

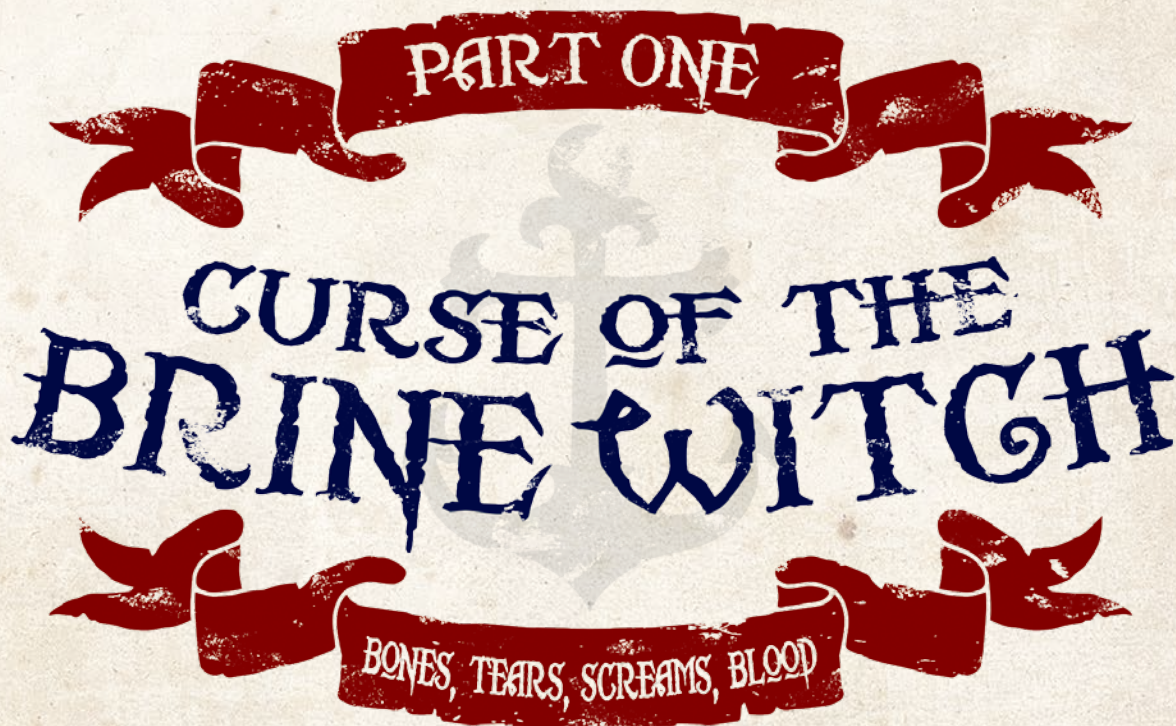
# RETURN TO FREEPORT

PART ONE: CURSE OF THE BRINE WITCH

**Pathfinder**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE







PART ONE

# CURSE OF THE BRINE WITCH

BONES, TEARS, SCREAMS, BLOOD

Something terrible is happening in Freeport. For weeks a supernatural plague of curses has ravaged the eastern part of the city. Folk from every eastern district are suffering mysterious weaknesses, losing their minds, taking their own lives, falling sick with incurable diseases, or simply vanishing. Rumors of monsters and black magic swirl through the city, and many believe it is the return of the Brine Witch—a powerful and vicious sea hag who preyed upon the city during the Freeport-Mazin War.

What's actually going on is more complicated. Nathan Grymes, a member of the Captain's Council, is building his fortunes by selling slaves to the Mazin, Freeport's ancient enemies and economic rivals. Looking for supernatural protection, Grymes obtained a relic from the Mazin, *the black hourglass*, which can summon and bind divs. Grymes' first attempt to summon a div went badly; he called up an aghash (a powerful div that takes the appearance of a hunched old woman), which slipped its chains and escaped into Freeport. Free to wreck havoc in the mortal world, the aghash sneaks around the eastern districts and inflicts terrible curses on whomever captures her attention. To make matters worse, the *obsidian sand* she leaves in her wake is corrupting local wildlife and weakening the barriers between planes. A few locals knew the story of the original Brine Witch,

and decided this new wave of curses must be a return of that figure from folklore. After hearing these rumors, the aghash has happily taken up the mantle of the Brine Witch, and sees this as an opportunity to establish herself as a powerful local threat, and eventually build a cult of worshipers.

Ever the opportunist, Grymes uses the Brine Witch's campaign of terror as cover for abducting more people to sell as slaves. As many of his captives hail from Scurvytown and the Docks, he's bribed Mortimer Quango to help cover his tracks; the Minister of Fisheries has hired assassins and Blackened Knot thugs to silence anyone asking questions about the abductions.

## SOURCES AND STAT BLOCKS

This adventure assumes you are familiar with the rules in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, and *Freeport: The City of Adventure* (often indicated as *FCA* when indicating the source of a monster or NPC). Feats, spells, and items from these books don't normally have notes regarding their source. Rules referenced from other rulebooks (including the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* and its successors, and follow-up books to the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*) do generally reference their source, to make it easy for the GM to



## RANDOM STREET ENCOUNTERS

d% roll	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-5	1 false urchin (beggar) working a scam	1	FCA p.339
6-10	2 giant centipedes	1	B1
11-15	2 apprentice cultists interrupted mid-ritual	1	FCA p.341
16-20	3 sand-blighted (see p. 10) dire rats	1	B1
21-25	Gang of 3 orc heavies out for blood	1	FCA p.348
26-30	1 doru (div) invisibly spying on the PCs	2	B3
31-35	1 guild wizard suffering abyss dust hallucinations	2	FCA p.349
36-40	1 bugbear shaking down a shopkeeper	2	B1
41-45	3 common pirates, drunk and spoiling for a fight	2	FCA p.346
46-50	1 sand-blighted (see p. 10) monitor lizard	2	B1
51-55	1 constrictor snake dragging away a passerby	2	B1
56-60	1 seasoned sellsword hired to harass the PCs	2	FCA p.344
61-65	2 common thieves picking pockets	3	FCA p.347
66-70	2 sand-blighted (see p. 10) venomous snakes	3	B1
71-75	1 sand-blighted (see p. 10) dire ape, escaped from its cage	3	B1
76-80	2 Hellhound thieves beating up a <i>Shipping News</i> reporter	3	FCA p.348
81-85	Press gang (1 abduction specialist and 2 common pirates) rounding up conscripts	4	FCA pp.347-348
86-90	1 aranea in humanoid form, preying on victims	4	B2
91-95	2 sand-blighted (see p. 10) common boars rampaging through a market	4	B1
96-100	1 guild wizard and 1 seasoned sellsword who blame the PCs for their recent troubles	4	FCA p.344 & 349

find them when needed. In particular most monsters and many NPCs don't include their full stat block in the adventure text, so the GM should find them and prepare to run combat including them (easily done with many online sources if a print rulebook is unavailable). Some creatures also have a simple template applied, and the GM is encouraged to make any needed adjustments before running encounters with such creatures.

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

After being singled out by a mad prophet as the ones who must defeat the Brine Witch, the PCs are hired to uncover the secret of the plague of curses. Their investigation pits them against hired thugs and corrupted monsters, but uncovers clues pointing to the Chambers Asylum. The Asylum has been taken over by a curse-maddened sorcerer and a washed-up cult; in defeating them, the PCs learn more about the plague of curses.

The Brine Witch knows the PCs are after her, and harries them with curses and fiendish creatures while a team of assassins seek to silence the PCs permanently.

Surviving the killers and gaining a potent weapon, the PCs discover one of their allies has been captured by the Witch. They must survive the horrors of her lair to end her curse once and for all.

### HITTING THE STREETS

As they investigate the plague of curses, the PCs are likely to poke around a variety of muddy streets, back-alley drinking holes and rundown tenements, asking questions and getting up in people's business. Such activities are rarely safe in Freeport.

If you wish to add new dangers to the adventure, roll on the **Random Street Encounters** table. This table presents a variety of suitable dangers—thieves looking for coin, predatory wildlife from the nearby jungles, creatures blighted by exposure to *obsidian sand* (and thus modified by the sand-blighted template, see p. 10), and so on. The monsters on the table can either be found in *The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* (or its follow-up volumes), or *Freeport: The City of Adventure* (marked with *FCA* and a page number).





Don't use this table in **Part II: Boil and Bubble**; the Chambers Asylum has its own (considerably more unusual) supply of dangers.

## PART I

# CURSE AND CONSEQUENCE

The adventure begins in the Fool's Market, the Temple District's open-air bazaar. The market is more crowded than usual; citizens from across the east side are looking to cure, explain, or ward off the plague of curses, and if that means praying to an unknown god or buying holy snake oil, that's what they're willing to do.

Why are the PCs at the Market? They might be attending a cleric PC's temple, shopping for potions, escorting a friend to temple services or simply exploring the city. They might even be among those looking for protection against the plague of curses. Work out an appropriate scenario with the players—or simply drop them into the middle of the Market and let them explain themselves.

Choose one PC to be the subject of the next scene—the best choice is probably the character with the highest Charisma (or the most expensive-looking equipment), but any character could suit.

## EVENT A

# THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY

**LOCATION:** The Fool's Market, or another common area

Read or paraphrase the following for your players.

*It's a frantic day at the Fool's Market, where acolytes of obscure gods peddle their faith and wares. The sun is hot, the air is humid with the promise of coming storms, and every man-jack from the east side of town looks to be here. From what you can make out from the constant noise, there's a common theme to the most urgent buying requests—most people want some kind of protection from curses, or salvation from curses already plaguing them.*

*People press around you as you make your way, but they give you space thanks to your weapons, armor, and air of danger. They give another man space too—a beggar in a tattered robe, shaking a cup and surrounded by a stench so thick you can almost see it. "Spare some coin? Spare some coin?" he mutters, but he draws back rather than get too close to you. "Don't mind me, yer worships, just passin' by," he mumbles, walking past—but then he trips and stumbles into [the chosen PC]'s side.*



## ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Curse of the Brine Witch" is designed to work with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, and *Freeport: City of Adventure*. It assumes a group of four 1st level characters will begin the adventure. Using the fast experience advancement rules, the PCs should reach 2nd level after defeating Zabreen, the Once-Magnificent, and achieve 3rd level after they confront and defeat the Brine Witch at the adventure's conclusion.

### GAMEY RIND

CR 1/2 - XP 200

Male human oracle 1  
N Medium humanoid (human)  
**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +0

### DEFENSE

**AC** 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)  
**hp** 8 (1d8) **IP** 1  
**Fort** +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4; +4 competence bonus on saves made against disease  
**Weaknesses** oracle's curse (wasting)

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.  
**Melee** belaying pin +1 (1d4+1/20)  
**Special Attacks** phantom touch 4/day (shaken/1 round)  
**Spells Known** (CL 1st; concentration +3)  
1st (4/day)—*bane* (DC 13), *read weather*  
0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*, *virtue*

### TACTICS

**During Combat** If attacked, Gamey's first instinct is to surrender. If his attackers persist, he casts *advanced scurvy* on the nearest opponent, then uses *phantom touch* to fend off pursuers while running away.

**Morale** Gamey runs from battle at the first opportunity, vanishing into the crowd and hiding until the coast is clear.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** 11, **Wis** 11 (10/12), **Cha** 14  
**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12  
**Feats** Iron Will, Prophetic Visionary\*  
**Skills** Bluff +2, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Profession (sailor) +4, Sense Motive +4, Use Magic Device +2  
**Languages** Common  
**SQ** mystery (occult), orisons, revelation (phantom touch)  
**Combat Gear** none; **Other Gear** tattered red robe, brass amulet, belaying pin, 9gp  
**\*Prophetic Visionary** (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*): **Benefit:** Once per day, you can enter a deep trance to receive a vision of the future. The trance lasts for 10 minutes, during which time you can take no other actions. If you are interrupted, you must begin again. When you come out of the trance, you know whether a particular action in the immediate future will bring good or bad results, as an augury spell with a 70% chance of success.

