

Courts of the Shadow Fey

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Press

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Adventure
for Levels 7 to 10

Pathfinder
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

by Wolfgang Baur

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So, we'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon.

—Lord Byron, "So We'll Go No More A-Roving"



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PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

Courts of the Shadow Fey

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COURTS OF THE SHADOW FEY

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Introduction

Some say the world is white and blank. Others say the world is a black abyss.

Half black, half white. Half sorrow, half joy. Half living, half a ghost. The Realm of Shadows is neither one thing nor another; it is a place of halves. One may think of it as half regret, half done, half dead. But it is just as fair to say half rich, half cured, half won. The shadows are a place of neither pure evil nor pure good but only that muddle where true balance lies, where lives are rich and sad and complicated. Half villains and half heroes who strive but never win. But who never quite lose.

The Shadow Courts

Welcome to the realm of shadows. You're halfway home.

The shadow fey maintain two seasons and two forms of rule. The Winter Court is the crueler one, ruled by the Moonlit King, and it is a rare season and often a violent one as well. The Summer Court is far more common, with a gentler air and manner, ruled by the Queen of Night and Magic. Both monarchs dwell in the Shadow Realm and their nobles with them. The members of these courts are referred to generally as the "Lords and Ladies" (by those who fear them) and more precisely as the shadow fey, winter fey, or scáthsidhe.

For almost 100 years, this was of little interest to the burghers of Zobeck. The shadow fey remained involved in their own affairs, ignoring wars, sieges, royal marriages, and the petty rivalries of human kingdoms. Until now.

The adventure begins when the fey court turns from one season to another, and the Winter Court briefly holds sway just as a valuable piece of information reaches the King's ear. After a century neglecting the mortal world, the Winter King takes the throne

following the return of one of the hidden ambassadors to the Free City of Zobeck, informing His Majesty that the arrangement with House Stross is now null and void. Apparently, says he, the humans overthrew their king and rule through some council of merchants. The Moonlit King—unpredictable at the best of times—is enraged and shocked. If the Stross bloodline no longer rules the city, then surely the place is entailed to its prior lords. Those lords are the shadow fey, in the body of their king and queen, and they want it back.

And in fact, things happen as the king commands, at least at first. In some ways, the city does rightfully revert to the fey, who ruled it first. They assume that their word is the law, and they appear more and more often on the streets. If it continues in this vein, humans and others in Zobeck will live at their sufferance.

The Winter Court's season of rule ends shortly after the Moonlit King sends his ambassador and servants down the Shadow Road to Zobeck. The Queen of Night and Magic maintains his policy and promulgates a set of edicts to the city. At first, these are annoying but manageable, such as a ban on cursing and an interdict against the worship of the city's patron goddess, Rava. The edicts quickly grow more and more demanding: no temples may be entered without the permission of the queen and her ambassadors, no one may eat meat without paying a portion to the fey, and no one may declare a toast without praising the fey. Finally, a herald announces that no one may breathe the king's air in the Gear District (which leaves the gearforged the only ones who may visit). At dawn and dusk, the fey seize control of the city gates, the council chambers, and the temple of the Green Gods. They don't exactly fight the city's watchmen; however, they enforce their declared laws. Those who break them are beaten, cut, or shaved hairless. Some are exiled from the city. Naturally, the Praetorian Council, the mayor, and

others find these strange fey edicts a threat to their authority and a danger to the city.

Why the sudden fey interest? Perhaps the party could speak to the ambassador and straighten all this out...

A Note on Design

The plot is a “bucketed” one, with five eras/stages/sandboxes that run sequentially. In terms of raw size and structure, the goal was to create five story segments, acts, or chapters of about 10,000 to 12,000 words each, each with its own mood, short story arc, and resolution. In fact, there’s quite a bit of variation in that length. The roughly 30 possible encounters take a party from **7th** level to **11th** level, though it’s not expected that every party will meet every encounter.

Each section is fairly loose, and once the party passes the relevant gate, a new set of encounters becomes available. The older ones largely disappear, and new NPCs arrive. The only ones who are relevant throughout are the king and queen, although their influence is felt largely by reputation in the early chapters.

Adventure Summary

The first stage of the adventure involves two assassination attempts: one against a priest of the Sun God, the second against the PCs. In between, the party notices the strange doings of the fey who arrive in Zobeck and begin making demands of the population, creating a certain amount of chaos and disruption as the existing authorities try to find some way to assert themselves against the capricious and sometimes deadly force used by these shadow fey. The party is invited to visit the hidden ambassador, a representative of the fey who is secretly hoping that the mayhem of shadow fey rule over the city can be avoided although he is much too loyal to say anything too clearly.

The party learns the ritual to open a fey Shadow Road, leaving the city behind in hopes of a visit to the Courts of the Shadow fey. After a couple hostile encounters on the road, the party arrives at the courts in the Shadow Realm only to find them apparently abandoned. The party may investigate, fight some animated guardian constructs, and gradually peel back the layers of illusion that hide the courts from casual trespassers, speaking to goblin servants, visiting the stables, and possibly becoming entangled in matters of the lower factions of the courts, such as the young shadow fey rakes and duelists. If the party gathers enough prestige, they are invited to meet more and more noble members of the courts, eventually being allowed out of the lower courts entirely.

Once the veil is pulled aside, the party finds new dangers and opportunities. They are invited to the Swan Festival held by the courtesans, whose dances and flirtations may prove dangerous. They may meet the Black Prince, the Demon Lord of Roaches, the Blademaster Lord Suid, and other members of the nobility. And they will certainly be challenged to duel, seduced by a succubus, given the opportunity to hunt down a mythic firebird, granted a lantern dragonette as a mark of favor, and if they choose, they may pursue the hand of one of the courtesans.

All this raises their Status and eventually gives the party a shot at an invitation from the Queen of Night and Magic, Her Majesty Sarastra, who grants them an audience and tells them they may discuss the matter of Zobeck’s rulership—and their own fate—with the Moonlit King. They are sent off to the Spiral Maze to find him, where he lives in a tower beyond traps, an ancient eye golem, and

ELITISM AS VILLAINY

In American life, elitism is a crime, but in feudal times it was just the natural order of things. Nobles ruled, bishops decreed excommunications and forgiveness, and peasants and merchants sucked it up. Yet nowhere in most Pathfinder games does class and status show up. I decided that Courts of the Shadow Fey was going to do something with this theme in addition to the more obvious themes of demons and shadow power sources. The design pivot I chose was to give class and status a Pathfinder metric: you can really measure status and prestige here, just as you can measure Wisdom or a spell’s Level.

Now elves in my mind have so often been underrated as villains. They are the genteel civilized creatures who live longer and look down their noses at smelly barbarians and bearded, beer-swilling dwarves. They are elitists who—and this makes it so much worse—are probably right when they claim that other races cannot lay claim to high culture, deeper magic, or perfection in the arts. They’re snobs, and they’re right about it. In the world of Zobeck, I see them as generally on the blackhat brigade. They want what they want, and you had best not disturb them, puny human insect.

This drives players apeshit, which makes it perfect for villains. Experienced heroes—especially those coming into their own power in the sweet spot—are masters of melee and lords of magic. Telling them they’re not good at something and then showing them a ladder of Status points to climb is red meat for them. Which is why I could use this system as an effective foundation for a courtly adventure: intrigue and clues are good for some players, but others need a way to keep score and ways to level up—they need exploration and tactical combat or it ain’t Pathfinder. If an invite from the prince is connected to a points system, the result is a more effective adventure at the relatively low cost of a point-tracking subsystem. Jane McGonigal discussed this recently at a TED talk on using gaming to change the real world. This project takes the same gaming approach to making snobbery and status rest on a mechanical foundation that makes it more accessible to a gaming approach.

So here we are. This is the best possible setting I could build for the shadow fey, the microcosm and hothouse world of the nobles and their servants with deadly combat, dangerous liaisons, and a set of hurdles that can keep a party looking for the right key to unlock the fey’s snobbish attitude—once they earn the right achievements. It seems to have worked well in playtest, and I hope it inspires your players to expand their gaming horizons a little as well.

My profound thanks to all the patrons who supported this work. I’ve wanted to write an Amber-meets-the-Fey adventure for 10 years, and your patronage made it possible. I hope you find the results to your liking.

Wolfgang Baur

—Wolfgang Baur

July 2, 2010

shadow demons. Meeting the Moonlit King can be either a diplomatic or a combat encounter although the king’s madness means that diplomacy is a frail reed indeed. He may grant the party what they wish and send them back on their way to the mortal world, or they may need to defeat him and his devils in combat first. Either way, they may meet Akyishigal, the Demon Lord of Roaches, one last time on their way out of the maze, offering them much in exchange for the king’s orb of rule. The party must decide whether to retain that source of power (and have one of them become a member of the courts), give it to the demon lord, or give it to the queen in exchange for riches and the return of the city. No one said these choices were easy.

The king is dead, long live the Moonlit King.



Act I, A Chill in the Air

The wind is chill with the promise of winter, the trade fair has closed up for the year, and the last of the dwarf caravans have struck home for the Ironcrag before the passes are snowed in. The city settles into the quieter rhythm of late autumn and awaits winter's first frost.

Scene 1, The Assassination

The PCs are in town when things go wrong. Shadow fey toughs threaten Oleg Khandarc, a priest of the year, the Sun God Khors, who has been warned to stay away from the temple of Svarog where the shrine to Khors stands. The PCs are called in by the young Misha Jorelik, a novice priest who slipped away to get help.

The Call for Help

A young man wearing the yellow tunic of the sun god stumbles into the tavern. "Come quickly!" he says. "Thugs are threatening the priest of the sun, and blood may spill on holy ground!"

Follow me!" and runs off. If the PCs do not follow, the priest and his novice are both found dead not long after, and the temple grounds are marred with blood. The holy ground must be re-consecrated.

When the PCs Arrive at the Shrine: *Perception (DC 20)*—You hear shouting in the temple ahead. You notice a piece of parchment, held by a knife, thrust into the enormous bronze doors in Temple Square.

Reading the notice requires a standard action or ending movement adjacent to the door; it is written in Elven.

Let it be known to all who worship here; the charter of the Temple of Perun and Khors is revoked by order of the Ambassador Thelamandrine. None may enter, visit, chant, keep vigil, or worship here unless and until the priesthood conforms to the new practices. Those who violate this order are subject to summary execution or removal by the forces of the Realm.

By his hand,

His Excellency Glaninin Thelamandrine, Hidden
Ambassador-In-Extraordinary of the Winter Court
to the Fey City of Zobeck

Once within the Shrine:

The shrine is filled with a brightly glowing statue of the sun god, currently smeared with black shadows and shifting light. Elves in black cloaks have surrounded a priest, who stands defiant against them. Pews fill the far end of the chamber, and the priest stands under a white dome supported by eight pillars. He seems calm. "You do not belong here," says the priest. "I demand you leave, in the names of Svarog and Khors."

"If you will not listen to the city's rightful ruler," says one of the fey, "you will pay the price." The elves all move as one, their blades striking to cut the priest down.

The Priest of Khors and the Novice: Assuming the party interferes, they may save the priest Oleg and the novice Misha from certain death. The priest can take three more hits from the rakes (AC 15, +6 Fortitude, +3 Reflex); the novice dies after just two hits (AC 14, +4 Fortitude, +3 Reflex). If present, the hound's bite counts as 2 hits, and his breath weapon counts as 3 hits on a failed Reflex save and 1 hit on a successful Reflex save.

Rake and Cutthroat

The rakes (and hound, if any) surround the priest to start while the cutthroats are concealed in the shadows and should not be placed on the battle mat.

Scene 1, Assassination

- CR 9—2 shadow fey cutthroats, 1 shadow fey rake
- CR 10—2 shadow fey cutthroats, 2 shadow fey rakes
- CR 11—1 hound of the night, 2 shadow fey cutthroats, 2 shadow fey rakes

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination—The statue of Khors is well lit although shadows flit across it (Knowledge (religion) DC 20 notes this as unusual). The space near the curtains and along the walls is unusually dim and offers partial concealment, certainly enough for shadow fey to hide in.

Fire Pit—Any creature standing in the small fire pit takes 2d6 fire damage at the start of its turn and must make a DC 15 Reflex save or start on fire.

The Pews—The wooden pews are difficult terrain moving across them but normal terrain moving along their length. An Acrobatics check (DC 15) allows a character to run over the backs of the pews at normal speed.

Shadow Fey Youths. Young shadow fey are as arrogant and cocky as they are graceful and skilled. Maturing in a society placing emphasis on success and ambition, young shadow fey aggressively seek to raise themselves in the court. For some, this means mastering the intrigues of court life through wit and charm while, for others, it is a life of arcane study. For most eager shadow fey, however, the only path to success is the way of the blade. Shadow fey culture values dueling as an art, and there is no shortage of ambitious fey who seek to master it.

SHADOW FEY RAKE

CR 6

With a wide grin full of teeth and sweepingly pointed ears, shadow fey appear like a cross between the worst elements of

DESIGN NOTE

Initially, this was the second scene of the adventure, giving the GM time to create a sense of mood and shadowy menace in the first scene. The problem with that approach is that the players see it all coming; there's less mystery about who is attacking and why. So I changed the sequence to make the first scene a fight (and a tough one), and the second section a bit of a puzzle to figure out why. Sequencing is critical in the early stages.

Further, this was originally an attack on the PCs directly; now, it's more a ruse to bring them into a place where they can be framed more efficiently. The party may still fall under quite a bit of suspicion if both the NPCs are slain and the PCs are found at the scene.

elf and goblin. They are rarely seen although they speak and harry and taunt their foes from the shadows often enough.

XP 2,400

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) fighter 2

NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 32 (7d6+2d10+24)

Fort +12, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities bravery, Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +13 (1d6+2/18–20) or falchion +7 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged masterwork short bow +13 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks shadow jump

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 30

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility**, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Standstill, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +17, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +12, Escape artist +13, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (courtier) +4, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +25; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear masterwork rapier, falchion, masterwork shortbow & 20 arrows

SQ flicker, stealth in motion

ASSASSINATION AT THE TEMPLE

1 SQUARE = 5 FT.



1. The Temple
2. Rectory
3. Mess Hall
4. Kitchen
5. Priest's Quarters
6. Merchant House
7. Apartments
8. Shops
9. Candlemaker
10. Wainwright's Guild
11. Brewmeister's Guild

C - Shadow Fey Cutthroats
 H - Hounds of the Night
 N - Misha, the Novice
 P - Oleg, the Priest
 S - Shadow Fey Rakes

** This feat can be located in Pathfinder Roleplaying Game *Ultimate Combat*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow fey rake can jump up to a total of 20 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 20 ft. or two jumps of 10 ft. each. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With Dimensional Agility, the rake may act after moving with Shadow Jump.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

SHADOW FEY CUTTHROAT

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) assassin 1
 NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 21, flat-footed 13 (+3 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 55 (7d6+21 plus 1d8+3)

Fort +9, **Ref** +17, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +11 (1d6+2/18–20) or falchion +5 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged masterwork short bow +11 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks death attack, shadowjump, sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 26

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +13, Disguise +9, Escape artist +12, Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (planes) +13, Linguistics +7, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +8, Profession (courier) +5, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +25, Use Magic Device +7;

Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear masterwork rapier, falchion, masterwork shortbow & 20 arrows

SQ flicker, poison use, stealth in motion

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Death Attack (Ex) If an assassin studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (assassin's choice). Studying the victim is a standard action. The death attack fails if the target detects the assassin or recognizes the assassin as an enemy (although the attack might still be a sneak attack if the target is denied his Dexterity bonus to his Armor Class or is flanked). If the victim of such a death attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 14) against the kill effect, she dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the victim is rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6+1 rounds. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the assassin has completed the 3 rounds of study, he must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds.

If a death attack is attempted and fails (the victim makes her save) or if the assassin does not launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing the study, 3 new rounds of study are required before he can attempt another death attack.

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Poison Use (Ex) Assassins are trained in the use of poison and cannot accidentally poison themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey cutthroat can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow fey cutthroat can jump up to a total of 20 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 20 ft. or two jumps of 10 ft. each. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

HOUD OF THE NIGHT

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Medium magical beast (cold)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 90 (12d10+24)

Fort +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

Immune cold

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +17 (2d8+7 plus 2d6 cold and trip)

Special Attacks breath weapon (every 1d4 rounds, 15-ft. cone, 6d6 cold damage, Reflex half DC 18)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th, concentration +12)
At will—quicken *dimension door* (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 30 (34 vs trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike

Skills Perception +14, Stealth +11 (+19 in snow), Survival +8;

Racial Modifiers +2 Perception, +2 Stealth (+8 in snow), +2 Survival

Languages Common, Elven

Tactics. Cutthroats are the fey who do not follow the guidelines of honorable duels or who have simply sold themselves to the highest bidder instead of playing the games of the court. As efficient but dishonorable killers, they rely on their stealth to stalk targets. They prefer to strike from the shadows and unleash their death attack as their first attack against the priests in the second round. They have been observing the humans for two rounds, and continue to observe them from the shadows while the rakes draw attention. They begin combat *hasted* by a rake.

Shadow fey rakes constantly press the advantage. They begin combat *hasted* by a rake. They use their shadow jump and dimensional agility as often as possible and to devastating effect. While some

duels have guidelines, ambitious young fey use any tool to gain the upper hand, from cruel poison, to *vanish*, to a steady stream of cutting insults.

If present, the hound viciously attacks the novice with its bite, and then turns on any interlopers so the rake or cutthroats can finish the priest. If possible, it uses its breath weapon so as to hit the priest and player characters, but avoid the shadow fey.

The fey assassins flee when both priest and novice are dead or when 3 of them can no longer fight. If ordered to surrender, they consider the option only after killing the clergy. Once they have killed their targets, they're confident they can escape any mundane prison quite easily and so go willingly. If present, the hound simply *dimension doors* away after saying it will surrender.

Shadow Fey Lore

Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (nature) (DC 22)—The hierarchy of the shadow fey is ever changing. Young shadow fey, especially, rise and fall quickly. Ruthless and determined, they rely on dueling and backstabbing to curry favor with the nobles of their court.

Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (nature) (DC 27)—Not all shadow fey play along with duels and court politics. Many, instead, hone their talents toward more murderous ends as assassins. This makes them indispensable to the court while not always subject to its dramatic whims.

Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (nature) (DC 32)—Shadow fey dislike either strong light or complete darkness.

Development: If the assassins flee, the party can help the novice or priest (if either survived) or examine what's left of them. Neither carries unusual wealth, messages, or items; both are clearly members of the clerical order of the Sun God from their garments and holy symbols.

If the party examines the strange shadows on the statue, ask for Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (arcana) checks and consult the following tables:

KNOWLEDGE (RELIGION) OR KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)

DC	RESULT
14 or less	Definitely some shadows on that statue. Someone should clean it.
15 to 21	Khors is a sun god; the presence of shadow on his statue is a mark of desecration. Marking it in this way requires powerful magic.
22 to 29	The statue needs to be consecrated.
30 or more	The shadows on the statue are pure matter from the Shadow Realm, and they cannot be removed without divine rituals.

If the party examines the corpses of the fey, they may find the treasure outlined below. Perception or Knowledge (nature) checks bring the following information:

KNOWLEDGE (NATURE) OR PERCEPTION (NO RESULTS GREATER THAN 21 WITH PERCEPTION)

DC	RESULT
14 or less	They look like fey creatures, and they possess bladed weapons.

Courts of the Shadow Fey

15 to 21	These are not elves but scáthsidhe, or shadow fey. They are a legend in Zobeck, long since vanished from everyday life.
22 to 29	The shadow fey are creatures of neither the forest nor the fey wilderness.
30 or more	The shadow fey are native to the Shadow Realm, another plane and the source of shadow magic.

If someone in the party makes a Knowledge (history) check, use the following table:

KNOWLEDGE (HISTORY)

DC	RESULT
19 or less	The history of the shadow fey is all forgotten or lost.
20 to 29	The scáthsidhe vanished from everyday life almost a century ago, withdrawing to their realms just as other fey creatures have abandoned the mortal world.
30 or more	The shadow fey once ruled the Margreve Forest, north of the city. They had some alliance or bargain with the people of Zobeck, and that's why the forest has never been cut down. A royal family rules them.

Treasure. The assassins carry four black opals worth 1,000 gp and 400 gp worth of strange coin (Knowledge (planes) DC 28 reveals this is the coin of the Shadow Realm). The opals are marked with an engraved crest of Moonlit King. They could be exchanged for +1 Status later, in the courts, should the characters still have them.

Scene 2, The Disquiet in the City

Autumn seems to have snuck up on the city. A deepening chill hangs in the city air, and the streets are filled with fog and cold mist. People are settling in for winter.

The PCs may investigate things after the assassination, but things also start to investigate them. In particular, they are followed by shadows, and their sleep is invaded.

Diplomacy (gather information): After the mayhem at the temple of Perun and Khors, some strange things have been going wrong in town: a street has disappeared and new heralds in black tabards have been spotted on street corners, declaiming the “Queen’s Edicts” and disappearing when approached.

The GM may use the information below as encounters for the party, to increase the sense of strangeness in the city, or as the results of Diplomacy (gather information) or Knowledge (local) checks (DC 20).

10 Strange Doings

- The Fey Hunt.** A group of fey hunters armed with bows and spears are hunting shadows through the streets of Zobeck while largely ignoring the people. Their white phantom hounds and stamping, strangely beautiful stag mounts are quite surreal as they trample through the crowded marketplace, scattering people to all sides. What they hunt through the streets is not human, dwarf, or

kobold, but wild deer, shadowy black bears, and a ghostly boar with tusks like knives—all of which they have released into the city. They have no qualms about endangering innocent bystanders.

- The Shadow Councilors.** The Praetorian Council meets in its halls and discovers that its usual numbers have been overshadowed by a group of new fey visitors who seat themselves and begin discussing city business. When the council attempts to remove them forcibly, the human, dwarf, and kobold councilors find themselves thrown out by their own guards (tricked by fey glamours).
- Trouble in the Street.** A fey bard has gained a great following, but everywhere he sings, the evening ends in a terrible brawl. The injured include a dozen members of the city watch.
- Disappearances.** Rumors claim that people who offend one of the fey walking the streets disappear. Others claim that the gangs such as the Cloven Nine and the Redcloaks are taking advantage of a troubled time to settle scores (see Zobeck Gazetteer for gang details).
- Longer Twilight.** The astronomers of the collegium believe that the days are even less well lit than before. The conjunction of a new moon with the winter solstice comes in a few weeks, and it is an especially inauspicious time.
- The Repentant Criminal.** An assassin tries to kill the mayor, and when his attempt fails, he turns himself in and hangs himself in his cell. The collegium necromancer who questions him using a Speak with Dead ritual discovers that the assassin repaid a debt to a fey overlord to prevent worse happening to his children. The children, though, are missing.
- The River Freezes.** The river Argent freezes solid for half a day. Merchants despair, captains worry about the harm to their barges, and children are delighted to play on the ice.
- The Beer Sours.** The important White Rose Brewery has an entire batch go off. The dwarves are incensed; the fey left a notice that the soured beer was a “fine for words meant to insult and injure the city’s right and proper rulers. All future brewings will suffer likewise until a sufficient apology is offered.”
- Mocking Shadows.** The PCs’ shadows taunt them as foolish for not throwing in their lot with the hidden ambassador, and even threaten danger when the Statthalter arrives (see page 13).
- Shades at the Gates.** The clockwork watchmen who usually watch over the North Gate and Dwarven Gate fail to operate normally. They are replaced by shadow fey guards wearing white tabards marked with a black moon. Attempts by the city watch to oust the interlopers fail because the city watch cannot reach the gate; they wander all over the city, but every time they approach the gates, they take a wrong turning and wind up elsewhere. The Zobeck guard captain Hovart Edelstein is enraged, but the Arcane Collegium seems powerless to counter the charm.

The Queen’s Edicts

If the party takes no action to investigate, events continue apace. The Queen of Night and Magic has given her Hidden Ambassador

instructions; he, in turn, promulgates a set of edicts to the city by sending out black-tabarded heralds to announce these edicts in Elven.

The PCs may hear the first edict directly from the Hidden Ambassador; they are asked to come speak to the council and offer advice or magical aid.

While they are in the city hall chambers, the proceedings are interrupted:

A figure dressed in black and white and holding a scroll steps forward from a dark corner and gives a short speech in Elven.

For PCs who understand Elven:

“The Moonlit King has spoken and upheld his claims, just and remembered. Once the longest night has passed, the king and queen of the Realm of Shadows shall rule the lands of Zobeck once more, appointing a statthalter as Their Royal Highnesses see fit.

As Hidden Ambassador to the city now built upon those lands, I stand ready to arbitrate in the name of the Shadow Court, winter and summer, day and night. Let no scáthsidhe be harmed or harassed in these lands, on pain of blindness. I await your full compliance; you may petition me if the need arises.”

The fey bows once, and disappears.

If the PCs attack before the speech is done, the ambassador simply flees sooner, and gives his little speech at the citadel or the watch barracks instead.

The Queen’s Edicts themselves are papers stuck to the city gates and announced by loud shadow fey and goblin criers in Crown Square and the Greenmarket at dawn and dusk each day. At first, these are annoying but manageable, such as a ban on cursing and an end to the Festival of Light (which isn’t until midsummer, so no one notices). Yet those who disobey find themselves unable to sleep well, and sometimes they find their voices gone for days at a time.

Then the heralds proclaim an interdict against the worship of the city’s patron goddess, Rava. All those who visit the temple are robbed: every coin, jewel, and item of value is taken from them as a “fine.” The priests are attacked, just as the priest of Khors was, by shadow fey rakes and assassins, occasionally a hound of the night.

The edicts quickly grow more and more demanding: no temples may be entered without permission of the queen and her ambassador, no one may eat meat without paying a portion to the fey, and no one may declare a toast without praising the fey.

DIPLMACY (GATHER INFORMATION)

DC	RESULT
17 or less	The city is restless; it will be a hard winter.
18 to 22	The Street of Tailors and the courtyard in the Green District near the market disappeared for an entire day.
23 to 27	The temple of Rava has been closed since the day of the assassination attempt. The priests and priestesses of the Gear Goddess and patron of the city are nowhere to be found.

28 to 32

The fey who attacked the high priest of Khors are shadow fey, who usually keep to themselves in the Margreve Forest, north of the city. Rumors claim that other officials in the city have been threatened as well.

33 or more

The events of recent days point to something more than troublemaking fey. The priesthood of Porevit says a “hidden ambassador of the shadow fey” approached its centaur high priest Ogolai and elf priestess seeking an understanding.

The Ambassador’s Invitation

On top of all that, a strange visitor appears one night in the PCs dreams and invites them to visit Winter’s Kiss, the hidden ambassador’s home in Zobeck. Give the party **Handout 1, the Invitation to the Winter’s Kiss**.

There’s just one problem: no one in the city seems to have heard of Winter’s Kiss. The fey have such a low profile that their ambassador, who has lived there for a decade, is not known by name or occupation. Indeed, asking about the hidden ambassador brings a blank stare from most people.

Fey Events:

Gradual Oppression and Strange Joys

If the PCs show little interest in finding the hidden ambassador, the city slides closer and closer to a change of government. Use some or all of the following events to show that this is a bad idea.

- Fey Crime.** The local watch lacks jurisdiction over the fey (or so they claim) and accusing one of them of a crime requires finding the hidden ambassador. As a result, the rakes and young shadow fey run riot in the city, robbing, dueling, and destroying property. When accused, they disappear or simply laugh, knowing that their misdeeds will have no consequences until such time as the statthalter or the hidden ambassador calls them to account.
- Gates Sealed.** Dwarves and humans who might leave the city as it grows stranger are not allowed to leave with their families. Shadow fey guards only allow a single family member out through the gates at a time, keeping the rest as hostages to ensure return. In theory, this can end when the statthalter or the hidden ambassador signs the right proclamation.
- Young Sacrifices.** Beautiful young women and handsome lads are invited to an “Eveningstar Ball,” which seems simple enough—but many of them are charmed and seduced and carried away by rakes and fey nobles.
- Counting Subjects.** City officials are asked to perform a census and report the birthdays, astrological signs, hair color, and other details of a private nature to the fey.
- Kobold Immunity.** Kobolds seem strangely unaffected by most of this (their pact with the shadow fey is a separate peace, and they are unaffected by the Stross deal).

HAUNTED DREAMS

Sleep and rest are disturbed by strange noises, lost sheets, and cold winds down the chimney. Each PC who seeks to rest must make a Survival check (DC 25, may be assisted). Those who fail are unable to rest sufficiently to heal naturally or properly pray or study to recover spells in this entire act, likely only a factor after **The Assassination (Act I, Scene 1, page 6)**.

Scene 3, Fighting the Assassin Shadows of Zobeck

While the PCs may know nothing about the shadow fey, the fey have certainly been speaking to humans, dwarves, and kobolds who know the PCs by their growing reputations—and the fey don't plan on letting such powerful heroes disturb the fey hold on power. This investigation makes it clear to the shadow fey that the PCs are a threat, so at some point, the fey target the PCs for assassination.

The GM should choose a time when the party has defied the shadow fey in public or defeated one of their agents or when the party is closing in on what is going on.

Scene 3, A Clear Message

- CR 8—Soul Eater, 2 Shadows
- CR 9—2 Soul Eaters
- CR 10—Greater Shadow, Soul Eater, 2 Shadows

SOUL EATER

CR 7

XP 3,200

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., all-around vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 82 (11d10+22)

Fort +5, **Ref** +13, **Will** +7

DR 10/magic; **Immune** critical hits, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 100 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +18 (1d6+1/19–20 plus 1d6 Wisdom damage)

Special Attacks find target, soul drain

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 22, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 29 (can't be tripped)

Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills* Acrobatics +20 (+8 jump), Escape Artist +20, Fly +28, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +14, Stealth +20 (+28 darkness or smoke)

Languages Abyssal, Infernal

SQ caster link

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Caster Link (Ex) When a soul eater is summoned, it creates a mental link between itself and its conjurer. If the soul eater's assigned target (see find target ability, below) dies before the soul eater can drain its soul, or if the soul eater is defeated by its target (but not slain), it returns

to its conjurer at full speed and attacks her. While the soul eater and the conjurer share the same plane (regardless of plane-traveling interruptions), it can use its find target ability to locate its conjurer.

Find Target (Su) When a soul eater's conjurer orders it to find a creature, it can do so unerringly, as though guided by a locate creature spell that has no maximum range and is not blocked by running water. The conjurer must have seen the desired target and must speak the target's name.

Soul Drain (Su) If the Wisdom damage from a soul eater's claw attacks equals or exceeds an opponent's actual Wisdom score, rendering the victim helpless, the soul eater can devour that creature's soul as a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. This attack kills the victim. The dead victim can resist having her soul eaten by making a (DC 17) Fortitude save; success means she is still dead, but can be restored to life normally. If she fails this save, her soul is consumed by the soul eater. A victim slain in this manner cannot be returned to life with clone, raise dead, or reincarnation. She can be restored to life via resurrection, true resurrection, miracle, or wish, but only if the caster can succeed on a DC 30 caster level check. If the soul eater is killed within 120 ft. of its victim's corpse, and the victim has been dead for no longer than 1 minute, the victim's soul returns to her body and restores her to life, leaving her unconscious and at –1 hit point. This is a death effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Wisdom Damage (Su) A creature hit by a soul eater's claw must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Wisdom damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

SHADOW

CR 3

XP 800

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 19 (3d8+6)

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

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, channel resistance +2;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee incorporeal touch +4 (1d6 Strength damage)

Special Attacks create spawn

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Fly +11, Perception +8, Stealth +8 (+12 in dim light, +4 in bright light); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in dim light (–4 in bright light)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su) A humanoid creature killed by a shadow's Strength damage becomes a shadow under the control of its killer in 1d4 rounds.

Strength Damage (Su) A shadow's touch deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living creature. This is a negative

energy effect. A creature dies if this Strength damage equals or exceeds its actual Strength score.

GREATER SHADOW**CR 8**

XP 4,800

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 18, flat-footed 12 (+2 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge)**hp** 58 (9d8+18)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal, channel resistance +2; **Immune** undead traits**OFFENSE****Speed** fly 40 ft. (good)**Melee** incorporeal touch +11 (1d8 Strength)**Special Attacks** create spawn (as per shadow), strength damage**STATISTICS****Str** —, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24**Feats** Dodge, Flyby Attack, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception, Stealth)**Skills** Fly +15, Perception +13, Stealth +20 (+24 in dim light, +16 in bright light); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in dim light (–4 in bright light)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Strength Damage (Su)** A greater shadow's touch deals 1d8 points of Strength damage to a living creature. This is a negative energy effect. A creature dies if this Strength damage equals or exceeds its actual Strength score.

Tactics. The soul eaters focus their attacks on any bearing open holy symbols, with a preference for worshippers of a Sun god, followed by any obvious followers of Rava. They then turn on heavily armored or hard-hitting foes, but always attacking the same enemy. For groups requiring slightly more challenge, but not a full jump to CR 10, consider having the first soul eater to die split into two smaller shadows and attack in the next round. This will result in an encounter roughly midway between 9 and 10. Because the monsters all look alike, the GM should use similar miniatures to represent all three sorts.

Treasure. If a soul eater is slain, its shadow ashes contain a magical powder equivalent to a *potion of cure serious wounds*.

Scene 4, Seeking the Hidden Ambassador

The party has a few choices for divination which could help. Mundane attempts at Diplomacy (gather information) or Knowledge (local) are no help at all, but some spells might prove useful.

- **Divination:** Much more exact, this spell will provide the players “fey undead guard the ancient stones.” In addition, the spirits mention “the House of Red Hats,” which was the Stross counting house before the revolt and has since been sold to the spice merchant Enneas Thel and renamed Winter's Kiss (Knowledge (history or local) DC 20, may be assisted). A visit is then easy.

STATTHALTER KONRATT EIGENSTIL

The viceroy, or statthalter, is an epic fey lich, vampire, or warlock with the demonic patronage of Akyishigal, Demon Lord of Roaches; his reputation is extremely dubious. He is served by Lord Suvid, his herald and bully—a quickling rightly feared among the court. The statthalter is the right hand of the queen and the right hand of the king—a feat that few courtiers ever manage. No statistics are provided since the statthalter's arrival is pretty much a guarantee of the PCs' failure in this adventure. The details are up to the GM; his arrival or defeat are beyond the scope of this adventure and, perhaps, are best left to an adventure of epic considerations.

If he does appear in this adventure, it is in a tide of shadowy mayhem. The mayor of Zobeck and the members of the Praetorian Council all flee or vanish entirely; those who oppose the new ruler are arrested, and the clockwork watchmen of the city guard are transformed into somewhat darker creatures, each inhabited and controlled by a shadow fey Deathwisp (see the wraith-controlled gearforged in *Halls of the Mountain King* for details).

- **Helping Hand:** The fey wardings on the manor completely flummox the directional elements of this spell. Anyone attempting it can cast it 10 times, being led around town by the point finger before returning to exactly where they started, tired and perhaps wiser.
- **Legend Lore:** This works perfectly, but if the party has easy access to this spell, they may be too powerful for this adventure as written. The priestess of Rava the Gear Goddess may cast it if the PCs seek her out and pay for the Clockwork Oracle (see *Kobold Quarterly* #6).
- **Speak with Animals:** Given the nature-friendly side of the fey, this works better than one might expect for a low level spell; a bird (crows or songbirds, but not pigeons) or even a rat might know that Winter's Kiss is near the Collegium and protected from view by most people. “The Mouse King has spoken of it. The fey keep a few of us as pets and servants.” The answers are all a bit vague on how to actually visit the hidden ambassador, and finding the exact location requires interpreting the directions of various urban wildlife, possibly requiring additional skill checks (Knowledge (nature) DC 20 or Sense Motive DC 25, may not be assisted), bribes of nuts and cheeses, or the ability to follow directions as the bird flies.

The PCs Do Not Seek Out the Hidden Ambassador

The fey don't invade, exactly; they just declare themselves in charge and assume that everyone will obey them. This leads to a curious sort of dual government for a time; the human guards are flummoxed by fey magic, and the fey pretty much ignore all human institutions that do not interfere with their goals.

If the PCs don't investigate for a month, a herald announces that no one may breathe the king's air in the Gear District (which leaves the gearforged the only ones who may visit). At dawn and dusk, the fey seize control of the city gates, the council chambers, and the temple of the Green Gods. They don't exactly fight the city's watchmen; however, they enforce their declared laws. Those who break

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them are beaten, cut, or shaved hairless. Some are exiled from the city.

Naturally, the Praetorian Council, the mayor, and others find these strange fey edicts a threat to their authority and a danger to the city. Why the sudden fey arrival? How can a bargain be struck with such capricious and arrogant creatures? Perhaps the party could speak to the hidden ambassador and straighten it all out...

Scene 5, Winters Kiss and the Hidden Ambassador

Once the PCs discover how to reach the ambassador and parley with him, the house itself seems ordinary. When the party first arrives:

The house seems perfectly ordinary although no one enters and no one leaves by the front door. The walls are of thick grey slate, the door painted a fresh white with an elegant silver knocker in the shape of a wolf's head. The shutters are dove grey and tightly shut.

A small inset window in the front door is tightly shut. You hear barking from within.

The door is unlocked, and any knock brings the rake, who introduces himself as Canderminne Tallowglass, a footman and servant to His Excellency, the Ambassador-In-Extraordinary of the Shadow Realm. He seems surprised to see humans knocking, and he addresses any elf, gnome, or other fey with the party as if they were leader by default. He does expect a reasonable excuse for their visit; if the party presents the invitation, they are quickly allowed in and then told to wait in the hall (see **Enter, Friend, and Welcome** section, below).

If no invitation is shown, the party can talk their way in (Bluff DC 22 or Diplomacy DC 17). The footman Canderminne is skeptical of those who breach protocol but reluctant to turn them away.

If the party does not show the invitation or they fail to fasttalk their way in, Canderminne politely asks them to leave: a Diplomacy check (DC 22) is enough to allow them to ask a single question—each additional question requires another Diplomacy check, and at the first failure, he calls out the dogs. Winter's Kiss is guarded first and foremost by the hounds of the night; the encounter below should be run at least twice if the PCs attack the place in force.

Scene 5, Dogs at the Door

- CR 09—1 hound of the night, 1 shadow mastiff
- CR 10—1 hound of the night, 3 shadow mastiffs
- CR 11+—1 hound of the night, 1 shadow fey rake, 4 shadow mastiffs

Use the hound of the night and shadow fey rake stats from Scene 1 if the party chooses to fight at the door.

HOUND OF THE NIGHT

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Medium magical beast (cold)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +8 natural)**14 hp** 90 (12d10+24)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8**Immune** cold**Weaknesses** vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** bite +17 (2d8+7 plus 2d6 cold and trip)**Special Attacks** breath weapon (every 1d4 rounds, 15-ft. cone, 6d6 cold damage, Reflex half DC 18)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th, concentration +12)
At will—quicken *dimension door* (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 30 (34 vs trip)**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike**Skills** Perception +14, Stealth +11 (+19 in snow), Survival +8;**Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception, +2 Stealth (+8 in snow), +2 Survival**Languages** Common, Elven

SHADOW MASTIFF

CR 5

XP 1,600

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; (+2 Dex, +5 natural)**hp** 51 (6d10+18)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5**Defensive Abilities** shadow blend

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.**Melee** bite +10 (1d6+6 plus trip)**Special Attacks** bay

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 4, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22**Feats** Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack**Skills** Perception +10, Stealth +11, Survival +10**Languages** Elven (cannot speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bay (Su) When a shadow mastiff howls or barks, all creatures except evil outsiders within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the same mastiff's bay for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Shadow Blend (Su) In any condition of illumination other than full daylight, a shadow mastiff disappears into the shadows, giving it total concealment. Artificial illumination, even a light or continual flame spell, does not negate this ability. A daylight spell, however, does. A shadow mastiff can suspend or resume this ability as a free action.

SHADOW FEY RAKE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) fighter 2

NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 32 (7d6+2d10+24)

Fort +12, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities bravery, Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +13 (1d6+2/18–20) or falchion +7 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged masterwork short bow +13 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks shadow jump

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 30

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility**, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Standstill, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +17, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +12, Escape artist +13, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (courtier) +4, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +25; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear masterwork rapier, falchion, masterwork shortbow & 20 arrows

SQ flicker, stealth in motion

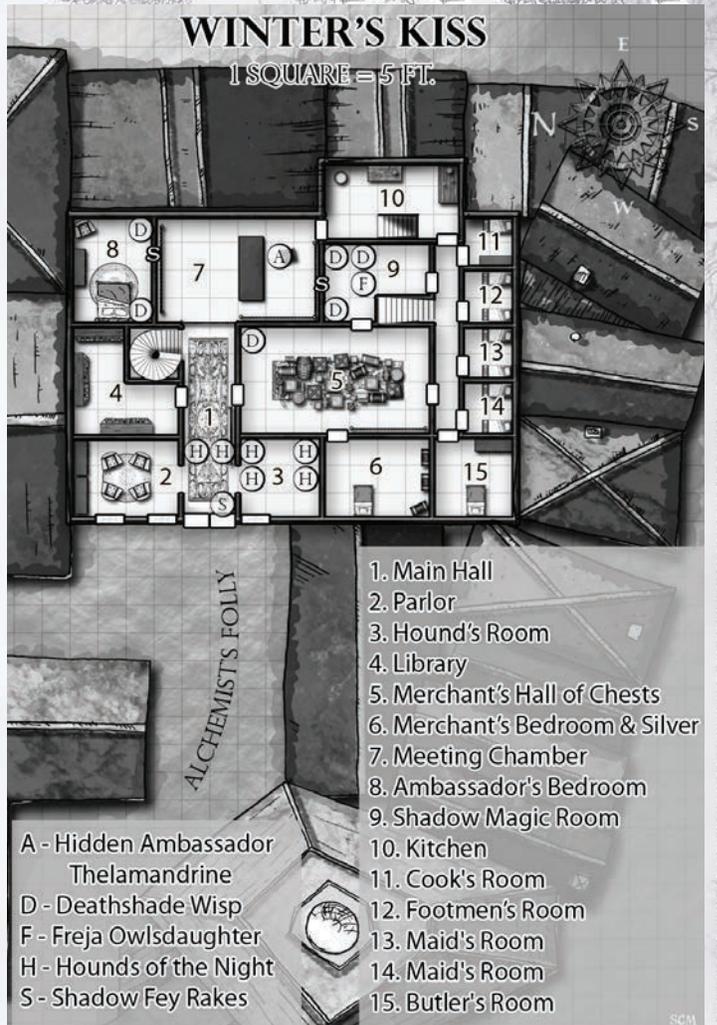
** This feat can be located in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow fey rake can jump up to a total of 20 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 20 ft. or two jumps of 10 ft. each. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With Dimensional Agility, the rake may act after moving with Shadow Jump.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.



Enter, Friend, and Welcome

If the party meets the sniff test, Canderminne bids them welcome to Winter's Kiss. He also asks for their "name and rank," so he can announce them. Once satisfied on that score, he opens the door wide and ushers them in.

The footman leads you down a long, carpeted hall to the audience chamber, a room only dimly lit with a few candles.

A white owl sits on a perch at the end of a long dining table; a single chair stands in the room, and the occupant is a fey of some kind with black hair, a thin nose, and pointed ears almost long enough for a goblin. His clothes are pure black and heavily embroidered in more black; his leggings are pure white and embellished with hexagonal designs. He holds an ivory wand and seems to be speaking a corrupted version of Elven.

The footman says, "Visitors, Your Excellency." [He then repeats their name and rank, starting with the fey and titled characters. He omits obvious henchmen, servants, and barbarians.] The shadow fey noble ignores you long enough to be rude, then turns and says "Why do you trouble me? Oh yes, I may have invited you, but I did not expect you

to take me up on the offer. Much less, to bring servants.”

The white owl is the sorcerer Freja Owlsdaughter. The rake remains at the door, politely not watching. If the party speaks Elven, the ambassador’s mood improves noticeably (“You speak like civilized people!”).

The ambassador first explains why he wished to meet the party.

“Ah, yes, I did invite you. Stand, and listen well. My manservant will bring us goblets and a stoup of wine. You are well known heroes of the city, you know. All my spies tell me so. And thus, your open and heartfelt support for the queen’s just and proper rule will make things easier for all. I require your immediate word of honor that you will not attempt further armed insurrection against the just and proper rulers of the city.

And to be clear, I mean the queen. If you have any other thoughts, discard them. Unless you change her mind, she can and will rule as soon as the viceroy, that is Statthalter Konratt Eigenstil, arrives. Statthalter Eigenstil is... unlike most of us. You might not like him.”

There’s room here for a nasty conversation; the ambassador does not yield a single point in favor of “humans ruling lands that do not belong to them.” He offers them a title as Lord Zobeck or Mortal Magister to Shadow Court or even Master of the Faithful to a cleric, if it helps. Regarding the earlier assassinations... well, he declares that he is just following instructions about the “change of administration.” No apology is forthcoming.

Sense Motive (DC 25)—This statement is a half-truth at best. The ambassador is holding things back.

If the PCs protest, the ambassador is happy to explain the fey claim to Zobeck (see **Information Gained** section, below), but regardless of what the party does, the audience chamber becomes more and more a place of shadows.

Conversational Dangers

If the party attempts to assert itself against the fey ambassador and his enormous sense of ego and privilege, things can go very badly. Hidden Ambassador Thelamandrine considers humans, kobolds, dwarves, and others to be lesser races, and he reacts poorly to any attempt to suggest that the shadow fey are in the wrong in their claim. The Queen’s Writ is the law in the ambassador’s eyes; to say otherwise is treasonous. Her newest subjects have very little latitude for subversive speech.

If a PC refers to the mayor, Zobeck’s status as a free city, the rights of citizens, or the worship of Rava and the Sun God, the speaker immediately realizes that the statement has been taken as deeply offensive—and even enraging—by the ambassador (*Sense Motive DC 13*).

To which, the ambassador asks, point-blank, whether they are “rebels against the crown” (Bluff, Diplomacy, or Knowledge (history) DC 20 avoids this question). If he is not satisfied with the answer (roleplay or Bluff or Diplomacy DC 22), he calls on the sorceress, the wraith, and possibly the shadows to cover his retreat (see

Development, below). If the PCs claim to want to fight against the queen, the hidden ambassador is happy to oblige them.

Information Gained

No matter what, the party should learn the following:

1. The queen’s claim dates to before the city’s founding, when the shadow fey ruled all the lands from the Ironcrag to the Ruby Sea.
2. Title for the ghetto was granted to the city’s kobolds and later transferred to House Stross. It now involves a kobold entailment, which they seek to turn to their advantage to maintain the ghetto status quo.
3. When House Stross was overthrown in the revolt, the lands reverted to those granting the fiefdom, namely the Lambent House of Her Celestial and Royal Majesty, Sarastra Aestruum, Queen of Night and Magic, Duchess of the Heavens, Countess of Thorn, Mistress of Air and Darkness, Lady of the Summer Palace and Bride of Shadows, as well as her husband and the father of the royal line, His Lunar and Royal Majesty, Ludomir Imbrium the XVI, the Moonlit King of the Shadow fey, Lord of the Shadow Realm, Lord Protector of the Black Elves, Duke of the Elvish Ironcrag, Baron of Bratislor, Earl of Zobeck, Master of the Winter Palace, and Count-Palatine of Salzbach.
4. The claim lay unacknowledged for a few decades, when the shadow fey were otherwise occupied, but it remains in force. The Margreve Forest and all lands within sight of it are part of their claim.

Additional Information Available: The party may learn more from Hidden Ambassador Thelamandrine with good roleplaying and clever questions.

DIPLOMACY

DC	RESULT
16 or less	The queen is sometimes amused to meet foreigners.
17 to 21	The king was the one who declared that the claim to the city is both valid and of interest to the court.
22 to 26	The king and queen are, indeed, not always of one mind in affairs of state. But this is not your concern.
27 to 29	The king has retired to his tower and his instructions have grown somewhat...cryptic. He has moods and seasons, the king. Beyond your understanding, simple folk of the daylight lands.
30 or more	The queen has taken a lover and might be looking for an excuse to expand her power. I descend into gossip. Footman, enough, show our guests the door! They do bore me, and I do nothing but prattle. Summon me proper companions for the night!

The ambassador privately thinks that this effort to enforce the ancient fey right to the city is foolhardy (although he never quite says so). He tells the party that a statthalter will arrive in a month or two; at that time, all resistance to the fey rulership of Zobeck must cease or blood will flow in earnest.

If the party succeeds in their entreaties to the ambassador, he offers them the information that an incantation exists that would allow them to visit the court and plead the case directly, down the Shadow Road. If asked about the details, however, he is coy at best:

“My brief,” he says, “is to convince you that such an action would be foolish. Surely your visit to the Shadow Realm would be suicidal and a waste of effort. (He winks.) But if you go, I cannot stop you, for the queen’s court is open to all comers.”

The ambassador knows the city well enough to know that attempts to enforce the fey claim will be bloody and likely futile in the long run. Some 80 years of independence, combined with the influx of human and dwarf worship of the Gear Goddess, makes this a recipe for misunderstanding and disaster. Though he cannot openly help the party in any way, he is willing to stand aside or even point in the right direction, provided he can ultimately deny any involvement in their plans if they fail.

If the party agrees to seek out the ritual on their own and tell the queen nothing of the ambassador’s failure to assassinate the high priest Oleg Khandarc, things might work out.

Fighting the Ambassador

If the party refuses to parley and insists on fighting, they are making things difficult for themselves later. But the ambassador is more than willing to fight.

Arrival at Winter’s Kiss. The ambassador, Freja Owlsdaughter, and six rakes are visible at the house; up to five deathshade wisps and possibly a few shadows are well hidden within the walls and floors, appearing only if the ambassador or the sorceress call for them.

The ambassador is already fleeing, knocking over his chair in his haste. From the floor and from the walls step guardian creatures of black armor, yet only skulls and shadows are visible within their helms.

The owl speaks a word and becomes a fey sorcerer, and ghostly shadows drift out of the walls all around.

The PCs start in the area indicated on the map.

Freja, the deathshade wisps, and possibly the shadow fey rakes cover the ambassador’s retreat with a furious attack meant to buy him time. Hidden Ambassador Thelamandrine moves behind the tapestry at the south end of the room. With his rakes and deathwisps to guard him, he prepares an incantation to depart along the Shadow Road. These battles are intended to be quite difficult for a 7th level party. The shadow fey will not pursue retreating characters, but will remember the insult.

Scene 5, Within the Embassy, Foolish Choices

- CR 10—Freja Owlsdaughter, 1 shadow fey deathwisp
- CR 11—Freja Owlsdaughter, 2 shadow fey deathwisp
- CR 12—Freja Owlsdaughter, 4 shadow fey deathwisp

Features of the Area

Dim Light—The manor of Winter’s Kiss is softly-lit with muted lanterns and deep shadows.

SHADOW FEY DEATHWISP

CR 7

This goblin faced shadow has long ears and an elvish grace. It stays in the shadows and is little more than floating eyes and a broken tooth smile, cursing and taunting all those around.

XP 3,200

Shadow fey wraith (*Midgard Bestiary*)

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft., lifestense; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 25, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +8 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 87 (7d12+42)

Fort +6, **Ref** +17, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, Improved Evasion, incorporeal, Uncanny Dodge; **Immune** undead traits

Weakness light sensitivity, sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed Fly 80 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +11 (1d4+1d6 Constitution Drain [Fort DC 17])

Special Attacks create spawn, shadow jump, unnatural aura

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 26, **Con** —, **Int** 20, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 28 (can’t be tripped)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +16, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +13, Escape artist +14, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +15, Perform (dance) +12, Profession (courtier) +6, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +26; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

SQ flicker

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su) Any creature slain by a shadow fey deathwisp’s Constitution drain or incorporeal touch attack rises as a wraith (see *Pathfinder Bestiary*) in 1d4 rounds. A wraith created in this manner is under the command of its creator and remains so until either it or the creator is destroyed.

Constitution Drain (Su) A shadow fey deathwisp’s incorporeal touch attack deals 1d6 points of Constitution drain unless the creature struck succeeds on a Fortitude save DC 17. On each successful attack, the wraith gains 5 temporary hit points. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey deathwisp seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Lifestense (Su) The shadow fey deathwisp can locate living creatures within 60ft., just as if it possessed the blindsight ability. It also senses the strength of their life forces automatically, as if it had cast *deathwatch* (CL 7)

Courts of the Shadow Fey

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey deathwisp can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow fey can jump up to a total of 40 ft. /day in this way; this may be a single jump of 40 ft. or four jumps of 10 ft. each, or any combination of jumps totalling 40 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex) A shadow fey deathwisp is utterly powerless in bright light or natural sunlight and flees from it. A shadow fey deathwisp caught in such light caught in sunlight cannot attack and is staggered.

Unnatural Aura (Su) Animals do not willingly approach within 30 ft. of a deathwisp, unless a master makes a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check.

FREJA OWLSDAUGHTER, THE SHADOWSWORN

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) sorcerer 4
NE Medium fey

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 23, flat-footed 20 (+4 armor, +6 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 71 (11d6+33)

Fort +10, **Ref** +16, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +12 (1d6/18–20) or falchion +5 (1d8/19–20)

Ranged masterwork short bow +12 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks shadow jump, spells

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* These spells can be found in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

Bloodline Spell-like Ability (CL 11th, concentration +17)

8/day—*lash of shadows*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 11th; concentration +17)

5th (5/day)—*leeching lanthorn** (DC 21), *mind fog* (DC 21)

4th (7/day)—*phantasmal killer* (DC 20), *shout* (DC 20), *solid fog*

3rd (7/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 19), *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *major image* (DC 19), *vampiric touch*

2nd (8/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *false life*, *ghoul touch*, *glitterdust* (DC 18), *touch of idiocy* (DC 18)

1st (8/day)—*chill touch* (DC 17), *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *silent image*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *ghost sound*, *mending*, *prestidigitaton*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*

*From *Zobeck Gazeteer*.

Bloodline Shadow (*Kobold Quarterly*#13).

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 22, **Con** 16, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 28

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +16, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +11, Escape artist +11, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +12, Perform (Dance) +11, Profession (courtier) +5, Sleight of Hand +13, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +24;

Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear masterwork rapier, falchion, masterwork shortbow, 20 arrows, +4 bracers of armor

SO change shape (owl), flicker, stealth in motion, unravel

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Change Shape (Su) All shadow fey sorcerers can assume an alternate form as a swift action, typically as a raven, dove, cat, wolf, or fox.

This animal form is always white, black, or silver gray. This ability is similar to a *polymorph* spell cast by a 12th level character, but the shadow fey sorcerer does not regain hit points

for changing form and must

choose from the forms

mentioned above. In

its alternate form,

it loses spellcasting

ability but gains the

natural weapons and

extraordinary special

attacks of its new

form. It can remain in that

form until it takes another or

until struck by sunlight.

