leads to its position. The lake has several small caves near the waterline that can serve as temporary shelter.

**Area 8—The path continues:** From this point onward, the pass continues to slope up for several miles before leveling off and gradually beginning its descent into the flatlands beyond the mountains.

When an opportune moment arises, she casts *invisibility* upon herself and stealthily moves in to position to study a target in order to strike with her death attack. Still, she does her best to avoid getting trapped in melee.

**Morale** If dropped below 30 hp Astrid breaks off the attack and attempts to flee, using spells to aid in her escape.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Empower Spell,

Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Pinpoint Targeting, Scribe Scroll, Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Focus (javelin)

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Bluff +12, Craft (alchemy) +11, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +11, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +6, Fly +13, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Perception +12, Ride +14, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +12, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +17

**Languages** Common (Azindrean, Kortezean), Goblin

**SQ** rogue talents (weapon training), trapfinding +1, arcane bond (amulet), hidden weapons, poison use, uncanny dodge

**Combat Gear** *boots of speed, potions of cure serious wounds* (2), thunderstone (4), 4 doses scorpion venom poison; **Other Gear** +3 slick studded leather, +1 buckler, +1 short sword, mwk javelin, amulet of natural armor +1, belt of incredible Dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, 4 doses of large scorpion venom, a black opal pendant worth 1,000 gp, and a pouch with 29 gp.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Large Scorpion Venom (Ex)** DC 17 Fortitude; 1/round for 6 rounds; 1d2 Str damage; Cure 1 save

#### Wyvern (7)

CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 80; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*

**Developments:** The valley's terrain offers many chances for cover and concealment. Before running this section the GM may want to review the rules on climbing, cover, concealment and attacking from an elevated position. The PCs may climb on to ledges, rock formations or try to seek shelter from overhead attack. Spotting such an appropriate feature is a DC 10 Survival check. If during the assault, the PCs take cover beneath the nearby copse of trees to shield and conceal them from the aerial attacks, the GM may begin Act III.

If instead, the PCs attempt to escape the battle by flying, they quickly find themselves harried by the scouts that use their lances to make aerial charge attacks.

### ACT III: GIVE ME SHELTER (CR 10)

The thick copse of trees offers cover from the aerial attacks of the wyvern riders. Located on a small tabletop ledge rise above the valley floor, a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) skill check notes the trees appear as if someone intentionally planted them very close together, for Kalk tribe druids tended this wood as a refuge and strongpoint for its warriors. The attack on the PCs intrigues the Kalks, who previously detected some of the unrest recent events brought to the Great City.

The Kalk tribe is a curious alliance of several small families of hill and wood giants and the Korteorian descendants of a failed expedition into the Loomshadows (for more information on the Kalks, see Appendix I).

Initially, the Kalks view the PCs as outsiders, though they do not initially seek to murder them, they aren't fond of trespassers and primarily seek to

drive them off. While the PCs have the opportunity to secure an alliance with the Kalks, they can near as easily turn the mountain folk into enemies, depending on how they interact with them. Still, the Kalks tend to act pacifistically and avoid outright murder. Instead, they typically drive intruders down to the beaches and leave them to the mercy of passing trade ships.

If the PCs near the copse, the wyvern riders begin taking additional missile fire from unseen assailants within the woods, forcing the riders to retreat and continue their attack from safe height. At this point, the PCs can attempt to continue up the trail or seek cover within the wood.

If the PCs enter the wood, allow anyone with the Knowledge (nature) skill to attempt a DC 20 skill check to reveal that the copse appears deliberately cultivated. The strongest oak tree trunks are spaced at roughly even intervals, with various trees spouting persistent lower trunk growth. The cultivation makes silent movement difficult (-5 to Stealth checks). A successful DC 15 Perception skill check notes what appears to be a passage between several ancient and thick-trunked oaks.

If the PCs bypass the copse, the GM can move the events in Act III to a different valley later on during the PCs journey in the mountains, using it as the initial encounter with the Kalks. The tribe maintains a network of specially grown defensive copses throughout their territory. Alternately, the GM can escalate the Kalks' missile fire on the wyvern riders to encourage in the PCs the false belief that allies hide beyond the tree-line, in order to entice them to enter the woods. Regardless, should the PCs trespass on their lands, the Kalks attempt to capture them and force their surrender, stating that they shall protect the PCs and will not harm them if they cooperate.

Soon after confronting the Kalks, the PCs are brought to face the outpost's leader, a shaggy half-giant named Karden Voss. Voss begins with an attitude of Indifferent. If PCs successfully change his attitude to Friendly, he agrees to a temporary truce and allows the PCs to camp on the plateau under the tribe's protection while he awaits a final decision about their fate from the tribal elders. In either event, he refuses to allow the PCs to leave the plateau armed until he receives word from the elders. A day later, the elders send a messenger demanding that Voss disarm the PCs and escort them to their stronghold in Kraddok Tor (see Act V).

If the party refuses to be disarmed, Karden tries to assure them that his tribe will at the very least allow the party to be picked up by passing ships on their exile beach. To portray the interaction with Karden, read or paraphrase the following passage:



*"By the ancient vows of our tribe, we Kalks cannot not allow trespassers in these mountains. We do not wish to kill anyone, but if you insist on violating our law, you will face two enemies. Not only will you face the dragon riders from the City, we too shall be forced to hunt you. We will capture you and some of you may die. Some of my tribe may die as well, and we do not wish that. Instead, I now offer you a temporary peace. Please come with us to our stronghold. We will keep your weapons secure and give them back to you when the time is right. Our elders would speak with you. They wish to know what turmoil brings you into our mountains. We may be able to help keep you safe, but not if you don't disarm now."*

Once captured or upon negotiating a peace, the party is led to Kraddok Tor to meet Galdren Kalk' Ar, the tribal chieftain, who will determine their fate. The journey takes a few hours, though for the final portion of the journey, Voss further requests the PCs wear a blindfold. During the trip, the PCs may freely converse with Voss or the six scouts that accompany him to attempt to further improve their relations.

#### Karden Voss

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male sorcerer 12

N Medium humanoid (human, giant)

Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +3

#### DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 68 (12d6+24)

Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +10; +2 vs fire spells and effects;

Resist acid 20

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 large quarterstaff +11/+6 (1d8+5)

Ranged mwk alchemical silver dagger +8/+3 (1d4+2/19–20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +10)

1/day—stomp

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +16)

7/day—elemental ray (1d6+6 acid)

1/day—elemental blast (12d6 acid, DC 20)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 12th; concentration +16)

6th (3/day)—chain lightning (DC 21)

5th (5/day)—cloudkill (DC 19), elemental body II, transmute rock to mud.

4th (7/day)—black tentacles, daze (mass), dimension door, elemental body I

3rd (7/day)—blade barrier (DC 18), fly, slow (DC 18), spiked pit APG (DC 18)

2nd (7/day)—accelerate poison APG (DC 16), acid arrow, scorching ray (acid) spontaneous immolationUC (DC 16), stone call APG, web (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—burning hands (DC 15) (acid), mage

armor, memory lapse APG (DC 15), magic missile, obscuring mist, shield

- o (at will)—arcane mark, daze (DC 14), detect poison, detect magic, light, read magic, prestidigitation, resistance, spark APG (DC 14)

Bloodline elemental (earth)

#### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18

Base Atk +6; CMB +12; CMD 24

Feats Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (stomp), Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff), Wild Talent(B)

Skills Bluff +11, Craft (alchemy) +6, Diplomacy +9, Fly +6, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +3, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +6, Survival +4, Use Magic Device +9; Racial Modifiers +4 Survival

#### Wild Talent (Feat)

**Benefit:** Your latent power of psionics flares to life, conferring upon you the designation of a psionic character. As a psionic character, you gain a reserve of 2 power points and can take psionic feats, metapsionic feats, and psionic item creation feats. You do not, however, gain the ability to manifest powers simply by virtue of having this feat.

#### Stomp

Discipline Psychokinesis Level Psychic warrior 1

#### MANIFESTING

Display auditory and visual Manifesting Time 1 standard action

#### EFFECT

Range 20 ft. Area Cone-shaped spread Duration Instantaneous Saving Throw Reflex negates; Power Resistance No Power Points 1

#### DESCRIPTION

Your foot stomp precipitates a psychokinetic shock wave that travels along the ground, toppling creatures and loose objects. The shock wave affects only creatures standing on the ground within the power's area. Creatures that fail their saves are thrown to the ground, are prone, and take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage.

**Augment** For every additional power point you spend, this power's nonlethal damage increases by 1d4 points. For every additional 2d4 points of nonlethal damage, the power's save DC increases by 1.

**Languages** Common (Kortezian), Giant  
**SQ** bloodline arcana (change energy damage spells to match bloodline energy), powerful build  
**Combat Gear** *wand of dispel magic* (23 charges);  
**Other Gear** *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of protection* +1

**Kalk Faction Winger (4)****CR 7****XP** 3,200

Female hill giant

**CN** Large humanoid (giant)**Init** -1; **Senses** low-light vision, Perception +6**DEFENSE****AC** 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)**hp** 75 (10d8+30)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3**Defensive Abilities** rock catching**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft**Melee** greatclub +11/+6 (2d8+8) or 2 slams +11 (1d8+5)**Ranged** giant's arbalest +10 (1d12+5) rock +9 (1d8+10)**Special Attacks** rock throwing (120 ft.)**TACTICS****During Combat** The wingers hang back and target enemies with arbalest fire, relying on their speed and terrain cover to keep them out of melee.**Morale** Wingers avoid melee at all costs and quickly disperse into the woods if forced to engage directly with opponents.**STATISTICS****Str** 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 6, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 24**Feats** Throw Anything, Intimidating Prowess, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (giant's arbalest), Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (giant's arbalest)**Skills** Climb +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +6**Languages** Common (Kortezian), Giant**Combat Gear** greatclub, giant's arbalest, 12 arbalest bolts**Kalk Scout (8)****CR 4****XP** 1,200

Male ranger 5

**N** Medium humanoid (human)**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +9**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex)**hp** 47 (5d10+15)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** mwk longsword +8 (1d8+2/19–20)**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +10 (1d8+2/x3), mwk net +9 (—)**Special Attacks** favored enemy (goblinoids +2, humans +4)**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd; concentration +3)  
 1st— *entangle* (DC 12), *longstrider***TACTICS****Before Combat** The scouts hide in the trees, attacking with their bows as targets move into range.**During Combat** The scouts attempt to capture targets casting *entangle* spells and then striking entangled opponents with their nets. They also carry specially prepared “sneezing powder” packets that they use to root out invisible opponents by tossing powder. Wherever the powder lands, the pouch bursts forming a 20-foot cloud. Any creatures within the 20-foot-radius must succeed a DC 10 Will save to avoid sneezing and giving away their location. Once thrown, the powder's effects remain active for 1d3 rounds.**Morale** If dropped below 20 hp, the scouts flee into the woods, regrouping later at Kraddock Tor.**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20**Feats** Endurance, Far Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (composite longbow)**Skills** Acrobatics +6 (+2 when jumping), Climb +8, Escape Artist +3, Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (nature) +4, Perception +9, Ride +5, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +11, Survival +9, Swim +6**Languages** Common (Kortezian), Giant**SQ** favored terrain (mountain +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +2, wild empathy +4**Combat Gear** +1 arrows (20); **Other Gear** +1 hide armor, mwk longsword, mwk composite longbow, mwk net, sneezing powder (3 doses), 54 gp**NEW WEAPON****Giant's Arbalest**

A giant's arbalest is a very heavy crossbow sized for giants

**Cost** 150g gp **Damage** 1d12+5 **Crit Range** 19–20/x2 **Range** 180 ft, **Wt** 24 lbs, **Type** P.**Requirements:** size Large; 20 Strength**Special:** When used by giants, the arbalest may be reloaded quickly using Rapid Reload feat.



## Act IV: In Exodus (CR 12)

If the PCs have an entirely negative encounter with the Kalks or fail to interact with them altogether, the Kalks remain determined to protect their lands by capturing trespassers and forcing them into exile. To accomplish this, the Kalks prepare an ambush along the pass that rounds the Cold Lake (see Area 7). The pass winds around Cold Lake at a steep angle making it difficult for travelers to maintain their footing. Travelers can safely move along the path at half their movement rate, however they must succeed a DC 15 Acrobatics check in order to move their full speed without slipping. Running increases the check to DC 20.

**Creatures:** Once the PC reach the mid-point of the pass, the hill giants begin hurling rocks near the PCs to trigger a mudslide. At the same time, Kalk archers fire a barrage of arrows in front of and behind the PCs. The Kalks' goal is to make the PCs slide and slip into the frigid lake water, where they become more vulnerable to capture. As the PCs slide into the water and/or face bombardment from boulders and mud, the Kalks call on them to surrender and lay down their arms.

The hill giants need to hit AC 10 to strike the lake bank and trigger the mudslide. Creatures within a 30-foot-radius from a boulder struck bank must make a DC 20 Dexterity or DC 15 Acrobatics check to avoid getting caught in a mudslide and pulled into the 15-foot-deep lake. Those immersed in the frigid lake waters take 1 point of cold damage per round while making appropriate Swim checks to stay afloat.

The lakeshore's steep and muddy banks make climbing out of the water difficult. A DC 15 Climb check is sufficient to reach the trail, however after triggering the mudslides, the Kalks immediately move to the lakeshore from where they yell surrender demands and try to push any defiant PCs back into the water until they yield. If deadly combat ensues or the PCs free themselves easily, they Kalks once again retreat to avoid injuries.

If the PCs are captured or upon negotiating a peace, the Kalks confiscate their weapons, blindfold them, and lead them to Kraddock Tor as described in the Act III.

**Hill Giant (4)** **CR 7**

XP 3,200

hp 85; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*

**Kalk Tribe Scout (6)** **CR 4**

See Act III

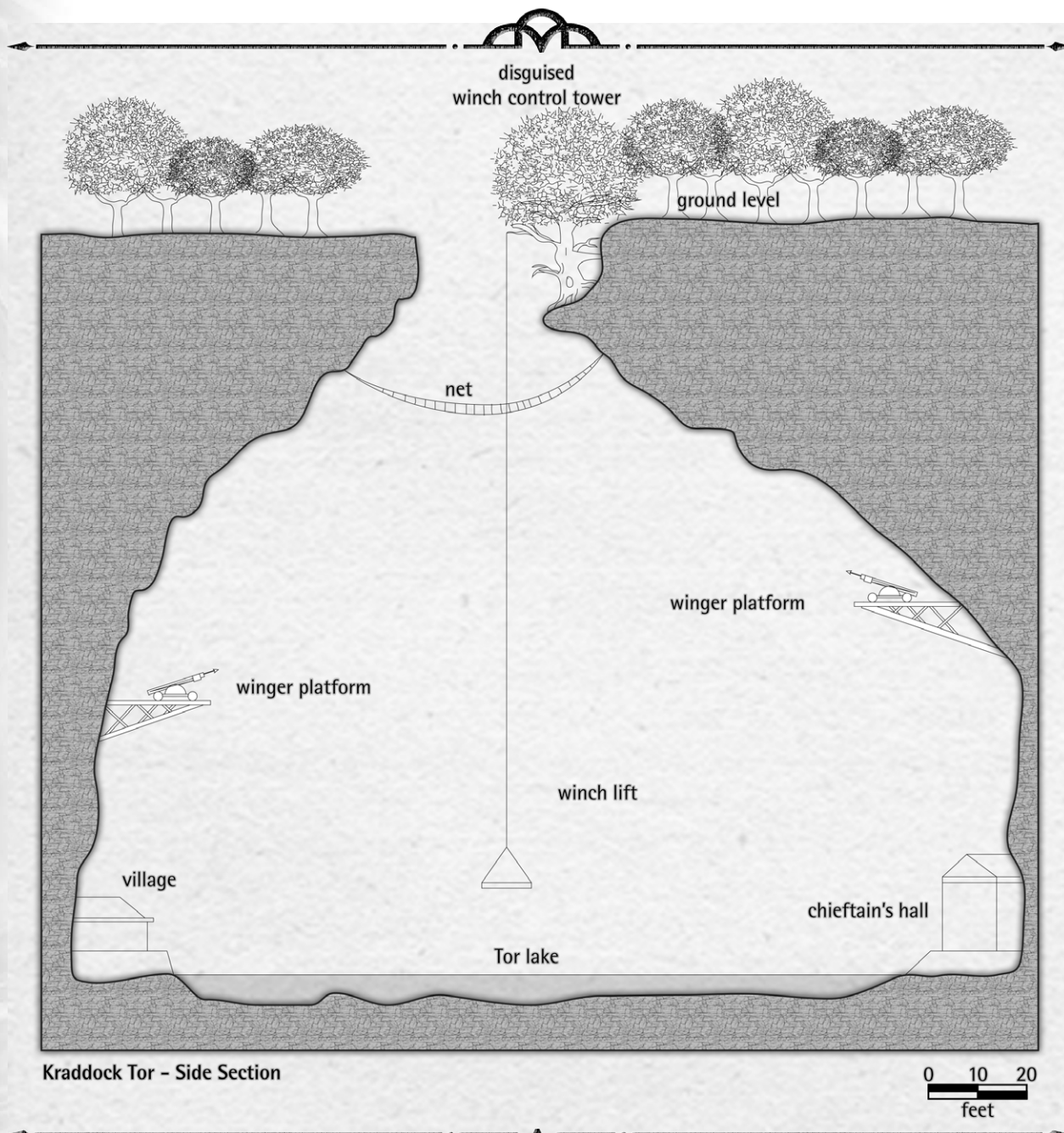
## Act V: Kraddock Tor (CR 14)

At this location lies a canyon carved by a narrow but strong flowing mountain stream. The top of the canyon is narrow and difficult to spot from afar. Along the base of the canyon, the stream feeds into a 200-foot wide lake. Because it provides a sturdy natural shelter, the Kalks have chosen this site to erect a large and fortified settlement they call Kraddock Tor. Over the years, the mountain folk have worked to improve Kraddock Tor's defenses by planting trees to conceal the grounds and stringing the pass with camouflaged nets. Spotting the Tor from the air requires a DC 20 Perception check.

The narrow lip at the top of canyon forms broad overhang and helps keep stronghold safe from attackers. At all times, at least 1d4+1 Kalk tribe scouts patrol the canyon lip along with an *invisible* hill giant winger who carries a cacophonous alarm horn to blow in case of attack. Unless spotted, the guards keep very well hidden and do not engage in combat. If attackers engage the canyon below, the guards try to gain a position of advantage and strike spellcasters or foes that appear vulnerable.

The Kalks use a primitive rope lift and winch to gain accesses to the lake below. The winch control tower is disguised as an old growth oak tree growing out of the side of the canyon lip. Spotting the winch control mechanism requires a DC 15 Perception check, DC 10 if within 50 feet. The tower is crewed by four Kalk tribe warriors. Opposite the winch control platform sits a small archer's outpost, staffed by two Kalk archers who provide cover fire as necessary. The winch is wrapped with a thick hemp rope affixed to a 10-foot-diameter wooden railed platform. The platform can support 5000 lbs and a complete trip takes 5 minutes. Though the platform is counter-weighted, it takes a DC 25 Strength check to operate the winch. The platform has four built in quadralests, which are quadruple loaded heavy crossbows mounted on swivels, which passengers use to engage targets while being lifted.

When pursued by enemies, Kalk tribesmen fling themselves off the top of the canyon lip to land in a net strung across the top of the canyon near the winch control tower. Guards that escape in this manner then climb across the net to where they can reach the winch platform. During their flight, winch operators and archers in the control tower can fire on enemies, helping to cover their escape. Conversely, any enemies that land in the net fall prone and become easy targets for the archers. Each round of movement across the wide net requires a DC 15 Climb check or a DC 10 Acrobatics check and uses a full-round action. The net holds up to 3,000 pounds.



The archer's posts consist of large 30 foot by 20 foot wooden platforms securely affixed to the canyon walls overlooking both the village and chieftain's hall. The platforms can be reached via rope ladder. A hill giant winger and two Kalk warriors staff each platform (double the amount of guards if the Kalks have reason to suspect an impending attack.) Each platform has two ballistae and two quadrilests on swivel mounts, along with a nearby bin holding over hundred missiles for each weapon. The guards ruthlessly fire upon any flying trespassers that enter the canyon using their own weapons as well as the heavy quadruple crossbows.

At the very bottom of the chasm lies a shallow lake, about 3 to 4 feet deep which the Kalks call Tor Lake. The winch platform stops just short of the

water. Rocks hidden just below the surface of the water allow easier passage across the lake. The Kalk tribesfolk know where the rocks are positioned so they can walk to the Chieftain's hall or the village without getting wet. This skill often make it appear to outsiders as if the Kalks can walk on water. The Kalk's lake village consists of sturdy log cabins built on six-foot high stilts to protect against canyon flooding caused by seasonal rains. The human Kalk tribesmen and their families live here, while wood giants and their hill giant allies maintain an oversized guest cabin where they stay during their visits. About 150 Kalk humans live here, led by six village elders. The elders act as tribal advisors to their chief, Galdren Kalk'Ar.

The Chieftain's Hall is a large, very sturdily built





log and timber structure. Likewise, the hall stands upon six-foot stilts. Its main room serves as a huge feasting hall and can hold about a hundred people. The Chieftain and his family live in quarters built into the rafters and separated by wooden partitions.

### GALDREN KALK'AR

Whether brought in as prisoners or on negotiated terms, the PCs are immediately taken to have their fate determined by the chieftain of all Kraddock Tor— Galdren Kalk'Ar. A gruff and aged wood giant, Galdren has little patience for trespassers and is especially wary of any humans from the Great City. The cheiftain begins this encounter with starting attitude of Indifferent. The PCs need to change his attitude to gain his trust and secure an alliance. Fortunately for the PCs, Galdren is open to diplomatic discussions. Following recent changes caused by the Sink, Galdren now fears that the pressure from the Great City will continue to rise and some day soon his tribe will no longer be able to maintain control of the mountains. Mentioning this gives the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks. If the PCs have not intentionally slain a Kalk tribe member, they receive another +2 circumstance bonus to negotiations.

If the PCs demonstrate that they are political refugees from an evil force trying to subvert the

Great City and are not simply criminals, add another +2 circumstance bonus.

If the PCs change the chieftain's attitude to Friendly, Galdren allows them to remain in the mountains and move through his territory unmolested. The PCs may buy provisions from the Kalk and may occasionally visit Kraddock Tor. If his attitude is changed to Helpful, Galdren offers the PCs shelter in Kraddock Tor for the remainder of the winter or current season and helps defend them against attacks from the Red Mist assassins or the Trypus Academy's troops. Still, the Kalks despise civilization, therefore even if the PCs secure their alliance, no Kalk ever willingly agrees to set foot inside the Great City.

If instead, the PCs fail to improve Galdren's attitude, he sentences them to the exile beach. The PCs are given about a week's supply of food and water, and enough material to make a signal fire. Within 1d6 days, the signal fire catches the attention of a passing ship headed to or from the Great City. A score of Kalk scouts keep watch over the exiled PCs until they are rescued and unless they head back into the mountains, the tribesmen do not interfere with their departure.

**Alternate Developments:** If the PCs manage to elude the Kalks and the Red Mist, each day allow them the opportunity to find independent shelter.

A DC 25 Survival check locates an old cave bear den with a small spring that provides them with fresh water, shelter, and concealment. Within a few days, Kalk scouts begin searching this area, therefore PCs wise PCs should take exceptional care to avoid detection. Likewise, within a few weeks, Trypus Academy scouts begin scouring this same area searching for the PCs and their renegade senator.

### Galdren Kalk'Ar

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male wood giant druid 7 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary II)

**N** Large humanoid (giant)

**Init** +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +4 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 142 (16 HD; 9d8+7d8+71)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +10, **Will** +11; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects

**Defensive Abilities** rock catching

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk greatclub +16/+11/+6 (2d8+7)

**Ranged** +2 longbow +17/+12/+7 (2d6+2/x3)

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

**Special Attacks** wooden fist (+3, 6 rounds/day), wild shape 2/day

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +8)

**Constant**—*pass without trace*, *speak with animals*

**3/day**—*charm animal*, *quench*, *tree shape*

**1/day**—*enlarge person* (self only), *spike growth*

**Druid Spells Prepared** (CL 7th; concentration +10)

**4th**—*command plants*(D) (DC 17), *flame strike* (DC 17)

**3rd**—*call lightning* (DC 16), *plant growth*(D), *sleet storm*, *spike growth* (DC 16)

**2nd**—*barkskin*(D), *heat metal* (DC 15), *flaming sphere* (DC 15), *tree shape*, *warp wood*

**1st**—*entangle* (DC 14) (D), *faerie fire*, *longstrider*, *obscuring mist*, *pass without trace*, *produce flame*

**o (at will)**—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *know direction*, *purify food and drink*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 21, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 32

**Feats** Combat Casting, Deadly Aim, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +12 (+16 when jumping), Climb +15, Craft (alchemy) +9, Handle Animal +8, Heal +10, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (nature) +13, Perception +15, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +11 (+15 in forests), Survival +17, Swim +12; **Racial**

**Modifiers** +4 Stealth in forests

**Languages** Common (Kortezian), Druidic, Giant, Sylvan

**SQ** bramble armor (1d6+3, 7 rounds/day), nature bond (Plant domain), nature sense, wild empathy +8, woodland stride, trackless step

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*, quiver with 40 arrows; **Other Gear** +2 *hide armor*, +2 *longbow*

### Kalk Tribal Defender (28)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Male or female human Warrior 4

**N** Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +5; **Senses** Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

**hp** 26 each (4d10+4)

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

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk club +5 (1d6), short sword +4 (1d6/19-20)

**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +6 (1d8/x3), net +5 (—)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth)

**Skills** Climb +5, Perception +8, Stealth +6, Survival +5

**Languages** Common (Kortezian), Giant

**Combat Gear** 30 arrows; **Other Gear** studded leather, light wooden shield, mwk club, mwk composite longbow, net,

### Kalk Scout (10)

CR 4

XP 1,200

See Act III

### Wood Giant (6)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 70; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary II*

**Developments:** As long as the party refuses to surrender they face further ambushes by the Kalk tribe. The mountain folk attempt to capture them first, however if further attempts are frustrated, the Kalks reluctantly escalate to deadly attacks. If the PCs ruthlessly kill tribe members or act maliciously, the tribe immediately escalates to violence and attempts to kill the party.

The Red Mist and Blood Fang mercenaries also continue to try to hunt the party down. The Blood Fang guerilla patrols summon yeth hounds (see *Pathfinder Bestiary*) to help with the tracking and



callously set fires throughout the wood to flush the PCs out of hiding. Conversely, the Red Mist assassins continue their aerial hunt from their wyvern mounts. Once they spot the PCs, they attempt to pin them in a disadvantageous position from which they can rain down missile fire, spells, and burning oil flasks and otherwise pummel and crush them in utter defeat.

## CONCLUSION

This adventure should conclude once the PCs gain some sort of defensible foothold in the Loomshadows (either with the Kalks or on their own). The PCs' goal should be to establish a new settlement where Vulgrax can remain safe from his enemies as well as shelter more escapees from the Great City, fleeing the dangers of the rising Trypus totalitarianism. These might include anti-Trypus refugees, Semheyls, or other similar allies and sympathizers. Vulgrax states to the PCs that they must brace themselves for the long haul, and prepare for the inevitable conflict with the Great City's new totalitarian rulers, a conflict which shall come far sooner than they expect when a lone refugee arrives at the new settlement bring grim news of the Trypus' latest project; news that will ultimately lead the PCs on a dangerous mission back to the Great City in the next installment of the Sinking series— Beneath the Shadowheart!

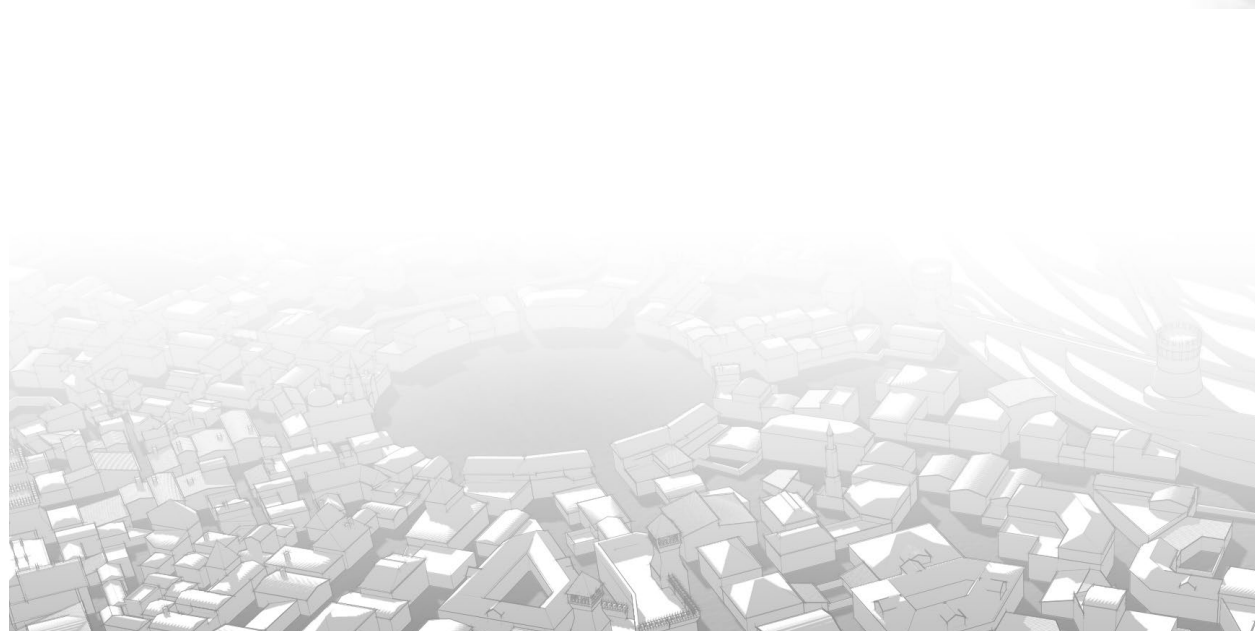
## APPENDIX

### WHO ARE THE KALKS

During the early years of the first Kortezean occupation, the imperialists attempted to expand

their holdings in the new world. The command of governing emperor Alaxi Atregan launched several dozen expeditions into the Loomshadows seeking to claim the fabled mineral wealth they believed lay hidden in the wild and jagged peaks. Ultimately, all of these expeditions failed. None of the troops returned and as a result, so convinced the Kortezeans to limit their continental expansion to the Great City itself.