*The man stops dead. His eyes roll back and he shakes and trembles; he would collapse if he wasn't clutching your arm. "The biting eye!" he yells, and everyone around turns to witness his outburst. "The crone's red claw! The black blood of the poisoned earth! The innocent are taken and the wicked rejoice at pain! Too many missing and not enough dead. You must confront her and end the curse, lest all is lost! Bloody fangs and unseen horns! Witchcraft! Damnation! Terrible sorcery and floating heads! The biting eye—no! It sees me!"*

*Then he vomits at your feet.*

The ragged man is Gamey Rind (*FCA* p. 182), a pathetic figure and one badly abused by his uncontrollable prophetic "gift." If the PCs want to interrogate him on the meaning of his utterances, he won't be able to give much insight. He happily confesses to being given to prophetic seizures, but assures the PCs he neither understands nor controls them (which is entirely true). If the PCs want to press the matter, and draw swords to interrogate him he'll happily say anything that seems likely to leave him unharmed. No one attempts to stop such an interrogation but it won't do the PCs' reputation, or their curiosity, much good.

Of course the PCs may not get much opportunity to question Gamey more closely; the crowd has seized upon his rant as a sign, and the party is quickly mobbed by bystanders. Everyone desperately tries to touch the PCs, especially the one Gamey brushed against, and they press up against the party while crying out for help curing their curses:

*"My son is consumed by boils!"*  
*"Rats keep devouring my potatoes!"*  
*"My hands won't stop bleeding!"*  
*"My babies!"*  
*"My scabies!"*  
*"Save us!"*

Each character needs to succeed at a DC 10 Reflex save to keep their feet or suffer 1d6 nonlethal damage



before they can break free. It takes a round to escalate to that point, though, and canny characters may be able to disperse the crowd with a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check. Attacking the crowd with spells and weapons will disperse them instantly—in fact, they'll run off screaming for help, and the PCs may soon be confronted by the Sea Lord's Guard or angry inquisitors from the local temples.

However the PCs escape the throng, they cannot continue with their current plans; the Fool's Market is in uproar and the god-peddlers are shutting their stalls early. Find out what they wish to do now and where they want to go next, and let them explore a little more of the city until dusk begins to fall.

### EVENT B

## ANY PORT IN A STORM

LOCATION: Anywhere

As the city closes shop for the evening, the PCs receive a message—someone in Scurvytown wishes to meet with them and discuss potential business. Read or paraphrase the following information for your players.

*You have only just settled yourselves for some rest and conversation when a small voice pipes up from nearby. "Excuse me, kind sirs and ladies, but could I trouble you?"*

*The girl can't be more than seven or eight years old; her face is dirty and her clothes ragged, but her face is lit with a warm, slightly desperate smile. "You are the heroes who visited the Fool's Market, yes? Please, kind folk, Little Nell (indicating herself) has a message for you. There's a pretty lady in Scurvytown who would have words with you. There's gold—in truth, gold!—in it for you. Oh please, heed me! The lady will give me a meal and a safe bed for the night if you but come with me!"*

Nell is actually an adult halfling masquerading as an urchin—see the False Urchin statblock on p.339 of *Freeport: The City of Adventure*. Suspicious characters can see through her act with a Sense Motive check (opposed by her Bluff check), but Nell does her best not to make them suspicious in the first place. If exposed, she admits it's an act—a woman can't be too careful—but she confirms that the offer of gold and a safe bed is genuine.

If the PCs refuse to come with her, Nell will plead with them before leaving. She comes back the next day with incentives—10 gp for each PC, just to talk with the pretty lady! If that fails, her employer is desperate enough that

Bones for the Brine Witch  
Morsels for her plate  
She cracks them on her jagged teeth  
And gobbles up your fate  
Tears for the Brine Witch  
Liquor for her cup  
She drinks them down like salty wine  
On sadness she will sup  
Screams for the Brine Witch  
Music for her ears  
She frolics at your dying note  
And dances to your fears  
Blood for the Brine Witch  
Horror is her joy  
She loves to see the final end  
Of every girl and boy  
Bones-and-tears-and-screams-  
and-blood-and-YOU-ARE-IT!

- traditional Freeport children's rhyme

she'll come to them—however, being out in public makes her suspicious, adding +2 to the DC of any skill checks for negotiating with her. Should the PCs try to attack Nell, she flees while girlishly screaming that bad people are trying to hurt her.

If and when the PCs follow Little Nell, she leads them to Dreaming Street. As they walk through the stinking alleyways of Scurvytown, folk glare at them from boarded windows or wave superstitious fetishes at them to ward off the curse plague. Meanwhile, Nell happily sings the Brine Witch rhyme (see above) to pass the time while climbing over drunks passed out in the mud.

Nell takes them to the Torchlight Academy, which appears, at first glance, to be a respectable and well-appointed establishment—but any PC that makes a DC 10 Knowledge (engineering or local) check, or DC 15 Appraise or Perception check, can tell that the façade is patchwork, the paint peeling, the velvet is tattered and the outfits worn by the Academy's "students" are torn and stained. This is a brothel, and not an upmarket one.

Nell takes the PCs through the Academy to the back offices to meet the brothel's owner. Lady Jane is a dignified, handsome woman whose slightly shopworn





clothing is still of good quality; similarly, her offices are a cut above the Academy's front rooms. She gestures for the PCs to sit in overstuffed chairs and sits behind a desk; Nell climbs onto a stool beside her and drops the little girl pretense to talk business.

**LADY JANE****CR 3- XP 800**

Female human noble 4  
 N Medium humanoid (human)  
**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +7

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)  
**hp** 25 (4d8+4) **IP** 0  
**Fort** +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4; +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws made to recover from a continuing effect (*aegis of recovery*)

**OFFENSE**

**Spd** 30 ft.  
**Melee** mwk war razor +5 (1d4/19-20)  
**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6  
**Spells Known** (CL 2nd; concentration +5)  
 0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 13), *message*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Lady Jane's preference is usually to avoid combat. If necessary, she attempts to use her *wand of hypnotism* to shut down hostilities before they start.

**During Combat** Lady Jane concentrates on the most vulnerable target and sneak attacks whenever possible. She drinks her *potion of protection from law* if her opponents are allied with the Watch or Sea Lord's Guard.

**Morale** Lady Jane surrenders at 6 hp if she believes her opponents will spare her life; if not, she flees to one of several secret safe houses across Scurvytown.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14 (8)

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

**Feats** Antagonize\*, Deceitful, Endurance, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Razor Tongue (FCA), Stealthy  
 \*Indicates a feat found in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*

**Skills** Appraise +10, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +1, Escape Artist +3, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +3, Use Magic Device +6

**Languages** Common, Elven, Dwarven, Orc

**SQ** area of expertise (illicit training—novice), area of expertise (arcane training (wizard)—novice), influence (1 influence point), power base

**Combat Gear** *wand of hypnotism* (30 charges), *potion of protection from law*; **Other Gear** mwk war razor, *aegis of recovery* (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Equipment*), courtier's outfit, jewelry worth 50gp, spellbook, 22gp

**Spellbook** both prepared spells plus 0—*detect poison*, *ghost sound*, *read magic*



Read or paraphrase the following information for your players.

*“Okay, here’s the deal,” Nell says, and her words are no longer sweet and childlike. “Lady Jane heard about that business in the Fool’s Market. If you cutters are really the ones who can do something about the plague of curses, then she’s willing to hand over serious coin to encourage you to do the deed. These curses are the real deal, and something’s gotta be done, ya know?”*

The PCs can ask questions of Lady Jane, but Nell is the one who answers (though Lady Jane will nod and show her agreement with what Nell says). She tells them that Jane awoke with sores across her body several days ago. When she realized it was a curse, she paid a cleric to restore her to normal. She was cursed *again* last night, this time with a horrifically altered voice, at which point she realized that someone (or *something*) was deliberately targeting her. She sent her cronies and employees out to learn more about the plague of curses, and they told her about the events in the Fool’s Market.

Lady Jane is willing to pay each PC 100 gp (25 gp up front, the rest later) if they can fulfill Gamey’s prophecy—find out what is causing the plague, confront it and end it. (Lifting the curse in the process would be nice, and likely to earn her good opinion of the PCs, but she doesn’t expect that.) How are they supposed to do that? How should she know! They’re the destined saviors—they can work that part out! She recommends talking to witnesses, finding out more about the victims, checking with *The Shipping News*... things like that.

If the PCs ask about any of the images from Gamey Rind’s visions, such as the “biting eye” or “crone’s claw,” or whether Lady Jane saw the Brine Witch, Little Nell won’t be able to answer and Jane will have to speak for

herself. Her voice is sickening and disturbing; it’s as if she’s speaking through mud and broken glass, every word distorted and painful. The PCs must attempt a DC 5 Will save or gain one insanity point (*Freeport: The City of Adventure* p. 427) just for hearing Jane speak.

She tells them that last night she had a terrible dream about a hideous old woman. When she woke with a start, she thought she saw something like a spider or scorpion (actually the *spectral hand* of the Brine Witch, the aghash that escaped Grymes) crawling on her bed covers, but it vanished as she came fully to her senses. She assumes it was just part of her dream.

The PCs can ask more questions of Nell and Lady Jane, but she and Nell have little more to add. They don’t know of the Brine Witch as anything more than a children’s rhyme, and while Jane has many enemies, none have this kind of supernatural ability and no one is moving to take advantage of her weakened condition.

If the PCs refuse the initial offer, Lady Jane is prepared to offer 150 gp per character, and to pay 50 gp up front, but that’s as far as she’ll go. She can also offer them use of rooms in her brothel to act as a base of operation free of charge, and even use of her employees when they aren’t with other clients, if the PCs express interest. If they won’t accept that, or refuse to work for the brothel owner at any price, then she’ll angrily order them to leave; the adventurers have made an influential enemy in this part of town.

Even if they turn their back on Jane, rumors about the PCs will spread across town. Other sponsors will come—some offering money, some threatening the PCs unless they do their duty. Find an NPC you like in *Freeport: The City of Adventure* and get them involved as a patron—or just have trouble come find the PCs, even if they don’t search it out. Lady Jane isn’t above letting it be known the PCs are hot on the trail of whoever is causing the curses,

## THE STUFF OF NIGHTMARES

If you want to crank up the tension a little, pick one PC—probably the one that was touched by Gamey Rind, but any of them will do—and drop a nightmare on her that wakes her up in the middle of the night.

The nightmare is a surreal mash-up of disconnected images and sensations. Disembodied arms form from fog to clutch at the dreamer; a ship crewed by damned souls pulls alongside the dreamer’s own ship; an eerie singing calls out across blood-drenched cobblestones near the Docks; a fleet of ships flying Mazin flags sail ominously out of a thick mist. The nightmare lurches from one image to the next and back, and leaves the dreamer feeling confused and disturbed.

None of these relate to the Brine Witch; they foreshadow events in the rest of the *Return to Freeport* series of adventures. Let the players try to make sense of it all, but don’t let them get too hung up on the dream when there’s a more pressing mystery to investigate.



even if she knows it isn't true, in the hopes of spurring the source of those curses to attack the PCs.

Once they meet with Lady Jane, there's little time left in the day; investigations will likely have to wait until the morning.

### EVENT C

## THE LAY OF THE LAND

**LOCATION:** Various (see sub-events)

Once the PCs start poking around the east side of Freeport they'll find a variety of sinister omens and a few enemies out for their blood. While this is presented as a single event that occurs after the PCs are hired to investigate the curses of the Brine Witch, there are actually several scenes that can help set the tone of the adventure and give the PCs a chance to get used to how things work in Freeport. A GM can use as few or as many as desired to fill in the gaps when the PCs go off the beaten path. While one or two are likely useful additions when the PCs first begin to investigate, feel free to sprinkle these throughout the adventure wherever you need to give the PCs another taste of investigation. Through the course of these, eventually the PCs will realize that something is going on at the Chambers Asylum. You don't have to go through every scene before they go to investigate this lead; keep any unused scenes and work them into **Part III: Beware the Biting Eye**.

The following scenes can all occur while the PCs are asking questions about the plague of curses. If the adventurers look in other parts of town or follow up their own hypotheses, you could repurpose these for your own use, make up your own scenes, or have nothing happen—

turns out the folk of the Merchant District don't know anything about a plague of curses.