Cloak of Shadows (Ex)

At 3rd level, shadow fey sorcerers gain resist cold

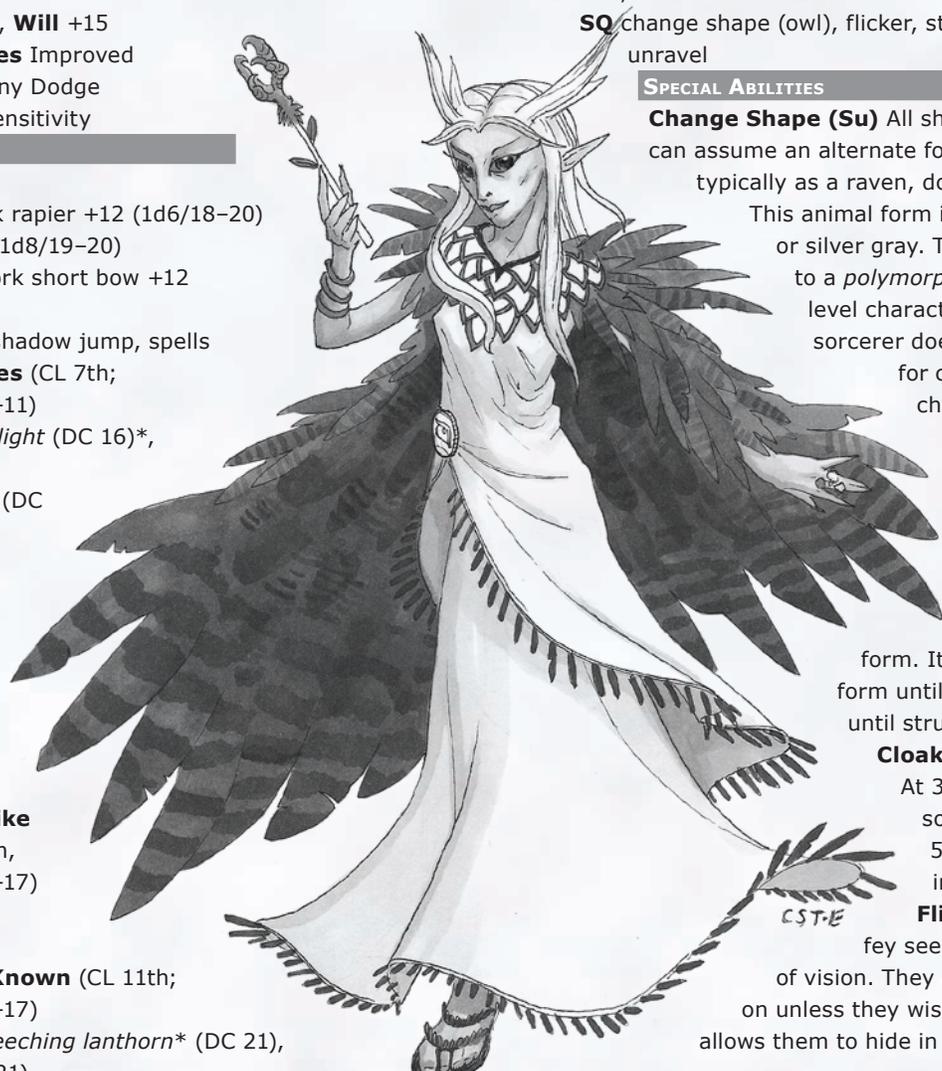
5 and a +2 bonus on

initiative checks.

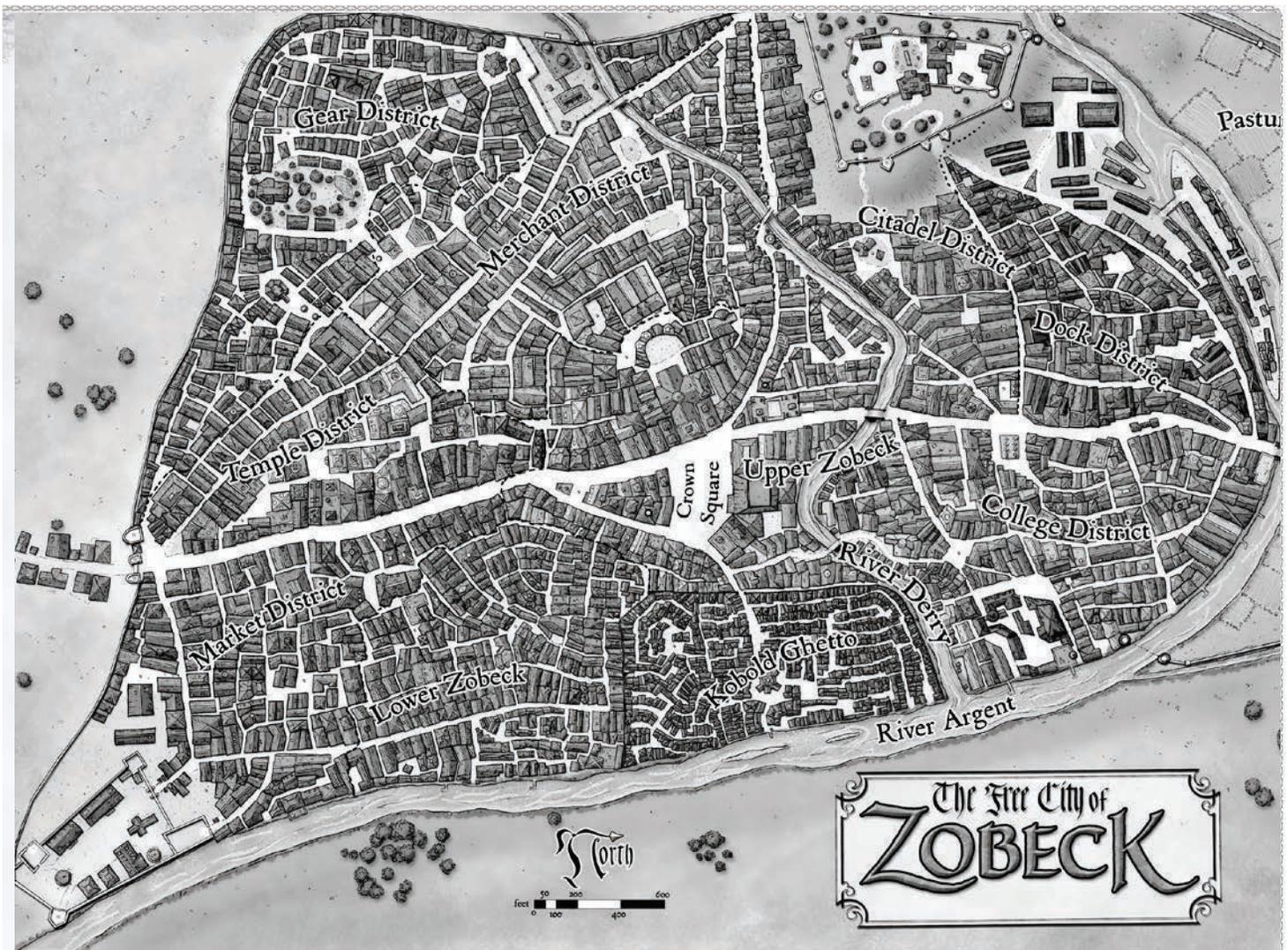
Flicker (Ex) All shadow

fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus

on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the



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shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Lash of Shadows (Sp) Starting at 1st level, Freja can summon a shadowy whip for one round to attack her enemies as a standard action, targeting any foe within 30 ft. as a ranged touch attack. The lash deals 1d6+2 hp cold damage. She can use this ability eight times per day.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. Freja can jump up to a total of 80 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 80 ft. or eight jumps of 10 ft. each, or any combination of jumps totalling 80 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With Dimensional Agility, Freja may act after moving with Shadow Jump.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Unravel (Su) As a swift action, shadow fey sorcerers can unravel the spells of their foes. This acts as a *dispel magic* cast at their overall class level.

Treasure. The deathwisp have no treasure, but the Freja has one item she holds very dear: a pair of +4 *bracers of armor*.

Development: The Ambassador flees.

A heavy tapestry conceals the door where the ambassador fled. Elven writing, in mithril and studded with shining green jewels, covers its surface.

The door is not trapped or warded although reading the Elven text takes 1 round. It is written in an unusual dialect: “These chambers are not for you, mortals, and not for those who have never looked upon the shadow forest. Those who pass against the hidden ambassador’s wishes will meet his soldiers and join his army of servants.”

The mithril and jewels can be pried out (Disable Device DC 17), and they are worth 4,400 gp in total: 6 citrines worth 500 gp each and 1,400 gp of mithril. Doing so takes about 5 minutes and gives the ambassador an opportunity to complete his incantation.

Failing the skill check by less than 5 means one of the 500 gp jewels is cracked and ruined by the character’s overly hasty attempts to pry it loose.

Perception (DC 18)—There appears to be a discharged magical trap on the door. The darker greenish tone of the jewels indicates that their power has been expended.

The party may choose to take a few minutes of rest after fighting the sorcerer Freja Owlsdaughter. If they do, halve the time necessary for the ambassador to escape.

Scene 5, Exit Stage Left

- CR 10—1 deathshade wisp, Hidden Ambassador Thelamandrine

ZOBECK CANON

The Dragged Woman, the other slough, can be temperamental and often commands expensive prices. Her information usually works only once. While she might be able to help the characters with an immediate path to the courts, they will have no return route and may need to learn the incantation there. GMs could use this option for groups who know of the Dragged Woman, or who want skip such investigations after a single barter with the Dragged Woman. If so, her passage deposits the characters on the Shadow Road. See either Streets of Zobeck or the Zobeck Gazetteer for more details regarding the Dragged Woman.

The Courts of the Shadow Fey, however, know the characters have entered the road, and conspire against them. Such groups proceed to Scene 7, but suffer at least two encounters on the road.

- CR 11—1 deathshade wisp, Hidden Ambassador Thelamandrine, 1 shadow fey rake
- CR 12—1 deathshade wisp, Hidden Ambassador Thelamandrine, 4 shadow fey rake

Setup. The party goes through the secret door behind the tapestry where the ambassador fled into the ballroom. They are immediately beset by the remaining deathshade wisp, the ambassador himself, and possibly shadow fey rakes. If he can chant for 4 rounds (as a swift action each round), he opens a shadow portal and escapes.

HIDDEN AMBASSADOR THELAMANDRINE
CR 9

Long black hair streaked with white, wearing a bright yellow vest under a dark green velvet jacket, the ambassador's face seems warped into a permanent cynical smile. At his belt is a rapier, at his hand is a glass goblet filled with wine.

XP 6,400

Male shadow fey(Midgard Bestiary) fighter 4
NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 32 (7d6+4d10+33)

Fort +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities bravery, Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +15 (1d6+2/18-20) or falchion +9 (1d8+2/19-20)

Ranged masterwork composite short bow +15 (1d6+2/19-20)

Special Attacks shadow jump

20 Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**
3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)
1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 36

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Defensive Combat Training, Dimensional Agility, Dimensional Assault, Dimensional Dervish, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +17, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +18, Disable Device +12, Escape artist +13, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +17, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (diplomat) +4, Sense Motive +12, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +25; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear masterwork rapier, falchion, noble's outfit, masterwork composite shortbow and 20 arrows

SQ flicker, stealth in motion

SPECIAL ABILITIES

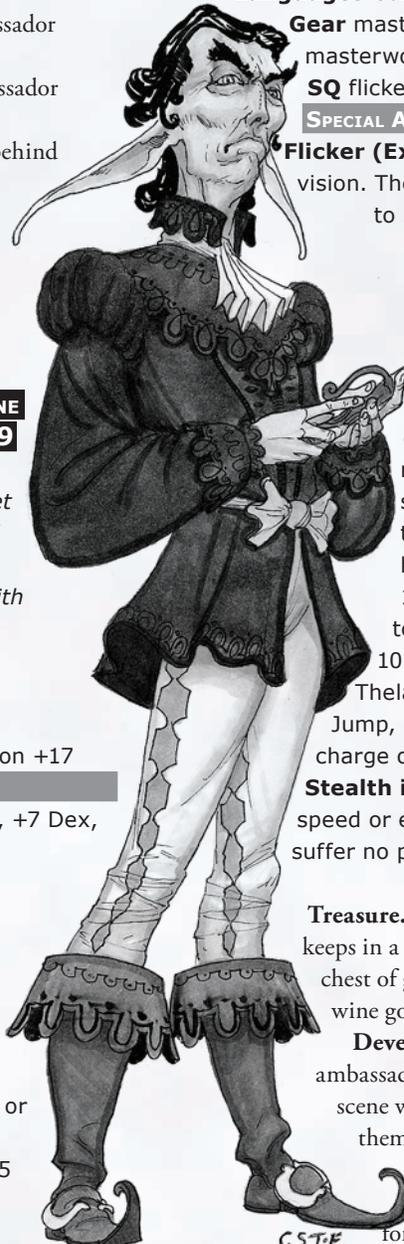
Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. Thelamandrine can jump up to a total of 80 ft. /day in this way; this may be a single jump of 80 ft. or eight jumps of 10 ft. each, or any combination of jumps totalling 80 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With his Dimensional feats, Thelamandrine may act after moving with Shadow Jump, Shadow Jump may be used as part of a charge or full attack option as a swift action.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Treasure. The party may find treasure the ambassador keeps in a locked chest in his chambers. The ambassador's chest of gold contains two 2,500 gp jewel-studded, golden wine goblets and 2,000 gp in Zobeck coin.

Development. If the party does not fight the ambassador but instead chooses to roleplay through the scene well, Hidden Ambassador Thelamandrine gives them each a gold and glass goblet (worth a total of 7,000 gp) "fit for a royal feast," and his sorceress grants them a boon of "a visit from my tailor" for "not behaving like so many louts we have entertained in this simple home." This results in a pair of +4 *bracers*



CSTE

of armor for an arcane or fey PC and the possibility that the sorceress Freya Owlsdaughter will reappear as an ally later in the adventure at the GM's option. Award experience as if the party defeated a single CR 12 encounter.

Scene 6, Finding the Shadow Road Ritual

With the hints from Hidden Ambassador Thelamandrine, the party may ask around about the incantation that opens the Shadow Road. There's little to go on at first, but the city of Zobeck does have the Arcane Collegium and even living fey within its walls who consider the place home and who know secrets. One of them will ultimately provide the information the party needs.

This series of complex skill checks can be roleplayed or pursued as skill checks, allowing characters to utilize their creativity. The square, the gate, and the sluagh may be pursued in any order and build on one another, but they need not all be performed—they should present the adventurers with the initial aspects of the incantation and the ability to recognize those places where the incantation can be performed. The pier is the final scene and culminates in the completion of the incantation.

Reward creative uses of spells or skills that further the challenge. A number of feats or class options are listed which provide miscellaneous bonuses. These bonuses should stack with any others. If there is an appropriate option or feat possessed by the characters but not listed, have it provide a +2 bonus to a fitting skill check.

Encourage player ingenuity throughout this challenge!

Challenges. Consider each complex skill check independently, but observe the players. If they wish to research further, continue the scene at the Collegium, borrowing additional information from the gate or the sluagh to reveal with each additional success. Likewise, if they linger in either of those locations, pull material from the other scenes. Calculate failures normally, but permit the sequence to progress even after 3 failures. Determine the consequences of excessive failures in each check after all the checks are complete (see **Additional Failure Consequences** section, page 24).

Collegium Square Complex Skill Check

At the Arcane Collegium, the adventurers research the particulars of the Shadow Road incantation. They interact with a group of Collegium students or the Collegium librarian on the grounds or possibly in the nearby taverns, such as the Hedgehog or the King's Cup.

Requires: 4 successes before 3 failures.

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Diplomacy (gather information), Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Sense Motive, Intimidate.

Success: If the group agrees to record the incantation for the library (and provides a blank book for the purpose), a member of the collegium suggests the party take a certain wand of cure moderate wounds (25 charges) with them. One of the Collegium's treasures from the days when sorcery was used to keep shadow fey from ambushing caravans, it might help in a place where the flow of time can be erratic.

Possible Actions for Success

- **Ask for help from the librarian:** Diplomacy, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Sense Motive (DC 23); Intimidate (DC 18, 1 success only).

- **Research the material without help:** Knowledge (arcana) (DC 18).
- **Seek help from students:** Diplomacy (DC 15); Diplomacy (gather information), Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Sense Motive, (DC 18).

Failure: Experience an additional encounter while traveling the Shadow Road.

Information Gained by Visiting the Collegium

- A few possible incantation sites exist throughout Zobeck—what identifies them is not always clear.
- One promising site is the Lych Gate, an old temple gate that was incorporated into the Ghetto Wall.
- A spinning lantern must be used in the incantation.
- The full incantation isn't recorded in the library. A fey might barter the details in exchange for something.
- Two sluagh, a fey spirit of an unclaimed soul, are known to live in Zobeck. One of them, Knuckletooth, told a collegium apprentice about the incantation years ago. The apprentice long since left for distant Siwal, and the records aren't in the library... but the sluagh might still live in town. You could ask it.

Bonus Information Gained with Each Success

- Knuckletooth, a sluagh, loves the sound of crying children and has a taste for freshly butchered pigs' knuckles.
- The Lych Gate can somehow be activated to show images or scenes.
- There is both a time and sacrificial component to the incantation.
- Choosing the correct ritual site is often crucial to fey incantation.

Skill Check Bonuses

- **Fey Foundling:** Add +2 bonus to Knowledge (history) checks.
- **Shadow Caster Archetype:** Add +2 bonus to Knowledge (arcana) checks.

The Ghetto's Lych Gate Complex Skill Check

The adventurers find a ruined gate incorporated into the wall surrounding the Kobold Ghetto. The engraved stone pillars and carved gabled roof of the gate show worn scenes of travel, trade, and war. The gate is part of the masonry of the Kobold Ghetto wall. With investigation, hard work, and persistence, they decipher its clues and activate it—causing it to reveal tidbits of information that flash between passing shadows.

Requires: 4 successes before 3 failures.

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Diplomacy (gather information), Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), Perception.

Possible Actions for Success

- **Decipher the faded fey symbols on the gate to activate it:** Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (history), or Perception (DC 23).
- **Talk to people in the area and learn what might activate the gate:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Diplomacy (gather information) (DC 18).

Courts of the Shadow Fey

- **Use local legends to unlock the gate's secrets:** Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), Diplomacy (gather information) (DC 23).

Failure: Experience an additional encounter while traveling the Shadow Road.

Information Shown by the Lych Gate

- The general location of the reluctant sluagh's lair.
- The sluagh's name and face.
- The collegium library and the Hedgehog Tavern, frequented by students.
- Signs show the importance of light: one sequence starts black, grows to the barest sliver of the sun on the horizon, and then fade back to black.
- Carvings that show a woman weeping at the feet of a dead hanging man; the incantation may hinge on death or grief in some way.

Bonus Information Gained with Each Success

- The Lych Gate is also known as the "Sluagh's Window" because it will often show the sluagh, Knuckletooth. Occasionally, if asked, it will show the Draggled Woman (see sidebar, Zobeck Canon).
- The Knuckletooth's lair was burnt down to a ruined husk of a structure.
- If the Collegium hasn't been visited: the shadow fey are of particular interest to a group of collegium apprentices. Otherwise: certain fey symbols on the gate are recognized as traveler's marks for a river and a road.
- The incantation must be performed just before sunrise or just after sunset.

Skill Check Bonuses

- **Breadth of Experience feat:** Add +2 bonus to Knowledge (history) checks.
- **Coordinated Defenses feat:** Add +2 bonus to Perception checks.
- **Fey Bloodline:** Add +2 bonus to Knowledge (arcana) and Perception checks.
- **Speak Elven:** Add +2 bonus to Knowledge (arcana) checks.
- **Spell Focus (Conjuration) or Theurgy feat:** Add +2 bonus to Knowledge (arcana) checks.
- **Stone Read feat:** Add +3 bonus to Knowledge (dungeoneering) checks.

The Reluctant Sluagh Complex Skill Check

With the details drawn from stories, old texts, and hidden locales, the adventurers discover the lair of a Sluagh native to Zobeck—a miserable creature with pale grey skin, stringy black hair and jagged teeth in an oversized mouth. It is known as Knuckletooth. It lives within the burnt-out remnant of a house and appears from the shadows of corners or from darkness beneath rubble piles.

Requires: 4 successes before 3 failures.

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Diplomacy (gather information), Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (history), Intimidation, Perception, Sense Motive, Stealth.

Possible Actions for Success

- Barter with the sluagh for knowledge: Knuckletooth knows the *Incantation of Memories Lost* (see page 25) and will perform it to share knowledge for a good trade: Diplomacy, Knowledge (arcana), Perception, Sense Motive (DC 23).
- Challenge the sluagh for knowledge: The sluagh likes to play a game of questions, asking questions to questions until someone cannot answer with a question that links back to the previous question.
- Intimidate the sluagh for knowledge: Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Sense Motive (DC 25); Intimidation, Stealth (DC 23).
- Search for the sluagh's lair: Diplomacy, Diplomacy (gather information), Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Perception, Stealth (DC 18, 1 success only).
- Search the area for clues about sluagh: Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (history), Perception, Stealth (DC 23, 1 success only).

Failure: Experience 2 additional encounters while traveling the Shadow Road.

Information Gained from the Sluagh

- Knuckletooth provides the remaining barebones aspects of the incantation, filling in the gaps of what might have been learned at the Collegium.
- If the collegium hasn't been searched: Knuckletooth indicates that the library is often a useful place to learn.
- Knuckletooth provides the possible incantation site beneath the pier.
- If the Lych Gate hasn't been activated: Knuckletooth indicates that it sometimes shows seekers useful tidbits.
- The incantation requires a sacrifice—a confession of lost love or betrayal.

Bonus Information Gained with Each Success

- Shadow fey enjoy intense emotions of suffering and loss. They barter in such emotions but have more base intentions, too.
- If the Collegium hasn't been visited: the shadow fey are a topic of particular interest to a group of collegium students: "Go bother them." Otherwise: certain fey symbols are recognizable in the graffiti drawn on the ruined house.
- The sluagh prefers to speak Elven.
- The sluagh tells the adventurers they can expect to meet fey giants and shadow horrors on the Shadow Road.

Skill Check Bonuses

- **Fey or Shadow Bloodline:** Add +2 bonus to Knowledge (arcana) checks.
- **Fey Foundling feat:** Add +3 bonus to Knowledge (history) checks.
- **Magical Knack trait:** Add +2 bonus to Knowledge (arcana) checks.
- **Stealthy or Go Unnoticed feat:** Add +2 bonus to Stealth checks.
- **Taking in Elven or Leaf Singer feat:** Add +2 bonus to all skill checks with Knuckletooth.
- **Toughness feat:** +2 bonus to Intimidation checks.

Beneath the Pier Complex Skill Check

After investigating the various sites throughout Zobeck, the adventurers may attempt the ritual, powering it with the details gathered throughout their investigation. They acquire a longboat and row out beneath the river pier to the point they learned about from the slough.

Hidden Ambassador Thelamandrine “happens” to be taking his evening constitutional along the quays and will stop to admire the river. He does not speak to the party directly, but he forces a goblin servant accompanying him to respond to PC questions, answering one per successful complex skill check thus far. It’s a bit roundabout, but Thelamandrine wants to have as much plausible deniability as possible.

Requires: 6 successes before 4 failures.

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Survival.

Possible Actions for Success:

- Keep the boat steady against the current: The ritualist performing the incantation intones the mystic syllables to usher the group from this world to the Shadow Realm: Acrobatics, Profession (sailor), or Survival (DC 23).
- Remember the ancient stories associated with the dark fey: The lost passphrases and songs help the party cross from this world into the Shadow Realm: Knowledge (history) (DC 20).
- Utilizing the tidbits of knowledge and magic gathered thus far: The incantation warps the shadows into a gate drawing the party into the Shadow Road: Knowledge (arcana) (DC 20).

Failure: Experience one additional encounter while traveling the Shadow Road.

Information Gained at the Pier

- Motion is a necessary part of the ritual. One must travel from an illuminated space to a darkened space.
- The fading light into darkness and the gradual reintroduction of light parts the veil between worlds.
- Parting the wall between this world and the Shadow Realm requires pain or suffering of some kind.
- Admission of a betrayal or a broken heart speeds the ritual, fueling the powers that make it possible.

Bonus Information Gained with Each Success

- If the confession comes from someone who is left behind rather than traveling, it is more potent.
- The incantation has specific possible destinations. Different confessions seem to favor different locales.
- A murder or terrible suffering must have occurred at the location where the ritual is performed.
- Favored transit locations are marked with unobtrusive fey symbols. This pier has those symbols.

Skill Check Bonuses

- **Alertness feat:** Add +2 bonus to Acrobatics checks.
- **Become fatigued or exhausted:** Add +3 bonus to a single check.
- **Diehard feat:** Add +2 bonus to Survival checks.
- **Fey Bloodline or Starlight Summons feat:** Add +2 bonus to Knowledge (arcana) checks.

At the GM’s option, the party also suffers some more flavorful problems from **Table 1-1: Shadow Ritual Failure**. Completing this

KNUCKLETOOTH THE SLUGH

A slough is the fey spirit of an unclaimed soul, said to live in part of Zobeck and speak with people about the incantation. Like most of its kind, it has pale grey skin, stringy black hair, and jagged teeth in an oversized mouth. It loves the sound of crying children and has a taste for freshly butchered pigs’ knuckles.

It is one of the few fey in the city that ever show themselves although it likes to hide and speak from the shadows. When it speaks—in Elven, of course—it likes to play games with questions. It is an ageless thing, a haunt of the city, and is quite cruel and secretive in its dealing with the city’s mortals—but remarkably kind to children and animals.



check completes the incantation (see page 25 for details) and opens the gate. While open, the site permits travel to the Shadow (or Niflheim) Road, and the party may reach the Courts of the Shadow Fey in the Shadow Realm.

Additional Failure Consequences

- **1 Failure.** The ritualist becomes fatigued (if already fatigued, exhausted) from the effort required to complete the ritual.
- **2 Failures.** All participants become fatigued (if already fatigued, exhausted. If already exhausted, suffer 1d6 nonlethal damage) from the effort required to utilize the road. The Shadow Court is immediately aware that someone is seeking to enter the Shadow Road and assigns a second footman to the Western Gate where the party arrives (see page 50).
- **3 Failures.** All participants become exhausted (If already exhausted, suffer 1d6 nonlethal damage) and suffer a -4 penalty to skill checks until they rest for 8 hours. (Such rest is not possible on the Shadow Road)
- **4 Failures (total failure).** All participants suffer 2d6 damage and suffer a -4 penalty to skill checks until they rest for 8 hours. The gate does not open. (See **Developments.**)

With 2 or more failures, the Shadow Court is immediately aware of the party's attempt to cross the boundary and takes appropriate actions to harass the adventurers.

As indicated above, each failed complex skill check indicates an additional encounter on the Shadow Road. All groups experience at least 1 encounter, even with total success.

Regardless of success or failure in this skill challenge, participating ritualists learn the Trod the Niflheim Road incantation, gaining access to the Shadow Road, and may transcribe it at their next opportunity. It remains in their memory until they have the chance to do so and may be used to return from the courts.

SHADOW ROAD LORE

KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA) OR (PLANES) CHECK

DC	RESULT
10 or less	You really don't know how the Shadow Road works.

11-15	Fey Roads connect two points through magical travel. The two points are always set in advance, and the doors to them are never open long.
16-20	The entrances to the Shadow Road must be a site of a murder, suicide, or other significant tragedy.
21-25	The destination of a Fey Road can be changed, but only by a fey. Otherwise, new destinations require variant incantations.
26 or more	Some Fey Roads are guarded, and others lead only in one direction.

Development. If the incantation fails entirely, the party is attacked by a shadow demon (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) and must try again. If the incantation is a success, the adventurers leave the mortal world of Midgard and enter the outer edges of the Shadow Realm. They have 1 or more encounters while on the Shadow Road. Consider awarding 1000xp per character per successful complex skill challenge.

Scene 7, Encounters along the Road

Travel on the Shadow Road should be memorable. The GM should choose two encounters for the road if the incantation was entirely successful and, possibly, 1 more if casting the incantation involved several failures. You may need to use lower CR versions of the encounters, since each occurs along the road, and the road's nature prevents resting to regain spells or recover hit points. As a benefit, however, spells with durations longer than 1 hour last for the entire trip.

- The Haunted Forest (CR 10)
- The Moebius Shadow (CR 10)
- Dead Demons (CR 10)

All encounters on the road are subject to the following property of the Shadow Road itself.

Dim the Light

Any light-based attack (*circlet of blasting*, *lightning bolt*, *searing light*, etc.) does half damage to the target and half damage to the attacker as the shadowy road protects itself.

TABLE 1-1: SHADOW RITUAL FAILURE

d6	RESULT
1	Bleaching. A PC is drained of all pigmentation and color, appearing only black and white. Clothing worn by the character eventually becomes shades of grey.
2	Softly. A PC loses the ability to speak above a whisper and cannot be heard more than 1 square away.
3	Demi-shadow dreams. Disturbing nightmares prevent any restful sleep sufficient to heal, pray or study to recover spells each night until the affected PC makes a successful Will Save (DC 20) for three nights.
4	The Twitch Disease. A PC gains -3 penalty to all saves versus fear effects.
5	Shadow Rot Disease. A PC suffers an additional 1d6 points of damage if hit by a deathwisp, a shadow, or a spell with the shadow descriptor.
6	Shadow Twin. A PC's shadow detaches and becomes an enemy shadow (see <i>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary</i>) in every encounter until the party finds a cure. It generally appears just in time to aid a foe by flanking.

INCANTATION OF MEMORIES LOST*"Coin? No. Give me your memories!"***School** enchantment; **Effective Level** 4th**Skill Check** Knowledge (arcana) DC 22, 2 successes;
Knowledge (nature) DC 22, 2 successes**Casting Time** 40 minutes**Components** F (a small pastry, bled upon and offered), M (a silver knife), S, V; during new moon**Range** touch; **Target** creature touched; **Duration** 24 hours**Saving Throw** none; **SR** no**DESCRIPTION**

You transfer a memory to the pastry, which may be consumed. The loss of this memory equates to a -4 penalty to a skill or -2 to all other rolls. This penalty lasts for 24 hours.

BACKLASH

After the incantation, you cannot stand the company of horses for a period of 1d6+1 days. Any horse feels repulsive to you and cannot be used unless you succeed on a Will save (DC 16).

FAILURE

Failing two consecutive skill checks, you provoke the fey's disgust and must assuage its anger before petitioning it again. This generally means completing some task for it.

TROD THE NIFLHEIM ROAD*"Cold. Dark. Sinister... Dangerous. Really, it's not unlike the shadow fey themselves."***School** conjuration; **Effective Level** 7th**Skill Check** In Order—Knowledge (arcana) DC 25, 3 successes, Knowledge (nature) DC 25, 3 successes, and Knowledge (planes) DC 25, 1 success.**Casting Time** 70 minutes; up to three secondary casters may assist the primary caster**Components** F (a lantern on a chain, a bag of sackcloth), M (a pint of oil taken from a creature, such as whale oil), S, V (a confession of lost love, betrayal, or failure); a site of a murder, suicide, or other significant tragedy with dim illumination**Range** touch; **Target** point touched, creating a portal 20 ft. across; **Duration** special* (see below)**Saving Throw** none; **SR** no**DESCRIPTION**

The Niflheim Road is known more commonly to non-fey as the Shadow Road or Fey Road. This incantation permits travel to designated locations within the Shadow Realm, throughout the lands of the Moonlit King and the Queen of Night and Magic. The starting points in the mortal realm must be a site of a murder, suicide, or other significant tragedy.

To cast the incantation, the casters spin a lantern and lift it in and out of a bag of sackcloth, creating alternating light and shadow.

At the same time, the casters and any travelers move from an area of dim illumination to an area of darkness while one of the casters provides a confession of lost love, betrayal, or failure. If someone moving with the travelers but not accompanying them to the destination provides

this confession, add +4 to each Knowledge (arcana) check. Elves, gnomes, and other creatures with fey blood gain a +2 bonus to their Knowledge (arcana) check when opening the Shadow Road. Creatures with the fey subtype get a +4 bonus to all checks.

BACKLASH

After the incantation, participants cannot stand bright illumination for a period of 1d6+1 days. The light causes participants extreme discomfort and they gain the sickened condition unless they succeed on a Will save (DC 20) each time they enter such areas.

FAILURE

Failing two consecutive skill checks, you mangle the incantation and disturb the planar boundary. Participants suffer 2d6 cold damage. The veil between worlds becomes turbulent and cannot be reopened until a day has passed or a fey creature opens the portal from the other side. Shadow fey notoriously demand expensive prices for such an opening. Failing a single check means the portal opens, but there is a strong likelihood the travelers have attracted the attention of a creature on the Road and can be certain of an encounter of some kind.

At the completion of this incantation, a caster makes a Knowledge (planes) check (those with fey blood may substitute Knowledge (nature)). The result determines the duration the road remains open.

KNOWLEDGE (PLANES) CHECK

RESULT	PORTAL DURATION
15 or lower	1 Minute
16-20	2 Minutes
21-25	3 Minutes
26-30	4 Minutes
35+	5 Minutes

While the portal is open, any creature that enters the portal appears at the other location 1d4 hours later along with anything the creature holds or carries. If the creature travels with several others, they all arrive in the same round and in the same sequence that they entered the road.

The destination of the road is always set when the portal opens—meaning small variations of this incantation exist to pair different origins and destinations. However, the caster may spontaneously change the destination during the casting with effort. Those with fey blood may change the destination of the Shadow Road by imposing a -5 penalty to the Knowledge (planes) roll. The caster must have visited the new destination before, not merely heard of it (a bartered memory is also sufficient, see *Incantation of Memories Lost*).

Any number of creatures of any size can use an open road; the only limitation is the number that can reach the portal before it disappears. Certain fey roads are guarded; others lead in only one direction. Anyone standing in the vicinity of either end of the portal sees a foggy road through a forest but no hints of the destination. Environmental effects at one end of the road don't affect the other end.

UNUSUAL INSPIRATION

Inspiration can come from anywhere. This encounter was inspired by an 80-year-old movie: *Snow White*. In particular, the initial “terror in the forest” sequence, full of eyes, claws, darkness, and pits made me think that the forest should push the party around a little here.

The idea that the Plane of Shadow should be a frightening place is pretty well established in game lore, but I thought it would be good to model something along those lines in game terms. Since PCs rarely run, forced movement is a crucial part of the scene; the haunts and marauders can “herd” the party toward the white stones and pits.

The Haunted Forest

The Shadow Road enters a section of thick forest, and a thin mist rises from the ground. The trees cut what little light shines into a deeper gloom. Something is crashing through the undergrowth, then it comes out onto the road; a dark-haired giant in rags, holding spears that shine with a baleful red light. Groans echo in the undergrowth to either side of the road.

Scene 7, The Haunted Forest

- CR 9—2 forest marauders, 1 shadow hound
- CR 10—2 forest marauders, 1 shadow beast, 1 shadow hound
- CR 11—2 forest marauders, 1 shadow beast, 3 shadow hounds

Features of the Area

Illumination—The light is dim, and PCs with normal vision can’t see well: creatures in the area have concealment (see *Pathfinder*



Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook). Characters with low-light vision see normally.

Pits—The marked pits are 40 ft. deep and contain spikes; they are too small for a forest marauder to fall into, and the shadow beasts float over them. Only the shadow haunts can fall into one. Creatures falling into the shadow pits take 4d10 damage and are prone and suffer 1d6 damage each round from impalement on the spikes (DC 15 Strength check ends).

Undergrowth—Branches and undergrowth interfere with targeting: all ranged attacks have their range reduced by 10 ft. In the first round, ranged attacks by the PCs may fail automatically if they try to shoot at full range. After the first round, tell the players that the forest terrain interferes with their ranged attacks.

White Stones on the Hill—The marauders and hounds attack first, pushing and sliding one or two foes toward a small hill. Three enormous white stones stand there, forming a rough doorway. Creatures pushed through threshold disappear from the Shadow Road and arrive alone at the Invisible Court (see **Act II**, page 34). They are marked with a “haunt mask” (two black eyes), which the courtiers recognize as a sign of weakness and remains until the Feast (**Act III, Scene 1**, page 74) or the character wins a duel with a shadow fey courtier. Their Status starts with a -1 penalty.

FOREST MARAUDER

CR 6

XP 2,400

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 67 (9d8+27)

Fort +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

Melee Boar spear +12/+7 (2d6+9/x3) or 2 slams +11 (1d8+6)

Ranged none

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks Push

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 10, **Con** 17, **Int** 6, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 23

Feats Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (boar spear)

Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +7, Perception +5

SQ Push

Equipment Boar Spear, Shadow Fey Armor

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Push (Ex) After a successful attack with either a slam or boar spear, the Shadow giant may push an opponent 10 ft. with a successful combat maneuver check.

SHADOW HOUND

CR5

XP 1,600

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)

HP 51 (6d10+18)

Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities shadow blend

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d6+6 plus trip)

Special Attacks Shadow Push

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 4, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22 (26 vs trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +11, Survival +10

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shadow Push (Sp) As a ranged attack, the shadow hound can buffet an opponent with a gale of animated shadows, acting as a push attack that moves the opponent 10 ft. This is done using the shadow hound's CMB just as a regular push attack, but requires no successful previous attack.

Shadow Blend (Su) In any condition of illumination other than full daylight, a shadow hound disappears into the shadows, giving it total concealment. Artificial illumination, even a light or continual flame spell, does not negate this ability. A daylight spell, however, does. A shadow hound can suspend or resume this ability as a free action.

SHADOW BEAST

CR 7

XP 3,200

CE Medium fey magical beast

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex)

hp 80 (10d10+30)

Fort +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, Shadow Blend; SR 17;
Weaknesses sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +12 touch (1d6 plus 1d6 cold), bite +12 touch
(1d8 plus 1d6 cold)

Special Attacks shadow push

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *fear* (DC 18), *telekinesis* (DC 19)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 30

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative,
Lightning Reflexes

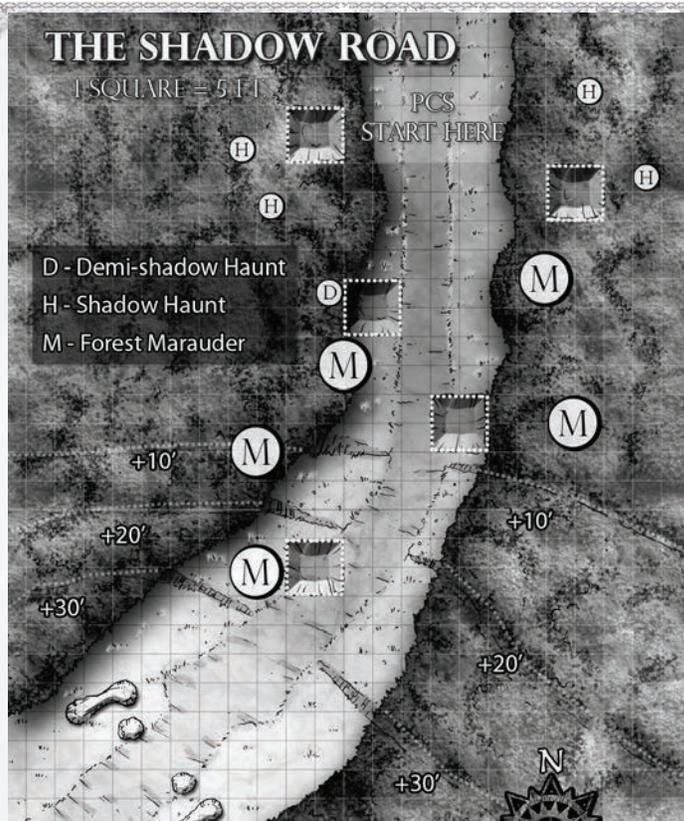
Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +14, Fly +22, Knowledge (local)
+12, Perception +20, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +14; **Racial**

Modifiers +8 Perception

Languages Elven, Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shadow Blend (Su) During any conditions other than bright light, a shadow beast can disappear into the shadows as a move equivalent action, gaining full concealment. Artificial



illumination or light spells of 2nd level or lower do not negate this ability, but a daylight spell does.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex) A shadow beast is utterly powerless in bright light or natural sunlight and flees from it. A shadow beast caught in such light cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action.

Shadow Push (Sp) As a ranged attack, the shadow beast can buffet an opponent with a gale of animated shadows, acting as a push attack that moves the opponent 10 ft. This is done using the shadow hound's CMB just as a regular push attack, but requires no successful previous attack.

Tactics. The monsters strike from the forest, maneuvering for flank on heavily armed warriors or very effective spellcasters. If melee fighters rush toward the hounds, at least two of the marauders roar with their shadow push to force enemies back, sliding foes toward the pits or toward the hill. If possible, they use multiple spear strikes to drive a foe toward the hill or a pit, in combination with the hound's push.

The shadow beasts remaining flank, using the darkness to keep concealed for as long as possible.

Treasure. The marauders have both packs and sacks full of bones, skulls, whetstones, and copper coin. The real value is in a +3 *frost brand* used as a paring knife and in the two 1,000 gp rubies.

The Moebius Shadow

This section of the road passes through a mountain. As the adventurers enter the mountain, read the following:

The magical road enters a tunnel. Matte walls of crumbling stone have replaced the dimly perceived vistas of the Shadow Realm.

After the party has traveled for another 10 minutes, the darkstone sculptor warps the road into a Moebius strip.

Perception Check (DC 30)—The road twists slightly underfoot. It looks perfectly straight and level but seems strangely off balance.

The adventurers are now trapped within a loop: 30 squares of travel in either direction brings them to the shadowrock poi. When the party can see the demons, read the following:

Ahead stands a whirling monstrosity, like a crying shadow crushed by watching its first death, talons honed to razor points and mouths drooling hungrily.

Scene 7, The Moebius Strip

- CR 9+—1 Thuvis Cloudshadow, 1 darkstone sculptor, 1 shadowrock pounder
- CR 10+—1 Thuvis Cloudshadow, 1 darkstone sculptor, 2 shadowrock pounders
- CR 11+—1 Thuvis Cloudshadow, 1 darkstone sculptor, 3 shadowrock pounders

Running the Moebius Strip. A Moebius strip is a topological oddity—a strip of material with only one side. The best way to understand it is to make one. Take a long, narrow strip of paper, twist one end by 180 degrees, and tape the two ends together. You can run your finger along the surface of the strip in one direction and travel along both sides of the strip. To a character walking along the Moebius strip, it will seem to be a loop. However, a creature at the beginning of the strip and one halfway through it are actually separated only by the thickness of the strip itself.

This Moebius strip made from the Niflheim Road is 25 feet wide and 400 feet long. The easiest way to track the movements of creatures on the strip is to draw it as two long rectangles, a "top" and a "bottom," with ends "A" and "B." Creatures leaving endpoint "B" of the top rectangle reappear at endpoint "A" of the bottom rectangle. Number the rows of squares from 1 to 40. Each row is on opposite faces of the Moebius strip.

However, recall that creatures on opposite faces of the loop are upside down to one another, and that left and right swap when crossing through the floor of the strip due to the twist in space. In other words, a character teleporting through the road from the right-hand side of row 1 on the top rectangle will appear on the left-hand side of row 1 on the bottom. Because this geometry is not intuitive but becomes clear with experience, the GM may want to practice this encounter before introducing it to the players.

Once the characters have observed some clue indicating that the loop is actually a Moebius strip, they can deduce its nature with a (Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (DC 25). Encourage players to make a Moebius strip for themselves so they more easily grasp its tactical possibilities.

Features of the Area

Attacking through the road—Auras pass through the road as if it were not there while area and ray attacks cannot be targeted normally at the other side of the road. For all such attacks, the substance of the road counts as 1 square. The road stops ranged attacks as if it were made of normal matter.

Ceiling—The ceiling is 20 ft. high.

Edges of the Road—The road passes through a mass of dull black shadowstone. Oddly, shadows cannot be cast on the surface of the stone.

Gravity—Gravity pulls creatures toward the road throughout the strip.

Illumination—A dim light suffuses this section of the Niflheim Road. Neither mundane light sources nor magical light of less than Caster Level 8th level increases the level of illumination.

Passing through the road—Shadow-touched creatures may pass through the road as if it were difficult terrain 1 square thick. (Note that cloudshadow flickers can thus move through it without hindrance.) Teleportation powers can pass through the road normally, counting the road itself as 1 square. Teleporting creatures that are not aware of the Moebius strip will appear on the other side of the road upside down and will immediately fall prone. Subsequent teleportations by the same character—or initial teleportations by characters aware of the loop—are not subject to this penalty. Creatures may not be pushed, pulled, or slid through the road, nor may they end their movement within the road.

Seeing through the road—The shadowy substance of the Niflheim Road is not completely opaque. Characters with low-light vision or darkvision can see through it (Perception DC 31); shadow-touched creatures receive a +20 bonus to this check. Passive Perception checks may only be used after a creature has seen through the road. The material of the road provides concealment to those creatures on the other side. Note that the upside-down orientation of creatures on the other side of the loop provides a hint to the nature of the Moebius strip.

Shadow-touched—Creatures are considered shadow-touched if they have Fey Foundling feat, the Shadow or Fey bloodlines or if they have shadow-based class powers, such as shadowdancers.

THUVIS CLOUDSHADOW

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) quickling-kin (*Advanced Bestiary*) wizard 1

NE Medium fey

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 28, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +9 Dex, +5 Dodge)

hp 44 (8d6+16) Fast Healing 1

Fort +7, **Ref** +18, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 120 ft.

Melee masterwork guisarme +12/+12 (2d4+1/x3)

Ranged dart +12/+12 (1d4+1/x2)

Special Attacks shadow jump, Spring Attack, rapid attacks

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 1st ; concentration +4)

1st—*grease* (2)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *message*, *dancing lights*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 28, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 32

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (guisarme), Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Scribe Scroll, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +29, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +14, Escape artist +15, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +10, Profession (courtier) +4, Sleight of Hand +19, Stealth +27; **Racial Modifiers** +10 Acrobatics, +2 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon, Aklo, Gnome, Abyssal

SQ flicker, stealth in motion, fast healing 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arcane Bond (guisarme) (Sp) Thuvus Cloudshadow must be wielding his guisarme to cast his wizard spells or he must make a Concentration check to avoid losing the spell. The DC for this check is equal to 20 + the spell's level. Once per day, his guisarme may be used to cast any one spell from his wizard's spell book as if it was prepared. Select any first level spell.

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. Thuvus can jump up to a total of 20 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 20 ft. or two jumps of 10 ft. each. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With his Dimensional Agility feat, he can act even after making a Shadow Jump.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Rapid Attacks (Ex) Thuvus Cloudshadow may make an extra ranged attack at his highest attack bonus during any attack action and when making a full attack. Furthermore, he may modify any or all his melee attack rolls with his Dexterity modifier instead of his Strength modifier, if desired. When he makes this substitution for all his melee attacks in an attack action or a full attack, he gains an extra melee attack at its highest attack bonus.

Quick Casting (Ex) When casting any spell with a casting time of 1 round, the casting time is reduced to 1 standard action.

Shift (Su) 6/day, Thuvus Cloudshadow may move 5 ft. as a swift action as if using the *dimension door* spell. This movement does not provoke an attack of opportunity. It

must be able to see the space that it is moving into. Thuvus Cloudshadow cannot take others with him.

DARKSTONE SCULPTOR

CR6

XP 2,400

NE Large outsider (earth, elemental, evil, extraplanar)

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (-1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 68 (8d10+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +1, **Will** +6

DR 5/cold iron; **Immune** acid, cold, poison

Weaknesses sunlight powerlessness, vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., burrow 30 ft., earth glide

Melee 2 slams +15 (2d6+8)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks earth mastery

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 8, **Con** 17, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 26

Feats Awesome Blow, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Power Attack

Skills Appraise +6, Climb +15, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +3, Knowledge (planes) +6, Perception +11, Stealth +5

Languages Dwarven, *telepathy* 60 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Earth Glide (Ex) A burrowing sculptor can pass through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. If protected against fire damage, it can even glide through lava. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other sign of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing sculptor flings the sculptor back 30 ft., stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Earth Sprint (Su) Once per minute while using their Earth Glide ability, a darkstone sculptor can move 180 ft. for one round.

Earth Mastery (Ex) A darkstone sculptor gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its foe are touching the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the sculptor takes a -4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. These modifiers apply to bull rush and overrun maneuvers, whether the sculptor is initiating or resisting these kinds of attacks.

Hatred: A darkstone sculptor receives a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against humanoid creatures of the dwarf and gnome subtypes and outsiders of the elemental and earth subtypes, due to special training against these hated foes.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex) A darkstone sculptor is utterly powerless in bright light or natural sunlight and flees from

NEW FEAT: UNDEAD RAGE

Prerequisite: must be undead, rage class ability

Benefit: With this feat an undead creature can benefit from the rage class ability; raging for a number of rounds per day equal to 4 + its Charisma modifier. Temporary increases to Charisma, such as those gained from Undead Rage and spells like *eagle's splendor*, do not increase the total number of rounds that a barbarian can rage per day.

While raging, you gain +4 profane (for evil aligned undead) or sacred (for good aligned undead) bonus to Strength and Charisma, as well as a +2 bonus of the same type on Will saves. Neutral aligned undead must choose its type of bonus upon gaining this feat, after which it can only be changed when and if the creature's alignment is changed to a good or evil alignment. In addition, it takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase to Charisma grants the undead 2 hit points per Hit Dice, but these disappear when the rage ends and are not lost first like temporary hit points.

The creature can end its undead rage as a free action and it must move at half its natural speed or 15ft. of movement (whichever is lower) for a number of rounds equal to 2 times the number of rounds spent in the undead rage. The undead creature cannot return a new undead rage until this slow effect is over, but can otherwise enter a undead rage multiple times during a single encounter or combat. If the undead creature falls unconscious, its undead rage immediately ends.

In all other ways this ability functions as the rage ability and replaces, allow the undead creature to gain rage related feats, class abilities, and rage powers.

Normal: Undead creatures cannot fully benefit from the rage ability as they cannot be affected by the mind-affecting moral bonuses, nor can they be fatigued.

it. A darkstone sculptor caught in such light cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action.

SHADOWROCK POUNDER

CR 6

XP 2,400

NE Large outsider (earth, elemental, extra planar, incorporeal)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 10 (+5 Dex, -1 size, +1 deflection)

hp 69 (8d10+24), regeneration 5 (cold iron)

Fort +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +4

Immune elemental traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect), Earth Glide

Melee 2 slams +12 (2d6+1d6 acid)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d8+4)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 8th)

At will—*deeper darkness*, see *invisibility*

TACTICS

Before Combat The shadowrock pouncer hides within a solid object and cast *deeper darkness* followed by *see invisibility* before coming out to attack.

STATISTICS

Str -, **Dex** 21, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 25

Feats Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Run

Skills Bluff +10, Diplomacy +7, Heal +11, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +11, Sense Motive +11, Stealth +16

Languages Dwarven, Terran; *telepathy* 60 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Earth Glide (Ex) A burrowing shadowrock pouncer can pass through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. If protected against fire damage, it can even glide through lava. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other sign of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing shadowrock pouncer flings the shadowrock pouncer back 30 ft., stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex) A shadowrock pouncer takes a point of Con damage after every hour it is exposed to sunlight.

Tactics. The pounders begin in a rough row awaiting the party's advance. The darkstone sculptor begins combat across the loop—in other words, through the floor—from the PCs, positioned so it can move into a flank with the pounders after they engage. Thuvis Cloudshadow begins behind the sculptor and passes through the Niflheim Road to a position behind the party after any pounders attack.

The pounders try to pin the party in one location with melee attacks. Thuvis Cloudshadow tries to get behind the party and use his mobility to strike and retreat behind its allies, while the sculptor concentrates its attacks on whoever appears to lead the party. The darkstone sculptor uses its powers to pull one enemy through the road, where a lone pouncer can earth glide and attack. Once the separated enemy is defeated, the sculptor pulls another enemy through; in the meantime, it moves to keep the party flanked by the pounders.

The darkstone sculptor and shadowrock pounders fight to the death. If only Thuvis Cloudshadow remains, he flees when at half hitpoints, using vanish and shadow jump to escape.

Development and Treasure. If the party defeats the darkstone sculptor, they find a twisted stone and a jeweled cameo. The stone is a piece of shadowstone formed into a Moebius strip. Breaking it releases this section of the Niflheim Road from its topological prison, allowing the adventurers to continue toward the Shadow Court (Knowledge (arcana) DC 23 reveals this fact): the stone is a small object with hardness 15 and 5 hp. Note that if the PCs manage to break the stone before the darkstone sculptor is defeated, the Moebius strip unfolds.

The cameo is a mithril and onyx rendition of the Queen of Night and Magic. It is worth 7,500 gp on the mortal plane, but in the Shadow Courts, it could be traded for favor or Status.

Déjà-Vu in the Shadows

This encounter takes place near the Shadow Road and should either be run at a lower CR or after the characters have leveled to 8th level—which they may have done by this point. When the PCs arrive in the shadow realm, they find themselves in the middle of the ruins mirroring Zobeck in the mortal world, near where they fought the rakes in the first assassination scene (see page 6). The Shadow Road stretches out in front of them, leading them through the maze of ruins rather than the houses of Zobeck.

Perception (DC 25)—This place amidst the dark ruins is oddly familiar.

Sense Motive (DC 25, after successful Perception check)—This place is similar to the area where you recently fought those fey assassins.

Just after the adventurers recognize the place, read:

A flash of light, much like lightning without thunder rips up the pitch dark sky and slams into the ground about 40 ft. away from where you are, among the ruins.

As the adventurers approach the spot where the soul fell, read:

As you enter the ruins where the mysterious light fell, you see darkness gathering, taking form. Slowly it rises from the dark mist covering the ground everywhere around you. Arms, body, and finally head form on the humanoid yet insubstantial body in front of you. Two points of pitch-black darkness stare at you in what you can only assume is amazement.

Perception (DC 28)—The shadow forming in front of you bears a striking resemblance to one of the fey assassins you killed recently. (Any player making the Perception check can take a standard action before the shadow-creature can react.)

The shadow-creature screams “REVENGE!” before hurling itself toward the PC’s.

Scene 7, Dead Demons

- CR 10+—Gorak the Mad Ghoul, 1 mad ghoul, 1 shadow fey deathwisp
- CR 11—1 darkness ghoul, Gorak the Mad Ghoul, 1 mad ghoul, 1 shadow fey deathwisp
- CR 12—2 darkness ghouls, Gorak the Mad Ghoul, 1 mad ghoul, 2 shadow fey deathwisp

Features of the Area

Illumination—Shadowy darkness, causing all creatures more than 2 squares away to have concealment and anyone further than 10 squares away to have total concealment

Rubble—Squares with rubble are difficult terrain.

Walls—The ruined walls vary in height, 2 – 10 ft. They are easy to climb (Climb DC 12, Acrobatics DC 17).

DARKNESS GHOUL

CR 6

XP 2,400

Ghoul illusionist 4/ shadowdancer 1

CE Medium undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge, +4 *mage armor*)

hp 40 (2d8+5d6+14)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d6+1 plus disease and paralysis) and 2 claws +4 (1d6+1 plus paralysis)

Ranged masterwork short bow +6 (1d6/x3)

Special Attacks paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 13, elves are immune to this effect)

Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +6)

2nd—*blur*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*

1st—*disguise self*, *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *disrupt undead*, *ghost sound*, *touch of fatigue*

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Scribe Scroll

Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +8, Perform (dance) +8, Stealth +12, Swim +3

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arcane Bond (Sp) If a darkness ghoul attempts to cast a spell without its amulet (now, it’s a *amulet of natural armor +1*) worn in its slot, it must make a concentration check or lose the spell, DC 20 + the spell’s level. 1/day the darkness ghoul may cast any one spell that it has in his spellbook and is capable of casting even if the spell is not prepared.

Blinding Ray (Sp): 5/day as a standard action a darkness ghoul can fire a shimmering ray at any foe within 30ft. as a ranged touch attack. The ray causes the creatures to be blinded for 1 round. Creatures with more Hit Dice than the darkness ghoul’s wizard levels (4) are dazzled for 1 round instead.

Disease (Su) *Ghoul Fever*: Bite—injury; *save* Fortitude DC 13; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based. A humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghastr.

Extended Illusions (Su): Any illusion spell the darkness ghoul casts with a duration of “concentration” last an additional 2 rounds after it stops maintaining concentration.

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): A darkness ghoul can use the Stealth skill even while being observed. As long as it is within 10ft. of some sort of shadow, a darkness ghoul can hide herself from view in the open without anything to

DESIGN NOTE: KEEP TRAVEL SHORT

By this point, the party has gotten a long way from the creeping invasion and may be wondering whether leaving town is even a good idea. Don't drag out the travel sequence; one or two short, sharp combats are ideal, maybe all three if the party failed completely at the rituals or is fond of the tactical side of the game.

Another way to think of this is that walking along a road, even a magical one into shadow, shouldn't take more than a single game session before the party arrives.

actually hide behind. She cannot, however, hide in her own shadow.

GORAK THE MAD GHOUL CR 8

XP 4,800

Ghoul barbarian 7 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)
CE Medium undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14, scent (while raging)

DEFENSE

AC 17 (19 traps), touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge, +1 deflection,)

hp 90 (2d8+7d12+36)

Fort +8, **Ref** +5 (+7 traps) **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +9 (1d6+1 plus disease and paralysis) and 2 claws +9 (1d6+1 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 13, elves are immune to this effect), rage (12 rounds), rage powers (superstition +2)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

Feats Extra Rage, Improved Natural Armor, Toughness, Undead Rage

Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +11, Intimidate +11, Perception +14, Stealth +14, Survival +10, Swim +7

Languages Common, Undercommon

Gear *cloak of resistance* +1, *potion of enlarge person*, *potion of inflict light wounds* x4, *potion of mage armor* (2), *ring of protection* +1, monk's outfit, signet ring, 3 rubies worth 50 gp each

SQ fast movement

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Su) *Ghoul Fever*: Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 13; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based. A humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast.