As for the missing brigades, the punishing climate and daunting terrain of the Loomshadows quickly ground their futile efforts to a halt. Injuries, sickness, and eventually starvation set in. Low on supplies, the weak and weary survivors were forced to attempt to settle in the area, and would have likely perished altogether if not for the mercy of one of the indigenous giant tribes clans that inhabited the mountain slopes. Known as the Kalks, the giants quickly captured the survivors, however their own tribe had recently suffered great losses due to plague. Fearing their tribe's extinction, their hill giant chieftain Grushmog offered to adopt the refugees. The Kortezeans accepted and over the course of the next few centuries, they began to intermarry giving forth the birth of a strange new tribe. The descendants of this curious union clan still inhabit the region today, and hold it as their sacred duty to keep the Loomshadows free from civilization and the Great City bottled up. When on occasion they encounter intrepid explorers, they capture or otherwise drive them down from the region and towards the seacoast.





# BENEATH THE SHADOWHEART

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**B**eneath the Shadowheart is an adventure for Season 2 of *The Great City: The Sinking* adventure serial. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It was designed using the *Pathfinder* RPG system and intended for a group of 10th-level player characters.

## BACKGROUND

In the previous adventure, the PCs made the arduous trek up the Loomshadow Mountains to help secure some sort of sanctuary settlement for Blood Senator Vulgrax whose recent and outspoken denouncement of the Lazarites and the Trypus Academe quickly branded him as an enemy of the City. Tasked with escaping the assaults of wyvern riding assassins and bounty hunters, the PCs most likely accepted an alliance with the strange and xenophobic Kalks, a clan of both giants and human refugees that have lived in the region for well over a century. After a final confrontation with the bounty hunters, the PCs should be taking the opportunity to rest and recuperate in their newly secured shelter as they try to decide their next course of action.

## PLOT SUMMARY

While trying to plot their next move from their makeshift mountain shelter, a mortally wounded man stumbles into their camp. One of Vulgrax's fervent supporters and a fellow Semheyl clansman, he and several others made a desperate flight from the City in order to find the Senator and bring him news of the Trypus' ever-expanding totalitarianism. The man also possesses an ancient map depicting a path originally used by the infamous Azindralean resistance group the Hardy Brutes during the early years of the Kortezean occupation to sneak out of the City (for details on the Hardy Brutes see *The Great City Campaign Setting*). Unfortunately while journeying through the passage, he and his companions were ambushed by strange humanoids. Grievously wounded, he was forced to flee from his comrades and continue on alone.

Fearful of the totalitarian nature of the Trypus' recent actions, the man quickly convinces Vulgrax that he must send allies back through the passage, and secure it from the violent creatures so that his supporters will have a free passage out of the City before the Trypus rounds them up as political prisoners and executes them. Using the map, the PCs venture back through the tunnel to secure it against the humanoids that lurk within. These creatures turn out to be doppelgangers, though at this point, they disguise themselves as the lone

survivor's former traveling companions. After defeating the doppelgangers, the PCs must make efforts to reseal those entrances to the passage once blocked off by the Hardy Brutes that have since been reopened by the passage of time. Once they secure the passage, they continue back to the Great City in order to make sure that others can find the passage and follow it to freedom. Yet back in the City, the PCs discover the Trypus tightened control in order to initiate the next stage of their plot. Encouraged to investigate the madness behind the Trypus' new motives, the PCs next perform an act of espionage that reveals that what the Academe really seeks are the Malchort Cabal's fabled Doom Golems—massive bestial-shaped war machines that ultimately lead to the destruction of their entire empire!

## INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins while the PCs are recuperating at their new mountain shelter. At some point and quite unexpectedly, a disheveled man staggers into the camp, his filthy hands clenched against a badly bleeding gash in his stomach. He demands to speak with Vulgrax immediately, claiming he is too weak from blood loss to waste words on anyone else. Fearing that he may have come to the wrong location, and preferring to die rather than betray his friend, the hardheaded man refuses treatment until he sees Vulgrax. If left untreated, he bleeds out in 1d4 minutes, dying on the spot. Should this occur, the only way the PCs will be able to get any information from him is with a *speak with dead* spell. If brought before Vulgrax, the Senator immediately identifies the man as Garik Semheyl (LN, male fighter 3, hp 20 (currently at 1 and bleeding out)), his own blood-kin and a close and trustworthy ally. Only after seeing Vulgrax does the man accept any healing. Once his wounds are attended to and he is stable enough to converse, he pulls a crinkled map from within the folds of his crimson stained garment, hands it to the Senator, and begins the following tale.

*"My Lord, my apologies for my poor condition. I fear in serving you I have failed my noble companions who are at this time, likely dead. The paper I gave you is an old rebel map of one of the many underground passages the Hardy Brutes used to take in and out of the city before the Empire learned of the Dungeon Under the Mountain. It runs west under the rock formation that the Azindraleans used to call the Shadowheart. I sought to pioneer the passage, to make sure it was safe enough to help our remaining allies escape the City. However, I fear that over the years, it has been compromised, for near the end of the journey my allies and I were ambushed by strange and violent humanoids. I hadn't even time to identify them before one of them slashed my stomach open. I regret that I made the choice not*

to fight like a warrior, but instead to flee. There is more. The situation at home has worsened. The Trypus has started arresting and detaining hundreds of people. Any who question or challenge them. It is my sincere belief that he intends to execute all his prisoners. He has completely quarantined the area around the Sink and built what appears to be a large mechanical device that plugs it. At least that's what they've announced to the public. I myself am not so sure the device is meant to seal the hole..."

After reviewing Garik's tale, Vulgrax asks the PCs what they make of it.

If the PCs respond by formulating some sort of plan of action that involves traveling back through the passage on Garik's map, allow the decision to happen organically. However, should they need prodding to pick up the adventure hook, Vulgrax expresses his concern for his allies, and that he'd like Garik to clear and secure the secret escape route. In either case, Garik can be quickly convinced to lead or partake in the expedition, but requests aid. Either Garik or Vulgrax can suggest the PCs for the mission if they fail to offer to perform the mission of their own volition. Furthermore, Vulgrax expresses concern over the strange plug device and requests that once the PCs reach The Great City, they perform a covert mission to get a good look at the device and find out more about what it actually does.

Once the terms of the mission are set, allow the PCs to prepare themselves for the journey and then move the game forward to Act 1.

## PART 1: INTO THE SHADOWHEART

This act begins in the wilderness a few miles away from wherever the PCs have been sheltering Vulgrax and his halfling assistant (provided Merille survived the previous adventure's encounters). Accompanied by Garik, he points out the huge shadow cast by the heart-shaped rock formation higher up the slope.

A small field of boulders lies in the shadow, having slid from the upper slopes, and Garik warns the PCs to watch their step, for rockslides in this area are commonplace. Treat the rock mountain slopes as rough terrain. Once within the darkest portion of the shadow, Garik scans the area and quickly points out the mouths of several naturally formed limestone caves. On the walls to one of the caves is a small faded carving written in old Azindralean. Anyone capable of reading the language or who succeeds in a DC 15 Linguistics check to decipher script determines the marking reads, "Shadows before sunlight." The secluded cave hides the mouth of the Shadowheart Passage.

The first part of the passage descends nearly a

## EAR SEEKERS (CR 5)

Ear seekers are tiny, pale-colored worms that dwell in rotting wood or other organic detritus. A DC 15 Perception check notices them. Otherwise, a living creature poking about their lair inadvertently transfers one or more ear seekers to its body. The seekers then search out a warm location on the creature, especially favoring the ear canal. Once there, they lay 2d8 eggs before dying. The eggs hatch 4d6 hours later and the larvae devour the surrounding flesh. Upon the death of their host, the new ear seekers crawl out and seek a new host. *Remove disease* kills any ear seekers or unhatched eggs in or on a host. Some ear seekers favor living in intact wood, often hiding in dungeon doors. The small pinholes left by this variety are particularly hard to spot (Perception DC 20).

### EAR SEEKERS

**Type** infestation; **Save** Fortitude DC 15  
**Onset** 4d6 hours; **Frequency** 1/hour  
**Effect** 1d6 Con damage

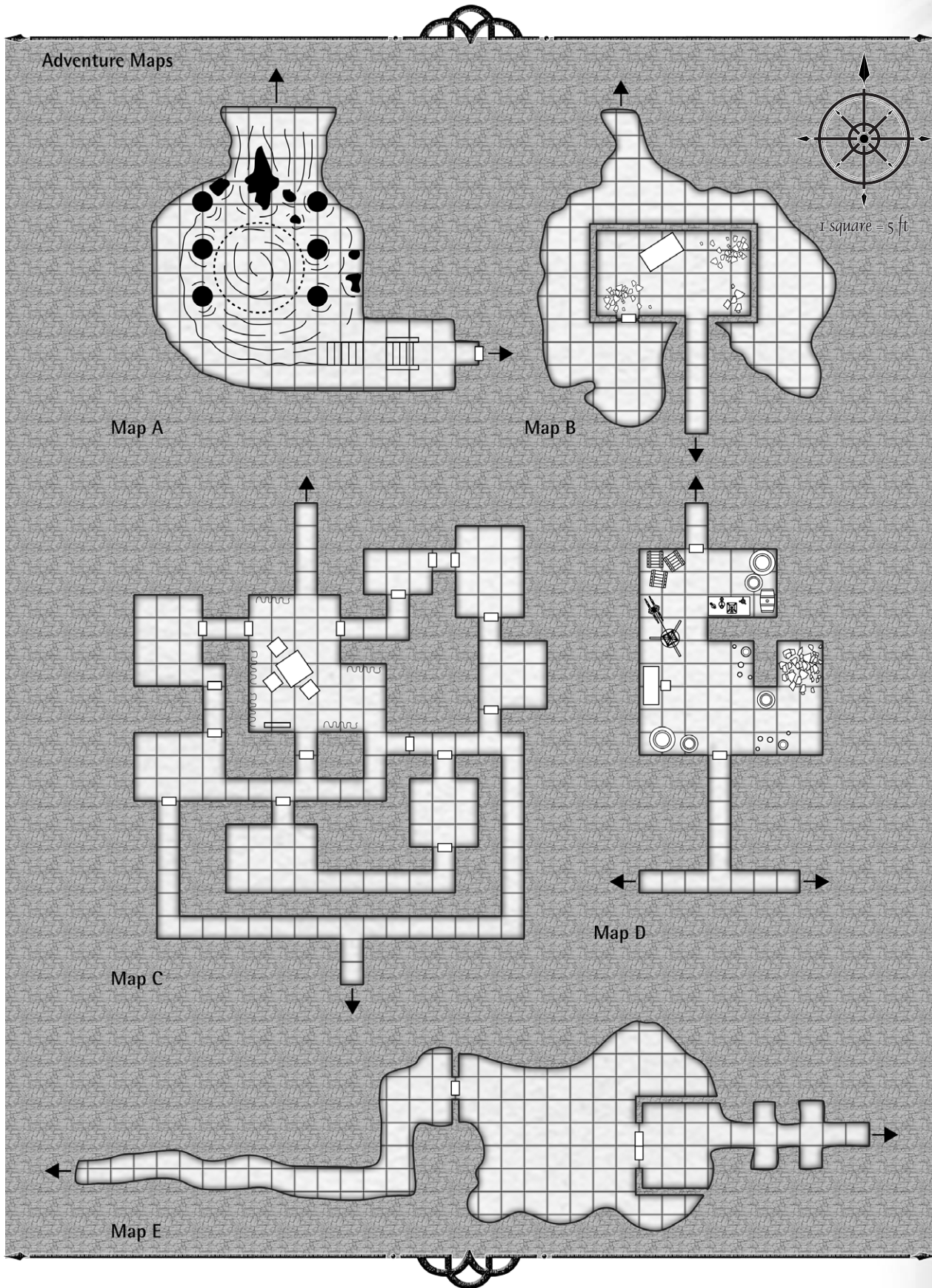
half-mile. Carved by the run-off of small, trickling mountain streams, the three-foot diameter path is a small and dangerous squeeze that can only be managed by crawling. The passage is naturally dark, and those unable to see in the darkness will need a light source. As nerve-wracking as the crawl is, the PCs should face no eminent dangers until they reach the Dungeon Under the Mountain. Instead, the GM should try to build up the PCs' fears by having the paranoid Garik wind them up. Still, if the GM wants to spice up the crawl a little, she might consider exposing the PCs to a hazard such as ear seekers.

## THE DARK ONES (CR 10)

The passage empties into a wide chamber through a section in one of the walls that eroded and collapsed. Brackish water covers the floor of the chamber.

At one time, the water from the streams fed into this room, coming from a clay pipe in the wall and flowing down into the center of the chamber where it collected in a pool. At some point, heavy rains flooded the crawl passage, detritus washed up against the drain cap, pressure built, and the wall finally collapsed. The debris and sediments jammed the drain in the collection pool, and while the drain still at the bottom still functions, it drains much more slowly, in turn causing the room to flood.





While most of the water is only 6-inches deep, the pool in the center of the room is nearly eight feet deep. Anyone stepping within a 10-foot radius of the center of the room must make a DC 15 Reflex save or fall into the pool. Probing the water reveals the presence of the pool. Having stayed to the walls

while navigating this room, Garik knows nothing of the deep section in the center of the room.

Beneath the surface of the water, a set of stairs goes down about 25 feet, leading to a door that goes to the Dungeon's third level. The door at the bottom



of the stairwell is locked and whatever is behind it is beyond the scope of this adventure. A second set of stairs along the opposite wall climbs up to a small landing set before a stone arch. A sodden wooden door once blocked that door, though it now hangs in tatters.

**Creatures:** Hiding in this room, a small clan of dark stalkers waits to strike against the PCs. Shortly after finding their way into this section of the dungeon, the doppelgangers that long held control over the passage enslaved and dominated them. After the doppelgangers tracked the fleeing Garik to this area, they commanded the stalkers to keep watch over the passage lest the cowardly human return with allies. For whatever reason, the dark stalkers do not like water, and therefore try to hold positions on those ledges and structures elevated above the water.

#### Dark Stalker (6)

CR 4

hp 39; *Pathfinder Bestiary II*

##### TACTICS

**Before Combat:** The dark stalkers wait in the positions marked on the map, trying to keep hidden until they can mark all the intruders. If possible, they hold position until all PCs enter the room and then reposition themselves to cut them off from the entrance.

**During Combat:** Stalkers try to keep mobile and keep positioning themselves to allow their allies to gain flanking bonuses. They strike and retreat, trying to manipulate the PCs into rushing across the room and falling into the pool.

**Morale:** While the dark stalkers are somewhat cowardly, they prefer to die at the hands of strangers than face whatever wrath their oppressors might bestow on them for failure, thus they fight to the death.

## PART 2: DECEIVERS IN THE DEPTHS

This section of the passage runs through a series of interconnected railroad-style chambers. It is within these chambers where Garik claims he last saw his party, during the ambush.

### 2A. LOST LEAVES (CR 7)

The passage floor is littered with dried leaves placed here by the creature that hides in the nearby shadows to alert him to the presence of intruders when he hears them crunching underfoot. Anyone investigating the floor quickly spots the leaves. If asked about them, Garik replied they were here when he originally passed through this way, but has no idea why they are here though they seem curious enough. Crossing them quietly requires a DC 25 Stealth check.

**Creature:** In this section of the passage hides a lone doppelganger who acts as the group's watchman. Unless the PCs make a concerted effort to keep quiet, the scout hears them coming and attempts to slip away quietly to warn his companions in the next section of the passage so they can set the stage for their deception.

#### Watchman

CR 7

XP 2,400

Doppelganger alchemist 4

CE Medium monstrous humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

##### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

**hp** 52 (8 HD; 4d10+4d8+12)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7; +2 vs. poison

**Immune** charm, sleep

##### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +11 (1d8+4)

**Ranged** +1 *shortbow* +10/+5 (1d6+1/x3)

**Special Attacks** bomb 5/day (2d6+1 fire, DC 13)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 18th; concentration +19)

At will—*detect thoughts*

**Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 4th)**

2nd—*invisibility*

1st—*expeditious retreat*, *jump*, *keen senses*, *true strike*

##### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If he thinks senses intruders, the doppelganger *detects thoughts* to confirm their presence.

**During Combat** Once he confirms the presence of intruders, the doppelganger uses his *invisibility* extract followed by his *expeditious retreat* extract and jets off to alert his comrades.

**Morale** The doppelganger's primary motive is to warn his allies of intruders, thus if attacked he makes every effort to flee.

##### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25

**Feats** Brew Potion, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved

Natural Attack ((click here to select a weapon)),

Stealthy, Throw Anything

**Skills** Bluff +9 (+13 while using shapechange ability),

Craft (alchemy) +6, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +9

(+29 while using shapechange ability), Escape

Artist +4, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana)

+7, Knowledge (local) +2, Perception +9, Sense

Motive +7, Spellcraft +8, Stealth +11, Use Magic

Device +7; Racial Modifiers +4 Bluff (+8 while

using *shapechange* ability), +4 Disguise (+24 while

using *shapechange* ability)

**Languages** Common



**SQ** change shape (alter self), mimicry, perfect copy, alchemy (alchemy crafting +4, identify potions), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 40 minutes), discoveries (infusion, smoke bomb), poison use, swift alchemy

**Other Gear** +1 *shortbow*, quiver with 20 masterwork bolts, *ring of protection* +1, 498 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mimicry (Ex)** A doppelganger is proficient in all weapons, armor, and shields. In addition, a doppelganger can use any spell trigger or spell completion item as if the spells were on its spell list. Its caster level is equal to its racial Hit Dice.

**Perfect Copy (Su)** When a doppelganger uses change shape, it can assume the appearance of specific individuals.

## 2B. BRUTISH CONFERENCES

Moldering artifacts from a lost age adorn the walls, marking this room as perhaps a common area once used by the Hardy Brutes during stopovers where they might sit and hatch covert plots. A prominently displayed shield of gray and aged wood bears the sigil of Erromin surrounded by dozens of long faded Broadside sheets thickly spotted black with mildew. A long wooden table lies on its side, toppled from where one of its legs gave way. Nearby on the floor lie its contents, a half a dozen dented pewter tankards, a cracked wine bottle, and a drinking horn carved from a giant ox.

**Treasure:** The horn is a magical drinking horn used by the Hardy Brutes before their raids, which they called *the horn of the fearless front*. For details, see the appendix.

## 2C. A STRANGE REUNION (CR 11)

In this chamber lurks the remainder of the small clan of doppelgangers that controls the Shadowheart Passage, as well as hunts and manipulates the dark folk that live in the adjacent section of the Dungeon Under the Mountain. These same creatures posed as dark folk when they lead the preliminary attack on Garik's group, and while the Semheyl insurgent believes he was lucky enough to escape his assailants, in actuality the doppelgangers allowed him to flee hoping he'd eventually return with more prey.

If the lookout from area 2A already spotted the PCs and alerted them to the presence of intruders, they set up a charade in which they pose as Garik's former companions attempting to recover from their recent attack. They begin by talking loudly in order to attract the PCs to their location. Then as the PCs approach their location, they turn suddenly quiet and feigning fear, and poorly hide themselves within

the room so that the PCs can find and "rescue" them. In this case, the PCs clearly hear the sounds of someone talking as they near the chamber. If the lookout hasn't alerted the PCs, the doppelgangers are more silent in their conversations and don't bother to cover up their unusual accents. Within 25 feet, a DC 20 Perception check is sufficient to hear them. Furthermore, as they rely upon the expertise of their guard, they are less jumpy about intruders, thus making it easier for PCs who disable the guard to sneak up on them.

This chamber is a hub and connects to several outlying rooms, which the doppelgangers use as private quarters. The doppelgangers keep this chamber and the outlying rooms neat. Each of the outlying rooms contains a bed, a chest or dresser for personal items, and a few other non-magical items.

If need be, describe the room as follows:

*The chamber itself is swept clean and spiced candles scent the dour dungeon air. Fine silk curtains suspended from iron rods mounted into the stone almost entirely conceal the outer walls. In one corner stands a full-length mirror set into an elaborately carved, gold-leaf frame. The chamber seems to be some sort of hub as several doorways lead off, presumably connecting to surrounding rooms.*

#### Doppelgangers (4\*)

CR 7

\*(5) if altered by the watcher in area 4

XP 2,400

Doppelganger alchemist 4

hp 52; see doppelganger watchman above)

**Developments:** Unless forced into combat, the doppelgangers' strategy is to feign fear and personal injury to keep the PCs wary of outside attacks and keep them paranoid and distracted long enough to lead the PCs into a dangerous section of the passage where they can gang up and kill them. To do this, they offer to help lead the PCs back through the passage playing upon the danger of their mysterious attackers to keep the PCs' focus pointed always outward. They ramble on about the presence of dark folk and really try to intensify the paranoia. If Garik accompanies the PCs, the doppelgangers try to take him out of the equation at first opportunity by poisoning him.

## 2D. THEM BONES

*This chamber appears to have been converted for use as some sort of laboratory. Like the previous set of chambers, it is fairly tidy and has certainly seen recent use. A long worktable holds an alembic and racks filled with all manner of glass beakers and bottles. Near one*

side of the table rest several strange concoctions, while lumps of alchemical goo, crystal, and unidentifiable reagents crowd the table's edges. To the far side of the room is a slight alcove piled with what appears to be mostly alchemical waste.

Three dirty skeletons lie slightly concealed in the darkened rubbish alcove. The doppelgangers have removed all the flesh from the bones in order to conceal the fact that the remains were once Garik's companions whose images they now wear. A DC 15 Heal check reveals that despite having been rubbed with filth to look aged, the skeletons are relatively fresh. If the PCs cast *Speak with Dead*, any of the remains can describe their horrific slaughter at the hands of the doppelgangers, as well as warn them of danger that lies at the end of the passage in 2E (see next entry).

**Ad Hoc XP:** If the PCs use the corpses to figure out that they are being deceived, award the PCs XP as if they defeated a CR 10 encounter.

The exit at the far end of the chamber splits in two directions.

To the west, it leads through a series of vacant chambers and broad hallways that slowly climb upward. While the passage has a few twists and tangles, the Hardy Brute's sealed off all exiting doors and passageways to isolate their escape path from the remainder of the dungeon. The path is simple to follow, and after a mile or so finally reaches its end in front of a broken wall that opens into a series of natural caverns that eventually lead back to the Great City. PCs following the west passage may proceed to Part 3 of the adventure. If instead they follow the doppelganger's advice or simply go east on their own, they eventually come to chamber 2E.

## 2E. WRONG TURNS (CR 12)

This section of the dungeon veers away from the Hardy Brutes path and leads deeper into the Dungeon Under the Mountain. The doppelgangers attempt to lead the PCs into this section for they have already encountered the creatures in the hall beyond and hope to pin them into a position between themselves and the beast in order to defeat them. The beast serves to guard the entrance against the dark folk realms beyond, allowing them to travel back and forth while keeping themselves and their secrets isolated from the pint-sized killers.

Once the PCs pass through the broken door, allow Garik the opportunity to attempt a DC 18 Wisdom check to note that he doesn't recall coming this way.

The following passage describes the room beyond.

## THE DARK FOLK COLONIES

Because of the format of these short adventures, it is impossible to write out every possible side trek that player characters might take. To make the dungeon feel more organic, the author has chosen to leave in the possibilities that other options exist aside from the most immediate and direct route addressed by the general plot of the adventure. If the player characters decide to push further into "unknown territories" there are a few quick ways the GM might want to handle it. First, to semi-railroad the PCs and get them "back on the track" you can send wave after wave of various dark folks from the passages beyond who seem interested in flooding into the section of chambers formally occupied by the doppelgangers. Alternately, you can grab another dungeon-themed module of the appropriate level and have the PCs run through that, retrofitting it where necessary, or put a little more effort into things and populate a section of the Dungeon Under the Mountain with various dark folk and have fun fleshing out your own little dungeon. As a GM, you should never feel limited by what you can't find in the text of a published adventure, nor should you feel like you cannot "flip the script" and improvise if you become inspired to do so.

**Creatures:** Within this chamber lurks a strange and alien being known as a shining child. This evil creature was drawn to this location long centuries ago by the sinister weird-workers who built the dungeon. While the room displays the faded remnants of a once decadent and luxurious pleasure chamber, it was and remains both a palace and prison to the shining child. The doppelgangers call him Eiom while the dark folk refer to him as the Prophet Ablaze. Eiom keeps several pacts secured with the doppelgangers, for they are intelligent and crafty enough to help him potentially break from his imprisonment. In exchange, he serves as the perfect foil for driving off the dark folk. In fact, while disguised the doppelgangers have instigated a growing belief among the dark folk that they must make sacrifices to The Prophet Ablaze to assure he will protect them against the dreaded realms of light.

### The Prophet Ablaze

CR 12

Shining Child; *Pathfinder Bestiary II*  
hp 152

**Developments** Should the PCs defeat the shining





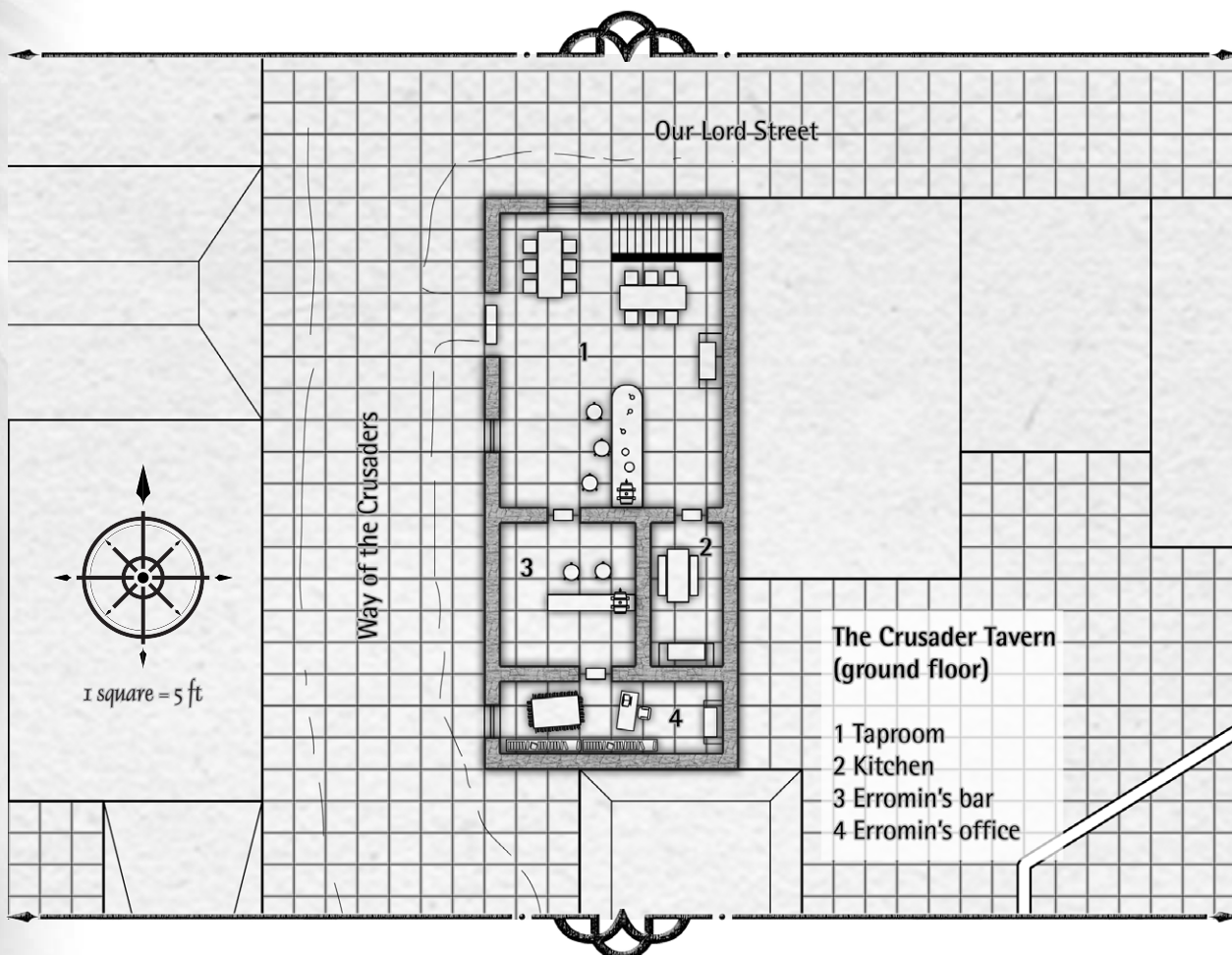
child, the dark folk in the adjacent chamber quickly grow curious and organize an expedition into the Hardy Brute passage. In order to secure the passage, the PCs must somehow devise a plan to seal it off. If they fail to do so, the dark folk soon take over the passage and delight in attacking and murdering any insurgents and refugees attempting to follow the path to freedom. Characters who instead decide to push further down the east corridor eventually hit a dark folk colony that lives on the third level of the Dungeon Under the Mountain. GMs should note that traveling in this direction goes beyond the scope of this particular adventure (see side bar).

### PART 3: THE CAVERNS

Formed from water carved limestone, these lightless caverns are slightly cramped, on average three to four feet wide, but eight to twelve feet tall. There are occasional sections where the passage becomes narrower, forcing travelers to squeeze their way through, but overall there should be no real complications. The walls feel smooth and somewhat slick, and a trickle of water flows along the floor. The lengthy caverns connect the Dungeon Under the Mountain to the Great City. They are only mentioned here to highlight the distance between Vulgrax's camp and the City itself. While no monsters inhabit the tunnel, about a mile or so into their journey they encounter the recent remains of a human who appears to be of Azindralean descent.

### DEAD MAN TALKING (CR 13)

The corpse lying upon the floor belongs to resistance propagandist named Viyona Camlithe, a native Azindralean who had her home and family swallowed by the Sink. Viyona recently escaped from the quarantine compound and immediately sped to meet her father's friends and fellow insurgents, the descendants of the original Hardy Brutes who still congregate at Erromin's, a tavern in the Temple Ward. Unfortunately for Viyona, her captors had previously researched her family history and staged the opportunities for her escape in order to track her to her fellow insurgents. Trypus agents followed her to the tavern, staking it out to figure out who's who. These same agents plotted a raid on the tavern that takes place in the next event. However, Viyona did not remain long at the tavern. Urged to flee the city by the tavern's owner and barkeep Fusker Chewbone (CN, human rogue 6; see the oone Games adventure *Puncture the Blackened Vein* for details), he sent her along the Shadowheart Passage in the company of her friend Dumort Granse, an Azywog from one of the seedier districts of the Residential Ward. Unfortunately for her, Dumort held secret ties to the Lazarites and was assigned to track her passage. Once masked within the secrecy of the caverns, Dumort attempted to turn on Viyona and slay her by stabbing her in the back. Despite striking a killing blow, Viyona held on to life long enough to confront her betrayer and run her sword through his belly. Dumort tried to flee, but eventually bled out and



died. His body can be found lying a mile or so away, back toward the tavern.

If the PCs have means to do so, interrogating Viyona's corpse can prove quite helpful. Still, before allowing her to escape the City, Trypus occultists placed a powerful hex upon her body to assure that even in death her words might be guarded. While her soul possesses answers, the hex curses her such that if anyone attempts to contact her soul through magic an evil spirits possesses it, turning it into an undead killing machine.