Also, wandering around poking at things is just asking for trouble—make a roll on the **Random Street Encounters** table (p. 2) and throw a random encounter in to spice up the day.

### EVENT C1

## THE AGGURSED

**LOCATION:** The Docks, Scurvytown, the Eastern District, Drac's End, Bloodsalt

The simplest way to start learning about the plague of curses is to talk to the victims—and they're not in short supply.

A Knowledge (local) check can be made after every 1d3 hours of asking questions of the locals; the DC is 15 in Drac's End or Bloodsalt (where the Witch has been less active) and 12 in the other districts. If successful, the PCs find someone suffering from a curse—or who thinks they are, or knows someone who is. Alternatively, a DC 11 Diplomacy check made to gather information works in any location.

The Brine Witch's curses take many forms. Roll on the table below to find out what victims the PCs might encounter in their investigations.

Few victims have any idea why they've been cursed. They assume it's the Brine Witch because that's what everyone's saying, even though none of them know anything about the historical Witch. If asked about seeing anything suspicious, some (20% chance) may recall seeing an old woman lurking in an alleyway, or being touched by a hand that wasn't there when they turned to look.

## RANDOM CURSE VICTIMS

D20 result	Curse	Possible manifestations
1	-6 Strength	Withered limbs, constant fatigue
2	-6 Dexterity	Muscle spasms, trembling
3	-6 Constitution	Constant pain, difficulty breathing
4	-6 Intelligence	Clouded mind, can't understand any language
5	-6 Wisdom	Terrifying hallucinations, sensory overload
6	-6 Charisma	Weeping boils, violent mood swings
7	-4 to all d20 rolls	Partial blindness/deafness, very bad luck
8	Only act normally 50% of the time	Constant distracting hallucinations, paralysis
9	Madness	Roll on <b>Indefinite Madness</b> table, <i>FCA</i> p.433
10	Ordinary misfortune mistaken for a curse	Boll weevil infestation, romantic failure, premature hair loss... the list is endless
11+	Abduction that has been mistaken for a curse	Friends/family describe how the person just went missing



There's no obvious pattern to the victims; the curse affects those of all races, genders and social classes. An astute PC asking if there are any similarities among the victims might realize (with a DC 10 Perception check) that an unusually high proportions of the victims are (or were) fairly attractive, or popular in their communities.

A common occurrence is that many victims have simply vanished. People blame this on the Witch, and it's true that some of the disappearances are due to her—but most of the missing have been abducted by Nathan Grymes' forces and sold into slavery to the Mazin. Make a point to the PCs of how many people go missing—realizing that more people have gone missing than the Brine Witch's activities can account for is the clue that connects this adventure to *The Abyssinian Chain*, part two of the *Return to Freeport* adventure series. If the PCs seem interested in the timeline of disappearances, it may be worth noting it would take at least two abductors to accomplish them all (with the second being Grymes).

If asking around the border of the Eastern District and Scurvytown, there's a 25% chance that the PCs will also hear tales of a disturbance at the Chambers Asylum last night, with more screams and shouts than usual.

## EVENT C2

## CR 1

## THE ASSAULT

## LOCATION: The Docks

As the PCs canvass the Docks, a woman runs from a tavern—the Black Gull, the Rusty Hook, or some other den of ill-repute from *Freeport: City of Adventure*—with a small mob of reprobates tormenting her. The woman is bleeding from the eyes and ears, but doesn't seem to be injured—though she will be if the mob turns to violence.

Should the PCs step in, a mob spokesperson yells that the woman is cursed, touched by the Brine Witch! *"She's bad luck—we don't want her in here spreadin' the curse to us!"*

Most members of the mob are merely superstitious drunks who will flee if threatened or hang back and mutter if the PCs help the woman—but two are corsairs who attack the PCs if they interfere.

**COMMON PIRATES (2):** *hp 13 (FCA, p. 346)*

Should the PCs rescue the woman, she can tell them little—she works in the tavern but woke up like this after a bad dream last night. If the PCs walk away, the mob beat her to within an inch of her life.

## EVENT C3

## HOT OFF THE PRESSES

## LOCATION: The Docks

The office of *The Shipping News* is teeming with reporters, informants, street-hawkers, and more. PCs will need to succeed in a DC 10 Diplomacy check to get anyone's attention; if they succeed, they meet ace reporter Angelo Stampfel (*Freeport: The City of Adventure* p.62), who has been covering the plague story.

Angelo is friendly but distracted; the plague is yesterday's news, and he's got to keep hunting for the next big story. He can only spare the PCs a few minutes, but he can tell them the following:

- *"This all started about a month ago. No rhyme or reason to it that I can tell—just folk disappearing or being struck down by curses. Definitely magical, but noone's claimed responsibility."*
- *"It only seems to be happening on the east side, so the Captain's Council doesn't much care. That's just the way it goes. It'd be different if a judge or noble came down with boils."*
- *"The Brine Witch was a sea hag who fought for the Mazin during the war. But that was hundreds of years ago and hags don't live that long. Do they?"*
- *"There're rumors of mutated, crazed animals on the prowl. Some were spotted near Chambers Asylum. Don't know if it's connected."*
- *"I heard there was some kind of noise around the Asylum last night, but there's always noise coming from that place."*
- *"Wish I could help you, but word on the street is that a mermaid gang's causing trouble on the Docks, and I need to get the inside scoop. Let me know if you learn anything new."*

## EVENT C4

## CR 2

## BLACK SAND, RED BLOOD

## LOCATION: Eastern District

A man runs screaming from a cottage, pursued by dozens and dozens of rats. He scrambles past the PCs, and the rats immediately attack the adventurers instead.

This is the PCs' first encounter with sand-blighted creatures (see the next page). Emphasize the unnatural appearance and behavior of the rats—their red eyes, their



## Obsidian Sand

Black, glassy sand falls constantly from the Brine Witch's rags. Piles of this *obsidian sand* collect wherever the Brine Witch spends any time, and more amasses when she uses her *bestow curse* ability.

*Obsidian sand* is slightly toxic if ingested (Fort DC 11, onset 1 min., frequency 1/min. for 5 min., 1 Wis damage, 1 save to cure), but that is the least of its dangers. It's more than just sand; it's the corrupt earth of the Bleeding Oasis, the crystallized malign power of the divs. Prolonged exposure corrupts animals and plants, giving them the sand-blighted template, and sand-blighted creatures are already beginning to rampage through Freeport. Worse, the presence of *obsidian sand* weakens the walls between the planes, allowing divs and other evil creatures to slip into this world.

If used as an additional material component in an evil-aligned spell (e.g. a *summon monster* spell used to summon an evil outsider), a dose of *obsidian sand* (about a handful) increases the caster level by +1 for the purpose of all effects. An alchemist or wizard might pay up to 20 gp for a dose of *obsidian sand*. A foolish alchemist or wizard might buy multiple doses and store them together—and then be killed by whatever monster spawns from the collected corruption.

If the PCs make inquiries about the sand, a DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information reveals that the material began to be spotted in Freeport about the same time as the first curses, and that it is most commonly seen near the Chambers Asylum.

### SAND-BLIGHTED RAT SWARM CR 2 - 600 XP

hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* and sand-blighted template, see below)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The swarm targets the nearest character and attacks them with its *maddening strike*. Only once that target has been successfully attacked will it turn upon the other characters.

**Morale** The rat swarm fights to the death.

## SIMPLE TEMPLATE: SAND-BLIGHTED (CR +0 OR +1)

Creatures with the sand-blighted template have been corrupted by exposure to *obsidian sand*. A sand-blighted creature's CR increases by +1, only if the base creature has 5 or more HD.

The sand-blighted template can be applied to any animal, ooze, plant, or vermin. A sand-blighted creature's quick and rebuild rules are the same.

**Senses** gains darkvision 60 ft.

**Defensive Abilities** gains damage reduction and energy resistance as noted on the table.

**SR** gains spell resistance equal to new CR +5

#### SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Maddening Strike** (Su) Once per day, the sand-blighted creature may make a *maddening strike*. As a swift action, the creature chooses one target within sight to attack. The creature adds its Wisdom bonus (if any) to attack rolls and inflicts 1 insanity point on a successful attack, in addition to the normal damage and effects of that attack.

This effect persists until the target is dead or the creature rests.

## SAND-BLIGHTED CREATURE DEFENSES

Hit Dice	Resist Acid & Electricity	DR
1-4	5	—
5-10	10	5/cold iron or good
11+	15	10/cold iron or good

maddening attacks, the black grit they leave behind. The players should feel that they have faced something evil and unnatural, rather than some random animals.

**SAND-BLIGHTED RAT SWARM:** *hp* 16 (See at left)

Once the rats are defeated, the PCs can see *obsidian sand* trickling from their corpses. If someone casts *detect magic* within 1d6 rounds of the battle, they detect a faint aura on the *sand*; a DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) or Craft (alchemy) check reveals it to be a mix of conjuration and necromancy magic in physical form. *Detect evil* finds a faint aura of evil if cast within the same timeframe. After this, the rats are ordinary dead vermin and the



sand merely some kind of unknown, mundane substance. A determined character can spend a couple of minutes gathering up enough *obsidian sand* to form a single dose of it.

If the PCs find the man who ran past them, he turns out to be an abyss dust addict who started squatting in the cottage yesterday. The previous tenant mysteriously vanished. (The Brine Witch cursed him with madness and took him to her torment garden (see p. 31).)

EVENT C5

CR 3

WE DON'T LIKE YOUR KIND

LOCATION: Scurvytown

While asking questions in Scurvytown, the PCs are accosted by a small gang of thugs, led by a beefy, neckless man dressed in expensive armor and wielding a heavy flail of obvious quality.

"Hey!" the leader yells. "*We don't want scum like you bothering our community! Get out!*" If there are any non-humans in the party, he continues: "*And take this degenerate filth with you!*"

These are members of the Blackened Knot, Scurvytown's local gang of violent xenophobes, led by Saul "Stump-Puncher" Stokie. The Knot have been paid by Mortimer Quango to keep an eye out for anyone asking questions about the plague of curses in Scurvytown. Once word got out that the PCs were making waves, Abel Wackets outfitted Stokie with equipment donated by Quango and told him to take care of the problem.

Stokie's spoiling for a fight and will find any excuse to attack. He bears a particular grudge against dwarves, since he claims dwarf craftsmen took all the good jobs on the Docks and forced him out of the ship repair business. Stokie is a terrible worker with no skill whatsoever as a shipwright, but that point always gets glossed over when he's haranguing people down at the tavern.

**STUMP-PUNCHER STOKIE:** *hp 19* (see at left)

**BLACKENED KNOT THUGS (1 PER PC):** *hp 12 each* (Longshoremen, *FCA*, p. 344)

Each thug is also carrying a gutbucket (see sidebar). At the start of combat, all the thugs throw their daggers at the PC wearing the lightest armor. They then gang up on Stokie's opponent while throwing gutbuckets at any PC who stands too close to one of their allies.

The thugs immediately surrender if reduced to 3 hp, if Stokie is killed or if they fail a Will saving throw against any effect.

STUMP-PUNCHER STOKIE

CR 1 - XP 400

Male human monster slayer 2  
NE Medium humanoid (human)  
**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex)  
**hp** 19 (2d10+4) **IP** 0  
**Fort** +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft.  
**Melee** mwk heavy flail +6 (1d10+3/19-20)  
**Special Attacks** smite dwarf 1/day

TACTICS

**During Combat** Stokie's first target will always be a dwarf, if possible; if he faces multiple dwarves, he attacks the toughest-looking one. If there are no dwarf PCs, he attacks the melee combatant with the lightest armor. He always uses *power attack*.

**Morale** Thanks to bravado and ego, Stokie refuses to back down and will fight to the death.

STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10  
**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16  
**Feats** Cleave, Power Attack  
**Skills** Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Sense Motive +6, Survival +6  
**Languages** Common  
**SQ** monster lore, monster specialist (humanoid slayer), favored enemy (dwarves) +2  
**Combat Gear** none; **Other Gear** mwk heavy flail, mwk scale mail, dose of salt draught, artisan's outfit, 15gp

GUTBUCKET

Despite the name, a gutbucket is a waterproof bag of thin calico packed with rotten fish guts, rancid meat, noxious plants and anything else that can be scavenged from the sewers of Scurvytown. Gathering the ingredients is easy; making the bag is the hard part.