Powerful Blow (Ex) Gorak gains a +2 bonus on a single damage roll. This power is used as a swift action before the roll to hit is made. This power can only be used one per rage.

Superstition (Ex) Gorak has a +2 morale bonus on saving throws made to resist spells, supernatural abilities, and spell-like abilities. While raging, Gorak cannot be a willing target of any spell and makes saving throws to resist all spells, even those cast by allies.

MAD GHOUL

CR6

XP 2,400

Ghoul sorcerer 5
CE Medium undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +1 dodge, +4 mage armor)

hp 47 (2d8+5d6+21)

Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d6+1 plus disease and paralysis) and 2 claws +4 (1d6+1 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks *acidic ray*, paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 13, elves are immune to this effect)

Spells Known (CL 5tj; concentration +7)

2nd (5/day)—*blindness/deafness*, see *invisibility*, *spider climb*
1st (7/day)—*chill touch*, *enlarge person*, *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *ghost sound*, *message*, *touch of fatigue*

Bloodline aberrant

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Eschew Materials, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +4, Bluff +7, Climb +6, Fly +7, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Perception +7, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +10, Swim +3

Languages Common, Undercommon

Combat Gear *brooch of shielding* (101 hp), *cloak of resistance* +1, *wand of mage missile* (50 charges), *potion of inflict moderate wounds* (3), *potion of featherfall* (4), 5 rubies worth 50 gp each, 50 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acidic Ray (Sp) 5/day the mad ghoul can fire an acidic ray as a standard action, targeting any foe within 30 ft. as a ranged touch attack. The *acidic ray* deals 1d6+ 2 points of acid damage.

Bloodline Arcana: Whenever the mad ghoul casts a spell of the polymorph subschool, increase the duration of the spell by 50% (minimum 1 round). This bonus does not stack with the increase granted by the Extend Spell feat.

Disease (Su) *Ghoul Fever*: Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 13; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Con and 1d3

Dex damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based. A humanoid who dies of ghoulish fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast.

Long Limbs (Ex) The mad ghoul's reach increases by 5 ft. whenever it makes a melee touch attack. This ability does not otherwise increase its threatened area.

SHADOW FEY DEATHWISP

CR 7

XP 3,200

 Shadow fey wraith (*Midgard Bestiary*)

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft., lifesense; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 25, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +8 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 87 (7d12+42)

Fort +6, **Ref** +17, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, Improved Evasion, incorporeal, Uncanny Dodge; **Immune** undead traits

Weakness light sensitivity, sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 80 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +11 (1d4+1d6 Constitution drain [Fort DC 17])

Special Attacks create spawn, shadow jump, unnatural aura

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 26, **Con** —, **Int** 20, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 28 (can't be tripped)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +16, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +13, Escape artist +14, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +15, Perform (dance) +12, Profession (courtier) +6, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +26; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

SQ flicker

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su) Any creature slain by a shadow fey deathwisp's Constitution drain or incorporeal touch attack rises as a wraith (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) in 1d4 rounds. A wraith created in this manner is under the command of its creator and remains so until either it or the creator is destroyed.

Constitution Drain (Su) A shadow fey deathwisp's incorporeal touch attack deals 1d6 points of Constitution drain unless the creature struck succeeds on a Fortitude save DC 17. On each successful attack, the wraith gains 5 temporary hit points. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey deathwisp seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Lifesense (Su) The shadow fey deathwisp can locate living creatures within 60ft., just as if it possessed the blindsight ability. It also senses the strength of their life forces automatically, as if it had cast *deathwatch* (CL 7th).

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey deathwisp can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow fey can jump up to a total of 40 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 40 ft. or four jumps of 10 ft. each. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex) A shadow fey deathwisp is utterly powerless in bright light or natural sunlight and flees from it. A shadow fey deathwisp caught in such light caught in sunlight cannot attack and is staggered.

Unnatural Aura (Su) Animals do not willingly approach within 30 ft. of a deathwisp, unless a master makes a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check.

Ghoul Lore

Knowledge (religion) (DC 15)—Humanoids that eat their own kind become ghouls when they die. All cares, concerns, and goals from its former life wash away in an undead hunger. All they care about is finding their next meal.

Knowledge (religion) (DC 20)—Mad ghouls are famous for not even being able to wait until a fight is over before they begin feasting.

Wraith Lore

Knowledge (religion) (DC 15)—Infused with the necromantic essence of the Shadow Realm, a wraith is a spirit bereft of soul and body—an empty vessel containing only a little personality and knowledge, if any. It usually remains near where its physical form died.

Knowledge (religion) (DC 20)—When a wraith slays a humanoid, that creature's spirit rises as a free-willed wraith of the same kind. Other wraiths are born in the Shadow Realm, and many remain there or enter the natural world through planar rifts and gates.

Tactics. The shadow fey deathwisp engages the adventurer whom appears the most capable swordsman.

The ghouls have been following the smell of fresh mortal meat. They sneak in (Stealth +10) and if no one sees or hears them, they surprise the party during their first round. The darkness ghouls move in, trying to corner or flank anyone with armor, while the mad ghouls jump from the walls, assaulting unarmored targets.

Gorak, despite being fairly bright for a mad ghoul, wades right into combat, eager to inflict as much pain as possible. He tries to position himself adjacent to several creatures, to paralyze as many foes as possible. During any given fight, he loudly describes in detail how he plans to eat his target, a favorite tactic of his is when an adjacent enemy is knocked prone. He often rages and is willing to inflict a coup de grace, even if it might provoke attacks of opportunity from allies surrounding the target.

Development. Either proceed to **Act II** or the next encounter. Remember time does not pass the same on the road, so casters will need to ration their casting. Pay close attention to the group's mood and be ready to move forward. Groups should be level 8 as they begin **Act II**.



Act I, The Invisible Courts

No man is so happy as he who lives under an illusion.

—Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*

With the ritual completed, the Shadow Road ends, and the party arrives in the Shadow Realm.

The courts appear abandoned, but the exact welcome depends on the PCs as much as the residents. Based on the encounters from Act I, the party should be 8th level as they arrive here, considering a medium progression and possibly achieving that milestone on the journey. GMs are encouraged to permit characters to level up as the journey concludes, as the threats will simply continue to escalate.

A Fey Welcome

If the party includes a fey PC, read the following:

The road ends at the bottom of a set of winding stairs carved out of a hillside amid fog and a shadowy forest. The dim light brightens for a moment, just enough to see towers and walls on two hills to the right and left.

The stairs themselves lead up to a well-lit set of gates; lanterns hang around a wide open set of doors, and a large armored figure is holding the doors open for you.

Sense Motive (DC 27)—The halls and corridors seem abandoned, but you keep hearing laughter in empty rooms.

The fey party may enter without incident; the monolith footman speaks to the fey PCs in Elvish saying, “The Courts grant you one night’s rest; you must depart come morning unless you have business here.” If the party leaves the next morning, they have an undisturbed extended rest and may continue down the Eastern road to the shadow fey city of Corremel, some 80–90 miles distant.

If the party neglects to vacate the premises, a footman comes to throw them out. Play out **Act II, Scene 1** (see page 50).

If there is no fey in the party, including drow, elf, gnome, or other characters of fey heritage, read the following:

The road ends at the bottom of a set of winding stairs carved out of a hillside; wisps of fog drift through a shadowy forest. The dim light is just bright enough to see towers and walls on hills to the right and left. The stairs are slick stone and seem to lead up to the saddle between the hills, but you hear no sign of habitation. An armored figure stands before the gates, a brightly burning sword lighting up the palace entrance on the hilltop above you.

The armor does not admit anyone through the gate that doesn't have a clear written invitation from the fey ambassador in Zobeck or from another fey source. The priests of Porevit and Yarila in Zobeck might qualify, as would a drow, elf, or gnome noble of the PC's home plane.

Perception (DC 25)—The halls and corridors seem abandoned, but you keep hearing laughter in empty rooms.

Atmospherics

A large part of this section is establishing an otherworldly tone and atmosphere. The PCs will be looking for people, monsters, and answers to why there's no one here. The fey are not inclined to provide those answers. Tease the PCs as long as you can with the sense that creatures are just around the corner. Here are some possibilities:

- PCs' shoes and boots all shined in the morning.
- A character's companion or familiar has a baked griddlecake.
- A candle left burning in a room.
- A fighter's armor shined and polished to a gleaming finish.
- Shifting, muttering shadows that turn to nothing when light is brought close. All non-fey take a -2 penalty to all Perception checks while in the illusion-shrouded halls.
- A book left open describes the various courtiers and welcoming rituals of the Courts of the Scáthsidhe. If a reader spends at least 1 hour with the book, the text begins to describe the PC and his or her companions, revealing their secrets, belongings, and hidden stories of their past. This book is a fey prank, meant to stir rivalries and encourage dueling. Some of its stories are pure invention, others are true.
- A small, glass ball the size of an orange rolls along near the PCs; it glows with dim purple light. The ball seems intent on going a particular direction, such as to the stables or even down some stairs. It leads the party wherever the GM would like them to explore. A Sense Motive check (DC 27) reveals the distant echo of children's voices speaking Elvish although no children are visible.

Tracking. Any ranger or other outdoorsy character trained in Survival can attempt to find tracks to penetrate the illusion of the halls (DC 22), revealing that the halls are used and lack any thick layer of dust. In addition, if that check succeeds, the PC finds many footprints in favorable terrain, such as the dust of the dueling grounds (**Area 2**) or the rookery (**Area 43**, page 46). Despite the masses of footprints indicating the presence of dozens and dozens of small creatures, the creatures themselves are not to be found.

Where is Everyone?

The Shadow Courts pay no attention to creatures of low Status or the uninvited, and the ambassador has not given the party an invitation to visit the palace. (He only invited them to his house in Zobeck because he's not foolish enough to provide a paper trail leading someone to accuse him of disloyalty or fraternization with humans). So, the PCs are among the uninvited.

As a result, the entire place is cloaked in illusion, which provides the first layer of defense for the courts. The only living creatures visible to the party are the animated footmen minions, the rooks in the rookery (**Area 33**), the owls in New Moon Hall (**Area 5**), and after some successful encounters with the footmen, the lantern dragonettes (see page 45). A variety of mice, rats, white foxes, doves, and other small animals also prowl the halls, and some of these may be shadow fey in disguise. Other creatures can sometimes be heard or noted tangentially, such as hounds howling and goblin servants singing or

INSIGHT VS. ILLUSION OF INVISIBLE COURT

According to the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, the appropriate mechanic to use against illusion is a Will save, not Sense Motive. The underlying mechanic is that willpower convinces the mind, not just surface appearances. However, Sense Motive works against bluffs and lies, and illusions are exactly that.

Furthermore, Sense Motive is ideal for dealing with some of the illusions here. The PC with the highest Sense Motive in the party should be the first to recognize that the court's illusions are illusions. This does NOT mean, however, that the PC sees through them, just that they are recognized as illusions. The DC to recognize an illusion for what it is requires a DC of 15 + the level of the effect. For the courts, the effects are all level 5 in the Lower Courts (or DC 20), level 7 in the Winter Palace (or DC 22), and level 9 in the Royal Halls (or DC 29).

If the PCs try to force their way in, they can certainly climb or bypass the guardian temporarily. Once in the halls themselves, the courts seem hollow and empty. Neither a View Location nor a Wizard's Sight ritual reveals even a sliver of the truth about the place; they merely show the illusion at a distance.

Within a few minutes of settling down for the night in an "empty" room, though, the footman arrives and demands they leave. Play out **Act II, Scene 1** (see page 50).

clapping or running. Every time a footman minion is killed, PCs might hear hammering and see firelight flickering in the smithy (Sense Motive DC 27) while the goblin smith Tenpound Hammer repairs the footman.

Status and Prestige Among the Fey

Status is not an ability score but an earned trait that has direct consequences in play. That is, it imposes a hierarchy of cliques and allegiances, keeping the "riff-raff" from simply immediately walking up to the queen and demanding to be heard. That would be a major social failure and result in punishment and a decline in Status, unless the queen were somehow "defeated" by being forced to listen to interlopers. In general, then, Status provides a gate that filters the unworthy and opens a door to those who are sufficiently prestigious to merit attention. As a result, only those worthy of her time may speak with the queen, and this system models that social climbing through a simple rank system.

PCs gain Status through their actions; impressive actions garner greater prestige, honor, power, and influence among the fey. A smaller proportion of Status ranks can be gathered from joining various factions or being granted various marks of distinction by fey lords and ladies.

Starting Status

For every PC, their starting Status rank in the Shadow Courts is equal to the following for any location where Status matters:

- Add the character's Charisma modifier.
- Add ranks, according to **Table 2-1: Titular Status** (see below), if a character is both fey and has a title such as knight, duke, or king (subject to GM approval for drow, elves, and gnomes). The table for fey titles is below; note that the shadow fey need



not respect titles granted by others courts and kingdoms, but they generally do so out of courtesy.

- Add a +2 bonus for PCs with the Elfmarked feat (*Midgard Campaign Setting*).
- Take a -1 penalty for characters who recieved the “haunt mask” (see **Act I, Scene 7**, “The Haunted Forest,” page 26)
- Take a -2 penalty for non-fey (only drow, elves, and gnomes avoid this penalty).

TABLE 2-1: TITULAR STATUS

STATUS	TITLE
+1	Knight, Court Mage, Guildmaster/Guildmistress
+2	Lord/Lady, Baron/Baroness, Archmage
+4	Duke/Duchess, Prince/Princess
+8	King/Queen, Emperor/Empress

Not every court follows the same rules, and different forms of nobility or different ruling groups might have different standards.

The penalty for non-fey reflects the particular customs of the shadow fey, and the penalty is quite deliberate. The shadow fey think themselves wholly superior to others, so some visitors (those with Status of 0 or less) are beneath their notice. It’s not that the shadow fey like other fey much better. It’s that they are biased against

halflings, humans, tieflings, devas, dragonborn, dwarves, goliaths, roachlings, and others.

For the purposes of this adventure, most non-fey begin with 0 or negative Status, and even most fey begin with Status of 5 or less. PCs can earn Status by taking actions in the courts to impress the fey. The following general items are available to all PCs: joining in fey politics, wooing and winning courtesans or consorts, and dueling all provide Status and are listed as treasures in the relevant encounters and the tables below.

Determining Status for NPCs and Others: Any PC may determine the Status of a member of the courts (Diplomacy (gather information): DC 20). PCs with fey heritage (such as drow, elves, and gnomes) gain a +2 bonus to this check.

Earned Status from Dueling

The fey place great importance on dueling properly, meaning that one challenges the correct sort of foe, the challenge is accepted, and the duel is fought with proper decorum and ceremony. The results then affect the participants’ Status from that day forward.

TABLE 2-2: GAINING STATUS IN DUELS

STATUS	ACTION
-8	Dueling the Black Prince and losing
-6	Caught cheating in a duel

-5	Caught dueling outside dueling season
-4	Declining a duel from a fey with a Status higher or lower than yours by 5 or less
-3	Challenging a fey to a duel whose Status is higher or lower than yours by 6 or more
-3	Losing a duel (whether in dueling season or not)
-2	Attacking a courtier without issuing a challenge to duel
-1	Losing a speed duel (see page 84)
0	Declining a duel from a fey with a Status higher or lower than yours by 6 or more
0	A duel that results in a tie
+1	Issuing a proper challenge that is declined
+1	Winning a speed duel (see page 84)
+2	Issuing or accepting a challenge outside dueling season
+4	Winning a duel during dueling season
+5	Accepting and losing a bridge duel (see page 84)
+6	Winning a duel outside dueling season
+7	Accepting and fighting a cliff duel (see page 86)
+8	Dueling the Black Prince and winning (see page 96)
+9	Dueling Lord Suvid and winning (see page 91)
+10	Winning a bridge duel (see page 84)

The dueling Status changes are not cumulative; only the greatest particular positive modifier and the greatest particular negative modifier apply.

Status Other Than Dueling

Status—especially Status among the fey—may be quite fleeting: easy to gain with a little luck, even easier to lose. Characters may lose or gain enormous Status in a single ill-considered act: a squire may grow well loved while saving the king from a hunting accident or a foolish courtier may be tricked into insulting the queen's costume at a masquerade and be banished from the Upper Court.

The table below lists some of the opportunities to gain or lose major Status in a single night. Other Status awards should be granted as appropriate.

TABLE 2-3: GAINING STATUS IN THE SHADOW COURTS

STATUS	ACTION
+1	Defeat a monolith footman (limit 5 times)
+1	Success with Diplomacy, Bluff, or Intimidate (limit once per skill)
+1	Success with Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), or Knowledge (nature) (limit once per skill)
+1	Play a successful prank on a shadow fey (or servant, for those PCs with Status <5)
+1	Joining the Ravens or Lords of Light factions
+variable	Woo and win a courtesan or consort (see page 72)
+2	Defeat the demon lord Akyishigal's minions (see page 92)
+2	Given a lantern dragonette as a gift by the Blood Royal (see page 45)
+3	Save a courtier from danger

+3	Prevent a brawl
+4	Joining the Grey Ladies faction
+4	Bring the firebird to the court (see page 100)
+4	Give the firebird to the queen (cumulative with the bringing to court)
+5	Become the Demon Lord Akyishigal's lover (see page 92)
+5	Drinking claret and/or going hunting with the Black Prince (see page 96)
+6	Defeat the Black Prince's raven assassins/death butterflies (see page 101)
+7	Defeat the Aspect of Akyishigal and drive him from court (see page 92)
+8	Woo and win the Sapphire Courtesan (see page 82)
+9	Become the queen's lover and favorite (see page 104)

TABLE 2-4: LOSING STATUS IN THE SHADOW COURTS

STATUS	ACTION
-1	Being the victim of a fey prank
-1	Attempt to browbeat or threaten the queen's servants to gain an audience
-1	Killing more than a single goblin or other servant
-1	Associating with a vandal, arsonist, or murderer in the commission of crimes
-2	Fleeing a noble who seeks your arrest or imprisonment
-2	Foiled by a fey illusion
-2	Seen sneaking into the palace over the walls
-2	Failing to win a courtesan/consort
-2	Killing more than 5 goblins or servants
-3	Attacking a lantern dragonette
-3	Brawling (any general melee that draws a crowd)
-3	Killing royal ravens or a swarm of death butterflies
-3	Vandalism or arson in the courts
-4	Caught sneaking into a restricted wing of the palace with a weapon, armor, or implement
-5	Decline a direct order from the Blood Royal
-5	Killing a lantern dragonette
-6	Killing a firebird
-6	Discarded from the queen's affections
-7	Insulting the Blood Royal
-8	Threatening or attacking the queen

Required Status for Certain Encounters

A minimum Status is required to merit the attention of certain major NPCs at the courts and, thus, to gain admittance to important encounters, such as meeting Lord Suvid and perhaps a demon prince. And of course, in the longer term, the PCs will wish to meet the queen herself—but to have any hope of that, a character's Status must be of a certain level.

At a first approximation, PCs will need a Status rank around 26 to meet the queen, a Status of 13 to woo the most junior courtesans and to duel some of the more powerful duelists.

Courts of the Shadow Fey

They need a Status of 11 and 15 to be invited to join factions such as the Grey Ladies and the Lords of Light, respectively. All this provides incentive to duel, to win courtesans and consorts, and to politic with fey factions. Most players, once they understand the system exists, are quick to try to exploit it. Reward them with Status, crush them with penalties, and see them contend among themselves to become famous and respected.

Consequences of High and Low Status

When the party arrives, they have done nothing and earned no respect, so the Invisible Court ignores them. Like a cat or a bird, they are simply not worth noting. Servants like the footmen and the psoglav demondogs are the first to notice the PCs.

PCs with negative or very low Status cannot even speak to the major nobles of the court; they are ignored and quickly ushered out. The PC with the highest Status—and being fey breaks a tie—is always addressed first by the Status-canny NPCs of the court and might win other favors or advantages.

TABLE 2-5: STATUS AND FEY BEHAVIOR

STATUS	BEHAVIOR
0 or less	Invisible. Not worthy of notice except by monolith footmen and empty cloaks. Only allowed in the Lower Courts although it's possible to climb over walls to other areas.
1–5	Arrival, Mostly Invisible. Sometimes worthy of notice by “animals,” court musician, goblins, demon dogs, horses, and changelings.
6–10	Closing Out Invisible Courts. Noticed by servants, young rakes, courtesans and consorts, and the elderly Grey Ladies although treated condescendingly. Allowed into the true form of the Lower Courts and allowed through the gate into the Winter Palace.
11–15	Offered True Sight by the Blind Seer Revich. Noticed but frequently insulted by noble courtiers. Not insulted by servants, rakes, courtesans and consorts, and Grey Ladies. Able to woo courtesans or consorts. Invited to speak to demon lord Akyishigal and join his faction.
16–20	Honored Guests. Now visible to most courtiers except for the most senior, such as prince and demon lord, not insulted by most courtiers, given bows and addressed as “Sir” and “Milady” by servants and marginal fey.
21–25	Invited Hunting by the Black Prince. Spoken to by the senior courtiers and visible to all courtiers. Treated with honor by young rakes, courtesans and consorts, and Grey Ladies.
26 or more	Persons of Royal Interest. Invited to an audience with the queen and addressed respectfully by all fey. Possible romantic ties to prince, princess, queen, or demon lord.

Status Bonus to Social Rolls

In the courts, your Status is just as real and consequential as your sword. Characters with high Status may use it to browbeat, impress, or threaten others more successfully than those with low Status. These free feats are available to PCs as well, though they may not know about them at first.

The feats have the following rules.

Courtier of the Shadows [Shadow Courts]

Requirement: Shadow Court Status of 11 or higher, faction member

Benefit: You may add +2 to Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate skill checks against those with a lower Status.

Dominion of the Shadow Court [Shadow Courts]

Requirement: Drow, elf, gnome, or shadow fey, and Shadow Court Status of 21 or higher

Benefit: You may add +5 to Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate skill checks against those with a lower Status.

Fey Trade & Barter: Body, Soul, Memories

Among the fey, it is not uncommon to trade in the abstract and to make the arcane and the spiritual concrete and mercantile. Indeed, that is a large part of their trade at various fairs (such as the Birch Queen's Fair in *Wrath of the River King*) and of their trade with mortals. Fey prize mortal emotions and memories as “more authentic” or “primitive” compared to those of longer-lived creatures.

Gifts

The first main category is gifts, such as skills, endurance, physical and mental prowess, even prestige—all the things associated with a particular individual's success or growth over time. Hagglng can be done as opposed Sense Motive and Bluff checks. You are probably better off just roleplaying most barter. The fey consider four traditional categories of gifts:

Gifts of the Mind and Body. A fey may trade his speed, fortitude, and so forth to another. These must be given willingly and are usually exchanged in pairs. A maximum of a -2 penalty to any one ability score while another rises by up to +2 may be made. In some rare cases, one party trades a gift of mind and body in exchange for crucial memories or learning.

Gifts of Learning. These are skills, traded permanently or temporarily for a set purpose. A character trading for a skill becomes trained or loses trained status. Among the fey, they often trade a few other “skills” as well: poetry, song, and crafting arts—even skill at dance or love. Loaning a poet's gift of inspiration to another fey is considered a wildly romantic gesture.

Gifts of the Arcane, Primal, and Divine. Divine spells granted by deities (rather than those available to rangers or druids) are not widely available among the fey and are valued as a result. Arcane and natural gifts are relatively common and are traded permanently or sometimes loaned. Failure to return a loan may cause a fey to wither and die or merely to twist to evil. It is considered a horrible sign to renege on such a bargain.

Gifts of Status. A PC may gain or give away Status to a fey. This is quite rare (the fey themselves tend to see it as a major occasion on par with a wedding or funeral). The deed itself is a simple blood oath, followed by the giver kneeling to the giftee and the transfer of Status—invariably accompanied by a loss of XP as well. This

experience point loss varies by the amount of Status given; see the table below. Note that the table cannot be circumvented by making 3 gifts of 2 points on 3 days in a row; the result in that case is still the loss of 1,600 XP. One such gift may be made per month.

TABLE 2-6: GIFTS AND STATUS

STATUS POINTS GIVEN	XP LOST
1–2	400
3–4	900
5–6	1,600
7–8	2,500
9+	3,600

The XP cost is permanent. Status granted in this way can never be returned in the same fashion; it is purely a one-way, one-time gift.

Fey Treasures: Emotions Worthy of the Touch

The greatest trick of some fey magic regarding gifts, memory, and emotion is the ability to give them physical form, using a ritual like the Incantation of Memories Lost (see page 25). These are typically stored in cabinets as small bottles of liquid; touching the bottle, a PC can feel a tinge of the emotions kept in it. Pouring the contents out produces effects as shown below:

THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP

You swore an oath of blood and mingled tears; both of you against the injustice of the shadow fey. Goblin blood held true, a dozen years of watchful friendship and laughter behind the courtier's backs. No harm must come to your closest companion!

Swift action to activate; Will DC 15+wielder's Charisma or Diplomacy bonus; Target must attack another creature or end its attack for (Charisma Bonus) rounds (at least 1).

PHILTER OF COWARD'S SHAME

You remember how the queen banished you for your cowardice and how the court laughed. Even your mother turned her back. You could not return to the courts until she died.

Standard action to activate; Will DC 15+wielder's Charisma or Intimidation bonus; a single target flees in terror from the holder for (Charisma Bonus) rounds (at least 1).

PHILTER OF YOUTHFUL JOY

You remember the sunshine and the shadows of the Margreve, picking bluebells as a young girl: the laughter of a child and the boundless strength of youth.

Standard action to activate; Target gains 3d8+3 hp or loses the fatigued or exhausted conditions.

PHILTER OF RAGING LUST

You tore her spider silk bridal dress in the treetops and dropped the shreds to the forest floor. You shook the leaves from the trees, and her cries set the birds to flight. You would have done anything she asked.

Standard action to activate; Will DC 15+ wielder's Charisma or Bluff bonus; one target is charmed by the wielder with

a save allowed each day; Second failed save—Target is dominated (save ends); Third failed save—Target is dominated until he or she spends an equal amount of time away from wielder as spent with wielder.

PHILTER OF RIGHTEOUS WRATH

The queen's rage swept everything before her, and you, her champion destroyed all you touched. Die, traitor! Die faithless creatures!

Standard action to activate; Will DC 15+wielder's Wisdom bonus; All successful attacks both by and against the holder's foes within 30 ft. are automatic criticals until holder's next turn; only the holder is not affected.

PHILTER OF WIDOW'S TEARS

She died in your arms, the glorious spider-maiden who spun your wedding vest and embroidered the lace you wore so proudly as the Statthalter of Corremel. Oh, that it should end thus. She was always the one who was meant to outlive your foolish plotting.

Standard action to activate; Will DC 15+wielder's Wisdom bonus; a single target within 30 ft. is stunned by a feeling of devastating grief (save ends).

Development. The party that uses such items may well encounter the person whose memories they consumed, for better or worse. In such a case, both sides may recognize what happened when the shared memory sets up some kind of arcane resonance between the original creature whose memory was captured and the PC who now remembers the event.

MORE FEY TREASURES

Memories of Times Past. Some fey trade memories of important days, such as weddings, battles, or first kisses. These memories have whatever price one cares to name for them. In most cases, the memory of another such event is required in exchange.

Memories of Great Prowess. You trade away (or gain) a critical hit. For instance, a hero might forget the critical hit that slew a dragon and gain a future success (his next 19 becomes a critical). The loss of that memory is expensive, for the PC loses 100 XP. The reverse is also possible, although the GM should permit it only once: a character can gain 100 XP from a fey's memory of wooing the queen, winning a duel, or whatever. In exchange, the character's next critical hit of 20 is automatically a failure of 1. Note that memories may also have other effects, such as enabling change to the Fey Roads (see page 25).

Future Moment of Success. A character can trade away a future saving throw for a future critical hit (it's never clear what one has traded with the fey). By agreeing to fail a future saving throw, you gain an automatically confirmed critical to use in the future. Or vice versa, you give up your next critical hit until such time as you make your next saving throw (when you make the save, you regain the ability to make critical hits). The fey making the trade gains the "lost" critical hit or save.

The Trade: Memory In, Memory Out

Extracting memories requires a few herbs and a 10-minute ritual, the *Incantation of Memories Lost* (see page 25). The character losing the memory, skill, or attribute also makes a Fortitude save (DC 15). If it succeeds, there's no adverse effect, and the ritual

THE SHADOW FEY COURTS

ONE SQUARE = 10 FEET

Lower Halls

1. Winter Gate
2. Dueling Grounds and Arcade
3. The Silver Tree
4. Ramp Up to the Winter Palace
5. New Moon Hall
6. Smithy
7. Kitchens
8. Goblin Court
9. Lesser Guests' Quarters
10. Stables
11. Librarium and Kennels
12. Guards Hall
13. Stairs Up to Royal Hall





The Winter Palace

- 14. Executioner's Gate
- 15. Hounds' Run
- 16. Hall of Banners
- 17. Servant's Quarters
- 18. Puzzle Box Chamber
- 19. Chamber of the Grey Ladies
- 20. Chambers of the King's Players
- 21. Kitchens
- 22. Major Domo's Chamber
- 23. Well of Ice
- 24. Hall of Changelings
- 25. Shrine to the Shadow Gods
- 26. Buttress of the Bridge of Night
- 27. The Flame-Cloaked Consort
- 28. The Silver-Chained Courtesan
- 29. Officers' Chambers
- 30. Visiting Nobles' Chambers
- 31. The Baron Coughspittle
- 32. The Count Sammas Hollowgrin
- 33. The Duke Rackclasp
- 34. The Lady of the Pale Gardens
- 35. Lady Marrowsilk
- 36. Lord Chelessfield, Lady Sorreminx, and the Red Knight Sir Yngress
- 37. Lord Maruuk
- 38. Lightning Lord Suvid
- 39. Mistress Gossamer
- 40. Princess Graystone and Prince Loric Oakbound
- 41. Guest's Chamber
- 42. Hidden Stairs to Forest and the Labyrinth
- 43. Rookery
- 44. Moon-Viewing Tower

The Royal Halls

- 45. The Open Portal
- 46. The Small Courtyard
- 47. The Long Hall
- 48. Kitchens
- 49. Chamber of the Black Mirror
- 50. Chamber of the Huntsmen
- 51. Tower of the Lords of Light
- 52. Well of Night
- 53. The Black Prince's Chambers
- 54. Courtesan of the Seven Veils
- 55. The Rain-Cloaked Courtesan
- 56. The Raven-Haired Courtesan
- 57. The Frost-Eyed Consort
- 58. The Sapphire Courtesan
- 59. Waiting Salon
- 60. Duke's Chambers
- 61. The King and Queen's Chambers
- 62. The Great Hall of the Shadow Court
- 63. Royal Audience Chamber
- 64. The Princess's Chamber
- 65. Chamber of Lord Suvid
- 66. Storage
- 67. Maid's Chamber
- 68. Solarium

proceeds normally. If the check fails, the character takes 3 hp of nonlethal damage which cannot be healed until the character leaves the Shadow Realm. The memory may be swapped with the recipient immediately (the most common practice), or it may be stored in a vial of semiprecious stone (carved crystal, jade, and even glass) for later use. This second option requires additional skill (Knowledge (arcana) DC 24). If that check fails, the memory goes to the recipient, rather than the vial.

Opening or receiving a memory requires the same Fortitude save (DC 15). If it succeeds, the transfer goes smoothly, and the recipient is stunned for 1 round, consciousness flooded by the memory, skill, or attribute. After that, the ability gained is accessed normally although memories are always clearly those of someone else. If the Fortitude save fails, the character takes 3 hp of nonlethal damage which can't be recovered until the character leaves the Shadow Realm, and is stunned for 1 minute. The transfer still succeeds.

Locations and Conditions in the Court

The Shadow Courts are set up in three "islands" or sections, each built around a main hall with many side passages. These islands stand above the forest; the cliffs leading up to them are easily climbed but are also the home of several hundred shadows (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) and dozens of shadow demons (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*). The three sections are the Winter Gate and Lower Halls, the Eastern Palace, and the Royal Halls. Far below the castle is a dark forest whose roads lead to various points of interest in the Shadow Realm.

Climbing Over the Walls. A party can climb up and over the palace walls with little difficulty. If the party does not exercise stealth (Stealth DC 18), however, they immediately take a -2 penalty to Status. After all, only thieves, spies, and desperate lovers sneak into the palace. If they attempt stealth and fail, they take the same loss of Status.

If the Stealth check fails by 5 or more, guards are summoned. Otherwise, the Status loss is merely from being observed and gossiped about.

Cicerone and Guides. The goblins are the traditional guides to the courts for visitors; they appear only if the party leaves the Invisible Courts. As cicerone, they know their way around the concerns of Status, the chambers best avoided, and so on. Hiring one (at 10 gp/day) grants a +1 bonus to Diplomacy (gather information) and Diplomacy checks made at the court.

There are limits to these guides; they are also somewhat lazy and intimidated by entering the chambers of the powerful. They flatly refuse to advise on any issue involving demons, devils, or the Blood Royal: "It ain't helpful to one's health and prosperitation to dabble with them, sirs."

Guards. The armored suits, like the monolith footmen, are tuned to the Status of visitors. If the PCs have sufficient Status, the footmen ignore them. A Status of 6 or better is required to no longer trigger the footmen in the Lower Courts. For the Winter Palace and the Royal Halls, the required Status is 11 and 16, respectively.

Goblins and Servants. For low-Status visitors, goblins are a useful source of information; they are short, puny, and easily intimidated (Intimidate DC 12) although goblins are notorious liars and not truly cooperative even when threatened. Generally, they run away from any threat (speed 30 ft.). Killing them is considered poor form and results in a -1 penalty to Status if more than one is killed and a -2 penalty for everyone involved in killing more than 5 of them.

As a courtier is likely to put it to a bloodthirsty PC, "It is so difficult to find good help, and I understand you've been thinning out the herd lately. I quite understand: terrible service and the insolence. But, er, could you keep it down to a thrashing? Goblins don't grow on trees."

Servants can also retaliate through gossip, informing on PC misdeeds, and the "goblin curse." This war of servant enmity results in poor or moldering food, lost mundane items, such as shoes and hats, embarrassing meetings with former lovers and current foes, and so on. This also results in a -2 penalty to all of that PC's skill checks until the character makes an astonishingly sincere apology or pays a fine commensurate with the offense at the Goblin Court (see area 8).

Shadow Doors. A few of the doors are marked as shadow doors on the map; these include the Winter Gate (or Western Gate), the Eastern Gate, the Executioner's Gate, and some of the interior doors such as the entrance to the King and Queen's Chambers (**Area 61**). Opening a shadow door requires a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (variable DC) to determine the proper sequence of mystic passes and light flashes to open and shut. The DC is given for each gate in the area descriptions.

The Lower Halls

- 1. Winter Gate (or Western Gate).** The Winter Gate stands well guarded at the head of a long stair carved out of the cliff below the Winter Palace. Usually misty and lit by a single oil lantern, the gate seems almost abandoned. A monolith footman (see page 51) always stands guard at the door; a small inset window opens to allow the footman to ask questions. The gate itself is warded as a shadow door (Knowledge (arcana) DC 23 to open).
- 2. Dueling Grounds and Arcade.** This open square field of pale greenish-grey grass is one where children play, where duels are fought in dueling season, where lovers declaim poetry, and where captains drill their troops. Surrounded by the arches of a carved and leafy colonnade, the dueling grounds are almost always home to someone. The Royals and fey of high Status visit only during dueling season.
- 3. The Silver Tree.** The courtyard's main feature is a tree with white bark and red and silver flowers. It is a favored spot for young lovers, courtesans, and poets (1d4-2 people are common). Lantern dragonettes often roost in the Silver Tree's branches.
- 4. Ramp Up to the Winter Palace.** This is a steep and cobbled passage up to the Winter Gate: difficult terrain and treacherously slippery due to fog, ice, and rain (Acrobatics DC 18 under those conditions or a person on the ramp will slip and fall down the steep cobbles, inflicting 1d12 damage or double that if the skill check result is a roll of 1).
- 5. New Moon Hall.** The hall where most visitors are first received: dimly lit and open to the air along the southern arcade. The hall is a bit of a maze, containing more than 30 striped marble pillars. The New Moon Hall is always thronged with crows by day and both forest owls and death butterflies by night. It smells vaguely of fox urine.
- 6. Smithy.** There is a small smithy with anvil, ancient bellows, and an open floor plan to let the heat escape. Used for repairs and often echoing with hammering sounds; this is also a place of superstitious dread among some of the fey, owing to the amount of iron worked here alongside

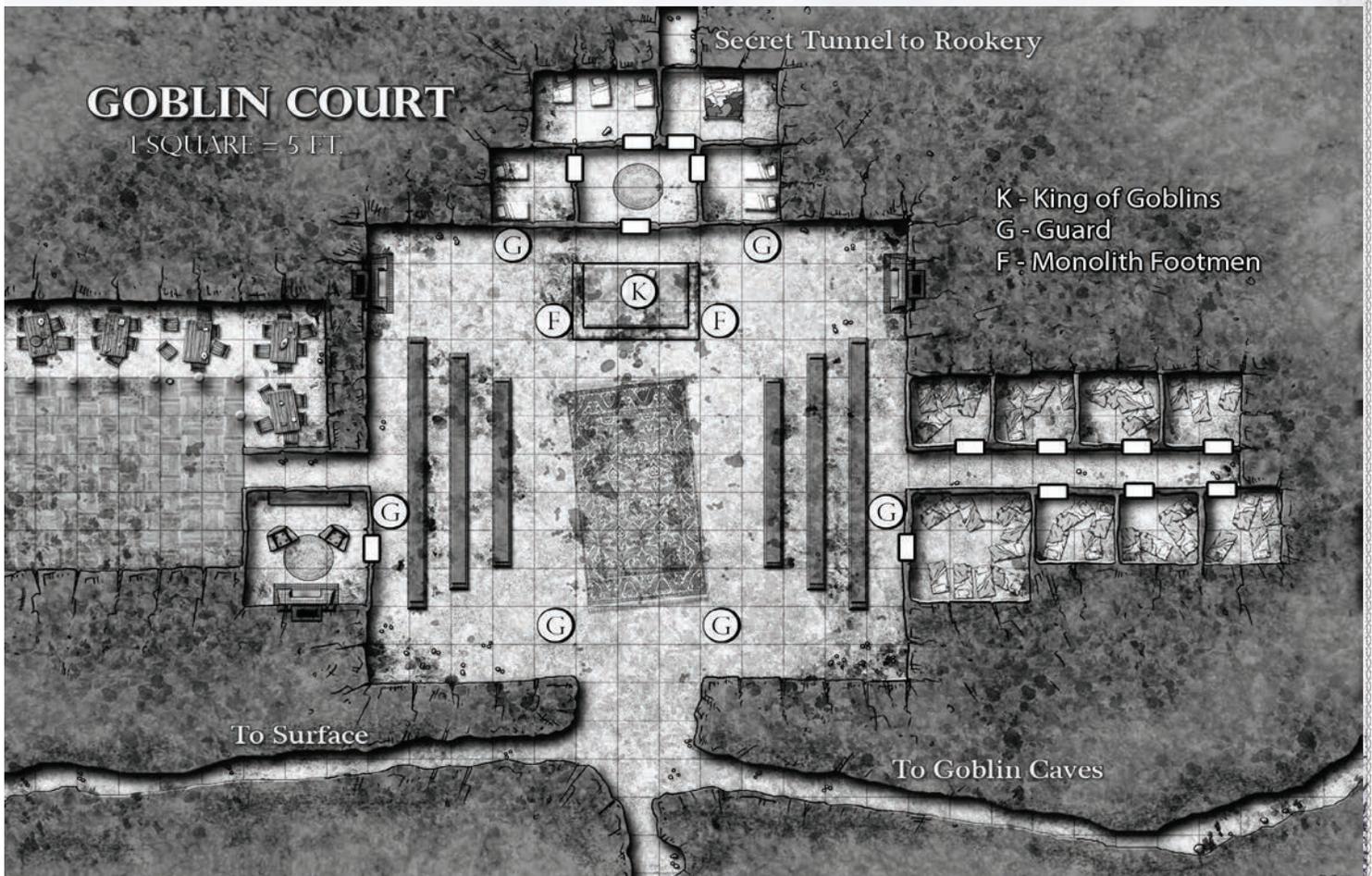
bronze, copper, silver, and mithril. The smith in charge of repairing swords and animated suits of armor here is Tenpound Hammer (a bit of a boast, and better known by his nickname “Nails”).

7. **Kitchens.** Pure chaos. The cook here is Blazing Barda, a goblin, who is ably assisted by the orc butcher Skrazag the Meek. Things are plucked, stewed, and served as slop in very large quantities here for the Lower Court. None of this food goes to the Upper Courts. Root cellars and wine cellars connect to the kitchens, but neither is connected to the Upper Courts although rumors claim they do connect to the Goblin Court.
8. **Goblin Court.** The lowest and most vulgar of the fey courts is the Goblin Court, where presides Moggo the Chamberlain as “king.” He rules on issues affecting servants and low-Status visitors and tends to behave as a tyrant—the carpet before his “throne” is splattered with blood. Bribery, flattery, and outrageous betrayals are common, and subtlety is almost unknown here. As long as the queen’s rolls are hot and the butter is sweet, she cares not what happens below. The courtly audiences are held at off-hours, when most servants sleep. The Goblin Hall extends along tunnels into the hill beneath the Winter Palace although few know just how far those tunnels extend or that the goblins have their own dancing hall.
9. **Lesser Guest’s Quarters.** Simple but clean rooms. Each contains a bed of linens over rushes, a pitcher of clean water, and a three-legged stool. The rooms cannot be locked.

THE POSTER MAP OF THE COURTS

A larger poster and battle mat of **The Shadow Fey Courts** map is available at KoboldQuarterly.com. Most of the adventure’s encounter areas are provided in the smaller detail maps, which will account for the major set piece encounters, but if your party is keen on wandering around the palace wings at night, you may want a larger version of the two-page map given here.

10. **Stables.** Goblin and changeling grooms watch over the black and white horses of the shadow fey nobles. In addition, the biggest and best of the pens in the stable is the home of Lazulin, the blue horse of the royal family. The prince most often rides it although some believe it is actually an entire herd of magical sky-travelling steeds. Certainly, the king and queen are said to sometimes turn the horse into one grey and one azure pair for their journeys among the clouds at equinox, when the rulership and crown of the Shadow Realm change hands. The goblin grooms will violently defend Lazulin if they must (see page 54 for a suggested encounter with the beast).
11. **Librarium and Kennels.** A once-great hall of learning, it is now a mass of rat-eaten scrolls and moldering tomes. A Search check (DC 30), however, might reveal that this is largely illusory. The hall stores provender for the stables and bags of grain and root vegetables for the kitchens. In addition, Kennelmaster Kolya watches over the Black Prince’s hounds and shadow mastiffs here, when they are not



with their master on the hunt or keeping him company in the courts themselves (see page 54).

12. **Guards' Hall.** Lesser nobles seeking to curry favor with the royals often send a company of fey archers, swordsmen, or quickling blades to the palace to serve for a season. At the moment, the guards are a company of the black shadow fey of Allosis, led by Captain Imbemerethion.
13. **Stairs Up to Royal Halls.** These are wide, shallow stairs of beautiful marble. Two lantern dragonettes light the portal at the top (see area 45 of the Royal Halls). This is a shadow door, and if the PCs have less than 11 Status, it requires a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 27) to open.

The Winter Palace

14. **Executioner's Gate.** The shriveled heads of enemies and entire corpses in iron cages are displayed along the palace wall; these remains are years old, but the fey keep them as a reminder and as an encouragement to loyalty. The gate is made of oak banded with iron and is shut each night. It is guarded by a footman; only fey or visitors with a Status of 6 or better are allowed within.
15. **Hounds' Run.** Creatures entering the Winter Palace are investigated by the Black Prince's shadow mastiffs (see page 54) or by the psoglav demon hounds (see page 54), both of whom use this courtyard as an exercise and play space.
16. **Hall of Banners.** Aside from the decorations and mementos for which it is named, this room is typically empty, reserved for courtly functions and meetings.
17. **Servants' Quarters.** The brownies, animal-headed humans, changelings, half-elves, and other low-Status servants, exiles, and outcasts who do much of the scut work at the court live in these shared barracks; goblins and hobgoblins live in the Lower Courts. Cots and beds are a luxury, and not all servants rate them; those who serve a particular fey noble sleep outside their door in the hall. Grooms, kitchen help, maids, and footmen are quite willing to taunt or mock low-Status outsiders who have no real clout; all are even more willing to toady and cater to those with any real sign of Status in exchange for food, magical trifles, or a decent story.
18. **Puzzle Box Chamber.** Fey send annoying guests and small children to wander here for a few hours; the room has stairs on the ceiling and every exit leads right back into the same room. Getting out is as simple (or as difficult) as taking a hidden bend in the stairs on the ceiling, which leads to the New Moon Hall in the Lower Courts.
19. **Chamber of the Grey Ladies.** This room seems twice as large inside as outside. Impossibly bright tapestries of pure gold and silver hang on the walls, and woven carpets of rich red, black, and grey cover the floor. Three large looms are set here and are attended at all times by at least one of the Grey Ladies.
20. **Chambers of the King's Players.** The tumbled mess of the King's Players is dirty, active, and loud most hours as the jesters, acrobats, and actors of various pretty trifles amuse themselves and practice their arts. They are also quite casual in their behavior and dress, often naked and sometimes sharing quite intimate secrets in public. The other fey seem to consider this normal. They do not have a stage as such but perform in the dueling grounds or Small Court in good weather and in the Halls when weather is poor.
21. **Winter Palace Kitchens.** Ovens, sinks, cauldrons, and knives wielded by goblins, fey condemned to punishment as scullery maids and pot boys, and Fat Lobbo, the half-ogre cook.
22. **Majordomo's Chamber.** The center of the servant's world is the majordomo's plain room with its two chairs and fine tapestry dividing it (and hiding the bed from the door). The major furnishing is a writing desk and an account book, where rest two inkhorns and a handful of reed pens, keeping track of stores and supplies as well as favors owed, servants gained and lost, demerits for goblins and changelings, and so on. *While Invisible:* Old furnishings, abandoned papers.
23. **Well of Ice.** The chilled water from this well is drawn up about 18 hours/day by strong goblin arms and taken to the kitchen. *While Invisible:* The well has no rope or bucket.
24. **Hall of Changelings.** This hall is the court for those not of great enough Status to visit the Royal Halls. This makes its schemes and politics no less deadly (2d6 courtiers are present at any given time).
25. **Shrine to the Shadow Gods.** Always dark and empty of lantern dragonettes, the shrine smells faintly of mold but shines with a thousand small silver treasures, each nailed to the shrine walls as an offering in the shape of an eye, hand, foot, or heart (Sleight of Hand DC 14 removes a total of 200 gp—and calls down a fey curse). The primary gods here are Anu-Akma, the god of death and judgment, (see *Imperial Gazetteer*) and the Red Goddess of Lust and Death (see *Zobeck Gazetteer*) although St. Charon and even the martial aspect of Perun, the god of War, have their icons here as well. The walls are lined with fine marble statues of ancestral kings and queens such as the Werewolf King, the Stag King, and the Jack of Shadows, as well as the Starlit Queen of the Pixies, the Eclipsed Queen, Comet Queen, and Queen Mab (see *The Faerie Ring* from Zombie Sky Press for more details on Mab and other fey lords).
26. **Buttress of the Bridge of Night.** The wall leads to a bridge abutment, and a bridge connects to the royal apartments across the valley of the Lower Courts—but the substance of the bridge exists only at night and only when the king or queen wishes it. The bridge can be trod upon by visitors of Status 11 or higher; those of lower Status can walk about 30 ft. out on it, then fall through. The shadow fey often fight duels on the bridge, but this is extremely risky; the duels begin at the bridge's midpoint, and when one duelist wins and the other loses, the loser often plunges through the shadow substance of the bridge to his or her death 60 ft. below (6d6 falling damage).
27. **Private Apartments of the Flame-Cloaked Consort.** The elf consort Hargos wears an illusion of a cloak of fire over his bare muscled chest; his hearty laugh is often heard in the Hall of Changelings and the Small Court. As a junior consort, he is not often allowed to visit the Royal Halls, and he makes the most of those opportunities, flattering and paying homage to the greatest of the shadow fey ladies. Most of the lords view him with deep suspicion although

his behavior is always in exact keeping with shadow fey standards of decorum. His chambers are furnished in fine woods and pale leathers, scented with pine. A small fire burns at the room's center at all times; two brownie servants take turns feeding the fire.

28. Private Apartments of the Silver-Chained Courtesan.

The junior courtesan is an elf maiden named Lishekki. Her purple hair and extremely pale skin shows to good advantage against the black, tarnished silver chains that constitute her only garments. Male fey consider her an exotic beauty, and the ladies consider her a single step above a whore. Unfortunately for Lishekki, as the junior courtesan (and an elf to boot) she is in no position to do much to counter that sort of talk—which is why she is currently seeking a client who's handy with blade or spell to call out her greatest detractor: Brightspur, leader of the Ravens.

29. Captain of Guard's and Officers' Chambers. These are simple rooms for the current leader of the palace's troops. Currently held by Captain Imbemerethion, who was believed to be a favorite of the king's and who is rather out of favor with the queen.

30. Visiting Nobles' Chamber. Reserved for lesser knights and nobles visiting the courts, this room is furnished well with a canopy bed, chairs, writing table, dining table, and at least one or two modest tapestries.

31. Private Chamber of the Baron Coughspittle. The shadow fey Lord of Rotting Leaves and Watcher of the Fractured Gate has many enemies among the fey and is always attended by a monolith footman and an empty cloak (see page 51). His chamber smells of forests after rain, and his bedding and tapestries all depict autumn scenes. The baron is a great storyteller and entraps any visitors in long reminiscences that sometimes last until dawn (save ends after only 1 hour, rather than 12).

32. Private Chamber of the Count Sammas Hollowgrin. The archmagus of the shadow fey is a force of incredible arcane power, and the door leading into his chambers always announces visitors in a loud voice, declaiming their names and titles at high volume (alerting him and his neighbors), no matter the hour. The chamber itself is a palace-within-the-palace with 15 rooms around a central courtyard (not shown on the map), invisible servants, and elf maidens (his apprentices); it's much bigger on the inside than the outside would let on—a small pocket dimension, really. Count Sammas has little patience for fools and claimants and can only direct the party helpfully if they make it past his many secretaries, appointment-book-keepers, underlings, and well-wishers (requires 4 successes before 3 failures; Diplomacy DC 20). He is also the royal standard bearer and herald, Master of Fence, the Lord of Fallen Archways and Broken Swords, meaning he knows literally everyone at the court and their secrets. Count Sammas wants nothing to do with the Zobeck problem; he's trying to restore the king's mind to sanity and keep shadow demons from overrunning things. Play him as not absent-minded but simply involved in larger problems.

33. Private Chamber of His Grace, Duke Rackclasp. The shadow fey Warden of the Early Frost and First Bonecarver is both an invoker and necromancer. His chambers are

LANTERN DRAGONETTES

Lantern dragonettes are a form of pseudodragon with scales like tarnished silver; their belly glows from within with an orange light that gives them their name. This glow can be muted when they keep their scales laid flat, a bit like a lantern shutter; the glow is brightest when their scales are held away from the body. Lantern dragonettes illuminate a 15 ft. radius around them as a swift action, and they usually obey commands to dim their light when requested. They eat insects, mice, and small birds, as well as bread and scraps. The fey seem to have bred them for docility; they have no effective attacks to speak of and flee when threatened. (No statistics are provided beyond their defenses, which are AC 21, Fort +8, Reflex +12, Will +8; two hits are generally enough to kill one. They have speed 20, fly 50.) Residents or guests being given a lantern dragonette to accompany them and light their way in the palace halls is a sign of great favor from the royals; that character gains +3 bonus to Status for owning a lantern dragonette. Only about 20 or so dragons live in the palace, and they are treasured by most of the court (kitchen staff are a notable exception). If a PC's dragonette is killed, this results in an immediate -5 penalty to Status, just as if they had killed it themselves.

What is not known by any but the most senior among the fey is that the lantern dragonettes are spies for the Blood Royal. Each dawn, when the lantern dragonettes have all dimmed their lights, they visit with the queen or the prince and—after a short ritual—they tell the juiciest stories of the court's doings, betrayals, romances, and feuds as a sort of bedtime tale. Many conversations told by lantern light are known to the queen by the time the dragonettes all sleep at noon. A few fey believe that the lantern dragonettes can serve as the eyes and ears of the Blood Royal more directly, that the royals can look directly through their eyes under certain conditions.

Lantern dragonettes are detailed on page 31 of the *Book of Drakes*.

strewn with chips of bone and always kept below freezing. Visitors take 2d10 cold damage each round they spend in his room.

34. Private Chamber of Jalennis, Lady of the Pale Gardens. The shadow fey druid of the court is responsible for the growth and health of the forests, gardens, and labyrinth of the courts. She is found in her chamber only when sleeping.

35. Private Chamber of Lady Marrowsilk. The Queen's Counsel and most learned advocate is a traitor to the fey cause, providing information to Lord Maruuk; she is often found in his chambers. Alternately, she is a loyal warlock who pumps Lord Maruuk for a great deal of information, always sharing that information with the queen. She's certainly interested in hearing from high-Status PCs, yet she says almost nothing of value while hinting she can solve their problems. She wants the Sapphire Courtesan dead out of pure professional jealousy.

36. Lord Chessfield, Lady Sorreminx, and the Red Knight Sir Yngress. These three elves from the River King's Court keep to themselves except during dueling season and major festivals. They are trying to forge a marriage alliance between the River King's daughter, Ripple, and the

Black Prince or another titled shadow fey noble without much success.

37. **Chambers of Lord Maruuk.** The diabolical ambassador loves the Shadow Court and the many fey of loose morals who seek power. It's almost too easy here, and he certainly offers the PCs much the same bargain. In exchange for their souls (an alignment change one step toward chaotic evil) he offers information and gossip. He especially wants the Demon Lord Akyishigal and the Lightning Lord dead, as both have foiled his own rise to power at the court more than once.
38. **Chambers of Lightning Lord Suvid.** The Quickling Lord of Blades has a peculiar chamber, small and neat as a jeweled egg—three times the size within as without. The walls are covered with small, neatly stacked boxes full of preserved ears and scalps from foes and a large well-used grinding wheel stands to one side of the entrance. The chamber has the smell of leather and metal. He is already drafting Statthalter Eigenstil's first proclamation, which is heavy on the "if you do not oppose my rule you have nothing to fear." He resents any intrusion by the PCs, but he might attempt to pump them for the "local view" of things.
39. **Chamber of Mistress Gossamer.** The Lady of the Mournful Gate is a banshee apologetic for the stench of her undead servants. Her chamber's floor is made of tombstones, which always show the names of her visitors; there are no other furnishings, and the chamber always smells faintly of mold and mildew.
40. **Chamber of Princess Vailessia Graystone and Prince Loric Oakbound.** The two youthful wards of the Summer Court are far from home. Prince Loric is a dreamer without power while Princess Vailessia is a much stronger child, always tumbling about and asking whether her visitors are bringing her a puppy, know where a puppy might be found, or have heard about a puppy coming to court. They are reasonably well informed but disinclined to talk politics with strangers. The rooms are hung with bright tapestries of hills, sunrises, unicorns, and a rainbow that offers fey children an escape from visitors (as a fey door).
41. **Guest's Chamber.** Reserved for non-fey visitors of some lesser distinction, it's furnished with a fine canopy bed, a painted chest for clothes and linens, and a wash basin behind a carved screen.
42. **Hidden Stairs to Forest and Labyrinth.** Three monolith footmen (see page 51) and six deathshade wisps (see page 17) guard these stairs from the forest side. None may pass down to the labyrinth below without the permission of the prince or the queen, in written and sealed form, or the queen's gift of daggers (see page 106). If the footmen and shades are defeated, the shadow door to the stairs down and the maze entrance can be opened (Knowledge (arcana) DC 30, or three *knock* spells).
43. **Rookery.** A thousand rooks and crows nest here each evening when the shadows grow especially long. The Black Prince is fond of the animals and they are well fed; he visits them at least once a week with his huntsmen and followers. *While Invisible:* Sometimes demon dogs show up and someone invisible feeds the birds.