#### Hex Haunt Ward

CR 13

XP 25,600

Type magic; Perception DC 34; Disable Device DC 34

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** spell; **Reset** automatic (1 minute); **Bypass password** (DC 34 Knowledge [arcana] or [religion] check to know)

**Effect** spell effect (summons a hex haunt, see Appendix)

**Developments** If the Hex Haunt is defeated, they may make further attempts to speak with Viyona's soul. Viyona can reveal any of the following information, provided the PCs ask the proper questions.

The area surrounding the Sink is now known as the Sink Compound. Technically, Lord Atregan called for and initiated the occupation and establishment of Sink Compound, and assigned the Kharel to secure the area with aid from the mysterious Lazarite cult leader Cygil Karn. Still, puppet Lord Atregan only operates under the word of the Kortezeian Emperor. This means the entire operation rests firmly in the hands of the mysterious Trypus Academe.

City law has been suspended within the Compound and instead replaced with a strict, totalitarian code. Any who enter the Compound agree to forfeit their civil rights. Code violators face harsh punishments, even death by the drooling maws of Karn's ravenous sink beasts.

The price on Vulgrax's head has tripled. While the Semheyls are still free to roam the city, they have been barred from entering the Sink Compound and prominent clan members have been placed under the secret watch of Shadowblade agents.

The Trypus commissioned the construction of a huge machine informally known as "the Plug." The machine rests over the mouth of Sinkhole and most observers presume its purpose is to plug it up. The Sinkhole and the Plug have been barricaded from the rest of the Sink Compound and only those with proper clearance are allowed within the barricade or



anywhere near the Plug. Anyone else caught within the Inner Compound is sentenced to immediate execution, no questions asked.

## PART 4: CRUSADER TAVERN

After several miles the cavern path ends, mysteriously blocked by a pile of crates. The crates are easily pushed aside allowing entrance into a dank cellar beneath the Crusader Tavern (see Great City, Temple Ward area 17).

*The passage emerges in the back of a dark cellar filled with sour-scented wine casks. Above, light trickles through the long plank floorboards. Slamming furniture and shouts of conflict echo into the darkness.*

*Leaning against the wall in the opposite corner, a rickety looking wooden ladder leads to a wooden hatch.*

The hatch is locked with a padlock from the opposite side. The barkeep, a longtime Azindrealan sympathizer, locked the hatch behind Garik and his companions when they left. Garik knows a secret knock to get the barkeep, Fuser Chewbone, to open the door; however, the ruckus prevents anyone from hearing the knock and responding. Further complicating things, three days prior to the PCs' arrival, the authorities apprehended Fuser. Trypus agents are currently holding him in the Inner Compound.

**Stout Wooden Hatch** AC 0; hardness 6; hp 18; Break DC 20

The hatch opens into the storage closet in the back of The Crusader Tavern AKA Erromin's (see the Great City Campaign Setting). In the Public Room beyond, a raging brawl has erupted between a furious patrol of Kharel Enforcers and a number of patrons suspected of spreading insurgency and dissent. The guards are knocking heads and rounding up suspects for detainment at the Sink Compound where they are to be questioned and tried.

The PCs have a couple of options for dealing with this section of the adventure:

As a safe option, the PCs can choose to wait out the conflict. If this occurs, the Kharel Enforcers call for reinforcements and eventually win the conflict. It takes about 20 minutes for the violence to wind down and another 10 for the enforcers to round everyone up before leading them back to the Sink Compound. If the PCs go this route, they emerge into a vacant tavern. The tavern is a wreck, littered with shards of glass and shattered furniture, toppled benches, and puddles of ale and blood.

As a more risky option, the PCs can engage the Enforcers (see Bar Fight) and help the people escape

through the passage (this puts the knowledge of the passage at risk as the Trypus has no clue or even suspicions about its existence). Conversely, the PCs can allow themselves to be captured and rounded up with other suspected insurgents and brought to the Trypus compound near the Sinkhole, or they can remain hidden and trail the guards back to the Trypus compound.

## BAR FIGHT (CR II)

Of the dozen or so patrons in the bar, four are Hardy Brute thugs, seasoned warriors and insurrectionists capable of holding their own in a one-to-one fight. In the event the PCs get involved in a bar fight, assume that Hardy Brutes and other sympathizers jump in to aid them. Rather than play out the specific actions of additional NPCs (which considerably slows down play and results in players watching as the GM rolls dice as her NPCs fight themselves), assume the Brutes and Enforcers are relatively equally matched. When two NPCs face off, assign each a different colored d6. Roll them together with the highest roll determining who wins the round. Whoever scores three wins first defeats his opponent. Losses can be easily tracked using the descriptors *Bruised*, *Bloody*, and *Beaten* to describe each stage. Tied rolls simply mean the round passes without anyone taking damage.

### Kharel Enforcers (10)

CR 7

XP 3,200

Human fighter 8

LN Medium humanoid

Init +6; Senses Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+10 armor, +2 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 80 (8d10+36)

Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +6; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 bastard sword +14/+9 (1d10+7/17–20) or spiked gauntlet +11/+6 (1d4+3)

Ranged net +10 (—)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +8; CMB +11; CMD 23

Feats Cleave, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

Skills Intimidate +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5,

Perception +8, Profession (soldier) +5, Ride +8, Survival +10

**Languages** Common (Kortezian)

**SQ** armor training 2

**Combat Gear** *potion of align weapon, potion of bull's strength, potions of cure light wounds (2); Other Gear* +1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 bastard sword, spiked gauntlet, masterwork net, cloak of resistance +1, 40 gp

**Conclusion:** If PCs survive this section and get a chance to talk to any other local survivors, they learn that the tavern's proprietor Fusker Chewbone was previously arrested and brought in for questioning. Jarg Kalright, a friend of Fusker's stepped in to run the tavern until Fusker is brought back. Jarg (CN human fighter 4, rogue 4) is secretly a member of Hardy Brutes and kept Erromin's open to allow his organization a place to discourse over recent events. If the PCs drove off the Kharel in a brawl, Jarg also remains behind, otherwise he is one of those arrested and brought to the Compound with the other dissidents. If left behind, Jarg knows little of what's going on, save for the most recent events. He fears that martial law is going to be inevitable and offers to get PCs whatever resources they need to fight against the rising powers. He doesn't actually

have the finances to back his offer, though if given 1d3 days he can produce up to 1,000 gp worth of equipment and/or items.

## PART 5: THE PLUG AND THE PANOPTICON

In this section of the adventure, the PCs must try to sneak into the restricted area to get a look at the mechanical Plug. To complete this section of the adventure successfully, the PCs must overcome three major obstacles. First, getting into the compound itself. The second involves getting near enough to the Sink to get a good look at the apparatus, overhear a key conversation, or steal important and telling documents from one of the Trypus council's chambers, or any similar means of determining the true nature of the Plug. The final challenge is to get back out of the compound alive and preferably without attracting attention. Because there are likely many ways to accomplish this task, this section of the adventure is designed in the "open sandbox." This means the GM is provided with the backdrop for the compound along with key NPCs and their locations, some key information, and important descriptions; however, it doesn't assume a course of action for the PCs but instead places the responsibility of anticipating the PCs actions and



\* Please refer to The Great City Campaign Setting or Øone's Blueprints: The Great City for numbered locations



responding to them on the shoulders of the GM. The PCs drive the action, but also determine the course of play. The GM will need to improvise, however the section does provide some helpful sidebars and hints for improvising.

## OUTER COMPOUND

The Outer Compound stands under the command of the Kharel and the Lazarite Cygil Karn. Cygil's power to "control" sink beasts has given him a formidable voice, however his true position remains less stable than he might imagine, for all of the other Korteisian factions deem him an erratic liability.

The Kharel fenced off the Outer Compound from the rest of the city with an 8-foot-tall wooden fence. The fence is relatively easy to breach and serves more as an intruder deterrent than an actual obstacle. There are six openings in the fence, allowing traffic to move into and out of the compound. At all times, a trio of Kharel Enforcers (for a complete stat block, see Part 4.) guard these entrances, searching and questioning anyone attempting to enter or leave the compound. The remainder of the fence is patrolled by small groups of two or three Enforcers. These groups pass by about once every 20 minutes. If intruders are spotted and the alert is sounded, the patrols double. Cygil Karn also joins the patrol, accompanied by a pair of sink beasts.

Most of the structures within the Outer Compound are either abandoned or have been converted to serve as quarters for the Kharel. In addition, there are a few more important structures as follows:

## KARN'S PENS (CR II)

A former grain storehouse, Karn uses this building to stable several sink beasts.

*A horrifying creature scuttles forth on four spindly, insect-like legs covered with thorny chitin that protrude from a small body resembling a maggot covered with toad's skin. Its sphincter-like mouth is filled with multiple pairs of crisscrossing black pincers. Three 10-foot-long spiny tendrils extend from the torso, two behind the legs and one from the center of the spine, each topped with a long, black, glistening spike.*

### Sink Beast (12)

CR 4

XP 1,200

NE Small aberration

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

### DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size)

hp 42 (5d8+20)

Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5

Immune acid, poison

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee 3 stinger +7 (1d2+2 plus 1d6 acid), bite +4 (1d4+1)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with gore)

### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 15 (can't be tripped)

Feats Endurance, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (stinger)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Climb +16, Perception +6, Stealth +9, Survival +6; Racial Modifiers +6 Acrobatics

Sink beasts are alien creatures found in the deepest darkest caverns of the world. Only rarely do surface dwellers see them, though they surface occasionally to hunt meat, a rarity in their lightless depths. Sink beasts hunt prey with long ropy tendrils, which lash out in great lengths and deliver excruciating acid burns when they pierce flesh. They are great climbers and decent trackers, often hunting in groups that employ primitive strategies. They also possess a reasonable intellect, and can thus alter their strategies allowing them to adapt quickly to various changes.

Many centuries ago, the people of an ancient empire known as the Malchorts bred these creatures in great numbers. They primarily employed the beasts for war and hostile conquest. After the Malchort's empire crumbled, the creatures went feral and their population scattered throughout the lightless under realms.

## LAZARITE MISSION HOUSE (CR 8)

The Mission House was a former two-story cobblestone flourmill, though Cygil Karn recently gutted the ground floor and converted it into a speaking hall where he preaches the word of Lazarus to his disciples. The second floor serves as Karn's personal quarters. If the PCs attempt to enter the compound as Lazarites, there is a good chance they'll end up here.

### Cygil Karn

CR 6

XP 2,400

Human conjurer 7

N Medium humanoid

Init +5; Senses Perception +5

### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 45 (7d6+21)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** alchemical silver dagger +2 (1d4–1/19–20)

**Ranged** alchemical silver dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)

**Arcane Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +12)  
8/day—*acid dart* (1d6+3 acid)

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 7th; concentration +12)

4th—*dimension door*, *summon monster IV*

3rd—*haste*, *seek thoughts*, *summon monster III*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility*,  
*summon monster II*

1st—*grease* (DC 16), *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*,  
*magic missile* (2), *summon monster I*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 15), *mage hand*,  
*read magic*

**Prohibited Schools** enchantment, necromancy

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Augment Summoning, Craft Wondrous Item,  
Defensive Combat Training, Improved Familiar,  
Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus  
(conjunction)

**Skills** Appraise +10, Craft (alchemy) +15, Craft (traps)  
+10, Fly +10, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate  
+10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge  
(dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (planes)  
+15, Knowledge (religion) +10, Linguistics +10,  
Perception +5, Spellcraft +15

**Languages** Abyssal, Auran, Celestial, Common  
(Azindralean, Korteziian), Ignan, Infernal, Terran

**SQ** arcane bond (amulet), *summoner's charm* (3  
rounds)

**Combat Gear** *lesser metamagic rod* (silent), scrolls of  
*expeditious retreat*, *obscuring mist*, *see invisibility*,  
*black tentacles*; **Other Gear** alchemical silver  
dagger, cold iron dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1,  
*headband of vast intellect* +2

#### Sink Beast (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42; see above encounter for stats.

### INNER COMPOUND

The area around the Sink is especially well guarded and walled off from the rest of the compound with twelve-foot-tall siege walls, hastily made of sandbags mortared together. Along the walls at approximately 40-foot intervals stand wooden lookout towers manned with four to six Kharel Enforcers (for full stat blocks see Part 4). The guards carry warning horns and heavy crossbows, and have orders to shoot first and ask questions later. Only two places allow entrance into the Inner Compound. Both are gated

off with rolling wooden barricades weighted with stone. The barricades are only 10-foot-tall but topped with rows of sharp iron spikes. A dozen guards watch over each gate. Few are allowed clearance to enter the Inner Compound. These individuals include members of the Trypus, select, high-ranking Lazarites, and a number of Korteziians from the high clans that have always shown their longstanding devotion to the Emperor.

Every structure within the Inner Compound was converted to serve as quarters for higher-ranking Kharel or members of the Trypus Academe. A typical structure is occupied by one or two Trypus members watched over by a brace of Kharel Enforcers, while those quartered by ranking Kharel members are unguarded. Once PCs begin studying the Inner Compound, two structures catch their attention, the massive plug and a small woodcarver's shop called the Artful Chisel.

*The Artful Chisel:* A pair of Kharel Enforcers keep watch over the front doors to what used to be a small woodworker's shop (see Great City Campaign Setting: Artful Chisel). The shop now serves as the residence of Trypus high-sage and weird-worker Ormian the Strange. If PCs monitor the shop for a brief time, eventually they note a trio of important looking men wearing elaborately decorated robes accompanied by a dozen armed guards approach and enter the shop. A DC 20 Knowledge (local) or (nobility) check identifies all of the robed men as members of the Trypus Academe. Unless the PCs interrupt the events, the men remain within the shop a good twenty minutes. They exit, accompanied by Ormian and head immediately towards the Plug. Only one of Ormian's guards follows his master, the others remain behind.

Ormian has just been finishing research on the eclectic Malchort machines of death known as Doom Golems. He summoned the other Trypus members to hear a summation of his findings in a short meeting. During the meeting, he laid out several maps in order to explain how to best proceed with excavation in order to reach the Panopticon. The maps and charts show the location of Eclipse as well as the general location of the Panopticon. Side notes describe limited information concerning the suggested location of the Doom Golems. If the PCs interrupt the meeting, Ormian attempts to roll up the maps and flee, while his guards and the other Trypus members attack. If the PCs instead wait, and attempt to enter the premises using stealth, the papers remain spread across the study table, though Ormian locks the door upon exiting the room with a masterwork padlock.

*The Plug:* From distance, the strange mechanical apparatus being erected over the Plug has a sort of



## WHAT LIES BELOW

The Sinkhole is over a mile deep, and empties into a tremendous subterranean lake filled with greenish blue, cupric-tinted water. Directly beneath the hole, the collapsed rock and sediment form a small island, which has been recently worked into a sort of broad platform. More pieces of the sediment have been used to create a sort of bridge that leads across the lake to a cavernous opening carved with an elaborate façade that marks the entrance to the Malchorts' hidden fortress-city—Eclipse. Once the primary entrance to the Dungeon Under the Mountain, the Malchorts established Eclipse as a covert, and fully defensible underground shelter.

During the later years of their civilization, the Malchorts sought to further protect themselves by building tremendous war-machines shaped like great beasts. Known as Doom Golems, they were built to house entire battalions of specially trained warriors and warlocks, who could control the machines from within. It is said these machines were stored in a massive subterranean chamber known as the Panopticon.

strange, arachnid type appearance and stabilizes itself upon great curved iron legs. A tight framework of interlocking and crisscrossing beams holds it together, giving it strength as well as obscuring the machinery within its central column.

Anyone able to get within 200 feet of the Plug and somehow see above the height of the wall (such as from a rooftop, ladder, window, or a building) or even see around the wall (with an *arcane eye* spell or a telescope) can attempt a DC 20 Perception check to notice the Plug is powered by some sort of lifting machinery. If the check fails, it can be repeated each round until the character succeeds, however the longer it takes the PCs to succeed, the greater their risk is of being spotted. A success check notices that the machinery incorporates several huge winches, each wrapped with hundreds of feet of chain and cable that threads through dozens of churning blocks. A DC 25 Knowledge (architecture) or (dungeoneering) readily reveals the Plug is designed as some sort of lift system. While it might possibly lower the Plug or seal, the most probable reason for the design is for use as a lift mechanism.

**Kharel Enforcer**

**CR 7**

hp 80; see stat block in Part 4

## CONCLUSION

The PCs have limited time and opportunity to collect what information they can before they eventually draw the attention of the Kharel Enforcers or others within the Compound. If they manage to leave without being spotted, they should have any number of options for exiting the City. Still, their association with Vulgrax leaves them marked as insurgents and broadsides posted throughout the City note each PC now has a 2,000 gp price on his or her head. Unless they attempt to disguise themselves, for each hour within the City roll a d20 to determine whether someone recognizes them as insurgents, with a 20 indicating they've been marked. If instead, the PCs are spotted anywhere within the Sink Compound, they are quickly beset by dozens of Enforcers and their best bet is to try to make a mad dash back to the Shadowheart Passage. If they escape, they likely return to Vulgrax with whatever information they may have been able to gather. Upon reviewing information, he then prepares the PCs for the next adventure *Locks of the Panopticon*!

## APPENDIX I

### NEW MAGIC ITEM

#### HORN OF THE FEARLESS FRONT

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 10th

**Slot** none; **Price** 7,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

This oversized drinking horn is carved from the single horn of a tremendous ox. Of simple design, it has only three sets of pewter binding, allowing it to be affixed to a pewter stand before pouring. The remainder of the horn is a light amber color smoothly polished to magnificent sheen. Once filled with ale, mead, wine, or a similar beverage, the user may speak aloud a unique blessing that imbues the contents of the horn with special powers that may be shared amongst a group of companions that strengthen their connections and make them more effective in battle. All those that partake of the drink are able to communicate with each other as if under the effects of a *message* spell. Furthermore, when each of the imbibers work together to threaten an opponent, their flanking bonus is increased to +4 and they gain a +2 bonus to all attack rolls made to aid another, provided they attempt to aid one of their allies who also drank from the horn. The effects last for 1d3 hours. The horn can serve up to 6 players at a single encounter.

#### CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, message; Cost 3,500 gp

## NEW SPELL

## HEX HAUNT WARD

**School** conjuration (summoning) [curse, evil]; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 7, witch 7

## CASTING

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S, M

## EFFECT

**Range** touch

**Effect** one corpse

**Duration** permanent until discharged (D)

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

This foul hex is placed upon any living creature so that if the spell's target is slain, a violent and evil spirit guards the departed creature's soul preventing others from successfully contacting it via a *speaking with dead* spell, or more powerful spells such as *raise dead*, *reincarnate*, or *resurrection*. Anyone attempting to use magic to contact the target's departed soul triggers the curse and summons forth a malevolent spirit known as a hex haunt (see below). Once summoned, the unholy spirit immediately attacks.

## NEW CREATURE: HEX HAUNT

*The near invisible form of a humanoid hovers as its skin, sliced into flowing ribbons, clings desperately to ethereal bones. It opens its wolfish mouth as if to scream, but instead out shoots an impossibly long tongue of seemingly rotten ghost-flesh that drips with maggots.*

## Hex Haunt

CR 13

**XP** 25,600

**CE** Medium undead (incorporeal)

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness, see invisibility; **Perception** +21

## DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 28, flat-footed 22 (+8 deflection, +6 Dex, +4 profane)

**hp** 200 (16d8+128)

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

**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal; amorphous, DR 10/holy; Immune undead traits; SR 24

**Weaknesses** sunlight

## OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 60 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** 2 unholy touch +19/+14/+9 (1 plus 4d6 unholy), spirit's tongue +16 (0 plus soul fire burn)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (spirit's tongue ft. with 20 ft.)

**Special Attacks** energy drain (1 level, DC 26)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +22)

**Constant**—*detect good*

**3/day**—*magic circle against good*

## STATISTICS

**Str** —, **Dex** 22, **Co** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 27

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 40 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (unholy touch)

**Skills** Fly +25, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Perception +21, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +21

**Languages** Common; telepathy 60 ft.

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** none

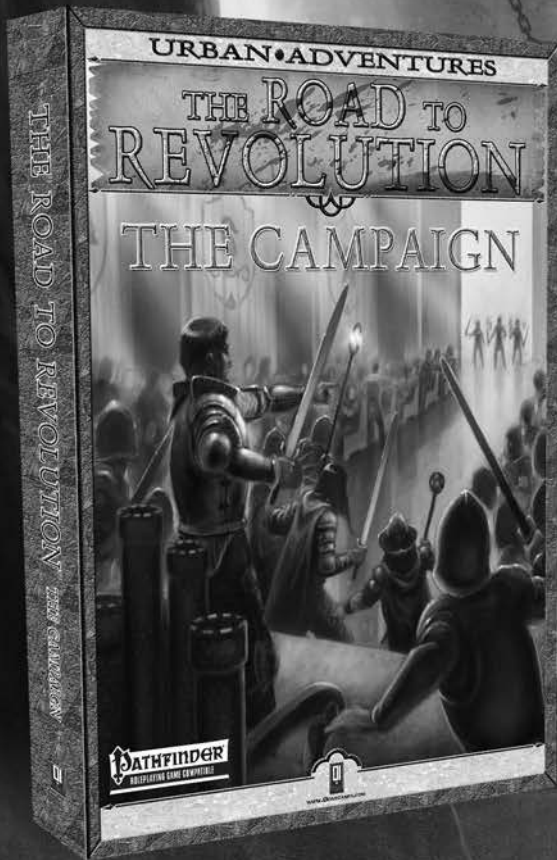
## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Soul Maggot Tongue (Su)** Using this ability a hex haunt that makes a successful touch attack with its hideous tongue can attempt to take possession of a living creature as per *magic jar* spell, however once inside, the hex haunt's tongue breaks off and begins devouring the creature's soul, burning it with unholy energy. The tongue-possessed individual becomes nauseated for the duration of the possession. Each round a target remains possessed, she must make a DC 21 Will save or take 4d6 points of unholy damage and lose control to the hex haunt. When this occurs, the victim begins projectile vomiting black, worm-filled sludge. The hex haunt can direct this projectile vomiting in a 10-foot-line as a ranged touch attack that deals 3d6 points of unholy damage. The vomit is actually an illusion, representing the unholy power gnawing at her soul. The DC for the save is Charisma-based. This ability has no effect on evil creatures. After the hex haunt's tongue breaks off, it takes the creature 1+1d4 rounds to grow a new tongue, which it can then use to make another Soul Maggot Tongue attack. A hex haunt can possess a number of creatures equal to its Charisma modifier.

Frequently described as hideous ghosts, the hex haunt is a sorcerous amalgam of embittered, violent, and tortured souls called into a single existence for the purpose of guarding the secrets of the dead. Only through performing their duties can these souls be freed from this prison, and therefore they perform their duties with extreme relish. Created by evil and profane magic, these unholy creatures thirst for the souls of the living, thus their primary attack involves attempting to enter a mortal's flesh by ramming its ghastly twenty-foot long rotten tongue down its opponent's throat.



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# LOCKS OF THE PANOPTICON

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**L**ocks of the Panopticon is an adventure for Season 2 of the *Great City: The Sinking* adventure serial. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It was designed using the Pathfinder RPG system and intended for a group of 10th-level player characters.

## BACKGROUND

After a dangerous foray into the Trypus-occupied Sink Compound, the PCs uncover the Trypus Acadamae's plot to recover ancient Malchort war machines known as the doom golems that lie hidden beneath the city. For their actions and association with senator Vulgrax, the Kharel marked the PCs as enemies of the City. With the streets plastered with broadsides offering a 2,000gp bounty for their heads, the PCs were left to flee the City or face arrest and likely execution.

## PLOT SUMMARY

Of their own volition or inspired by the insight of Senator Vulgrax, the PCs once again delve into the unknown depths of the Dungeon Under the Mountain in search of the fabled Panopticon, a secret chamber where the Malchorts housed and fought giant war-machines. Their goal is to gain control over the stored war-machines before the Trypus. They must defeat the guardians, overcome the traps, and solve the puzzles put in place long ago to seal the Panopticon. The actual recovery of the doom golems will occur in the next, and final, episode: Doom Golem Rising.

## INTRODUCTION

This adventure begins with the PCs' return to Senator Vulgrax's refugee camp high in the Loomspires. It assumes the PCs acquired enough information to incite the Senator to propose a counter-mission to attempt to race to the Panopticon to sabotage the Trypus agents' efforts.

As soon as the PCs break the camp's perimeter, rebel guards emerge from the brush and escort them safely through the trapped grounds into the inner camp where Vulgrax awaits their return.

Over a feast of stew and beer the PCs have the opportunity to reveal what they know to the senator, trade details, and discuss their next course of action. Once enough of the details of the Trypus's plot are revealed Vulgrax formulates a proposition and requests the PCs head up an emergency expedition into the Dungeon Under the Mountain to try to beat

the Trypus agents to the Panopticon and sabotage their efforts to resurrect the Malchorts' deadly war machines.

At this point, one of the senator's allies hands him a package of string tied oilcloth, which he then presents to the PCs. Unwrapping it reveals a longsword of glistening black iron, its blade etched with strange symbols. Vulgrax offers the PCs the following explanation of the curious weapon.

*"While you were out, I remembered something from my childhood that I thought might aid us, and now... I am certain of it. My father called this weapon the Weirdling Blade. My family kept it in one of their collections. It was recovered from deep below the Dungeon Under the Mountain, and my father told me his sages believed that it was presented to warriors who sought to test their mettle in some sort of martial trial. The markings on the blade explain this, but more so I believe they form some sort of map to lead its carrier to the location of the event, a place I believe is the Panopticon for I compared the blades markings to what I could find of the Malchorts and the writings and runic structure is entirely similar. "*

*The sword was taken from one of my family's landholdings a few days ride north of the city, just off the coast. There were dozens of caves in the nearby hills that, during the time of my great grandfather, were rich with iron. Several of these caves lead down into strange subterranean passages that we eventually determined connected to the grand Dungeon Under The Mountain,*

## STUCK IN THE GREAT CITY

If the PCs failed to leave the Great City in the previous adventure, the GM needs to make additional arrangements to get them started. Depending on how events in the previous adventure transpired, the players may be able to use the Crusader Tavern as a rendezvous point, but if the Kharel seized the tavern, the PCs must seek out another location to hole up, study the documents, and lick their wounds. Once you give them a starting point, they should have the opportunity to contact one of Vulgrax's trusted allies, a burly family guardsman named Baynard Kos. Several days after their initial contact, Kos brings them a message from Vulgrax and presents them with the *Weirdling Blade*. The GM can run this encounter much like the beginning of the adventure with Kos delivering the details. From there, they can make a dash into the sewers and down in to the Dungeon Under the Mountain.

and after the word got out, many local miners threw in their picks to become adventurers. The *Weirdling Blade* was procured as a result of one of the more successful expeditions. Ultimately, few of the expeditions proved profitable, while a significant number resulted in serious injuries and even fatality. Eventually, settlers packed up and left the territory. Currently, it's little more than a ghost town and I doubt the Trypus knows much about anything north of the city. I suggest you start there."

After presenting the blade to the PCs, Vulgrax calls for an agent to get the PCs' horses which his men have already equipped with several days worth of food and a few other mundane supplies, though the camp has little in the way of resources. He suggests the PCs spend the night to rest up, and then head out early in the morning.

## THE BLACKDUN HOLDINGS

Known as the Blackdun Holdings, The Vulgrax's family land-hold lies north of the Great City, several days ride from the encampment. Vulgrax gives the PCs a well-drawn map to the location, so they should have no problem finding it. It is assumed the ride is uneventful and therefore it isn't detailed in this adventure. During the Azindralean uprisings, workers at the settlements Blackdun Mining Reserves revolted, seized the compounds and burned them to the ground, crippling the Korteziens' iron supply. As a result, there remains little trace of the settlement, except the broken foundations of several of the larger

buildings and a dozen or so crumbling coke-blast furnaces. From Blackdun, they can follow overgrown paths up to the hills and into the iron mines. The entrance to the Dungeon Under the Mountain lies in the cave on Vulgrax's marked Shiner's Folly.

Smaller than most of the other caves, Shiner's Folly was never fully developed and lacks a cart system. Instead, miners working these shafts had to haul loads by foot. Its main passage has a dangerously steep decent that leads to a series of interconnecting mine passages. At the end of these passages stands an aged wooden barricade with a warning sign indicating that the passages beyond are unstable and drop into something called the Midnight Sea.

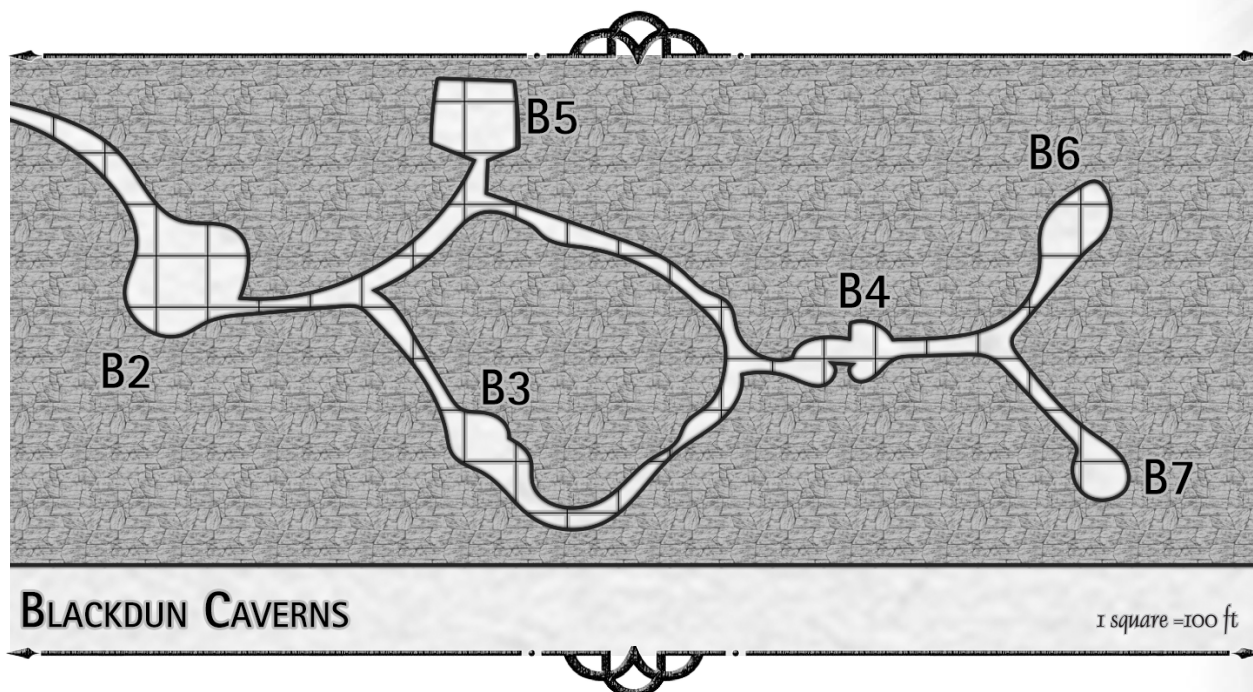
## BI. GATEMAN'S SHACK

At the mouth the passage stands a decrepit shack that once served as the home of the gateman that guarded the entrance to the five locks. Its planks sodden and moldering, the structure is in danger of collapsing.