You can hurl a gutbucket as a splash weapon with a range increment of 10 feet. A creature struck with a direct hit must succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+1 rounds. If the target fails its save, it must succeed at a second Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. Creatures in the splash area must succeed at a Fortitude save or be sickened for 1 round.

**CREATE:** Craft (tailoring) DC 15 **PRICE:** 20 gp  
**WEIGHT:** 1 lb.



If captured, Stokie refuses to give the PCs any information. His followers are less intractable and will readily tell everything, if threatened. All they know is that money has been flowing into the Blackened Knot in exchange for beating or killing undesirables who ask too many questions. They don't know about Mortimer Quango's involvement.

A PC who succeeds in a DC 15 Appraise check of Stokie's arms and armor discovers the crest of the Sea Lord's Guard stamped into both. The Knot thugs can only tell them that the weapons and armor were given to them by a wealthy patron.

If the PCs wish to punish the Blackened Knot thugs, none of the locals will object. Poor and desperate they may be, but no-one likes a bully or a racist.

## NEXT STEPS

Their investigations should have alerted the PCs that something is amiss in Chambers Asylum, and the next logical step is to head to the Eastern District to learn more.

Adventurers aren't always logical, though, and the PCs might try some other course of action. If they spend a long time following other leads, throw some more random encounters (see p. 2) at them while providing more clues about the Asylum's importance. Sooner or later, they'll get the hint. If necessary, have an NPC the PCs either threatened or aided earlier come suggest a hag that might be the Brine Witch has been spotted near the Asylum.

## PART II

# BOIL AND BUBBLE

While the PCs have been tracking down leads about the Brine Witch, other forces have been making moves as well. Normally divs have little influence in the material world but their corruption has left its mark, especially amongst the azhar. One example of such corruption is Zabreen, the Magnificent, an azhar pirate, who draws his sorcerous powers from a rare div bloodline—a bloodline that gave him disturbing visions when Grymes began using the *black hourglass*.

Following his visions, Zabreen came to Freeport in his ship, *The Scalded Man*, along with his crew of azhar buccaneers and his pride of tame krenshar. His dreams led him to the Brine Witch, who he attempted to recruit as a partner in piracy. However, the aghash was not thankful for his attentions and cursed him with madness. His crew took him to Chambers Asylum for treatment, where he

caught the attention of its owner, Bianka Altanish. She performed experiments on him that damaged his mental condition even further—until he snapped. He swore vengeance on the Asylum and called for his crew.

Around the same time the PCs attended the Fool's Market, Zabreen's crew stormed the Asylum, killing many of the staff and patients. (Altanish fled in the confusion). While a few staff remained in hiding, the buccaneers assumed control of the Asylum and pillaged it for valuables. But Zabreen wanted more than gold; his paranoia made him suspicious of his allies and he secreted himself in Altanish's underground torture-laboratory, where he now tries to summon steam-spirits from the Asylum's boilers to grant him enlightenment.

His crew thus had to fend for themselves when a group of cultists attacked the Asylum anew! This cell of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign was disbanded years ago when Milton Drac was defeated (see p.15 of *Freeport: The City of Adventure*), and cell leader Clement Moore abandoned his faith. When the Asylum was overrun by the azhar, Moore was trapped inside; in desperation he sent a *message* out to his old cell-mates, and they united once again to rescue their leader. Except "rescue" doesn't seem to be on the agenda. The other cultists never lost their faith, and they see this as an opportunity to take control of the Asylum as their new temple to the Unspeakable One.

Enter the PCs.

Any effort to get guards or other groups interested in the goings on at the Asylum fail. Altanish bribed a number of influential Freeport officials to ignore any reports of oddities, screams, or violence from near the Asylum, to ensure her experiments could be conducted uninterrupted. Even those groups that haven't been bribed (or pressured by those who were) won't want to investigate the Asylum based on the PCs' reports. The place is a house for the insane, after all, and all previous investigations based on claims of those who "wandered by" turned out to be the maddened rantings of escaped lunatics. Even if the PCs do convince someone in authority to take an interest, no investigation by anyone else is going to occur for a few weeks, by which time the Asylum will be abandoned.

The Asylum is a great place for emphasizing the horror aspects of this adventure as the PCs creep around in darkness, trip over bodies, and see the aftermath of bloody combat. The walls and doors are as strong as reinforced dungeon trappings. If you want to throw in some additional dangers, roll on the **Random Chambers Asylum Encounters** table. These monsters can either be found in on the indicated page, or in *The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* (or



## RANDOM CHAMBERS ASYLUM ENCOUNTERS

d% roll	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-10	2 azhar buccaneers patrolling the halls	1	p. 13
11-20	1 sand-blighted krenshar hunting prey	1	B2
21-30	2 apprentice cultists searching the Asylum	1	FCA p.341
31-40	1 doru invisibly spying on the situation	2	B3
41-50	1 crazed journeyman commoner trying to escape	2	FCA p.340
51-60	1 sand-blighted slime mold clinging to a wall	2	B2
61-70	2 azhar buccaneers and their krenshar pet	2	p. 13 & B2
71-80	2 apprentice cultists and a vargouille they can't control	3	FCA p.341 & B1
81-90	4 azhar buccaneers who have set up an ambush	3	p. 13
91-100	2 sand-blighted krenshars chasing a patient	3	B2

its follow-up volumes), or in *Freeport: City of Adventure* (marked with *FCA* and a page number). Some also have the sand-blighted template (see p. 10).

### AREA 1. ENTRANCE FOYER

CR 1

*The Asylum is a two-story building of weathered stone, much more solid than the tenements that surround it. A large, iron-reinforced door bars the entrance; there are no windows on this level.*

Knocking gets no response at first; eventually someone shouts “*Sod off, we’re closed!*” from within.

The door’s locks were damaged in the fighting, so the buccaneers have piled broken furniture against it on the other side to keep people out. Pushing the door open requires a DC 15 Strength check, and up to three PCs can cooperate (the strongest making the check, the other two attempting to make DC 10 Strength checks to add +2 to the main character’s check as aid another actions). When the door is pushed open, the buccaneers on either side of the doorway flank and attack the first PC to come through; they then pull back to the darkness of the hallway.

**AZHAR BUCCANEERS (2):** *hp* 13 (see at right)

Inside the door, the entrance vestibule of the Asylum is a mess of broken furniture, lit only by whatever light comes from outside.

### AREA 2. GROUND FLOOR HALLWAY

The ground floor is completely dark—the azhar have darkvision, so they destroyed the lights to give themselves

#### AZHAR BUCCANEERS

CR 1/2 - XP 200

Female or male azhar warrior 2

N Medium native outsider

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

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 13 (2d10+2) IP 0

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1; +2 racial bonus to all saving throws against spells and spell-like effects with the fire descriptor

**Special Defenses** fire affinity

**Weaknesses** vulnerability to cold

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** scimitar +3 (1d6+1/18-20)

**Ranged** shortbow +3 (1d6/x3)

**Special Attacks** might of the efreeti, precise strike +1d6

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Buccaneers flank opponents with allies that also have Precise Strike (to deal an additional 1d6 damage), using might of the efreet.

**Morale** The buccaneers surrender if reduced to 3 hp or less.

#### STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

**Feats** Precise Strike

**Skills** Acrobatics +3, Climb +3, Profession (sailor) +5

**Languages** Azharan, Common (can’t read)

**SQ** gifted sailor

**Combat Gear** 10 arrows; **Other Gear** leather armor, scimitar, shortbow, traveler’s outfit, 1d10 sp

an advantage over the Brotherhood. Unless PCs also have ways to see in darkness, they need light sources to see anything.



*A wide hallway runs the breadth of the building, with wooden doors to your left and right. Stairways to the next floor are at each end of the hallway, next to narrow corridors leading off at right angles. The hallway is strewn with broken furniture and fixtures, plus several corpses.*

Most of the bodies are Brotherhood cultists, but there are some dead azhar as well. The corpse of a krenshar lies against the wall. A DC 11 Perception check shows that the cultists have been variously stabbed, slashed, bitten and shot, while the azhar and krenshar were killed by blades and crossbow bolts.

### FIRST MATE NEJHIRA

CR 1 - XP 400

Female azhar gunslinger (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*) 2

N Medium native outsider

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +0

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 19 (2d10+4) **IP** 0

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +0

**Special Defenses** fire resistance 5, gunslinger's dodge, nimble +1

**Weaknesses** vulnerability to cold

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** scimitar +3 (1d6+1/18-20)

**Ranged** mwk blunderbuss +5 (1d8/20)

**Special Attacks** might of the efrete, deadeye, scatter attack (blunderbuss)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Nejhira starts combat by getting behind cover and using *deadeye* to attack the character in the heaviest armor. She directs the buccaneers to attack that opponent while she uses her alchemical cartridges to fend off the other targets.

**Morale** Nejhira surrenders when reduced to 5 hp if she believes her opponents will spare her life, otherwise she flees.

### STATISTICS

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

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

**Feats** Gunsmithing, Rapid Reload (blunderbuss)

**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Bluff +5, Climb +3, Handle Animal +5, Profession (sailor) +5

**Languages** Azharan, Common

**SQ** gifted sailor, gunsmith, grit (1 point/day), quick clear

**Combat Gear** 10 bullets, 10 handfuls of pellets, 1 entangling shot cartridge, 1 dragon's breath cartridge;

**Other Gear** mwk studded leather armor, scimitar, mwk blunderbuss, traveler's outfit, gunsmith's kit, powder horn

The wreckage in this area makes moving around difficult and noisy; the DC of any Acrobatics or Stealth check is increased by +2.

### AREA 3. NORTH-EAST DORMITORIES

CR 1

*A number of small rooms lead off from a hallway. Somewhere in the darkness you can hear the faint sound of teeth chewing on bone.*

These rooms housed the Asylum's typical patients—citizens with mental and emotional problems who deserved better treatment than they received. When the azhar invaded the Asylum, some patients fled, others were killed and a few are now hiding. None are specified here, but if you want to increase the tension, add various patients to the rooms who jump out at players, rant creepily, or beg for rescue.

Some of the krenshar that accompanied the azhar have become corrupted by *obsidian sand*. One is in the last room on the right, gnawing on the body of a patient. If it sees/hears the PCs, it pounces from hiding and fights until killed. Although its *skullface* ability makes a loud noise, other krenshar will not be attracted to the sound; the corruption has driven this creature from the pack.

**SAND-BLIGHTED KRENSHAR (1):** *hp* 13 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 2 and sand blighted template, p. 10)

If the PCs search the dormitories they will find a variety of minor personal effects, including clothing, cheap jewelry, writing materials and furnishings, that are collectively worth 5d10 gp. A single dose of *obsidian sand* can be collected from the krenshar's corpse.

### AREA 4. COMMON ROOM

CR 1

*The many tables, benches and chairs suggest that this is a dining or common area. They are in disarray now, and many are smashed and broken; others have been upended or pushed aside to clear space for a campsite.*

Nejhira, the first mate of *The Scalded Man*, has turned this room into a base of operations, and is here along with two buccaneers and a krenshar.

The takeover of the Asylum has been a costly enterprise, and Nejhira is unhappy about how Zabreen is leading his followers. They're supposed to be raiding ships on the open seas, not fighting cultists! She's not ready to mutiny and abandon her captain just yet, but she might if given a reason.

If the adventurers try to negotiate, Nejhira's attitude starts as neutral and she may be willing to hear them out.



But if they burst in and start throwing spells and daggers around, she and her comrades are hostile and immediately give as good as they get.

**FIRST MATE NEJHIRA:** *hp 19* (see p. 14)

**AZHAR BUCCANEERS (2):** *hp 13* (see p. 13)

**KRENSHAR (1):** *hp 13* (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*)

The wreckage in the room impedes movement; the DC of any Acrobatics check is increased by +2. Many pieces of furniture can serve as cover.

If the buccaneers are defeated, the PCs can find the loot they've scavenged from the Asylum—a *potion of cure light wounds*, a flask of alchemist's fire, a variety of canned foodstuffs, 70 gp and a set of silverware worth 100 gp.