44. **Moon-Viewing Tower.** This tower is off-limits to all but the nobles of the court and reserved for its especially good view of the full moon 3 days/month. The rest of the time, it is haunted by a dozen deathshade wisps (see page 17), which violently discourage visitors. The stairs within the tower are moonlight stairs: invisible and insubstantial except by moonlight, when they are fully solid and useful for climbing to the viewing platform at the top.

The Royal Halls

45. **The Open Portal.** The doors to this section are always flung open although two monolith footmen guard them (see page 51). If an alarm has been raised in the castle, the shadow door here requires a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 27 to open from the outside, DC 23 to open from within the Royal Halls). However, the halls are barred to those with a Status of 10 or lower; only those with 11 or more may walk in freely (and bring a guest with a Bluff or Diplomacy DC 19).
46. **The Small Courtyard.** The courtyard is dominated by stairs up to the east, a view to the north over the forest through battlements, a tower to the west, and a bubbling, playful fountain of pure cold water. Servants from the kitchen draw from it, and nobles drink of it; the runoff is piped down to the Lower Courts' kitchen.
47. **The Long Hall.** This long, 5-ft.-wide hall dominates the entire layout here with more than a dozen doors leading into the chambers of various nobles and courtesans.
48. **Kitchens.** These kitchens are by far the best equipped in the palace. On feast days, they include a shadow portal that opens directly to the Chamber of the Huntsmen, allowing dishes to travel to their destination more swiftly. The head chef of these kitchens is the shadow fey Elastriel ("Mistress Chopper" to her underlings).
49. **Chamber of the Black Mirror.** Dominated by a black mirror in a golden frame, this chamber is used by lesser courtiers to plot and scheme. The chamber is empty, unless a hand of cards is being played or a debauch held with the courtesans. The eponymous black mirror is an 8-ft.-tall slab of polished black marble with mithril and tarnished silvergilded edging. The mirror connects to all shadow doors within the palace, but only those of blood royal or those who make a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 33) may pass. Failing the Knowledge (arcana) check alerts the nearest monolith footman or empty cloak to throw a trespasser out of the royal wing of the palace.
50. **Chamber of the Huntsmen.** A salon used for appointments—even more intimate appointments of the royals and their followers—which doesn't require the great hall. It is named for the tapestries adorning its walls.
51. **Tower of the Lords of Light.** This tower is the home and refuge of the court's sorcerers, warlocks, and wizards. It is always lit by a large group of lantern dragonettes—those beasts are bred and fed here although they sleep in the Spiral Maze (see page 111). The halls of the tower are unornamented and stripped of illusion, showing only bare stone. This is, of course, an illusion: the stones are thickly covered with layers of runes and wardings, preventing the use of any power of a divine, martial, or primal source

within the tower. Powers and spells having the light descriptor all gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and saving throw DCs within the tower.

- 52. Black Well of Night.** This is the pit of the Demon Lord Akyishigal. A shadow censer at the bottom of the descent (about 50 ft. in darkness) keeps the chamber in a state of perpetual gloom. The cave at the bottom contains solid black pillars of an unearthly chill, and the chamber is always occupied by servants of the demon lord (such as roachlings, the psoglav, or tiefling courtiers). The pit below is crawling with millions of roaches and guarded as well by Akyishigal's roachlings and other servants (see page 92). No light shines here unless the censer is found and destroyed. Powers and spells having the light descriptor suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls and saving throw DCs in this chamber.
- 53. The Black Prince's Chambers.** Decorated with hundreds or even thousands of antlers, boar tusks, and wings, these rooms are a shrine to the chase and the kill. The beds are covered with bearskins, the chandeliers are antlers, and the floors are inset with incredibly fine inlay scenes of falconry and boar, fox, bear, and deer hunting. The Black Prince's servants are all deathshade wisps and favored nobles of the court, most of them young rakes. Those who visit him here are offered a cup of black wine or green ale; those who refuse to drink are challenged to a duel.
- 54. Private Apartments of the Courtesan of Seven Veils.** Filled with dozens of diaphanous silk banners and hanging tapestries, this chamber completely blocks line of sight beyond a single square. The Courtesan Ulara herself is rarely here unless she is entertaining an admirer. She wears silks and flowing capes in many bright colors, knotted and draped enticingly.
- 55. Private Apartments of the Rain-Cloaked Courtesan.** A small fountain of stone and water burbles quietly in a corner, and the entire chamber has a warm, wet atmosphere filled with scent: pine, rose, plum, or whatever suits the courtesan Mora Moonwater's fancy that day. She wears blues meshed with pearls, solid raindrops, and shimmering scales and necklaces of mithril. The fountain contains small fish, and the furnishings display an aquatic theme: mother of pearl and lapis inlays, carved fish as table legs, and so forth.
- 56. Private Apartments of the Raven-Haired Courtesan.** The courtesan Songemesha is a drow of mixed blood; her charms are peculiar ones, for she has both black hair and black skin, and her eyes glow like molten gold. This chamber is decorated in white silk wall hangings with a rug of pale yellow spider silk. The room is guarded by a half-dozen spider swarms (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) at all times; a single goblin maidservant named Spinner is also here to scream a warning when admirers go too far.
- 57. Private Apartments of the Frost-Eyed Consort.** The consort's room is decorated in furs and fine wall hangings of woven silk in pale green and gold with a white bearskin rug before the window and a set of ermine blankets on the bed. The consort Ballandrine is the most powerful of the human changelings at the courts, and he helps his fellow

DESIGN NOTE: THIEVERY IN THE COURTS

The courts are filled with treasures large and small, and the PCs can steal a lot silver here if they decide to make a job of it. However, most of these treasures are either illusory or made of shadowstuff and have no substance outside the palaces themselves. Even so, gross thievery is frowned on by the fey as uncouth, and anyone caught stealing more than 1,000 gp of real or illusory silverware, paintings, candlesticks, necklaces, and so forth is brought before the queen or the Goblin Court, depending on their Status. Most are exiled or transformed into goblins and forced to work as servants. All suffer a -3 penalty to Status if convicted, and a fine may be levied in an equivalent gp value.

As a general design principle, this means that most treasures and ornaments are not given gp values in their descriptions. They can be looted, but they have no game value in the long term.

humans when he can; as a result, the servants feed him information and provide help when scheming among the fey. He is a fearsome schemer and secretly favors the cause of the Moonlit King, hoping to return him to favor in the courts.

- 58. Private Apartments of the Sapphire Courtesan.** These rooms seem to be decorated in precious stones and rich dyed and gilded wallpapers. The courtesan Maraya is always here during daylight hours and prowls the courts and halls by night. She is attended by four maids who are also bodyguards. The creature is both a succubus and an incubus; in male form, he calls himself Marek the Sapphire (see page 83).
- 59. Waiting Salon.** Those not quite admitted to the Great Hall must wait here. A painting of the queen hangs here on the eastern wall; servants and lesser nobles always bow to it as they enter or leave the room (kitchen staff bearing dishes may nod instead). Visitors are expected to avert their gaze; staring at it is considered impossibly rude and may be cause for a challenge to duel. Those who do stare, however, may learn a few things: 1) she wears diamonds and carries a glowing wand, 2) she is stunningly beautiful but with a sort of cruel beauty, cold as the stars, and 3) she is surrounded by wisps of fog and constellations unlike those seen elsewhere (Perception DC 20, 25, and 27 respectively).
- 60. Old Duke's Chambers.** Often used by the court's secretaries and by lovers seeking a tryst, the Duke's Chambers have not been anyone's quarters since the death of the old duke (the Black Prince's uncle, Duke Gallasphear Trimordian, who was the queen's younger brother) some years ago. The chamber is decorated with thick tapestries, a writing desk, and a splendid view of the bridge and the Western Gate.
- 61. The King and Queen's Chambers.** Furnished in silver, gold, ebony, and mahogany, the King and Queen's Chambers are a maze of gauzy silk dividers and beautiful tapestries of spun glass, spun moonlight, and spun silver and bronze. There are bright pearl rests for two ancient lantern dragonettes the size of hounds. The room has chests, wardrobes, black carpets woven with constellations and abstract patterns, and a dozen maidservants wait on the queen at all times.

62. The Great Hall of the Shadow Court. This is a very high-ceilinged hall with several niches and hidden chambers for the prince's men and for ladies-in-waiting. On the main floor, black wallpaper hangs from the walls between a dozen columns of alabaster set with perches for lantern dragonettes; the floor is made of alternating black and white marquetry, and the ceiling hangs with glowing jewels in the shape of unfamiliar constellations. Courtiers visit here only when invited by the royal family, but the Black Prince's friends, dogs, and archers are always present. The archers stand at the ready on the hall's small balcony, keeping their eyes on visitors but not interfering with court business. The dogs stay close to their master. Shadow doors lead from here to most sections of the Royal Halls (Knowledge (arcana) DC 30 to activate).

63. Royal Audience Chamber. Not technically part of the Royal Halls, this chamber rests atop a cloud of shadowstuff below a sky sparkling with a million stars. The king and queen are always illuminated by a train of star spires and lantern dragonettes, and a trio of owls watch over the throne when the queen is enthroned (ravens for the king). A cloudy mist envelops the room's floor, and the ceiling is open to the heavens. The whole place seems to be constructed on a cloud far above the courts proper—and it is. A successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 23) reveals that the air is cold and thin enough to match an altitude of at least 1 mile up, perhaps more. Visitors are often cowed by the majesty of the site, which is indeed its intended purpose.

Diplomacy, Gossip, and Rumor

The PCs may gather information as often as they like, but the results depend on their Status as well as the person they question—and the GM should NOT give all answers on a high roll, just selected elements. The entries vary for PCs with servant-level Status (Status 5 or lower), low Status (Status 6 – 10), medium Status (Status 11 – 15), and high Status (16 or more).

Gossip Minor Quests. If the PCs gather up more than half the rumors on any one table and act on at least one of them, they respectively gain 700, 800, 1,000, and 1,200 XP (from Servants to High Status) for completing minor quests.

TABLE 2-7: SERVANTS' GOSSIP (STATUS 5 OR LOWER)

DIPLOMACY (GATHER INFORMATION) CHECK	RESULT
1–5	The cook owes money to Fordin of the East, the changeling Master of Horses. (true, but irrelevant)
6–8	The cook puts saltpeter in the Master of Horses' meals. (false)
9–11	Don't step on spiders, they are royal children. (false)
12–14	Laurian the Wine Butler was caught tasting the King's Brew. (true)
15–17	You will be respected for imitating a donkey. (false, but it will make goblins laugh)
18–20	True nobility is found downstairs as well as up. Visit Moggo the Chamberlain in the Goblin Court, and you may be granted an audience with the Goblin King. (true... though it's more likely that the PCs will be tested to perform servant's tasks like fetching water or peeling potatoes)
21–22	An all-seeing angel lives in the Tower of Light. Its name is Revich. (true)
23–24	The goblin soup chef Amaryllis Amra is wildly in love with the princess Princess Vailessia Greystone. (improbably true!)
25–26	The glowing light from a lantern dragonette's body is a key ingredient in a more powerful Raise Dead ritual. (true, but you better not try it!)
27–28	Lantern dragonettes are a particular mark of royal favor. (true)
29–30	There are no "natural" creatures of the Shadow Realm. Mundane animals are all servants of the Fae in one way or another. (only half-true; some creatures do live in the forest, such deer and mice and so on)
31–32	The underlings of the Master Cook Blazing Barda and other servants are children stolen from the mortal world and spell-cloaked to look fey. (mostly true, though many are goblins as well)
33+	The princess Princess Vailessia wants a puppy. The soup chef would love to sneak one to her room. (true!)

TABLE 2-8: LOW-STATUS GOSSIP (STATUS 6–10)

DIPLOMACY (GATHER INFORMATION) CHECK	RESULT
1–5	At twilight on the night of the waxing moon, the shades come back for their due. (false)
6–8	Never touch your nose among duelists. It's a deadly insult. (false)
9–10	Mortal wines and spirits are more than just vile to shadow fey—they're toxic. (false)
11–12	The Gray Ladies secretly worship Mammon. (false, and likely to give offense to the Ravens)
13–14	Akyishigal's roachlings work among the master cook's underlings and cook the food for low Status diners. (false, and likely to result in a challenge to a duel if repeated)
15–16	The noble Lady Sariel has been cursed to wander, lost in the halls of the courts, not for having relations with the kennel master but for snubbing his dogs while she did. (false, and cause for a challenge to a duel if repeated)
17–18	The Moonlit King is a creature allied with dark forces: with dwarves and death. He always kills mortals who have seen his true form. (false)
19–20	Stealing a glass of King's Cordial and offering it as a refreshment before a duel grants great Status to its bearer in the event that they win the duel afterward. (true, +1 Status for sheer bravado)
21–22	Whitemist—the goblin servant in charge of the dueling grounds—is addicted to ale and enchanted moments of bliss. He can easily be bribed to permit a duel out of season, or to overlook a hit. (true)
23–24	The king's mad half-brother is confined to the Tower of Light, and the angel is his guardian. (almost true)
25–26	The Rain- and Flame-cloaked courtesans are plotting together with servants of the Moonlit King to supplant the Sapphire Courtesan. (true, but it is always true)
27–28	The Sapphire Courtesan adores strawberries. (true, and grants +2 to the next attempt to woo her)
29–30	The Shadow Court has caught and imprisoned the firebird at least a dozen times... but it always reappears outside the court within the week. (true)
31+	The Firebird lives in the forest outside the palace, and the Black Prince has never caught it himself. Anyone who does becomes his deadly enemy. (true)

TABLE 2-9: COURTIER-STATUS GOSSIP (STATUS 11–15)

DIPLOMACY (GATHER INFORMATION) CHECK	RESULT
1–10	The Moonlit King assassinates all those who dare visit his wife the queen; dozens of mortals have been slaughtered in his name. (false)
11–12	The queen doesn't really care about the mortal city Zobeck although her courtiers have theories. Some say she considers the gear goddess Rava a rival. (false)
13–14	The Grey Ladies are compelled not to leave court for more than 3 days, or the court's power will fade. (false)
15–16	The king and queen exchange the power of the throne on a schedule only they fully understand. Each holds a piece of the Shadow Realm's power. (true)
17–18	A Lord Chelessfield from the River King's realm is visiting here. (true, and a possible ally)
18–19	The statthalter that the queen intends to send to Zobeck will grind it under his bootheel. The Black Prince did the same when the shadow fey conquered Corremel. (true)
20–21	The queen visits the king but rarely; more often, she sends those who displease her into the Spiral Maze to amuse the Moonlit King or to die at his hands. (true)
23–24	All the court fears meeting the Moonlit King in his winter season. His moonlight devils destroy fey souls, and his maze is a place of horrible suffering. (true)
25–26	No one is really sure whether the queen really wants to seize the mortal city; some think her husband made her swear to press the claim. (true)
27–28	Other courtiers believe that Zobeck is the place where the queen and the king first kissed. (true)
29–30	Some believe the queen sets the firebird free each time it is brought to her. (true)
31–32	The Moonlit King is as much a title as a person, but his word is the one that will make or break the claim to Zobeck. If he disavows the claim, the city faces no more threat from the shadow fey. (true, but rather incomplete)
33+	The queen sorrows over the king's wrath and his growing bloodlust, which make him dangerous to the entire court. She's starting to let the king go and perhaps considering a replacement... (true)

TABLE 2-10: HIGH-STATUS GOSSIP (STATUS 16 OR HIGHER)

DIPLOMACY (GATHER INFORMATION) CHECK	RESULT
1–10	The queen finds “cynicism” and corrupted “purity” to be heady drinks and forces the children of the courts to serve Akyishigal in his rituals to harvest them. (false)
11–12	The king and queen are blackmailing each other for the power of the throne; each secretly despises the other. (false)
13–14	The king always consults with the queen for all decisions. (false, and likely to annoy the Black Prince or Lord Suid)
15–16	Akyishigal is the king’s lover. It’s the only reason the demon lord is tolerated in the court. (juicy, but not true)
17–18	Among the queen’s closest advisors, there is a fashion for wearing dried lavender tied to the left ankle. (true but not very helpful; doing so adds +1 to a Diplomacy roll, once)
19–20	Princess Vailessia Graystone is a pawn at court, but she is also one of the few truthful and honest fey of Royal Blood. Surely she knows a few secrets. The servants all say she is mad about a puppy. (true)
21–22	The queen and the archmage Count Sammas Hollowgrin are having an affair. (true, though no one minds at the fey court since affairs are common practice)
23–24	The king turns a blind eye to the affair because he fears he could not win a duel with the court’s fearsome archmage and swordman. (false, the king has no idea)
25–26	Lord Suid is the queen’s assassin and spymaster. (false, though she does sometimes confide in him)
27–28	Both the Demon Lord of Roaches and the Black Prince have aspirations to the throne. The queen plays them against one another, but it’s not clear whether she can continue to do so without exiling one of them. (true)
29–30	The princess is a crucial pawn in the courts; she might marry either the Black Prince or the Demon Lord of Roaches, and her dowry would be the City of Corremel. (true)
31–32	Marrying off the princess may be the queen’s best solution to resolve rivalries at court since it would remove one of the dark pair from further politicking. However, she fears marriage to either of them might also embolden them to seize power. (true)
33+	The king is quite mad in his winter season and is only exiled so long as his madness remains. These periods have grown longer and longer. (true)

Scene 1, Monolith Porters and Empty Cloaks

A single type of enemy seems to live at the courts: an enormous, glowing suit of armor, the Queen's Champion, who defends the Western Gate and the gates to the Upper Courts as a sort of monstrous footman. This is a monolith footman, and its name is quite appropriate: the thing is 10 ft. tall, and the armor is empty. When approached, read the following:

The armor is made for an ogre or similarly sized creature: about 10 ft. tall, tarnished silver on steel, and apparently entirely empty. A voice as echoing as the bottom of a well speaks, saying “Who has invited you to the Shadow Courts?”

Unless the PCs respond immediately with “the queen” or “Statthalter Konratt Eigenstil” (Bluff DC 25), the monolith armor realizes they are uninvited guests, and it tries to throw them out. Its sword lights up with blue flame, and it strikes to remove them as quickly as possible. Defeating a monolith footman is purely temporary and provides no experience, but each defeat does result in a +1 bonus to Status, and as Status increases, additional creatures gradually become visible to the party.

After the party members gain a Status of at least 6, they see the guards somewhat differently; they are figures in black or purple robes with deep hoods and empty sleeves. These are the valets, or simply the “empty cloaks.”

Scene 1, Suit at the Door, Unwelcome Welcome

CR 3—1 monolith footman

Scene 1, Suit at the Door, Back for More (2-4 Defeats)

CR 4+—1 monolith footman and 1 empty cloaks

Scene 1, Suit at the Door, Missing the Hint (5+ Defeats)

CR 6+—2 monolith footman and 2 empty cloaks

Development. If the party defeats a monolith footman in combat, they gain a +1 bonus to Status and other shadow fey appear (see **Table 2-11: Defeating Monolith Armor**, below). Most arrive in their animal form only: bats, birds, mice, rats, and cats will watch the party often, and they may be described as animals living in a clearly abandoned set of halls.

Alternately, if the party avoids the footman, consider letting the party use Sense Motive and find some combination of Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (nature) checks to view the courts proper.

TABLE 2-11: DEFEATING MONOLITH ARMOR

NUMBER OF DEFEATS	FHEY APPEARING
0	Ravens, owls
1	Mice, rats, foxes
2	Silent Billoc, mute and cowardly goblin potboy
3	Eracen the court musician, court painter
4	Cook, brownies, goblin servants

5	Human changelings with animal heads, ogres, goblin smith
6 or more	Low-Status shadow fey and courtiers such as members of the Ravens faction (see page 57), as well as the guards and their captain, the seer, and the various other creatures of the Lower Court.

MONOLITH FOOTMAN **CR 3**

XP 800
 N Large construct
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)
hp 31 (3d10+15)
Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1
Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee Large masterwork longsword +8 (2d6+4 plus 1d6 fire* and blatant dismissal/19-20), or slam +6 (1d8+4 plus 1d6 fire* and blatant dismissal)
 * See fey flame for details
Special Attacks blatant dismissal, fey flame

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19
Feats Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Perception +8; **Racial Modifiers** Acrobatics (+4 when jumping), +5 Perception
Languages Elven
SQ diligent sentinel, simple construction
Treasure Large masterwork longsword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blatant Dismissal (Su) With a successful hit, a monolith footmen in the courts of the shadow fey attempts the forced substitution of the target with a shadow double. The target must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or be replaced by a shadow double. To the characters, this will have no immediate effect (see the **Steep Drops in Status and Shadow Doubles** sidebar, page 53).

Diligent Sentinel (Ex) Monolith footmen are designed to watch for intruders. They gain a +5 racial bonus to Perception checks.

Fey Flame (Su) The ritual powering Monolith footmen grants them an inner flame which can be used to provide their weapons additional damage. This damage can be either fire or cold, depending on the construct's needs and requires a swift action to change between types.

Simple Construction (Ex) Monolith footmen are designed with a delicate fey construction. They receive only half the bonus appropriate for a construct of their size and burst into pieces with a confirmed critical hit. They require less time for repair or construction, needing only 1 day per 5,000 gp of materials.

EMPTY CLOAK **CR 2**

XP 600
 N Medium construct [shadow]



Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +5 deflection)
hp 21 (3d10+5)
Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1
Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. fly (perfect)
Melee masterwork longsword +8 (1d8+3/19-20), shadow slam +6 (1d4+4)
Special Attacks shadow binding

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18
Feats Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Fly +9, Perception +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Fly, +5 Perception
Languages understands Elven
SQ diligent sentinel, shadow construction

Treasure masterwork longsword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Diligent Sentinel (Ex) Empty cloaks are designed to watch for intruders. They gain a +5 racial bonus to Perception checks.

Shadow Binding (Su) The swirling darkness within an empty cloak's chest can fire a net of shadows at any target it is aware of 1/round as a standard action. This is a ranged touch attack that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. It has a range increment of 20 ft. with a maximum range of 60 ft. It functions in all other ways as a standard net (entangles on successful hit; AC 10, 5hp; DC 20 escape artist/DC 25 Strength check to escape as a full round action).

Shadow Construction (Ex) Empty cloaks are designed with a delicate fey shadow construction. They receive only one-quarter the bonus appropriate for a construct of their size and burst into pieces with a confirmed critical hit. They require less time for repair or construction, needing only 1 day per 10,000gp of materials.

MONOLITH FOOTMAN AND EMPTY CLOAK CONSTRUCTION

Though different of build, monolith footman and empty cloak are typically made at the same time and use very similar processes. Both are simple constructs demanding a delicate chassis of brass and some mithral. After construction of the bodies, a single-day ritual involving 500 gp in special oils and powders activates the constructs.

CL 5th; **Price** 10,500 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate object*, *expeditious retreat*, *faerie fire*, *grease*, creator must be CL 5th and fey type; **Skill** Craft (clockworks) and Craft (alchemy) DC 22; **Cost** 5,500 gp

Development. After the PCs have defeated monolith footmen twice, the Queen's minions call up empty cloaks to further ward the halls. They then attack in pairs: one cloak and one footman. Once these pairs are defeated three times (with a resulting 5 Status available), a defeated minion's last shout calls out the psoglav hounds (see page 53). A horrible baying sound is heard echoing through the halls. Proceed with **Scene 3**, the Queen's Demonic Hounds.

Treasure. The armor left behind is ordinary elven plate mail (albeit Large). It could be resized to Medium with a Craft (armorsmithing) DC 25 check, and the robes are good ones that might help an attempt at disguise or infiltration. In addition, the footmen and

cloaks have treasure: in the form of 1,800 gp worth of mithral inlay, animating gems worth 5,700 gp, and two powdered *potions of cure moderate wounds*.

Scene 2, Tripping and Thievery

As they wander and explore, the PCs feel the frequent brush of invisible hands. These are the goblins and lesser fey who see the party perfectly well and take advantage of their invisibility.

Invisibility and Foes

The illusions covering the courts are extremely powerful and hide all vision and much sound. This makes the characters blind with comparison to the invisible fey and the standard 50% miss chance against ranged and melee attacks for invisibility. As usual, PCs must choose squares randomly to attack (hoping their foe is there), and the PCs cannot make opportunity attacks.

In addition, invisibility grants a +2 circumstance bonus to certain actions that the fey might take, especially tripping and Sleight of Hand checks.

See invisibility does not pierce this glamour, only *true sight* (or a similar magnitude effect) reveals the actual nature of the courts' occupation.

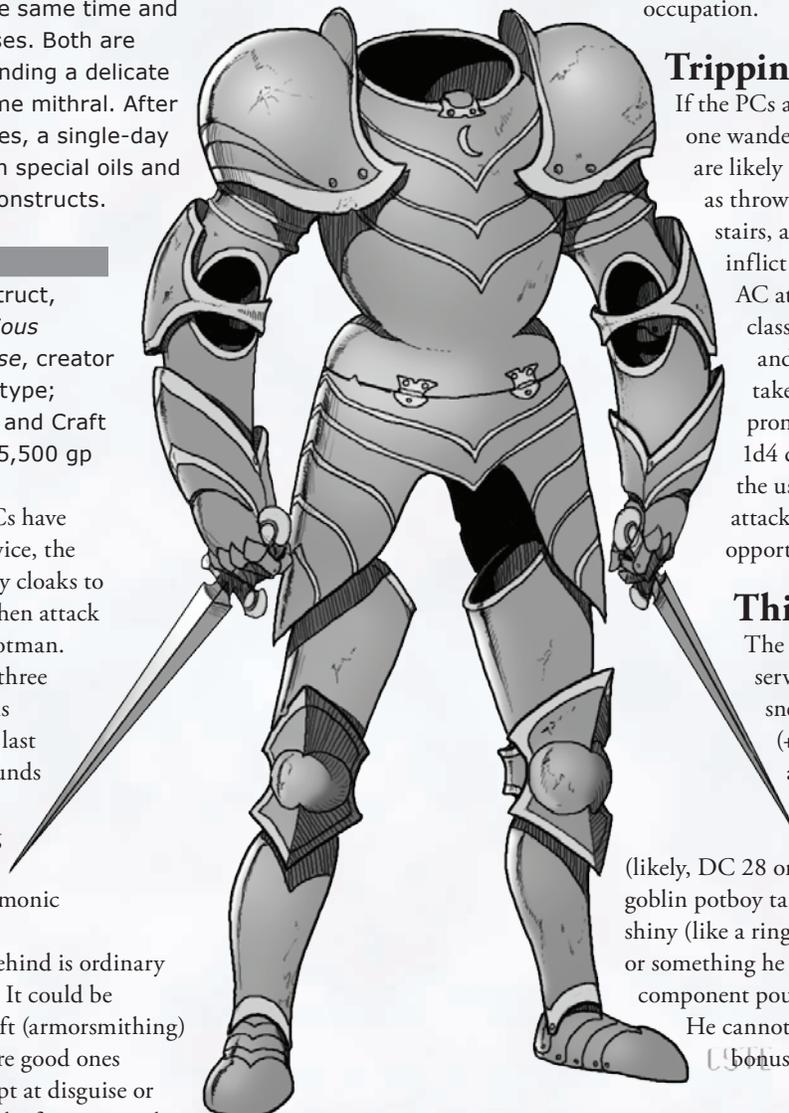
Tripping and Pushing

If the PCs are loud and annoying or if one wanders off to the stairs alone, they are likely targets for harassment, such as thrown rocks, tripping attempts on stairs, and so on. Most of these acts inflict little damage, but use a +12 vs. AC attack as typical for the lower-class goblins, human changelings, and lesser fey. If they hit, the target takes 1d4 damage and is knocked prone. Falling down stairs inflicts 1d4 damage/10 ft., rather than the usual 1d6 damage/10 ft. These attacks do not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Thievery & Vandalism

The main thief among the many servants is a goblin potboy and sneak thief named Silent Billoc (+15 Sleight of Hand); he gains an additional +2 bonus for being invisible. He must overcome a DC 20 + the target's level (likely, DC 28 or more). If he succeeds, the goblin potboy takes either something small and shiny (like a ring, scarf, amulet, or holy symbol) or something he recognizes as powerful (spell component pouch, small weapon, or potion).

He cannot take a held item. Add a +4 bonus to Billoc's roll to determine



whether he is noticed; if the roll +4 would be a success, the attempt is not noticed.

If the roll is still a failure, the attempt is noticed. However, no opportunity attack may be made because the thief is invisible, and his first action when detected will be to run off. The PCs may take precautions magical and mundane, but the thief gets away.

Reporting Theft. If the party reports the thefts to a monolith footman or an empty cloak, they do not speak but nod in response and glide off. The reporting PC's goods are returned under their pillow the next morning.

Vandalism. If the party attempts retaliation (such as arson or vandalism), a monolith footman and an empty cloak arrive to stop them. Fire does not burn properly, but if the party makes a serious attempt with magic, the blind seer may arrive early to anoint their eyes to see through illusions—closely followed by the Black Prince and a troop of archers to take the PCs to the judgment of the Goblin Court. They are sentenced to repair the damage plus a week's labor in the palace kitchens. The primary vandal suffers a -3 penalty to Status. Those seen assisting the lead vandal suffer a -1 penalty to Status.

Scene 3, The Queen's Demonic Hounds

After the PCs have defeated a monolith footman twice and the partnered cloaks and footmen three times, they draw the attention of the queen's demonic dogs, a gift from evil allies of long standing. The demon dogs are among her favorite creatures because they keep so many visitors away—by devouring them. Their attentions test the bravery of visitors to the courts; most run away when they hear the howls.

Perception DC 25—The baying resembles the sound of dogs but enormous ones with deep howls from Hell.

An enormous pack of black dog-demons called the psoglav serve the queen. Each has a dog's head with iron teeth, humanoid body with horse hooves. Their helmets have a single enormous gemstone somewhat resembling an eye.

The psoglav sometimes work with the raven-demons called the malphas to drive off unwanted guests.

Scene 3, Unleash the Hounds

- CR 10—1 psoglav dog-demon
- CR 11—1 psoglav dog-demon and 1 malphas storm crow
- CR 12—2 psoglav dog-demons, or 1 psoglav dog-demon and 3 malphas storm crows

PSOGLAV DOG-DEMON

CR 10

XP 9,600

CE Large Outsider (chaotic, evil, extra planar)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+6 Dex, -1 size, +4 natural, +4 *mage armor*)

hp 146 (13d10+65)

Fort +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

Immune fire, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 40, fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +17/+12/+7 (2d8+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

STEEP DROPS IN STATUS AND SHADOW DOUBLES

If the PCs' Status drops below the minimum of 11 to be allowed into the Upper Halls and the courts themselves, they get more than just dirty looks. Every day, the Queen's Champion arrives in the form of an empty cloak or a monolith footman and seeks to drive the party out—or at least the party members with low Status. Each time the champion hits, a PC is teleported from the courts to the prince's hunting lodge in the Shadow Realm. The PCs may visit distant keeps and lodges and receive invitations to falconry and demon foxhunts, but they are out of the game for a few days.

The player won't know this; tell him that his character has "phased out" for a round.

Shadow Doubles. Behind the scenes, the missing PC is replaced in the combat at the start of the next round by a fey shadow double. The usual player should not be informed of the switch until the real PC returns 1d6 days later.

Special Attacks shadow stealing ray

Spell-like Abilities (CL 13)

3/day—*greater invisibility*

1/day—*mage armor*

TACTICS

Before Combat The psoglav dog-demon will cast *mage armor* then *greater invisibility*.

During Combat The psoglav dog-demon will attack from a beneficial point, using its shadow door ability if necessary, and attack its most heavily armored enemies first with its shadow stealing ray.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 23, **Con** 20, **Int** 16, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 35

Feats Alertness, Critical Focus (bite), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Greater Bull Rush, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatic +19, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +19, Fly +19, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +16, Knowledge (planes) +19, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +22, Stealth +17

Languages Common, Abyssal, Infernal; *telepathy* 60 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mechanical Mouth (Ex) The psoglav dog-demon has a giant mechanical mouth of gears, locks, and springs. Its bite attack counts as adamantine, cold iron, evil, magic, and silver.

Shadow Door (Su) A psoglav dog-demon has the ability to travel between shadows as if by means of a *dimension door* spell 4 times per day. The limitation is that the magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some dim light. A psoglav dog-demon shadow door can take it a distance no greater than the 920 ft.

Shadow Stealing Ray (Su) This ray comes from the psoglav dog-demon's one center eye, as a ranged touch attack 3 times per day. A creature hit with this attack is knocked 20 ft. back and must make a DC 16 Reflex save or land prone. The creature's shadow stays in the square it was originally standing and acts as an undead shadow (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) under

THE PSOGLAV

Human mythology is filled with thousands of demons, a sign of just how many things we—or our ancestors—feared. One of these is from Serbian mythology, the psoglav: a one-eyed dog demon with iron teeth. With that description, it seemed like a good fit for the pack serving the Queen of Night and Magic.

the command of the psoglav dog-demon. If the creature hit with the shadow stealing ray flees the encounter, it is without a natural shadow for 1d12 days before the undead shadow fades and the creature’s natural shadow returns. The undead shadow steals the body of its creature of origin if that creature is killed during the encounter. The creature’s alignment shifts to evil and it falls under the command of the psoglav dog-demon. When an undead shadow is slain, the creature of origin regains its natural shadow. A creature can only have their shadow stolen by the shadow stealing ray once per day, even if hit by the rays of two different psoglav dog-demons, but it can be knocked back by it as many times as they are hit.

MALPHAS STORM CROW

CR 7

XP 3,200

NE Medium fey

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield, +5 Dex)

hp 67 (9d6+36); regeneration 5 (cold iron)

Fort +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities evasion

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. Fly 30ft. (average)

Melee +2 longsword +10 (1d8+4/19-20)

Special Attacks black bolt, night terror, shadow call

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +11)

At will—*magic missile*

1/day—*haste*

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 20, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

Feats Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Fly +13, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +9, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +17;

Racial Modifiers +2 Perception and Stealth

Languages Common, Tengu, Sylvan, Aklo

SQ sneaky, swordtrained

Treasure +2 longsword, buckler, studded leather

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Black Bolt (Su) When a malphas storm crow cast its *magic missile* spell half the damage is force damage and half is cold damage. The malphas storm crow must be holding a sword to cast *magic missile*.

Night Terror (Su) A malphas storm crow may make a full round action to deliver one melee attack at its highest attack bonus and cast *magic missile* against the same target.

Shadow Call (Su) Whenever a malphas storm crow is hit by a thrown weapon or ranged weapon, it can cast *magic missile* as a free action.

Swordtrained (Ex) Malphas storm crow are trained from birth in swordplay, and as a result are automatically proficient with sword-like weapons (including bastard swords, daggers, elven curve blades, falchions, greatswords, kukris, longswords, punching daggers, rapiers, scimitars, short swords, and two-bladed swords).

Development. If a shadow double has been arranged, the real PC returns from the forest within 1d4 days (and is again played by the usual player). The shadow double was a servant of the Moonlit King, and when the real PC returns, the shadow double mocks the party, saying:

“You cannot see through the simplest trickery, so I go to report what I have learned to my master, the Moonlit King. Farewell, fools!” The figure’s skin peels away, leaving only a core of mist and shadows that fades to nothing.

The shadow double is as good as his word, teleporting away unless the party takes extreme measures to hold the shadow double in place (see **Steep Drops in Status and Shadow Doubles** sidebar, page 53).

Treasure. The “dogs” and “crows” have treasure in the form of gemstones on their collars. These are five emeralds (each worth 1,000 gp) and one blood-red carbuncle (worth 700 gp).

In addition, gathering a few hairs from the tails of the dog demons can help the Grey Ladies in their weaving and spinning of a magical tapestry (see page 59) and complete a minor quest.

The dogs are entirely unwilling to give up their hair this way; doing so requires either killing a psoglav and taking the hair or making a successful Acrobatics or Sleight of Hand stunt roll (DC 25+3/successful hit by the dogs) while the rest of the demon dogs take a few bites.

Scene 4, The Blue Horse and the Kennels

The horse and hounds become visible when a PC has a Status of 3 or more. Other PCs can see them if they are pointed out and the PCs make a Sense Motive check (DC 20).

The Blue Horse

You enter the stables, and see a blue horse in the largest stall. The animal has a white mane and silver shoes.

The Black Prince rides the blue horse, Lazulin, whenever the prince visits his hunting lodge, hunts in the Margreve Forest, inspects the nearest shadow fey villages, or gambles and carouses 2 days ride through the woods in the Hidden City of Corremel (his

major fiefdom). Contrariwise, the horse is a much gentler steed when carrying Princess Vailessia Graystone.

Riding the horse is difficult, both to mount successfully (Acrobatics DC 25) and to get it to obey even simple commands (Handle Animal DC 30). Riding the horse without permission is an insult to the prince and results in a -2 penalty to Status to the rider. Gaining permission is rare and happens only for one of the prince's favorites (see **The Hunting Lodge: Catching the Firebird: Act III, Scene 7**, page 100). In addition, riding the blue horse without permission leads to a challenge to a duel by one of the Ravens (see page 57).

The horse listens intently when anyone attempts to quietly converse in the stables, and the Prince occasionally learns secrets from him.

The Hounds of the Margreve

About a dozen large black dogs are sleeping in a large pile in a room behind the stables, snoring quietly. A collection of enormous and well-chewed bones is scattered around them.

Befriending the Hounds. Befriending the hounds is a complex skill check or a roleplaying encounter. It requires six successful Handle Animal checks (DC 20) before three failures. Each failure increases the DC by 2. An offering of freshly killed meat (at least the size of a Medium creature) reduces the DC by 3. Diplomacy with wild empathy class feature or a *Speak with Animals* spell will also work.

Alternatively, if the characters bring the hounds a freshly killed deer each day for a week (Survival check (DC 25) requiring five hours to complete; reduce time spent by one hour for each 5 the roll exceeds the target, increase time by one hour for each individual assisting the hunter).

Gaining favor of the hounds provides a +4 bonus to interactions with Kolya and is worth 1000xp.

Taunting the Hounds. Teasing the shadow mastiffs brings no Status penalty, but it is very foolish: 2d6 hounds are present in the stables at any time, and they attack the teaser en masse if any of the hounds take damage. Killing one of the prince's hounds results in an immediate -2 penalty to Status and a challenge from Kolya the Kennelmaster to "Bows at 5 paces," although he hates dueling.

The Kennelmaster

Kolya is the kennelmaster, in charge of the hunting dogs and the kennel boys. Although a minor noble, he is rarely found in the courts proper, having a great disdain for the duels and games of the courtiers. Kolya appears as a tall shadow fey with wolfish features. He dresses in black hunting leathers and carries several heavy knives about his person. In more formal circumstances, he adds a fine feathered hat to his ensemble. Kolya comes across as blunt and unrefined. While unlikely to challenge a PC to a duel, he could face the party in direct combat; the prince has often arranged hunts where his enemies become the prey. Kolya can also be a source of information, being an ally of the prince and learning what the kennel boys hear (too low of Status to be noticed, secrets are sometimes discussed around them as though they weren't there). It is even possible to gain Kolya as an ally—he pines for Maurelle, one of the queen's ladies in waiting. PCs who play matchmaker would be owed a great boon by the lonely kennelmaster.

KOLYA, KENNELMASTER

CR 9

With a wide grin full of pointed teeth, sweepingly pointed ears, and shaggy muttonchops, Kolya appears like a cross between the worst elements of elf and goblin with a healthy dash of dire wolf. He is more taciturn and solitary than most shadow fey, preferring the mastiffs and the hunt to the politics and maneuverings of the courts.

XP 3,200

 Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) fighter 2/ranger 2
 NE Medium fey

Init +11; Senses darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 22, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 79 (7d6+4d10+33)

Fort +15, Ref +19, Will +11
Defensive Abilities bravery, Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +15 (1d6+2/18–20) or falchion +9 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged masterwork composite long bow +14 (1d8+2/19–20, x3)

Special Attacks rapid shot, shadow jump


VOICES IN THE DARK

The courts may be empty, but they aren't necessarily quiet. If things grow dull or the players are unsure what to do, send them on a wild goose chase with voices of shadow fey mages: whispering voices tease and lead them directly into an encounter with some of the shadow hounds of the Invisible Court (use stats from page 26).

Not all voices need be hostile. Singers praising the queen or prince and princess make a perfect accompaniment to the Invisible Courts, confounding the PC's ability to find them. The same trick could be used later in the adventure with a chorus of lantern dragonettes during the **Honored Guests** section (see page 66). It could be very annoying to serenade the heroes while trying to sneak around.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 30

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility, Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +17, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +12, Escape artist +11, Handle Animal +16, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +16, Perform (dance) +8, Profession (hunter) +11, Ride +15, Survival +15, Stealth +25; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear masterwork rapier, masterwork composite long bow and 40 arrows, falchion, 4 daggers, hunting outfit

SQ favored enemy (humanoid [human]), flicker, stealth in motion, track, wild empathy

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. Kolya can jump up to a total of 80 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 80 ft. or two jumps of 40 ft. each, or any number of jumps totalling 80 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With his Dimensional Agility feat, Kolya may act after making a shadow jump.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Eracen is an elf from the mortal world who has—much against his will—become the mournful court musician to the Shadow Realm. Eracen may become an ally of the PCs, but he demands some show of competence before truly befriending the party:

The thin elf's smile is wholly unnerving: not because any malice or cruelty lurks beyond his perfectly straight-toothed grin, but because of its unnatural intensity. The pale man looks as if he were posing for some portrait, waiting for a painter to capture him. Even in painting, the fellow would be somewhat disquieting. His pale blue eyes peer out wildly from beneath his blonde locks, most of which are in a long pony tail. And his snow-white skin lacks any of the flush or blooded hue of health.

Eracen longs for something rare in the Courts of the Shadow Fey: a reprieve. Not native to the Shadow Realm, Eracen found long ago that he lacked the stomach for the treachery and cruelty of his hosts. Still, the elf knows he must play along or face the shadow fey's punishment. He often wonders if this imagined penalty could possibly outstrip the torture of his virtual imprisonment. Eracen is imprisoned because he is a violinist without peer. With his face pressed against the violin's cool wood, the haunted elf occasionally finds peace. In his hands, the bow ignites the string with fiery notes that stir whatever embers still glow in his heart. Ultimately, this warmth is an illusion; his majestic, mournful music becomes a court favorite, as necessary to a social event as the royal family itself. If it was only his spirit being crushed, Eracen might still rail against his lot, but his body grows weak as well. The Master Summoner Count Sammas Hollowgrin regularly takes Eracen's blood to fuel his rituals; these rituals use his non-native blood to fuel portals to, in Count Hollowgrin's own words, the "lighted planes." As long as Eracen remains strong enough to perform, this torture is allowed and even praised by the court. Despite all this, Eracen attempts to display an upbeat persona. He laughs. He bursts into song and dance. He tells jokes and regales with stories. He does it all with a smile etched into his face and a hollow feeling of self-betrayal gripping his heart. In his own time, he often drinks himself into oblivion, desperate to escape.

Dealing with the PCs. Outwardly, Eracen is humorous and gregarious. His jokes are bawdy and his stories are gossipy. The slender elf often touches others when he talks: a soft tap on the back, a slight grip of the shoulder, a lean into the personal space of others. When spoken to, he laughs loudly, a shrill sound, at even the smallest hint of comedy and follows it up with overzealous compliments. He fawns over the PCs accomplishments and lavishes attention on them.

In other words, Eracen quickly grows annoying. He does have his uses though. He is a storehouse of information and has no qualms discussing the court with the PCs; of course, even when he doesn't know something he suffers no hesitation in offering gossip in its stead.

Most importantly, his Status as chief entertainer allows him and those he vouches for access to some of the lesser functions and locales with minimal hassle. Serving as guide, informant, and confidant to the PCs offers him no end of pleasure. He doesn't bother hiding this enjoyment, often speaking in a conspiratorial tone when regarding their shadowy hosts. Eracen strives to nurture a love of

music, especially the violin, within the PCs. He will spend time, often gossiping about the shadow fey and the court, teaching the PCs how to play the violin. It is only during these lessons that Eracen displays any anger (and even then, it seems clearly a slip from his usual demeanor). He responds to repeated failure or disinterest with sharp, biting retorts although he often apologizes profusely and blames these outbursts on his passion for music.

Motivation. Eracen's offer of friendship and aid to the PCs is born out of his desperation to leave the court. He believes that if he helps the PCs grow more popular than he, he'd be granted an escape from the woeful work of playing for his captors. Though he pins his hopes on teaching them to become musicians themselves, Eracen takes any measure of popularity they gain and promotes it. This could be demon fighting, dueling, arcane mastery... to Eracen each endeavor is the same, each is a possible escape.

Development. Becoming too closely associated with Eracen might cost the PCs something eventually; the courtesans are not fond of him, and the duelists consider him largely beneath contempt. Over time, the PCs may realize that their elf guide is a minor cog of the court—and they may abandon him as well, moving on into higher social spheres. At that point, his hopes dashed, Eracen may grow desperate enough to attempt a kidnapping or assault of some kind—and when that fails, perhaps even suicide.

Treasure. Befriending Eracen and keeping him living in hope eventually pays off. The PC who invests the most time and effort in befriending him, playing music and such, is rewarded by the gift of an appropriate magical item worth no more than 10,000 gp. Ideally, this is a miscellaneous item related to music, rather than armor or weaponry, but the idea is simply that Eracen gives one of his greatest treasures to the PCs in return for the friendship they have shown.

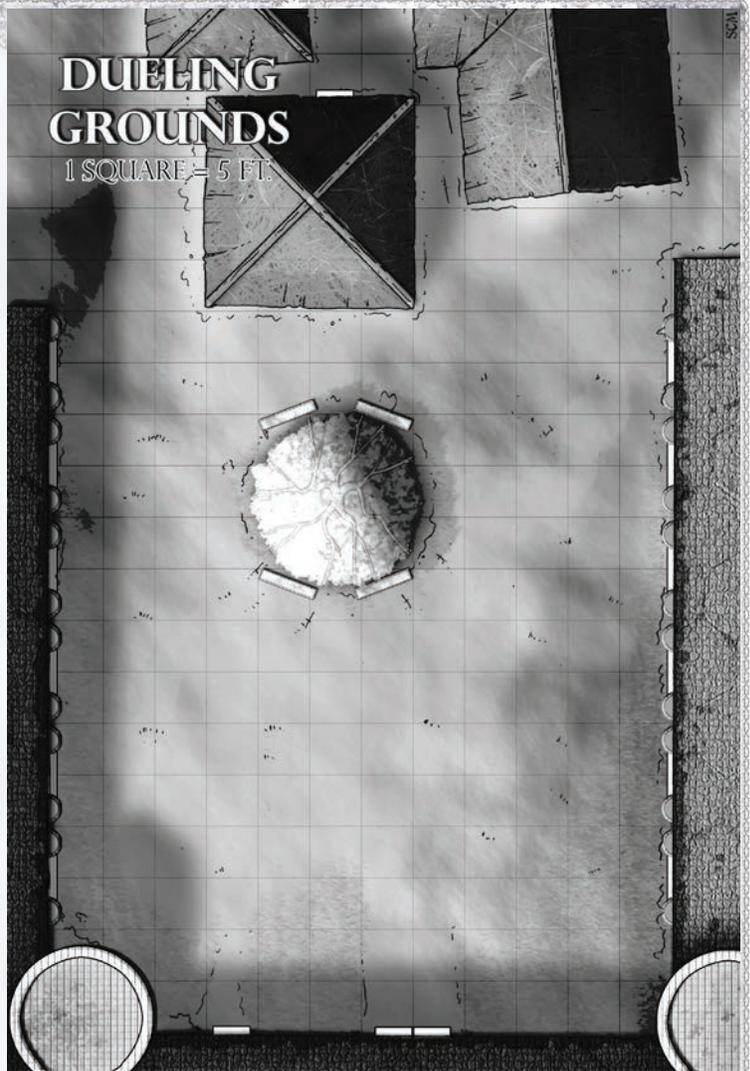
Scene 6, The Ravens in the Court

The young duelists and rakes of little Status often hang out in the dueling grounds (1d8-3 of them are present there at any given time). The duelists all share the same stats and are, frankly, both curious about visitors and spoiling for a fight with anyone who seems willing to give them one. Their dueling skills are formidable, but otherwise, they are variously spoiled, vain, and self-centered. If the party spends any time questioning them (or even just practicing their martial skills in the courtyard), one of the Ravens named Josha Migallisti approaches them and challenges them to a test of skill. Read the following:

A young shadow fey approaches, his hand on his hilt, and sneers. "This is our court, and not for visitors. You carry a worthy blade and are a man of honor. And yet you have acted dishonorably, poking your nose where it does not belong." He draws his sword. "Defend yourself, or be proved a coward."

Sense Motive (DC 15)—The challenge is clearly to a formal duel; you are not expected to fight to the death, but there are probably rules about what is a "proper" duel.

If the player asks, describe the dueling rules briefly. If the PC agrees to the duel, use the quick dueling rules on page 84. The dueling stats are those of a shadow fey rake (see page 7).



If the PC wins, he or she gains or loses Status as described on page 36. Read the following as long as the PC did not cheat:

"You fought well." Your foe bows to you. "Join us in the Ravens, the society of men of the blade. None shall oppose you with our support."

If the PCs decide on a general brawl rather than a duel, they each suffer a -3 penalty to Status and take part in the following encounter. As the fey say, when the prince smiles, the queen herself is pleased. When the prince whispers a word of complaint, the queen frowns and the court weeps.

Brawling, Not Dueling

The rakes stand in the arcade. They shout and taunt the PCs while fighting, and a crowd of goblins, half-elves, low-Status shadow fey, and human changelings quickly gather to watch the duel. The crowd fills most of the squares in the arcade and around the open central space where the Ravens flash their weapons and boast.

Crowd. Entering the crowd requires a successful Strength check (DC 17) to push through or Acrobatics (DC 15) to slip through. Failure means that the moving character ends their movement in the first crowd square. A character with *pass without a trace* (or the equivalent) can move through the crowd without a check.

Courts of the Shadow Fey

Regaining Status. If the party wins the brawl without killing anyone, they gain a +3 bonus to Status (regaining the points lost from brawling in the first place), but they gain no additional Status.

Scene 6, How is a Raven Like...

- CR 10—Brightspur and 2 shadow fey rakes
- CR 11—Brightspur and 3 shadow fey rakes
- CR 12—Brightspur, 4 shadow fey rakes, and 1 Margreve shadow mastiff

BRIGHTSPUR, FIRST KNIFE OF THE RAVENS CR 8

With a wide grin full of teeth and sweepingly pointed ears, shadow fey appear like a cross between the worst elements of elf and goblin. They are rarely seen although they speak and harry and taunt their foes from the shadows often enough.

XP 4,800

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) assassin 3
NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 32 (7d6+3d8+30)

Fort +10 (+11 vs poison), **Ref** +18, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities Improved Evasion, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +13 (1d6+2 plus giant wasp poison (Fort DC 18)/18–20) or falchion +7 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged masterwork short bow +12 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks death attack, shadow jump, sneak attack +2d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 30

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +17, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +10, Disguise +11, Escape artist +11, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (planes) +8, Perception +14, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (courtier) +10, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +26; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear courtier's outfit, falchion, masterwork rapier, masterwork short bow, studded leather armor, vial with 6 doses of giant wasp poison

SQ flicker, poison use, stealth in motion

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Giant Wasp Poison Rapier—injury; save Fort DC 18; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Dexterity damage; cure 1 save

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. Brightspur can jump up to a total of 40 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 40 ft., two jumps of 20 ft. each, or any number of jumps totalling 40 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With his Dimensional Agility feat, Brightspur may act after a shadow jump.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Brightspur is a boastful, preening sort who laughs as he cuts enemies down. His richly decorated weapon is difficult to see clearly, and he wields it with confidence. Brightspur's rapier is coated with giant wasp poison, and the first two targets hit by it suffer the effects. Afterwards, the assassin must reapply the poison as a move action provoking attacks of opportunity. A cosmetic alchemical treatment makes the weapon opaque.

SHADOW FEY RAKE CR 6

XP 2,400

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) fighter 2
NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 32 (7d6+2d10+24)

Fort +12, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities bravery, Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +13 (1d6+2 plus giant wasp poison (1 Fort DC 18)/18–20) or falchion +7 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged masterwork short bow +13 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks shadow jump

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 30

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Standstill, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +12, Escape artist +13, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (courtier) +6, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +25; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear courtier's outfit, falchion, masterwork rapier, masterwork shortbow, 20 arrows

SQ flicker, stealth in motion

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Giant Wasp Poison Rapier—injury; save Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dexterity damage; *cure* 1 save. The first two targets hit by the rapier suffer the poisonous effects; afterwards, the assassin Brightspur must reapply the poison.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow fey rake can jump up to a total of 40 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 40 ft., two jumps of 20 ft. each, or any number of jumps totalling 40 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With Dimensional Agility, the rake may act after moving with Shadow Jump.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

MARGREVE SHADOW MASTIFF

CR 8

A black hound stands snarling, stout and heavy-jawed, with wattles and a collar made of thick leather. Its eyes rarely blink, and its fur seems to take on the coloration of the shadows nearby.

XP 4,800

N Medium magical beast (cold)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 90 (12d10+24)

Fort +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

Immune cold

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +17 (2d8+7 plus 2d6 cold and trip)

Special Attacks breath weapon (every 1d4 rounds, 15-ft. cone, 6d6 cold damage, Reflex half DC 18), Vital Strike

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th, Concentration +12)

At will—quicken *dimension door* (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 30 (34 vs trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike

Skills Perception +14, Stealth +11 (+19 in darkness), Survival +8; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception, +2 Stealth (+8 in darkness), +2 Survival

Languages Common, Elven

Tactics. Shadow fey rakes constantly press the advantage. The rake's greatest trick is to shadow jump into a flanking position and attack an unassuming target while hasted or vanished. While some duels have guidelines, these ambitious young fey will gain the upper hand from poison to keeping a steady stream of cutting insults.

Brightspur opens up with a paralyzing death attack, having been observing the obvious priests or spellcasters.

Brightspur and the rakes will happily accept the surrender of any foe and may even offer this to a clearly bloodied and beaten enemy. They never strike to kill unless one of their own party has been killed first; they strike to subdue or incapacitate, leaving their foe down and out rather than down and dead. The mastiff works to continually provide Brightspur a flank.

Development. Winning in a brawl without killing anyone removes the Status loss, but the party makes enemies of the Ravens permanently. The PCs must find someone else to duel for Status; the Ravens won't have it unless a profound and sincere apology is forthcoming: either a Diplomacy check (DC 25) from the character they challenged to the proper duel or a bribe in the form of a token from some other faction member or miscellaneous magic item worth 8,000 gp or more.