Inside the shack is a locked chest with a wax sealed scrollcase containing several notes secretly stashed by the adventurer who found the *Weirdling Blade*. These explain that in the chambers beyond, he discovered a number of magical items. He intended to open them, though he was unsure of what they protected and was in the process of researching them at the time of his death.







**Treasure:** In the shack is a chest with half a dozen *potions of waterbreathing*; however, they're old and because the seals aren't great they now have toxic fungus growing in them (treat as arsenic poison). If consumed they function normally, however the consumer is also exposed to their toxin.

#### Arsenic

**Type** poison, ingested; **Save** Fortitude DC 13  
**Onset** 10 minutes; **Frequency** 1/minute for 4 minutes  
**Effect** 1d2 Con damage; **Cure** 1 save

Near the chest lies a half-crushed iron barrel. Any who investigate the barrel and make a successful DC 20 Perception check to locate a hidden catch quickly realize this isn't an ordinary barrel, but rather an *apparatus of the crab*—though severely damaged. The *apparatus* carries the broken condition. The *apparatus* will not function until fixed with either a *mending* or *make whole* spell.

Finally, leaning against the wall behind the chest is an old oil painting. The painting is badly damaged but appears to depict a cotton field with a rainbow zooming overhead, faeries and a dragon flying past. Carved into the frame is a poem; a DC 25 Knowledge (history) or similar check reveals the engraving on the frame is an old traditional poem known as *The Rainbow*. The back of the painting is covered in mold; anybody who takes a few moments to scrape off the mold discovers a poem scrawled in beautiful, flowing handwriting on the back of the canvas.

*While sowing seeds, I saw a rainbow fair  
 Cascading its colors across the air.  
 How placed at odds between earth and the sky  
 Where red dragons roam, purple fairies fly.*

*Humbled at this, I smiled, then wiped my brow  
 Gave thanks to the gods above, and below,  
 Until after four, I finished and fled  
 To the cotton warmth of my feather bed.*

Curiously the poem is titled "The Lock of Air" instead of the "Rainbow".

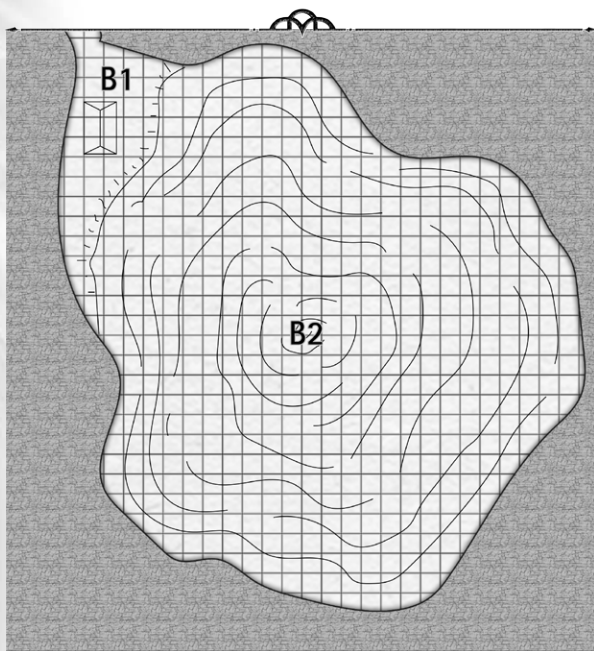
## B2. THE MIDNIGHT SEA

The shack rests on the bank of a large underground lake. The water is potable freshwater, but dangerously cold, just above freezing (see Environment: Water in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*).

The room itself is a massive cavern, with the roof soaring high overhead, 200 feet at its apex. Small tunnels branch off around the chamber, leading to various chambers in the Dungeon Under the Mountain. Limestone stalactites, some massive enough to almost touch the ground, ring from the ceiling and rhythmically drip water into the Midnight Sea. The beach around the lake consists of black sand, weathered from the surrounding volcanic bedrock.

The mechanism to secure this lock lies at the bottom of the lake, 100 feet below the surface (see below).

**Creature:** In addition to the lake's frigid waters, the PCs need to contend with a hungry sea serpent that makes its home here. The beast barely eats enough to survive and would love to devour a PC or two. The sea serpent is bound to this chamber and unable to leave of its own accord. It fights to the death.



**B1 – GATEMAN'S SHACK**  
**B2 – THE MIDNIGHT SEA**

1 square = 10 ft

#### Sea Serpent

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 187 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

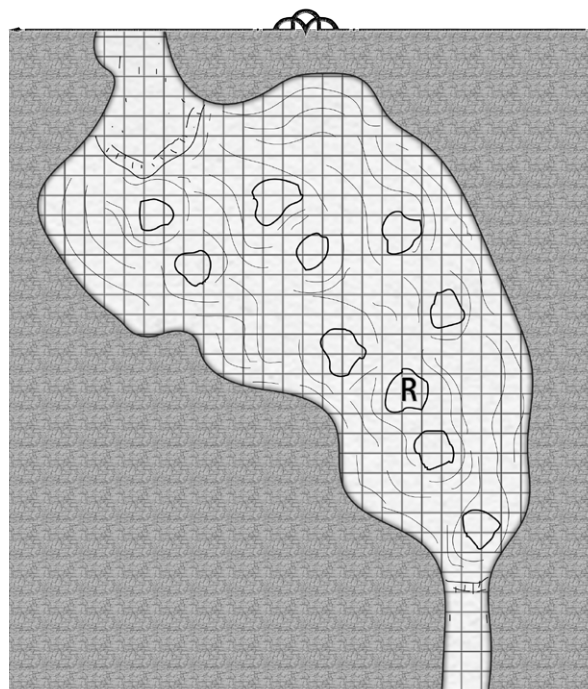
**Treasure:** While the sea serpent doesn't possess its own a treasure hoard, several items rest at the bottom of the lake, the remnants of previous poor fools who became a meal for the serpent. Those who take 30 minutes to scour the bottom of the lake and make a successful DC 20 Perception check locate the following items: a +1 *glamered moderate fortification full plate*, a *greater metamagic rod of enlarge*, and a *staff of swarming insects*. During the same search, a successful DC 30 Perception check turns up a starburst sapphire worth 10,000 gp buried under an eddy of sand.

In addition, attached to the right fin of the sea serpent, embedded in the flesh, is a small golden orb. The orb itself is worth 500 gp, but also serves as the key to the lock.

**The First Lock:** At the bottom of the lake, in the very center, is the lock mechanism. To disable the lock, PCs must insert the golden orb into an indentation upon the plate found at the bottom. Inscribed in draconic upon the plate is the phrase, "Insert the key to set me free."

### B3. A TEST OF FLAME (CR 12)

Malchort engineers incorporated a natural magma pool into the design of this chamber. As the PCs approach, read or paraphrase the following.



**B3 – A TEST OF FLAME**

1 square = 5 ft

*As you descend down this tunnel, the air grows warmer. The unmistakable glow of fire burns ahead, lighting the path to the chamber.*

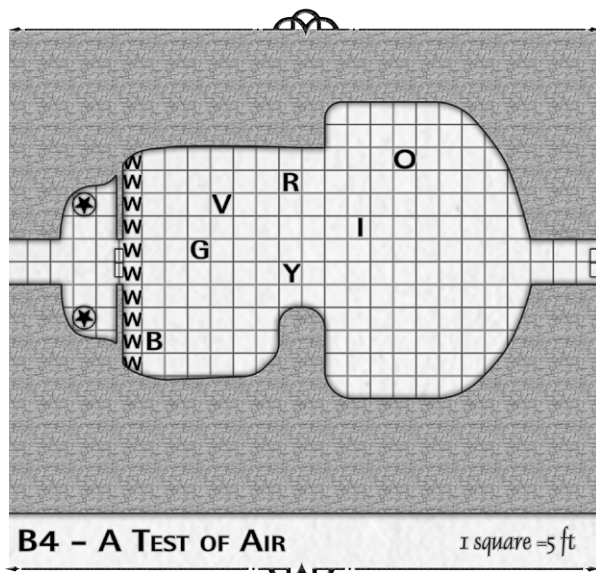
Lava flows from the rocks in the south end of the room, with an obsidian island floating nearby. Rock walls surround most of the chamber, with a packed dirt "beach" to the north and northeast. The ceiling is a mere 25 feet above the lake of lava, leaving little room to maneuver. The entire room glows fiery red; PCs do not need a light source to see in this chamber.

**Creatures.** Malchort sorcerers bound a pair of greater fire elementals to this chamber to serve as its guardians; they are unable to leave until all the Panopticon locks are destroyed. If the PCs defeat the creatures, they respawn 2d4+1 hours later. This near-eternal torment has driven the elementals insane. They spew vile insults in Ignan as they viciously attack any who enter the chamber.

**The Second Lock:** To unlock this section, PCs must somehow traverse the lake of lava, either using magic or clever use of small floating rocks, reaching the area on the map marked by the letter K. Here, they must deactivate a magical rune serving as the lock. Those attempting to use flight, magical or mundane, must make a DC 12 Fly check each round due to the strange air currents in the room.

Using the floating rocks is obviously dangerous. The rocks bob and weave through the lava, sometimes sinking only to reappear a moment later. Odd, inconsistent eddies steer the lava as it flows through the room, carrying the rocks in unusual





patterns. Standing upon a rock requires a DC 10 Acrobatics check to successfully balance. Once anyone stands on a rock, it begins to slowly sink into the lava, completely submerging in 2d6 rounds. There are always 1d2 other rocks within jumping range; making the successful jump requires a DC 13 Acrobatics check. The elementals prefer to target PCs balancing upon rocks rather than those standing on the shore or flying overhead.

The air in the room is extremely hot (150–160° Fahrenheit). As such, unprotected creatures take 1d6 fire damage every minute (no save). In addition, those creatures must make a Fortitude save every 5 minutes (DC 15 +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Those wearing heavy clothing or any sort of armor take a –4 penalty on their saves.

#### Greater Fire Elemental (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 123 each; *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*

**The Second Lock:** The lock in this chamber is a simple rune. A character with the trapfinding class feature can disable it normally; alternately, a spellcaster can use spells such *dispel magic* and *erase* to overcome the lock if the party lacks a rogue. In either case, a Heightened *explosive runes* trap protects the rune so the PCs must deal with it before they can deactivated lock rune. If the rune is deactivated and at least one other lock is still active, it regenerates itself—including its *explosive runes* protective spell—in 1d3+1 days. If the *explosive runes* is removed but the lock is not bypassed for some reason, the *explosive runes* resets itself in 1 minute.

#### Rune Trap

CR 8

XP 4,800

Type magic; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** 1 minute

**Effect** spell effect (Heightened *explosive runes*, 6d6 force damage, no save for the creature that triggered the trap, DC 20 Reflex save for those within 10 feet.) **Multiple Targets** (all creatures within 10 feet.)

**Ad Hoc XP:** If the PCs defeat the fire elementals and undo the lock, award XP for each elemental as though it were CR 10 rather than CR 9, due to the conditions of the room strongly favoring the elementals.

### B4. A TEST OF AIR (CR 12)

As PC approach this chamber, read or paraphrase the following description.

*A pair of small statues, seemingly made from clay, flanks the hall. No more than a foot or so high, intricate and detailed carvings cover them from head to toe. Ahead a few yards, another pair flanks, standing at attention to quietly guard the passage. This second pair is slightly taller than the first.*

The pattern of statues continues the entire length of the hall up to the door, until the reach a set that is a touch over 6 feet tall.

If the PCs search the doorway (dwarves may add their stonemasonry bonus) anyone succeeding a DC 18 Perception check notices small cracks beneath the archway, the effects of the block falling repeatedly, as well as scrape marks along the sides—again, damage from the stone coming down. If a PC wishes to stand in the archway (and four other creatures aren't already in the room) and look around, request a Perception check again. If the PC beats a DC of 22, she notices the prism embedded in the ceiling. If she beats a DC 28, she notices the small vents in the ceiling and floor.

**Creatures:** At the start of the next round, the last pair of statues (actually terra-cotta soldiers) animate and attack anybody left outside the chamber.

#### Terra-Cotta Soldiers (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 64 each; *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 3

If the PCs struggle with the poem (see Area 1), a DC 20 Intelligence check recalls a rainbow has 7 colors, with Red being the first and Violet being the last. The players need to occupy the “odd” numbered colors—Red is one, Yellow is three, etc. A second but higher DC 25 check reveals the last two lines suggests that after the four colored squares are occupied, any other creatures should occupy white.

Deactivating the lock for this room is a simple matter of solving the puzzle and overcoming the room's deadly gas and blast traps.

**Trap:** After the fourth creature—including animal companions, hirelings, cohorts from Leadership, and so on, but not counting Tiny sized familiars—enters the room, stone blocks drop out of the ceiling, blocking all exits. Any creature standing in a doorway when the trap is triggered must attempt a 20 Reflex save to avoid being struck by the stones. A successful check allows the PC to decide which side of the door they wish to be on; those who fail the Reflex save suffer 4d6 points of damage and are forced into the hallway.

**Trap B:** As soon as the blocks drop, deadly chlorine gas begins to fill the room. The gas enters through tiny vents in the floor and ceiling, and continues as long as the doors are sealed shut.

#### Chlorine Gas Trap

CR 10

XP 9,600

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** proximity; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** spell effect (*cloudkill*, 3 or fewer HD die [no save], 4–6 HD DC 22 Fort save, death on failure, 1d4 Con on success, 7+ HD 1d4 Con damage, Fortitude DC 22 for half damage); **Multiple Targets** (all creatures within the room.)

**Bypass:** Exposing the prism imbedded in the ceiling to a light source activates the trap's bypass sequence. Rainbow-hued rays of light shower the chamber. The prism is angled such that a ray of each color of the light spectrum lands on a different square as indicated on the map. R for red, O for orange, Y for yellow, G for green, B for blue, I for indigo, and V for violet. Additionally, white light bathes marked areas along the room's perimeter. One round after the colors appear, creatures must be standing in specific squares: one creature must occupy Red, Yellow, Blue, and Violet. If any other creatures made their way into the room, they must be standing in the White light. Failure to correctly bypass trap B triggers trap C.

**Trap C:** If the proper squares aren't occupied, each remaining square is targeted with a *disintegrate* spell every round until the correct squares are occupied.

#### Death Ray Trap

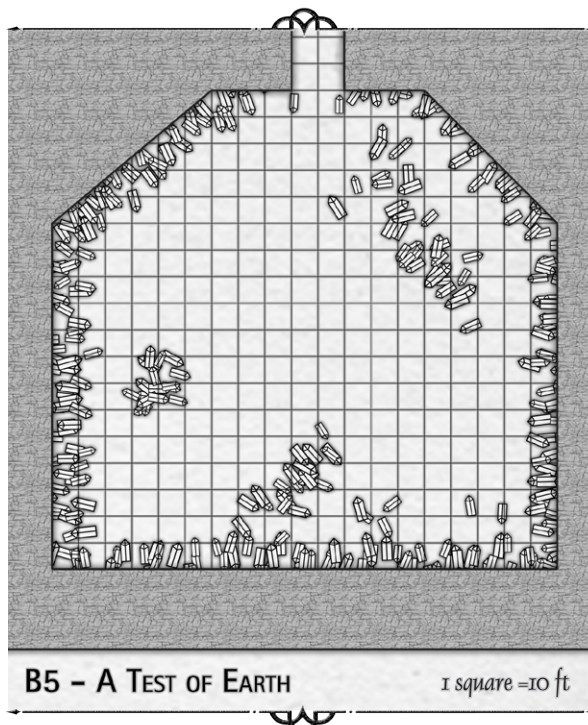
CR 12

XP 19,200

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** timed; **Reset** automatic



**Effect** spell effect (*disintegrate*, CL 12, ranged touch +9, 24d6 damage, Fortitude DC 24 for 5d6 damage); **Multiple Targets** (all creatures in room not on "safe" squares)

Once the correct squares are occupied, read or paraphrase the following information to the players:

*You hear a loud click, as though a great lock were opened. Immediately, the holes that were billowing forth with deadly gas begin to reverse, drawing the gas out of the room. The rocks blocking the entryway begin to grind and make their way back into place above the doorways. Those in the corridor find the statues they were fighting move back to where they started and then deanimate. It would seem that the puzzle has been solved.*

The puzzle has indeed been solved at this point, and the lock in place is released for 1d4+2 days. If the other locks are not released by that amount of time, this lock—and the associated traps—resets itself.

**Treasure:** The room has a few scraps left over from previous failed attempts. Scattered about the room are a total of 147 gp; scooping them all up will take a few minutes. Tucked in corner is a garnet worth 200 gp, and nestled in another corner is a +1 *aberrations bane* longbow.

## B5. A TEST OF EARTH (CR 10)

This immense cavern is filled with crystals. The roof of this cavern is 50 feet high at its highest point, and slopes downward to a height of 40 feet against the walls. Clear crystals protrude from odd angles all



around the room that can serve individuals as cover. The floor is made of dirt, but contains small particles of crystal material, creating a glittery effect along the ground. The largest crystals—both in length and diameter—are closer to the bottom of the room, with lengths up to 15 feet long and diameters of 8–10 feet. The crystals closest to the ceiling are as small as a few inches in length and diameter.

The room itself is oddly shaped, with one long wall to the south and angled walls to the northeast and northwest.

Any character carrying a light source—mundane or magical—finds the light from the source oddly refracted throughout the room. Characters relying upon such light sources suffer a 20% miss chance due to the odd refraction, unless they find some way to overcome it (such as casting *darkvision* on themselves and/or allies).

**Creatures:** Within this chamber lurks an adult crystal dragon. Ages ago, her mother struck a deal with the Malchorts promising that she and her offspring would forever guard this cavern in exchange for a safe haven deep beneath the ground. Various ventilation shafts give her access to the surface, where she hunts for meals, stretches her wings, and seeks to gather more items for her treasure hoard. In addition to the shafts leading to the outdoors, there are also a plethora of tunnels the dragon and her mother burrowed over the decades. Despite the many tunnels, the ground in this room is stable.

#### Shimmeracth

CR 10

XP 9,600

LE adult crystal dragon, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*

hp 149

**Tactics:** Free to come and go, this guardian is in full control of her mental faculties, unlike most of the other denizens encountered. She relishes in the idea of a good combat—all the better to add to her hoard! However, she isn't crazy and won't stick around to fight to the death. She opens combat by blasting the PCs with her *glitterdust* spell-like ability. She aims the spell so as to affect as many PCs as possible in one shot, hoping to blind them all. In the short term she ignores those who appear to be blinded, knowing she has 13 rounds—over a minute—where they will be effectively useless.

If she blinds all the PCs, she moves in and, one at a time, opens up with a full attack. If a target remains with sight, she either uses her *glitterdust* ability again, or blasts that character with her breath weapon. She'll willingly engage a single target in one-on-one

melee combat, trusting in her abilities and combat prowess. If more than one target remains, she prefers to remain at distance and blast from safety.

If she ever feels unsafe, such as if PCs seem to be immune to her *glitterdust* and breath weapon, or if she is reduced to less than one-quarter of her hit points while in melee, she blasts foes with her *color spray* ability, and uses the subsequent advantage of stunned opponents to make her escape, flying through one of her many ceiling fissures leading to the outdoors. Should she be forced to retreat in such a manner, she vows vengeance against the PCs, seeking to learn who they are and how to defeat them. In such a circumstance, she could end up allied with the PCs' foes, or simply arrive while the PCs are fighting for their lives, resulting in a wild three-sided battle.

**Treasure:** Hidden atop the jutting crystals near the cavern's ceiling lies Shimmeracth's treasure hoard. It contains a *sword of subtlety*, *potion of fly*, *potion of displacement*, a divine scroll with *pass without trace*, an arcane scroll with *identify* and *darkvision*, a red garnet worth 90 gp, a tourmaline worth 100 gp, a star rose quartz worth 30 gp, 950 gp, and 180 pp.

**The Third Lock:** The lock in this room is located in the square marked with an "X," on a crystal about 20 feet above the ground. The mechanism itself is a fairly simple device requiring a 90 degree turn to the right. When that is done, the PCs hear a faint humming sound as the crystals briefly vibrate, then all is silent again. If the other locks are not secured, this lock will reset in 1d3+1 days.

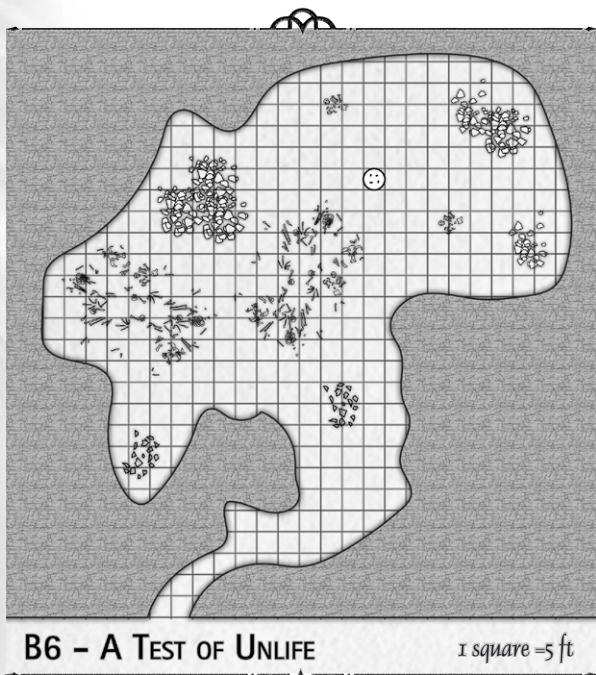
## B6. A TEST OF UNLIFE (CR 11)

The room is small, compared to the other chambers at least. The ground slopes downward toward the middle of the room at a very slight incline. The walls are rough stone, and the ceiling—also rough stone—is uneven but on average about 15 feet overhead. The room is strewn with litter and filth, as well as rubble from a few cave-ins over the years—gravel, dirt, bones, moldering viscera, and other unidentifiable detritus cover every inch of the floor space in this room.

The volume of rubble and debris covering this room make it difficult terrain.

This room is protected by a permanent *unhallow* spell. As long as it remains in effect, the entire room is covered by a *magic circle against good* spell. It also wards all creatures within the room against mental control.

**Creatures:** four totemmasks guard this cavern. Hungry for flesh they violently set upon any living



creature entering their demesne.

#### Gray Guardians (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200

Totenmasks; *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*  
hp 85 each

**Tactics** For as long as the room's *unhallow* spell remains effective, increase the AC, touch AC, and flat-footed AC for the totemmasks by +2 (this is a deflection bonus), and increase all saves by +2 (this is a resistance bonus). The creatures hunger for flesh, seeking to sink their claws into a target so as to slurp away flesh from a victim for the first time in ages.

**Treasure:** Scattered about the room lie several items, a masterwork dagger, an *amulet of natural armor* +1, +1 *leather armor*, a small sack containing

347 gp, a pouch containing a small diamond (250 gp) and a star sapphire (500 gp). Each item requires 10 minutes of searching through the filth and rubble to locate.

**The Fourth Lock:** DC 25 Perception check to check the floor, locates a curious stone plate bored with four unusual holes set at the dead center of the room. To open the lock, PCs must insert an odd-looking tooth from each totemmaske into each of the holes in the plate. When completed, the teeth turn to dust and the stone plate slowly sinks into the ground and unlocks. If the other locks aren't disabled within 1d2+1 days, the locking mechanism rises out of the ground, and the totemmasks respawn.

## B7. THE DARKGATE

*The passageway empties into a circular, seemingly dead-end cave. The floor in the very center of the room is engraved with an unknown rune.*

A DC 35 Knowledge (arcane) check identifies the rune as an ancient and currently inactive gate. The rune is in fact the Darkgate. The gate only activates after all of the Locks have been disabled. Once this occurs, a strange pulsing sound emanates from the rune, shortly after, the rune erupts into a pillar of dark green fire. Anyone stepping into the fire is immediately transported to a new location within the Panopticon. Once this occurs, the adventure ends.

## CONCLUSION

Disabling all five locking mechanisms allows the PCs to open the Darkgate granting them access to the fabled Panopticon. These events and others are covered in the Sinking final chapter: **Doom Golem Rising**.





URBAN•ADVENTURES

# THE GREAT CITY

## CAMPAIGN SETTING



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Backdrops

UA002 - The Great City  
A Pound of Flesh

UA003 - The Great City  
Color Map Folio

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# DOOM GOLEM RISING

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**D**oom Golem Rising is the concluding adventure for Season 2 of the Great City: The Sinking adventure serial. It can be played as part of the series, or as a stand-alone adventure, though it assumes the Great City has suffered a recent cataclysmic event. It was designed using the Pathfinder RPG system and intended for a group of 11th-level player characters.

## BACKGROUND

After successfully uncovering and disabling a series of magical locks, the PCs activated the mysterious Darkgate, a supposed passage into the fabled Panopticon, a great arena where the ancient Malchort competitively battled using tremendous machines of war known as the Doom Golems. The adventure begins as the PCs emerge from the Darkgate into the Panopticon.

## PLOT SUMMARY

As the finale to an ongoing series, *Doom Golem Rising* possesses the potential to become a fairly complex scenario. While the PCs face the time constraint of stopping the Trypus Academy and their allies from completing their goals, there remain several roads to triumph. For this reason, the GM should be clear about the major objectives the PCs need to fulfill and prepare to accommodate those groups which decide to meet these objectives creatively.

In the First Act, the PCs need to decipher that their enemies raided the Panopticon for its greatest treasure, the ancient Malchort war machines known as Doom Golems. They must also get the sense that in order to stop them, they must fight fire with fire and gain control of their own golem. While there are numerous ways for the PCs to gain control of a golem, the easiest is to befriend the semi-hostile progenitors of the Kortezyan people.

In the Second act, the PCs journey to the surface in pursuit of another golem previously taken by the Trypus Academy and their allies. The path leads to the Academy's former encampment near bottom of the Sink, now overrun with the Malchorts' ancestral enemies, a violent tribe of rock trolls.

In the Third Act, the PCs reach the surface where they finally gain the opportunity to face off against their nemeses in a doom golem brawl in the center of the city.

In the Fourth and final act, the PCs must hunt down all those responsible for the Sink, and recover evidence to prove their guilt in order to restore balance to the Great City.

## PART I. INTO THE PANOPTICON

The adventure begins as soon as the PCs step into the column of glowing green flame known as the Darkgate, which appears at the end of the previous adventure, *Locks of the Panopticon*. The Darkgate passes them through a dimensional rift, transporting them far below the Great City into the secret chambers of the Panopticon. They arrive at location P1.

### P1. THE PANOPTICON (CR 13)

When the PCs emerge from the Darkgate, read or paraphrase the following:

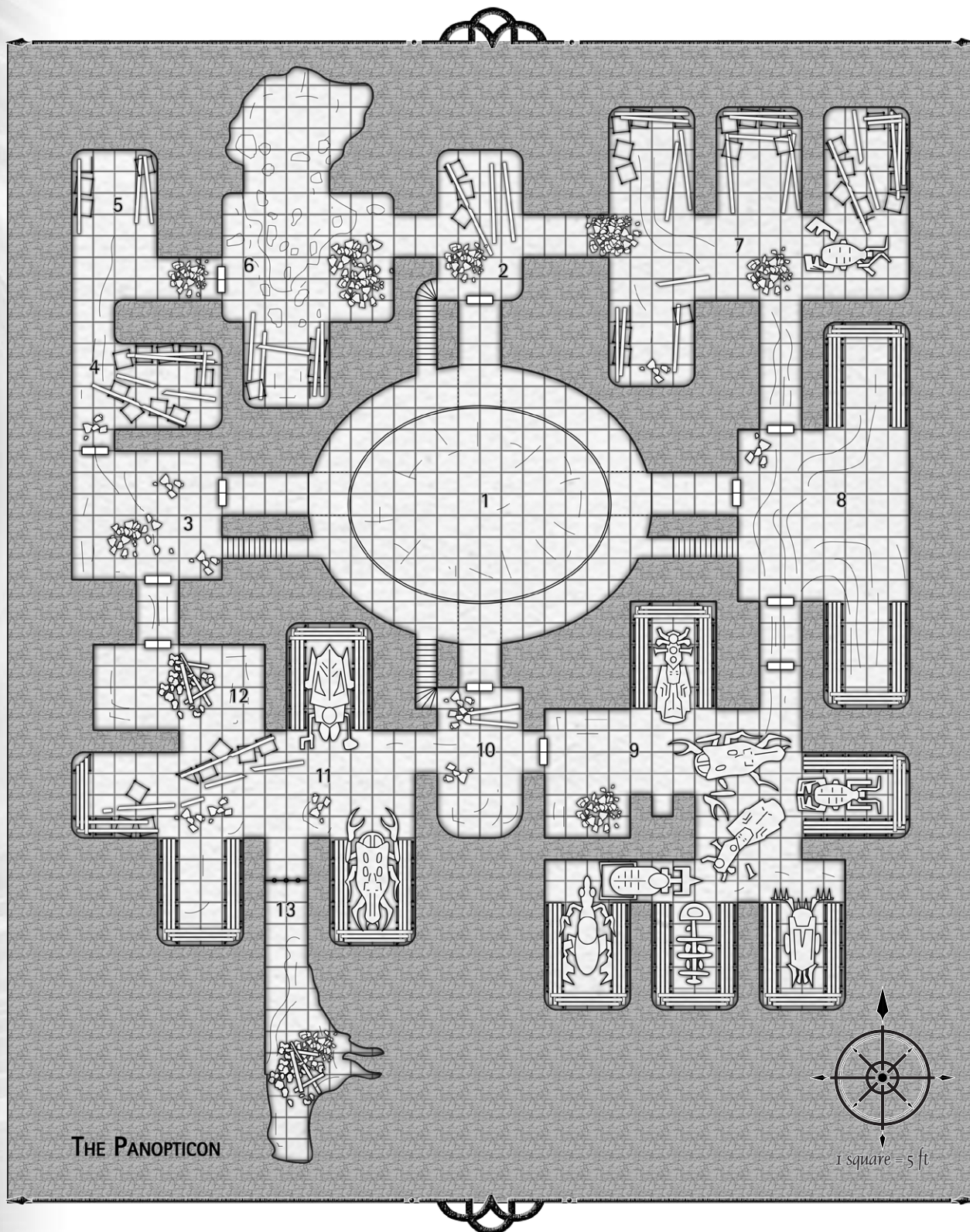
*The eerie green glow of the Darkgate spills out in a broad circle, barely illuminating the interior of a massive vaulted chamber. Its flickering flames create long strands of dark shadow that race up tremendous stone arches to unknown heights. The air here is heavy, stale and soured by passing centuries. A thick layer of dust blankets the smooth stone floor and the chamber feels so empty and still that every motion seems to echo through the silence like a small clap of thunder.*

The area immediately surrounding the Darkgate doesn't entirely exist within the Panopticon, at least not until the gate is deactivated. However, the moment any objects moves beyond this area and into the chamber, a magic sensor detects the motion and triggers a *permanent alarm* spell. Once triggered, the sensor produces an audible click. The next round, in a nearby flagstone, a dull light the size of dinner plate begins pulsing beneath the thick layer of dust. The slow but steady pulse begins to emanate outward through the chamber like webs of clear circuitry.