## AREA 5. KITCHEN

CR 1

*The floor of this kitchen is covered with smashed crockery and spoiled food. A dumbwaiter hatch on the outer wall is ripped open, and a bloody feline paw dangles down the shaft.*

The azhar have raided the kitchen for supplies, and there is nothing left of value.

The cultists have blocked the dumbwaiter shaft with the corpse of a krenshar and trapped it with two flasks of acid. If the PCs dislodge the body (including searching it), the flasks drop to the floor and explode. If the PCs disarm the trap they can salvage the flasks.

## EXPLODING KRENSHAR TRAP CR 1 - XP 400

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

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** can't be reset

**Effect** two flasks of acid (Atk +5 ranged; 1d6 acid and splash damage); multiple targets (person who dislodged corpse and the person or space to their right)

If the corpse is removed, the PCs can climb up the shaft to the top floor. This is fairly easy (DC 10 Climb check), but there's only enough room for one person to climb at a time. A heavy chair has been stuffed into the top of the shaft; pushing it requires a DC 17 Strength check, made with a -2 penalty due to the lack of leverage, and the noise may attract attention.

## AREA 6. STORAGE

*This storage room has been blasted by fire so recently that you can still smell the smoke. All the room's contents are strewn about and covered with soot and ash.*

*A metal staircase spirals down from above, but it's walled off from the room by heavy iron grills on all side. Next to the stairwell, a massive feline creature devours a charred corpse.*

The krenshar will not attack unless the PCs invade its territory or attack it first. If it uses its *skullface* ability, other krenshar may hear and come to its aid.

**KRENSHAR (1):** *hp 13* (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*)

The stairwell leads from Area 10 above to Area 12 below. The grillwork allows for equipment to be passed to someone on the stairs while keeping the passage secure. When Zabreen went down the stairs, he cast fire spells through the grill to kill the guard stationed here.

The grillwork has hardness 10, and each inch-thick bar has 30 hit points. Breaking through is possible but will take a long time and make a great deal of noise. A Tiny creature, such as a familiar, could squeeze through the openings, but a Small creature would have to make a DC 20 Escape Artist check to do so.

If the PCs search the wreckage of the storage room they find a vial of armor ointment (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Ultimate Equipment*), an iron holy symbol of the God of Magic (with a secret compartment that holds a *potion of remove fear*) and a set of manacles with a common lock attached to a 10 ft. iron chain.

## AREA 7. SOUTH-WEST DORMITORIES

*A number of small bedrooms lead off from a narrow hallway.*

These rooms are identical to those of Area 3, except that they've been stripped of all valuables. On the wall of one dormitory room, someone has written "I HAVE HEARD THE MERMAIDS SINGING" in what appears to be blood.

## AREA 8. UPPER FLOOR HALLWAY

CR 1/2

*This hallway is largely identical to the one downstairs. Light streams in from barred windows set along the outer wall, showing blood and soot streaked across the floor. Some furniture has been dragged into the middle of the hallway to form a defensible position.*

Two cultists are stationed within the desk-fort, armed with crossbows, keeping watch on the staircase for



# CHAMBERS ASYLUM

- AREA 1. ENTRANCE  
FOYER
- AREA 2. GROUND FLOOR  
HALLWAY
- AREA 3. NORTH-EAST  
DORMITORIES
- AREA 4. COMMON ROOM
- AREA 5. KITCHEN
- AREA 6. STORAGE
- AREA 7. SOUTH-WEST  
DORMITORIES
- AREA 8. UPPER FLOOR  
HALLWAY
- AREA 9. STAFF LIVING  
QUARTERS
- AREA 10. TREATMENT  
ROOMS
- AREA 11. ASYLUM OFFICES
- AREA 12. HIGH-SECURITY  
CELLS
- AREA 13. HIDDEN  
LABORATORY





intruders. They take a -2 penalty to Perception checks to notice PCs approaching from another direction, such as anyone who climbed up the dumbwaiter shaft in Area 9. The NPCs have cover against anyone that isn't adjacent to their makeshift fortification.

Once two PCs have come into view, the cultists open fire, yelling "*Death to the unbelievers! Glory to the Unspeakable One!*" and similar sentiments. The noise is likely to alert the cultists in Area 10 and Clement Moore in Area 11.

**FOLLOWERS OF THE BROTHERHOOD (2):** *hp 9*  
(Apprentice Cultists, *FCA*, p. 341)

The Followers gang up on the weakest-looking opponent and use their *fanatic* ability to gain a +3 insight bonus on their first attack rolls. These fanatics will fight to the death.

**AREA 9. STAFF LIVING QUARTERS**

*Several large bedrooms open from a wide hallway. The rooms look like they were comfortable and decently-appointed before fighting tore everything apart. A number of bodies lie in the hallway.*

These rooms belonged to the staff members that lived within the Asylum; the largest room belonged to Bianka Altanish. Most of the staff are now dead, killed by either the buccaneers or the cultists. The rooms have been stripped of valuables.

**AREA 10. TREATMENT ROOMS** **CR 1/2**

*This large room contains a number of beds, most of which are empty; one contains an obviously dead body. One wall is lined with bookshelves, while workbenches and desks sit against the opposite wall. At the far end, a metal staircase spirals down through the floor.*

This room is where patients received various kinds of treatment, ranging from therapeutic discussion (rare) to being involuntarily plied with untested medications (common). The stairs lead down through Area 6 (see p. 15) and into the basement at Area 12. A dumbwaiter shaft leads down to Area 5, but is blocked by a broken chair that's been stuffed into the entranceway.

Two Followers are in this room. If surprised, one is idly flicking through books and tossing them into a pile, while the other is guarding the spiral staircase. If they're alerted that the PCs are coming, both cultists are hiding behind cover with their crossbows aimed at the likeliest door.

**FOLLOWERS OF THE BROTHERHOOD (2):** *hp 9*  
(Apprentice Cultists, *FCA*, p. 344)

The books relate to a variety of medical subjects, and might be valuable to a physician or academic; an enterprising PC could get 50 gp for them but would need to find a buyer.

The workbenches house a variety of alchemical supplies including a vial of antitoxin, a packet of smelling salts, two doses of shrewd herb, a flask of acid and a container of itching powder. Exactly how all of these substances were meant to help patients is unclear.

**AREA 11. ASYLUM OFFICES**

**CR 4**

*Wooden partitions divide this space up, leaving space for desks, chairs and bookcases. Much of the space is fire-damaged, and burned books have been torn from their cases and strewn on the floor.*

These were the administration offices of the Asylum. Clement Moore oversaw the Asylum's operations from here and holds onto it as his headquarters now. Hidden behind a partition, he waits to see if the PCs are friends or foes, and will call out to them if they're not accompanied by cultists or pirates.

Moore wants out of the Asylum, and better still out of Freeport; his days of worshipping evil gods are behind him. So long as the PCs don't attack him, he can fill them in on what happened here, tell them where the other cultists are stationed, and explain that the leader of the pirates is now barricaded in the basement, after blasting through the upper floors with fire magic.

If the PCs head into the basement, Moore promises to wait for them, then grabs any unclaimed valuables from the floor and leaves the Asylum. He defends himself if they attack, but would rather talk things over and avoid a fight if possible.

**CLEMENT MOORE:** *hp 27* (Journeyman Cultist, *FCA*, p. 341)

If pressed in combat, Clement softens up the most dangerous-looking opponent with *fear* and *blindness/deafness* while yelling for assistance from nearby cultists.

Against a reasonable opponent, Clement surrenders if reduced below 13 hp; if his opponents refuse to negotiate, he fights to the death. It's preferable than living under the Brotherhood again.



**ZABREEN THE ONCE-MAGNIFICENT CR 4- XP 1200**

Male azhar sorcerer 5

CN Medium native outsider

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 16 ft., Perception -1**DEFENSE****AC** 16, touch 12 (13 vs. firearm attacks), flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 shield)**hp** 30 (5d6+10) **IP** 0**Fort** +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5; +2 bonus on saving throws against poison**Special Defenses** div resistances, fire resistance 5**Weaknesses** indefinite madness (psychotic paraphrenia)**OFFENSE****Spd** 30 ft.**Melee** light mace +1 (1d6-1)**Special Attacks** scion of steam (7/day), spoiling touch (7/day)**Spells Known** (CL 5th; concentration +9 [+13 when casting on the defensive])2nd (5/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 15), *stunning bolt* (DC 17), *touch of idiocy*1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *burning hands*, *color spray* (DC 15), *disguise self*, *shield*0 (at will)—*ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *message*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *spark***TACTICS****Before Combat** If the *alarm* is triggered, Zabreen casts *shield* and drinks his *potion of spider climb*, then climbs the walls to find a vantage point on the ceiling.**During Combat** Zabreen uses his scroll to summon sand-blighted eagles and sets them upon the PCs, then moves within the steam while attacking with *stunning bolt* and *magic missiles*. He casts *glitterdust* if he can catch multiple targets (hoping to blind them), and *touch of idiocy* on any spellcaster that gets too close.**Morale** Zabreen's paranoia and delusions mean that he will fight to the death rather than leave this room and his communion with the steam.**STATISTICS****Str** 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 18**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13**Feats** Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Spell Focus (evocation)**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Climb +1, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Profession (sailor) +9**Languages** Azharan, Common, Naval Code**SQ** gifted sailor, cantrips, div bloodline, bloodline arcana**Combat Gear** *wand of magic missile* (50 charges), *scroll of ice slick*, *scroll of cloud of seasickness*, *scroll of summon monster II*, *potion of spider climb*; **Other Gear** light mace, +1 *amulet of bullet protection*, courtier's outfit, jewelry worth 150 gp**AREA 12. HIGH-SECURITY CELLS**

*The staircase leads down to a basement with a low ceiling. Within are six small cells, most of which are barred and locked although the door to the fifth cell hangs open. There is a stink of blood and bodily waste, and a clammy mist fills the air.*

These cells are where the Asylum kept violent patients who could not mix with the general population. Two cells have charred bodies in them, while the others are empty. The fifth cell is open.

At the end of the hallway is a secret door that leads to Bianka Altanish's hidden laboratory. Finding the door requires a DC 20 Perception check, but the trickles of steam leaking out from the adjoining room give searchers a +2 bonus to their check. The secret door is also warded by an *alarm* spell; it will trigger silently to alert Zabreen if anyone is within 20 ft. of the door.

**AREA 13. HIDDEN LABORATORY**

*This room is very warm and uncomfortable, filled with a thick cloud of steam. Moisture pools on the benches, workspaces and stretchers within. The walls are plastered with papers and texts, slowly rotting and sagging from the steam. You can hear the chug of some kind of engine at the far end.*

*A barrel next to the door falls over as you enter, spilling a variety of dismembered body parts onto the floor in front of you.*

Bianka Altanish carried out experiments here on both living patients and cadavers, and the preserved remains of her subjects can be found in barrels and buckets around the room.

The sound comes from the steam boiler at the back of the room. This was used to power the lights and amenities of the Asylum, as well as Altanish's experimental devices. Zabreen has blocked the boiler, filling the room with steam; he finds it comfortable, and believes that through the steam he can commune with the divs.

Zabreen is a sodden and demented shadow of his former magnificence, but he's still a dangerous opponent who goes all out to destroy the PCs. Throughout the battle he screams well-spoken invectives at them, cursing their parents and forebears, boasting of his prowess and power, and telling them that the Torture Sultans shall soon rise from the Bleeding Oasis to usher in an age of holy degradation and terror—which even he can't explain.





### ZABREEN THE ONCE-MAGNIFICENT: *hp* 30 (see p. 18)

The steam acts like a *fog cloud* spell centered on the boiler; it fills the back 30 ft. of the room, leaving the 15 ft.-wide space next to the door relatively clear. Anyone who starts their turn within the cloud must attempt a DC 12 Fortitude save or take 1d4 nonlethal fire damage from the heat; *endure elements* will negate this effect. The boiler has AC 2, hardness 8 and only 5 hp (it's been damaged by Zabreen); if reduced to 0 hp, it explodes doing 2d6 damage to everyone within 10 ft. (DC 13 Reflexes save for half damage). It can be safely disabled without an explosion as a full-round action with a DC 12 Disable Device check, or a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check. In either case, the steam clears one minute after the boiler stops.