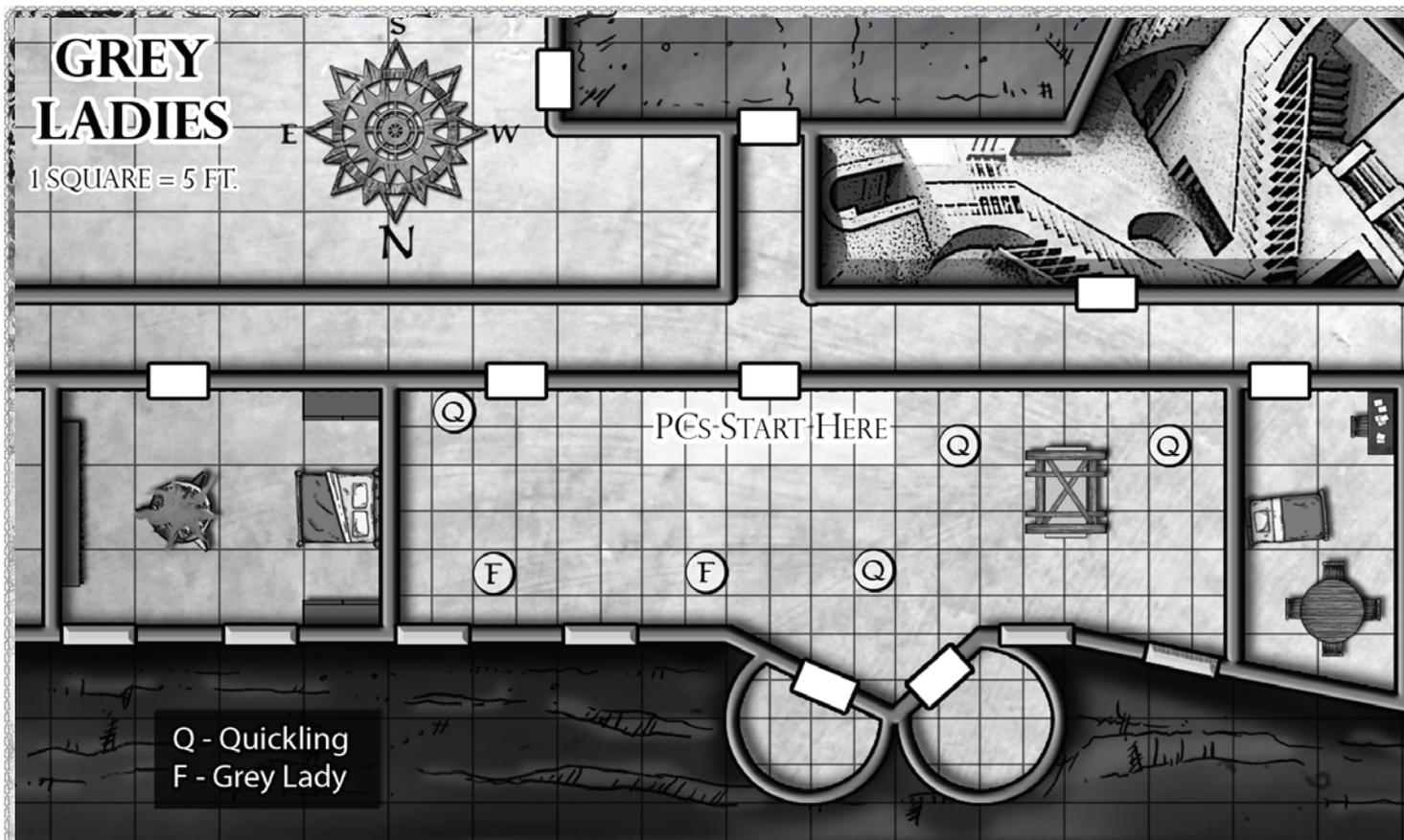
Treasure. If the character fights the duel and wins, the winner gains a +4 bonus to Status if during dueling season—or a +6 bonus to Status if not during dueling season (see **Table 2-2: Gaining Status in Duels**, page 36) and is offered membership in the Ravens. If the PC accepts, he or she is given a +3 magical weapon as a sign of the Raven's affection. If the PC does join the faction, Brightspur shares some information about possible other duels to fight (avoid Lord Suid), about the Shadow Bridge (see **Area 26**), and about the finest courtesans. He offers two minor quests:

- XP 600 to anyone who is willing to lose a duel with him in front of the courtesan Lishekki, his current flame (thereby suffering a -3 penalty to Status in the cause of Love)
- XP 900 to anyone who brings him the albino raven from the Moon-Viewing Tower

Regardless of whether the party joins or not, winning a duel makes them less the target of the Raven's attentions, and the other party members are accepted as worthy of the Raven's conversation and perhaps swordplay.

Scene 7, The Grey Ladies Spin

When the party has one character with a Status of 11 or better, they are invited to visit the Grey Ladies, a coterie of elderly shadow fey noblewomen and former courtesans who gossip, knit, and weave various items of finest silk and shadowstuff. They are hardly



power players among the court, but they are a faction with at least a little influence, mostly because of the respect that the shadow fey pay to the elderly among them. Many fey nobles also remember former courtesans very fondly, a fact that the Grey Ladies exploit rarely but ruthlessly.

If the party accepts the invitation, read the following:

The room is well lit with gentle yellow light; two lantern dragonettes seem to watch the knitting of the elderly ladies of the court carefully. Two white-haired men work an enormous loom together, the shuttle flying so fast it cannot be seen. The threads of the tapestry they are creating seem to sing a song of power, strengthening the sense of potent magic in the air. Flakes of shadowstuff drip from the loom.

In addition to the men, ladies in dresses and shawls of soft grey mouse fur are sitting on tall chairs, knitting long, complicated... Nets? Veils? It's difficult to tell.

Knowledge (arcana) (DC 22)—The song of the tapestry is indeed arcane but not yet at full strength.

Perception (DC 24)—The knitters are working on neither a net nor a veil but a long, strange cloak. At its intersections hang small silver stars; the threads themselves are made of black yarn.

If a PC accepted the True Sight ritual from Revich the Blind Seer (see page 65), read the following:

Of the fey here, the ones weaving on the loom are just as they seem. The knitters, though, are not quite what one might think. Their needles are made of bone, the black yarn they use seems oddly metallic, and the knitting elderly ladies of the court are...

spider-like, at the very least. Each has mandibles and four arms, a bit like a more refined ettercap.

"Stop staring," says one of them. "Your eyes might fall out."

The Bargain. Let the party introduce themselves and then read or paraphrase:

"We are pleased you have come to us. Give us a portion of your courage and your strength, 13 threads from one of your heads. We shall weave it into the loom, and your prestige among the court will rise, for you will be numbered with us, the ladies whose weaving gathers shadow and light and makes them into the turning wheel of Fate."

Sense Motive (DC 23, if suspicious)—The offer does seem remarkably generous for the fey. There may be more to it. The PCs are well advised to tread carefully and ask questions before saying yes. Any PC who gives up 13 threads also gives up 15% of their maximum hit points or one of their highest level spell slots for the rest of the adventure; doing so means he may join the Grey Ladies faction. This involves wearing a woven item of grey silk as a badge, gaining a +4 bonus to Status, and being given a boon (see **Treasure** section, below).

If a PC agrees and joins this faction, the Grey Ladies speak again:

"We are glad you have chosen wisely, and we are pleased to see you rise in the court's esteem. But remember us, or else, we will most assuredly remember you when the time comes. So it is woven, so will it be done."

As a member of the faction, the PC gains the Status and badge while losing the health or spell. This price is restored (and membership in the faction ends) when he or she leaves the realm and returns to the mortal world. If respectful, however, the ladies fondly recall the character's association in future dealings.

Fighting Fate

Perception (DC 25)—These fey are cloaked in thick illusion, but underneath, they are not normal fey at all; the women are six-armed creatures with compound eyes, and their clacking knitting needles are made of bones and steel.

The PC sees through the illusion that the Grey Ladies maintain about themselves, and sees that the women among them are six-armed aranea or similarly arachnid fey.

Chaos ensues when it becomes clear that a mortal has seen through their disguise, and the Grey Ladies demand immediate, sincere apologies (Diplomacy DC 25 from the offending speaker), or they demand the PCs leave and never return. If the party makes a fuss, the bladeweavers attack to force them out.

Scene 7, Impolite to Stare

- CR 10—2 bladeweavers, 2 grey lady fatespinners
- CR 11—3 bladeweavers, 2 grey lady fatespinners
- CR 12—3 bladeweavers, 2 grey lady fatespinners, 3 shadow fey rakes

GREY LADY FATESPINNERS

CR 5
XP 1,600

Female aranea sorcerer 1

N Medium magical beast (shapechanger)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 56 (5d10+1d8+24)

Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +7

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +9 (1d6-1 plus poison)

Special Attacks web (+9 ranged, DC 14, hp 5)

Destined Bloodline Spell-like ability (CL 6th, Concentration +11)

 8/day *touch of destiny* (sp) touch; +3 insight bonus on attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks for 1 round

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +11)

 3rd (4/day)—*dispel magic*, *entangle* (DC 18),

 2nd (6/day)—*invisibility*, *mirror image*

 1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *silent image* (DC 16)

 0th (at will)—*daze* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *light*, *mage hand*, *resistance*

STATISTICS

Str 9, Dex 19, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 20


Courts of the Shadow Fey

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

Feats Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +10 (+18 jump), Climb +13, Escape Artist +9, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Perception +10, Stealth +10;

Racial Modifiers +2 Acrobatics, +8 Climb, +2 Perception

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ change shape (humanoid; alter self)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bloodline Arcana: Whenever a grey lady casts a spell with a range of "personal," she gains a luck bonus equal to the spell's level on all saving throws for 1 round.

Change Shape (Su) A grey lady can take the form of a Small or Medium humanoid or spider-humanoid hybrid. In humanoid form, a grey lady cannot use its bite, web, or poison. In spider-humanoid hybrid form, a grey lady looks like a humanoid with spidery fangs and spinnerets, with the latter typically located at the small of its back. The grey lady retains its bite attack, webs, and poison in this form, and can wield weapons and wear armor. When in humanoid or hybrid form, a grey lady's speed is 30 ft. and it has no climb speed.

Fated (Su) Grey ladies gain a +1 luck bonus on all saving throws and to their AC during surprise rounds and when they are otherwise unaware of an attack.

Poison (Ex) bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Str; *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Touch of Destiny (Sp) A grey lady can touch a creature as a standard action, giving it a +3 insight bonus on attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws for 1 round. They can use this ability eight times per day.

QUICKLING BLADEWEAVER

CR 7

Moving in a flash, this short warrior is grabbing a wicked looking weapon and tossing aside a fine purple cloak. The short sword that comes to bear is a broad blade worked in bat-winged rabbits.

XP 3,200

Quickling ninja 4 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*)

CE Small fey

Init +11; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 19, flat-footed 12 (+7 Dex, +1 size, +1 natural, +1 dodge)

hp 38 (4d8+4d6+16)

Fort +4, **Ref** +15, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, natural invisibility, supernatural speed, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/cold iron

Weaknesses *slow* susceptibility

OFFENSE

Speed 120 ft.

Melee masterwork short sword +14 (1d4-1/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

Before Combat The bladeweaver prepares his short sword with blue whinnis poison.

During Combat The bladeweaver uses his sneak attack the first round on the least armored opponent, then uses flanking and his natural invisibility to sneak attack enemies with little armor, sometimes using his Run feat to retreat and dose his sword with poison again.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 24, **Con** 14, **Int** 15, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 20

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Run, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +18 (+54 jump), Bluff +13, Climb +6, Craft (weaver) +13, Escape Artist +18, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +13, Sleight of Hand +18, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +22, Survival +4, Use Magic Device +7

SQ *ki* pool (4), ninja tricks (fast stealth, slow reactions), no trace +1, poison use

Languages Aklo, Common, Sylvan

Combat Gear masterwork Small short sword, blue whinnis poison (4 doses), *wand of grease* (45 charges); **Other Gear** courtier's outfit, bottle of fine wine, pipe, 2 lbs. of tobacco, 5 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Natural Invisibility (Su) The bladeweaver is invisible when motionless. It loses this invisibility and remains invisible for 1 round in any round in which it takes an action other than a free action.

Supernatural Speed (Su) The bladeweaver moves with incredible speed. Save for when it remains motionless (at which point it is invisible); the bladeweaver's shape blurs and shimmers with this speed, granting it concealment (20% miss chance). In addition, this ability grants the bladeweaver evasion and uncanny dodge (as the rogue abilities of the same names).

SHADOW FEY RAKE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) fighter 2

NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 32 (7d6+2d10+24)

Fort +12, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities bravery, Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +13 (1d6+2 plus giant wasp poison (1 Fort DC 18)/18-20) or falchion +7 (1d8+2/19-20)

Ranged masterwork short bow +13 (1d6/19-20)

Special Attacks shadow jump

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 30

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Standstill, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +12, Escape artist +13, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (courtier) +6, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +25; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear courtier's outfit, falchion, masterwork rapier, masterwork shortbow, 20 arrows

SQ flicker, stealth in motion

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Giant Wasp Poison Rapier—*injury*; save Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dexterity damage; *cure* 1 save. The first two targets hit by the rapier suffer the poisonous effects; afterwards, the assassin Brightspur must reapply the poison.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow fey rake can jump up to a total of 40 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 40 ft., two jumps of 20 ft. each, or any number of jumps totalling 40 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With Dimensional Agility, the rake may act after moving with Shadow Jump.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Tactics. The fatespinners use their restraining *entangle* spells with the ample material in the room to lock down the strongest foes, leaving them hampered for the quicklings to cut with sneak attacks then step away. If possible, they augment the quicklings or the rakes with supplemental spells while *invisible* and then *dispel* party magics.

The quickling bladeweavers attack the weakest foes while mocking the strongest. They slip past enemies using their speed and attack old, unarmored, or slow foes while flanking either with each other or with the rakes. The quicklings count on their high movement rate to get around a group of foes.

If present, the rakes wade into the party, providing the flanks and distractions necessary to preoccupy the party.

Development. If the PCs do join this faction, they may be asked to undertake a minor quest or two, and they gain a +2 bonus to all Diplomacy (gather information) checks while at the court.

Leaving the Grey Ladies without permission can be fatal; the unfaithful member of the faction is challenged to a duel by the faction's patron, the powerful duelist Lightning Lord Suvid (see page 91).

DESIGNER'S NOTE: THE LORDS OF LIGHT

These arcanists and priests are meant to be half secret society, half snooty Illuminati who kill demons. They are a bit of a personality cult that favors dropping "as the Seer says" into every conversation, but they are also valued for their talents within the Court. Most of all, they are not beholden to the royal family, or at least their interests are tangential to what the Court wants, and so the Seer and his followers are often a thorn in the side of the queen or the Black Prince.

Any PC fortunate enough to be accepted into the society has a partial protection from the rage of the fey, because of the special status of the Lords and Ladies.

Treasure. If the PCs defeat the Grey Ladies in combat, the PCs find a wondrous magic item worth 12,000 gp or less. The suggested item is a cloth or woven item, such as a *bag of holding*, a +3 *cloak of resistance*, a *cape of the mountebank*, or *slippers of spider climbing*.

However, if the party decides to join this faction, they gain that treasure without combat, requiring only the completion of a minor quest (XP 700). These minor quests might involve any of the following:

- Fetching 20 strands of horsehair from Lazulin, the royal horse (see page 54)
- Finding a puppy for the princess (see page 46)
- Challenging Sir Yngress the Red, an Elf from the River Court to a duel (winning not required, see page 86)

Scene 8, The Blind Seer

The blind seer Revich is the leading power of good among the fey, serving the Lords of Light, and is the sworn enemy of Akyishigal, the Demon Lord of Roaches (see page 92). Sometimes called the Fiery Angel, his gaze burns away illusions, and if a PC joins his faction, the angel may teach the party the True Sight incantation. Revich serves the harsh god, Khors-Amon, Lord of the Sun, and seeks to purify and convert those members of the courts who will listen to him. It is a difficult burden to bear, and his faction is a small one. Though he is the sworn enemy of all demons and night creatures, Revich's services as a soothsayer and wise man are much in demand, and his time is largely spoken for. Two monolith footmen, the squire Anya, and the lantern archon Krasnaya guard the door to the tower—they try to prevent most visitors from passing, and they are immune to threats and bribery. A PC must have a Status of 11 or more to gain a legitimate appointment with Revich on his own; those with less Status are ignored as too small to matter.

However, if a PC has a Status of 15 or more, the tables turn, and he or she is invited to an audience with the seer, who seeks to evaluate this rising star for himself. The seer has no intention of answering many questions or providing help immediately, but he may offer an extremely helpful incantation, True Sight (see *Incantation of True Sight* sidebar, page 65). The members of the Lords of Light faction keep Revich in the Tower of the Lords of Light (see **Area 51**)—at the top of the tower where the lantern dragonettes rest and where they are fed. This chamber is relatively quiet and well guarded by shining radiance; most of the shadow fey avoid it for that reason. Others believe that Revich is the one reluctant to confront the many

shadow fey outside the tower, and that he remains a hermit by choice rather than remaining secluded because of the various lords' pressures or wardings. Neither side is telling much.

An Audience with Revich

Before he answers any questions, Revich demands that the party wait for a little while in the lowest chamber of the Tower of the Lords of Light (Area 51 on the castle map). He uses this time to cast various spells, in this order:

- *Commune*. Once complete, he asks whether the PC has committed evil deeds in the mortal world. If the PC is known as shady, this will surely come out. Unless the answer is very bad, Revich moves on to cast the next spell.
- *Zone of Truth*. Once complete, he returns to question the PCs for 5 minutes. Each lie is a mark against them.

If the party passes, well and good. If not, the servants of the Lords of Light ask the party to step out, and inform the highest-Status PC



of the reason why. The party is welcome back in a week or a month, depending on the severity.

REVICH, THE BLIND SEER (ANGEL OF DIVINATION)

XP 76,800

Male planetar angel (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

NG Large outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft., *detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, low-light vision, true seeing; Perception +27

Aura protective aura

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+4 Dex, +19 natural, -1 size; +4 deflection vs. evil)

hp 229 (17d10+136); regeneration 10 (evil weapons and effects)

Fort +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +19; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil

DR 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee +3 *holy ranseur* +27/+22/+17 (2d6+15/x3) or slam +24 (2d8+12)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)

Constant—*detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *true seeing*
At will—*continual flame*, *dispel magic*, *holy smite* (DC 21), *invisibility* (self only), *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear* (DC 18), *speak with dead* (DC 20)

3/day—*blade barrier* (DC 21), *flame strike* (DC 22), *power word stun*, *raise dead*, *waves of fatigue*

1/day—*earthquake* (DC 25), *greater restoration*, *mass charm monster* (DC 25), *waves of exhaustion*

Spells Prepared (CL 16th)

8th—*discern location*, *fire storm* (DC 25)

7th—*holy word* (DC 24), *regenerate* (2)

6th—*banishment* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, *heal*, *mass cure moderate wounds* (DC 23)

5th—*break enchantment*, *dispel evil* (2, DC 22), *plane shift* (DC 22), *righteous might*

4th—*death ward*, *dismissal* (DC 21), *divination*, *neutralize poison* (DC 21)

3rd—*cure serious wounds* (2), *daylight*, *invisibility purge*, *locate object*, *wind wall*

2nd—*align weapon* (2), *bear's endurance* (2), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *eagle's splendor*

1st—*bles* (2), *cure light wounds* (4), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*detect magic, purify food and drink, stabilize, virtue*

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 19, **Con** 24, **Int** 22, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 40

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +24, Craft (any one) +26, Diplomacy +27, Fly +26, Heal +24, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (planes) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +20

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

SQ change shape (*alter self*)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spells Planetars cast divine spells as 16th-level clerics. They do not gain access to domains or other cleric abilities.

Joining the Lords of Light

The Lords are looking to recruit allies to hunt down the Demon Lord of Roaches and remove his evil influence from the courts. They are, however, somewhat particular about who they'll take; they prefer good aligned and lawful good-aligned heroes with access to divine powers. They accept somewhat less than that, however.

Joining the Lords of Light Complex Skill Check

Requires: 8 successes before 3 failures.

Primary Skills:

- *Knowledge (arcana)* (DC 27)—The lords value wizardry and arcane knowledge in all its forms, but they are no pushovers for amateurs.
- *Knowledge (religion)* (DC 20)—Most fey hold Knowledge (religion) in relatively low esteem; the Lords of Light, with their close ties to the angel Revich, think otherwise.
- *Sense Motive* (DC 18)—What the Lords value most is understanding and the ability to both empathize and (when required) manipulate, so demonstrating understanding of their difficult position is hugely worthwhile.

Secondary Skills:

- *Bluff*—The Lords of Light can detect lies (as per *zone of truth* (Will DC 18), and they detest liars. The attempt to use Bluff is an automatic failure.
- *Diplomacy* (DC 18)—Smooth talk has its place. The Lords appreciate it as a tool.
- *Diplomacy (gather information)* (DC 15)—The lords may pretend to great wisdom, but secretly they love gossip or (as they call it) “intelligence and advance warning.”
- *Knowledge (history)* (DC 25)—The lords have access to an angel who tells them how it was. A historian must be very sharp indeed to prevail around those who have access to a font of Truth.
- *Sleight of Hand*—The lords dislike thievery and trickery in all its forms. Using this skill is an automatic failure.

Success: The applicant is recognized as a master of the arcane or divine, a wise creature to be respected and valued among the fey and blessed by the light of the blind seer. He or she is immediately inducted into the faction in a resounding ceremony: standing atop the tower, his or her name is shouted to the heavens while light streams forth from every window and every door of the tower.

INCANTATION OF TRUE SIGHT

“No glamour conceals the truth from these eyes. See beyond the deception.”

School divination; **Effective** Level 5th

Skill Check Knowledge (arcana) DC 22, 3 successes; Knowledge (planes) DC 22, 2 successes

Casting Time 50 minutes

Components F (a small prism), M (a vial of specially prepared oil costing 250 gp), S, V; must be performed at sunrise or sunset

Range touch

Target target touched

Duration 10 hours

Saving Throw none; **SR** no

DESCRIPTION

You anoint the target's eyes with oil, granting the power of *true seeing* and a +4 bonus to Sense Motive for 10 hours.

BACKLASH

After the incantation, you and the other participants take 2d6 damage and cannot stand bright illumination for a period of 1d6+1 days. Any brighter illumination than Dim causes participants to be sickened unless they succeed on a Will save (DC 17). A successful save allows a participant to ignore the effects of bright light for 5 minutes, but each subsequent save made that day is at +2 to the DC.

FAILURE

Failing two consecutive skill checks, the caster and participants warp the fabric of reality, suffering the backlash and blindness for 10 hours. A *remove curse* (cast by an 11th level caster or greater) can eliminate the blindness effect sooner.

The character gains a halo of light, which cannot be entirely quenched, and is given a lantern dragonette as a mark of Status. The character learns the *True Sight* incantation over the next 3 days, if he or she wishes to do so, and gains a +3 bonus to Status (the +3 includes the Status of the dragonette, halo, and incantation; if the dragonette gift is refused, the PC gains +1 Status from the halo and the offer of the incantation alone).

Failure: The Lords of Light cast the applicant out of the tower and make it known that he or she is not welcome. The character gains a +1 bonus to Status among the fey and will be approached by a servant of Akyishigal for a counteroffer that very night. In addition, the lords will consider the character an enemy; Lord Suvid is likely to challenge the character to a duel on some pretext, or may attempt to intimidate him or her if their Status is too low to permit dueling.

Miscellaneous Bonuses and Penalties

- **Divine spells:** Demonstrating any spell effects with the Good descriptor provides 1 automatic success.
- **Necromantic effects:** Demonstrating any necromantic effect counts as 2 failures.



Act III, The Honored Guests

*Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness,
Leave the gloomy haunts of sadness,
Come into the daylight's splendor...*

—Johann Franck, *Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele*

...amongst the upper classes extreme politeness is merely the most highly refined expression of one's scorn for others.

—Arturo Pérez-Reverte, *The Flanders Panel*

Once the party gains prestige and Status, the Invisible Courts come to life with bustle and laughter, and they are, if anything, a little crowded; bystanders are common, combat is rare, and PCs must be on their guard against snoops and spies. The empty hollow echoing spaces of the courts suddenly become bright, visible, and filled with creatures; everyone is superficially friendly.

In fact, the change is more than friendliness in this season. At some level, after the PCs defeat Akyishigal's champion roachling or other contenders in duels and gain sufficient prestige through other means, the characters are feared. At that point, the fey seek to get rid of them, politely or through violence. Combat is rare in this section of the adventure because no one will fight the party except in formal duels or—and this is quite likely to be entertaining if handled skillfully by the GM—by a devilish courtesan against a naked PC. In bed.

Teleport and Illusion. At the same time, the players may think that just because not every monster here is trying to have them killed immediately, they have the run of the place. Be very clear about this as GM: they don't. The PCs actions can be constrained by illusion and teleport magic, and PCs visiting private areas can and should be bewitched and be-mazed and returned to the Lower Courts dizzied and subject to the mockery of sniggering goblins. Stealth and politics will be better than combat if the party wants to make progress toward the goals of greater Status and to meet the power players of the court. Those players, on the other hand, are not entirely eager to meet the PCs.

Which isn't to say that the various rooms are dull. Certainly finding a demon summoning room or the librarium is exciting, but the PCs can't do much about the locations. Meeting the devils and demons who stride the halls is worthwhile for future reference—some of the devils might even treat the PCs with courtesy, assuming that they speak Infernal or some other exotic language. The PCs can learn

some crucial information, gain a valuable incantation, and discover both gossip and various plot points throughout this section.

Many of the threads are complex enough and the design is open enough that it's up to you as GM to make the days pass swiftly and in a style of danger and illusion. If all else fails, declare the start of dueling season when PCs grow twitchy, and make it clear that the Dread Lord Suvid is in a foul mood.

Fey Names and Types

The courts are constantly in flux, and many fey pass through its gates. Here's a list for the GM to choose for when an NPC wanders in or when the PCs buttonhole someone for a Diplomacy (gather information) check. The list also includes most of the court's major NPCs with page references and can provide a sense of what sorts of creatures inhabit the courts.

This list is not exhaustive by any means; more than 200 fey live in the courts at any time. Fey wander in and out daily; only the titled and older fey can be considered permanent inhabitants. To choose randomly, roll d% and add the investigating character's Status ranks. The list runs roughly in order of the lowest-to-highest Status among the courts.

SERVANTS, SCULLIONS, AND ORPHANS

1. Dazog, a goblin who tallies scraps
2. Karrunk, shaggy-furred ogre slave
3. Yolksbeard, the brownie egg-thief
4. Pattypan, a brownie squash monger
5. Thumbless Rottentusk, troll pariah seeking his captured thumbs
6. Feardorcha, a snotty goblin pageboy
7. Puzzletooth, a goblin with a candle melted to his head
8. Stiefelmesser, the brownie, tries to steal shoes and boots
9. Crow, an informer
10. Gentle Bluestem, a fortunetelling goblin
11. Silent Billoc, a mute goblin potboy and sneak thief
12. Yowling Marej, a 35-lb., talking, tone-deaf calico cat
13. Floppy and Bop, sisters and chambermaids, triplets of rising Cottonwing
14. Melantha Darkflowering, an unwanted tiefling child of a shadow fey mother
15. Erlanna, shadow fey makeup artist and wigmaker
16. Flippant Fanderol, a devilish tailor
17. Firinn, a faceless goblin concubine
18. Orwin, a talking hedgehog gardener
19. Cinder, a bullying shadow fey servant
20. Olva, a human child
21. Velvet, the quickling knife sharpener
22. Laurian, the cobweb-winged pixie and wine butler
23. Whitemist, incompetent servant and drunk goblin master of the dueling grounds
24. Tenpound Hammer, the goblin smith (better known by his nickname "Nails")
25. Amaryllis Amra, goblin soup cook for the Goblin Court
26. Blazing Barda, the master cook of the Lower Courts, a goblin, ably assisted by the orc butcher Skrazag the Meek
27. Fat Lobbo, the half-ogre cook for the Winter Palace
28. Elasstriel, the head chef of the Royal Kitchens, a shadow fey ("Mistress Chopper" to her underlings)

DESIGN NOTE: SANDBOX AND PLOT

This entire arc of the adventure is much less linear than the city and Shadow Road, and much less exploratory than the Invisible Courts; it presumes the characters are level 9 or very close to it. There's no driver of the action, and you should feel comfortable letting the PCs get into trouble on their own (depending on your players, you can just tell them "It's up to you to decide what to do here"). If the party feels uncomfortable without an obvious set of directions, the challenges to duel and the feast gives them a hook, as does enticing PCs with courtesans and consorts. Let the players choose enemies and set the direction.

Avoid giving them the ability to approach the upper echelons of royalty directly (for instance, the royals are always stepping through a shadow door just as the PCs arrive). Indeed, whenever possible, gradually build up the distance and power of the queen and danger of the king, so those two meetings in the finale have maximum impact.

For more information on sandbox design, see the *Kobold Guide to Game Design, Volume 3*.

THIEVES AND TRICKSTERS

29. Sixes, a shadow fey gambler
30. Inlas Larack, ogre thief master
31. Bever Eyginly, shadow fey collector of unslaked lusts
32. Dappled Hand, tiefling keeper of lost property
33. Fenny the Hat, a shadow fey whose head is entirely engulfed by his hat
34. Heron, goblin messenger and thief
35. Shay, a shadow fey warlock, ruler of her own shadow

MONSTERS

36. Knifeflick, the (justifiably) bitter gelding painted-horse centaur courier
37. Ruebezahl, an obsessive shadow demon who seems to enjoy long conversations—counting the words
38. Trundleflich, a hag-like lamia with a taste for baby boys
39. Hoarfrost Driga, a heartbroken blue hag seeking a lover—she freezes them to death

ENTERTAINERS

40. Ananuriel, a shadow fey singer
41. Vale, a shadow fey dancer
42. Caterwaul Buckleburrr, gnome bagpiper with a necklace of ears
43. Puddingbottom, a gnome jester
44. Zwarosic, goblin Keeper of Whimsy

RAKES, ASSASSINS, AND DUELISTS

45. Phays, a changeling assassin
46. Poseymuddle, former goblin cat torturer, now looking for a position
47. Amelio, shadow fey and the Royal Arsonist
48. Mirasto the Skin Tailor, a shadow fey halfbreed
49. Silver, a shadow fey demon handler and friend to the House Stross of old
50. Caleb Quick, a tiefling rake with a vicious wit

THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Players almost always resist the passage of time... I call it the “nothing happens” problem. They seek to advance the story every minute, even when the people they want to talk to are not always available, the places they wish to visit are closed, or the work they hope to do requires helpers who are sleeping or otherwise engaged.

Ideally, you as the GM can make this time pass smoothly with a few tricks and tips.

Fey Time. Describe the seasons as summer one game session, and autumn the next. If no one notices, so be it. Time passes strangely among the fey. If someone does remark on it, tell them that time has gone by without the PCs noticing.

The Long Challenge. Not every skill challenge need pass quickly. Let one of the factions take a month or more to decide whether to admit an applicant to their ranks. Checks happen weekly.

The Weekly Duel. Combats are not fought daily during dueling season (see page 84). The combatants meet only once a week, perhaps due to slower healing in the Shadow Realm (see Slow Healing below).

The Lovers. If a PC woos and wins a courtesan or consort, they are inevitably spending time with that lover and not on the party’s other goals. Roll a 50/50 chance that the PC is missing in any particular day or scene—or simply say that the lovers are off at a cabin somewhere, fishing on an emerald tarn, or giggling behind a locked tower door.

Slow Healing. Force things the old-fashioned way; say that a full night’s rest in the Shadow Realm takes a week, no exceptions. Then let the players set their own pace.

51. Gadflit, instigator and avoider of duels
52. Josha Migallisti, a shadow fey junior duelist among the Ravens (see page 57)
53. Jurok the Spear, an unorthodox although successful goblin duelist (see page 86)
54. Brightspur, a young shadow fey rake and leader of the Ravens faction (see page 57)
55. Sir Yngress the Red, an eager Elf knight of the River Court (see page 86)
56. Yikrugrak the Crawling Knight, roachling duelist and servant of the Demon Lord Akyishigal (see page 87)

DOORMEN, GUARDS, AND WARDENS

57. Dunsnip the Curt, gargoyle doorman
58. Halgamel, a bitter hall guard
59. Old Socket and Banesniff, the troll sheriff and his ironsmelling boggart
60. Targomel, an obstinate shadow fey door guard
61. Marjest the Snide, shadow fey doorman
62. Odifiyi Sangazarotti, shadow fey master at arms
63. Imbemerethion, shadow fey captain of the guard, possible former lover of the king

RANGERS AND HUNSMEN

64. Courrant, a goblin bird catcher
65. Prickles, a goblin huntsman
66. Fordin of the East, Master of Horses, changeling
67. Kolya, Keeper of the Royal Hounds, shadow fey
68. Mongo the Lesser, Warden of the Moonlit Forest, shadow fey

69. Kynthalig Lickshadow, Master of the Hunt, shadow fey

SCHOLARS, SAGES, AND GREYBEARDS

70. Narin Poolcryer, dwarf and sage extraordinaire
71. Niccela, a shadow fey apprentice bookbinder and junior scribe
72. Grey Essicar Goose, a shadow fey tutor of black knowledge
73. Rhanshinau, the deva herald of truth and friend of Revich the Blind
74. Thorngrip, the pooka docent
75. Thistledown, white-haired gnome codger and complainer
76. Holmfirth, a shadow fey crone and wise woman, leader of the Grey Ladies (see page 59)

ROYAL APPOINTMENTS AND KEEPERS

77. Moggo the Chamberlain, goblin chamberlain and Keeper of the Goblin Court
78. Achingfast, Royal Corpsehanger and Skullpolisher, sluagh
79. Yllohbur, gnome master herb gardener and gatherer of nightsoil
80. Blistersoot the Royal Glassblower, a grimy and vindictive hobgoblin
81. Tarrin Voleslayer, Royal Owl Wrangler, kobold
82. Avaniel, Keeper of the Rookery and Owlery, shadow fey
83. Aileelia, Keeper of Mirrors, shadow fey
84. Halamath Greenleaf, Royal Druggist, gnome
85. Grizden Threeblade, Royal Armorer, shadow fey in charge of keeping minions running
86. Ladra, Royal Gloomier, shadow fey illusionist
87. Lady Katya Hollyoak, Royal Oathmaker, dryad
88. Lunggristle, Royal Mead Brewer, quickling stitcher of errant shadows
89. Mashfinger, Keeper of the King’s Ghoul Warrens, troll
90. Spindletwist, Queen’s Haberdasher and Lapidary, Keeper of Her Majesty’s Personal Adornments, gossamer-winged pixie spy
91. Winged Elvesta, Keeper of Lanterns (meaning the lantern dragonettes), shadow fey
92. Yarrow, Keeper of Locks and Spymaster to Her Majesty, shadow fey

COURTESANS AND CONSORTS

93. Songemesha, the raven-haired drow enchantress (see page 47)
94. Ballandrine the Frost-Eyed, consort and human changeling (see page 47)
95. The Lord of Flames, Hargos Enderran the Flame-Cloaked, elf consort (see page 44)
96. The Lady of Chains, Lishekki Almandrine the Silver-Chained, elf courtesan (see page 45)
97. Ulara of Seven Veils, shadow fey courtesan (see page 47)
98. Mora Moonwater the Rain-Cloaked, shadow fey courtesan (see page 47)
99. Maraya/Marek Laccrystae, the Sapphire Courtesan, succubus (see page 83)

COURTIERS

100. Cottonwing, rising shadow fey noble and triplet with Floppy and Bop (who are mere chambermaids)
101. Gwathion Everglade, shadow fey courtier with a temper
102. Meltathraiel, a shadow fey advisor with a deep-seated hatred of all non-fey
103. Saulena, Mistress of Daunts and Dares, shadow fey
104. Hulda Wisenhazy, a malign shadow fey gossip
105. Moongallow, questing Elf fairy knight
106. Sariel, a mysterious shadow fey lady in black
107. Sir Rujan the Knight of the Barnacle Tree, shadow fey duelist and bully
108. Hawksblood, an Elf dancing master
109. Despoiling Jon, a ganconer and philandering shadow fey courtier seeking naive maids
110. Lady Sorreminx, an Elf sorcerer from the Court of the River King (see page 88)
111. Revich the Blind Seer, angel of truth and leader of the Lords of Light (see page 63)

TITLED NOBLES

112. Baron Coughspittle, Lord of Rotting Leaves, Watcher of the Fractured Gate, a deathshade wisp who rules a barony to the north
113. Count and Archmagus Sammas Hollowgrin, Master Summoner, Royal Standardbearer and Master of the College of Heraldry, Master of Fence, the Lord of Fallen Archways and Broken Swords, shadow fey consort of the queen
114. His Grace, Duke Rackclasp, Warden of the Early Frost and First Bonecarver, slough invoker and necromancer
115. Jalennis, Lady of the Pale Gardens, shadow fey druid
116. Lady Marrowsilk the Queen's Counsel and Most Learned Advocate, shadow fey wizard
117. Lord Chelessfield, Master of the Alpine Marches, Elf of the River King's Court (see page 90)
118. Lord Maruuk, diabolical tiefling ambassador (who never wishes to go home)
119. Akyishigal, Demon Lord of Roaches and Master of Decay, Earl of Dark Corners and Lord of the Roachlings (see page 92) with attendant roachlings
120. Lightning Lord Suvid, Quickling Lord of Blades, Baron of Oracle Hill (see page 91)
121. Mistress Gossamer of the Mournful Gate, a banshee apologetic for the stench of her undead servants
122. Prince Loric Oakbound, youthful Elf ward (hostage) of the Summer Court (also known as the Cloud Prince and Lord of Daydreams)

THE BLOOD ROYAL

123. His Serene Highness ("Durchlaucht"), Prince of the Blood Hander Svenk, Baron of the Lantern City of Corremel, Waldgraf of the Margreve Forest, the Black Prince of Balefire (see page 96)
124. The Hidden Princess Vailessia Graystone, shadow fey princess, daughter of the city of Corremel (cousin of the Black Prince), Lady of the Hounds
125. Her Celestial and Royal Majesty, Sarastra Aestruum, Queen of Night and Magic, Duchess of the Heavens,

OPTION: SHADOW PASSAGES

As an added twist, you might add shadow passages connecting certain rooms. Choose 12 rooms to connect in this way but keep the record to yourself, so players have to learn the connections slowly.

The shadow passages are usable as a move action by any creature with shadow magic, teleportation, or related abilities to move instantaneously from one of the two locales to the other. This shadow passage may be locked by the nobles of the courts (and are automatically locked during any alarm), but they are generally left open for all to use.

Additionally, any fey-blooded creature with a little arcane training (Knowledge (arcana) DC 15 to open as a standard action for fey; DC 23 for non-fey) can open them as a standard action. They open as a swift action for those of Royal Blood.

Countess of Thorn, Mistress of Air and Darkness, Lady of the Summer Palace, and Bride of Shadows (see page 109)

126. His Lunar and Royal Majesty, Ludomir Imbrium the XVI, the Moonlit King of the Shadow fey, Lord of the Shadow Realm, Lord Protector of the Black Elves, Duke of the Elf Ironcrag, Baron of Bratislor, Earl of Zobeck, Master of the Winter Palace, and Count-Palatine of Salzbach (see page 124)

Conditions in the Court

The courtiers, servants, and hangers-on of the court all have their codes of behavior and their own concerns; most of the time, they ignore strangers unless they find some advantage in not.

Alliances, Courtesans, and Dueling

The PCs will need to claw their way up the social ladder here; they may question courtesans and lovers for information, strong-arm servants to gain access to important NPCs, and generally find their own most successful road to make progress in meeting the court's lords and ladies. There's a limited supply of available fey lovers and allies, and there's a price for keeping them happy, in gold, vitality, magic, memories, and so on (see courtesans on page 72, dueling on page 36, the Ravens faction on page 57, the Grey Ladies faction on page 59, the prince's Huntsmen faction on page 100, the Lords of Light faction on page 63, and the Demon Servants faction on page 92).

Otherwise, PCs can duel via magic, strength, knowledge, and so on. The court limits duels to 1/fey/month; this section of the adventure could go for several months.

Invisible Servants

Servants are present but not always visible in every room of the Royal Halls. They hide in the shadows of the room, motionless, until their presence is required (Perception DC 25).

Any character with a Status of 20 or more may call up a servant by speaking and asking for one as a free action. They will fetch and carry, offer assistance, answer simple questions—never about Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (arcana), or politics!—and generally make themselves useful to their betters.

Courts of the Shadow Fey

There is only one servant available for each small room with proportionally more in larger rooms. The Small Court has five servants (**Area 46**), and the Great Hall of the Shadow Court at least a dozen (**Area 62**).

Illumination and Illusion

Illusions cloak every room of the courts, even after the Invisible Courts illusion has faded. Some are friendly, some are perplexing. Choose from among the following if the party ventures into territory they should leave alone, or even when they visit familiar ground (like their own bedchambers).

TABLE 3-1: 20 DANGEROUS AND LURING ILLUSIONS FOR FEY CHAMBERS

1	Chickens with dozens of zealously guarded nests and eggs. PCs may be overcome with the urge to guard these nests against foxes.
2	Gigantic spiders discussing the making of soup. PCs may see themselves liquefied into soup, waking up in their own chambers fatigued.
3	An open pit with no apparent bottom. Falling drops the visitor into the Well of Night (area 52) covered by roaches.
4	Her Majesty the Queen in full royal garb, accompanied by a variety of cavorting dryads, satyrs, and naked elves. She invites the PCs to join her; those who do wake up hours later with their armor missing for a few days. Missing bits can be found at the smith's (Area 6).
5	Two young deer nibbling a grassy sward. PCs entering are transported to a distant quarter of the forest.
6	Storm clouds and rain. PCs are drenched.
7	Grey and utter silence. All who enter are dusted with grey powder.
8	Scrolls of ancient lore, crumbling before the viewers' eyes.
9	The tide is coming in. Opening the door releases an (illusory) wave of salt water.
10	A black-walled chamber of blood and howling souls; a group of goblins prepares a blood sacrifice to a demon lord.

11	A chamber of 100 mice in urgent consultation on legislation before the Murine Chamber, devoted to a bureaucratic apportionment of available resources. Quite hypnotic.
12	A small hidden palace-within-a-palace where the servants pretend to be nobles and the courtiers fetch and carry. Beheadings held at noon and sunset daily.
13	Stairs to the upper level of the palace, which is really the palace's rooftop. The illusion makes it seem that there are walls where none exist: Acrobatics check (DC 25) required or a PC falls and takes 3d10 damage.
14	Stairs to a wine cellar, which is really the Goblin Court, where an intruder may be held for trespass.
15	A line of beech trees stretches into the distance on one side of a dusty trail. On the other, a long and placid stream or canal. Frogs croak and herons wander. Good fishing here, surely: if the character fails a DC 20 Will save, then the character remembers a fine day fishing but is missing from court for a day or week.
16	An inferno of dwarves and derro toiling ceaselessly on some horrific contraptions of brass, steam, and iron. Rather like the Ironmonger's Hall back in Zobeck, really.
17	A garden in full bloom. The flowers are soporific, and those who enter sleep for days.
18	A parade! Goblins strike drums, shadow fey throw rose petals, quicklings zip along with flags and batons. Sound the trumpets, here come the unicorns.
19	A mountaintop shrine full of icy wind and with absolutely no exits. Leaving requires a Sense Motive roll (DC 22); staying without damage requires Endurance.
20	A dragon's lair. And a very, very unwelcoming dragon: DC 26 Fortitude or Reflex save, if the character fails, the PC wakes up with burns all over, and fatigued.

TABLE 3-3: COURTESANS AND CONSORTS

CONSORT/COURTESAN	PC				
	MINIMUM STATUS	SUCCESSES NEEDED	STATUS GAINED	MAINTENANCE (GP)	XP
The Lord of Flames, Hargos Enderran, the Flame-Cloaked Consort	10	4	+1	50	700
The Lady of Chains, Lishekki Almandrine, the Silver-Chained Courtesan	11	4	+1	50	700
Ulara, Courtesan of Seven Veils	13	6	+2	100	1,400
Ballandrine the Frost-Eyed Consort	14	8	+3	200	2,100
Mora Moonwater, the Rain-Cloaked Courtesan	15	8	+3	200	2,100
Songemesha the Raven-Haired	18 ¹	10	+5	400	2,800
Marek the Sapphire (M)	20	12 ²	+8	1,000	3,500
Maraya the Sapphire (F)	22 ³	12 ²	+8	1,000	3,500

¹ Will not speak to those with Status less than 14.

² All skill check DCs for wooing are 2 points higher than normal.

³ Will not speak to those with Status less than 16.

Guards and Wards

The courts are reasonably well guarded, at least at every major hall and at the gates linking the three main sections of the courts. Many of these guards are monolith footmen; a few others are rakes or quicklings of one stripe or another (use the rake stats from The Assassination scene, page 77). The guardians and hulking brutes don't fight much but, instead, use warding magic to keep PCs out (DC 20 Will save; PC is be-mazed and "loses" 1 day while wandering among illusions).

Sneaking in as a Servant

It's entirely possible to sneak into the courts disguised as a servant: this costs a -2 penalty to Status if infiltrating the palace over the walls or a -4 penalty if sneaking into a restricted wing. The disguised "servant" will be recognized by most of the fey, but the disguise is an accepted if disreputable way to visit the Royal Halls for lovers and desperate commoners, so they are usually ignored.

Servants and those disguised as servants are not allowed to carry weapons or arcane implements or to wear armor (Stealth DC 23 or Bluff DC 26). For those breaking the rules, the guards are summoned and the trespassers quietly but firmly escorted to the Lower Courts and given to the Goblin Court for judgment (usually expressed as a number of days spent scrubbing pots and hauling water).

Note that the roof and the windows are warded just as the Open Portal is (see page 7). It's not possible to climb into the Halls without some degree of Knowledge (arcana) skill. Even then, the lantern dragonettes report trespassers, and within a few minutes the visitors will be escorted out, to their shame.

Status Invitations

If the party negotiates well and gains Status in the courts, they may be invited to meet the Blind Seer, the Black Prince, or the Sapphire Courtesan, as shown in the following table.

TABLE 3-2: STATUS DOORS

STATUS	PRIVILEGE EXTENDED
11	May attend the Swan Festival as standing-room-only servants
11	Allowed to visit Revich the Blind Seer to ask for appointment (see page 63)
13	Invitation to meet Akyishigal, the Demon Lord of Roaches (see page 92)
15	Invitation from blind seer to dine (see page 63)
16	Invitation to enter the Royal Halls and the Upper Court (see page 74)
16	Invitation to the Swan Festival to drink and dine (see page 74)
19	Invitation to go hunting with the Black Prince (see page 96)
20/22	Invitation to woo the Sapphire Courtesan (see page 82)
23	Invitation to capture a firebird for the queen through an intermediary (see page 100)
26	Audience with Her Majesty the Queen of Night and Magic (see page 104)

12 STRANGE TRICKS OF THE COURTIERS

- 1** Twin Spiders. Two spies are lurking on the ceilings of the halls, using their spider-climbing abilities to learn about the PCs. The two spies serve two different fey factions.
- 2** Spotlights and Darkness. The PC with the highest Status is always well illuminated by a pair of lantern dragonettes (see page 45). The PC with the lowest Status is always cloaked in shadows and gains concealment as a swift action.
- 3** The Locked Room without Doors. This hall of 6 doors seems unconnected to any other part of the palace. Visitors sometimes hear a light laugh or running water. No matter what door they go through, they always come out one of the other doors in the room. Materials in the room look like clues for which doors to go through in what order: a tapestry, an enameled box, a carved wooden set of chessmen. The whole is an elaborate illusory trap, which ejects visitors after a few hours or with a Knowledge (arcana) or Sleight of Hand check (DC 30) to puzzle out the clues.
- 4** The Stairs Up. The PCs enter a room with stairs on the ceiling. With the right password or ritual, they can reverse gravity here to visit a secret room, such as the gathering place of one of the factions or the site for an assignation with a high Status courtesan or consort.
- 5** The Doubles. If a PC splits from the rest of the party, he or she returns and seems normal—but the others may notice that the PC casts no shadow (passive Perception DC 30). Eventually, the other "real" PC returns. Which is real?
- 6** Animal Servants. The party finds a room with humanoid servants, each with an animal head. These heads are illusions, but the servants are convinced they are real punishments for failing to obey shadow fey law. They weep beneath these illusory masks—and obey.
- 7** Living Furnishings. The furniture in this room— chairs, lounging couches, even a pendulum—are all people, goblins, or other servants.
- 8** Seconds and Doubles. If the PCs challenge a fey much above their station, the fey lord or lady sends back a double to a duel as an insult to the PCs.
- 9** Shadow Memory. There is a ritual that allows one to absorb the memories of the double. The fey consider this perfect for illicit assignations or crimes requiring a strong alibi.
- 10** Death Butterflies. A sphere of force rolls down the hall, filled with a mass of butterflies. If a PC picks up the sphere or pokes at it, the force bubble evaporates and the death butterflies within are released to attack for 2d3 rounds, before scattering (see page 101 for stats).
- 11** The Starchild. An illusion of a star-elf descends from the heavens one night to ask the PCs to do something that will make them appear truly, truly foolish: this might be spitting in the presence of the queen, challenging the Black Prince to a duel, and so on.
- 12** The Door Home. The PCs open a door and step into Zobeck. They may come and go as they please, visiting familiar places and people, purchasing goods and so on. If they ask around, the fey chuckle and say the Shadow Road is only one way into and out of the Moonlit Court. At some point when the PCs are resting at home after a particularly taxing encounter, they wake up in the fey court, with all they accomplished or gained in Zobeck gone and the shadow fey all laughing at them for falling for the illusion (-2 penalty to Status).

Winning a Courtesan or Consort's Favor

... A dread trembling o'erwhelms me, paler than I, than dried grass in Autumn, and in my madness, dead I seem almost.
—Sappho, "Hymn to Aphrodite"

A PC with a Status of 10 or higher may woo and win the favor of a courtesan or consort, as long as their status is greater or equal to the courtesan or consort. This costs 50 gp in grooming for the PC, plus 10x the courtesan's or consort's minimum Status (as shown in **Table 3-3: Courtesans and Consorts**). Once favor is won, the PC gains the XP indicated as a one-time award; if favor is not won, the PC suffers a -2 penalty to Status.

Winning and Wooing. Winning over a courtesan or consort is a complex skill check, of sorts, and the PC involved must make the skill

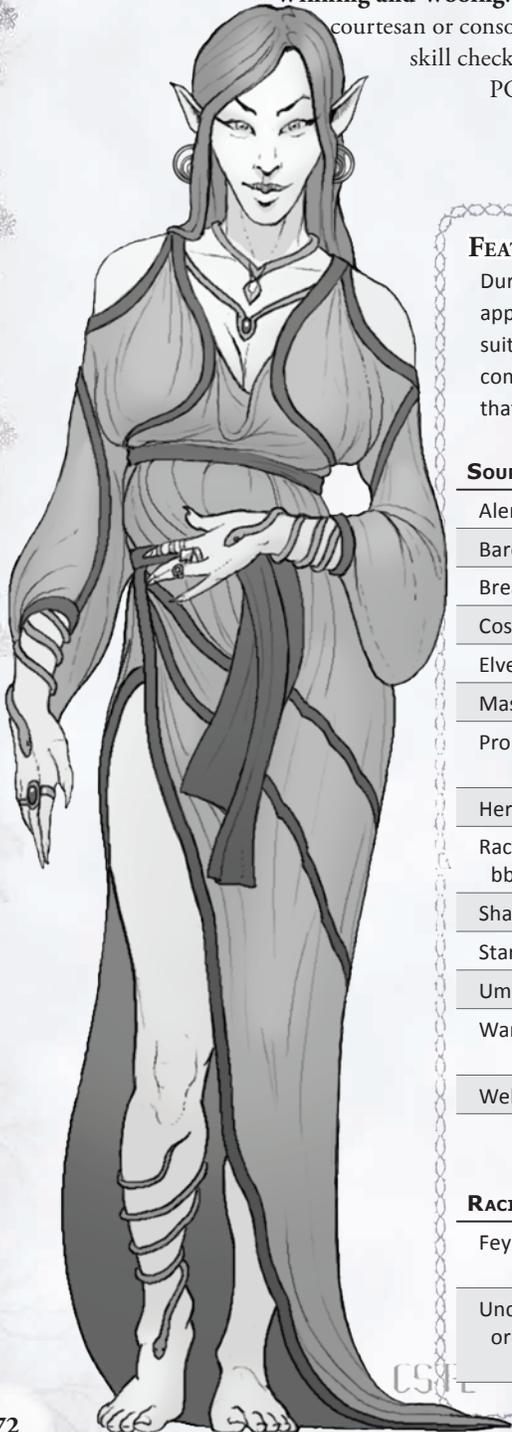
checks required (see **Table 3-3: Courtesans and Consorts**); a friend may help with only a single skill check, or else the friend may instead inadvertently win the courtesan or consort's attention, not the wooing PC. Aid attempts by friends are always allowed.

Courtesans and consorts can be wooed with a wide variety of skills and even won by dueling and other activities. Favor is not won if three failures are achieved before the minimum number of successes. This process can be done over time, if desired, with no more than one or two successes permitted per encounter. This extends the time spent in the courts and mirrors the gradual development of the relationship.

Acrobatics (DC 23)—Treated as dancing although other forms of Acrobatics might apply: running over rooftops, climbing the Silver Tree to pluck its highest flower, and so on.

Bluff (DC 23)—Lies, braggadocio, and purest flattery are welcome. However, lies that fall flat to a sharp-eared consort or courtesan are especially sour and count as 2 failures. No one likes excessive ego in a suitor.

Diplomacy (DC 18 + 5/additional attempt)—Sweet words are the courtesan's and consort's bread and butter, and they pretty much



FEATS AND POWERS IN THE COURTESAN/CONSORT CHALLENGE

During this form of complex skill check, the identity and abilities of the PC matter. His or her appearance is all very nice, but most courtesans and consorts are more impressed with what a suitor does. So a PC with one of the following feats gains a bonus to a single skill check during a complex skill check. Multiple feats on the list don't stack, but this bonus stacks with other feats that provide a skill boost.

SOURCE	RATIONALE
Alertness (feat)	Adds to Perception leading to Sense Motive
Bardic Knowledge	+1 to all checks, stackable with Breadth of Experience
Breadth of Experience (feat)bbb	+1 to all checks
Cosmopolitan (feat)bbb	"Aren't we cultured?"
Elven speakeraaa	Preferred language of the Courts
Master Craftsman (feat)	"Tell me about your art."
Prophetic Visionary (feat)ddd	Failed check does not incur penalty ("Oops—time to back off.")
Hero's Fortune (feat)bbm	Make two rolls and use the better
Racial Heritage (elf or gnome) (feat)bbb	Use Fey origin Racial bonus
Shared Insight (feat)bbb	Ally points out something useful offering small bonus
Starlight Summons (feat)ddd	"Can you point out the constellations for me?"
Umbral Spell (feat)ISM	"There's hope for you yet."
War Singer (feat)bbb	"Oh, eloquent and aggressive! Tell me how you got your scars."
Well Prepared (feat)bbb	Re-roll failed skill check

RACIAL BONUSES	RATIONALE
Fey origin (drow, Elf, elf, gnome)	Some general bonus, but also bigger penalty for getting it wrong ("You should know better.")
Uncouth (dwarf, gearforged, half-orc)	Some general penalty, but bigger bonus for getting it right ("You can overcome your natural oafishness for little me?")

CLASS ARCHETYPES/ASPECTS RATIONALE**ALCHEMIST**

Alchemical Simulacrum ⁴	"So much potential..."
Doppelganger Simulacrum ⁴	"You <i>are</i> twisted."
Poison Conversion ³	"You know so many delightful tricks! We need to talk..."

BARBARIAN

Good for What Ails You (rage power) ²	Only for supreme egotists ("I'm so gorgeous you're bound to fall for me.")
Perfect Clarity (rage Power) ³	—

BARD

Magician archetype ²	—
Masterpieces ⁴	"Play it again for me..."
Jack of all Trades	+1 to all checks

CAVALIER

Order of the Blue Rose ³	—
Order of the Cockatrice ²	The character might become a challenge for the wooed, "Can I make them care about something other than themselves?"

CLERIC

Darkness domain	—
Deception domain ²	—
Lust domain ²	—
Night domain ²	—
Trickery domain	—

DRUID

Barkskin	—
Resist nature's lure	"Oh, I like a challenge."

FIGHTER

Bravery +3	"Stalwart in the face of fear, I love it!"
Gladiator archetype ³	"Do you promise to defend my honor?"

GUNSLINGER

Deadshot ²	—
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INQUISITOR

Fate inquisition ⁴	—
Infiltrator archetype ⁴	—

MAGUS

Arcane Cloak ³	—
Soul Forger archetype ³	"Elegant...and clever. How unexpected."

MONK

Drunken Master archetype ²	"Such a refreshing change of pace from your fellows."
Hungry Ghost archetype ²	"Like a kindred spirit"

ORACLE

Dark Tapestry mystery ²	—
Time mystery ²	—

Haunted or Wasting curse ²	—
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PALADIN

Exhausted mercy	"Like you were carved from wood, absolutely delightful."
Fatigued mercy	"Able to go without stopping, we love it."