**Developments:** While the chambers are rarely visited, they belong to the descendants of their creators, the Malchorts. Recently, the Trypus Academy breached the surrounding chambers and stole some of their most valuable and deadly machine of war, slaughtering a number of Malchorts

### AS A ONE SHOT

If you intend to run this adventure independently from the series, all you need to do is present the PCs with a motivation for delving into the Panopticon (such as a recovery mission assigned by a mentor or as an exploratory mission into the unknown chambers of a lost race) and a method for accessing the Darkgate (such as reading a *scroll* or placing the gate in a remote location such as in a secret temple).



during the incursion. As a result, the Malchorts have placed the chambers on lockdown, retreating to the southern chambers and barricading the northern dock bays from where the surface dwellers entered. As a result, they are initially hostile to any non-Malchorts.

As soon as the alarm triggers, the Malchorts sense the alarm, summon a pack of sink beasts and a pair of elite telepaths lead the creatures to the arena to

investigate.  $2+1d6$  minutes later, they enter onto the balcony from the staircase in **area P3**.

**Creatures:** Once the Malchorts arrive, they immediately send the sink beasts to create a line of defense between themselves and the intruders and then launch a telepathic assault. On the following round, one of them sends a *message* spell to others nearby to send reinforcements and 4 Malchort strikers arrive  $1d4$  rounds later to offer support. If the



PCs begin overwhelming the sink beasts and dealing heavy damage to the telepaths, they retreat seeking reinforcements.

Though evil, the Malchorts aren't unreasonable and should the PCs attempt to use Diplomacy to dialogue with them rather than fighting, they may be able to convince them that they are different from the previous surface dwellers they encountered. Still, the highly xenophobic Malchorts won't hesitate to employ severe measures to ensure the preservation of their race and their culture. If the PCs can convince them that they came to eradicate the threat of further surface incursions, the Malchorts request to take them "hostage" and interrogate them for several hours using psychic probing to determine the truth of each of their statements. If they PCs agree, the Malchorts truthfully tell them they will offer them aid.

Should this occur and the PCs meet the criteria of their psychic probes, the Malchorts can describe the recent events and invasion, and offer to help the PCs raise a doom golem. Unlike the PCs adversaries, the Malchorts inform the PCs of the additional modification in the golem for using light crystals against their ancestral enemies, the rock trolls.

#### Sink Beast (6)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

NE Small aberration

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 42 (5d8+20)

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

**Immune** acid, poison

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** 3 stingers +7 (1d2+2 plus 1d6 acid), bite +4 (1d4+1)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with stinger)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** sink beasts take the front line of combat, positioning themselves between the Malchorts and their enemies.

**During Combat** The sink beasts hold their positions using reach to attacks to keep enemies from moving into melee range with their masters. They keep their formation until more than two individuals break their front, at which point they gang up on the nearest opponent.

**Moral** the sink beasts fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Endurance, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (stinger)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Climb +16, Perception +6, Stealth +9, Survival +6; Racial Modifiers Acrobatics+6,

**Languages** Undercommon

#### Malchort Elite Telepath (2)

CR 9

XP 4,800

Male/female Malchort sorcerer 8

LE Medium humanoid (skulk)

**Init** +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

**hp** 68 (12 HD; 3d8+9d6+24)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9; mental resistance +4 saving throws against enchantments and illusions.

**Defensive Abilities** camouflaged step, chameleon skin

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk short sword +6/+1 (1d6-1/19-20)

**Ranged** mwk dagger +9/+4 (1d4-1/19-20)

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +12)

**Bloodline Arcana** Whenever you cast a spell of the compulsion subschool, increase the spell's DC by +2

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 9th; concentration +12)

4th (4/day)—*charm monster* (DC 18), *modify memory* (DC 18), *summon monster IV* (sink beast)

3rd (7/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance* (DC 17), *hostile levitation* UC (DC 16), *marionette possession* UM (DC 16), *suggestion*

2nd (7/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 15), *dust of twilight\** (DC 15), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 15), *levitate*, *shatter*

1st (7/day)—*hypnotism*, *infernal healing* ISWG, *mage armor*, *memory lapse* APG (DC 15), *true strike*, *vanish*

o (at will)—*arcane mark*, *daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *light*, *haunted fey aspect* UC, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *read magic*

**Bloodline** Psionic Bloodline

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The telepaths cast mage armor on themselves and then slip to the edges of the room using the sink beasts for cover. Next, the cast *message* to call for aid.

**During Combat** The telepaths attempt to reposition their opponents using *hostile levitation*, *marionette possession*, and *suggestion* to make them vulnerable to the attacks of the sink beasts. They save their lower level spells, particularly *true strike*, in the event they are forced into melee.

**Moral** If at all possible, the telepaths avoid melee and, dropped below 30 hit points, the telepaths cast *infernal healing* on themselves and then plot their escape.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 9, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Alertness, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spell Focus (enchantment), Toughness  
**Skills** Appraise +10, Bluff +8, Climb +4, Craft (alchemy) +10, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +3, Knowledge (history) +5, Perception +12, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +21; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

**Languages** Undercommon, Ancient Malchort

**SQ** camouflaged step, chameleon skin,

**Gear** *amulet of natural armor* +2, mwk dagger (2)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Camouflaged Step (Ex)** Skulks can pass through forest and subterranean settings almost without a trace. Add +10 to the DC to track a skulk in these environments.

**Chameleon Skin (Ex)** A skulk's racial bonus to stealth comes from his ability to change the color of his skin to match his surroundings, even complex or regular patterns like bricks and mortar. A skulk loses this conditional bonus if he is wearing armor, or if he wears any clothing that covers more than one-quarter of his body, as skulks can only change their own flesh, not things they carry. A skulk normally conceals small items behind his body; by putting his back to a wall and changing his front half, he can hide the item because observers don't have line of sight to the item.

**Hand of the Psion (Su):** 6 times per day, a Malchort telepath can cause a melee weapon to fly from his grasp and strike a foe before instantly returning. As a standard action, he can make a single attack using a melee weapon at a range of 30 feet. This attack is treated as a ranged attack with a thrown weapon, except that the Malchort adds his Charisma modifier to the attack roll instead of his Dexterity modifier (damage still relies on Strength). This ability cannot be used to perform a combat maneuver.

**Psychic Blast (Sp):** A Malchort telepath can unleash a psychic blast of mental energy once per day. This 30-foot cone-shaped burst does 5d6 points of nonlethal damage and stuns creatures in its path for 1 round. Those caught in the area of your blast receive a DC 24 Will save. A successful save negates the stunned effect and reduces the damage by half. The save is Charisma-based.

## P2. NORTH FIGHT BAY (CR 10)

*This chamber bears the brutal scars of extensive and violent conflict. Deep cracks bruise the walls and its scaffolding and other furnishings lie smashed and scattered. A waist-high pile of scrap metal and slabs of*

*rock pried from the corridor walls crudely barricades a wide egress to the west, however the remaining corridors appear accessible.*

The doors to the Panopticon are wedged closed, jammed shut with debris from the room, but not locked. A DC 20 Strength check sufficiently forces them open. The stairwell to the upper deck of the Panopticon remains clear. The barricade partially blocks the entrance into **area 7**. For purposes of movement, treat the barricade as an **obstacle**. Similarly, the barricade provides partial cover to anyone standing behind it.

**Iron Arena Doors:** hardness 10, hp 90, **Break** DC 25

**Creatures:** four Malchort strikers guard this area, watching the west passage in case the assailants return. Any creature entering from **area P6** suffers immediate and merciless attack. If the PCs arrive in this chamber from elsewhere, they stand a far better chance of dealing with the Malchorts diplomatically, however their initial reaction is hostile.

### Malchort Striker (4)

CR 6

**XP** 2,400 each

Male/female Malchort rogue 3/sorcerer 3

LE Medium humanoid (skulk)

**Init** +8; Senses low-light vision; **Perception** +12

## DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 70 (9 HD; 3d8+3d8+3d6+30)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6; mental resistance +2 saving throws against enchantments and illusions.

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1; camouflaged step, chameleon skin

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk short sword +10 (1d6+1/19–20)

**Ranged** mwk dagger +10 (1d4+1/19–20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

1st (6/day)—*hypnotism*, *infernal healing* ISWG, *true strike*, *vanish*

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *haunted fey aspect* UC, *mage hand*, *message*

**Bloodline** Psionic Bloodline

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** If given the opportunity, the strikers cast *hypnotism* as opponents approach, followed by *true strike*. Half hurl their daggers first, then charge while the others blend into the shadows to attempt sneak attacks.

**During Combat** Strikers work in pairs or as a single teams to attempt to flank opponents and gain sneak attacks.



**Moral** If dropped below 30 hp, a strikers casts *infernal healing* in herself and then uses *vanish* to attempt to escape. Once one routes, the rest begin routing fast, using *message* to attempt to locate any nearby allies.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 18, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Bluff +6, Climb +12, Disable Device +5, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Perception +12, Stealth +26; Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth

**Languages** Undercommon, Ancient Malchort

**SQ** rogue talents (fast stealth), trapfinding +1

**Gear** +2 studded leather, mwk short sword, mwk dagger

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Camouflaged Step (Ex)** Skulks can pass through forest and subterranean settings almost without a trace. Add +10 to the DC to track a skulk in these environments.

**Chameleon Skin (Ex)** A skulk's racial bonus to stealth comes from his ability to change the color of his skin to match his surroundings, even complex or regular patterns like bricks and mortar. A skulk loses this conditional bonus if he is wearing armor, or if he wears any clothing that covers more than one-quarter of his body, as skulks can only change their own flesh, not things they carry.

A skulk normally conceals small items behind his body; by putting his back to a wall and changing his front half, he can hide the item because observers don't have line of sight to the item.

**Hand of the Psion (Su):** 4 times per day a Malchort striker can cause a melee weapon to fly from your grasp and strike a foe before instantly returning. As a standard action, you can make a single attack using a melee weapon at a range of 30 feet. This attack is treated as a ranged attack with a thrown weapon, except that you add your Charisma modifier to the attack roll instead of your Dexterity modifier (damage still relies on Strength). This ability cannot be used to perform a combat maneuver.

### P3. WEST FIGHT BAY (CR 11)

*This large chamber is relatively clear of debris, though telltale signs of combat remain evident. Stray chunks of rock and other debris litter the chamber and smears of blood form a wide and grisly trail that passes through the center of the chamber, disappearing beneath the double doors to the south.*

This chamber has three entrances, none of which are blocked or barricaded, though the doors leading to the Panopticon are shut. The passage to the Panopticon's mezzanine level remains unobstructed. Unless the PCs previously opened the doors to area 12, they are locked tight.

**Trap** Anyone passing beyond the center of the



room triggers the trap. The doors on either side of the chamber swing shut and lock with arcane lock (CL 12) and the chamber begins filling with poisonous gas.

**Iron Arena Doors:** hardness 10, hp 90, **Open Locks** DC 25, **Break** DC 30

#### Poison Gas Trap

CR 11

XP 12,800

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair

**Effect** poison gas (burnt othur fumes); never miss; onset delay (1 round); multiple targets (all targets in chamber, persists for 1d4 rounds)

### P4. SHATTERED DOCKING BAY (CR 11)

*Fiercely battered scaffolding crowds against the walls of this broad alcove, blackened with the soot of tremendous explosions. In the center lie pieces of the pulverized wreckage of some sort of great machine.*

This bay once housed one of the doom golems, though during the raid invaders toppled it and brutally tore it into salvageable scrap. The Trypus raiders took the parts they believed most valuable and fled, leaving a wake of destruction.

Anyone searching this area can attempt a DC 15 Perception check to uncover an unusual scrap of cloth. A DC 20 Knowledge (local) check correctly identifies it as having similar properties to the cloth the Trypus Academy uses for their robes. The cloth substantiates the PCs' claims that the Trypus miners' covert activities likely took place beneath the southern entrance.

**Creatures:** a clutch of sink beasts scour this area. Without Malchorts to command them, the beasts attack any living creatures they spot.

#### Sink Beast (12)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 42; (see page. 235)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** As soon as sink beasts detect living creatures, they break from their scavenging and charge them.

**During Combat** The sink beasts mob the nearest opponent. Devoid of any tactics, they fight en masse or attack what's most immediate or convenient. If they drop an opponent, they attempt to flee with the fallen individual, dragging the victim off and devouring the quick meal.

**Moral** At first, the sink beasts fight to the death,

however if 6 or more them are slain, the remainder can be driven off by dropping them below 10 hit points.

### P5. BLOOD ON THE FLAGSTONES (CR 9)

*Piles of rock slab broken into enormous chunks, boulders, and rubble seal much of a side corridor and almost entirely bury a pair of stone doors. Like many chambers in the Panopticon, a large alcove appears as if it likely held a doom golem, however little remains here, the bulk of the relics bashed into junk and piles of rusting metal.*

*Throughout the room, dozens of footprints tear through centuries of dust, punctuated by swathes of deep crimson, bloody trails painted by bleeding bodies dragged across the flagstones. In other places, the dust has soaked up so much blood it has balled into gruesome clumps.*

This chamber housed one of the Malchorts' doom golems until the Trypus agents broke through the ceiling and liberated it from its crypt. While the Malchorts attempted to drive the intruders off, the Trypus agents outmatched them and slaughtered dozens before forcing them to drag off their wounded in retreat, forfeiting the golem to the surface dwellers.

**Traps:** The Malchorts have since returned, wiring the room with traps to ward against the surface dwellers' return. Anyone exploring the room risks hitting one of the tripwires, detonating explosive devices that cause further collapse.

#### Collapsing Ceiling Trap

CR 9

XP 6,400

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** as per a cave-in/collapse (see Pathfinder Core Rulebook environmental hazards)

**Developments:** The sound of the explosions alerts the patrol of rock trolls in the nearby chambers to the presence of intruders. 2d6 rounds later, six Malchort strikers quietly sneak into the room to determine the cause of the disturbance. If they spot intruders, they immediately attack.

### P6. THE EXODUS BOREHOLE

*Something tore a huge gaping hole into the side of this large chamber. Where the wall once stood spills a mountainous avalanche of earth and rubble. The rest of the room appears ransacked with the remains of shelves and scaffolding crunched into a tangle of metal piled into a wide antechamber opposite the hole.*



The hole is nearly 30 feet across and upon casual inspection appears wide enough to accommodate a doom golem. The passage continues upwards for hundreds of yards. The Academy created it with their modified golem as a route back to the surface. It connects to The Dungeon Under the Mountain at bottom of the original Sink.

Anyone searching the rubble can attempt a DC 12 Perception check to recognize the golem's tracks climbing up the rubble and exiting the same way.

## P7. NORTHEAST DOCKYARD (CR 11)

*The outer walls of tremendous housing have been chambered with broad bays lined with aged and rusting scaffolding. In places the scaffolds rise nearly 20 feet from the floor, clinging precariously by rusted bolts sunk into the bedrock walls. About a third of the scaffolds have collapsed completely. Towards the eastern end, a great carapace of rusted iron occupies the center of the room. A gaping hole in its side reveals a wall of strange gears and complicated mechanical levers once used to manipulate the corroded hulk.*

This broad chamber once house several doom golem docking bays. After salvaging everything of use to them, the Malchorts vacated the area quickly and collapsed it as a deterrent against invaders. In its wake, they erected a waist-high barricade of earth and metal to block the passage connecting to area P2. Anyone attempting to traverse the barricade has their movement affected as if traveling through difficult terrain.

**Creatures:** a Malchort telepath oversees three strikers that guard this area. When they spot intruders, they blend into the wall and covertly slip off to contact their allies to organize a more united attack. If spotted, they emerge from hiding and charge intruders while the telepath summons a sink beast and then unleashes a barrage of spells and psychic attacks.

### Elite Malchort telepath

CR 9

XP 4,800

hp 68 (see page. 235)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The telepath attempts to remain hidden for as long as possible, waiting for the opportunity to flee the room.

**During Combat** The telepath draws his sword in defense, then uses his powers to try and keep his opponents off guard and moving away from him as he attempts to flee the room.

**Moral** If spotted, the telepath attempts to flee.

### Malchort Striker (3)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 70 (see page 236)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The strikers attempts to remain hidden for as long as possible, guarding the telepath and looking for the opportunity to flee the room. If an opponent spots the telepath, one of the strikers bursts from his hiding place and darts across the room, taking an attack in passing and attempting to divert their attention elsewhere.

**During Combat** The striker that initiated the combat turns aggressive, backed up by another striker in order to try to move rapidly about the room to flank opponents. The third striker acts as the telepath's guard and positions himself between the telepath and any opponents.

**Moral** The strikers wait for the telepath to route safely before fleeing, and if necessary, protect his escape with their lives. Once the telepath has safely routed, they fight until dropped below 20 hp and then flee.

## P8. EAST FIGHT BAY

All the doors to this room are wedged shut and locked but open with minimal force. Opening the doors creates a fair amount of noise capable of alerting creatures in neighboring chambers to their presence.

**Iron Arena Doors:** hardness 10, hp 90, **Open Locks** DC 25, **Break** DC 30

*This broad chamber seems strangely empty, though in several places the floor is heavily scarred from giant scrapes likely caused by dragging large heavy objects. The only thing left intact hides in a pair of wide opposing alcoves housed towards the back of the chamber— two near pristine sets of two-tiered scaffolding that line each of the alcoves' walls. The scaffolding's first tier stands at about 10 feet, while the upper tier towers nearly twice as high above the ground.*

The ancient Malchorts used the scaffold-lined alcoves as docks to house, service, and repair their war machines. The upper grids still have a couple of pulleys and similar engineering equipment attached to them, though as parts they have little value or function.

Anyone inspecting the floors can attempt a DC 15 Survival check to determine the scrapes were made by multiple objects and all proceed through the doors exiting to the south. The scrapes were made when Malchorts dragged the golems from the upper bays into chamber area 9 in a vain attempt to protect them.

## P9. SOUTHEAST DOCKYARD (CR 14)

The dented hulks of a pair of towering insect-like machines lie in the center of the room, their frames partially dismantled and surrounded by scattered remains of large, intimidating mechanical pincers, razor sharp mandibles the length of a horse, spiked armor plating and devices that look like they might pump some sort of caustic alchemical fluids. Lining the chamber's outer walls, great recessed alcoves form scaffold-lined docking bays that house more of the unsettling machines, one in the north, one west and three to the south. The impressive machines stand slumped and suspended by chains and gears as if patiently waiting to be serviced by long dead engineers. Another great hulk, crammed into the southern corridor, blocks the alcoves to the west.

**Creatures:** A small encampment of Malchorts hold a post within this chamber. Tasked with defending a dying society precariously teetering on its last legs, these men are willing to risk everything, especially after recent attacks. The group consists chiefly of young radicals, a generation that strongly believe the Malchort people will go extinct unless they make a drastic change.

While older Malchorts remain hesitant to engage in violence against surface dwellers, their social structure dictates that they have little say should the younger population decide to choose war.

In these chambers the Malchorts have housed several doom golems which they have been restoring. One is nearly refurbished, the remains of the others are guarded.

If the PCs enter, the initially hostile Malchorts attack, relying on stealth and distance to mentally blast opponents from a distance while sending sink beast pawns into melee to create a defense wall. Too much slaughter forces a surrender, otherwise the PCs can attempt to use Diplomacy to convince the Malchorts that they aren't like the other recently encountered surface dwellers to try and gain their aid as described in encounter P1.

### Elite Malchort telepath (3)

CR 9

XP 4,800 each

hp 68 (see page 235)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If they have the opportunity to do so, the telepaths cast *true strike* on the strikers' blades, then move towards the back of the room and use *hypnotism* to distract opponents.

**During Combat** The telepaths draw their blades and act like bait to provide the strikers the opportunity to make sneak attacks, and use their telekinetic spells to move opponents into compromising

positions where the strikers can attack with ease.

**Moral** The telepaths fight until dropped below 25 hit points, then flee.

### Malchort Striker (6)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 70 (see page 236)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Strikers use camouflage to blend into the wall and reposition themselves to make sneak attacks.

**During Combat** Using vanish, they attempt to approach victims from behind before their targets have a chance to attack the telepaths.

**Moral** The strikers hold their ground and will fight to the death to prevent telepaths from being slain. They always wait for the telepaths to route safely before fleeing. If there are no more telepaths to guard, they fight until dropped below 20 hp and then flee.

**Developments:** During their raid, Trypus Academy agents only managed to commandeer a single doom golem. After taking control of the machine, they rampaged through the Panopticon damaging and destroying nearly all the remaining doom golems hoping to gain sole control over the powerful constructs. Still, their efforts weren't entirely thorough. Within this chamber rests one of the last doom golems still in good enough condition to be animated for use. If the PCs gain control of this room, either through defeating the Malchorts in combat or allying themselves through Diplomacy, they gain access to the doom golem and can thereafter enter the machine and animate it as per the rules for operating a doom golem (see Appendix)

## P10. SOUTH FIGHT BAY (CR 9)

A tremendous barricade consisting of several thousand pounds of rock, metal, and other debris piled high against the Panopticon doors rises near to the ceiling. It seals the northern entrance of this chamber, including the balcony.

**Arena Door Barricade:** hardness 8, hp 145, Break DC 40

**Hazard:** Unfortunately, the amount of force needed to break the barricade is also substantial enough to trigger the collapse of the surrounding ceiling. The thunderous noise alerts any of the Malchorts lurking in the adjacent chambers.

### CEILING COLLAPSE HAZARD

CR 9

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25



## EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** Atk +20 melee (10d6); **multiple targets** (all targets in a 10-ft. square)

Beyond the barricade the iron doors are locked and sealed fast.

**Iron Arena Doors:** hardness 10, **hp** 90, **Open Locks** DC 25, **Break** DC 30

## P11. SOUTHWEST DOCKYARD

The opening entrance to this room is locked.

*This chamber has four docking bays. The westernmost bays were previously emptied of their contents, though the scaffolding remains intact along with most of the tools and research equipment. The bays to the west are empty, their golems long ago pilfered or cannibalized for parts.*

*The remaining bays have been kept in near pristine condition and house the carapaces of the Malchorts' doom golems, tremendous war machines resembling knuckle-walking demonic apes fashioned entirely of hammered metal. No two appear identical and each has been custom modified with a variety of extra limbs, claws, weapons, hooks, scorpion-like stingers, and other jutting protuberances.*

While the golems appear to be in excellent condition, anyone entering their drive chambers quickly observes the controls and drive mechanisms have been badly savaged. The Academy vandalized all of the golems, making them inoperable without major repair to prevent others from using the technology until they had the opportunity to return and reclaim them at a later date.

Anyone attempting to repair a golem can make a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) skill check to determine that whoever vandalized the golems did so methodically and removed and possibly pilfered several key components without which the constructs are rendered inoperable.

**Developments:** Within one of the great carapaces lurks a stray Trypus agent. The young Kortezean man cowers in the shadowy corners of the machine, half-starved and clutching the stump of his right arm, now tightly wrapped in torn pieces of his shirt and stained black in a crust of dried blood. The man's name is Eldrigos. A student from overseas and an expert in technology, the Trypus recruited him to aid them in their salvage. They since abandoned him here after his tinkering caused an explosion that blew off his arm and killed two others. The force of the blast nearly killed Eldrigos, ripping off his hand, knocking him unconscious and blowing his body

across the golem's passenger bay and wedging him into an alcove. The other agents attempted to look for him, but were forced to flee after the blast alerted a horde of sink beast to their presence. The Trypus has since assumed him dead.

Eldrigos is scared and fears any intruders, however he's also starving and his wound has become badly infected with red ache (note: he is contagious). He understands the reality that without aid, he will die within a few days. As a foreigner, he speaks only Kortezean, however the only stories he's ever hear about Azindraleans are extremely biased and he holds a strong prejudice against them, more fear than hatred, for he believes them to be ignorant savages. When he first encounters the PCs, he attempts to stay hidden and out of sight, however his hunger motivates him to attempt to shadow them, spy on them, and at first opportunity, to steal food, water and, if possible, medical equipment.

### Eldrigos

CR5

**XP** 1,200

Male human expert 6

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +3\*; **Senses** Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (–1 Dex\*)

**hp** 27 (6d8); currently at 6

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +6

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8 (currently at 4) (–2 from disease, –2 from fatigue), **Dex** 10 (currently at 8\* from fatigue), **Con** 10, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 12

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (disable device), Skill Focus (Knowledge (engineering)),

**Skills** Appraise +11, Craft (machinist) +11, Craft (woodworking) +12, Disable Device +13, Knowledge (arcane) +11, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Knowledge (engineering) +14, Knowledge (history) +11, Perception +8, Profession (engineer) +10, Ride +4

**SQ** fatigued

**Developments:** Eldrigos begins the encounter fearful of the PCs, and with an attitude of unfriendly. If confronted, he knows he's helpless and may flee from them in terror if given the opportunity. If the PCs save Eldrigos, feed him and cure his disease, they are able to overcome his initial prejudice and gain his trust. All in all, his knowledge of machines makes him a useful and valuable ally, and he remains both loyal and grateful if the PCs provide him with

aid. He can also help the PCs confirm the identities of specific Trypus members, knows they escaped with a refurbished golem through the borehole, and knows about the Trypus' dealings with the trolls in the next section, though he is unaware of specific details with Stonegullet and the Trypus' overall betrayal of the tribe.

## P12. COMPRESSION CHAMBER (CR 11)

*Bent metal beams prop against the door to hold it fast. The outer walls of the chamber have been cleared of debris exposing the raw bedrock beneath. The egress to the south is crammed with jagged beams and other refuse physically cramping the corridor leaving little more than a crawlway.*

The doors set into the north wall are locked and trapped; however, only individuals approaching from the north risk triggering the trap. Individuals exiting the room cannot trigger the trap.

Anyone entering from area 3 who attempts to tamper with either the doors or the lock triggers the trap (as described in area 3).

**Creatures:** this chamber is guarded by a telepath, four sink beasts and four strikers. They defend the chamber against any intruders.

### Elite Malchort telepath

CR 9

XP 4,800

hp 68 (see page 235)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The telepath commands the sink beast to form and hold a frontline between herself and the intruders.

**Moral** The telepath fights until dropped below 30 hit points, then casts *infernal healing* on herself and tries to flee

### Malchort Striker (4)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 70 (see page 236)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The strikers cast *vanish* and using stealth try to slip past the sink beast frontline to where they can strategically position themselves behind their targets.

**Moral** So long as the telepath remains in the chamber and threatened by opponents, the strikers fight to the death. If dropped below 20 hit points they cast *infernal healing* upon themselves. If the telepath has fled, the strikers break from combat the following round to cover her escape, or flee if dropped below 20 hit points.

### Sink Beast (4)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 42; (see page 235)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The sink beasts form a line as commanded by the telepath, holding their position to keep opponents from advancing.

**During Combat** The sink beasts remain in formation, using the reach of their stingers to keep opponents back. If the telepath breaks command, they frenzy and wildly attack the nearest targets.

**Moral** The sink beasts fight to the death

## P13. COLLAPSED TUNNEL.

*An iron portcullis blocks this passage. Though old and badly rusted, its thick bars remain sturdy. Beyond the bars, the corridor continues for a few yards before*

## MALCHORT CITY

The Panopticon is connected to a massive quarter-mile-wide cavern wherein hides the strange and alien city of the Malchorts. Within tower dozens of weird, hive-looking structures cobbled from the salvaged remains of their once mighty empire. All consist of great granite blocks carved with unknown runes, wedged together at odd angles. Their design shows no apparent consistency and they appear unevenly spaced, as if built at random.

Each hive serves as a shelter to a single house, overseen by the family's most powerful, fertile telepath who serves as the family's matron. While a house's elders remain respected for their wisdom, the Malchorts are a dying race, therefore those proven capable of reproduction are highly revered, particularly females which they believe hold their people's future. Pregnancy is rare and more than four births within a single decade is nearly unheard of. As the Malchorts age, they quickly become sterile and thus they have only brief window opportunity to reproduce. Worse, they have great difficulty with childbirth. Fatal complications are frequent during late stages of pregnancy while during the first few years, there remains a high infant mortality rate that stems from common genetic diseases.

Fear of exposure to disease is what keeps them isolated, and they believe they are quite susceptible to common human diseases which they fear might easily wipe them out.



ending in a pile of collapsed rubble that fills the entire passageway.

**Portcullis Stats:** thickness 2 in., hardness 10; 60 hp, lift DC 25

The rubble is an illusion and the passage beyond continues through a tangled warren of passages for several miles into the depths. Eventually the passages emerge into a huge cavern filled with the ancient ruined remains of an entire city. Within these ruins dwell the last descendants of the ancient race known as the Malchorts. While this adventure doesn't focus on the city, the following sidebar provides GMs with some basics about the Malchorts and their civilization

## PART 2: THE SINK REVEALED

In this part, the PC learn how to use the doom golem, prepping them for the climactic golem battle in the final act. Locations detailed in this section follow the passage from the Panopticon back to a strange outpost base at the bottom of the Sink. Exploration of the outpost exposes the relationship between the Trypus academy and others to the Sink and subsequent events in the Great City's political climate. Lastly, the PCs can locate a final passage connecting the outpost to the actual sinkhole. After completing this section, the golems climb out of the hole into the city.

Bright light bathes the encampment at the bottom of the Sink. The light is created by daylight crystals, multifaceted transparent gemstones that when targeted with a *light* spell focus it into a powerful beam. The PCs may retrieve the crystals and load them into the golem to aid in the escape. Give the PCs opportunity to explore the base a little in order to allow them settle once and for all that the Sink was not a natural disaster but a planned act of violence.