Turning off the boiler and clearing the steam requires a DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) check.

### ASYLUM AFTERMATH

A search of the laboratory turns up Zabreen's journal. Reading the notes thoroughly takes time, as the water-logged pages must be handled with care. The main things that can be gleaned are:

- Zabreen drew his magical power from the blood of div in his veins, which he calls the Outcast Ones—a mythic race he never truly believed in until recently. (See **Event F** for more information.)
- A month ago he received visions of a black oasis, where power welled up from blood-red waters; he wanted that power, and the visions drew him to Freeport.
- He encountered “The Biting Eye” and it showed him how insignificant he was compared to the might of the Outcast Ones; from here his notes become more incoherent.
- He suffered terrible pain and indignity at the hands of Asylum staff, and swore to avenge himself on them.
- Another vision of boiling blood and red mists convinced him that answers could be found in the steam, but only once he made offerings to the Outcast Ones and the Torture Sultans (see **Event F**).
- He'd heard that Arzu, the owner of Kafe Ilkin, is learned in the myth and lore of the azhar, and planned to kidnap her and sacrifice her to the steam spirits,



who would then open the way to the Bleeding Oasis and his audience with the Sultans.

- The walls are covered with anatomical diagrams, notes on the reanimation of dead tissue and recipes for alchemical substances of dubious morality. The notes are sodden but if the PCs can preserve them, they might be of interest to the Wizard's Guild. The laboratory also contains a coffer containing 30 gp, two watertight flasks of *obsidian sand* and a *potion of pass without trace*. A portable alchemist's lab can be assembled from the equipment here and in Area 10.

Once Zabreen is defeated, any remaining buccaneers flee back to *The Scalded Man* and set sail for the Continent, and any surviving cultists return to hiding. The Watch will eventually come to check out the disturbance at the Asylum—if the PCs waste too much time scavenging goods, they may have to explain themselves to armed watchmen.

### PART III

## BEWARE THE BITING EYE

Zabreen, the Once-Magnificent has been defeated, but he was a victim of the plague of curses, rather than its creator. Still, he was a victim with insight, and now the PCs have a new lead—Arzu, proprietor of Kafe Ilkin, may be able to shed light on the mystery.

But the party's actions have not gone unnoticed. A doru in the Brine Witch's service observed the events in the Asylum and reported back to its mistress—as a result the Brine Witch now knows that the PCs are hunting for her, and decides to enjoy itself by tormenting them before moving in for the kill.

There are also doru in Nathan Grymes' service, and they've observed the PCs' investigations on the east side. Grymes sent word to Mortimer Quango that a problem needed to be rectified, and the Minister has hired a team of assassins from the Canting Crew to take the PCs down. Luckily, Quango's greed prevented him from hiring the best/most expensive the Crew had to offer, but this team of killers is still dangerous. These doru have also informed Grymes about Kafe Ilkin, and his assassins are to go spy there after dealing with the PCs.

This section of the adventure assumes that the PCs have rested and recovered since their trip to the Asylum. The PCs should be level 2 by the time they reach this point. If not, you may want to add some side quests or random encounters to increase their experience before advancing.

### EVENT D

### CR3

## ENEMIES IN HIGH PLACES

**LOCATION:** Outside the Chamber's Asylum.

As the PCs make their way through the city after leaving the asylum (possibly headed to Kafe Ilkin), they are spied upon by an invisible doru. It lets the assassins know their route, and they set up an ambush. As the PCs walk down a side street in the Eastern District, the trap is sprung!

*A female half-elf steps out of an alleyway several dozen yards away. "That's far enough, heroes!" she calls out. "Looks like you cranked off the wrong people!"*

Two men emerge from hiding on the roofs on either side of the street and level longbows at you. But that's not all—from behind you a massive jungle troll bursts out of a doorway. She roars in fury and charges down the street towards you, wielding a whalespear (*Freeport The City of Adventure* 436)

*"Do it like we planned, Eyebiter!" the half-elf calls, drawing a wand from her pocket. "Blood and fortune! Take them down!"*

Constance and Eyebiter are close friends and neophyte assassins, weary of scraping a living through piracy. This job promises to be their big break—if they can kill the PCs, they're bound to rise through the ranks of Mister Wednesday's organization. That's also why they announced themselves rather than just striking from hiding—they need recognition for their skills.

They're accompanied by a pair of Canting Crew snipers armed with compound longbows. They stay on the rooftops, raining arrows down upon the PCs and ducking behind chimneys and cornices to avoid return fire.

**CONSTANCE:** *hp* 11 (see p. 21)

**EYEBITER:** *hp* 24 (see p. 22)

**CANTING CREW SNIPERS:** 11 *hp* (Bandit, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Game Mastery Guide*)

The snipers focus fire on one opponent, aiming first at spellcasters and then ranged attackers, changing targets once their enemy falls. They avoid attacking anyone engaged in melee with Eyebiter, and shoot at anyone who gets too close to Constance. The snipers flee if reduced to 3 *hp* or less, or surrender if escape is impossible.



## CONSTANCE

CR 1 - XP 400

Female half-elf bonded witch 2  
 N Medium humanoid (elf, human)  
**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

## DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 *mage armor*, +2 Dex)  
**hp** 11 (2d6+2) **IP** 0  
**Fort** +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6; +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells and effects  
**Special Defenses** immune to magic sleep effects

## OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.  
**Melee** staff +0 (1d6-1/20)  
**Ranged** light crossbow +3 (1d8/19-20)  
**Special Attacks** hexes (cackle, evil eye) (DC 13)  
**Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd; concentration +4)  
 1st—*ill-omen*\*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 13), *shield*, *sleep* (DC 13)  
 O—*daze* (DC 12), *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*  
 \*Indicates a spell found in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Just before the ambush, Constance drinks her potion of *mage armor* and casts *resistance* on Eyebiter.

**During Combat** Constance casts *shield* as soon as battle begins. She uses evil eye and her spells to weaken opponents for Eyebiter, while casting *burning hands* from her wand or *ray of enfeeblement* on any enemy that gets too close. If she ever has two foes under the effects of her evil eye at the same time, she uses cackle to maintain their durations.

**Morale** If reduced to 3 hp, or if Eyebiter is reduced to 6 hp, Constance calls a retreat and flees back to the Warehouse District.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13  
**Base Atk** +1; CMB +0; CMD 11  
**Feats** Lightning Reflexes  
**Skills** Bluff +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +7  
**Languages** Common, Elven, Gnome, Goblin  
**SQ** dual minded, elf blood, wary, cantrips, patron's spells (portents), bonded item (ring)  
**Combat Gear** 10 bolts, *wand of burning hands* (25 charges), *potion of mage armor*; **Other Gear** staff, light crossbow, bonded ring worth 100gp, traveler's outfit, 219gp  
**Bonded Ring** rather than have a familiar, Constance stores her spells known in a bonded ring, which contains all prepared plus all O-level spells and the following 1st-level spells; *cause fear*, *command*



Another doru lurks nearby, this one in service to the Brine Witch. At an opportune moment, it telepathically whispers to one of the PCs—one with some insanity points, or the one with the highest Charisma—saying



## EYEBITER

CR 1 - XP 400

Female jungle troll barbarian 2  
 CN Medium humanoid (goblinoid)  
**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

## DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 natural armor, -1 Dex, -1 size)  
**hp** 24 (2d12+6) **IP** 0  
**Fort** +7, **Ref** -1, **Will** +1  
**Special Defenses** uncanny dodge

## OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.  
**Melee** mwk whalespear +6 (1d10+4/x3) (grapple, reach)  
**Ranged** chakram +1 (1d8/20) or whalespear +1 (1d10/x3)  
**Special Attacks** rage 9 rounds/day; bite +5 (1d4+2/20)

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Eyebiter drinks her *potion of aid*.  
**During Combat** Eyebiter rages as soon as combat begins and keeps raging as long as the fight lasts. She focuses on the toughest-looking opponent; if she manages to grapple them with her whalespear, she closes and bites their face while maintaining the grapple.  
**Morale** If left to her own devices, Eyebiter will fight to the death—but if Constance falls she will cease fighting to carry her friend back to safety in the Warehouse District. She also retreats (reluctantly) if Constance gives the order to withdraw.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** 17, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10  
**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 15; disarm maneuvers made against whalespear suffer a -2 circumstance penalty  
**Feats** Unsettling Visage  
**Skills** Climb +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (nature) +4, Stealth -10  
**Languages** Common, Goblin  
**SQ** massive, tough, inscrutable, rage, rage power (animal fury)  
**Combat Gear** 2 chakrams, *potion of aid*; **Other Gear** mwk whalespear with shark-skin grip, chainmail armor, artisan's outfit, 18gp

"Soon you too will know the delights of unending torment," (or something similarly creepy). The distraction causes the PC to suffer a -2 penalty on their next attack or skill check. Should the heroes win the fight, the doru whispers to the same PC: "Treasure the memory of this victory, for tomorrow it will be all you have left." No-one else can hear the doru's telepathic messages.

If defeated, the snipers say nothing; better to stay silent than risk Mister Wednesday's wrath. Constance and Eyebiter aren't as experienced; if taken alive and successfully intimidated, they tell the PCs that they were given an assignment through a contact in the Warehouse District, then sent updates and instructions via weird

## A LITTLE MISDIRECTION

Gamey Rind and Zabreen spoke of "the biting eye." Now they're being attacked by a warrior called Eyebiter. This can't be a coincidence! Except that it is—Gamey and Zabreen had visions of the horrific face of the aghash that has taken on the mantle of the Brine Witch, while Eyebiter got her nickname because she bites people in the face. It's just one of those things that happens in Freeport, if not elsewhere, and it doesn't mean anything.

There is *literally no chance whatsoever* that your players will accept that it's a coincidence, though, and someone is bound to think that Constance and Eyebiter are deeply involved with the plague of curses. Don't discourage this, but also don't push the PCs into it. Let them pursue that red herring all the way out to the sea if they wish, but when and if they realize it's a false trail let them feel smart for figuring it out. Meanwhile the Brine Witch, the real "biting eye," is watching their every move and learning their weaknesses.

telepathic messages. They don't know anything about the plague, the Asylum, or the Brine Witch. They were under orders to go spy on Kafe Ilkin after killing the PCs.

In Constance's belongings there is a ripped piece of paper with descriptions of the PCs and a map to Kafe Ilkin; a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) check spots that it is written on Ministry of Fisheries stationery with most of the letterhead torn off. (If the PCs follow up this clue at the Scurvytown Fishery, they find that the Ministry offices are closed and noone knows where the Minister and his staff have gone.)

It's up to the PCs to decide what to do with the assassins. Whatever they do, a crowd has gathered to watch the fight, and they will witness whatever happens next—including something weird.

## EVENT E

CR 2

## DORU! DORU! DORU!

**LOCATION:** Outside the Chamber's Asylum.

Doru can fly and turn invisible at will, but their invisibility only lasts for six minutes. This means they often have to retreat somewhere out of sight, such as a rooftop or secluded alley, to re-use their *invisibility* spell-like ability.



They're usually diligent about this, but distracted by the fight between the PCs and the assassins, one of several doru in the vicinity has forgotten to renew its invisibility.

While the PCs are still interrogating the assassins (or searching their bodies), a doru suddenly appears nearby! It jabbars angrily at them in Abyssal for a moment before biting at them.

**DORU (1):** 16 hp (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*)

The doru tries to bite the most charismatic character a couple of times; its poison will make the target that much more vulnerable to the Brine Witch's curses.

Once the doru takes any damage, or if it successfully bites a character twice, it turns invisible and flees. Doru are difficult to injure with mortal weapons, so it's unlikely that the PCs will be able to defeat the creature before it escapes.

Divs are a rare species of outsider, thought to be mythical by the few who've ever heard of them. Non-azhar PCs must succeed in a DC 23 Knowledge (planes) check just to recognize what it is; azhar PCs need only succeed in a DC 18 check.

## EVENT F

# THE BLOOD OF HISTORY

**LOCATION:** Kafe Ilkin

Kafe Ilkin (*FCA* p.127) is usually busy at all hours of the day, but the plague of curses has been bad for business, and there are only a few patrons when the PCs arrive. Arzu isn't busy, and so long as the PCs are polite she'll agree to talk with them; she'll even make kahve for everyone and serve them in the hookah room, since it's so quiet.