RANGER

Favored Enemy (Fey)	"It's like you already know me." (add +1 or 1 use per +2 to the bonus)
Favored Terrain (Urban)	"Let us see if you can find the hidden places here."

ROGUE

Charmer talent ²	Roll twice and use the better result on a single check
Honeyed Words talent	Roll twice and use the better result on a single check
Rumormonger advanced talent ²	—
Strong Impression talent ²	—

SORCERER

Destined bloodline	—
Fey bloodline	—
Shadow bloodline ²	—

SUMMONER

Eidolon serpentine form ²	—
Eidolon Fey model ⁴	—
Eidolon Basic Magic evolution ⁴	—
Eidolon Flight evolution ²	—
Eidolon Major Magic evolution ⁴	—
Eidolon See in Darkness evolution ⁴	—

WITCH

Charm hex ²	—
Fortune/Misfortune Hex ²	Reroll one failed check
Deception, Moon, Portents, Shadow, Trickery patrons ^{2,4}	—
Hoarfrost hex ⁴	—

WIZARD

Divination school speciality	"Oooh, tell me what he's thinking!"
Shadow School speciality ²	—
Shadowcaster ⁵	—

- 1 *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*
- 2 *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*
- 3 *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*
- 4 *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*
- 5 *Inner Sea Manual*

Courts of the Shadow Fey

expect to hear them as well as speak them. However, too much of a good thing is not just possible but likely. After the first attempt, the DC goes up by 5 for each subsequent attempt.

Diplomacy (gather information) (DC 25)—All courtesans and consorts love gossip, and the juicier the rumor, the better. A roll of DC 30 or better adds a +2 bonus to the next check.

Dueling—Winning a duel fought for a particular courtesan or consort counts as 2 successes. This must be part of the challenge and acceptance of the duel and, thus, declared beforehand. Losing such a duel always counts as a failure for the skill challenge, and the PC suffers the Status losses for both the lost duel and possibly the lost courtesan or consort.

Feat bonuses—At the GM's option, relevant feats could grant a +1 bonus to a wooing check and an appropriate class ability grants a +2 bonus for a single check ("It's not so novel the second time"). Each relevant feat may be used once in the process. (See the **Feats and Powers in the Courtesan/Consort Challenge** sidebar for a more complex take on this.)

Intimidate (DC 19)—Only Lishekki the Silver-Chained Courtesan can be wooed with Intimidate. For all others, this is an automatic failure.

Knowledge (arcana) (DC 28)—The courtesans and consorts are notoriously easily bored by Knowledge (arcana) although a PC may impress them with sufficiently bizarre, original, or practical advice.

Knowledge (history) (DC 30)—The consorts and courtesans are notoriously easily bored by Knowledge (history), even more so than by Knowledge (arcana). Though it is possible to impress in this fashion, it is rare.

Knowledge (nature) (DC 12 + Courtesan's Status + 2/additional attempt)—Flowers, greenery, feathers from rare birds, sweet berries, robin's eggs, and distilled sap are all welcome gifts among the courtesans and consorts. However, the more sophisticated consorts find these things a little beneath them: for instance, merely ordinary flowers are not enough to sway the Sapphire Courtesan. The DC is increased by the Status of the courtesan's or consort's skill check: for example, Hargos is a DC 22 (Status 10) while Maraya demands a DC 34 (Status 22). Like flattery, little gifts do eventually grow tiresome, so the DC also goes up on each attempt.

Knowledge (religion) (DC 27)—The courtesans and consorts find most Knowledge (religion) unimportant since the fey's goddess rules them, and thus, every other Knowledge (religion) is a form of heresy or wasted effort. But sometimes a story about one divinity or dogma is especially amusing or barbaric, pleasing their jaded sensibilities.

Perception (DC 25)—Just seeing things rarely impresses a courtesan or consort; after all, the whole point is that they are meant to be seen. However, sometimes a PC notices something of particular interest, such as a clever bit of sewing in their garments or the way a ring is inscribed with a motto. Keen eyes and sharp ears have their moments.

Sense Motive (DC 20)—Understanding what a consort wants is crucial. Sense Motive grants no success immediately, but a single successful roll grants a +2 bonus to all of that week's wooing attempts. A failed Sense Motive roll is still a skill challenge failure: the PC fatally misreads some wish or trait of the consort and commits a faux pas by revealing this lack of keen attention.

Sleight of Hand (DC 20 + 5/additional attempt)—Gifts stolen from rivals are always sweet ones. However, gifts do grow tiresome with time—especially if unwelcome questions about provenance come up.

Strength check (DC 18)—Only applies to the female courtesans; male consorts are expected to demonstrate their own feats of Strength, and attempting to impress them in this way is an automatic failure. The consorts do hate to be overshadowed.

Survival (DC 28)—Physical prowess is interesting but not always desirable. Most consorts and courtesans do not require displays of endurance, so the bar is quite high.

Success: The courtesan or consort takes the PC as a lover, and the PC gains Status (as shown in Table 3-3: Courtesans and Consorts) as long as the PC continues to provide gifts and attention (as reflected in the "maintenance" column). Either party may break the affair off; the courtesan typically does so only if the PC is negligent or takes up with a rival.

Failure: The courtesan or consort publically or privately tells the PC that she or he is not interested in further advances. The PC suffers a -2 penalty to Status as word gets around that the suit has been rejected.

Once a suit has failed, further attempts to woo the consort or courtesan for at least 1 month are automatic failures (with additional -2 penalties to Status each time). Continued attempts to win the courtesan when the PC's advances have clearly been declined will result in a visit from a duelist champion.

Scene 1, Entering the Upper Halls

MINIMUM STATUS: 16

Once the most diplomatic or boldest of the party has achieved a Status of 16 or better (or they have all disguised themselves as servants and snuck into the Royal Halls), the PCs may see the true powers, the lords and ladies of the Shadow Court. Or at the very least, they may visit the wing of the palace that has thus far been closed to them.

This is a small occasion in the Status-obsessed courts. Read the following when the party first approaches those Upper Halls:

The lantern dragonettes perched at the top of the white marble stairs lift their heads; their tarnished silvery scales shake and the orange light of the dragons shines out like a beacon, parting the darkness and revealing a small courtyard with a fountain, a white tower, and stairs up past more armored footmen.

Once up the second stairs, there is a long hallway filled with lantern light and many doors. Laughter and music float down from the far end of the hall, and a few servants bustle to and fro.

To the PC with the Highest Status:

The footman in his silvery armor speaks to you in a pleasing, slightly echoing voice. "Ah, milord, much joy and welcome! You are invited by their Royal Majesties to enter the Upper Halls. Please, the

Scene 2, The Courtesans Dance

servants there await your command, and your fellow courtiers will surely be delighted to meet you! How shall we announce you?"

If the PC gives a title, there is a fanfare of invisible trumpets, the PC's name and title rings out—and that's about it. A few servants come over, looking to ingratiate themselves.

Once inside, give the party time to react, quiz a servant, and so on. If they do enter the Great Hall, read or paraphrase the following:

More than 40 guests mingle in the Great Hall; servants follow them, preparing a feast. Most of the guests are fey or elves of some type, but there are a few humans and a single figure that appears to be a cross between a gigantic insect and a horned man dressed in red silks who is not a member of the court. Three demon dogs roam the hall as well, slinking under the tables.

Perception (DC 25)—At least half a dozen archers stand on an upper balcony.

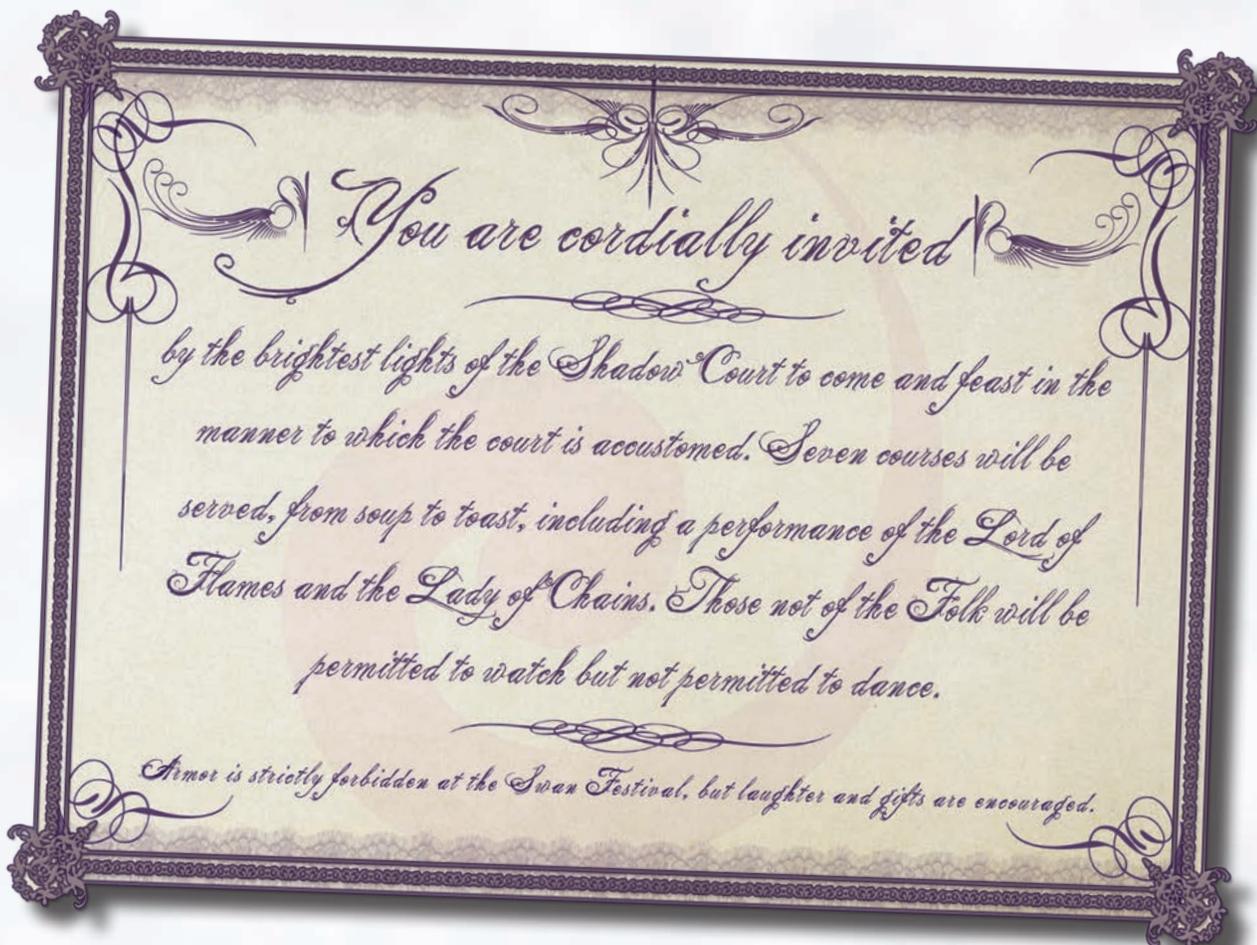
Sense Motive (DC 25)—Illusions cloak many of the guests; at least 6 of them are not fey at all but demons or devils of some kind. It's hard to track them, but clearly, bound or conjured demon lords serve in the queen's retinue and devils as her advisors.

MINIMUM STATUS AS SERVANT: 11**MINIMUM STATUS AS INVITED GUEST: 16**

Many fey specialize in being beautiful, smart, charismatic, or insanely sexy. These courtesans and consorts are both power players in their own right, as well as being prizes and tokens of Status among the fey. Nobles and ladies who can afford the chase, woo these courtesans and consorts with magic and lavish gifts, and the courtesans and consorts bestow their favors only rarely. Their willingness to take a new noble as a lover is always a sign of Status and prestige.

This winter, the consorts and courtesans are throwing a winter party called the Swan Festival, and the PCs with a Status of 11 or better are able to attend as servants or bystanders—they are not seated; characters with Status of 16 or better will get a copy of this invitation and are invited to dine.

As explained in the handout, armor is not permitted at the dance, but weapons and implements certainly are (and are expected to remain sheathed unless there is good cause). Give the PCs time to arrange whatever special garments, favors, and arrangements they require such as attending with a favored fey, or wearing faction colors, or whatever else they dream up. The event is held in the Great Hall of the Shadow Fey (**Area 62**) just after moonrise.



KING'S CORDIAL AND PRINCE'S ALE

The Prince's Ale is safe (gain a +1 bonus to Status), and the queen notes those who signal alliance to her son. This is not entirely good, and might be noted in the Queen's Audience later (see page 104) since she has a remarkable memory for these sorts of things.

Those who drink the King's Cordial may be in for a wild ride; fey suffer no ill effects beyond a mild euphoria, but others begin to hallucinate and suffer a paralysis.

KING'S LUNAR CORDIAL

Drinking the Moonlit King's cordial offers strange visions of celestial realms and leaves its imbibers weak-kneed and faint.

Type poison (ingested); **Save** Fortitude DC 20

Onset 1 minute; **Frequency** 1/minute for 10 minutes

Effect 1d4 Wisdom damage and -5 ft from movement rate; **Cure** 3 successive saves

This poison does not kill those reduced to 0 Wisdom, but leaves them mad and immobile.

The Seating, Soups, and Spoons

FOR PCs OF STATUS 11 OR LOWER.

Two servants bar your way at the entrance. "Please, come this way. There's a party in the guest hall for visitors; this ball is only for those invited."

Crashing the party when the servants ask you to leave is a boneheaded move, and all heads turn to see who is making a fool of themselves. The character's immediately suffers at least a -4 penalty to Status. Those who follow the servants are taken to the Goblin Court for a much rowdier feast.

FOR PCs WITH STATUS 11 – 15.

A beautiful shadow fey and a grinning goblin look at you and consult a list. "Hm, yes, you may observe the festivities from the hunter's hall, balcony, and adjoining chambers, milord, milady. The hall itself is full, I fear."

Those who wish may sit outside watching in from a distance; they are given water or mundane ale to drink for the queen's toast but, otherwise, not fed or waited on. Many of the junior keepers and a few low-Status visitors make up the majority of this "outside festival."

Attempts to crash the seating arrangements are dealt with fairly brutally (keep it brief), and the character who simply sits down in the main hall without an invite suffers a -4 penalty to Status.

FOR PCs WITH STATUS 16 OR HIGHER.

A beautiful shadow fey and a grinning goblin look at you and consult a list. "Ah yes, follow this dragonette down the long hall, and bow when you enter. The

feast is almost ready to begin." Who knew that the fey could be punctual?

The dragonette leads them to a squire, who takes them to their seats—except for the highest-Status PC.

FOR THE PC WITH THE HIGHEST STATUS.

You are led to the high table, above the salt, where sit the fey lords and ladies. They look you up and down once, then return to their conversation, ignoring you. A servant steps forward with a basin and towel; the lady next to you seems to be eating a bouquet of flowers. Your friends are all seated further down the table in a group.

Sense Motive (DC 20)—The fey lords seem to think you are purely a temporary distraction. Heck, they probably think you don't even speak Elven.

A PC who makes a Diplomacy check (DC 25) wins over his or her neighbors and may attempt Diplomacy (gather information) for gossip or may simply ask a question for each additional successful Diplomacy check. At some point, of course, their sufferance for this visitors grows thin, and they turn away to discuss more important matters with other courtiers. Increase the DC by 10 after a number of questions equal to the character's Charisma modifier, unless the topic of conversation is of particular interest to the fey.

The Feast Begins

Once seated:

Once you are sitting, the dishes arrive immediately and come in an unending stream, each announced by a herald or servant: first a bell soup, snowflake soup, and a sparkling stew called goblin stew. Surely, there is no goblin in these. Or is there? Do you eat it?

Those who do gain a +1 bonus to Status; those who decline suffer a -1 penalty to Status for rudeness.

The Wine and the Toast. Those who do eat the soups are offered wine; those who do not eat are offered none:

As you finish the soup, the dish floats away, carried by invisible hands. Goblins and animal-headed servants step forward with pitchers of liquid, perhaps wine or water. They are not remotely human wines: the servant says "Queen's Wine, King's Cordial, or Prince's Ale?"

Ask the player whether his or her character will accept a goblet full and whether he drinks. Make a note to yourself.

Knowledge (nature) (DC 25)—The Queen's Wine is liquid starlight, unfit for human consumption but safe for the fey to drink (fey characters doing so immediately gain 2d10 temporary hit points which remain until lost or leaving the courts; all others take 1d10 points of damage and become fatigued).

Perception (DC 15)—The Queen's Wine is inky black with flecks of something luminous, the King's Cordial shimmers like moonlight, and the Prince's Ale is pale green, like spring leaves.

Sense Motive (DC 20)—The fey courtiers and visitors are asking mostly for the queen's and prince's beverages. Only the queen and a few senior nobles request the King's Cordial.

Consequences. Those who refuse all three drinks suffer a -2 penalty to Status for failing to toast the Blood Royal. Those who accept the Queen's Wine and drink it gain a +2 bonus to Status and suffer the effects of starlight wine above; those who accept the King's Cordial gain no Status (but see King's Cordial and Prince's Ale sidebar); those who drink the Prince's Ale gain a +1 bonus to Status (but see King's Cordial and Prince's Ale sidebar).

Using Sleight of Hand or Bluff to pretend to drink is remarkably difficult, given the number of servants, keen-eyed courtiers, and others eager to observe the newcomers. These are opposed attempts against the +12 Perception and +10 Sense Motive of roughly 1d8 + Charisma modifier people watching the PC at any given time; as newcomers, they are curiosities and worth staring at.

The Toast

We greet our cousin the River King and his ambassadors, Lord Chelessfield and Lady Sorreminx. We regret that young Lord Flax could not join us. We greet the fiery Lord Maruuk and return the greetings of his masters, the archdukes. And we greet our

visitors from our ancient lands in the Lighted Realms as well, led by [NAME of PC with Highest Status]. To the Shadow Realm and all who rule it!

Diplomacy (DC 11)—Refusing to drink when the toast is made is a serious breach of etiquette. Those who do not drink with the queen suffer a -6 penalty to Status.

The Feast

The second and following courses arrive with fish, meats, and much stranger things. Read the following:

Servants bring in 20 dishes: so many it's impossible to see them all or hear them announced. A wild boar reduction over lamb stuffed with firebird eggs, and so forth. Your bowls and plates of blue glass are heaped high. Do you eat?

Eating confers no Status unless the PC refused the soups. If they did (and then eat the meal anyway), they gain +1 Status (better late than never, for a net gain of 0).

The Menu

Read the following to the players, or provide them with Player Handout #2 (see page 75) or downloadable for free from www.koboldquarterly.com/kqstore/.



Courts of the Shadow Fey

Menu

A repast to celebrate the arrival of guests at the Winter Halls of Her Celestial and Royal Majesty, Sarastra Aestruum, Queen of Night and Magic, Duchess of the Heavens, Countess of Thorn, Mistress of Air and Darkness, Lady of the Summer Palace, and Bride of Shadows.

Seating and Musical Divertissement

Seeds and Flower Bouquets

1st Course: Bells, Flakes, and Sparks

Choice of Bell Soup, Snowflake Soup, or Sparkling Goblin Stew

Arrival of the Royal Presence

All rise, proclamation

Toast

Choice of Queen's Wine, King's Cordial, or Prince's Ale

2nd Course: Fire and Snort

Wild boar reduction over golden lamb stuffed with firebird eggs

Fresh lamb

Lamprey pie with galantine-sauce of cinnamon and sugar

Stone goblets, fire wine

Interlude: Three Dances

Fire, Tears, and Veils

3rd Course: Birds of the Air

Raven's Pie with archery

Stork legs and sparrow's tongues

Beet foam, apple darts, and hatching eggs

Silver goblets, cloudberry liquor

4th Course: The Underworld

Cocooned badger a la drow with fish sauce

Memorial beef

Varied mushroom accompaniment

Root vegetables

Golden goblets, skull wine

Jewels and Speech

5th Course: The Swan Thieves

The Silver Swans and their Lunar Jewels

Shaved goose eggs with Saffron Crust

Flying Swan with Falling Crowns

Spun glass goblets, gooseberry wine

Dessert

Candied roses

Smoke puff pastry with gold center

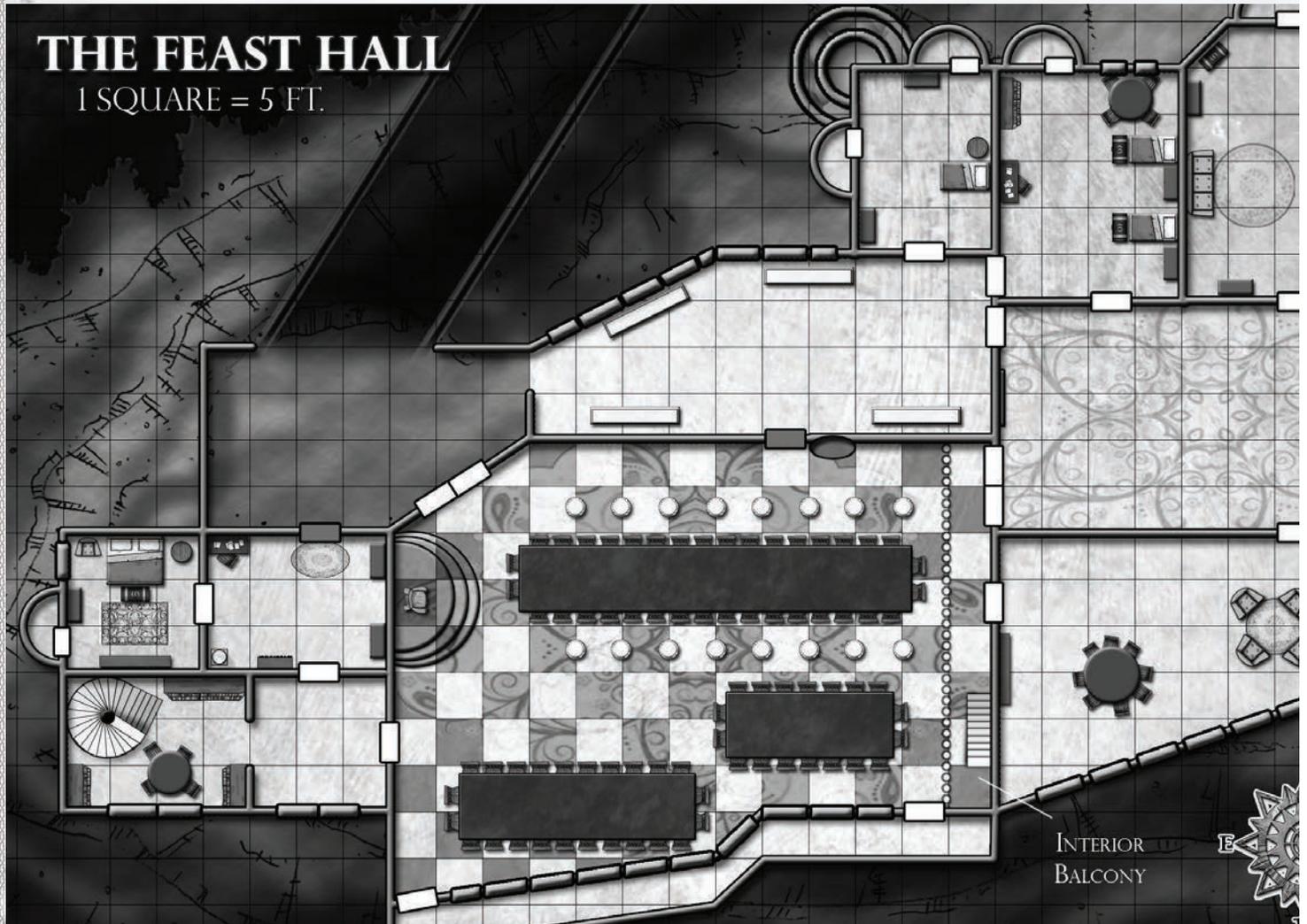
Castle pastry with inhabitants and orchards

Chocolate egg

Spun glass goblets, iced cinnamon pear wine

THE FEAST HALL

1 SQUARE = 5 FT.



The Royal Presence Retires

Dances and Music to Dawn
Orange punch with children's tears
Ginger beer with blood shot

Notes to Explain the Menu

The menu is meant to be a minefield, and players will try to figure out what is what. The primary checks are Sense Motive, Knowledge (nature), and Perception (DC 21)—and possibly even Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion)—to gather a little information. Easier are the Diplomacy (gather information) (DC 18) or Diplomacy (DC 15) checks to ask one's neighbors—though the fey may lie just to amuse themselves. The cutlery and plates as well as cups and glasses are often edible. Spun sugar for glasses, breads for plates, fruits for cups, and shadow for cutlery.

- Fresh Lamb.** The “fresh lamb” is cut from a live animal, of course.
- Raven's Pie.** The “pie with archery” involves shooting down one's supper when the pie is opened. Shooting requires an attack (against AC 19, only a hit is required) using a bow and a single arrow provided (and retrieved after the course). Success garners a +1 bonus to Status, a very tasty bird, and some applause from neighboring diners. A critical success indicates two birds are struck and provides an additional +1 to Status.
- Drow Cuisine.** The “a la drow” is a spun silk cocoon around a jellied badger liquefied by spider venom (and then heated to neutralize the venom). It requires successful Fortitude save (DC 19) to eat jellied badger since it tastes vile and the badger's skeleton hasn't dissolved yet. Success means not vomiting it back up; failure means inability to eat more than a single mouthful and a -1 penalty to Status. Drow need not make the Fortitude check and may eat normally. They gain no Status for the feat.
- Memorial Beef.** This maggot-ridden food for the dead is rotting under an illusion. Once requested, it must be eaten, as failing to eat this and honor the dead is a grave insult. Generally avoided, this requires an Fortitude save (DC 23) to eat without gagging or vomiting (-2 penalty to Status for vomiting up a royal feast—or -3 penalty to Status for refusing to eat it, and insulting the shades of the departed).
- Skull Wine.** This is made from fermented brains. Likewise, best avoided. If drunk, this hellish poison induces visions of death while chilling the blood and slowing the heart: Fortitude save (DC 20) or suffer 1d10 damage and weakened (Two saves ends both); After Effect—You are weakened until the feast ends.
- Jewels and Speech.** The jewels might be illusions or real, but either way, attempting Sleight of Hand is a bad idea: -2 penalty to Status for theft. The queen displays her power by conjuring the jewels together into a necklace and asking Lord Chelessfield, Ambassador Marduuk, and the highest- Status PC to say a few courteous words to the court. This requires an opposed Diplomacy check (+19 Diplomacy from Chelessfield, +10 Diplomacy from Marduuk). The winner gets the necklace and gains a +4 bonus to Status for a gift directly from the queen. The second-place speech loses nothing, the third-place Diplomacy check suffers a -3 penalty to Status for a dull, insufficiently flattering, or otherwise unworthy speech.

Menu
A repast to celebrate the arrival of guests at the Winter Halls of Her Celestial and Royal Majesty, Sarastra Aestrum, Queen of Night and Magic, Duchess of the Heavens, Countess of Thorn, Mistress of Air and Darkness, Lady of the Summer Palace, and Bride of Shadows.

Seating and Musical Divertissement Seeds and Flower Bouquets

1st Course: Bells, Flakes, and Sparks
Choice of Hell Soup, Snowflake Soup, or Sparkling Goblin Stew

Arrival of the Royal Presence All rise, proclamation

Toast
Choice of Queen's Wine, King's Cordial, or Prince's Ale

2nd Course: Fire and Suet
Wild bear reduction over golden lamb stuffed with firebird eggs
Fresh lamb
Lamprey pie with galantine sauce of cinnamon and sugar
Stone goblets, fire wine

Saterlode: Three Dances Fire, Tears, and Veils

3rd Course: Birds of the Sky
Ravens Pie with archery
Stork legs and sparrows tongues
Beet foam, apple darts, and hatching eggs
Silver goblets, cloudberry liquor

4th Course: The Underworld
Cecooned badger a la drow with fish sauce
Memorial beef
Various mushroom accompaniment
Root vegetables
Golden goblets, shall wine

Jewels and Speech

5th Course: The Swan Thieves
The Silver Swans and their Lunar Jewels
Shaved goose eggs with Saffron Crust
Flying Swan with Falling Crowns
Spun glass goblets, geeseberry wine

Dessert
Candied roses
Smoke puff pastry with gold center
Castle pastry with inhabitants and orchards
Chocolate egg
Spun glass goblets, iced cinnamon pear wine
The Royal Presence Retires
Dances and Music to Dawn
Orange punch with children's tears
Ginger beer with blood shot

The Royal Presence Retires

Dances and Music to Dawn
Orange punch with children's tears
Ginger beer with blood shot

ROMANCE AND LUST AMONG THE FEY

The fey are easy lovers; easy come, easy go, not too many broken hearts. Perhaps their long lives make them less passionate—or at least less willing to grieve over these things—but for the most part, the PCs are a novelty at the court and nothing more. There is an etiquette to it: certain flowers, certain gifts, poetry, daggers, instantiated memories (see page 38), and even drugged or enchanted wine are all perfectly normal ways to go about one's social life to the fey. Their standards are... different.

To reflect this, the ideal is to describe one or two of the courtesans and see whether any of the players express an interest. If not, it's not something that can be forced. If the PC is interested, avoid running a romance as a skill challenge (maybe do so covertly, but NEVER make it clear that there are successes and failures at stake). Smooth-talkers may get shot down, but they should at least be having fun—and remember that romance is one long look away from dueling, if the PCs hit on the wrong courtesan in front of the wrong noble. Even a failed romance can be an entertaining adventure.

In general, this isn't about long-term relationships; it's more *Dangerous Liaisons* with each side maneuvering for advantage. For more information on running a successful romantic subplot in a high-fantasy game, see "Romance in RPGs" in *Kobold Quarterly Magazine* #13.

7. **Fire Wine.** This is a vile, painful, burning liquid that churns the guts, and requires a Fortitude save (DC 16), or the diner must leave the table abruptly to relieve themselves. No Status loss.
8. **The Swans and Crowns.** The swans are enchanted to appear alive, fully feathered, and perhaps singing as they are carved. The flying swan drops tiny crowns to favored diners, which show the queen's current Favor: +1 bonus to Status to PCs who move quickly, catching them on their heads with a successful touch attack against AC 24.
9. **Smoke Puff Pastry.** The gold center is, in fact, liquid gold, which burns the tongue of anyone attempting to eat it (they are meant as offerings to the departed, or cooled down and used for monetary value). Eating one means the diner is mute with a burnt tongue for the rest of the feast, and can only pantomime (use DC 16 Bluff checks to convey meaning).
10. **Castle Pastry.** The castle is indeed full of tiny inhabitants who scream and flee the diner and the orchards are, indeed, tasty fruit snacks.
11. **Chocolate Egg.** The chocolate covered egg has a boiled duckling inside. Those who complain get an odd look: "What did they EXPECT to find inside an egg?"

The Two Dances and the Third

The dances begin as soon as the wine comes out. Being chosen to dance is a mark of favor; those who do not dance at three feasts in a row are clearly in disfavor, so the courtesans and consorts struggle powerfully behind the scenes to gain the invitation to dance before the court.

The first dance is by a consort. Read the following:

The hall grows silent except for the growing roar of the fireplace, and then, a male elf steps out of the fireplace wreathed in fire. The ladies of the court applaud and shout "Hargos, Hargos!" as he dances, leaping along the table and leaving puffs of purple smoke every time he lands. The dance ends with another puff of smoke as he stands beside one of the ladies-in-waiting, and then he's gone.

The dancer is the Lord of Flames, Hargos Enderran, the Flame-Cloaked Consort, an elf who always wears an illusion of a cloak of fire over his bare muscled chest. His hearty laugh is often heard in the Hall of Changelings (**Area 24**) and the Small Court (**Area 46**). As a junior consort, he is not often allowed to visit the Royal Halls, and he is making the most of this opportunity, flattering and paying homage to the greatest of the shadow fey ladies.

Most of the lords view him with deep suspicion although his behavior is always in exact keeping with shadow fey standards of decorum. Two brownie servants attend to him after the dance. He shows off to any female PC although he leaves it to them to show interest before pursuing them.

Read the following:

The music plays for a while quietly, then steadily builds and a second dancer appears in a cloud of mist and a quick shower of raindrops that soaks the lower table. The second dancer is a stunning shadow fey woman wearing a cloak of liquid water. The cloak swirls and disappears into fog, and she dances in blue silk meshed with pearls, solid raindrops, and shimmering mithril scales. She moves as smoothly as a stream, her hips swaying like a tide, and her dance seems to be directed at every man in the room.

When the music stops, one of the Elf visitors bows to her and presents a pink lily to her. She smiles, but takes her seat elsewhere.

Sense Motive (DC 22)—She seems eager to make an impression, but she's also quite sad. Mora Moonwater is the Rain-Cloaked Courtesan. She's one of the less-notorious courtesans and has recently stepped up from the junior courtesans post; rumor has it (Diplomacy (gather information) DC 20) that she is the new lover of the Black Prince or perhaps of Imbemerethion, the new Captain of the Guard (or both).

Like Hargos, Mora shows off to the male PCs, but she leaves it to them to show interest with a gift, toast, or other sign before pursuing things any further (see **Winning a Courtesan or Consort's Favor** section, on page 72).

The Third Dancer

The third courtesan who might dance is Ulara of the Seven Veils, but she seems not inclined to show herself. Sometime after Mora's dance ends, a PC may overhear muttering (Perception DC 18) about the lack of a third (or simply DC 15 Diplomacy (gather information) to learn it firsthand).

If the PC has Status of 18 or higher, the Black Prince or another antagonist might ask the PCs to go fetch her. If they do and find her, that PC gains a +1 bonus to Status; failure to bring her back

is a failure to obey the prince and a penalty of -2 to Status (see the optional **Fire Dancer: the Courtesan Ulara of Seven Veils** section, below). If the PCs do not go fetch Ulara, she is missing the next day. This happens to courtesans rather often when they fall from favor.

None of the fey want to talk about it, and all the servants will say (Intimidate DC 18) is that “she’s gone to the labyrinth, or to visit her mother in Corremel.”

Fire Dancer: the Courtesan Ulara of Seven Veils

The dance of Ulara the Courtesan of Seven Veils is a magical one, a form of pyrohypnosis that uses flames and movement to dominate its viewers. The fey are used to this form of trickery, but the PCs may not be:

A brazier ignites in the center of the hall—the flames roar and smoke fills the air. A shadow fey maiden dressed in grey veils of smoke dances into the hall, cinders falling from her black hair, her golden eyes

COURTLY COMMENTS AND CUTTING REMARKS

The fey can be insufferably arrogant bastards and cruel bitchy gossips, but as GM, you may not always have that perfect put-down at your disposal. Here are a few options to consider; choose your favorites for chatty scenes.

Note that some of the more snobbish shadow fey never address mortal PCs directly but, instead, address their shadows. The flesh they consider uncouth, for those not born in the Shadow Realm.

TABLE 3-4: SNOBBISH COURTIER COMMENTS

Did you hear something? Noisome bother. Just anyone seems to get in these days.

Budgy, I see animals. Their lips are moving, almost like speech. Will her Majesty have them defanged?

You there, fetch me more wine! (If used repeatedly and constantly to the lowest-Status PC, it might motivate them to earn Status. Or to smash something.)

Your friend appears to be talking. You should deal with that. (A courtly warning from a noble to the party leader.)

[To a servant while ignoring the characters.] *Was there a breeze ruffling the curtains? Tend to the windows.*

You wait here.

As I was saying...

[Stonewalling.] *I understand.*

These annoying beasts are only good for lighting. Wish we still had a Royal Ratcatcher.

COURTESANS

By a melancholy or often drunk courtesan: *There are darker things than shadow in this place.*

You do not seem to bear anything upon or below your belt sufficient to accomplish any task I would set you...

What pretty eyes you have—a shame they do not see better.

SERVANTS

Goblin: *Phew. Smells like the Light in here.*

Butler: [An eyebrow raises, turns, and wags itself like a finger at the PCs.] *Shhh.*

Servant: [A tip about its master.] *Some elves love music, women, the skill of the blade, but I’ve never seen any elf love anything as much as Dae Tyrnin loves his suits.*

Goblin proverb: *Better a rat in the pot than a hog at the trap.*

Goblin proverb: *Better copper today than silver tomorrow.*

DUELISTS

So many men have fallen to my blade...and so many women to my bed.

There is a place you can cut a mortal that will paralyze it, leaving it to watch its own blood pour out like the last drops of wine. I hope to show it to you sometime.

Draw steel, and I swear I will gut you where you stand.

My sword’s enchantments are older than your mewling language. Prepare to face true power.

Make your words count, they may be your last!

Whoreson, impudent, emboss’d rascal! Have at thee!

Her Majesty’s Mercy! (Exclamation and joke.)

HUNTER

What has become of us brothers? We still allow the bird of flame to mock our hunts and now... now we must accept these lumbering cows in our keep? (Looking at the PCs.)

As I was saying, the hunting is very poor. Some new game is needed desperately. (Glancing at PC.)

shining. Her bare feet scatter the coals of the brazier, and the smoke slowly starts to fade—her breasts and hips shake and push waves of rippling heat outward as the courtiers ring their glass goblets, shouting “Ulara, Ulara!”

The light of the brazier starts to pulse like a heartbeat, and the smoke veils the eyes of some.

Knowledge (arcana) (DC 18)—The Black Prince seems to shout loudly. And the ambassador Lord Maruuk’s eyes devour the dancer.

Knowledge (arcana) (DC 23)—The brazier’s light supports some fire spell or charm.

Unless the PCs pointedly do not watch or are not sitting with their friends in the Great Hall, make each of the PC viewers save against the following effects.

DANCE OF FIERY LUST

30 ft. range; DC 20 Will save; target is fatigued and charmed (save ends)

KISS OF FIERY LUST

+12 touch attack; DC 20 Will save (not required if target is charmed); target is exhausted and *dominated* for 24 hours

If Ulara succeeds in charming a PC or two with her dance, she continues dancing while the PC makes additional saving throws. In the second round, she kisses a charmed PC with the *kiss of fiery lust* in front of the court, securing the PC’s obedience and imposing a -1 penalty to the PC’s Status. The PC in question has not won Ulara; quite the contrary, she is likely to take all those she dominates that evening back to her chambers for her own amusement.

If none of the PCs succumb to domination or the kiss, the victim is likely the young Raven leader Brightspur. If any of the PCs are members of that faction, Brightspur approaches them in the morning asking for help by acting as his seconds in a duel. He intends to recover his lost Status by challenging Ulara’s champion to a duel to show his devotion to her... this need not be a rational duel; to make his point, he may even call for a cliff duel or bridge duel (see page 86), expecting to be declined or talked out of it.

Development. Though Ulara wins some followers through magic and cruelty, a PC can turn this encounter to his or her advantage. Returning to Ulara to woo her is much more likely to succeed for a once-dominated character; the PC gains a +2 bonus to all seduction rolls. Even if the PC fails in the attempt, the fey consider this courageous behavior and no Status is lost for the attempt.

Courtesans Who Do Not Dance

Two other courtesans attend with their admirers, followers, and lovers: Songemesha the Raven-Haired Courtesan (Status 18; she will not speak to PCs with Status less than 14) and Maraya Laccrystae, the Sapphire Courtesan (Status 23; she will not speak to PCs with Status less than 18). Lishekki and Ballandrine both do not attend, and rumors claim they somehow insulted Lord Suvid or one of the elder fey recently.

Songemesha and Maraya feast, joke, and enjoy the dances, but they do not themselves take part in the festivities beyond keeping their own coterie amused and choosing one of them to walk them back to their chambers. Unless a PC intervenes and succeeds in courting a courtesan (see page 72), these two courtesans leave

with their primary admirers. In the case of Songemesha, this is Lord Chelessfield, the Elf. For Maraya the Sapphire Courtesan, this is Lord Maruuk, the diabolical ambassador.

Dangerous Women

The women at the Swan Festival are dangerous: such as the succubus/incubus Maraya who dotes on the ambassador of Hell (and who is all too willing to prey on mortal lusts); the courtesans who keep some psoglav dog demons nearby to send after PCs who dare too much or who stray from protocol; the noblewoman who asks the PCs to do just one dangerous favor, gathering some hairs from the prince’s brush or comb while he attends the ball; and the equally dangerous noblewoman who seeks a tryst in the Moon-Viewing Tower (**Area 44**). That last wants a PC to meet her alone at the forbidden Moon-Viewing Tower; if the PC agrees (and defeats the deathshade wisps there), a goblin servant carries the noblewoman’s regrets, and the PCs are ambushed at the tower by the Roach Lord. For indeed, this Lady Jalennis, Lady of the Pale Gardens, is a member of the Lords of Light.

Closing the Feast and Cleaning Up

Akyishigal and his minions swarm the feast to bring it to a close. With roaches everywhere, the feast ends in chaos and courtiers flee in all directions:

The dancing has just really gotten underway when one of the servants lets rip a heartfelt shriek. A dozen roaches are scampering up the goblin’s legs, and he is trying to shake them off. Then suddenly the roaches are everywhere, covering every dish, floating in the wine goblets, crunching underfoot.

A clacking, hissing voice says “How is it that no one invited your fourth guest and the King’s Favorite, Akyishigal? How is it that I was spurned? My followers SHALL HAVE THEIR FEAST!”

The goblins, shadow fey, everyone is running for the exits. The party’s over.

The following day is a day of rest and recovery throughout the courts. Almost none of the fey are receiving visitors, and most are calling on servants to bring chilled wines and simple squash soups and the like. Hard-charging PCs might find this a good occasion for a healthy rest (and find that study or prayer for spells is effective this day); knocking too loudly may result in harsh words being exchanged or even invitations to duel.

Scene 3, Winning the Sapphire Courtesan Maraya

The most beautiful of the courtesans of the Shadow Court is the blue-haired Maraya, better known as the Sapphire Courtesan. The various princes, knights, and duelists all vie with one another for her favor and her kisses, and generally one or more of them are always present. However, if the PCs defeat her current paramour in a duel, she transfers her affections to the new (and in her eyes, more powerful) member of the court. Her fickleness seems not to bother most who pursue her.

Winning her favor is quite difficult (see **Winning a Courtesan or Consort’s Favor** section, page 72), and once she is won, things

may get worse. Maraya is a demanding courtesan, dictating what days each of her suitors may visit and peevish if they fail to show up with gifts and flattery. If they do show up on time and with gifts, Maraya also grants a token of esteem in return on their first visit—a small bauble and her Profane Gift, which the character retains until Maraya rescinds her favor.

Treasure. As a gift from the Sapphire Courtesan, a *choker of eloquence* (as per a *circlet of persuasion*, but uses the neck slot).

Combat with the Sapphire Courtesan

Winning Maraya's favor is a bit of a poison pill; when the PC wins her and the scene might normally fade to black, you as the GM have the option of starting a rather unexpected combat.

Important Note. This is an optional scene that you should discuss with the player *before the game*. If the player is not comfortable with the character fighting tangled in the sheets with some impossibly sexy fey, drop it and move on. If the player seems comfortable with this sort of scene, run it. After judging a new lover's Status and suitability, Maraya may attack, choosing a moment when most vulnerable—unarmored and without a weapon immediately to hand, gaining surprise and attacking with her dizzying kiss. Once that succeeds, her new lover follows her like a puppy dog until her *dominate* is broken; the PC suffers a -8 penalty to Status for falling prey to her (which is regained if the PC wins her or defeats her in combat later).

If the kiss fails to dominate, a normal combat ensues. Maraya won't give chase out of her chamber, but she may block the way. The PC suffers only a -2 penalty to Status for running naked and bloody through the halls for successfully escaping, but he or she also loses a magic item (player's choice) or other item of extreme value.

If the Sapphire Courtesan is slain, the entire court is rather bitter about it; she was well liked despite her arrogance and abuse, and the PC who struck the fatal blow suffers a -4 penalty to Status. The Ambassador of Hell, Lord Maruuk, will take it very poorly if Maraya is assaulted by the PCs and lodges a complaint with the prince and the queen if she is wounded or killed. The ambassador makes sure that the PCs must fight a duel at the first opportunity, likely with Lord Suvid.

Of course, even while alive, Maraya is perfectly willing to send Lord Suvid, the quickling blademaker, as a challenger on her behalf if a suitor fails to appear when required. In short, she's in a position of power and abuses it; if Suvid fails to win a duel against a former lover, she tries to begin a duel of gossip to destroy a foe's reputation through whispers.

MARAYA

CR 12

Fey succubus bard 5
XP 3,200

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, fey, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect good; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 106 (8d10+5d8+40)

Fort +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +15

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

Resist acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.; fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +15 (1d6)

OPTIONAL: DUELS OF WORDS AND SLANDER

Skill stunting can be used as shown below or as opposed rolls in a form of riddle game or match of wits.

The suggested target skill stunting check DCs are 20 (easy), 26 (moderate), and 31 (hard) for characters level 8-10. The common forms of slander and intimidation are listed below:

- **Threatening and Extortion:** Intimidate against (Courtesan/ Character's Will bonus +10) or opposed Diplomacy (gather information)
- **Protocol and Toadying:** Diplomacy against (Courtesan/ Character's Will bonus +10) or opposed Profession (courtier)
- **Gossip and Slander:** Opposed Diplomacy (gather information)
- **Verbal Mockery and Insult:** Opposed Bluff
- **Theft and Trickery:** Sleight of Hand against (Courtesan/ Character's Reflex bonus +10) or opposed Perception
- **Physical Mockery:** Acrobatics against (Courtesan/ Character's Reflex bonus +10) or Opposed Diplomacy

Note, the simultaneous attacks in this case can take different forms: one party may make threats, the other may respond with slander. A roll of 1 or a miss by 5 or more allows the opponent an unanswered follow-up attack (effectively, a "4th pass" during the duel).

Successful skill attacks inflict a -1 penalty to Status or a -2 penalty on a critical.

Special Attacks bardic performance, countersong, energy drain, profane gift

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +22)

Constant—*detect good, tongues*

At will—*charm monster* (DC 24), *detect thoughts* (DC 24), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *suggestion* (DC 25), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *vampiric touch*

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 25), *summon* (level 3, 1 babau 50%)

Bard Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +15)

2nd (5/day)—*cure moderate wounds, hold person* (DC 22), *silence*

1st (7/day)—*animate rope* (DC 21), *cure light wounds, silent image* (DC 21), *unnatural lust* (DC 21)*

0th (at will)—*daze* (DC 20), *detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 20), *message, open/close, prestidigitation*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 19, **Con** 24, **Int** 18, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 31

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +15 (+17 to grapple); **CMD** 25 (27 vs grapple)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Eschew Components, Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Grapple, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +29, Diplomacy +21, Disguise +21, Escape Artist +15, Fly +15, Intimidate +18, Linguistics +9, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +15, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +25, Perform (dance) +18, Perform (oratory) +23, Profession

Courts of the Shadow Fey

(courtier) +17, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Bluff, +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Gnome; tongues, telepathy 100 ft.

SQ bardic knowledge, change shape (*alter self*, Small or Medium humanoid), inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2, lore master 1/day, versatile performance, well versed

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Energy Drain (Su) A succubus drains energy from a mortal she lures into an act of passion, such as a kiss. An unwilling victim must be grappled before the succubus can use this ability. The succubus's kiss bestows one negative level. The kiss also has the effect of a suggestion spell, asking the victim to accept another act of passion from the succubus. The victim must succeed on a DC 24 Will save to negate the suggestion. The DC is 24 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. These save DCs are Charisma-based.

Profane Gift (Su) Once per day as a full-round action, a succubus may grant a profane gift to a willing humanoid creature by touching it for 1 full round. The target gains a +2 profane bonus to an ability score of his choice. A single creature may have no more than one profane gift from a succubus at a time. As long as the profane gift persists, the succubus can communicate telepathically with the target across any distance (and may use her suggestion spell-like ability through it). A profane gift is removed by dispel evil or dispel chaos. The succubus can remove it as well as a free action (causing 2d6 Charisma drain to the victim, no save).

Development. Those who woo and win Maraya are in for a world of hurt; her lovers always disappear for a week or two and are generally thrown back into the courts fatigued, exhausted, without a stitch of clothing left—and at half hit points. The fey know this and consider it normal, but it takes a Diplomacy (gather information) check (DC 22) for a PC to find out about it when their friend disappears. If the party decides to mount a rescue operation rather than wait, Maraya does not fight much; the PCs find their friend besotted, enchanted, and willing to defend the Sapphire Courtesan to the death. If they can subdue the PC, Maraya flees and spends a few days hiding in the form of a goblin or Elf, plotting some revenge.

If the party waits, their friend does return after 2d6+2 days naked (without clothes or armor), shaved, and otherwise a mess. The strange thing is, even naked and embarrassed, most of her lovers want to win her back.

Treasure. Beyond the gifts Maraya gives a love, if she is defeated in combat and her rooms are searched (Perception DC 20), the party finds her locked coffers of jewelry and gemstones. There are six pieces of gold jewelry, two necklaces, two bracelets, and two rings, each worth 3,000 gp and each set with sapphires.

Scene 4, Dueling Season

The courts enforce a dueling season. During this time, the kind of rest necessary to recover spells is only possible after the season. Typically, this is a period of about 1 – 4 weeks, when dueling is permitted. Otherwise, servants inconveniently awaken or

84 interrupt those trying to rest, pray, or study. An enchantment on

the courts confuses magical items with limited uses per day during this time, preventing them from recharging their uses until after the season.

Common seasons at the courts include “poet’s season,” “courting season,” and “revels season.” Other seasons are certainly possible; they are proclaimed and enforced by the king and queen. Violating their terms results in an immediate -5 penalty to Status. The various bonuses and penalties to Status from dueling are described in **Table 2-2: Gaining Status in Duels** (see page 36).

Speed Dueling Rules

Duels may be fought with royal sanction during the dueling season, a request rarely granted to commoners or lesser fey (for whom dueling remains illegal). These challenges are commonly fought either on the dueling ground (see **Area 2**) for duelist of Status 15 or less or in the Great Hall of the Shadow Court (**Area 62**) or on the Bridge of Night (**Area 26**) for duels wherein either party has a Status of 20 or more. A bribe of goods or gold equal to 10 gp for every rank of Status convinces the disreputable groundskeeper Whitemist (page 49) to allow the illegal use of the dueling grounds.

Challenging someone outside dueling season is possible but risky. These duels are fought outside the palace, either in a forest clearing at dawn far from prying eyes or along the cliff side path leading up to the Western Gate (risky but romantic). If those dueling are caught, they are sent before the king or queen for a royal reprimand, which invariably involves the apprehended duelist being asked to surrender his or her sword. The king or queen then shatters the sword and its enchantments and gives the duelist a well-carved wooden sword instead as a mark of shame.

Despite this, cliffside duels and bridge duels are the stuff of legend (see **Cliffside Duels** sidebar, page 86) and are immensely popular. They are rarely reported to the footmen, the captain of the guard, the archmagus, or others who might be inclined to arrest the participants.

Challenges and Status. A duel requires a challenge and an acceptance; anyone can challenge any adult fey to a duel although traditionally courtesans and consorts neither issue nor accept challenges. Declining a duel results in a -1 penalty to Status, unless the challenger has a Status 5 or more higher than the challenged party (in which case no Status is lost by the challenged party).

Initiative and Striking. No initiative roll is required. All attacks are simultaneous and both sides can succeed in an attack on any given round. Each participant strikes three times in a standard duel although special reactions and dueling powers may increase the number of strikes. The winner is the duelist who lands the most strikes.

Combat in a Duel. The strikes in a duel use the character’s combat powers and abilities against standard defenses. A roll of 1 or a miss by 5 or more allows the opponent an unanswered followup attack (effectively, a “4th pass” during the duel). Otherwise, the combat proceeds normally with duelists moving and attacking for three strikes. If being used, a hero point may be spent in a duel, but it is not recovered until the end of dueling season.

Length of Dueling Season. The season ends when the queen says it ends, usually after 2 or 3 weeks or until most of the interesting duelists have been injured and no more interesting challenges are expected.

Damage, Healing, and Resolution. For each successful hit in combat, the target takes damage normally. Healing, however, is impeded somewhat. Over the course of a dueling season, frequent

duelists become exhausted and worn. The Shadow Realm seems to prevent healing for those who overexert themselves during this time; a ritual or incantation by the shadow fey may be involved.

Cheating. Either duelist may cheat and roll two attacks in a single pass of combat or social dueling; both rolls count. If both rolls miss, no cheating is noticed.

If one or both of the attack rolls are successful, the foe may note that the attack involved cheating. The high roll is the attack roll; the low roll is the cheating roll. The affected duelist must have a Perception +5 (for combat) or Sense Motive +5 (for social skills) equal to or greater than the cheating roll (low roll).

For example, a half-orc attacks a shadow fey sorcerer in combat dueling and decides to cheat. He rolls two attacks: 26 and 13. The 26 becomes his attack roll and hits; the 13 is his cheating roll and is lower than the sorcerer's Perception +5. She spots the cheating half-orc and may call him on it. If cheating is spotted, the cheater suffers a -1 penalty to Status, and the duel is over. The non-cheater is declared the winner and gains a +1 bonus to Status accordingly.

Winning. The duel takes three simultaneous checks, and the duelist with the most successes wins; ties are always possible. The winning duelist gains a +1 bonus to Status; the loser suffers a -1 penalty to Status. If both duelists have the same number of successes, the duel is a tie and Status does not change.

Challengers and Duelists

Anyone can be a challenger in a duel. In addition to Brightspur (see page 57), four shadow fey, three elves, and one roachling are the most active potential challengers during the dueling season although the GM might well introduce others.

CALEB

CR 10

Male half-celestial shadow fey (Midgard Bestiary) fighter (free hand fighter) 6/duelist 3

CG Medium outsider (augmented humanoid, fey, native)

Init +8; **Senses** Darkvision (60 ft.), Low-Light Vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 22, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +1 Deflection, +6 Dex, +2 insight, +1 natural, +3 dodge)

hp 90 (9d10+18)

Fort +8 (+12 vs poison), **Ref** +10, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities Canny Defense +2, Parry; **DR** 5/magic; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, elven Immunities; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *icy burst rapier* +18/+13 (1d6+1d6 cold+5/15-20/x2)

Special Attacks Precise Strike, singleton +1, smite evil (1/day)

Spell-Like Abilities

3/day—*protection from evil*

1/day—*aid, bless, cure serious wounds, detect evil, dispel evil, holy smite* (DC 15), *neutralize poison, remove disease*

TACTICS

Before Combat Caleb will use *bless* and *aid* before a duel (giving him +9 HP and +1 to hit for *aid*, and +1 to hit for *bless*). If an opponent is obviously evil, Caleb will cast *protection from evil* for a +2 to AC and saving throws.

During Combat Caleb will close and first attempt to disarm an opponent. He will then use full attacks to pummel

opponents he cannot disarm. Caleb will use his parry ability if his opponent seems to doing more damage with less attacks than he is. If he takes a great deal of damage, Caleb will use his shadow jump to move away and then proceed to heal himself with his spells in the next round.

After Combat Caleb will fight to the terms of the duel, usually unconsciousness or death. He is no fool, though fiery in temperament, Caleb will not fight to the death without a good reason. He will use his shadow fey abilities to flee if necessary.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 22, **Con** 15, **Int** 14, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +12 (+16 to disarm); **CMD** 33 (37 vs. disarm)

Feats Combat Expertise +/-3, Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Disarm, Mobility, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +16, Climb +10, Diplomacy +5, Fly +10, Intimidate +11, Perception +12, Perform (dance) +10, Stealth +13

Languages Celestial, Common, Elven, Goblin

SQ deceptive strike +2, elusive +2, enhanced mobility, stealth in motion

Combat Gear +1 *icy burst rapier*, +2 *glamered mithril chain shirt*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Canny Defense +2 (Ex) Gain an insight bonus to AC equal to the duelist's Intelligence bonus (max Duelist level).

Combat Expertise +/-3 Bonus to AC in exchange for an equal penalty to attack.

Deceptive Strike +2 (Ex) +2 to Disarm CMB/CMD, Bluff checks to feint or create a diversion to hide.

Elusive +2 (Ex) +2 Dodge AC

Enhanced Mobility (Ex) +4 AC vs attacks of opportunity while moving out of a square.