**Background:** Following his escape into the Sink in Season One's *The Malchort Cabal*, Wvolmar Viterias, the mad scholar and senior member of the secret cabal responsible for orchestrating the Sink, began performing numerous vile and violent rituals to appease the Trollfather, demon lord of catastrophes and trolls. In his attempts to pact with the Trollfather, Wvolmar promised the Demon Lord the lives of many humans as slaves and food. Among his offers, he promised to lay siege to the remains of the ancient kingdom of the Malchorts whose people had long ago invaded and seized the ancient subterranean troll holds in a bloody conflict that has waged war for centuries. The trolls aided Wvolmar in his preliminary efforts to clear the Sink and tunnel into the Panopticon. With the aid of the trolls Wvolmar quickly reached a series of outlying

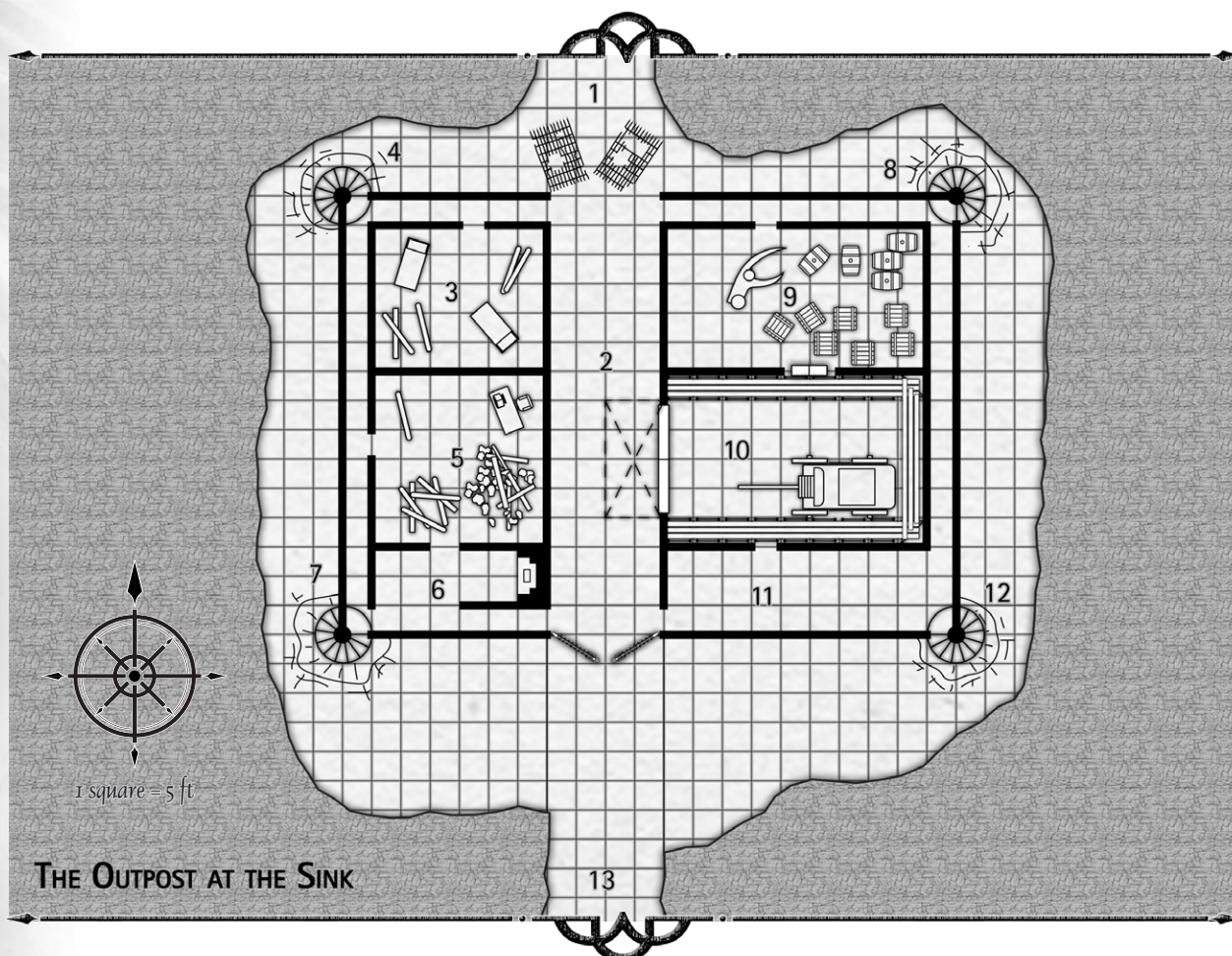
Malchort settlements wherein he and his agents discovered strange energy storing crystals which the Malchorts manipulated to create explosive bursts of light capable of driving off the light-sensitive trolls. After driving off the Malchorts, Wvolmar armed himself with the light crystals and turned upon his former allies, using the potent light from the crystals to turn them to dust. During his initial attacks, Wvolmar captured Stonegullet, the trolls' huge and gruesome king, by imprisoning him in an iron-lined cell called the darkness box. He unsuccessfully attempted to ransom the king back to the trolls, however the trolls believe that any king who allows himself to be captured is no king at all, so they forsook him and the next most powerful troll quickly seized command. Stonegullet lies half-starved in his darkness box in area Q10. If released, the PCs can attempt to ally with him, however he's still a vicious and evil troll already betrayed by humans so any such alliance remains unreliable at best. Still, he possesses a truthful recollection of the events behind the Sink and can provide the PCs with possible means to piece together more of the underlying causes and means of the Sink.

## THE OUTPOST AT THE SINK

This section covers the PCs' first journey with the doom golem and is meant to acquaint them with its controls before the eventual confrontation with the Academy. While the trolls should provide a significant threat, the encounters in this section are not meant to be deadly. Because both the PCs and the GM are working with new mechanics, the GM should feel free to tweak the numbers and tactics of the trolls to meet his/her needs.

While the golem can enter the outpost via the large golem walkway, designers intended the first part of this session to take place on foot. During their exploration of the outpost, the PCs will discover new information about the Sink, encounter Trypus agents, and perhaps make a new ally in the form of the betrayed rock troll king. Additionally, they will be able to obtain four *daylight crystals*, magic items that can help fuel the doom golem during its passage through the Sink. However, these crystals are part of what is keeping rock trolls out of the outpost, and their removal and relocation means that the outpost will be undefended. The PCs must fend off the trolls, collecting crystals as they do so, while also finding out additional clues as to the true nature of the Sink.

Finally, with the *daylight crystals* obtained, the PCs must make their way up through the Sink in pursuit of their enemies. However, they will have to first fend off an even larger attack by rock trolls while learning how to properly operate their new doom golem.



THE OUTPOST AT THE SINK

## Q1. PASSAGE TO THE OUTPOST

The rough-hewn walls of the borehole eventually give way as it meets up with a pre-existing tunnel. Large flagstones pave the floor of a broad, gaping hallway with a high arched ceiling clearly built to accommodate the passage of something massive. Clusters of bioluminescent mushrooms cling to the passage walls, painting the tunnel in a pale blue light.

The cavern's former denizens cultivated the all-pervasive mushrooms to provide light to the passages and rooms beyond. Unless otherwise noted, treat the tunnel and all rooms and passages in this section as areas of dim light.

Anyone moving through the tunnel soon spots an area filled with bright light up ahead. The light filters in from the Golem Walkway but emanates from a set of four *daylight crystals* (see sidebar) permanently set into the pinnacles of four towers that rise to the top of the cavern.

**Developments:** At the mouth of the intersection where the borehole bursts into the main tunnel, Trypus agents cast an *alarm* spell. If triggered, the alarm sends a mental alert to the Elreesa, the Trypus wizard in Q12. If alerted, Elreesa immediately casts *sending* to alert the Academy aboveground. Once she has alerted her allies, she takes cover and waits for the best moment to confront the PCs.

## Q2. THE GOLEM WALKWAY

This broad and cavernous thoroughfare continues through a great stone arch where the splintered remains of a pair of tremendous metal doors hang limply from their bent and twisted hinges. Each door face bears numerous pummeling dents and huge circular scorch marks.

The double wide passage runs through the outpost, beginning at the arch with the great doors and continuing to the passage connecting it to the outpost at the bottom of the Sink.

A DC 18 Knowledge (architecture) or (dungeoneering) check reveals that the huge metal doors were forced open by something of incredible size and strength.

## Q3. LIGHT TOWER A

A wash of weak orange light filters through this vaulted chamber, spilling down from some point high above the almost cathedral-like ceiling. Dominating the room, a massive column of rough textured stone rises from its center, forming a singular and impressive tower wrapped with a long spiraling stone staircase.

Upon second glance, what initially appears to a great stone tower quickly reveals itself to be a



## DAYLIGHT CRYSTALS

These magically cultivated crystalline clusters most resemble a pale yellow-orange amethyst. The crystals can be identified with a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nature) or DC 25 Spellcraft check. Under normal circumstance they are somewhat translucent with a dull, almost greasy luster, however they can be activated by casting a *light* spell upon them causing them to give off a brilliant, fiery radiance as per a *daylight* spell. This effect does not count toward the number of *light* spells that can be active at any given time. While they remain embedded in their natural rock, *daylight crystals* can be utilized indefinitely. However, once they are removed (a delicate act that requires a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check or a DC 20 Disable Device check they will only glow 10+1d20 minutes before going permanently dark.

Each cluster of crystals has a break DC of 10. However, successfully breaking an activated *daylight crystal* causes it to shatter explosively, causing 3d6 piercing damage within a 5-foot radius. Any creature carrying or sharing a square with an activated *daylight crystal* is dazzled until they are no longer sharing that square or holding it.

Additionally, a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (engineering) check or DC 25 Spellcraft check reveals that the crystals can be used in the doom golem's converter box. *Daylight crystals* function uniquely in the converter box. See the **Troll Attack** sidebar for more details.

staggeringly colossal stalagmite that rises near to the chamber's 30-foot high ceiling. The top of the great stone column is hacked to pieces exposing the clustered mass of a large amber crystal whose fiery gleam illuminates the entire area. A set of stairs carved into the side of the stalagmite winds around the column, ascending to where crystal formations protrude.

## Q3. SLEEPING QUARTERS

*The musty bunked beds lay broken and moldered on the ground. A small lizard darts across the floor into an unseen crevice in the wall.*

The Malchorts that once ran the outpost bunked here. However, long years have passed since any

of their kind even visited it much less ensured its upkeep. Most of the equipment that was left behind is too damaged to be useful, but a DC 25 Perception check reveals a metal lockbox hidden under one of the beds. It is fitted with a simple lock, and takes a DC 20 Disable Device check to open.

**Treasure:** The lockbox contains a statuette of a Malchort female heavy with child carved from purple amethyst worth 100gp, a *bull's strength* potion, and small collection of 20 Malchort coins worth 300 gp to an antiquities collector, sage, or archeologist.

## Q5. MESS HALL (CR 11)

*Most of the remains of long tables and numerous chairs have been stacked against the far wall, but one table acts as a desk. A clear quartz figurine of a Malchort warrior posed to strike glows softly, illuminating the scattering of maps, letters, and notes that cover the desk. In the corner, three bedrolls have been laid out.*

**Treasure:** The figurine has a *permanent light* spell cast on it and is worth 100 gp. Additionally, one of the prominent papers on the desk has been trapped with an *explosive runes* spell. If the spell is triggered, all papers on the desk are scattered about the room and severely damaged, requiring a DC 25 Linguistics check to decipher their meaning.

The papers contain cryptic notes compiled by Trypus agents and Wvolmar concerning the further excavation of these subterranean passages, Malchort culture, and diagrams of doom golems. One letter, presumably penned by Wvolmar, infers the value of golems in controlling and dominating the City. Still, the piece of greatest importance to the PCs is a few pages of notes on daylight crystals, which describes their function as well as their reaction to certain spells and practical use to create light ray effects when inserted into the doom golem's conversion box.

**Creatures:** If alerted by the *alarm* spell in area Q1, or if the PCs entered area Q2 in the golem, Elreesa and her Trypus Guardians have blocked the door with the remains of the tables and chairs in the room (requiring a DC 15 strength to budge), cast a *grease* spell just inside the doorway, and now lay in wait for the PCs. If not, one Guardian stands outside watching the door while the other remains inside dozing in his seat, and Elreesa works by herself at the main table. Once she realizes the presence of intruders, she casts *sending* as soon as possible to alert the Academy forces aboveground.

Elreesa

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female human wizard 10

## TROLL ATTACK (CR VARIES)

At this point, it is likely that the PCs have learned the value of the daylight crystals for use in powering up their golem, and as a result make attempts to remove the crystals in this room. Once a PC places the crystals into the golem, the overall counts against the number of crystals lighting the room, which has the following effects:

**3 crystals remaining**—Q2 and the cavern now count as areas of normal light; in 1d6 rounds 1d4 rock trolls come from Q13 to investigate.

**2 crystals remaining**—Q2 and the cavern now count as areas of dim light; in 1d4 rounds 1d4 additional trolls come to investigate.

**1 crystal remaining**—Q2 and the cavern now count as areas of darkness except around the last crystal; in 1d2 rounds 2d4 additional trolls join the others.

**No crystals remaining**—Q2 and the cavern are now in total darkness; 2d4 additional trolls arrive.

Obviously, this tide of trolls could easily prove overwhelming to the PCs. However, there is still the doom golem, and the PCs may return and man it at any time. GM's note: the trolls are far from helpless and can damage the golem to the point of inoperability. As such would represent mission failure. See the doom golem entry for more details.

As long as at least one *daylight crystal* has been placed in the golem's converter box, the operators

can activate the lights installed on the golem. These super-charged spotlights were designed to combat the rock trolls such that the creatures must make a DC 20 Will save to stand their ground when caught in the beam of one of these lights. Creatures who fail the save act as though affected by *fear*. This ability can only be used once per crystal.

### Rock Troll (varies)

CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 80 each (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2*, 272)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Trolls wander the passages sniffing for warm-blooded prey. As soon as they sense living creatures they charge towards them, mob the nearest living targets and close quarters to attack with their natural weapons.

**During Combat** The trolls are interested in people as food, and often fight over targets during combat. They like to snatch their victims up, and often grapple for their prey which results in what can best be described as playing tug. Sometimes they pull hard enough to rip their prey in half, but for the most part they only manage to pull off a tasty arm or leg.

**Moral** Fearing almost nothing, the trolls feast and fight to the death. The sole exception is their aversion to sunlight which they flee from and can be used to drive them off. Anyone who uses sunlight to drive them off earns their eternal enmity, and the trolls will do their best to try and track them down by scent at a later time to kill and devour them.

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +6; **Senses** Perception +2

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

**hp** 67 (10d6+30)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +12

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 35 ft.

**Melee** mwk dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20) **Special Attacks** hand of the apprentice (7/day), metamagic mastery (2/day)

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 10th; concentration +14)

5th—*teleportation*, *sending*

4th—*arcane eye*, *black tentacles*, *bestow curse* (DC 18), *shout* (DC 18)

3rd—*fly*, *heroism*, *hold person* (DC 17), *summon monster III*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *darkvision*, *scorching ray*, *shatter* (2)

1st—*alarm*, *grease*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If forewarned by the alarm spell in Q1 or at any later time, Elreesa casts *mage armor* on herself and *bull's strength* on one of her Guardians. She also casts *sending* to notify the rest of the Academy of the PCs coming.

**During Combat** Elreesa tries to strike a balance between supporting her Guardians and magically attacking the PCs. She has a healthy sense of preservation, however, and if trolls appear during the battle, she attempts to use her wand of *charm monster* to control one of the creatures and turn it against its allies instead of the PCs, preferring them to the monsters.

**Morale** Elreesa is loyal to the cause, but she is no martyr. If reduced to 20 hp, or if one or both of her



Guardians are badly injured, she casts *teleport* to get both herself and any remaining guards back to the surface.

#### STATISTICS

**Base Statistics** Without mage armor the wizard's statistics are **AC** 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12.

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Dodge, Fleet, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Toughness

**Skills** Fly +10, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +12, Knowledge (planes) +17, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +17

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Undercommon

**SQ** arcane bond (rat)

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *scrolls of fireball* (2), *scroll of phantasmal killer*, *scroll of shout*, *wand of charm monster* (20 charges);

**Other Gear** mwk dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, component pouch, spellbook, 818 gp

#### Trypus Guardians (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200

Human fighter 7

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +3 shield)

**hp** 68 (7d10+25)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3 (+2 vs. fear)

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 longsword +13/+8 (1d8+7/19–20), mwk shortbow +11/+6 (1d6+4/3), javelin +10/+5 (1d6+4)

**Special Attacks** weapon training (heavy blades +1)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If alerted to the PCs, the Trypus Guardian drinks his potions of *barkskin*, *bull's strength* and *enlarge person*.

**During Combat** The Trypus Guardians make it their priority to protect Elreesa.

**Morale** If reduced to 30hp, the Guardian will begin fighting defensively and move beside Elreesa, ready for her to teleport them.

#### STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Cleave, Disruptive, Improved Shield Bash, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Shield Proficiency(B), Step Up, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

**Skills** Climb +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Perception +5, Survival +6

**Languages** Common

**SQ** armor training 2

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of enlarge person*, *potion of barkskin*; **Other Gear** mwk breastplate, mwk heavy steel shield, +1 longsword, mwk shortbow, javelin, *sunrod* (2), 80 gp

## 06. KITCHEN

This room is slightly warmer than the surrounding caves and has the pleasant smell of earthy scented herbs and burnt charcoal which likely emanated from the stone rimmed hearth set into the far wall. Two crates form a makeshift table supporting three large burlap sacks. The sacks are open and appear to hold dried foodstuffs such as beans and rice. Near the heart are some iron tools, a wood bin, and a small table covered with pots and pans. At the far end of the table is a stack of clay bowls and a wooden box filled with silverware. At the same corner, a half-cut barrel sits on the floor, half full of soapy water

Unlike most of the outpost, Trypus agents cleaned up this chamber to make use of its small, but vented hearth and transforming the room into an impromptu kitchen. Aside from a few bags of foodstuffs, some pots and pans and other basic utensils, there is nothing of worth here.

## 07. LIGHT TOWER B

An otherworldly orange glow washes through this room scarred with deep dark shadows cast from the colossal stalactite that hangs from the ceiling nearly down to the ground. Along the great stalagmite's roots protrudes a large jagged daylight crystal, the obvious source of the eerie light.

The light crystals hang nearly 30 feet above the chamber floor likely making their retrieval somewhat inconvenient. Despite the stalactite's coarse texture, its inverted angle makes it a rough DC 25 Climb, though characters able to levitate or fly have little difficulty reaching them.

## 08. LIGHT TOWER (CR 10)

Sprouting from the center of this chamber rises a great, tapering stone tower crowned with a single

gleaming light crystal. Shaped like a terrifyingly huge stalagmite, its surface is slathered in a thick crust of concrete with a texture similar to tree bark. In several places, time has caused the crust to crumble and reveal a darker, drip-layered stone beneath. Winding about the stalagmite like the weathered skeleton of a great serpent, a rickety metal and concrete staircase dangles in disrepair.

The stalactite in this cavern is hardly natural. Anyone studying the structure can attempt a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) or (dungeoneering) or a DC 10 stonecunning check to spot numerous small fissures across its surface, implying it was at one point disassembled and then placed back together. Still, many centuries ago, the Malchorts employed several doom golems to break the stalactite apart, transport it to this cavern, and reassemble it. While their initial efforts proved to be quite impressive, since then the structure has suffered extensive damage. While the main structure is still secure, the dilapidated stairs are badly weakened and anyone attempting to traverse them to reach the crystals places themselves at risk.

**Developments:** About 15 feet up the rickety stairs, the supports have rotted out completely. As soon as pressure is applied, the stairs break and crumble.

#### **Collapsing Stairs**

**CR 10**

**XP 9,600**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 29

#### **EFFECTS**

**Trigger** location; **Reset** none

**Primary Effect:** 20-ft. fall (2d6 falling damage); falling debris (Atk +15 melee; 1d6 tumbling blocks per target for 1d6+6 damage each); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square); DC 18 Reflex avoids.

**Secondary Effect:** falling debris (Atk +15 melee; 1d6 tumbling blocks per target for 1d6+6 damage each); multiple targets (all creatures in 20-ft.-square area directly beneath the stairs); DC 20 Reflex for half.

The falling staircase makes a considerable racket, readily alerting all creatures in adjacent rooms.

## **Q9. SUPPLY ROOM**

Barrels and crates of all sizes have been knocked over and strewn around this large room. Some of them are still full of rusted nuts and bolts, but most have been picked clean. A large, half dismantled, metal claw resembling that of a crab is shoved against the far wall.

This room once housed spare parts of all kinds for doom golem repair and maintenance. Now, most of it has been scavenged or is rusted beyond use.

A large metal claw blocks a door to the top hallway of area Q12. The door was of good quality in its day but deteriorated (Break DC 18) through abuse and neglect and will give before the claw moves, allowing creatures to enter, treating the first square as difficult terrain. The claw can be moved from the inside with a DC 18 Strength check.

An additional set of double doors leads to area Q11.

**Treasure:** Tossed into the corner of the room lie a large +2 *great axe* and a large +2 *breastplate*. Both items are battered and slimed with a nauseatingly putrid film of liquid, which an appropriate DC 15 Knowledge skill check identifies as troll sweat. These items belong to Stonegullet, the troll lord imprisoned in area Q10, and were tossed here after he was imprisoned. They were supposed to be boxed up and taken, however in their haste, the Trypus agent responsible for the task forgot them. If Stonegullet spies these items he immediately demands them returned to him. Reclaiming them emboldens him significantly, making him more aggressive, more capricious, and even less trustworthy.

## **Q10. GOLEM DOCKING BAY (CR 12)**

The entrance to the chamber beyond is blocked by two massive, ironbound wooden doors.

**Trap:** The two oversized doors were specially designed to be opened only by a team of mechanics working together. In addition to their size, the doors are also trapped. Anyone fiddling with the doors in an attempt to pry them open triggers a blast of electrical power that strikes all creatures in a 10-foot-line directly in front of the doorway.

#### **Shocking Floor Trap**

**CR 9**

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 26; **Disable Device** DC 26

#### **EFFECTS**

**Trigger** proximity (alarm); **Duration** 1d6 rounds; **Reset** none

**Effect** spell effect (shocking grasp, Atk +9 melee touch [4d6 electricity damage]); multiple targets (all targets in a 40-ft.-square room)

Opening the doors requires a DC 18 Strength check.

**Docking Bay doors:** hardness 10, **hp** 45, **Break** DC 25

Once the PCs pass through the docking bay doors, read or paraphrase the following description:

*Teetering scaffolding towers over this large room. Large chunks of it, along with ancient tools litter the floor, while dust-covered barrels brimming with small parts line the walls. A large box of curious construction sits in a back corner.*



Doors on either side of this room lead to area Q10 and area Q13.

Made of metal-reinforced wood, the curious box seems to have no opening, yet it is hollow. Anyone knocking on the box alerts the creature within who frantically begins knocking back. The box is fastened to the floor with great iron rings. A solid iron hatch is set in the top panel. A locking iron drop bar holds the hatch shut and its edges have been sealed with pitch.

**Darkness Box** hardness 10, **hp** 180, **Break** DC 30

**Locked Hatch** hardness 10, **hp** 60 **Break** DC 28;  
**Disable Device** DC 28

**Creature:** The box serves a lightless prison for an exceptionally large rock troll known as Stonegullet. He is bound in a straightjacket with masterwork manacles. The former king of the trolls, the Academy captured him and imprisoned him here to ensure the trolls' cooperation. If released, he emerges hostile and aggressive, though PCs may attempt to employ magic or Diplomacy to calm him, provided they speak Giant or find some other way of communicating with him.

While Stonegullet can be made friendly, or even helpful, at his core he remains an evil, flesh-eating troll, and as such any friendliness he exhibits is solely driven by his bestial will to survive. He cannot ever be trusted and turns murderous at the first convenient opportunity. Further details on Stonegullet's knowledge and behavior are explained in the developments section below.

### Stonegullet

CR 10

**XP** 9,600

Male rock troll fighter 5

CE Large Humanoid (earth, giant)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +19

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 16(+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 147 (6d8+5d10+5 favored class +88); **Regeneration** 5 (acid or sonic)

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5; +1 vs. fear

**Weaknesses** light petrification

**Defensive Abilities** Bravery +1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee bite** +16 (1d6+8) and 2 claws +16 (1d6+8)

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

**Special Attacks** rend (2 claws, 1d6+8), weapon training +1 (axes)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Stonegullet's initial attitude

towards anything that smells remotely human is hostile. He thrashes wildly in his bindings, snaps his jaws, growls menacingly. Anyone who understands Giant interprets his growls as threats to eat the face off the skull of the first person that approaches him. In the event that PCs use Diplomacy to calm him and possibly pact with him, he secretly plans to make good on this promise at a later date.

**During Combat** Stonegullet attacks whoever offends him most first, using his claws and bite. He targets fights or similar opponents who might have weapons, particularly axes for which he has a fondness.

**Moral** Like the rest of his kind, Stonegullet fights to the death, unless he is showered in *daylight*, in which case he readily flees.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 14, **Con** 23, **Int** 4, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 31 (32 vs. disarm and sunder)

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (great axe), Weapon Specialization (great axe)

**Skills** Climb +10, Perception +19

**Languages** Giant

**SQ Armor** Training 1

**Gear** none

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Sunlight Petrification (Ex)** If exposed to natural sunlight Stonegullet is staggered and must make a DC 20 Fortitude save each round to resist permanently turning to stone. A stone to flesh spell (or similar effect) restores him from petrified rock, but if he remains exposed to sunlight, he must immediately start making new Fortitude saves to avoid petrification. Spells like *sunray* or *sunburst* that create powerful natural sunlight cannot petrify him, however he becomes staggered for 1d4 rounds after being exposed to such an effect.

**Developments:** As the former king of the rock trolls, Stonegullet possesses a fair amount of information pertaining to the Sink and the current situation. Players can employ whatever tactics they desire to get information from him. If the PCs succeed in mentally breaking him or successfully form a temporary alliance with him he reveals that the rock trolls long ago took these passages from the people that once lived there (Malchorts), though the people used powerful glowing crystals to keep them at bay. During his tenure as king, he encountered a human from the light lands above, a powerful wizard able to command sink beasts. If the PCs fail to recognize the description of the wizard as Wvolmar, allow them a DC 12 Intelligence check to recall the fact.

Stonegullet further explains that the wizard promised him and his people a route to the surface and the spoils of the creatures living above. Together they plotted a massive excavation of weakened stone lying above these caverns, in effect orchestrating and encouraging the collapse of hundreds of tons of rock that would form a huge, natural looking sinkhole. Promised the spoils of human captives as slaves and food, the trolls aided in the excavation. Once the humans got to the bottom and built a camp, they set up the light barriers and betrayed them. During their initial attacks, he was captured and placed within the darkness box, however he is unsure why the humans took him hostage for he knows he was worthless to them as a bargaining piece as his tribe would abandon him if they felt he was a weak enough leader to become captured.

He relishes repeating the story of his betrayal, spitting profusely throughout the tale and unapologetically expressing great enmity for his human captors. He doesn't know what has happened to his clan but is certain if they managed to survive they have abandoned him for, in troll culture, capture is the same as death and his people will view him as weak, ineffective, and worthy only of being slain. He complains bitterly that his equipment was taken from him, and should any of the PCs possess his items, he becomes enraged and demands they hand it over. Anyone refusing this request should expect a fight. Similarly, if the PCs convince him to accompany them for a bit, if they stumble upon his possessions (or possessions of any of his formal tribe members) he immediately claims ownership over them as is his right.

Stonegullet is completely untrustworthy and even if freed and shown kindness, he will at first opportunity betray his liberators and likely attempt to slay them in his attempt to redeem himself. He's not very intelligent however he's clever and knows he needs to hide the truth of his capture from his fellow trolls. For this reason, anyone who has seen him imprisoned must die before they can expose his failure.

## QII. ARMORY

*A number of rusted metal pegs protrude from these walls, set evenly spaced and at eye level. Swept sloppily into the corner, lie the broken parts of an old stool and some broken shards of glass.*

The Malchorts used this room as an armory however it has long since been raided for its contents.

**Developments:** Among the garbage swept into the corner hides a small treasure. A curious metal sphere about the size of an eyeball can be identified as the pommel to an ancient Malchort sword. If detected

for, it radiates an aura of faint divination magic. If held to the light, it projects a cryptic phrase in ancient Malchort that when translated into common reads "When the Gates Fall and the Path Fails, We Shall Meet Beyond the Wall and Build Again Beyond the Veil."

The poem references the hidden entrance in the Panopticon that leads to the Malchort City, which at the time the pommel was forged (during the final decline of the Malchort Empire) was being fortified as a safe haven.

## Q12. LIGHT TOWER D (CR 9)

*Scattered and infrequent drips echo through this chamber, its floor slick with water and dotted with small shallow pools that refract with sheets flickering orange and amber from a constellation of glowing crystals poking their fine tips through a morass of dripping calcite high above. The transplant stalagmite that serves as the chamber's light tower is similarly caked in the drippings, and the deposits cascading down the staircase gives it the appearance of a great frozen waterfall.*

Anyone examining the cavern floor can attempt a DC 18 Perception check to notice numerous bones in the pools, most half or entirely buried by minerals and sediment. Inspection by anyone with the Heal, Knowledge (nature), or the Survival skill notes most of the bones are those of small, subterranean scavenger mammals.

Water slicked calcite deposits blanketing the staircase rob it of its shape and anyone attempting to ascend the glassy slope must succeed a DC 15 Climb check to avoid slipping and tumbling back down. Similarly, the light crystals are half-covered with calcite and firmly cemented in place. Anyone attempting to remove them must first chisel away the deposits before prying them loose. This requires a DC 15 Craft (sculpture), Craft (stoneworking), Disable Device, or stonecunning check. If the check fails by more than 5, then the individual accidentally strikes the crystal with enough force to cause it to explode.

**Creatures:** The water in this cavern has attracted a pair alien and aberrant predators to settle high above among the rock formations in the ceiling. Known as lurker above, these bizarre organisms resemble stalactites and attack stealthily by dropping on their prey.

**Lurker Above (2)**

**CR 7**

**XP 3,200**

**hp 85 each** (*Pathfinder Bestiary 4*)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** These strange beasts wait for living



creatures to come in range, keeping silent and immobile until the last possible second.

**During Combat** The creatures drip from above, targeting prey and smothering them as quickly as possible.

**Moral** These strange creatures fight to the death.

**Developments:** Near the top of the stairs, in the pale glow of the crystals, is a gelatinous, transparent fluid-filled egg sack containing a dozen vile looking aberrant creatures in an embryonic state of development. The eggs were left by the lurkers. If the sac is punctured, it releases a splattering stream of noxious placental ooze.

**Ruptured Egg Sac:** atk +15 melee (DC 18 Fortitude save or nauseated for 1d4 rounds); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. square)

## Q13. THE PATH ONWARDS (CR 6)

If the PCs succeeded the check in **area P6** to identify the borehole as golem-made, they recognize the telltale signs of the Trypus' golem. If they failed to correctly identify the borehole earlier, allow them the opportunity to make another check at this time.