Born and raised in Freeport, Arzu is nonetheless a scholar of azhar lore, myth and history. She becomes visibly concerned as the PCs tell her what they have learned, especially if they repeat the terms Zabreen used in his journal.

*Arzu's hand doesn't shake as she drinks her kahve, but you can tell that it's only from sheer willpower. "The things you describe are from the ancient stories of my people, from a time long before they settled Kizmir. The Torture Sultans, the Outcast Ones... these were great evils, genie that fell from grace and were corrupted by a terrible god. They were exiled from the Elemental Lands and imprisoned in the Bleeding Oasis, but they still reach out to corrupt the mortal world—No, this isn't possible. These are myths! They must be!"*

## ARZU

CR 5- XP 1200

Female azhar alchemist 6

NG Medium native outsider

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +4

## DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex)

**hp** 36 (6d8+6) **IP** 0

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1; +4 bonus on all saving throws against poison

**Special Defenses** fire resistance 5

**Weaknesses** vulnerability to cold

## OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** dagger +3 (1d4-1/19-20)

**Ranged** light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20)

**Special Attacks** might of the efreeti, bomb 3d6 (9/day)

**Alchemist Extracts Prepared** (CL 6th; concentration +9) 2nd (4/day)—*fire breath*\* x2, *lesser restoration*, *see invisibility*

1st (5/day)—*comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds* x2, *keen senses*\*, *stone fist*\*

\*Indicates a spell found in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Arzu prefers to avoid combat and will do her best to talk her way out of conflict. If battle is inevitable, she drinks her *shock shield* extract.

**During Combat** Arzu hangs back and throws bombs, letting them detonate as smoke bombs if that would assist her allies.

**Morale** Arzu will fight to the death to protect Kafe Ilkin; if faced with lesser threats, she drinks her *potion of gaseous form* and flees when reduced to 9 hp or less.

## STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Brew Potion, Far Sight, Favored by Fortune, Nimble Moves, Throw Anything

**Skills** Appraise +12, Craft (alchemy) +12, Diplomacy +9, Heal +8, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (planes) +16, Perception +4, Profession (merchant) +8

**Languages** Azharan, Common, Elven, Gnome, Ignan

**SQ** planar familiarity, alchemy, mutagen, discoveries (cognatogen, infusion, smoke bomb), poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning

**Combat Gear** *potion of gaseous form*, 2 doses of shadow essence, 10 bolts; **Other Gear** leather armor, dagger, light crossbow, scholar's outfit, *eyes of the eagle*, *boru bead* (1st), formula book, 50 gp

Horried by the possibility that the Outcast Ones are real and working within Freeport, Arzu willingly volunteers to help the PCs. Information that she can give them:



- Curses and corruption are the hallmarks of the Outcast Ones (she never uses the term “divs”), so it’s possible that they could be behind the plague.
- Even the weakest of the Outcast Ones have many subtle powers—invisibility, telepathy, teleportation, hypnotism and so on.
- If the PCs describe a doru she recognizes it, and tells the PCs that doru are the spies and messengers of the Outcast Ones, but that they sometimes serve mortal masters.
- *Obsidian sand* must be the substance of the Bleeding Oasis. It’s very dangerous and should be destroyed! Its mere presence is enough to weaken the walls between worlds.
- The Outcast Ones are resistant to most mortal weapons and spells. The azhar heroes of old wielded cold iron weapons to fight them.
- Arzu doesn’t realize an aghash that has taken up the mantle of the Brine Witch is responsible even if the PCs mention the “biting eye.” (That would be too easy.) Nor does she know much about the history of the Brine Witch.

As well as information, Arzu can create alchemical items if the PCs can provide the raw materials (i.e. pay the base cost).

As the adventure continues, Arzu may prove to be a great ally for the PCs—skilled in alchemy, knowledgeable

about the lore of the divs and well-connected in Freeport society. Assuming she lives, that is. And if the PCs help make that possible, she’ll treat them as useful and potent (though whether she likes and befriends them, is willing to hire them, or thinks of them as just too dangerous to cross while desperately trying to avoid them depends on how the PCs act around her).

## EVENT G

### RAISING THE STAKES

LOCATION: Anywhere

The PCs have several options—shopping for cold iron weapons, getting alchemical supplies for Arzu, looking for more information, and so on. Let them decide on a plan and start exploring it.

But the Brine Witch has not been idle. Spying on the PCs through doru agents, she’s learned where they live, who they associate with, and anyone that they care about in Freeport. While they talked with Azru, the Witch cursed someone close to the PCs. If the heroes don’t have any close friends or allies, she curses Arzu’s sister, Dilara, who is shopping at the Docks. (Another option might be cursing Little Nell, if the players enjoyed interacting with her.)

As the PCs pursue their plan, a duro telepathically whispers to a PC: “*Those who meddle in the affairs of the mighty shame themselves in the process. Too bad for you. Too bad for [victim’s name].*”

(If the players can’t come up with a plan and seem stuck, you can send them this message while they’re still at Kafe Ilkin to prod them into action.)

What do the PCs do? Do they all run to find and save their friend? They’ll be too late, but they don’t know that. Feel free to add a random encounter of creatures tricked or extorted by the Brine Witch into waiting for the PCs to arrive at the scene and trying to kill them, if the PCs need more clues, or more action, or more experience points.

Do they split up? Do they do nothing, condemning their friend to the Brine Witch’s curse? What if it’s Arzu’s sister in danger—will they drop everything to help a stranger? There is no right or wrong answer; it’s up to your players to decide what’s important to them.

If one or more of the characters go to rescue the victim, finding them might be straightforward or could require a Knowledge (local) check to track them down. They find the victim already cursed—use the **Random Curse Victims** table (p. 8) to decide what afflicts them.

### GOLD IRON

Cold iron weapons are the most effective tool for fighting divs, but they’re currently rare and hard to find. In a city Freeport’s size they’d normally be fairly common, but people have been buying up cold iron since the plague of curses began. How rare are they now? That depends on how difficult you want the game to be. If you want the PCs to feel desperate and outclassed, then there just aren’t any cold iron weapons to be found. If you want to give them a fighting chance, let them turn up one at a local vendor with a DC 15 Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check, plus one for every 5 higher their skill check is. If the PCs have a noteworthy patron, they can get one more—but no more than that.



## CURSES!

For low-level adventurers, getting cursed is a big problem. There aren't that many spellcasters in Freeport able to cast *remove curse* in the first place, and those that can charge 150 gp (or more—higher demand leads to higher prices) for the service, which is out of the budget of most heroes on their first adventure.

Because of this, avoid putting multiple curses on one character. Putting significant penalties or problems on a PC, while not giving options for removing those conditions, is likely to leave the player feeling frustrated or bored, neither of which is much good for gaming.

If every PC ends up with a curse, you may wish to add a small group of clerics or inquisitors at least some of whom are high enough level to cast *remove curse*, who are also hunting the Brine Witch—but are convinced this is all the activity of a cult worshipping an evil god opposed to their own deity. These figure doesn't trust the PCs and won't work with them, but are willing to trade *remove curse* spells for what information the PCs have managed to gather about the case so far.

As they try to help the victim, a doru whispers "*More fruit for the torment garden*" to an appropriate PC—and the Brine Witch, lurking nearby, strikes again. She uses her *spectral hand* ability to make a +10 ranged touch attack against the PC on the scene with the highest Charisma. If the attack's successful, the PC must make a DC 16 Will save or be struck with a curse. Don't roll randomly for this—choose a *bestow curse* effect that makes sense for that character and negates one of their major strengths.

Whether they succeed or fail, the PC will notice the *spectral hand's* touch, and glimpse it—a translucent claw, almost like a spider—as it flies back to the Brine Witch. If any of the PCs see her (usual Perception/Stealth rules), they see a hunched old woman in an alleyway or similar location about 100 ft. away. They may have a chance to take an action against her, but unless they can stop her she casts *dimension door* and vanishes from the scene.

But her doru servant stays behind and whispers "*And now for the meddling Azhar alchemist who thinks herself so learned.*" This is the PCs' clue the Brine Witch is going after Arzu! It might be wiser for the doru to keep silent, but the evil creature can't help taunting the PCs in the hopes they'll feel emotional pain when they later realize they could have tried to stop the attack.

If none of the PCs went to find the victim, then this scene plays out fairly similarly—the Brine Witch and doru follow the PCs from hiding, then take an opportune moment to curse the most charismatic PC.

When the PCs return to Kafe Ilkin, Arzu is gone, with no sign of a struggle. (A doru *charmed* her into going willingly with the Brine Witch; if any PCs were hanging around the kafe, Arzu told them she was leaving to get more supplies.) If the PCs don't go check on her themselves, Little Nell

may come inform them of the alchemist's disappearance within a day or so (as her mistress is checking up on their progress). Or a patron of Arzu's may show up with several bodyguards, demanding to know why she disappeared right after they left her shop. Or, if necessary, you could add another random encounter forced to attack the PCs by the Brine Witch, who flee to the shop with a note in their pocket saying to burn it to the ground. For **Event H** to happen, the PCs need to learn the Brine Witch has Arzu, and want to track the Witch down.

### PART IV

## BRINE WITCH'S BANE

The Brine Witch has marked the heroes for destruction—striking down friends and allies with curses and abducting Arzu. She looks forward to drawing out the PCs' anguish over days, weakening and degrading them before finally adding them to her torment garden.

But if the PCs can find her first, they have a chance to stop the Brine Witch once and for all, to lift the plague of curses and to save their friends—and to learn that there's more going on in Freeport than just a few monsters causing trouble.

## THE TORMENT GARDEN

When she escaped from Grymes' botched summoning, the Brine Witch drifted from hiding place to hiding place for several nights, always moving lest the Mazin-ally find and bind her. Eventually she found a place to call her own—a decrepit manor house in Drac's End, ruined by fire and near collapse.



It wasn't quite abandoned, though—Dirk Haslinger, the manor's former owner, would come by every couple of nights to squat in the ruins, smoke abyss dust, and rant about how important he used to be. Haslinger was pathetic, but potentially useful—so rather than curse or kill him, the Brine Witch persuaded him to join her service. The former gangster has scavenged weapons and tools from the Witch's victims, and outfitted what's left of his old manor with traps and patrols the lair to keep it safe from intruders.

The aghash has made the old manor her home—worse, she's made it into a torture chamber for her victims. Those victims that she chooses to abduct are brought here and imprisoned in her “torment garden,” where she plies

them with curses and harvests their delicious pain and degradation. This is where she has brought Arzu, and this is where she plans to bring those PCs she lets live.

## EVENT H

### FINDING THE LAIR

**LOCATION:** Anywhere

What the Witch doesn't realize is that Arzu left behind a potent weapon to use against the divs—a *see invisibility* extract, infused so that others can use it. The extract is in the alchemist's workshop in Kafe Ilkin's living quarters, and the PCs easily find it if they search the kafe for clues. (There's also a vial of quick freeze oil and a pellet of flash powder, which could be useful.)

The extract allows the imbiber to see the invisible for one hour. That's plenty of time to search the vicinity for the doru the Witch has set to watch them, then to follow it back to the Witch's lair—the manor is on the border of Drac's End and the Eastern District, a bit more than 200 yards north of Kafe Ilkin.

That's easier said than done. First, the PCs need to convince the doru that they're not going anywhere, so that it gets bored and leaves; this calls for a Bluff check opposed by its Wisdom. The PC who can see it then needs to trail it through Freeport without being seen—this requires a Stealth check opposed by the doru's Perception. If the doru realizes it's being followed, it will try to lose the PC, who will need to make a Perception check opposed by the doru's Stealth. If the PC does lose the doru, he might be able to find it again, or to stumble across the Witch's lair, but the creature will be ready for him.

Another option is to capture the doru—it's not a strong combatant and might be overpowered with cold iron weapon and non-resistible spells. If captured, the doru swings between sneering, monstrous bluster—“*Your blood will soak the black sands of the Oasis!*”—and pathetic, jabbering cowardice—“*Gaaaahhh! Let this one go, it begs you, it begs you!*” A DC 14 Intimidate check will persuade it to reveal the location of the Witch's lair, but it doesn't know about Grymes' operations.