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Improved Disarm Disarm at +2, without an attack of opportunity.

Parry (Ex) Forego an attack to defend against enemy attacks.

Precise Strike (Ex) Extra damage when using light / 1-handed Piercing weapons.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. Caleb can jump up to a total of 160 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 160 ft., sixteen jumps of 10 ft. each, or any number of jumps totalling 160 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments.

Singleton +1 (Ex) +1 to hit and damage when wielding a one-handed melee weapon.

Smite Evil (1/day) (Su) +1 to hit, +9 to damage, +1 deflection bonus to AC when used.

CLIFFSIDE DUELS

Duels fought outside of dueling season must be fought outside of the palace or else risk discovery by one of the guards or senior nobles. The cliffs near the Eastern Gate are a popular dueling site for this reason but also quite dangerous. If either participant scores a critical hit during a cliffside duel, the foe may be forced off the path by the blow, taking falling damage from a fall of around 70 ft. or so (7d10 damage).

The falling participant is deemed the loser. The winner gains Status normally, but the loser does not lose Status. Surviving a fall from that height creates its own aura of success.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Vital Strike Standard action: x2 weapon damage dice.

JUROK

CR 12

Male goblin fighter (cad) 13

LE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +9; **Senses** Darkvision (60 ft); Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +5 Dex, +1 size)

hp 133 (13d10+26)

Fort +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *vicious spear* +21/+16/+11 (1d6+10/x3) and unarmed strike +19/+14/+9 (1d2+4)

Special Attacks Razor-Sharp Chair Leg

TACTICS

Before Combat Jurok prepares several small bags of sand and vials of foul smelling ichors to use for his dirty tricks. He has been known to use catch off-guard an opponent before the duel has even begun with a rock or other improvised weapon.

During Combat Jurok begins by using his dirty trick to blind or nauseate a foe for one round. He then attempts to disarm, or relies of his payback ability to do extra damage. Jurok heartlessly mocks foes he has disarmed.

After Combat Jurok will not fight to the death; in his heart he is craven, and he fawns shamelessly over those who have defeated him.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 20, **Con** 15, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +16 (+25 for dirty tricks, disarming; +23 to steal); **CMD** 31 (38 vs. dirty tricks, disarm, or steal)

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Combat Expertise +/-4, Disarming Strike, Greater Dirty Trick, Greater Disarm, Improved Dirty Trick, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Steal, Power Attack -4/+8, Quick Dirty Trick, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (spear), Weapon Specialization (spear)

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +10, Fly +7, Intimidate +7, Perception +5, Ride +9, Stealth +21, Survival +9

86 Languages Elven, Goblin

SQ craven combatant, deadly surprise payback +3, sweeping prank (2 opponents)

Combat Gear +2 *slick mithril chain shirt*, +2 *vicious spear*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Catch Off-Guard Proficient with improvised melee weapons. Unarmed opponents are flat-footed against Jurok's improvised weapons.

Craven Combatant (Ex) When fighting defensively, Jurok cannot be flanked except by a rogue or ninja whose level is 17+.

Deadly Surprise (Ex) When Jurok hits an opponent denied its Dexterity bonus to AC, he may attempt a dirty trick combat maneuver as part of the attack.

Disarming Strike The confirmation roll for a critical hit by Jurok is a Disarm maneuver check.

Greater Dirty Trick +2 to Dirty Trick, penalty lasts longer and takes a standard action to remove.

Greater Disarm +2 to disarm, weapon lands 15' away.

Improved Dirty Trick Dirty Trick at +2, without an attack of opportunity.

Improved Disarm Disarm at +2, without an attack of opportunity.

Improved Steal Steal at +2, without an attack of opportunity.

Payback +3 (Ex) +3 to hit and damage any creature that has attacked Jurok since the beginning of his last turn.

Power Attack -4/+8 Jurok can subtract from his attack roll to add to his damage.

Quick Dirty Trick Jurok may perform a dirty trick in place of one of his melee attacks

Razor-Sharp Chair Leg (Ex) Jurok's improvised weapons have 19-20/x2 crit range and can do bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage.

Sweeping Prank (Ex) Jurok may perform a dirty trick maneuver against two adjacent opponents as a standard action.

Vital Strike As a standard action, Jurok may make an attack which inflicts x2 weapon damage

Sir Yngress the Red

MINIMUM STATUS: ANY (WILL ACCEPT ANY DUEL)

The youngest and most eager—and most ignorant—of the elf visitors from the River Court, Yngress pretty much agrees with whatever was said last. Gullible enough that he doesn't quite realize he was brought along to be the entertainment, Yngress is the best hunter at the courts other than the Black Prince and will frequently visit the woods and return with remarkable things: such as unicorn foals, white bear pelts, a singing squirrel, or an eagle with two heads. He keeps a longsword and dagger tied neatly to his saddle, which he uses to fight any duel as needed. His fey warhorse Estoile (an awakened heavy war-trained horse) occasionally whispers some advice in his ear. It is by far the smarter of the pair.

SIR YNGRESS THE RED

CR 11

Male elf fighter 12

XP 12,800

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; **Senses** Low-light vision (60 ft.); Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +4 shield)
hp 90 (12d10+24)

Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8 (+11 vs fear)

Defensive Abilities armor training +3, bravery +3

Immune elf traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *longsword* +17/+12/+7 (1d8+6, 17-20)

Ranged masterwork composite longbow +15/+10/+5 (1d8+2/x3)

Special Attacks bull rush, unseat

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +18 (20 vs Bull Rush); **CMD** 30 (32 vs Bull Rush)

Feats Alertness, Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Skill Focus (Survival), Toughness, Unseat, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Acrobatics +7*, Intimidate +9, Perception +8, Perform (dance) +3, Profession (courtier) +4, Ride +14*, Sense Motive +6, Survival +16, Stealth +7*; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

*Armor check penalty and equipment bonus applied.

Languages Common, Elven

Combat Gear +2 *longsword*, +2 *breastplate*, +1 *large steel shield*, *boots of elvenkind*, *cloak of elvenkind*, *vest of resistance* +2, military saddle, masterwork composite longbow and 30 arrows, masterwork lance

SQ weapon familiarity, weapon training (+2 heavy blades, +1 bows)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Critical Focus: Yngress gets an additional +4 to confirm critical hits.

Power Attack: Yngress may take -4 on a melee attack to add +8 to damage.

Unseat: When charging an opponent while mounted and wielding a lance, resolve the attack as normal. If it hits, you may immediately make a free bull rush attempt in addition to the normal damage. If successful, the target is knocked off his horse and lands prone in a space adjacent to his mount that is directly away from you.

Development. Sir Yngress is a good sport about these things and bears no grudge. He has a tendency to bring up his victories to rub them in although it's done with a smile and a wink rather than smugly.

Treasure. Sir Yngress will insist that the victor in a duel against him take an item of value. The suggested default item is a +2 longsword, which Yngress calls Heartsilver. However, he will part with his boots, cloak or vest, too.

Yikrugrak, the Crawling Knight

MAXIMUM STATUS: 12 (WILL ACCEPT ANY DUEL FROM LOWER STATUS)

A favored roachling gifted with great power, Yikrugrak is a nightmare foe who tears into the enemy with abandon. She accepts all challenges by those of lower Status and none by those of higher Status.

YIKRUGRAK, THE CRAWLING KNIGHT

CR 14

Rust-colored antennae twitch at your approach. The insectoid figure hunches into a careful stance, dark eyes seeming to absorb every bit of detail about you. From underneath a tattered cloak, you see the bug's hands grip four steely edged blades.

Female roachling fighter (two-weapon fighter) 14

XP 38,400

NE Small humanoid (insectoid)

Init +6; **Senses** Darkvision (60 ft.); Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 18, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +6 Dex, +1 size, +1 natural, +1 dodge)

hp 171 (14d10+56)

Fort +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities bravery +4, defensive flurry

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *corrosive shortsword* +24/+24/+19/+14 (1d4+10/17-20) and +2 *corrosive shortsword* +24/+24/+19/+14 (1d4+10/17-20) and unarmed strike +21/+16/+11 (1d2+4)

Special Attacks doublestrike, improved balance -1, twin blades +3

TACTICS

Before Combat Yikrugrak observes her opponent, looking for weaknesses.

During Combat If the opponent seems to be less martial, she uses feints to drop their AC. For a more heavily armored opponent, she relies on her hammer the gap ability to do extra damage. Remember that she is at an extra -3 to hit and to damage when making a full attack with all her weapons, and two weapon rend works once per attack for her, if both of her two attack series manage to hit at least once. Her extra arms do not allow her to do extra two-weapon rends, but make it more likely that one of her attacks will land from each series. Yikrugrak relies on her high hit points to help her stand toe-to-toe with a foe while landing huge numbers of attacks.

After Combat Yikrugrak is a determined and deadly foe, but will retreat if brought to 10% of her full hit points (she is an expectant mother, after all).

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 23, **Con** 19, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 34

Feats Combat Expertise +/-4, Dodge, Double Slice, Greater Two-weapon Fighting, Greater Weapon Focus (shortsword), Greater Weapon Specialization (shortsword), Hammer the Gap, Improved Critical (shortsword), Improved Two-Weapon Feint, Improved Two-weapon Fighting, Two-weapon Fighting, Two-weapon Rend, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Specialization (shortsword)

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Skills Acrobatics +20, Bluff +3, Climb +13, Diplomacy +3, Escape Artist +16, Fly +8, Intimidate +10, Perception +3, Stealth +21, Survival +11, Swim +8

Languages Draconic

SQ equal opportunity

Combat Gear +2 *corrosive shortsword*, +2 *corrosive shortsword*, +4 *light fortification mithril chain shirt*, *potion of cure serious wounds*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bravery +4 (Ex) +4 Will save vs. Fear

Combat Expertise +/-4 Bonus to AC in exchange for an equal penalty to attack.

Defensive Flurry +3 (Ex) +3 AC vs. melee when making a full-attack with both weapons.

Doublestrike (Ex) Standard action: Attack once with each weapon (normal two-weapon penalties).

Equal Opportunity (Ex) May attack with both weapons of an AoO (normal two-weapon fighting penalties)

Extra Arms (Ex) The roachling possesses 2 extra arms armed with corrosive shortswords. She cannot fully use them in combat, but they do allow her 2 extra strikes at full combat effectiveness during a full attack action.

Hammer the Gap With a full-attack action, each hit against the same opponent deals extra damage

Improved Balance -1 (Ex) Reduce the penalties for two-weapon fighting or count off-handed one-handed weapon as light.

Improved Two-Weapon Feint Make a Bluff check instead of your first attack

Twin Blades +3 (Ex) +3 to hit and damage when making a full attack with both weapons.

Two-weapon Rend Deal an additional 1d10+6 when both of your weapons hit the same target.

Development. Oddly enough, Yikrugrak is an excellent potential ally for the party. Yes, in the Shadow Realm, everything comes with a price, but a roach duelist may be among the most trustworthy people here; certainly, if the party wins the Crawling Knight's trust by defeating her in a duel, she will remain quite loyal and friendly to the person who defeated her. Her roach instincts drive the duelist to survive, and survival is often difficult in the Shadow Courts. While she is not wholly good, her urge to gain allies may convince her to train the PCs in dueling arts (granting them the Improved Feint or Improved Disarm feat for use only during the dueling season and without prerequisites). She can also give them some rather useful information about the maze and the Moonlit King: in particular, if the party helps her with one or two small tasks such as gaining access to the kitchen pantry (mouths to feed!), retrieving her lord's stolen dagger from the belt of Lord Suvid where it hangs as a prize, or even assassinating Brightspur (who loathes Yikrugrak as unworthy and un-fey, seeking to drive her into exile).

Her information includes the knowledge that:

1. The Moonlit King is a hermit-like figure who never leaves his tower, and it is death to wander toward that tower without an invitation
2. A hidden cache of treasure exists near the lantern dragon's roost in the maze, buried underground there for times of need

3. The king's servants are more powerful by moonlight, and they may well seek to kill the PCs if they learn what the party intends
4. That the Demon Lord of Roaches is very, very eager to seize the king's title for himself.

In addition, Yikrugrak comes with a few strings attached—she is ready to lay eggs and is looking for an appropriate place (such as the carcasses of many dead fey... better if she could not be tied to the murders). She seeks a nest of rotting carcasses to raise the next generation. Perhaps the PCs could help by slaughtering many of the fey?

A friend, perhaps, but hardly a human friend.

Treasure. Yikrugrak asks the winner to swear friendship. If the winner agrees, she gives the PC one black star sapphire (1,000 gp) and one potion of cure serious wounds. She also comes to visit the winner at occasionally awkward hours of the night, asking how the PC has survived and avoided the wrath of the Moonlit King.

Lady Sorreminx of the River Court

MINIMUM STATUS: 13

An exotic black-haired Elf from the River Court who enjoys learning and history, Lady Sorreminx carries an ebony wand set with two diamonds at either end. She prefers to hear discussions of things arcane and historical rather than dueling and swordplay, and she is always quick to point out the flaws in her foes. Indeed, she delivers her putdowns with a cruel smile; "Where did you learn your major arcana, in a pigsty? Any apprentice knows better, sir, for shame!"

LADY SORREMINX OF THE RIVER COURT

CR 11

Female elf sorcerer 12

XP 12,800

NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +5; **Senses** Low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 54 (12d6+12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9 (+11 vs enchantment)

Defensive Abilities elven immunities

Immune *sleep*

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +6 (1d6-1/18-20)

Ranged masterwork short bow +8 (1d6-1/19-20)

Special Attacks arcane bond, spells

Bloodline Spell-like Ability (CL 12th, concentration +23)
1/day—*arcane bond*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 12th; concentration +23)

6th (4/day)—*mislead* (DC 23)

5th (6/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *overland flight*, *persistent image* (DC 22), *teleport*

4th (7/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 21), *black tentacles* (DC 21), *dimension door*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 21)

3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic*, *hold person* (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *major image* (DC 20), *vampiric touch*

2nd (8/day)—*false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 19), *invisibility*, *rope trick*, *scorching ray*, *spider climb*

1st (8/day)—*feather fall*, *grease* (DC 18), *identify*, *magic missile*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*
 0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 17), *light*, *mending*, *prestidigitaton*, *read magic*

Bloodline Arcane**STATISTICS****Str** 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 18 (24)**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 29**Feats** Alertness, Combat Casting, Defensive Combat Training, Eschew Materials, Expanded Arcana (teleport), Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell**Skills** Bluff +15, Fly +8, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (History) +17, Perception +8, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (courtier) +6, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +10;**Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception**Languages** Common, Elven, Sylvan**Gear** masterwork rapier, +6 *headband of alluring charisma*, *potion of cure moderate wounds***SQ** elven magic, weapon familiarity**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Arcane Bond (Ex)** Lady Sorreminx's bonded item is her wand; it allows her to cast any one of her spells known.**Bloodline Arcana** Whenever Sorreminx applies a metamagic feat to a spell that increases the slot used by at least one level, increase the spell's DC by +1. This bonus does not stack with itself and does not apply to spells modified by the Heighten Spell feat.**Metamagic Adept (Ex)** At 3rd level, Lady Sorreminx can apply any one metamagic feat she knows to a spell she is about to cast without increasing the casting time. She must still expend a higher-level spell slot to cast this spell. She can use this ability three times per day.**New Arcana (Ex)** At 9th level, Lady Sorreminx added black tentacles to her spell list.**Development.** Lady Sorreminx sometimes takes a liking to those who spar well. If the PC shows any interest, the two may become an item at court.

If the PC snubs Lady Sorreminx, she may take it ill unless the PC lets her down smoothly (Diplomacy DC 18). Failure to disentangle oneself gracefully means that Sorreminx may connive to have Sir Rujan or Lord Chelessfield challenge the duelist soon.

Treasure. Lady Sorreminx happily gives a victor a huge 5,000 gp emerald and a potion of cure moderate wounds.

Sir Rujan, Knight of the Barnacle Tree

MINIMUM STATUS: 15

Sir Rujan is both an instigator of duels and a master of illusion.

SIR RUJAN, KNIGHT OF THE BARNACLE TREE CR 12

XP 19,200

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) fighter 2/sorcerer 6
NE Medium fey**Init** +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +11**DEFENSE****AC** 23, touch 23, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)**hp** 101 (7d6+2d10+6d6+45)**Fort** +12, **Ref** +16, **Will** +15**Defensive Abilities** Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge;
Resist 10 cold**Weakness** light sensitivity**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.; icewalker**Melee** masterwork rapier +17/+12 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 cold/18–20) or falchion +11 (1d8+2/19–20)**Ranged** masterwork short bow +17/+12 (1d6/19–20)**Special Attacks** cold steel, shadow jump, spells**Bloodline Spell-like Ability** (CL 13th, Concentration +18)
8/day *cold steel***Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +18)**6th (4/day)—*eyebite* (DC 21), *freezing sphere* (DC 21), *transformation*5th (6/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 20), *dismissal* (DC 20), *dominate person* (DC 20), *teleport*4th (6/day)—*black tentacles* (DC 19), *crushing despair* (DC 19), *detect scrying*, *greater invisibility*, *wall of ice*3rd (6/day)—*dispel magic*, *elemental aura (cold)*, *lightning bolt* (DC 18), *major image* (DC 18), *nondetection* (DC 18), *rage* (DC 18)2nd (6/day)—*acid arrow*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *see invisible*, *scorching ray*,1st (6/day)—*enlarge person*, *feather fall*, *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *magic missile*, *mage armor*, *shield*0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ray of frost*, *mending*, *prestidigitaton*, *read magic***Bloodline** Boreal**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +12)At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)1/day—*haste** From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 18**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Dimensional Agility, Endurance, Eschew Materials, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +12, Escape artist +13, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (nature) +11, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +17, Perform (dance) +10, Profession (courtier) +10, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +25, Survival +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth**Languages** Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon**Gear** courtier's outfit, masterwork rapier, masterwork shortbow & 20 arrows, falchion, *potion of cure moderate wounds***SQ** flicker, snowshroud, stealth in motion**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Cold Steel (Sp)** At 1st level, Rujan can touch a weapon or up to 50 pieces of ammunition as a standard action,

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giving it the frost property for six rounds. He can confer the icy burst property instead, but for only 3 rounds.

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Icewalker (Ex) Rujan has resist cold 10 and can climb icy surfaces as if using spider climb.

Shadow Jump (Su) Rujan can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. Rujan can jump up to a total of 320 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 320 ft. or thirty-two jumps of 10 ft. each, or any combination of jumps totalling 320 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With his Dimensional Agility feat, Rujan may act after shadow jumping.

Snow Shroud (Su) Rujan ignores concealment and Perception penalties in natural or magical snow, ice, fog, and similar weather conditions. In addition, he can surround himself with a cloak of swirling snow for 13 rounds per day. This power acts and deals damage as a *fire shield* (*chill shield*)

that sheds no light. It provides a 20% miss chance on attacks made against him and grants a +6 bonus on Stealth checks in snowy or icy areas.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Development. Sir Rujan shows a calm poise in defeat, but inside, he seethes with rage. He grants no gift or spoils to the victor in a duel although he will attempt to claim some (by intimidation and threats, generally) if he comes out on top.

Lord Chelessfield, Master of the Alpine

MINIMUM STATUS: 17

This elderly elf, with golden hair and purple eyes, wears a tabard of white marked with blue diamonds. He has a set of mithril bracers as well as a circlet of pure gold worked into the shape of a dragon (the symbol of his title and rule of the highlands in the Fey Realms).

Lord Chelessfield carries a boar spear and a hand crossbow on his off days, and is a close friend of the Black Prince because of his love of the hunt. He is a dangerous foe since he is interested in what the PCs might do in the Shadow Realm, rather than hoping to score points with the ladies. He asks the party many pointed questions about their goals here, what acts of murder they may have committed against Elf or shadow fey interests, and what other lords they may have crossed swords with.

LORD CHELESSFIELD, MASTER OF THE ALPINE

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male elf fighter 12

CN Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Low-light vision ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+8 armor, +4 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 112 (12d10+36)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8 (+11 vs fear)

Defensive Abilities armor training, bravery +3

Immune elf traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft

Melee +2 rapier +19/+14 (1d6+5, 19-20)

Ranged +1 hand crossbow +17 (1d6 19-20/x3)

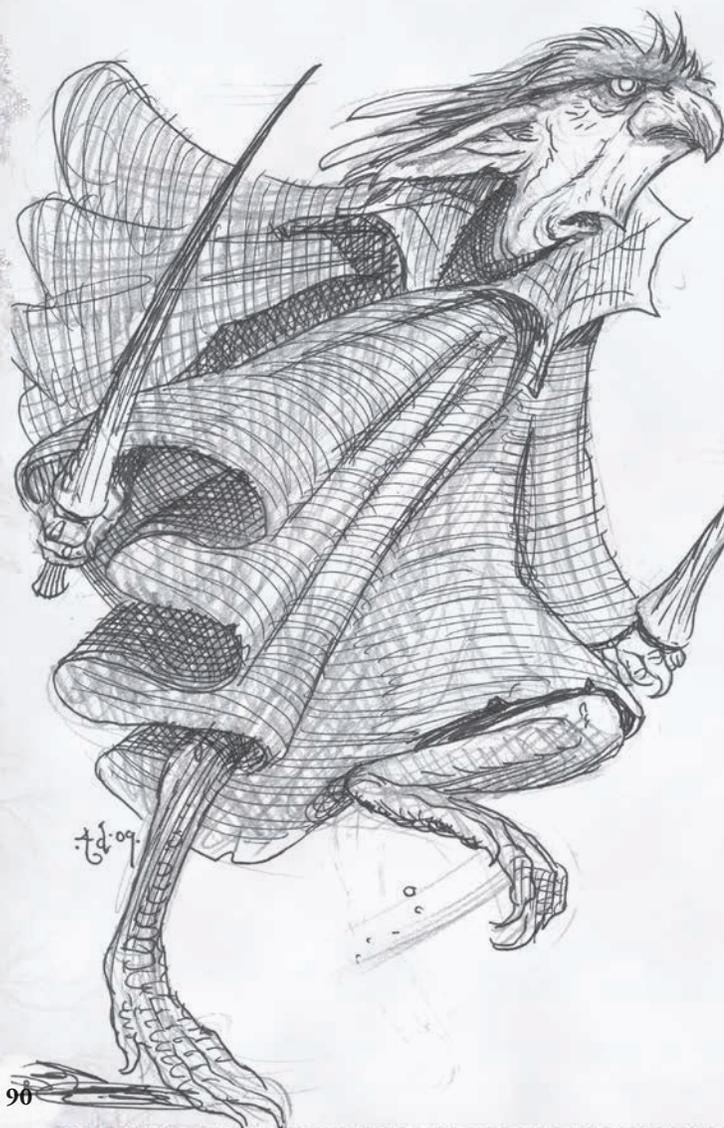
STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

Feats Crossbow Mastery, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Hand Crossbow), Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

Skills Diplomacy +9, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Perception +10, Perform (dance) +4, Profession



(courtier) +13, Ride +9, Sense Motive +10, Survival +5;

Racial Modifiers +2 Perception

Languages Common, Elven

Combat Gear boar spear, courtier's outfit, *belt of physical might* +4, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, +2 rapier, +2 breastplate, +1 hand crossbow, 20 bolts

SQ weapon familiarity, weapon training (light blades +2, bows +1)

Development. Defeating Lord Chelessfield irks him but does nothing for shadow fey politics. He may choose to woo a courtesan that his challenger pursues or has won—and given his charm and wealth, he may well win her away.

Treasure. Lord Chelessfield gives away an *absorbing shield* to the victor if he is defeated: it is marked with the blue and white mountain insignia of his home fiefdom. He also generously offers to foster any of the victor's offspring in the knightly arts and to teach that child archery.

Lightning Lord Suvid, the Quickling Lord of Blades

MINIMUM STATUS: 19

Lord Suvid's clothes are made of shimmering silk woven with silver, so that they ripple like water when he moves. He wears lace, feathers, and ribbons as well, all of which turn into a blurry cloud of color. Seeing his lunges and slashes in combat is exceedingly difficult.

As the fastest and perhaps most lethal blade at the court, Lord Suvid is widely and justly feared. Speed is his main weapon, together with the ability to shift away when he pleases and to humiliate his lesser. He's usually looking for an excuse to duel someone; the Ravens are all terrified of him, and he defends the honor of the Grey Ladies faction when they ask it of him. Lord Suvid enjoys bridge duels and even duels against arcanemasters, but the one thing he can't stand is losing. If he ever loses a duel, he leaves the Shadow Court in shame and embarrassment for at least 1 month, returning only when his loss is largely forgotten.

When dueling, he wears armor made of white feathers that further blur his motion. Generally, he winks in the instant before combat, and then leaps into destruction.

LIGHTNING LORD SUVID, THE QUICKLING LORD OF BLADES CR 12

XP 19,200

Male quickling ninja 9 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary 2*,
Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat)

CE Small fey

Init +13; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 21, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +9 Dex, +1 size, +1 natural, +1 dodge)

hp 106 (4d6+9d8+52)

Fort +11, **Ref** +21, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge (rogue 17th), natural invisibility, supernatural speed, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/cold iron

Weaknesses slow susceptibility

OFFENSE

Speed 120 ft.

Melee +2 *short sword* +19 (1d4+2/19-20)

Special Attacks disengaging feint, greater disarm, improved feint, sneak attack +5d6, spring attack

TACTICS

Before Combat Lord Suvid prepares his short sword with blue whinnis poison.

During Combat Lord Suvid uses his sneak attack the first round, then uses feint and his natural invisibility to sneak attack enemies, sometimes using his Run feat to retreat and safely dose his sword with poison again.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 28, **Con** 18, **Int** 15, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 20

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Disengaging Feint, Dodge, Greater Disarm, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Run, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +20 (+56 jump), Bluff +12, Climb +7, Craft (weaver) +14, Diplomacy +13, Escape Artist +20, Knowledge (nature) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +15, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +14, Profession (courtier) +16, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +20, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +24, Survival +5, Use Magic Device +6

SQ ki pool (5), ninja tricks (fast stealth, shadow clone, slow reactions, Agile Maneuvers), no trace +3, poison use

Languages Aklo, Common, Sylvan

Combat Gear +2 *small short sword*, *bracers of armor* +4, *cloak of resistance* +2, blue whinnis poison [4 doses], *wand of cure moderate wounds (45)*; **Other Gear** courtier's outfit, bottle of fine wine, pipe, 2 lbs. of tobacco, 5 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Natural Invisibility (Su) The bladeweaver is invisible when motionless. It loses this invisibility and remains invisible for 1 round in any round in which it takes an action other than a free action.

Slow Susceptibility (Ex) A bladeweaver that succumbs to a slow effect loses its supernatural speed ability and is sickened as long as the effect persists. This sickened condition persists for 1 round after the slow effect ends.

Supernatural Speed (Su) The bladeweaver moves with incredible speed. Save for when it remains motionless (at which point it is invisible); the bladeweaver's shape blurs and shimmers with this speed, granting it concealment (20% miss chance). In addition, this ability grants the bladeweaver evasion and uncanny dodge (as the rogue abilities of the same names).

Tactics. Lord Suvid attacks with his greater disarm first and uses improved feint constantly against his "lesser"; he engages only one opponent at a time and strikes them then moves away and returns, literally running around his foe as needed. If badly wounded, Lord Suvid uses run to retreat. He is not a fan of fighting very long, and as he leaves, he shouts threats that "The King shall hear of this! You shall be struck down as the impure whoreson mongrels you are!"

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Development. If Lord Suvid is defeated, most of the court is terrified to duel the winner. Suvid, however, wants revenge. In a day or two, he talks to the Black Prince about banishing the PCs—and when that fails, will turn to the assassins of the Akyishigal or even the Moonlight Demons of the king.

Treasure. Lord Suvid is remarkably magnanimous in defeat; he is seeking, in fact, to win favor with the PC for the future, hoping to turn this deadly combatant into someone that he can manipulate. He gives two very rich gifts in the wake of a duel: a quicklingforged, glossy black +4 *adamantine weapon* and a circlet set with two sparkling diamonds (10,000 gp total).

Scene 5, Akyishigal the Roach Demon Lord

MINIMUM STATUS: 13

The party is invited to meet the Demon Lord of Roaches, who seeks to dissolve the court and seize power from the queen—while pretending alliance and friendship, he is a well of corruption and destruction. The queen knows this well but keeps the demon lord on a leash just as she keeps her demon hounds and her son, the Black Prince. Akyishigal is in love with—or at least obsessed by—the fey princess Vailessia Graystone (who is all too often absent from the court). To help secure her by his side, he seeks allies among the humans since even his endless scuttling shadow minions are outnumbered here. In particular, Akyishigal is frequently outfoxed by the Lords of Light (see page 63), so he seeks to approach the party after they are rejected by them or before they even speak to Revich the Blind Angel.

Motivation. Akyishigal wants to rise into the ranks of shadow fey nobility and join the court by force and fear. In particular, he plans to shred the king's soul and offers information about the tower labyrinth about how to get through it—and about the rich magical treasures he can offer to anyone who brings him proof of the Moonlit King's death.

An Invitation to the Depths

A strange goblin steps forward from the shadows and bows; it seems to have antennae or horns of some kind on its forehead. "You are invited, lords and ladies, to treat with one who has watched your climb from the sewers to the stars. Lord Akyishigal would share his confidences with you at the bottom of the Black Well tonight at moonrise.

The odd little goblin bows and steps away.

If the PCs accept the invitation and go to the Well of Night (**Area 52** on the map), a Climb check (DC 20) gets them safely 50 ft. down the slippery, slimy walls of the well into the darkness below. They are expected...

The chamber is black, yet the sound of scuttling and scraping is everywhere; 5-ft.-thick pillars of pure black stone reach up to the ceiling 20 ft. overhead. A creature with the head of an enormous cockroach steps into the dim light, its antennae twitching.

92 "Welcome to the blackest pit in the palace. The only

ones who visit here are my servants and my food. Which are you?"

All around in the darkness, a hundred scuttling legs suddenly stop and listen.

Scene 5, Unrefusable Offers

- CR 11—Akyishigal
- CR 12—Akyishigal, 2 Spawn of Akyishigal, 3 roachling warriors, 3 roachling servitors
- CR 13—Akyishigal, 4 Spawn of Akyishigal, 6 roachling warriors, 6 roachling servitors

Features of the Area

- *Illumination*—Light sources all fade by one category here: from dim to darkness. A shadow censer burns in the center of the chamber, darkness spreading from it.
- *Pillars*—The pillars grab any foe adjacent to them at the start of a round (Acrobatics or Escape Artist DC 20 ends).

Reactions and Negotiating with the Demon Lord

If the PCs say "your guests," the Demon Lord remembers his plan to bribe the party. He offers them power in the form of two appropriate magic items worth 25,000 gp or less in exchange for the *Orb of the Moon*, currently held by the Moonlit King. If the PCs accept this offer, the speaker at the least becomes a member of Akyishigal's faction (see fealty, below). The demon lord says, "Take this brooch as a sign of our bargain." Refusing it enrages him and may result in combat unless the PCs leave immediately.

If the PCs say "Neither," the demon lord is offended. Characters not accepting his service and not taking the Status of "guest" must make an immediate Bluff (DC 22) or Diplomacy check (DC 25) each round to keep Akyishigal from attacking. He is an impatient listener, and his swarms attack on a failed check. If the party has nothing to bargain with or if a single PC visits alone, the servants may join combat immediately.

If the PCs say "Your servants," the Demon Lord sends his badges to the speaker (shiny black roaches that act as brooches on a cloak or buckle). Those who accept the badges become a member of Akyishigal's faction.

Fealty to a Demon Lord—Akyishigal is perfectly willing to accept the party's fealty; doing so means that each gains a tiny roach companion that is always with them and that Akyishigal may dominate that PC for 1 round at a future point. Characters accepting his service gain a +2 bonus to Status and the undying hatred of the Lords of Light. This is an evil act.

If the PCs say anything else, it's up to the GM to figure out whether a demon lord finds it worth talking instead of eating them for supper.

COUNT AKYISHIGAL, THE COCKROACH DEMON OF THE ABYSS CR 11

It resembled an insect that had learned to walk upright while wearing a ragged coat of graying skin. Although humanoid, its long and segmented limbs seem gangly, and its overstretched mouth exuded dripping mandibles, clawing at the air. Barbed stingers sprouted from between its fingers, and the eyes looked like a panic-stricken human's.

AKYISHIGAL, THE SKITTISH ONE

Of all the dreadful demons lurking within the Abyss, perhaps none is as vile and disgusting as Akyishigal, the Cockroach Demon, whose filth-slicked mandibles clack hungrily and ceaselessly for the flesh and souls of humans. Despite this, he has a surprising number of followers among the urban dispossessed, the slum dwelling downtrodden, and those who lurk within the lightless depths below cities.

Though Akyishigal has sired an entire race in his image, he craves followers among humans, elves, and other races as a means of corrupting civilization from within, rotting it at its core like an aging fruit. Shrines are most likely to be located in abandoned buildings, garbage dumps, sewers, ruins, graveyards, and other filthy places.

Kidnapped victims find themselves submerged in filth with only their heads showing. Bound, disoriented by darkness and hissed chanting, and paralyzed by fear, the innocent are helpless to act as ravenous roaches feast on their eyes and tongue. A sacrifice who survives is later released back into the populace. There, blind and speechless, his body wracked by disease contracted from the filth in which he was submerged, the sacrifice despairs as his slow death becomes a drain on family and society.

In most cases, the cripple soon finds himself begging in the slums, adding to the seething mass of disenchantment that exists in the shadows of the worst large cities. These tragic figures become potential new supplicants for Akyishigal, who promises to heal them of their ills but leaves them hollow shells of bitterness and cruelty. Unfortunately, these cults are almost as difficult to stamp out as are real cockroach infestations. Even if driven off repeatedly, followers inevitably resurface among the teeming mobs of beggars, thugs, streetwalkers, and refugees.

Typical worshipers include evil humanoids (kobolds and goblins in particular), roachlings, disenfranchised slum dwellers, and shadow creatures of all stripes.



XP 12,800

CE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, chaotic)

Init +7; **Senses** see in darkness, tremorsense 60 ft.;

Perception+17

Aura decay (15 ft)

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (-1 size, +5 Dex, +13 natural)

Miss Chance 20% cloak of swarms

hp 136 (13d8+78); regeneration 3

Fort +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

Defensive abilities cloak of swarms; **DR** 10/good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 23

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +18/+13/+8 (2d6+5 plus 1d6 aura plus poison/19-20)

Space 10 ft. **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks aura of decay, cloak of swarms, command vermin, poison, Power Attack, summon spawn, touch of rot

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th, +16 ranged touch)

At will—*detect law*, *detect good*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *magic circle against law*, *magic*

circle against good, see *invisibility*, *summon swarm* (spiders only)

3/day—*giant vermin*, *greater dispel magic*, *insect plague*, *shapechange* (vermin only), *summon monster VI* (fiendish vermin only)

1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 24), *unholy blight* (DC 21)

TACTICS

Before Combat Akyishigal readies plans for all events, and uses his million-eyed swarms to prepare. His cloak of swarms and all at-will abilities are active against anyone who does not *teleport* to him.

During Combat Akyishigal favors *insect plague* and *summoned swarms*, monsters, and minions over direct melee. In hand-to-hand he uses his poison touch as a flyby attack. He avoids *blasphemy* in the courts, as this is certain to affect more than his foes, and he does not wish to create unnecessary enemies.

Morale Akyishigal fights with complete conviction until the battle is won, lost, or no longer suits his purposes.

STATISTICS

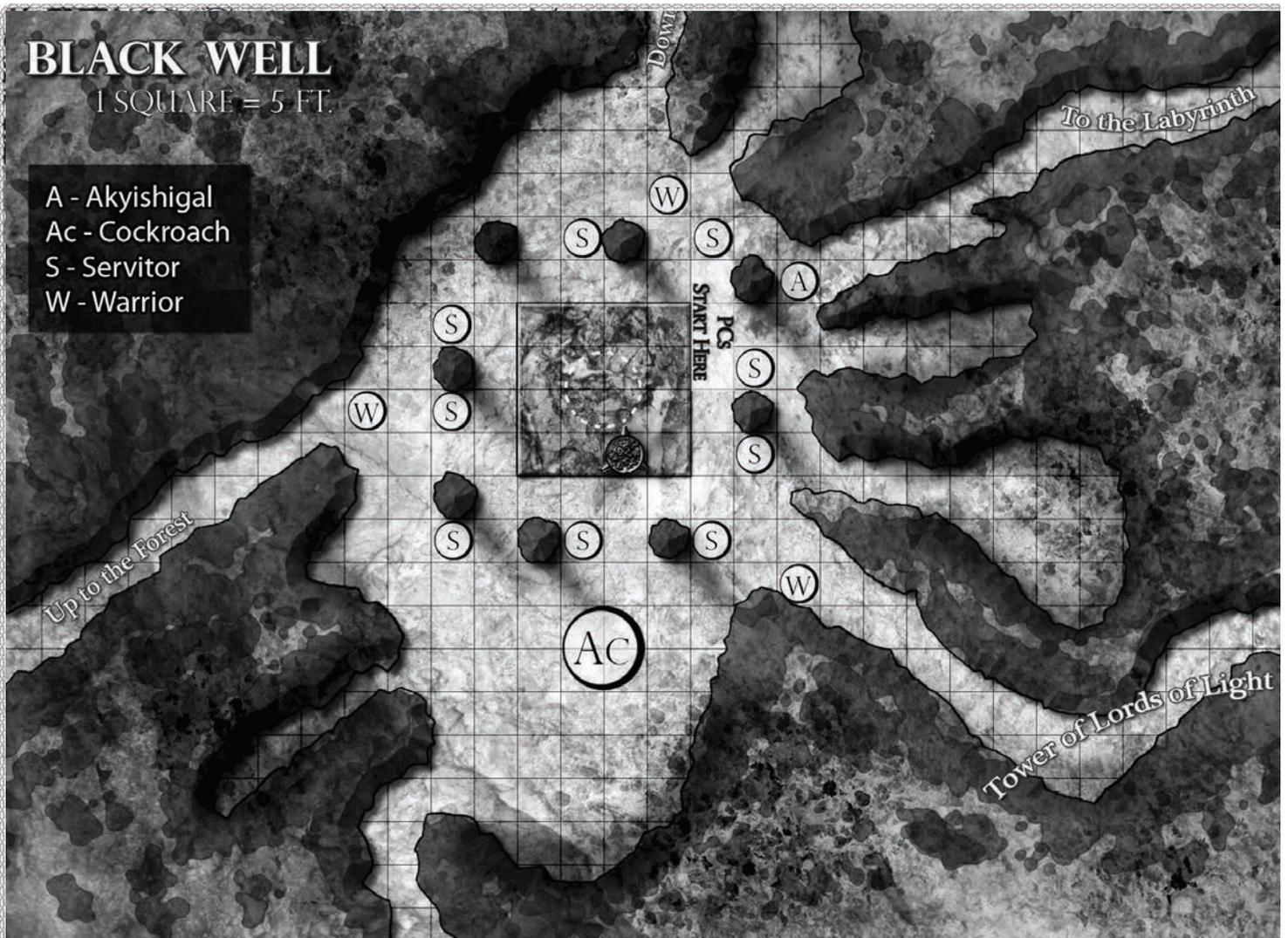
Str 21, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 19, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 22

BLACK WELL

1 SQUARE = 5 FT.

A - Akyishigal
Ac - Cockroach
S - Servitor
W - Warrior



Feats Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +17, Climb +16, Diplomacy +16, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +16, Profession (courtier) +12, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +19, Survival +9, Use Magic Device +14; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal; *telepathy* 60 ft.

SQ demon traits, outsider traits

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Decay (Su) All injuries dealt to living creatures in the aura cause 1d6 additional hp damage. Akyishigal can grant or remove immunity to any creatures in the area at will. (He and his cloak of swarms are always immune.) The hardness of all nonmagical objects in the area is reduced by 2 (minimum 0). If this aura is dispelled, Akyishigal can restore it as a move action.

Cloak of Swarms (Su) As a move action, Akyishigal can emit a cloud of flying, stinging insects from his mouth, his eyes, and the tears in his skin. This cloud surrounds him to a depth of 5 ft. The cloak means all attacks against him suffer a 20% miss chance, Akyishigal can see in all directions (through the insects' eyes), and he is immune to flanking. Any living creature in a space occupied by this cloud suffers the following effects: 2d6 damage,

DC 23 Fort save or be nauseated for 1 round, and DC 23 Fort injury poison for damage 1d6 Dex (1 save to cure). The swarm is immune to weapon damage. If the swarm suffers 20 hp damage in a single attack, spell, or effect, it dissipates; otherwise, it lasts for 5 rounds. Akyishigal can exhale another 1d4+1 rounds later.

Command Vermin (Su) Seven times per day, Akyishigal can command vermin within 30 ft. as an evil cleric commands undead (DC 23). His effective rebuking level is equal to his Hit Dice. He can command up to three times his effective commanding level-worth of Hit Dice (normally 39) of vermin at a time.

Poison (Ex) Akyishigal can change his choice of poison—Strength damage or Dexterity damage—as a swift action.

Slow Reaction (Ex) In a surprise round in which he cannot act, Akyishigal's Initiative modifier drops to 0 for that combat.

Touch of Rot (Ex) Anyone who suffers ability damage from Akyishigal's poisons emits the faintest stench of decomposition. All uncontrolled vermin attack that character on sight and in preference to all others. In addition, the rot imposes a -2 penalty to all further saving throws against poison. These effects remain even after the poison's ability damage has been healed, and requires a caster level check (DC 23) eliminate.

Skills Akyishigal has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. He can always take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

SPAWN OF AKYISHIGAL**CR 5**

XP 1,600

LE Medium aberration (extraplanar)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +12**DEFENSE****AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +8 natural)**hp** 59 (7d8+28);**Fort** +8 (+10 against poisons), **Ref** +3, **Will** +7 (+9 against mind-affecting effects)**Defensive Qualities** partial vermin traits; **DR** 2/—; **Immune** nausea, sickening**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.; climb 15 ft.**Melee** 2 stings +8 (1d4+2 plus poison) and bite +2 (1d6+1)**SA** poison (DC 17, 1d6 Str), rebuke vermin 4/day (+1, 2d6+6, 7th), swarming cough**STATISTICS****Str** 15, **Dex** 13, **Con** 19, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7**Feats** Alertness, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (sting)**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Climb +17, Linguistics +1, Perception +12, Stealth +12; **Racial Modifier** +8 Climb**Languages** Infernal, Spawn of Akyishigal**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Partial Vermin Traits (Ex)** Spawn of Akyishigal share some of the standard vermin resistances, gaining a +2 racial bonus to saves against mind-affecting effects and poisons (included above). They are susceptible to any effect that normally targets only vermin.**Command Vermin (Su)** Once a day, Spawn of Akyishigal can command vermin within 30 ft. as an evil cleric commands undead (DC 14). Its effective rebuking level is equal to its Hit Dice. It can command up to three times its effective commanding level-worth of Hit Dice (normally 21) of vermin at a time.**Poison (Ex)** injury; *save* Fort DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d6 Str; *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.**Swarming Cough (Su)** As a standard action, a spawn can belch forth a roach swarm (as a spider swarm, see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*). The swarm is completely under the spawn's mental control, and remains for 1 minute or until destroyed. A Spawn of Akyishigal can use this ability once every 1d4 rounds, and can never have more total swarms in existence than half its Hit Dice. The locusts do not attack the Spawn of Akyishigal, and it may fight from within the swarm.**Skills** Spawn of Akyishigal have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A spawn can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.**ROACHLING SERVITORS****CR 1**

XP 400

Male roachling rogue 2

CN Small humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 10 ft.; Perception +6**DEFENSE****AC** 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)**hp** 18 (2d8+6)**Fort** +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1**Defensive Abilities** evasion**Weaknesses** light sensitivity**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** rapier +5 (1d4+2/18–20), dagger +5 (1d3+3/19–20)**Ranged** light crossbow +5 (1d6/19–20), dagger +5 (1d3+2/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15**Feats** Point Blank Shot**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Climb +9, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +8, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +6, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Climb, +2 Stealth**Languages** Common**SQ** resistant, rogue talents (finesse rogue), skitterer, trapfinding +1**Treasure** NPC gear (daggers (3), leather armor, light crossbow and 20 bolts, rapier)**ROACHLING SOLDIER****CR 3**

XP 800

Male roachling rogue 2/fighter 2

CN Small humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 10 ft.; Perception +8**DEFENSE****AC** 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)**hp** 18 (2d8+2d10+12)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3**Defensive Abilities** evasion**Weaknesses** light sensitivity**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** rapier +8 (1d4+2/18–20), dagger +7 (1d3+3/19–20)**Ranged** light crossbow +7 (1d6/19–20), dagger +7 (1d3+2/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17**Feats** Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Climb +9, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +8, Knowledge (Local) +6, Perception +8, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Climb, +2 Stealth**Languages** Common

THE RAVEN DEMONS

If the party's highest Status is less than 15, the prince considers them too lowborn for him to bother with, so he sends a group of his "raven assassins" to assassinate the PCs late at night.

These raven assassins are a CR 12 or 13 encounter; despite their name, they are not birds but rather a group of firbolgs appropriate to the party size and level (use 4 ogre magi from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* for a CR 12 encounter).

The fey giants enter the window and break down the door of the party's rooms, attacking by surprise for 1 round. The last survivor of the assassins flees to report their failure (if the firbolgs actually win the fight, they throw the last surviving party member over the palace wall and out onto the road to spread the tale).

The assassination attempt is a test of the PCs: are they worthy of the courtesan's hand? And if the party has truly drawn the prince's ire, the assassins are only part one of the night. The prince and his hounds may well show up as the last of the assassins fall.

SQ resistant, rogue talents (finesse rogue), skitterer, trapfinding +1

Treasure NPC gear (daggers (3), leather armor, light crossbow and 20 bolts, rapier)

Tactics. The servitors and soldiers stay close to their master providing flanks and aiding attacks.

Development. If the party fights to the bitter end, they will be swarmed and overrun by the Roach Lord and his underlings. Any non-good PC "killed" by the Roach Lord and his servants is transformed into a roachling NPC in his service. Unaligned PCs become evil, and evil PCs become chaotic evil.

Treasure. The roaches have a hoard of fey memories in physical form and an appropriate magic item worth 16,000 gp. The shadow censer here requires incense to use its dimming magic.

Advice from Akyishigal. Follow a white hare through the labyrinth to sanctuary in the loop.

Scene 6, The Black Prince and his Hounds

MINIMUM STATUS: 17 FOR AUDIENCE, 21 TO GO HUNTING

Though the party may never be introduced to him until they rise in Status sufficiently to be invited hunting, the Black Prince is certainly aware of them, and his raven spies watch carefully to see where interesting travelers go. To all guests, the Black Prince is superficially friendly. In fact, he is bored and constantly looking for distraction and possibly assistance in sensitive and surreptitious matters of state.

As the party grows in influence, the brooding Black Prince becomes a rival to the party; he is certainly his father's surrogate and an arrogant cad who expects a great deal of deference from visitors. If any of the party rises quickly in Status, the Black Prince considers them a rival, especially anyone who takes on a role as the queen's or the Sapphire Courtesan's newest love.

The prince sends a white raven or the Kennelmaster Kolya to give the PCs a simple invitation without specifics: "requesting

your presence to attend his Royal Majesty in the Great Hall of the Shadow Court an hour after moonrise." (See below for the setting and tone of the audience. See **Developments without Combat** section, page 100).

Meeting the Prince

The audience chamber is filled with glowing light and shimmering surfaces; its walls ripple under the weight of tens of thousands of white moths.

The fey lord sits atop a small chair draped in purple velvet. He wears black chain armor and an open-faced bassinet topped by a glowing white feather. He carries a rapier at his side, and he pets an enormous black dog. Beside him is a female shadow fey with hair as white as his is black.

Diplomacy (gather information) (DC 25)—The woman must be the prince's sister, the Pale Witch of the Marches. She is said to visit the courts but rarely. His dogs are his own breed of shadow mastiffs, and his shadow fey archers keep watch from above and all sides; they do not all walk beside their prince but at a distance, keeping an arrow in hand at all times as a sign of their vigilance.

Knowledge (nature) (DC 23)—The dog resembles a mastiff from the Margreve forest but even larger. They are notorious teleporting beasts.

Perception (DC 30)—A wooden gallery runs above the audience chamber, lined with fey voices and the rattle of quivers.

Sense Motive (DC 18)—The woman resembles the prince and may be a relative.

The white moths on the walls aren't just pretty; they are also an alarm against intruders, covering any non-fey in hundreds of otherwise harmless but glowing creatures. All Stealth checks suffer a -4 penalty here, and invisible creatures are always the perch for at least a few of these moths, just enough to make their invisibility largely worthless.

Scene 6, The Black Prince's Displeasure

- CR 11—The Black Prince (Not recommended, single foes versus parties are rarely satisfying and he should begin hasted and stonesskinned)
- CR 12+—The Black Prince, The Pale Witch, 1 Margreve shadow mastiff
- CR 13+—The Black Prince, The Pale Witch, 2 shadow fey archers, 1 of the Prince's Hounds

HANDER SVENK, THE BLACK PRINCE **CR 11**

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) fighter 6/sorcerer 3
XP 12,800

NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 23, flat-footed 17 (+2 armor, +5 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 116 (7d6+6d10+3d6+48)

Fort +17, **Ref** +21, **Will** +17

Defensive Abilities armor training, bravery +2, Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** +2 rapier +22/+17/+12 (1d6+4/18–20) or falchion +14 (1d8+2/19–20)**Ranged** masterwork short bow +20 (1d6/19–20)**Special Attacks** shadow jump, spells, unravel**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +15)At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 17)*, *vanish**3/day—*suggestion* (DC 18)1/day—*haste*

* These spells can be found in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide.

Bloodline Spell-like Ability (CL 10th, concentration +15)8/day—*touch of destiny* (sp) touch, +5 insight bonus on attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws for 1 round**Spells Known (CL 10th; concentration +15)**5th (4/day)—The Prince has selected *orb of light** (DC 20) as his 5th level choice.4th (6/day)—*detect scrying*, *orb of light** (DC 19), *stoneskin*3rd (7/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance* (DC 18), *lightning bolt*(DC 18), *nondetection* (DC 18), *protection from energy*2nd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *blur*, *false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 17), *glitterdust* (DC 17)1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *color spray* (DC 16), *disguise self*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *silent image*0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound*, *mending*, *prestidigitaton*, *read magic** From the *Zobeck Gazetteer*.**Bloodline** Destined**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +19 (+21 vs disarm); **CMD** 36 (38 vs disarm)**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Arcane Strike, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dimensional Agility, Disarming Strike, Greater Disarm, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +10, Escape artist +11, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +11, Perform (dance) +10, Profession (courtier) +12, Ride +15, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +25, Survival +11; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth**Languages** Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon**Gear** +2 rapier, bracers of armor +2, cloak of resistance +2, 3 potions of cure serious wounds, falchion, noble's outfit, masterwork shortbow, jewelry worth 20,000 gp, orb of the moon (nonmagical replica of the Moonlit King's item, worth 10,000 gp)**SQ** flicker, stealth in motion, weapon training (light blades +1)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Bloodline Arcana** Whenever The Prince casts a spell with a range of "personal," he gain a luck bonus equal to the spell's level on all his saving throws for 1 round.**Fated (Su)** The Prince gains a +2 luck bonus on all of his saving throws and to his AC during surprise rounds and when he is otherwise unaware of an attack.**Flicker (Ex)** All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.**It Was Meant To Be (Su)** The Prince may reroll any one attack roll, critical hit confirmation roll, or level check made to overcome spell resistance. He must decide to use this ability after the first roll is made but before the results are revealed by the GM. He must take the second result, even if it is worse. He can use this ability once per day.**Shadow Jump (Su)** The Prince can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. The Prince can jump up to a total of 320 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 320 ft. or thirty-two jumps of 10 ft. each. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With his Dimensional Agility feat, The Prince may act after shadow jumping.**Stealth in Motion (Ex)** Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.**Touch of Destiny (Sp)** The Prince can touch a creature as a standard action, giving it a +5 insight bonus on attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws for 1 round. He can use this ability eight times per day.**Unravel (Su)** As a swift action, shadow fey sorcerers can unravel the spells of their foes. This acts as a *dispel magic* cast at their overall class level.**HERZOGIN ROSALI SVENK,****PALE WITCH OF THE UMBRAL MARCHES****CR 6***Unlike most shadow fey, Rosali's skin is deathly pale, almost white, contrasting with her large, deep-black eyes. She is tall and graceful, wearing hooded black robes decorated with silvery eldritch patterns; her wide grin is cruel and predatory. She carries a gnarled staff decorated with raven feathers and the skulls of tiny animals.*Female shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) sorceress 1
XP 2,400

NE Medium fey

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +11**DEFENSE****AC** 24, touch 24, flat-footed 17 (+7 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 Dodge)**hp** 52 (7d6+1d6+24)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +16, **Will** +14**Defensive Abilities** Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge**Weakness** light sensitivity**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** masterwork rapier +10 (1d6/18–20) or falchion +3 (1d8/19–20)**Ranged** masterwork short bow +10 (1d6/19–20)**Special Attacks** shadow jump, spells, unravel**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +14)

Courts of the Shadow Fey

At will—*dispel magic*, *dust of twilight* (DC 19)*, *vanish**
3/day—*suggestion* (DC 20)
1/day—*haste*

* These spells can be found in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

Bloodline Spell-like Ability (CL 8th, Concentration +15)
9/day—*lullaby* (sp) 180 ft., 10 ft. burst; Will DC 17 or sleep for 8+concentration rounds

Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +15)

4th (4/day)—*black tentacles* (DC 21)
3rd (8/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (DC 20),
invisibility sphere
2nd (8/day)—*augury*, *ghoul touch* (DC19), *glitterdust* (DC 19),
scorching ray
1st (8/day)—*animate rope*, *color spray* (DC 18), *disguise self*,
magic missile, *sleep* (DC 18), *silent image*
0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*,
ghost sound, *mending*, *prestidigitaton*, *read magic*

Bloodline Dreamspun (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 22, **Con** 16, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 22 (24)

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Disable Device +11, Escape artist +12, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +12, Perform (dance) +11, Profession (courtier) +6, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +24; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *potion of cure serious wounds*

SQ alternate form, flicker, stealth in motion

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alternate Form (Su) All shadow fey sorcerers can assume an alternate form as a swift action, typically as a raven, dove, cat, wolf, or fox. This animal form is always white, black, or silver gray. This ability is similar to a polymorph spell cast by a 12th level character, but the shadow fey sorcerer does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from the forms mentioned above. In its alternate form, it loses spellcasting ability but gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. It can remain in that form until it takes another or until struck by sunlight. Herzogin favors a raven.

Bloodline Arcana: Whenever Herzogin targets a single creature with a spell, she gains an insight bonus equal to half the spell's level (minimum +1) for 1 round to her AC and saving throws against any spell or attack made by that creature.

Combat Precognition (Su) Herzogin's insight into the future grants her an advantage in combat. She gains a +2 insight bonus on initiative checks.

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the

shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Lullaby (Sp) At 1st level, Herzogin can use *lullaby* as a spell-like ability 9 times per day. This effect lasts for 1 minute and does not require concentration. The penalty on saves versus sleep effects increases to -4.

Shadow Jump (Su) Herzogin can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. Herzogin can jump up to a total of 20 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 20 ft. or two jumps of 10 ft. each. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Unravel (Su) As a swift action, shadow fey sorcerers can unravel the spells of their foes. This acts as a *dispel magic* cast at their overall class level.

THE PRINCE'S HOUND

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Medium magical beast (cold)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 90 (12d10+24)

Fort +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6

Immune cold

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +17 (2d8+7 plus 2d6 cold and trip)

Special Attacks breath weapon (every 1d4 rounds, 15-ft. cone, 6d6 cold damage, Reflex half DC 18)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th, concentration +12)

At will—quicken *dimension door* (self only, may act after teleporting)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 30 (34 vs trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike

Skills Perception +14, Stealth +11 (+19 in snow), Survival +8;

Racial Modifiers +2 Perception, +2 Stealth (+8 in snow), +2 Survival

Languages Common, Elven

SHADOW FEY ARCHERS

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) fighter 4

NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 22, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 79 (7d6+4d10+33)

Fort +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +12 (+13 vs fear)



Defensive Abilities armor training, bravery +1, Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +15 (1d6+2/18–20) or falchion +9 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged +2 *composite long bow* +17 (1d8+4 plus giant wasp poison (DC 18, 1d2 Dex, 1 a round for 6 rounds, 1 save)/x3)

Special Attacks rapid shot, shadow jump

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 30

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (longbow)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +10, Escape artist +11, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (courtier) +5, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +24, Survival +16; Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Combat Equipment Masterwork rapier, +2 *composite longbow*, quiver with 40 arrows

SQ flicker, stealth in motion

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision.