**Creatures:** Watching this entrance is a pack of rock trollhounds. As soon as they smell or catch sight of intruders, they turn and dart off into the passage, running full speed towards area R1, in order to alert Great Tusk of their findings. The trollhounds do their best to flee and usher their warning, but if the PCs pursue and corner them, the primal beasts turn, hold their ground, and fight viscously. If challenged, they always fight to the death.

### Rock Trollhound (3)

CR 3

XP 800

N Medium magical beast

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +8 natural)

**hp** 30 (4d10+8); fast healing 3 (must be underground and touching natural earth)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

**Weaknesses** sunlight vulnerability

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** bite +8 (1d6+6 plus disease and trip)

**Special Attacks** disease

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The trollhounds hide in the shadows and try to avoid perception. Should any living creature come within range of their sight or scent, allow them a Perception check to detect the intruder.

If the trollhounds are successful, they rush off down the tunnel barking a loud warning.

**During Combat** If forced into combat, trollhounds attempt to bite and trip their opponents, slathering them with their virulent saliva. They continue barking loudly to ensure they alert their masters to the encroaching intruders.

**Moral** Trollhounds fight to the death

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19 (23 vs. trip)

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception)

**Skills** Perception +8, Stealth +5, Survival +1 (+5 scent tracking); Racial Modifiers +4 Survival when tracking by scent

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Disease (Ex)** A trollhound's saliva is an infectious brew of contagion. Creatures bitten by a trollhound are often afflicted with bloodfire fever, a disease characterized by deep internal pain, as if the victim's blood were on fire. Its symptoms include loss of muscular coordination and physical strength as well as lethargy and fatigue. *Bloodfire fever:* Bite-injury; *save* Fort DC 14; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Str damage, 1d3 Dex damage and target is fatigued; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Sunlight Vulnerability (Ex)** A rock trollhound exposed to sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) can only take a single move or attack action and is instantly turned to stone (as if by a flesh to stone spell) in the next round if it fails a DC 17 Fortitude save. A rock trollhound must make a new saving throw each round it remains in sunlight. This effect ends at night, once the rock trollhound is no longer exposed to sunlight.

**Development:** If the PCs let any trollhounds escape, they warn the trolls in Part 3 allowing them to gain a +4 to all Perception checks when attempting to hide or surprise any individuals walking down the street.

## THE JOURNEY TO THE SURFACE

This section of the adventure was primarily designed for the PCs to learn how to control their golem and make use of its powers. While the PCs pursue their enemies, however, they are attacked by still more rock trolls. However, these trolls have seen firsthand the devastation that one of these colossi are capable of, and they are not entirely unprepared. A large number of their kin were slaughtered by the Academy's golem, and now they seek revenge. The trolls attack in force, and have set traps in preparation for the PCs.

While the troll ambush may at first seem incredibly deadly, GMs should note that the threat of rock trolls is far less when the PCs remain inside the golem. This is deliberate on the behalf of the adventure design to encourage the PCs to use the golem and continue with the adventure. PCs encountering the rock trolls outside the golem - especially if they come in great numbers - face a far more serious and potentially deadly challenge. In such circumstances, the GM should consider reducing the number of trolls to 4 or 5 and have a second wave of trolls arrive on the tail end of the first combat.

## RI. TROLLS' VENGEANCE (CR II)

*The gaping tunnel slopes upward at a slight angle. Despite its girth, gouges left by the passage of the Malchorts' great machines mar the walls and smooth cobbled floors. After a few thousand feet, the tunnel levels off. Ahead, there appear some alcoves that might branch off from the main tunnel.*

At this point a DC 25 Perception check spots what might be movement ahead in the side tunnels. The trolls do their best to stay out of sight, hoping to lure the PCs into a crude trap.

**Trap:** At this location, the trolls rigged a crude but murderously effective trap which they built to kill any and all of the humans who betrayed them. Anyone stepping into this area without first checking for traps is in danger.

### Crushing Stone Trap

CR 13

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** Atk +15 melee (16d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. square)

**Creatures:** 1d4 rounds after the PCs spring or disable the trap, a band of trolls rushes from the tunnel and attacks any and all trespassers, especially humans. Heading the charge is the tribe's new leader, a hulking monstrosity both more sizeable and brutish than others of his kin. The hideous creature drools profusely from between his great curved dagger-like tusks as he snarls threats of death and recklessly flails his weapon at anything within range.

### Rock Trolls (8)

CR 6

**XP** 2,400

**hp** 80 each (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2, 272)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The trolls wait for Tusk's command to charge, and follow him in a scattered formation,

each targeting the nearest opponent, but none attacking Tusk's target.

**During Combat** The trolls gleefully attack opponents, though they are also testing Tusk's ability as the new leader, thus they let him fight solo and without aid.

**Moral** The trolls fight to the death but can be driven off if exposed to daylight.

### Great Tusk

CR 8

**XP** 4,800

Male advanced giant rock troll (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 294, 295; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 272)

**hp** 108

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Eager to prove himself, Tusk targets the most physically impressive looking opponent and recklessly charges into melee.

**During Combat** Tusk uses his natural attacks making full-round attacks whenever possible. If he kills his opponent he moves straight on to the next available target, pushing allies out of the way and claiming that victim as his own. If he does this, the other trolls give him sway.

**Moral** As Tusk has made his claim as the clan's new leader, he fights to the death and even holds his ground in the face of sunlight, even allowing himself to become petrified. This is because if he fails to impress as leader, his tribe will kill him anyway.

## CONCLUDING PART 2

If the PCs defeat or drive off Great Tusk and his followers, the trolls flee deeper into the caverns to lick their wounds and plot revenge for another time. Hereafter, the PCs suffer no more assaults from the rock trolls for the remainder of the trip back and the rest of the journey back to the surface is uneventful. At this point, the GM may proceed to Part 3 of the adventure.

## PART 3: THE EMERGENCE

In this section of the adventure, the PCs return to the Great City to confront their enemies in an epic golem battle.

*This passage climbs upwards through a rough and narrow chasm-like cut in the surrounding rock. The walls taper into a narrow rubble-filled path that winds through the bottom of the chasm. Light begins to seep into the passage from above, and the Sink opening looks like a small, blinding white sun.*

Just outside the Sink Compound a great crowd gathers to view the unbelievable spectacle of a



towering metal war machine recently recovered from within the Sink. On a makeshift wooden stage, a crier gleefully screams a tale of heroic triumph to the eager crowd, espousing the virtues of the Great City's newest heroes, a team consisting of several high-ranking members of Trypus Academy and their guide, the prophet Lazarus whose divinely inspired visions guided them deep into the heart of the Sink and allowed them to recover the source of the destruction that so recently leveled much of the city.

In the crier's tale, he describes how the team bravely fought hordes of hideous subterranean beasts and laid low their strange and terrible masters who vainly thought to destroy the City by collapsing it from beneath. Then he entreats the crowd to feast their eyes on the terrifying machine which stands behind him. Still piloted by Lazarus and his allies, the heroes drive the menacing golem thing to perform feats of power, strength, and destruction. The machine spins upon its axis and with unexpected speed and precision snatches a nearby concrete bunker, lifts it high into the air and then snaps it like a twig. The crowd erupts into applause. As the noise calms, the crier again addresses the crowd, promising that the recovery of the golem promises all citizens of the Great City ensured safety against any and all outside threats, starting with the sealing of the Sink and then launching a campaign against the rogue Semheyl Blood Senator Eldron Vulgrax

Between their natural guile, extensive political connections, and considerable funds for cranking out propaganda, Lazarus and the Academy have thus far done a decent job of convincing the public that they heroically destroyed the source of the Sink and returned with a machine capable of serving the public defense. Likely the PCs already possess a fair amount of evidence to the contrary. Unfortunately, they lack enough of an audience to speak out against them to stop them from using the doom golem to take over the will of the people.

**Creatures:** If the PCs emerge in their newly claimed doom golem, the Academy members quickly man their own golem and rush to engage them. An immediate and epic golem fight breaks out right outside the sinkhole.

## DOOM GOLEM CREW

Under the command of the high-ranking Trypus Academy representative Sumat Dartosian (LE human female aristocrat 4/magus 10) the doom golem contains a mixed crew of Lazarites, Trypus Academy members, along with a Kharel lieutenant **Densmore Rastin** (LN male human fighter 12) who operates the golem's attack controls. Depending upon how PCs performed against villains in prior adventures,

you can choose either Lazarite disciple **Cygil Karn** or **Wvolmar** to serve as the Golem crew's arcane power and operator of the blaster controls. Cygil is the default NPC used in the doom golem's stats. Updated stats for Cygil and Wvolmar are provided in the Appendix, and Wvolmar's blast abilities are listed in a sidebar. If both Cygil and Wvolmar were killed in prior episodes, simply substitute another Trypus agent named **Graigrol** and use either Cygil's or Wvolmar's stat block.

The mobility controls are handled by **Ris the Living Shadow** (NE male human rogue 12), one of the Trypus Academy's most noted infiltrators. The defensive controls are handled by the blind Lazarite priest **Mogdred** (LE female human oracle 12). In addition to commanding the team, Sumat uses her powers to work the golem's converter box and the weapon enhancement controls. Sumat's statistics are in the next chapter while the statistics for the remaining PCs are included in the Appendix.

### Doom Golem

CR 14

XP 38,400

N Gargantuan construct

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 7, flat-footed 25 (+1 dodge, +19 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 197 (25d10+60)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, improved uncanny dodge; Immune construct traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +39 (2d6+18), buzz saw hand +39 (2d8+18)

**Ranged** blaster +21 (as per base spell)

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

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +6d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** As soon as they spot the PCs, the crew rushes to their positions within the golem. Once secure, they position themselves to attack, trampling any people in their path and kicking and crushing nearby structures to clear the battlefield. They open with ranged blasts, and defensively hold their position for the PCs' approach.

**During Combat** When using the golems' attacks, track any misses and determine if they strike nearby structures. Some might burst into flames or become crushed or explode when struck by blasts or slam attacks. The Trypus crew isn't above breaking apart nearby structures and hurling the pieces or even hurling bystanders while they attack. The crew considers structures or individuals crossing their path as expendable.

**Moral** The crew pilots the golem until it is toppled and defeated. If any of them survive the defeat, they attempt to flee the wreckage, rush to the protection of the surrounding army, and begin their plot to try and frame the PCs as dangerous aggressors as described in Concluding Act 3.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 35, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10  
**Base Atk** +25; **CMB** +41; **CMD** 52

**Feats** Cleave(B), Dodge(B), Great Cleave(B), Improved Initiative(B), Power Attack(B)

**SQ** attack controls, blaster controls, defense controls, weapon enhancement controls, converter box

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Attack Controls (Sp)** as per Densmore's attack modifications: +6 to melee attacks, Cleave, Great Cleave, and Power Attack

**Blaster Controls (Sp)\*** as per Cygil Karn's spells: 6th— 6d6 acid (2) (DC 21), 6d6 electricity (DC 21); 5th— 5d6 acid (4) (DC 20); 4th—4d6 acid (5) (DC 19); 3rd— 3d6 acid (5) (DC 18), 3d6 cold (DC 18); 2nd— 2d6 acid (6) (DC 17); 1st—1d6 acid (4) (DC 16); 1d6 force (2) (DC 16)

**Defense Controls (Sp)** as per Mogdred's spells: 6th (3/day)—shield bonus +6 for 6 rounds, ability buff +12 for 6 rounds, jaunt 60 feet; 5th (5/day)—counter fire effects 5th-level or lower, shield bonus +6 for 5 rounds, +5 insight bonus to saves for 5 rounds, jaunt 50 feet; 4th (6/day)—counter chaos or force effects 4th-level or lower, shield bonus +4 for 4 rounds, +4 insight bonus to saves for 4 rounds, jaunt 40 feet; 3rd (6/day)—counter air or light effects 3rd-level or lower, shield bonus +3 for 3 rounds, ability buff +6 for 3 rounds, +3 insight bonus to saves for 3 rounds, jaunt 30 feet; 2nd (6/day)—+2 insight bonus to saves for 2 rounds, ability buff +4 for 4 round, concealment for 2 rounds, jaunt 20 feet; 1st (7/day)—ability buff +2 for 2 rounds, +1 insight bonus to saves for 1 round, +1 insight bonus to saves for 1 round, jaunt 10 feet.

**Weapon Enhancement Controls (Sp)** as per Sumat's items: 4th—any energy +4d6 for 4 rounds; 3rd—fire +3d6 for 3 rounds, cold +3d6 for 3 rounds; 2nd—acid +2d6 for 2 rounds, fire +2d6 for 2 rounds x2; 1st—adjuring step\*, cold +1d6 for 1 round, force +1d6 for 1 round

**Converter Box (Sp)** This box can be used to convert magic items or light crystals into various effects. As a full round action, the individual places the item into the converter box and dials in the specific effect. The effect is then transferred as a spell with a caster level equal to the level of the individual that created the item to either the blasters, shields, or weapon enhancements.

Effects generated using the converter box cannot be used simultaneously with effects produced by spells channeled into the controls, thus the individual operating a specific control determines which effect to use for each round.

## CONCLUDING PART 3

As the golem battle draws to a close, the Kortezyan military moves in to secure the area by surrounding the fight and creating a barrier of soldiers between the golems and the rest of the city. The Trypus Academy agents take the offensive and publicly accuse the PCs of treason. They attempt to convince a stunned crowd that the PCs recovered a doom golem for the purpose of attacking and conquering the city, while trying to paint themselves as protectors. While their argument isn't necessarily convincing, it doesn't have to be as by the Empire's law the Academy always holds the greater truth.

Unfortunately for the Trypus Academy, Lord Atregan has come to suspect that the organization poses a threat to his own control over the city and its efforts to seize power contradict his authority. Still, Lord Atregan lacks the evidence to support his suspicions, thus he realizes that the PCs and Senator

### WVOLMAR'S BLAST SKILLS

If using Wvolmar as the arcanist component in the golem instead of Cygil, his spells convert as follows:

6th— enchantment blast (six rounds, save DC 20 per round), empowered cold blast 24 damage, empowered sonic blast 24 damage

5th— empowered fire blast 18 damage, empowered force blast 18 damage

4th— enchantment blast (4 rounds, save DC 18 per round), fire blast 4d6, cold blast x2 4d6

3rd—enchantment blast (3 rounds, save DC 17 per round), lightning bolt (DC 17), cold blast 3d6, acid blast 3d6

2nd— dazzling blast (2 rounds, save DC 16 per round), enchantment blast (2 rounds, save DC 16 per round), force blast 2d6, fire blast 2d6, sonic blast 2d6

1st— fire blast 1d6, enchantment blast (1 rounds, save DC 15 per round), transmute blast (-1 to Dex for 1 round, save DC 14 per round) force blast 1d6, electricity blast 1d6



Vulgrax who obviously oppose the Academy are likely his best weapons against them. At this time, enough of the public has started to question the authenticity of the treasonous accusations against Blood Senator and instead suspect that he understands a darker truth that the Academy has deliberately hid from them.

To gain the peoples' support and in order to avoid further conflict or civil strife, Lord Atregan assembled a bipartisan search team to locate the Senator to offer him amnesty until the issue of the Sink can be resolved.

## PART 4: THE RETURN OF GINTZ OPHILIAN

Once the PCs defeat the doom golem, they need to provide evidence to prove that the Academy's efforts to recover the doom golem lie in their desire to seize greater political control and are tied to Wvolmar's initial plans, possibly even funding them.

With Kortezean army securing the area, Lord Atregan confronts the Academy, telling them they have overstepped their boundaries in matters of the City's defense, forcing them to back down a little. Much to their ire and to the surprise of the people,

Lord Atregan refuses to acknowledge any claims of treason against the PCs or Senator Vulgrax without solid proof that their opposition to the Trypus Academy was performed as an act of personal benefit and not in defense of the welfare of the City. He allows the PCs to speak candidly and publicly about their experiences and what they know. While he finds their statements truthful, he lets them know that their statements imply that the Trypus Academy, one of the Empire's oldest and most revered institutions has acted with treasonous intent against the City and his throne. Lord Atregan then announces that the PCs have 24 hours to recover evidence to definitively incriminate those involved in the initial plot to create the Sink and recover the doom golems. Later he lets them know that he believes conspirators within his homeland and even within his own family are trying to wrest his position from him.

Within the next day, the PCs need to secure proof that the Trypus Academy was also involved and possibly funded the Malchort Cabal's initial plot. Unfortunately, the Academy went to great length to make sure they destroyed all records containing any prior evidence. Seemingly all members of the original cabal have been slain or tried and incarcerated or perhaps in the case Gintz Ophilian (see *The Malchort*



*Cabal*), traded testimony for freedom and anonymity. Of those Cabal members the PCs interrogated, Gintz had the most frequent contact with the Trypus Academy and remains perhaps their only viable source of information. Unfortunately, Gintz is dead. While he fared well in escaping the wrath of the Malchort Sage, he foolishly trusted the Academy to aid him in his flight from the Great City. Instead, Trypus agents believed him too much of a risk to let loose and poisoned him over supper as together they plotted his escape. These same agents hid his corpse in a giant block of ice on a ship in the harbor set to sail overseas to a sanctioned Academy where mystic surgeons will perform a ceremonial operation to extract his memories.

After Lord Atregan grants them temporary amnesty, the PCs likely begin rattling their brains to come up with a plan to gather evidence or testimony. If they need prompting, remind them that the people that know the most about the Sink are the ones who caused it, the members of the Malchort Cabal. Of those still living, allow them to recall that Gintz Ophilian was both the most knowledgeable as well as the most forthcoming and for this he was granted his freedom. Likely he has fled town, however his trail should be easy enough for seasoned adventurers to track down. The PCs can start their search at Gintz's home, a modest two story brick building in an upscale part of the Lower Castle District.

Upon arrival, the PCs discover the windows drawn and all doors locked. Should the PCs begin to pry

around, they attract the attention of Gintz's young niece and sole heir **Miran** (NG female commoner 1). Miran lives in the area, but for the last several weeks she has kept watch over the house in her uncle's absence. Returning from errands, she waits before approaching to study the PCs' actions. Their interest in her uncle deeply concerns her. Several days have now passed since he left the house, leading her to suspect her uncle has become a victim of foul play. Miran draws a light crossbow, heads to the house, aims it at the first intruder she spies and demands to know what happened to her uncle. Her initial attitude starts as hostile, though if she can be calmed enough to gain her trust and change her attitude to helpful, she reveals to them that she believes her uncle was murdered for what he knew.

When Miran last spoke with her uncle, he told her he was going to meet with Trypus representative Sumat Dartosian who had extended a generous offer to help him relocate to Garat-Kai, one of the Empire's new colonies to the south, to help set up shipping operations. He told her he was going to return later and discuss with her the details, however he never returned home. Instead, later that evening a messenger brought her a cryptic letter from her uncle. Though written in her uncle's own handwriting, Miran found the writing odd and uncharacteristic, leading her to believe - correctly - that Gintz was forced to write it to explain his disappearance. At this point she hands the PCs the letter.

*Dearest Mirahn,  
I send you my deepest apology for not contacting you sooner. I have been offered a wonderful opportunity to work overseas. The offer has come quite suddenly, leaving me little time to prepare. Thus, I am unfortunately forced to inform you by letter and will not have the opportunity to say my farewells in person. I shall send word to you when I arrive with greater details.*

*Love,  
Uncle Gintz*



Dearest Mirahn,

*I send you my deepest apology for not contacting you sooner. I have been offered a wonderful opportunity to work over seas. The offer has come quite suddenly, Leaving me little time to Prepare. Thus, I am unfortunately forced to inform you by letter and will not have the opportunity to say my farewells in person. I shall send word to you when I arrive with greater details.*

Love,  
Uncle Gintz

After the PCs have a chance to read the letter, Miran offers a few comments.

*"It seems strange that my uncle spelled my name wrong. I'm sure the error was deliberate though at the very least, it would seem to indicate he was writing under duress... other words are also misspelled, however my uncle is well educated. I'm believe these too were deliberately placed, though I'm can't quite figure out why. My uncle never expressed a desire to visit the empire, and has always feared traveling by ship. Something is very wrong."*

Allow the PCs to study the letter to see if they can find the message HELP. If need be, allow a DC 12 Intelligence check to catch each one of the following errors.

The added H in Miran's name

Sea is misspelled, deliberately. "E"

L and P are both capitalized for no particular reason.

HELP.

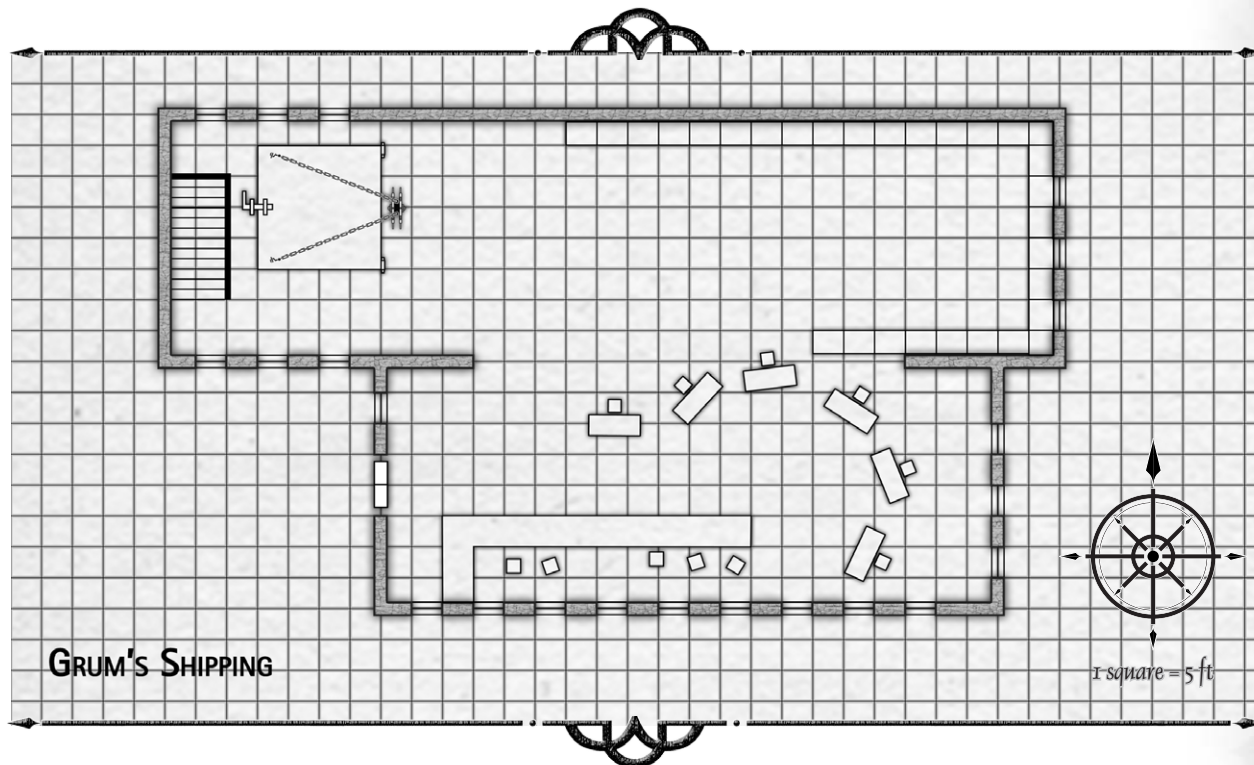
**AD Hoc XP:** If the PCs manage to decipher the secret message award them XP as if they completed a CR 11 encounter

**Concluding the Encounter:** After determining that Gintz has likely fallen into trouble, the PCs next logical choice is to track him down at his last known destination. Miran readily procures this information for them, shuffling through several pieces of paper on her uncle's desk until she spots one that appears familiar. It reads, "Grum's Shipping House, West Docks, Port 14". A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check recalls that the section known as West Docks are owned and operated exclusively by overseas' Korteasian shipping companies.

**Developments:** The Trypus Academy considers Miran's testimony an admission of guilt in committing both heresy and treason against the empire. If she confronts the PCs in public, eventually news of their interactions reaches the ears of Trypus intelligence agents. The Academy immediately assumes her guilt, thereafter she must be safeguarded against Academy assassins sent to kill her. The PCs need to make provisions for her protection (such as placing her in Lord Atregan's custody) or she will be dead before they return from their investigations.

## GRUM'S SHIPPING (CR 13)

When the PCs arrive at Grum's Shipping they find the door shut and a "Closed" sign hanging in the window. A short list of services offered posted on a plank near the door indicates the company deals with shipping provisions locally, mostly perishables



such as meats and fish. Anyone attempting to enter discovers the doors to be locked with a masterwork lock. The windows are shuttered and barred from the inside as well. Should the PCs force their way in, read or paraphrase the following text.

*The front doors lead into an open, timber framed room that serves as both a warehouse and a shop. Wooden plank walls plastered with faded yellow posters advertise services and shipping routes. A few shipping and nautical tools hang displayed on the walls as decoration. From the beams hang a series of thick spring pull scales, while a broad workbench displays several other tools for taking weights and measures, including rulers and pan balances. A wooden service desk topped with a thick cork mat stands facing a section with smaller, cramped looking desks and chairs for filling out forms and reports. Beyond, towards the back of the room, a large hatch hole with a rope and pulley above it opens into the floor. Near the hatch hole, an archway leads to a staircase that descends to a lower level.*

This room serves as the main business area for the shipping company where deals are brokered and goods are received, weighted, and measured before being packed up and shipped out.

**Creatures:** At present, warehouse Bally Grum finalizes arrangements with Trypus agent Sumat Dartosian here to handle the transfer of Gintz's remains now frozen in a block of ice in the basement. Also in the room, six of Bally's well-paid stevedore guardsmen keep a tentative watch for any signs of trouble.

#### Stevedore Thug (6)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Human fighter 2/rogue 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; Senses Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 34 (2d10+2d8+14)

Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, evasion

#### OFFENSE

Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+3/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +6 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The thugs rush to the sides of the room, moving about until they can gain flanking advantage and avoiding the mass of tentacles conjured by the magus.

**During Combat** The thugs use hit and run strikes and attempt to get the PCs to break up, in order to expose the spellcasters.

**Moral** The thugs fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 17

**Feats** Alertness, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Disguise +3, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (nobility) +2, Perception +10, Profession (stevedore) +5, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +8

**Languages** Azindralean, Korteizian

**SQ** rogue talent (combat trick), trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, masterwork dagger, masterwork longsword, light wooden shield

#### Bally Grum

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human expert 7

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init –1; Senses Perception +13

#### DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 9, flat-footed 10 (+1 armor, –1 Dex)

hp 31 (7d8)

Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +9

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk silver dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk silver dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Bally begins by covering the magus until she casts *fly* upon herself.

**During Combat** Hardly a great fighter, the merchant hangs back and tries to hide behind a desk, using his dagger defensively to jab at anyone that approaches him.

**Moral** Bally fights until dropped below 10 hp, then he drinks his *potion of invisibility* and his *cure moderate wounds* potions and flees. If he gets outside and people are still fighting within, he attempts to light his warehouse on fire before fleeing the city.

#### STATISTICS

Str 9, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13

Base Atk +5; CMB +4; CMD 13

**Feats** Alertness, Iron Will, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Appraise, Intimidate)

**Skills** Appraise +15, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +13, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (history, nobility) +4, Knowledge (local) +12, Perception +13, Profession (merchant) +11, Ride +9, Sense Motive +13, Survival +2

**Languages** Common, Azindralean, Korteizian, Infernal



**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** masterwork silver dagger, masterwork rapier, *bracers of armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1

#### Sumat Dartosian

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female aristocrat 4/magus 10

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex)

**hp** 90 (14 HD; 4d8+10d8+24)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +13

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *corrosive bastard sword* +14/+9 (1d10+3/19–20 plus 1d6 acid)

**Special Attacks** improved spell combat, spell combat (–2 attack, +2 concentration), spellstrike

**Magus Spells Prepared** (CL 10th; concentration +14)

4th—*black tentacles*, *detonate* APG (DC 18)

3rd—*blink*, *fly*, *flame arrow*, *wind wall*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *fire breath* APG (DC 16), *invisibility*, *scorching ray*, *web* (DC 16)

1st—*adjuring step*\*, *frost bite*\*, *infernal healing* ISWG, *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 15), *magic missile*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The magus opens her attack by casting *black tentacles* to control the room and allow the thugs to surround and flank targets.

**During Combat** She casts *fly* upon herself and launches into the air to cast ranged spells about the room to back up the thugs or controls the movement in the room with spells like *grease* and *web*. As soon as she has the opportunity to target rival spellcasters, she takes the advantage using her *flame arrow* and *acid arrow* spells, or dropping in on the rival caster and striking with her sword.

**Moral** As soon as she is injured, she casts *infernal healing* on herself and continues her attack until dropped below 15 hit points, at which point she casts *invisibility* upon herself and attempts to flee.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27

**Feats** Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

**Skills** Appraise +12, Bluff +10, Climb +8, Craft (alchemy) +12, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +7, Fly

+11, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Perception +11, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +17, Swim +9, Use Magic Device +10

**Languages** Common, Azindralean, Korteian, Infernal

**SQ** arcane pool (9 points, +3), fighter training (fighter level 5), knowledge pool, magus arcane (familiar, pool strike +4d6, spell shield) medium armor proficiency, spell recall

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds, wand of wand of summon monster III* (22 charges); **Other Gear** +3 *studded leather*, +1 *corrosive bastard sword*, *belt of incredible Dexterity* +2, *ring of protection* +2, spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all 0-level spells and all prepared spells as well as the following: 3rd—*hold person*; 2nd—*blood transcription*; 1st—*comprehend languages*, *disguise self*, *mount*, *protection from good*, *unseen servant*), 40 gp.

**Treasure:** On the desk rests a magnifying glass and masterwork merchant's scale. A DC 20 Perception check reveals a false panel hiding a secret drawer holding a strongbox locked with a masterwork lock containing 1,720 gp.

## The Icehouse (CR 11)

The basement serves as an icehouse, at all times kept at freezing temperatures. Workers use the room to icepack and freeze food and other perishable goods for shipping. Frozen goods are then packed into wooden crates for shipping.

The temperature of the outer room is slightly warmer, just below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. There are several workbenches around the room, and tools and materials for packing such as crates, boards, hammers, nails, scissors, knives, string, wire, pliers, along with wool, cotton blankets and other such insulating materials. There are also a number of moving carts, ropes and chains, ice picks and tongs, and long wooden poles.