But what if the PCs don't find the *see invisibility* extract, or don't think to search for doru? If the players come up with another way of finding the lair, go with it. Perhaps they use divination magic to find traces of *obsidian sand* and follow the Witch's path; perhaps they use investigation skills to find a pattern in the curse occurrences and match them against a city map. Don't let them succeed without trying—get a clear explanation of what they're doing

#### DIRK HASLINGER

CR 3 - XP 800

Male human rogue 4  
NE Medium humanoid (human)  
**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +1 dodge, +2 Dex)  
**hp** 29 (4d8+8) **IP** 0  
**Fort** +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2  
**Defensive Abilities** evasion, uncanny dodge, electricity resistance 2

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.  
**Melee** morningstar +5 (1d8+2/20)  
**Ranged** mwk hand crossbow +7 (1d4/19-20)  
**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6, befuddling strike, positioning attack

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** He drinks his *potion of blur* just before he launches his first surprise attack.  
**During Combat** See above  
**Morale** Haslinger is hopped up on *abyss dust*, addled by the Brine Witch's powers and desperate to win back his decaying mansion; he fights to the bitter end.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8  
**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18  
**Feats** Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot  
**Skills** Appraise +7, Bluff +6, Climb +9, Disable Device +9, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +8, Stealth +9  
**Languages** Common  
**SQ** rogue talents (befuddling strike, positioning attack), trapfinding +2, trap sense +1  
**Combat Gear** *potion of blur*, 10 hand crossbow bolts, 1 dose of cobra venom, 3 acid bolts, 2 tar bombs, 2 pepper smoke pellets, 1 tanglefoot bag, 1 pouch of vicious caltrops; **Other Gear** studded eel hide leather armor, morningstar, mwk hand crossbow



## THE BRINE WITCH'S LAIR



AREA H1. RUINED ENTRANCE

AREA H2. ANTEROOM

AREA H3. COOK'S QUARTERS

AREA H4. MAIN HALL

AREA H5. MANOR SURROUNDS

AREA H6. KITCHEN

AREA H7. SERVING CORRIDOR

AREA H8. DINING ROOM

and impose some suitable difficulties—but give them the chance to think outside the box and have it pay off.

### STORMING THE LAIR

Arzu was taken in the afternoon; no matter how clever the PCs are, it's likely to be getting dark by the time they find the ruined manor.

When the PCs approach the manor, Dirk Haslinger is probably lurking in Area 7, peeking out the broken windows and keeping watch. If they come in with lights blazing and voices raised, he'll prepare surprise attacks for them. If they're careful and stealthy, Dirk won't notice them right away and they'll have the edge against him.

EVENT H(A)

CR 3

### GUERRILLA IN THEIR MIDST

LOCATION: The Brine Witch's Lair

Dirk Haslinger is a pretty terrible person, but if he was in his right mind even he'd draw the line at working for an inhuman monster. Sadly, Dirk and his "right mind" have been strangers for some time. The Witch has promised

him he can have his manor back, and he's crazed and wretched enough to both believe her and do anything she wants in return.

As the PCs explore the ruined manor, Dirk constantly moves around to launch surprise attacks and lure them into traps. Some of the things he might do:

- Lunge from hiding to land a sneak attack, then use positioning strike to run away.
- Snipe from hiding using acid bolts.
- Toss tar bombs at groups of PCs standing together.
- Scatter caltrops in a hallway, then trick the PCs into running at him through them.
- Go through a secret door to get behind the PCs.
- Throw rocks into trapped areas so that the PCs investigate and trigger them.
- Poison his weapons with cobra venom before attacking (risking poisoning himself).

Dirk's ultimate aim is to draw the PCs up to the top floor and onto the balcony of the dining room, where the aghash can help him defeat them.



## AREA H1. RUINED ENTRANCE

*This must have been a decent manor house once, before it moldered, caught fire, and mostly collapsed. Now it's little more than a cube of crumbling bricks, boarded-up windows and soot-stained wreckage. Two mildewed wooden doors stand on one wall of the building, surrounded by rubble and garbage.*

The walls of the manor are made from brick (8 hardness, 60 hp per 10-foot-by-10-foot section). The floor is dirt, with some wooden flooring still in place in front of the doors. A DC 20 Perception check reveals traces of *obsidian sand* in the dirt around the manor; *detect magic* gives a +2 circumstance bonus to the check.

Both doors are locked, but the locks are warped and loose; it's only a DC 18 Disable Device check to open them.

The ceilings on this level are 20 ft. high, while those on the top floor at 15 ft. high.

## AREA H2. ANTEROOM

*This anteroom was probably ramshackle and dirty even before it caught fire. Now it's just a roomful of half-burned garbage. A wooden door at the north end leads further in.*

The area in front of the door (marked with a T) is a trap, with rotting timber planks placed over a wine-storage cellar.

### COLLAPSING FLOOR

CR 1- XP 400

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

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair

**Effect** 10-foot fall (1d6); multiple targets (all creatures in 10 ft. area); DC 15 Reflex save avoids.

The door can be opened, but behind it is a 2-inch-thick sheet of rusty iron that covers the doorway, attached to the brickwork with cured alchemical glue. Pushing down the sheet requires a DC 25 Strength check, and it has 10 hardness and 70 hp. Anyone pushing or attacking the sheet needs to stand in front of the door, which requires building something stable to stand on.

A hidden door on the south wall requires a DC 20 Perception check to find. If the PCs are trying to get through the other door, Dirk Haslinger may open the door to shoot or toss tar bombs, then close the door and run up the stairs.

## AREA H3. COOK'S QUARTERS

*The broken furniture in this room suggests it was once used as a bedroom, although not a fancy one. In fact, it looks like someone's been using it recently—the bedding is disturbed and there's an odd smell, like sweat and bodily waste overlaid by something else.*

*A rickety spiral staircase at the back of the room leads up, its wooden stairs blackened by flame.*

This is where Dirk Haslinger sleeps; the odd smell is that of abyss dust, which a disreputable character may recognize. Searching the room and succeeding in a DC 15 Perception check turns up two doses of abyss dust and a pouch with 12 gp hidden in the foul bedding.

The stairway looks rickety and dangerous but it's actually still sturdy.

## AREA H4. MAIN HALL

*A wide corridor runs east-to-west, with a couple of boarded windows along the outer wall. The floor is thick with rubble and garbage, piled up in rotting heaps. At each end of the corridor, a heavy wooden door is set in the southern wall. In the ceiling, at the western end, a hole is just wide enough for one person to climb through if they could reach it.*

Unless the PCs have broken through it, a rusty iron sheet covers the eastern-most door.

A DC 20 Perception check reveals a few shallow handholds on the western wall, which provide a +2 bonus to Climb checks for anyone trying to reach the hole in the ceiling. Dirk Haslinger uses this area to move between floors.

## AREA H5. MANOR SURROUNDS

*The remains of the manor house—broken bricks, burnt timbers, and broken glass—splay out around it in a barren field. There are boarded-up windows on the upper floor, but no other doors or windows at ground level.*

A DC 15 Perception check reveals one window on the western wall that isn't completely boarded over and could be squeezed through. Climbing up requires a DC 22 Climb check, and the window is 25 feet above the ground.

The window leads into the western end of Area 7, next to the hole in the floor that goes to Area 4.



## AREA H6. KITCHEN

*The only things in this derelict kitchen not ruined by fire are a pair of heavy iron ovens, and even they are warped by heat and rust. The pantries, cupboards, and benches that once filled the room are now just trash and ruin. A door hangs off one hinge in the northern wall.*

There's a hole in the western wall behind a broken cupboard; Haslinger uses this as a secret door (DC 15 Perception check to find it). If chased by the PCs he may run into Area 7, then double back along the balcony in Area 8, and come back through the door to attack the PCs from behind.

## AREA H7. SERVING CORRIDOR

CR 1

*A small waiting room leads into a wide corridor running east to west. Boarded-up windows line the outer wall. The floor is covered with smashed and burnt furnishings and serving utensils.*

An axe tied to a rope will drop and swing as soon as the eastern door to Area 8a is opened.

## SWINGING AXE TRAP

CR 1 - XP 400

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

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** Atk +10 melee (axe; 1d8+1/ 3); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. line)

A hole in the floor at the western end of the corridor leads down to Area 4.

## AREA H8. DINING ROOM

CR 5

This text assumes the PCs enter from Area 7; if they come in from Area 4, adjust as necessary.

*A narrow balcony with a waist-high lattice surrounds this large room, which takes up both floors. A staircase leads down to ground level from the other side.*

*The floor of the room is covered in dirt, maybe a foot or more thick. The only "furniture" is six iron stakes rising up around the bottom of the stairs. A person hangs limp from each stake, manacled and chained; they all quietly moan and weep. Arzu is chained to the stake furthest from you.*





*In the middle of the room, a few feet from the foot of the stairs, an old woman dressed in filthy rags silently kneels to pull up weeds, her face hidden from you.*

This is the aghash's torment garden; her captives are people she has cursed and then abducted for further torture. All are currently still alive; the bones of old victims are mixed with the dirt and *obsidian sand* that covers the floor.

If the PCs challenge or call out to the Witch, she responds telepathically to provoke them. She might also use *suggestion* to prod a melee combatant into running down the stairs to attack her, which are covered with poisoned caltrops.

### TRAPPED STAIRCASE

CR 2 - XP 600

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

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** manual

**Effect** caltrop spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1 point of damage [as caltrops] plus poison); poison (medium spider venom, DC 14 Fort; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1d2 Str damage; cure 1 save)

Only once a PC comes down to ground level does she raise her head to reveal her horrific face—a single giant eye, ringed by long fangs. As she battles the PCs, her eye blinks like a shark biting and she mocks them for their weakness, promising to harvest their pain and shame over weeks before disposing of them. She also telepathically says: “*You fools come seeking those who were never here to be found! Pity the poor slaves who hoped such as you might rescue them.*”

**THE BRINE WITCH:** *hp 45 (Aghash, Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3)*

The aghash casts *spectral hand* (losing 1 hp) right away and uses it to *bestow curses* while she moves away from danger. She's compelled by her nature to always attack the character with the highest Charisma. However, she can use her *cursed gaze* ability on anyone, not just the beautiful.

If reduced to 5 hp, the aghash seeks to escape and fight another day. Since she can use *dimension door* at will, slipping away is simple for her; PCs have to interrupt her casting to stop her.

Buried in the earth at the foot of the stairs is a sand-blighted weedwhip, which attacks any nearby PCs but leaves the Witch alone.

**SAND-BLIGHTED WEEDWHIP (1):** *hp 16 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4)*

If still alive, Dirk Haslinger joins this battle and does his best to protect the Witch.

## AFTERMATH

Once the PCs land the killing blow, the Witch telepathically whispers “*The Bleeding Oasis calls me—no! No! Let me be freeeeeeee!*” and then dies.

With the Witch and her slaves dead, her prisoners can be freed. All have been cursed into helplessness and need serious medical and magical attention; Arzu is in better shape than the rest but still afflicted. These victims could be recurring NPCs to use later in the Adventure Path, who will gratefully assist the PCs if/when they recover from their torment.

Buried in the dirt are the remains of half-a-dozen other victims—an awful number, but far fewer than the number of people that have vanished over the last month. (If the PCs don't realize this, other NPCs may make the connection and tell them.) There are also a number of treasures that the Witch took from past victims—a +1 *light steel shield*, a *potion of eagle's splendor*, *armbands of the brawler*, a length of *iron rope*, an *elixir of swimming* and 300 gp worth of cash, jewelry, and effects.

If the PCs tell Angelo Stampfel or the Watch about what happened here, it quickly becomes front page news and the PCs are lauded as heroes. Lady Jane (or another patron) pays them their promised fee; the Captain's Council may also reward them if things go public, or pay for *remove curse* spells for them and the victims they rescued.

But there are still questions left to be answers and mysteries left unsolved—and the PCs have only just begun to glimpse the evil at work in Freeport's shadows.

The adventure continues in *Return to Freeport Part Two: The Abyssinial Chain*, by Crystal Frasier!



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