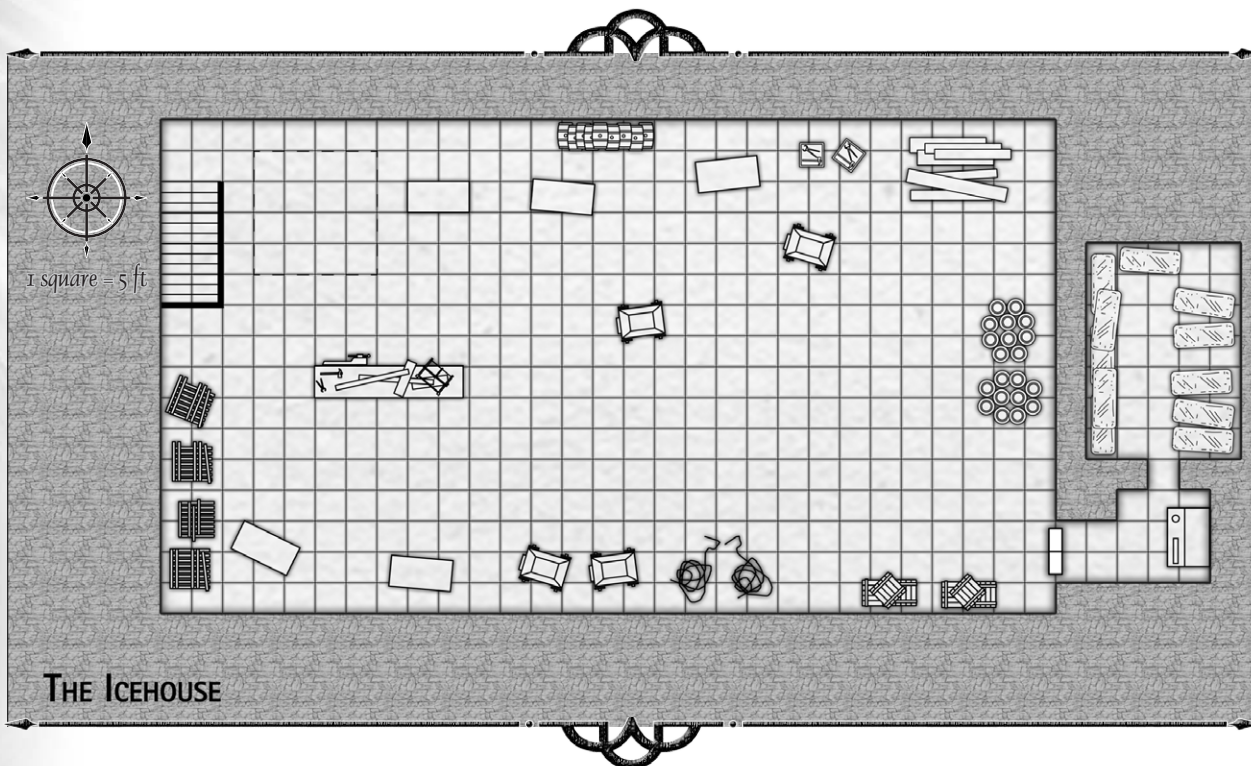
A huge frost rimed, metal door leads into another section of the basement. The passage just beyond the door is a small chamber set with a magical apparatus for blast freezing. Currently set to freeze, any time an object passes into this chamber it triggers the blast freezer, rapidly encasing anything in the chamber in solid ice unless the bypass switch is activated.

#### Blast Freezer

CR 11

XP 12,800

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30



## EFFECTS

**Trigger** proximity; **Bypass** locked; **Reset** automatic (takes 1d4 minutes)

**Effect** spell effect (cone of cold, 15d6 cold damage, DC 17 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. area entering the freezer)

The passage opens into a large plain stone room holding a great number of ice blocks, each containing various provisions. The room is freezing cold, below 20 degrees Fahrenheit, and breath condenses quickly surrounding everything in a haze. The floor is slick and slippery, allowing workers to slide the blocks easily.

**Developments:** An unusually large block of ice in the corner encases the macabre contents of Gintz Ophilian's partially dismembered corpse, tightly bound in butcher's cord. Though Gintz is dead, the PCs can still speak to him using *speak with dead*. Once they contact him, he readily reveals that both before and after the Trials he kept in regular contact with members of the Trypus Academy - particularly Sumat Dartosian - who were using their positions as a means to gain power in the new world, not only in Azindralea, but the Empire's newly developing colonies as well. While he has little proof as to their motives, he suspects their ultimate goal was to develop and arm the colonies, create viable trade routes and economies, and then to secede from the Korteisian Empire. While the goal seems noble, and they did their best to convince others of such, they sought absolute and totalitarian rule and had plans to enforce their efforts through slavery. He has much of the latter documented in his journal along with several papers and shipping receipts to prove their

involvement in these efforts. More importantly, Gintz used a clockwork spy to record three hours' worth of covert conversations. The conversations are stored on gemstones which are hidden in a locked safe-box buried in the basement of his home. Ironically, his murderers failed to find the key to the safe-box that he wears on a leather thong about his neck.

## APPENDIX

## Cygil Karn

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male human conjurer 12

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +6; **Senses** Perception +0

## DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 74 (12d6+30)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 cold iron dagger +6/+1 (1d4/19–20)**Ranged** +1 alchemical silver dagger +9/+4 (1d4/19–20)

**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +17)

At will—*dimensional steps* (360 feet/day)

8/day—*acid dart* (1d6+6 acid)

**Conjurer Spells Prepared** (CL 12th; concentration +17)

6th—*acid fog*, *chain lightning* (DC 21), *summon monster VI*

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 21), *acidic spray* UM (DC 21), *life*



*bubble* APG, *summon monster* V  
 4th—*black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *shout* (DC 19),  
*solid fog*, *summon monster* IV  
 3rd—*battering blast* DUOG (DC 18), *haste*, *seek*  
*thoughts* APG (DC 18), *sleet storm*, *stinking cloud*  
 (DC 19), *summon monster* III  
 2nd—*acid arrow* x3, *glitterdust* (DC 18), *invisibility*,  
*summon monster* II  
 1st—*grease* (DC 17), *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*,  
*magic missile* x2, *summon monster* I  
 o (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 15), *mage hand*,  
*read magic*

**Opposition Schools** enchantment, necromancy

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 20, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 12  
**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19  
**Feats** Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Craft  
 Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item,  
 Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron  
 Will, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjunction)  
**Skills** Appraise +16, Craft (alchemy) +18, Fly  
 +17, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +16,  
 Knowledge (dungeoneering) +13, Knowledge  
 (engineering) +12, Knowledge (geography) +11,  
 Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (local) +13,  
 Knowledge (nature) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +11,  
 Knowledge (planes) +13, Knowledge (religion) +12,  
 Spellcraft +20  
**Languages** Aklo, Azindralean, Common, Infernal,  
 Kortezean, Undercommon  
**SQ** arcane bond (amulet), summoner's charm (6  
 rounds)  
**Combat Gear** *scroll of expeditious retreat*, *scroll of*  
*obscuring mist*, *scroll of see invisibility*; **Other Gear**  
 +1 cold iron dagger, +1 alchemical silver dagger,  
*bracers of armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband*  
*of vast intelligence* +2, *ring of protection* +1, 171 gp

#### Densmore Rastin

CR 11

**XP** 12,800  
 Male human fighter 12  
 LN Medium humanoid (human)  
**Init** +5; **Senses** Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+10 armor, +1  
 deflection, +1 Dex)  
**hp** 106 (12d10+36)  
**Fort** +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6 (+3 vs. fear)  
**Defensive Abilities** bravery +3

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.  
**Melee** +1 greatsword +22/+17/+12 (2d6+12/17–20)  
**Ranged** +1 flaming longbow +15/+10/+5 (1d8+2/x3)  
**Special Attacks** weapon training (heavy blades +2,  
 bows +1)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8  
**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +17 (+19 bull rush, +19 sunder);  
**CMD** 29 (31 vs. bull rush, 31 vs. sunder)  
**Feats** Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Greater  
 Weapon Focus (greatsword), Improved Bull  
 Rush, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved  
 Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning  
 Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon  
 Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization  
 (greatsword)  
**Skills** Climb +17, Handle Animal +8, Knowledge  
 (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (engineering) +8,  
 Ride +7, Survival +11, Swim +13  
**Languages** Common  
**SQ** armor training 3  
**Combat Gear** quiver with 20 arrows, **Other Gear** +2  
*half-plate*, +1 greatsword, +1 flaming longbow, *ring of*  
*protection* +1, 3,500 gp

#### Mogdred

CR 11

**XP** 12,800  
 Female human oracle 12  
**CN** Medium humanoid (human)  
**Init** +2; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.;  
 Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+5 armor, +1  
 deflection, +2 Dex, +2 natural, +2 shield)  
**hp** 81 (12d8+24)  
**Fort** +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.  
**Melee** +2 shortspear +11/+6 (1d6+1)  
**Ranged** mwk club +12/+7 (1d6)  
**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 12th; concentration +13)  
**6th (3/day)**—*anti-life shell*, *mass owl's wisdom*, *mass*  
*cure moderate wounds*\*  
**5th (5/day)**—*flame strike* (DC 16), *life bubble* APG,  
*contact other plane*, *mass cure light wounds*  
**4th (6/day)**—*chaos hammer* (DC 15), *divine power*,  
*spell immunity*, *legend lore*, *cure critical wounds*  
**3rd (6/day)**—*daylight*, *dispel magic*, *magic vestment*,  
*wind wall*, *locate object*, *cure serious wounds*  
**2nd (6/day)**—*augury*, *death knell* (DC 13), *disfiguring*  
*touch* UM (DC 13), *resist energy*, *silence* (DC 13),  
*tongues*, *cure moderate wounds*  
**1st (7/day)**—*burning disarm* CED (DC 12), *ray of*  
*sickening* UM (DC 12), *sanctuary* (DC 12), *shield of*  
*faith*, *unbreakable heart* ISWG, *identify*, *cure light*  
*wounds*  
 o (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *enhanced*  
*diplomacy*\*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*,  
*stabilize*\*, *virtue*  
**Mystery** lore

## STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21**Feats** Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Weapon Focus (shortspear)**Skills** Appraise +11, Craft (alchemy) +13, Diplomacy +14, Heal +13, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (planes) +11, Knowledge (religion) +15, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +17**Common**, Azindralean, Korteziar**SQ** oracle's curse (clouded vision), revelations (arcane archivist, brain drain, focused trance, lore keeper, mental acuity),**Gear** +1 chain shirt, +1 light wooden shield, +2 shortspear, mwk club, amulet of natural armor +2, ring of protection +1

## Ris

CR 11

**XP** 12,800

Male human rogue 12

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +9; **Senses** Perception +16

## DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 17, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield).**hp** 75 (12d8+18)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +4

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 short sword +14/+9 (1d6+1/19–20), +1 short sword +14/+9 (1d6+1/19–20)**Ranged** mwk shortbow +15/+10 (1d6/x3)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +6d6

## STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 20, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Appraise +12, Bluff +12, Climb +13, Disable Device +24, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +14, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (local) +16, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +18, Stealth +20, Swim +11, Use Magic Device +16**Languages** Common, Azindralean, Korteziar**SQ** rogue talents (bleeding attack +6, combat trick, crippling strike, finesse rogue, stand up, surprise attack), trapfinding +6**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, quiver with 20 arrows; **Other Gear** +2 leather armor, +1 short sword, +1 short sword, mwk shortbow, belt of incredible Dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +1, headband of vast intelligence +2, ring of protection +1, 389 gp

## Wvolmar

CR11

**XP** 12,800 each**Male** human enchanter (enchanter) 12**NE** Medium humanoid (human)**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +1

## DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +4 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 natural)**hp** 86 each (12d6+42)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk quarterstaff +6/+1 (1d6-1) or +2 dagger +7/+1 (1d4+1)**Ranged** +2 dagger +11/+6 (1d4+1)**Special Attacks** aura of despair (12 rounds/day)**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +16)

7/day—dazing touch

Enchanter Spells Prepared (CL 12th; concentration +16)

6th—*cloak of dreams*, *empowered ice storm*, *empowered shout*5th—*empowered fireball* x2, *empowered force punch* x24th—*confusion* (DC 18), *fire trap* (DC 18), *globe of invulnerability* (lesser), *ice storm* x23rd—*dispel magic* x2, *hold person* (DC 17), *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *sleet storm*, *stinking cloud* (DC 17)2nd—*blur*, *glitterdust* (DC 16), *gust of wind* (DC 16), *scorching ray* x2, *shatter*1st—*burning hands* (DC 15), *charm person* (DC 15), *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *read magic***Opposition Schools** necromancy, illusion

## STATISTICS

**Str** 9, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17**Feats** Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Improved Familiar, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spell Mastery, Spell Penetration, Toughness**Skills** Appraise +17, Bluff +11, Craft (alchemy) +15, Diplomacy +6, Fly +14, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (history)



+13, Knowledge (nobility) +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +10, Linguistics +15, Spellcraft +19,

**Languages** Common, Korteisian

**SQ** arcane bond (grymwort), enchanting smile

**Combat Gear** *wand of chill touch* (33 charges); **Other Gear** mwk quarterstaff, +2 *dagger*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *bracers of armor* +2

### GRYMWORT (ADVANCED FAMILIAR) CR —

Cacodaemon; see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* page 64.

**NE** Tiny outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect good, detect magic; **Perception** +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+4 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 19 (3d10+3); fast healing 2

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

**DR** 5/good or silver; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** bite +6 (1d4+1 plus disease)

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

**Special Attacks** soul lock

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

**Constant**—*detect good*, *detect magic*

At will—*invisibility* (self only)

3/day—*lesser confusion* (DC 12)

1/week—*commune* (CL 12th, six questions)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat:** Grymwort flies about attempting to draw the PCs' attention away from his master. He targets opponents with *lesser confusion*, then swoops in to make bite attacks, hoping to get opponents to lose their footing.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 11, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12/19

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Bluff +7, Fly +18, Knowledge (planes) +5, Perception +7, Stealth +14

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** change shape (2 of the following forms: lizard, octopus, small scorpion, venomous snake)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Disease (Su):** Cacodaemonia: Bite—injury; save Fortitude DC 12; onset 1 day; frequency 1/day; effect 1d2 Wisdom damage, cure 2 consecutive saves. In addition to the normal effects of the disease, as long as a victim is infected, the cacodaemon can telepathically communicate with the creature over any distance (as long as they remain on the same plane).

**Soul Lock (Su):** Once per day as a full-round action, a cacodaemon can ingest the spirit of any sentient creature that has died within the last minute.

This causes a soul gem to grow inside of the cacodaemon's gut, which it can regurgitate as a standard action. A soul gem is a fine-sized object with 1 hit point and hardness 2. Destroying a soul gem frees the soul within, though it does not return the deceased creature to life. This is a death effect. Any attempt to resurrect a body whose soul is trapped in a soul gem requires a DC 12 caster level check. Failure results in the spell having no effect, while success shatters the victim's soul gem and returns the creature to life as normal. If the soul gem rests in an unholy location, such as that created by the spell *unhallow*, the DC of this caster level check increases by +2. The caster level check DC is Charisma-based. Any evil outsider can, as a standard action, ingest a soul gem. Doing so frees the soul within, but condemns it to one of the lower planes (though the soul can be returned to life as normal). The outsider gains fast healing 2 for a number of rounds equal to its Hit Dice.

## DOOM GOLEMS

Doom golems are massive machines of war shaped somewhat anthropomorphically. Unlike normal constructs, doom golems cannot function autonomously but are instead directly animated and controlled by living creatures that activate and manipulate the golem using controls within the construct's head. In essence, a doom golem is more like a vehicle than a creature, though its game mechanics and overall function most resemble a creature.

### Doom Golem Base CR 14

**XP** 38,400

N Gargantuan construct

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

**Perception** +0

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 6, flat-footed 25 (+19 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 197 (25d10+60)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

**Immune** construct traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +33 (2d6+18) plus any weapon enhancements determined by base spell.

**Ranged** blaster +21/+16/+11/+6 (as determined by base spell)

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

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 35, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** —, **Cha** —

**Base Atk** +25; **CMB** +41; **CMD** 51

**Controllers (Sp)** a doom golem's controllers allow individuals to control and enhance the doom golem's abilities and attacks as described below.

## ACTIVATING AND CONTROLLING THE GOLEM

Within the cranial cavity of the golem are five chairs with strange wires and helmets attached to them. Determining how the apparatus works and how to properly hook an individual into the mechanisms requires a DC 20 Spellcraft or Knowledge (engineering) check. Hooking or unhooking oneself into a control seal is a move equivalent action. Once an individual is hooked into the apparatus the individual gains the ability to use her own powers to manipulate and influence a specific aspect of the golem. In all, there are five control stations, one for motion, one for physical attacks, one for magically enhancing physical attacks, one for controlling shields, and one for operating blaster attacks. The descriptions below provide the details for manipulating each of the control stations and the converter box. When left vacant, controls run on autopilot and function as per their descriptions below.

While the golem doesn't possess mental ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma), once activated, determine its Wisdom and Charisma ability scores by using an average of the mental ability scores of all individuals hooked into the controllers.

There is also a strange box forged from an unknown greenish metal with a hinged top. Affixed to one side is a large dial while the other side is fitted with a large pull-switch. Each chair serves as a control station for manipulating a different aspect of the golem.

**The Converter Box:** The box is a converter designed to transfer powers of magically charged magic items directly into the golem. These powers can be utilized by individuals operating the golem or to enhance autopilot settings. Individuals must decide where the powers from items placed into the box are going to be applied at the time they are placed into the box. As a full round action, the individual places the item into the converter box, and using the box's dials, its powers are transferred as a spell to either the golem's blasters, shields, or weapon enhancements and the item is drained of all charges. The controller gains a number of uses of that power as determined by the number of charges in the item. If the item has a number of charges per day, it only expends its daily charges into the golem and functions normally after 24 hours pass. Uncharged items can only be utilized by the item's user who can channel the effects into the golem when strapped into the control apparatus.

Effects generated using the converter box cannot be used simultaneously with effects produced by spells channeled into the controls, thus when not on autopilot, the individual operating a specific control determines which effect to use for each round.

**Attack Controls:** An individual hooked into this apparatus gains control of the golem's slam attacks. As a full-round action, the individual can add ½ his Base Attack Bonus to the golem's slam attacks. The golem can also use any applicable combat feats or class abilities related to combat possessed by the individual controlling its attacks. Feats such that affect a specific weapon such as Weapon Focus or Specialization or Two Weapon Fighting feats that aren't applicable with the golem's slam attacks should not be applied. Similarly, feats affecting individual abilities that wouldn't technically affect a construct are not applied.

When not manned, the attack control autopilot can be set to one of two modes, defense or offense. In defensive mode, the construct's arms are used to block incoming attacks providing a +2 bonus to AC for as long as the attack control autopilot setting remains in this mode. In offensive mode the golem attacks opponents, making a single attack per round using its base attack.

**Blaster Controls:** As a full-round action any spell caster can channel one of her spells into the golem's blaster power banks in order to make blast attacks. The specific properties of the blast are determined by the channeled spell. When firing the blast, the caster adds her primary spell casting ability score modifier to the golem's blast attack to determine its success. The save against all blast attacks is equal to 10 + the spell level + the caster's ability score modifier.

Abjuration spells cannot be converted into blasts.

Conjuration spells can be converted into blasts that deal 1d6 points of energy per spell level as determined by the type of energy of the base spell. If the conjuration spell has no energy type (such as a summoning spell), use acid as the default energy type.

Enchantment spells can be converted to blasts that cause the victim forfeit all their actions for a number of rounds equal to the spell level unless they first make a successful will save against the spell effect. Saving successfully doesn't terminate the duration of the effect, but only allows the victim to temporarily overcome the compulsion for that round. If this blast used upon another golem, the spell effect targets only one of the golem's operators. Determine the operator randomly.

Divination spells cannot be converted into blasts.



Evocation spells can be converted into blasts that deal 1d6 points of energy per base spell level as determined by energy type of base spell. If the evocation spell has no energy type, the caster chooses the energy type at the time of casting.

Illusion spells can be converted into blasts of colorful swirling nebulous figures and cacophonous sounds. Anyone struck by the blast must save or be dazzled for a number of rounds equal to the spell level unless they first make a successful will save against the spell effect. Saving successfully doesn't terminate the duration of the effect, but only allows the victim to temporarily overcome the negative effects of the condition for that round. If this blast is used upon another golem, the spell effect targets only one of the golem's operators. Determine the operator randomly.

Necromancy spells can be converted into blasts that deal 1d6 points of negative energy damage per base spell level.

Transmutation spells can be converted into blasts that alter an opponent's physical or mental ability scores, temporarily decreasing a single ability score (chosen by the caster) by -1 point per spell level for a number of rounds equal to the spell's level unless they first make a successful Will save against the spell effect. Saving successfully doesn't terminate the duration of the effect but only allows the victim to temporarily overcome the ability score penalty for that round. If this blast is used upon another golem, the spell effect targets only one of the golem's operators. Determine the operator randomly.

When not manned, the blaster control autopilot can be set to one of two modes passive or active. In passive mode, the blaster shuts off. In active mode, a wand, rod, staff, or similar spell storing device may be placed into the converter box to provide the blaster with a base spell type. The golem automatically fires one blast per round at a random enemy using the magic item's caster level and spell level to determine the numeric values of any effects produced by the golem.

**Defensive Shield Controls:** As a full round action any spell caster can channel one of her spells into the golem's defense shield apparatus. The effects of the defensive shield are determined by the channeled spell.

Abjuration spells can be converted to provide a shield bonus equal to +1 per spell level for a number of rounds equal to the level of the base spell.

Conjuration spells can be converted to allow the golem to jaunt to a new position as per a dimension door spell with range equal to 10 feet per level of the base spell.

Divination spells can be converted to provide a +1 insight bonus to all saves per spell level for a number of rounds equal to the level of the base spell.

Enchantment spell cannot be converted

Evocation spells can be used to create an energy shield that counterspells the same energy type of any spell or spell converted blast of equal or lesser level.

Illusion spells can be converted to provide concealment for 1 round per level of the base spell.

Necromancy spells cannot be converted.

Transmutation spells can be converted to buff a single ability by +2 per spell level (maximum +10) for 1 round per level of the base spell.

When not manned, the defense control autopilot can be set to one of two modes passive or active. In passive mode, the shields shuts off. In active mode, a wand, rod, staff, or similar spell storing device may be placed into the converter box to provide the controls with a base spell level. The golem activates a defensive shield providing a +1 force bonus per 1/4 spell level. The bonus lasts for a number of rounds equal to the spell level. Alternately, the defense modifier can be applied to a single saving throw occurring during the next 24 hours. The effects of multiple applications do not stack.

**Motion Controls:** An individual hooked into this apparatus gains the ability to aid the golem's maneuverability. As a full round action, the individual command the golem to move in a specific direction. So long as the individual remains hooked into this apparatus, the golem uses the individual's Dexterity score and Initiative scores as well as any Feats and class abilities that influence movement (such as Dodge or Evasion). If the individual controlling the golem has the ability to make sneak attacks, the golem also gains the ability to make sneak attacks.

When not manned, the motion control autopilot can be set to one of two modes, defense or offense. In defensive mode, the construct gains a +2 bonus to AC for as long as the motion control auto-pilot setting remains in this mode. In offensive mode, the golem gains a +4 bonus to its initiative.

**Weapon Enhancement Controls (Sp):** As a full round action any spell caster can channel one of her spells into the golem's weapon power banks to enhance its slam attacks.

Evocation spells can be used to add +1d6 points of energy damage per spell level to the golem's slam attacks of rounds equal to the base spell's spell level. The energy type is determined by the base spell. If the evocation spell has no energy type, the caster chooses the energy type at the time of casting.

Divination spells can be converted to boost attacks by providing one +10 insight bonus to a slam or blast attack per spell level.

When not manned, the weapon enhancement control autopilot can be set to one of two modes: passive or active. In passive mode, the enhancer shuts off. In active mode, a wand, rod, staff, or similar spell storing device may be placed into the converter box to provide the enhancer with a base spell type. The golem automatically enhances the golem's slam attacks using the magic item's caster level and spell level to

## DOOM GOLEM BATTLES

Doom golems function as per any other creature in combat. When operated by PCs, individuals determine the order of their actions by initiative, however they may opt to hold actions or change the order of their actions through communicating with each other. As noted above, each area of the golem is controlled by a different control panel. All physical damage sustained during combat is applied to the golem and not its passengers. Individuals within the golem are well protected and relatively safe while operating the golem, however once the golem reaches 0 hp points it topples over dealing 4d6 bludgeoning damage to all creatures inside it. A DC 16 Reflex save allows individuals to brace

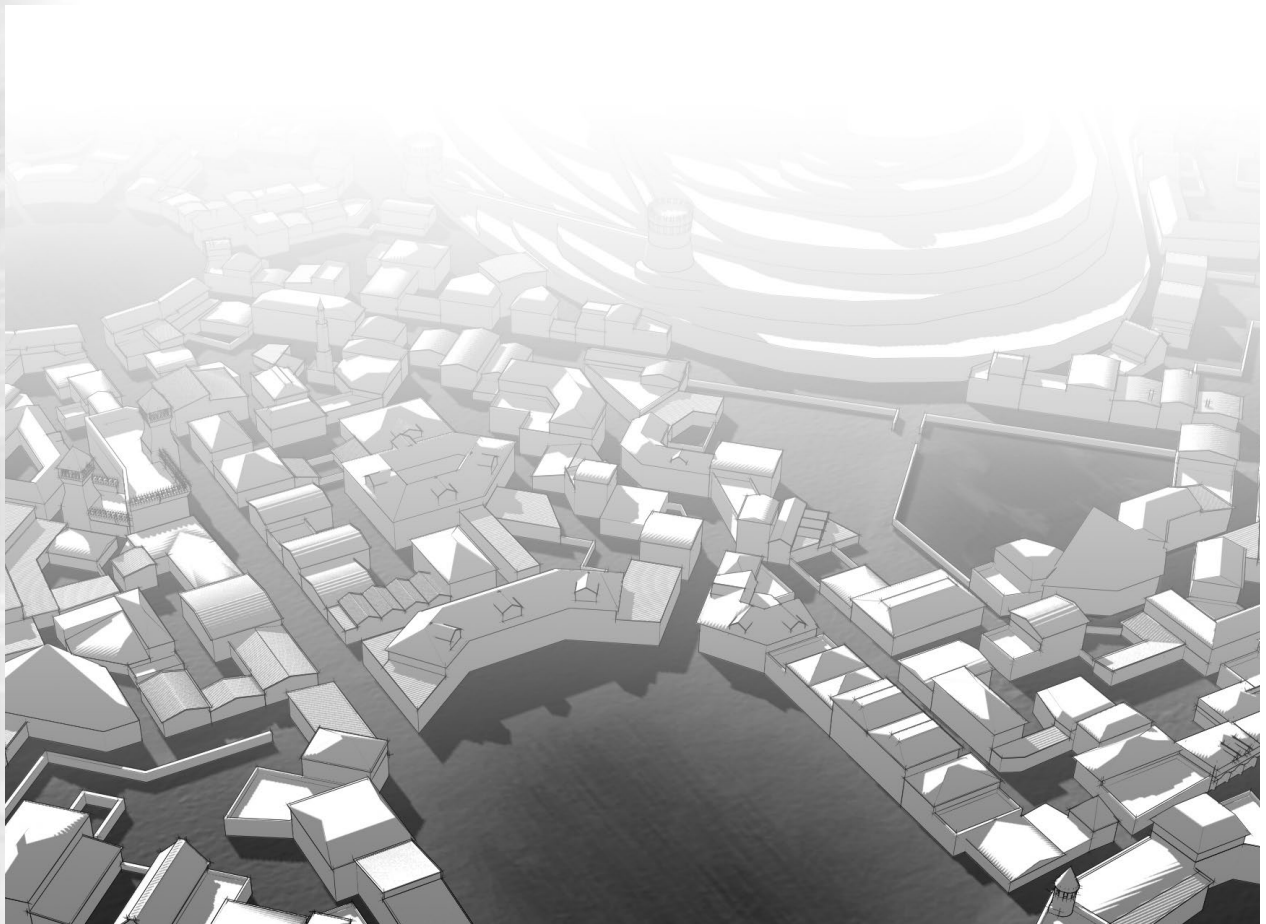
themselves before the crash for half damage or cast a standard action spell that would protect them from the damage.

Heating or cooling a golem can change the interior temperature of the machine, affecting passengers by creating extreme heat or cold environmental factors. In the event this occurs, keep things simple and have anyone in the golem attempt DC 15 Fortitude saves each round the effect persists to avoid 1d6 points of nonlethal damage (either from heat or cold).

Another effect that might target individuals within the golem is poison gas. While *stinking cloud* or similar types of toxic gas blast effects do not affect the construct, they can affect its operators if the golem's head passes within the area of effect.

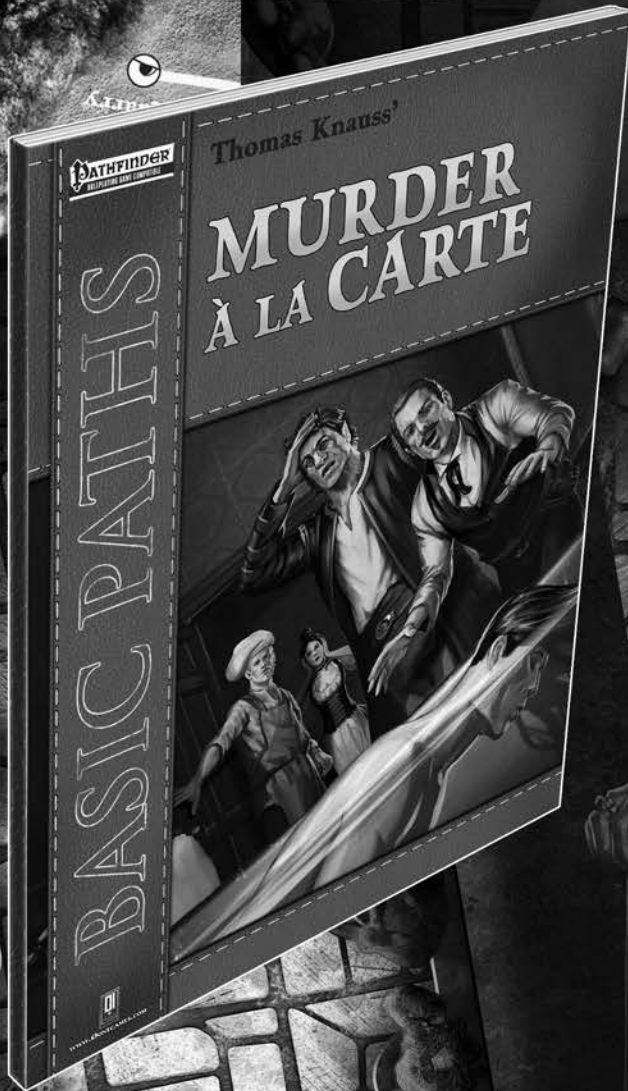
Lastly, sonic-based effects created by thunderstones or spells that target the golem's head might also affect passengers.

In all, because of the multitude of spell options that might potentially create such effects, the specifics of how such effects might affect the golem's passengers is left to the discretion of the GM. This allows the GM to make quick decisions about such effects without dragging the golem combat to a halt of rules and calculations. The golem encounter is meant to be fun, not necessarily deadly.





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