They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow fey can jump up to a total of 80 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 80 ft. or eight jumps of 10 ft. each. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With their Dimensional Agility feat, they can act after shadow jumping.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Tactics. The hound corners a foe and attacks from darkness if possible. It uses its breath weapon to catch clustered enemies before teleporting next to its victim to threaten any responders. The Pale Witch seeks to stay out of melee combat if she can, attacking from a distance with black tentacles or lightning bolt. If an opponent engages her in close combat, she slips away with shadow jump or vanish before using scorching ray or lightning bolt. The archers shoot anyone who is a melee threat to the prince first, setting up his disarm attacks by reducing their dexterity. Subsequent targets include anyone casting blasting spells; the archers concentrate fire on these figures, especially on identifiable clerics and healers.

Treasure. The Black Prince keeps many odd things in his chamber—the horns of shadow elk as a hunting trophy, the bottled sighs of virgins, and the collected shadows of the Family Stross—but these are only valuable in the Shadow Realm, or at least only valuable among the shadow fey.

His real treasure is a set of a dozen silver apples made of distilled moonlight. These apples shine like mithril and are worth 1,000 gp each. They provide the bearer with a +4 insight bonus to AC and immunity to daylight weakness for a year and a day, and they are always carried by two young shadow fey pages who retain them until such time as the Moonlit King returns to the palace. They are for his consumption alone, not for any lesser creature.

Developments without Combat

If the party appears as summoned, he speaks to them courteously and warns them off. “Do not interfere with the Blood Royal. Do not attempt to bring your quarrels to my mother. And do not tamper with my ravens, my hounds or my friend the Count Suvid. Do not ally yourselves with the Roach Lord. And leave the court before another moon grows full.”

If the party insists on their right to continue to act against the prince’s wishes, he challenges them to a duel in the next dueling season if he perceives any threat to the court or his influence. If one or more of the PCs has attempted to woo “his” succubus courtesan, he warns that PC off in particular.

If the party agrees to stay away, the prince is quick to notice any breach of their promise (his lantern dragonettes report on it). Breaking their given word is cause for a duel and, likely, for expulsion from the court if they lose it.

Developments after Combat

If defeated in combat, the Black Prince is not killed; the party has defeated him and earns experience, but he cannot be slain in his home court. Instead, he bows, sheathes his rapiers, and confesses “You have bested me; I am your servant.” His minions, hounds, and sister (if any survived) cease combat as well although they remain wary. Goblin servants leap out of nowhere to bandage the wounds of all fey and the wounds of those with Status of 16 or higher.

The Black Prince’s sudden change of temperament from raging attack to genteel offers of rare claret and sweet pastries may throw the PCs off guard, but a Sense Motive check (DC 15) makes it plain that he is sincere in his surrender and his newfound peaceful mien.

If the party accepts his peace offer, they gain considerable Status (+5 bonus) as soon as word spreads that they have “drunk claret with the Prince.” If they refuse and attempt to continue combat, they gain no Status for the victory, the prince immediately gains 85 hp, and he leaves. The prince cannot be killed in the courts by less than epic-level characters (though he can be defeated and XP are earned for that defeat).

If the Black Prince escapes, he sends his raven assassins to attack the party that night and each night thereafter until such time as they have killed 16 raven demons or they make him an apology for their “ungentlemanly behavior” in the face of a sincere surrender.

Scene 7, The Hunting Lodge: Catching the Firebird

MINIMUM STATUS: 21 FOR INVITATION, WHICH INCLUDES 2 GUESTS

When the Black Prince invites the party to go to his hunting lodge, he offers to outfit the party with bows and boar spears to hunt for game in company with the Elf Lord Chelessfield and two favorite followers. The GM should choose from among these:

- Kolya the Kennelmaster (to control the dozen shadow mastiffs and coursing hounds)
- Lord Suvid the Quickling, blademaster (if the PCs have not crossed blades with him and defeated him)
- Gwathion Everglade, the shadow fey courtier, who has a temper (always baiting the party)
- Meltathraiel, the shadow fey advisor, who has a deep-seated hatred of all non-fey (irredeemably hostile to many PCs, which the Prince finds entertaining)

The trip to the lodge is a rattling journey through the forest on horseback with a pack of shadow mastiffs and a small troop of archers for company. Once the hunters arrive, the lodge is small but snug and large enough for the whole crew with a gabled roof painted in hound and eye designs. By first light of the Shadow Realm’s morning, the hunters are awake and ready to seek out deer or boar among the deeps of the forest, flickering between the Shadow Realm and Margreve Forest in the mortal world. This provides a glorious chance for the invited PCs to curry some favor with the Blood Royal and show themselves in a good light. Hunting characters may show skill in the chase (Knowledge (nature) DC 22); success gains approval in the eyes of the prince and his companions and a +1 bonus to Status for that character.

The Boars and the Butterflies

The party encounters death butterfly swarms in the woods on the first day’s hunt:

The woods are filled with a cloud of silent, fluttering butterflies. Each of them has wings checkered black and white, and their motion is as a swarm or wave.

- *Knowledge (nature)* (DC 23)—These are death butterflies, particularly notorious and dangerous fey swarms.
- *Knowledge (nature)* (DC 37)—This is a much more potent than normal swarm!
- *Perception* (DC 18)—The party is not surprised by the butterflies.

Scene 7, The Sound of Tiny Wings Flapping

- CR 10—2 greater death butterfly swarms
- CR 11+—3 death butterfly swarms
- CR 12—4 greater death butterfly swarms, and reduce the sandalwood available to a 5ft by 10ft area.

Features of the Area

Some nearby sandalwood holds the swarms at bay if lit (10 hp of fire damage, or 5 hp of fire damage continuously for 2 rounds), preventing the swarms from entering the squares surrounding the fallen logs, a 10ft by 15ft area. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 25)

allows a character to recognize this fact. The swarm must make a DC 20 Will save to enter or remain in the space.

GREATER DEATH BUTTERFLY SWARM**CR 8**

XP 4,800

CE Diminutive vermin (swarm)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9**DEFENSE****AC** 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 size)**hp** 99 (22d8)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8**Defensive Abilities** swarm traits; **Immune** weapon damage**Weakness** swarm traits**OFFENSE****Speed** 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)**Melee** swarm (5d6 plus poison)**Special Attacks** distraction (Fort DC 21), poison, weight of wings (DC 23)**STATISTICS****Str** 1, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** —, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** —; **CMD** —**Skills** Fly +18 Perception +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception**SQ** swarm traits, vermin traits**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Poison (Ex) Swarm—injury; *save* Fort DC 21; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1 Con; *cure* 1 save. This poison also affects undead creatures, dealing 1 Cha damage/round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Weight of Wings (Su) Creatures affected by the swarm's distraction effect must also make a DC 23 Will save or suffer from the effects of *hold person*. This paralysis only lasts as long as the victim is within the swarm and affects living and undead creatures alike. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Particularly vile creatures never seem to rest, often coming back as unliving abominations and ghastly spirits. Sometimes, though, these creatures do just cross over to whatever reward awaits them, leaving behind tainted corpses that pass the evil on to those that feast on the remains.

A death butterfly swarm results when a rare breed of carrion-eating butterflies, drawn to an incredible stench of decay, feed on the corpse of an evil creature. Individually, and prior to feeding on such a creature, the butterflies pose no threat, but the driving animus forces the butterflies to swarm and inflict misery on all who cross their path.

Naturally attracted to rotting material, the swarm's new state allows it to inflict a fast-acting, necrotizing poison on its victims. Thus, it can feed immediately on carrion created with its poison. The oppressive evil infused in the butterflies bears down on those caught in the swarm's wake, potentially paralyzing victims the swarm passes over. The swarm benefits from this effect, fluttering around unmoving victims and necrotizing more and more flesh while they cannot escape.

Undead creatures, to which the death butterfly swarm would obviously be drawn, are not immune to a death butterfly swarm's poison. Just as the swarm rots away a living creature, it may also dissolve an undead creature's animating force. Given the choice between an undead and living creature, the swarm will always attack the undead target. The swarm finds ghouls and ghosts to

be particularly appealing. Because of this, non-good mages see summoning a death butterfly swarm as a necessary evil in battling the Empire of the Ghouls.

The Firebird

If the PCs wish, they may pursue more legendary game—the longtailed firebird. The queen has often expressed a desire for it, and characters may have learned this from Diplomacy (gather information) use and gossip (see page 48). If a character expresses an interest in this to the Black Prince, he warns them off. “That firebird is my rightful prey. Leave it by, and seek the white hart, or the black boar, but not that bird.”

Finding the Bird in the Woods Complex Skill Check

Requires: 6 successes before 3 failures.

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Climb, Knowledge (nature), Perception, Stealth, Survival; alternate skills are possible at the GM's option (all DC 32). Appropriate spells may provide equivalent successes, as well.

- *Acrobatics or Climb* (DC 27)—Climbing trees and hills for a better view, chasing sounds while running along fallen tree trunks in the forest, leaping from branch to branch in a favored tree, or otherwise moving to a better position enable the elusive bird to be more easily spotted. Alternative Option: Casting overland flight or spider climb provides a success, fly provides a +3 to the next check.
- *Knowledge (nature) or Survival* (DC 29)—Knowing the bird's nesting habits, likely food sources, and preferred foraging, roosting, and mating habits enable it to be more easily tracked in the enormous forest. Alternative Option: Casting speak with animals or spending two uses of wild shape provides a success.
- *Perception* (DC 25, limit 2 successes)—Hearing the firebird's distant song or the rush of its wings or seeing signs of its smoldering nest in a treetop are sure signs it's near.
- *Stealth* (DC 30, special, does not contribute to success)—A successful Stealth check provides a character with a +3 to the next check. Alternative Option: Casting silence provides a Stealth success for two checks.

Once the Firebird is found, the chase may begin!

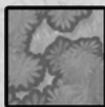
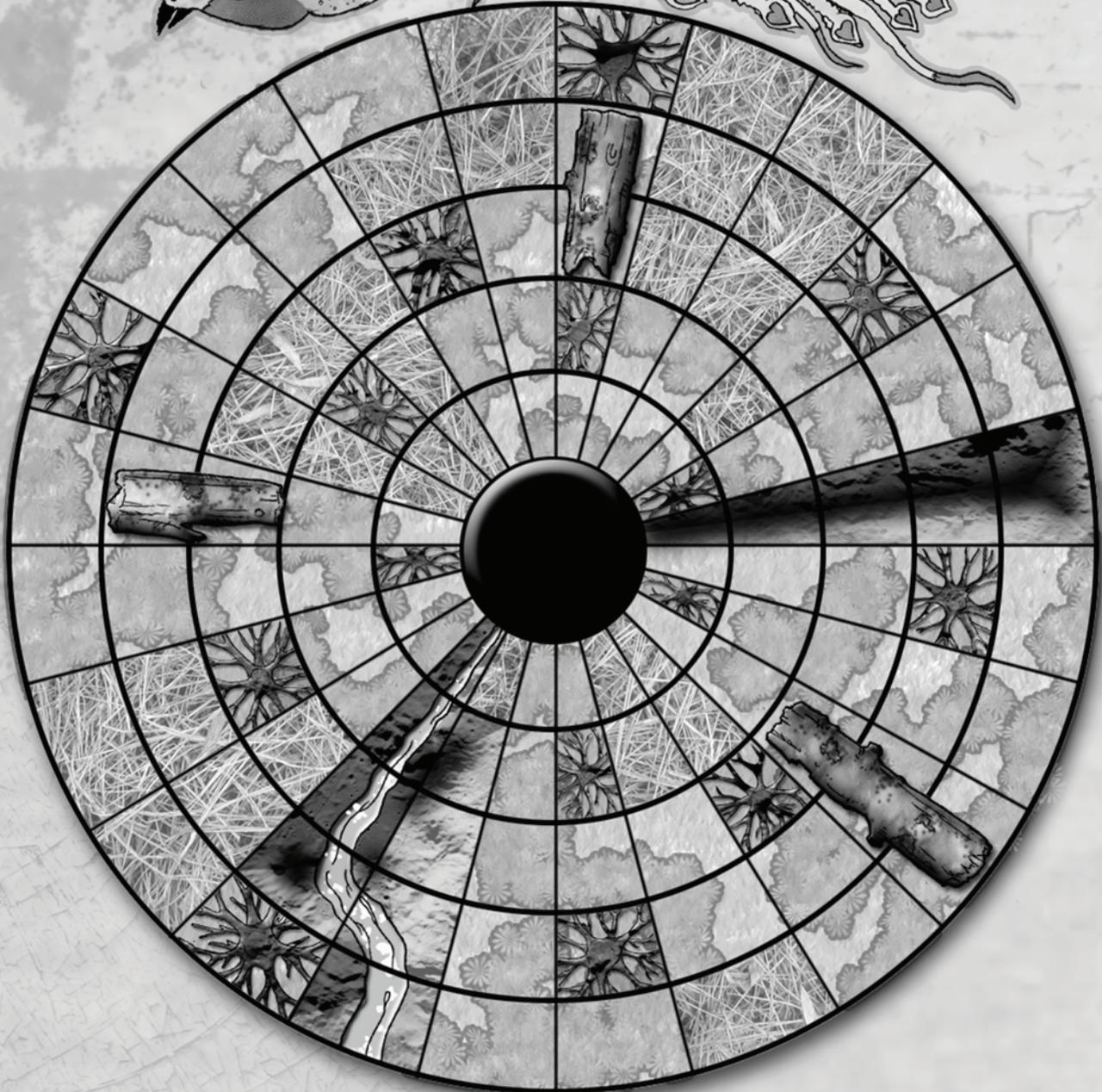
The Chase and Circle Map. Seeing the bird and catching it are two very different things. The job of catching the firebird is a matter of netting it or striking it without lethal injury. Of course, the party may try to kill one, but the queen is more interested in a living bird as a mark of Status—no one is interested in the bird as food although the feathers would find takers.

But first the party must catch up to it.

The party begins along any set of adjacent squares opposite the firebird, and they can pursue either clockwise or counterclockwise; the forest geometry around the firebird is subject to major shifts and the bird itself seems to create a sort of “chase magic” around it.

The firebird flies away with two moves (8 squares) whenever the party comes within 6 squares of it and it can move through the central black circle out to anywhere on the edge (but not the reverse). The firebird can move into a perching position on any tree (putting it 5 squares above the ground) by ending movement in that square. If the firebird passes through the black circle for the third time, it leaves the area of the woods near the PCs, though its birdsong can be heard fading in the distance for some time.

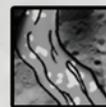
THE FIREBIRD CHASE



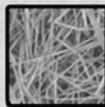
FOREST



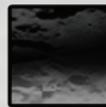
TREE/STUMP



CREEK



BRAMBLES



DITCH

Much of the forest is difficult terrain (marked with brambles). Tree trunks are impassable terrain and climbing is likewise difficult: Climb or Acrobatics checks are needed for jumping over the logs (DC 18); and Climb checks are needed for climbing the mossy tree (DC 20) and jumping the stream (3-square jump; DC 15 with a running start or DC 30 without).

Features of the Area

Heavily Wooded Terrain—All ranged attacks have half their usual range (rounded down).

THE FIREBIRD

This proud bird has the bearing of a peacock, made all the more majestic by its flaming fan of feathers, which shift through the color spectrum.

Init +15

AC 25

hp special (two successful attacks for nonlethal damage required to capture; two lethal hits kill it)

Fort +10, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

Speed 10 ft.; fly 20 ft. (average)

Actions The firebird has no physical attacks, but it will move or double-move away from the nearest person on its turn if anyone is within 25 ft.; it does not suffer any penalties for difficult terrain

Blinding Radiance As a swift action, the Firebird's song releases a mote of fiery brilliance, which floats up to 30 ft. from the bird and explodes in a 10-foot radius. All those within the area of effect must make a DC 24 Reflex save or take 1d10 damage and be both blinded and held in place until the start of firebird's next turn (save for half damage and not blinded). Note: Shadow fey find blinding radiance disconcerting and if it is used against them, they will soon abandon the chase (on a roll of 1-4 on 1d6 each round).

Successful Tactics for Catching the Firebird. The solution is to use magical movement or to gather near the black circle and flush the firebird to the edge. Once a PC is close enough to throw a net, cast a non-lethal spell or shoot birding arrows (-2 penalty to hit), they may knock the bird down long enough to catch it.

Option: Fighting the Firebird

For a greater challenge using a Firebird that fights back, use the statistics below.

THE FIREBIRD

XP 4,800

NG Small magical beast (*Midgard Bestiary*, "Firebird")

Init +4; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +1 size)

hp 75 (10d10+20); fast healing

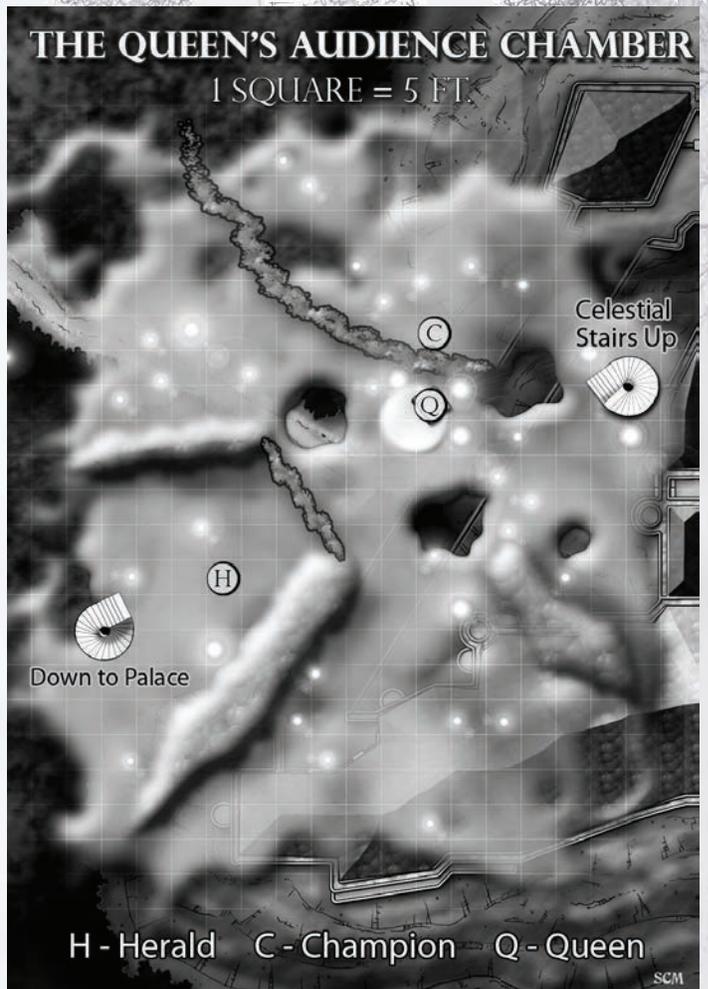
Fort +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

Immune fire; **Resist** electricity 10; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. fly 100 ft. (good)

Melee bite +12 (1d4+1)



Ranged blinding ray +16 (5d6 fire plus blindness)

Special Attacks blinding ray

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +17)

At will—*detect magic, guidance, purify food and drink, pyrotechnics, see invisibility, speak with animals*
3/day—*charm monster, cure serious wounds, daylight, glitterdust, heat metal*

1/day—*geas/quest, heal, rainbow pattern, reincarnate, remove disease, restoration, tongues*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 25

Feats Dodge, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (blinding ray)

Skills Appraise +9, Fly +15, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Perception +15, Sense Motive +12

Languages Celestial, Common, Sylvan

SQ light of the world, warming presence

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blinding Ray (Su) Erupting from its radiant tail feathers, a firebird can fire a burning ray of light up to 50 ft./round as a standard action. This attack deals 5d6 fire damage, and the target struck must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Light of the World (Su) A firebird's feathers glow with a warm light. The creature can cause itself to shed light as dim as a candle up to a bright as a hooded lantern.

A firebird always sheds light, and any feathers plucked from the creature continue to shed light as an everburning torch.

Warming Presence (Su) A firebird and any creatures within a 5-ft. radius don't feel the sting of cold and are affected as if by an *endure elements* spell. Invited into a home or building a firebird can expand this warming presence to its inhabitants, no matter how close they are to the creature.

Development: The Black Prince's Offer

If the party captures a firebird, the Black Prince is not pleased. To turn things to his advantage, he offers the party a trade:

The prince raises an eyebrow as he comes close to the firebird.

"You have done remarkably well. I will reward your enterprise and resolve; each of you will be given a lantern dragonette as a mark of my royal favor upon our return to the palace. In return, you will give me this firebird." He nods and holds out his gloved hand.

If the party refuses with anything but the greatest courtesy—a complex skill check requiring 4 successes before 3 failures using the primary skills of Bluff (DC 27), Diplomacy (DC 27), and Sense Motive (DC 23, no more than 2 successes) (Intimidate results in an automatic failure)—they have made a mortal enemy. In this case, the PC who caught the firebird and possibly anyone who refused to hand it over can both expect a challenge to a bridge duel (see page 84) by one of the prince's followers or a challenge in dueling season by the prince himself. The PCs suffer a -4 penalty to Status for treating the prince poorly; few wish to associate themselves with the person who said no.

If the party succeeds in this skill challenge, the prince does not challenge the hunter to a duel, but he does warn the party not to give the bird to the queen.

"I warn you," says the Black Prince. "It is too precious a thing to bandy with. Set it free, keep it in your chambers, but on no account give it to the queen." The hunting trip is over, and the prince returns to court the next morning.

Killing the Firebird. If party kills the firebird instead of using non-lethal means, the killing PC immediately suffers a -5 penalty to Status but the prince gives the PC a mithril mirror (2,500 gp) and a moonglass goblet (1,500 gp) for "good service to the crown."

Scene 8, Queen's Attention and her Lovers

MINIMUM STATUS: 30 OR FIREBIRD-GIVER

The queen does have her favorites, but the PCs are not among them at first, as they simply have too little Status to be worthy of her attention. They must earn that attention through their actions at the court.

Gift of the Firebird

Players are contrary and the prince is an arrogant bastard, so it's quite likely the party may not give a captured firebird to the prince but instead to the queen.

As the PCs approach the Great Hall or walk over the Bridge of Night with the Firebird, make much of the reactions of the servants dropping dishes, fey staring open-mouthed, and even well-regarded diplomats and stone-faced courtiers getting wide-eyed as the PCs approach the feast hall to present their gift.

Read the following:

The golden feathers of the firebird do more than merely glow in the feast hall; they seem to paint the chamber with gold, turning its nocturnal tones to the bright colors of summer. All around it, the creatures of the court turn to fading, irrelevant shadows, dim wisps compared to the bird's lush shades of fire and blood.

Sense Motive (DC 20)—The Queen of Night and Shadow on her throne is the only one who seems delighted; her servants and courtiers are terrified.

Let the presenting PC make a speech if so desired. With a Diplomacy check (DC 15), this goes smoothly. A failure means some courtier takes offense and threatens the PCs:

"No mortal should dare make such a gift. It is unheard of! Begone!"

When the bird is handed over:

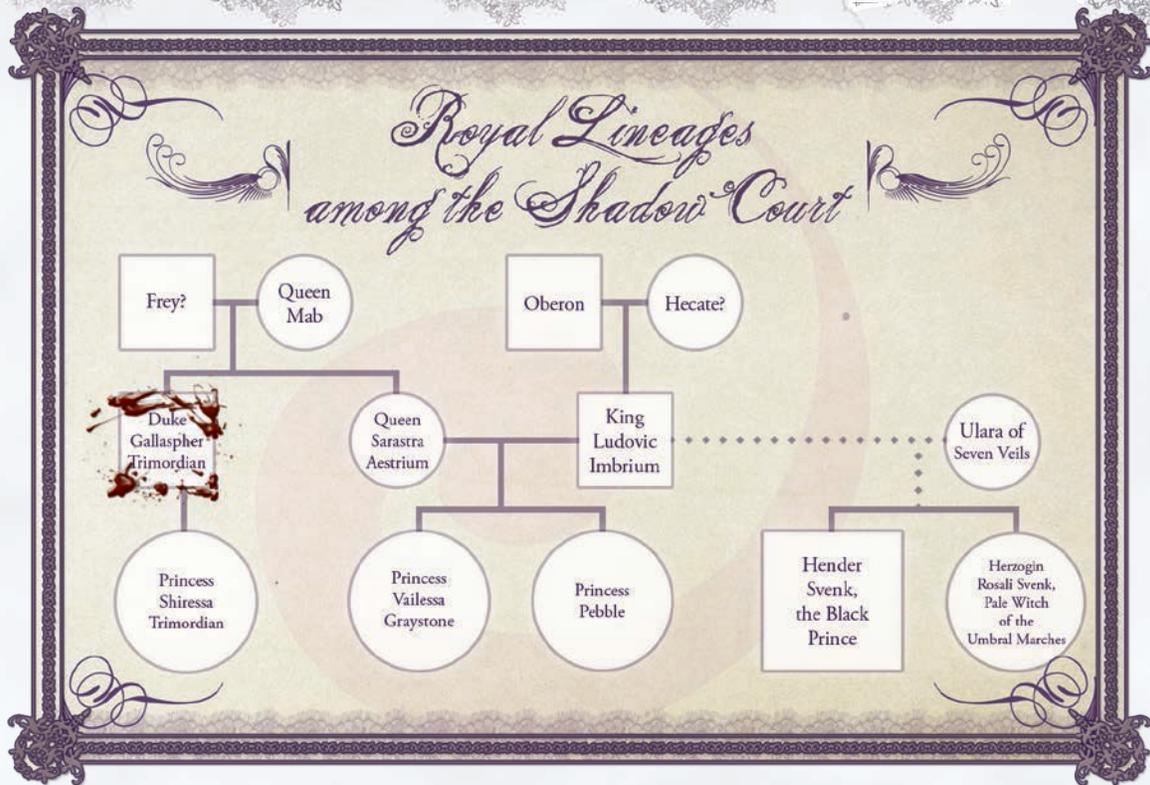
The firebird squawks once and settles comfortably onto the queen's wrist. She pets it once, twice, and three times, and each time the fire in her eyes grows stronger. The queen smiles, "Oh you have done well... beloved. You have brought me a fine gift indeed." Her eyes sparkle, and she waves you forward. "Come to me that I may whisper to you."

Knowledge (arcana) (DC 25)—The queen has a strange mystic relationship with the firebird. Understanding that might be interesting, but it is not related to the shadow powers of the court. Indeed, it seems more related to the radiant powers of the queen.

If the PC does approach, take that player aside and ask him or her whether they wish their character to become the queen's consort and possibly her lover. If yes, the PC is given a heavy golden necklace set with rubies (7,000 gp) and asked to stand at the queen's right side. If no, he or she is dismissed with a rueful glance; the queen holds no long lasting grudge although her first reaction is quite negative (see below).

Development: The Queen's Lover

If any PC gives her the gift of the Firebird, he or she may become the queen's favorite and (at the player's option) possibly her lover. The same offer may be made if a PC reaches a Status of 30 or more.



A New Consort

If the character accepts that position in the court, the queen is most pleased and the presenter gains +9 Status immediately (see **Status Other Than Dueling** section, page 37).

The Queen takes the firebird to the window, and sets it free. The court whispers and bows. "You are dismissed. We shall retire," says the Queen, and she steps through a shadowy portal. Her words echo faintly into the hall. "Come with me, O Royal Birdcatcher."

If the player agrees, the character wanders off to the queen's bedchamber and is not seen again by the other PCs. Behind the scenes, Queen Sarastra's semi-divine domination turns him or her (temporarily) into an NPC. The character dotes on the queen and spends no time with his or her old friends. The player may choose to play an NPC such as Brightspur (see page 57) or the roachling duelist Yikrugrak (see page 87), or may roll up a new temporary PC such as a shadow fey, elf, or roachling. The queen gives a gift of any magic item worth 40,000 gp or less to her new lover as a token of her delight.

As the queen's Lover, the PC is essentially untouchable by all other fey until the queen tires of her new toy in 1d6 weeks and dumps him or her. At that point, the former lover must fend off 1d4+1 dueling challenges, as well as many cutting remarks and new sycophants, all seeking either to prove themselves worthy to the queen or to learn the "secret" of impressing her (see Discarded Favorites section, below).

Turning Down the Queen

If the PC refuses to become the pet and lover of the queen, the queen takes it very poorly for several days. The character's Status suffers a -3 penalty, and the guards keep the character out of the Royal Halls

by royal decree, regardless of Status. All other courtiers consider the character the fool who passed up a golden opportunity, and they snub the PC for some days until he or she does something worthy. If not, other events distract them soon enough because the court has a short attention span.

The character is, however, in the good graces of the Demon Lord Akyishigal and the Black Prince, and may be invited by one or both to plot against the queen's interests, or at least to share treacherous gossip.

Discarded Favorites

If a discarded lover seeks to return to the queen's good graces sooner than one year after he or she has been dismissed, things go very poorly indeed. Queen Sarastra banishes her old, used-up, worn-out, or just plain no longer fancied lovers to the labyrinth, perhaps even bound into a new shape for her own amusement, such as a goblin or a gnome.

If the PCs are smart, they might figure out that these various fey beggars and goblins in the maze can be sources of information. That is, if they don't kill them first.

Development: the Prince's Incandescent Rage

The prince knows that the queen derives some power and pleasure from the firebird, and it is his plan to give her such a bird himself, thus foiling the ambitions of Akyishigal and ingratiating himself with his mother, who mistrusts him (for good reason). If the party does give the bird to the queen despite the warning, the Black Prince is angry enough either to send a double-size group of his raven assassins (see **The Raven Demons** sidebar, page 96) or to duel the gift-giver personally on the Bridge of Night. He expects to thrash them.

Regardless of the outcome, the Black Prince remains their enemy, sending messenger birds about them to the Moonlit King, whispering into the Well of Night to inform the Demon Akyishigal about them, and encouraging Lord Suvid to destroy them in any manner he finds suitable.



Act IV, Royal Audiences and Treachery

For beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror, which we are still just able to endure, and we are so awed because it serenely disdains to annihilate us.

Every angel is terrifying.

—Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*

*And when it was night, oh, as was their plight,
The moon had gone down, the stars gave no light;
They sobbed and they sighed, and bitterly cried
Then the poor little babes, they lay down and died.*

—“Babes in the Wood” (traditional English folksong)

Once the PCs have gained higher-ranked connections (or intimidated and enchanted the right enemies), they gain more access to power. The first PC to the top gains an audience with the queen in which she deigns to speak of the king, whose name is rarely spoken except in fearful whispers in the times when the queen rules. The encounters in this act presume the characters are levels 9 or 10.

Scene 1, Meeting the Queen

When a single PC has reached Status of 26, he or she is invited to an audience with the queen, at his or her earliest convenience. The character knows a certain protocol is involved (Diplomacy DC 106 25), and a form of courtly ritual is required to visit the queen.

This involves wearing one’s finest finery, lighting a candle in the Shrine to the Shadow Gods (area 25), and walking across the bridge to the Royal Chambers. There, one climbs the 1,000 steps up to the Queen’s Audience Chamber, eventually walking out onto a cloud above the twilight gloom below.

Status 21 or better characters who have not been specifically invited may trail along as friends and confidantes of the invited PC. They are not announced (see below).

Status of 16 – 20 characters may attend the invited PC as servants or hirelings of the invited PC, so long as they bear no weapons and wear no armor or jewels. They may not speak, on pain of immediate expulsion from the audience—the floor literally vanishes beneath the expelled character and he or she falls 100 ft. down to the Bridge of Night, landing near the Eastern Gate and suffering 10d10 damage from the fall. Survivors suffer an immediate loss of all earned Status.

Status of 15 or less characters may not enter the presence of the queen except by stealth or deception, disguising themselves as someone of higher Status. If their pretense is discovered, they are expelled immediately through the floor, falling and suffering the loss of all Status as described above.

The stairs up to the audience chamber are not quite countless; it takes most of an hour to reach the top. Countless stars shine above the audience chamber, and the floor is covered in cloudlike mist. The chamber seems to be entirely outside the palace, hundreds of feet up in the sky. There are no walls, just a throne of dark lapis lazuli flecked with gold—a curtain of shadows obscures the throne's occupant, though she clearly wears a shining crown set with stars. A small herald steps forward and announces you.

Announcing the PCs

A small shadow fey herald with a large voice announces the PCs. The queen is announced as soon as the door is opened, and the PCs enter in order of precedence (by Status). The queen is announced thus:

A fluid voice echoes from all around. "You enter the presence of Her Celestial and Royal Majesty, Sarastra Aestruum, Queen of Night and Magic, Duchess of the Heavens, Countess of Thorn, Mistress of Air and Darkness, Lady of the Summer Palace and Bride of Shadows. Attend her well."

A small fey herald turns, and the curtain of shadows ripples. "Your majesty, may I present to you the invited guest _____, the honorable mortal and visitor who has been acquitted most passing well."

Give the name of the PC with the highest Status together with any title and noteworthy accomplishments including duels won, courtesans wooed, and monsters slain recently. Then announce any other PC with a Status of 21 or more, giving a shorter title and perhaps a single accomplishment ("Seducer of the Succubus" or "Confidante of the Ravens"). Omit PCs with 20 or lower Status, using the words "and their servants and other mortal followers not of this Realm."

The veil parts from before the queen, a beautiful shadow fey woman with black hair below a crown of mithril and glowing starstones. Her cloak is pure black, and her dress an indigo set with numberless diamonds. Four lantern dragonettes curl around her feet, darting forward, hissing. The queen speaks a word, and they disappear below her throne.

She lifts a hand and waves you forward. "You have cut quite a swath through my court. The lantern dragonettes have been full of stories about you. I find your mortal ways charming, truly I do."

Sense Motive (DC 18)—She's totally schmoozing you up; her lack of sincerity isn't even covered up that well. It's all etiquette.

The Queen Speaks and Expects an Answer

While the queen is buttering up the party, she does have a vested interest in listening to the PC's case to some degree. After all, they've been mucking about her court, and her lantern dragonettes have told all sorts of stories of what the PCs have been up to. The party has been entertaining and may be capable of entering the Spiral Maze and defeating the Moonlit King and bringing his orb back to her. The matter of the shadow fey takeover of Zobeck is of a secondary concern to her although she is much too smart to admit that it is a bargaining chip to her.

Though she never says so directly, the queen hints broadly that she will give up her claim to Zobeck if they walk the Spiral Maze and go fetch a mark of the king's rule and return it to her: his buttons, say, or his arcane orb.

The queen won't give just anyone such a promise. They have to pass her questions and prove their worthiness first: clever but not TOO clever, brave but not impudent, and ingratiating without being ass kissing. It's a fine line.

Convince the Queen of Your Worthiness,

Complex Skill Check

Requires: 10 successes before 3 failures.

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Diplomacy (gather information), Intimidate, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (religion), Sense Motive.

- *Bluff* (DC 26, limit 1 success)—A smooth-talker generally wins some points with the queen for bravado.
- *Diplomacy* (DC 26 +3/additional attempt)—Diplomacy smooths the way with the queen, but the closer you get, the tougher Her Celestial Majesty becomes. She likes to make diplomats sweat.
- *Diplomacy (gather information)* (DC 24)—Well-informed and gossipy visitors are always welcome. The queen is keenly interested in an outsider's view of her court's politics to compare with her own.
- *Intimidate* (DC 24, limit 1 success)—Gusto is considered a sign of bravado, courage, and aggressiveness. Too much of it, though, is merely uncouth.
- *Knowledge (arcana)* (DC 28, limit 1 success)—As the Queen of Night and Magic, Her Celestial Majesty knows almost everything that there is to know about the arcane. Even when she doesn't, she finds it extremely annoying to be corrected on the subject.
- *Knowledge (history)* (DC 25 +3/additional attempt)—Some knowledge of the queen's reign and her king's checkered past is a boon. Too much knowledge of the past makes the queen doubt the speaker's trustworthiness and question whether, perhaps, the speaker knows too much.
- *Knowledge (nature)* (DC 22, limit 1 success)—Feeding or playing with the lantern dragons and making it clear that the lantern dragonettes are pleased with this attention is a sign that the queen takes seriously—though once a PC wins one over, the queen dismisses her lantern dragonettes to fly off and chase birds. Conversely, being nipped by a lantern dragonette is a mark of failure.
- *Knowledge (religion)* (DC 25, limit 2 successes)—Terms and hymns of praise for the Goddess of Night and Darkness and Sense Motives into the divine are somewhat of interest to the queen. However, she fears anyone who knows too much on

OPTION: THE QUEEN'S CHAMPION WEARS A STOLEN

FACE

This variant of the Queen's Champion looks exactly like one of the PCs; ideally, this is the same PC who had a shadow double appear and talk with the party for some time (see **Steep Drops in Status and Shadow Doubles** sidebar, page 53). In addition to its other powers, the champion can use one of the same daily powers as the PC it appears like, mimicking that power as a reaction when the PC uses it. If killed, the shadow creature still resembles the PC for a moment, before becoming an empty suit or cloak once more.

this topic as a potential rival; she discourages religiosity among her court.

- *Sense Motive* (DC 25)—Who understands the whims of an ageless and powerful monarch? She seeks to balance many interests beyond her own, and a wise PC can see her perspective.

Alternate Skills: *Acrobatics, Climb, Heal, Knowledge*

(*dungeoneering*), *Survival* (DC 25)—Quite likely to result in neither a success nor a failure, depending on how they are used.

Success: Queen Sarastra is more than willing to forget about sending the brutal Statthaler Konratt Eigenstil to Zobeck. Indeed, she suddenly discovers that she has grown rather fond of him as possibly useful in certain political problems at home (by which she means, keeping Akyishigal on a leash). The queen agrees not to send the Statthaler to root out disloyalty in Zobeck for, say, 100 years but only under certain conditions. These amount to "If the king agrees to it. Or if his reign should end."

She gives them the keys to the labyrinth and the ceremonial daggers as a mark of favor (unannounced PCs and those who serve the Lord of Roaches or the Black Prince's faction do not get daggers). If a member of the party has a Status of 25 or better, she also gives that character a piece of unsolicited advice about the nature of the king's servants, saying "Heed me well, for I shall say this but once: do not attend the king too closely, for his presence is dangerous, and he draws his strength and his celestial voice from the moonlight. Return with his orb and his word, and you shall leave my kingdom without harm or hindrance."

Treasure from Success: The queen gives the party 5 ceremonial daggers (one per PC, presuming appropriate status and faction), each presented as the PCs go to the labyrinth:

Sheathed in a charcoal grey scabbard with the queen's owl emblem, this is an extremely well made piece. When in shadow, this double-edged blade can be seen to be engraved with blood red fey runes.

The daggers are keys to the labyrinth, unlocking the gate at the bottom of the hidden stair (**Area 42**). Once the bearer arrives at the Tower Beacon, the daggers are still worth 1,000 gp apiece, and +2 Status, should the characters decide to return to the court at a later date.

Failure: If the party fails in its diplomacy, read the following:

"You tread upon my patience. You impose on my hospitality and discomfit my champion. You will now amuse me with the dueling I have heard so much of. Champion, step forth!"

And you see a familiar set of armor step forward, but this armor's visor is up and there is a black skull within, its eyes bright sparks as cold as a winter moon. A cloak of owl feathers hangs from the champion's shoulders, and it salutes you with twin swords.

Roll initiative. The party must fight the Queen's Champion.

Scene 1, You Say the Worst Things

- CR 11—1 champion monolith armor, 1 hole in the clouds, 1 shadow fey herald
- CR 12+—1 champion monolith armor, 1 hole in the clouds, 3 shadow fey herald
- CR 13+—1 champion monolith armor, 1 hole in the clouds, Her Majesty Sarastra
- or
- CR 13+—1 champion monolith armor, 2 hole in the clouds, 4 shadow fey herald

Features of the Area

The cloudstuff is full of holes, which can be quite dangerous since the queen can move the holes as a swift or move action.

A HOLE IN THE CLOUDS CR 8

XP 4,800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset automatic

Effect 1000-ft.-deep pit (12d6 falling damage, due to bouncing on the shadow bridge); DC 23 Reflex avoids; single target (target in a 5-ft.-square area)

COUNTERMEASURES

Adjacent to the trap, you can trigger it (Disable Device or Sleight of Hand DC 25, standard action), causing the cloudstuff to fade into mist and revealing the hole.

Adjacent to the trap, you can disable it (Knowledge (arcana) DC 29, standard action). Causing the cloudstuff to solidify and become safe.

You can jump over the hole (Acrobatics DC 13, or DC 23 without a running start, move action).

You can run safely around the edge of the hole (Acrobatics DC 17, move action).

MONOLITH CHAMPION CR 8

XP 4,800

N Large construct

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (+1 Dex, +13 natural, -1 size)

hp 85 (10d10+30)

Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3

Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee Large masterwork greatsword +16/+11 (2d8+5 plus 1d6 fire* and blatant dismissal/19–20), or slam +14 (1d8+5 plus 1d6 fire* and blatant dismissal)

* See fey flame for details

Special Attacks blatant dismissal, fey flame

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 27

Feats Cleave, In Harm's Way, Power Attack, Step Up, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Perception +15; **Racial Modifiers** Acrobatics (+4 when jumping), +5 Perception

Languages Elven

SQ diligent sentinel

Treasure Large masterwork greatsword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blatant Dismissal (Su) With a successful hit, a monolith champion attempts the forced departure of the target. The target must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or be removed from the queen's audience room to the Great Hall.

Diligent Sentinel (Ex) Monolith champions are designed to watch for intruders. They gain a +5 racial bonus to Perception checks.

Fey Flame (Su) The ritual powering monolith champions grants them an inner flame which can be used to provide their weapons additional damage. This damage can be either fire or cold, depending on the construct's needs and requires a swift action to change between types.

HER MAJESTY SARA STRA, QUEEN OF NIGHT AND MAGIC

CR 12

Female advanced shadow fey (Midgard Bestiary) sorcerer 6
XP 25,600

NE Medium fey

Init +16; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 27, flat-footed 23 (+3 armor, +8 deflection, +8 Dex, +2 Natural, +1 Dodge)

hp 110 (7d6+6d6+65)

Fort +14, **Ref** +24, **Will** +19

Defensive Abilities cloak of shadows, Improved Evasion, uncanny dodge; **Resist** cold 10

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +15 (1d6+2/18–20) or falchion +7 (1d8+1/19–20)

Ranged masterwork short bow +15 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks ring of the ram, shadow jump, swirling shadows (DC 24), unravel

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +21)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 19)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 20)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

Bloodline Spell-like Ability (CL 13th, Concentration +17)

11/day—*lash of shadows*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +21)

6th (5/day)—*shadow walk*, *true seeing*

5th (8/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 23), *leeching lantern** (DC 23), *persistent image*, *seeming*, *shadow evocation* (DC 23), *teleport*

4th (8/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 22), *flickering fate** (DC 22), *greater invisibility*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 22), *shadow conjuration* (DC 22)

3rd (8/day)—*deeper darkness*, *lightning bolt* (DC 21), *major image* (DC 21), *nondetection* (DC 21), *vampiric touch*

2nd (8/day)—*alter self*, *blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *darkvision*, *glitterdust* (DC 20), *knock*, *touch of idiocy* (DC 20)

1st (8/day)—*color spray* (DC 19), *feather fall*, *lengthen shadows**, *light blindness**, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*, *prestidigitaton*, *read magic*, *shadow bite* (DC 18)

* From *Zobeck Gazetteer*.

Bloodline Shadow (*Kobold Quarterly* #13).

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 26, **Con** 20, **Int** 20, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 33

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dimensional Agility, Empower Spell, Expanded Arcana (*cone of cold*, *teleport*), Improved Initiative, Quickened Spell, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +20, Disable Device +13, Escape artist +14, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +20, Perform (dance) +12, Profession (courtier) +20, Sense Motive +20, Sleight of Hand +15, Spellcraft +18, Stealth +26; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan, Undercommon

Gear +3 bracers of armor, +1 rapier, ring of the ram, ring of mind shielding, rod of absorption (4 levels stored), noble's outfit, crown of diamonds (9,000 gp)

SQ alternate form, flicker, stealth in motion

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alternate Form (Su) All shadow fey sorcerers can assume an alternate form as a swift action, typically as a raven, dove, cat, wolf, or fox. This animal form is always white, black, or silver gray. This ability is similar to a polymorph spell cast by a 12th level character, but the shadow fey sorcerer does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from the forms mentioned above. In its alternate form, it loses spellcasting ability but gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. It can remain in that form until it takes another or until struck by sunlight. She alternates between raven or fox.

Bloodline Arcana Whenever the Queen casts a spell of the shadow subschool, increase the spell's DC by +1.

Cloak of Shadows (Ex) The Queen has resist cold 10 and a +4 bonus on initiative checks.

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the

Courts of the Shadow Fey

shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Lash of Shadows (Sp) The Queen can summon a shadowy whip for one round to attack her enemies as a standard action, targeting any foe within 30 ft. as a ranged touch attack. The lash deals 1d6+6 hp cold damage. She can use this ability eleven times per day.

Shadow Jump (Su) The Queen can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. The Queen can jump up to a total of 160 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 160 ft., sixteen jumps of 10 ft. each, or any number of jumps totalling 160 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With her Dimensional Agility feat, she can act after shadow jumping.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Swirling Shadows (Sp) The Queen can summon a swirling storm of shadows to engulf her enemies. The swirling shadows cover a 20-ft. radius burst. Anyone in this area takes 13d6 cold damage. This power has a range of 60 ft. Those caught in the area can make a Reflex save for half damage. Those who fail the save are blinded for 1 round. (DC 24). The swirling shadows disappear after 1 round. She can use this ability once per day.

Unravel (Su) As a swift action, shadow fey sorcerers can unravel the spells of their foes. This acts as a *dispel magic* cast at their overall class level.

SHADOW FEY HERALDS

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*) fighter 6
NE Medium fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 22, flat-footed 16 (+2 armor, +4 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 102 (7d6+6d10+45)

Fort +14, **Ref** +18, **Will** +13 (+15 vs fear)

Defensive Abilities armor training, bravery +2, Improved Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier +17 (1d6+2/18–20) or falchion +11 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged +2 *composite long bow* +19/+14 (1d8+4 plus giant wasp poison (DC 18, 1d2 Dex, 1 a round for 6 rounds, 1 save)/x3)

Special Attacks deadly aim, rapid shot, shadow jump

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dust of twilight* (DC 16)*, *vanish**

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

110 **Str** 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 32

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Deadly Aim, Dimensional Agility, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (longbow)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +10, Escape artist +11, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +13, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (courtier) +13, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +24, Survival +16; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

Combat Equipment Masterwork rapier, *bracers of armor* +2, +2 *composite longbow*, quiver with 40 arrows, noble's outfit

SQ flicker, stealth in motion, weapon training (bows)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (Ex) All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision. They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen. This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

Shadow Jump (Su) A shadow fey can travel between shadows as if by means of *dimension door*. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow fey can jump up to a total of 160 ft./day in this way; this may be a single jump of 160 ft., sixteen jumps of 10 ft. each, or any number of jumps totalling 160 ft. This ability must be used in 10-ft. increments. With their Dimensional Agility feat, they can act after shadow jumping.

Stealth in Motion (Ex) Shadow fey can move at full speed or even run while using the Stealth skill. They suffer no penalties on Stealth checks due to movement.

Development. If the party defeats the monolith armor, the queen is stunned and immediately proclaims one of the PCs as her new champion and Keeper of the Seals of the Realm. As the character's first responsibility, he or she must visit the Moonlit King and gain his approval to abandon the fey claim to the city. The queen doesn't entirely expect the character to return.

If the PC refuses the title as the queen's new champion, the party is immediately dropped through the cloud floor of the chamber (falling 1,000 ft. but bouncing off the shadow bridge to take "only" 10d6 damage).

Depending on the circumstances and the danger that the queen feels the PCs present to the realm, she may salute them and drop them into the maze (without damaging them), or she may banish them from the Shadow Realm; thereafter all attempts at the Shadow Road ritual simply release shadow demons (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) against the characters.

In this second case, as every hand is turned against them, the PCs mission has failed. The statthaler soon arrives to seize control of the city of Zobeck, and the rule of the shadow fey is re-established.

The queen hopes the PCs will kill the king—who the fey believe cannot be slain—through some mortal trick; if the audience becomes a combat, this does not mean that her goal has changed. Indeed, regardless of whether the fight turns against her or she has the party helpless and defeated, she tells the PCs that she will give them what they want—but it requires the acknowledgement, or at least the witnessed consent, of her royal husband.

She grants them permission to visit his tower and considers herself lucky either way. If they go and never come back, good riddance to annoying visitors. If they find the Moonlit King's tower and get his signature or permission, well enough, the queen hopes that she can use this concession of territory against her husband at some future date.

Treasure. The queen carries the crown of diamonds (9,000 gp), +3 bracers of armor, a ring of mind shielding, a ring of the ram, a +1 rapier, and a rod of absorption.

Scene 2, The Radiant Demons of the Spiral Maze

Once the PCs enter the Spiral Maze from the hidden stairs in the northeastern section of the palace (**Area 42**), they quickly see that the maze is massive, taking up huge swathes of the forest and filled with dark, thorny hedges and wide-open avenues that twist and curl in all directions. Worse, it is dark and extremely unfriendly (see **Conditions in the Labyrinth** sidebar).

Most parties will drift over time toward the Tower of the Moon, where the king is held. The maze is quite deadly, though, for the queen does not want many visitors for her husband (too dangerous if his partisans have ready access to the king).

This first encounter is a nesting place for the lantern dragonettes, which is protected by a trap that they and their shadow demon guardians never trigger.

And of course, if the PCs watch the glowing brazier's light, they are immobilized and hypnotized when the shadow demons come out of the shadows...

The maze's wide passages open up ahead, and bright lights flicker in some sort of clearing. A dozen of the small lantern dragonettes are warming themselves around a huge brass brazier.

Perception DC 27—It's not just the shadows from the fire and the dragonettes; the walls of the maze contain large shadowy creatures, just barely out of sight.

If the PCs approach within 50 feet, the dragonettes all fly to their nests and hide from the ensuing combat. The shadow demons step forward out of the black walls of the maze, gaining a surprise round if not previously detected.

Scene 2, Welcome to the Labyrinth

- CR 10—1 pyrohypnosis brazier (trap), 2 shadow demons
- CR 11—1 pyrohypnosis brazier (trap), 3 shadow demons
- CR 12—1 pyrohypnosis brazier (trap), 5 shadow demons

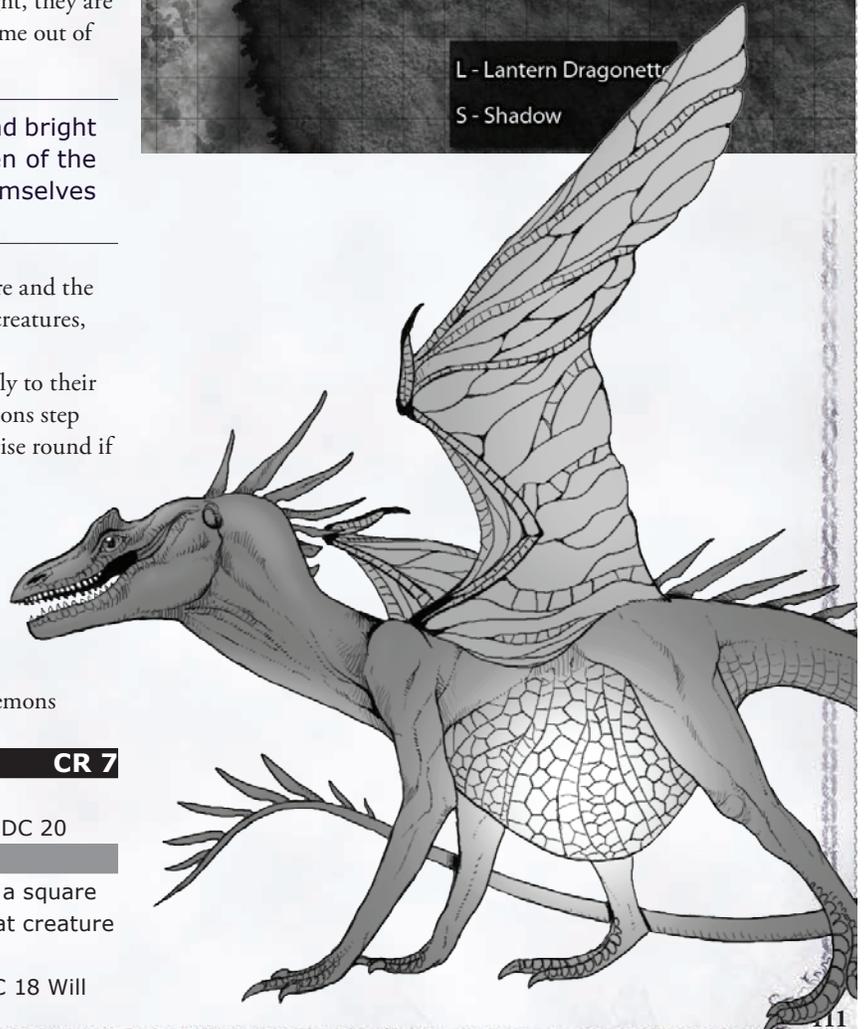
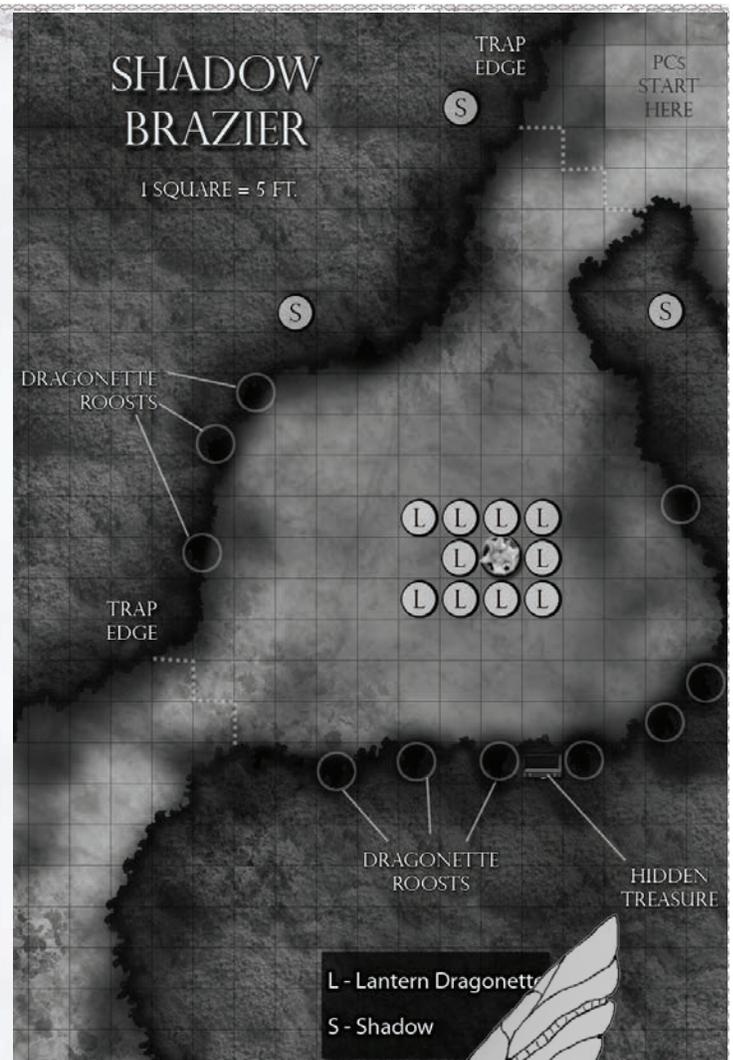
PYROHYPNOSIS BRAZIER **CR 7**
XP 3,200

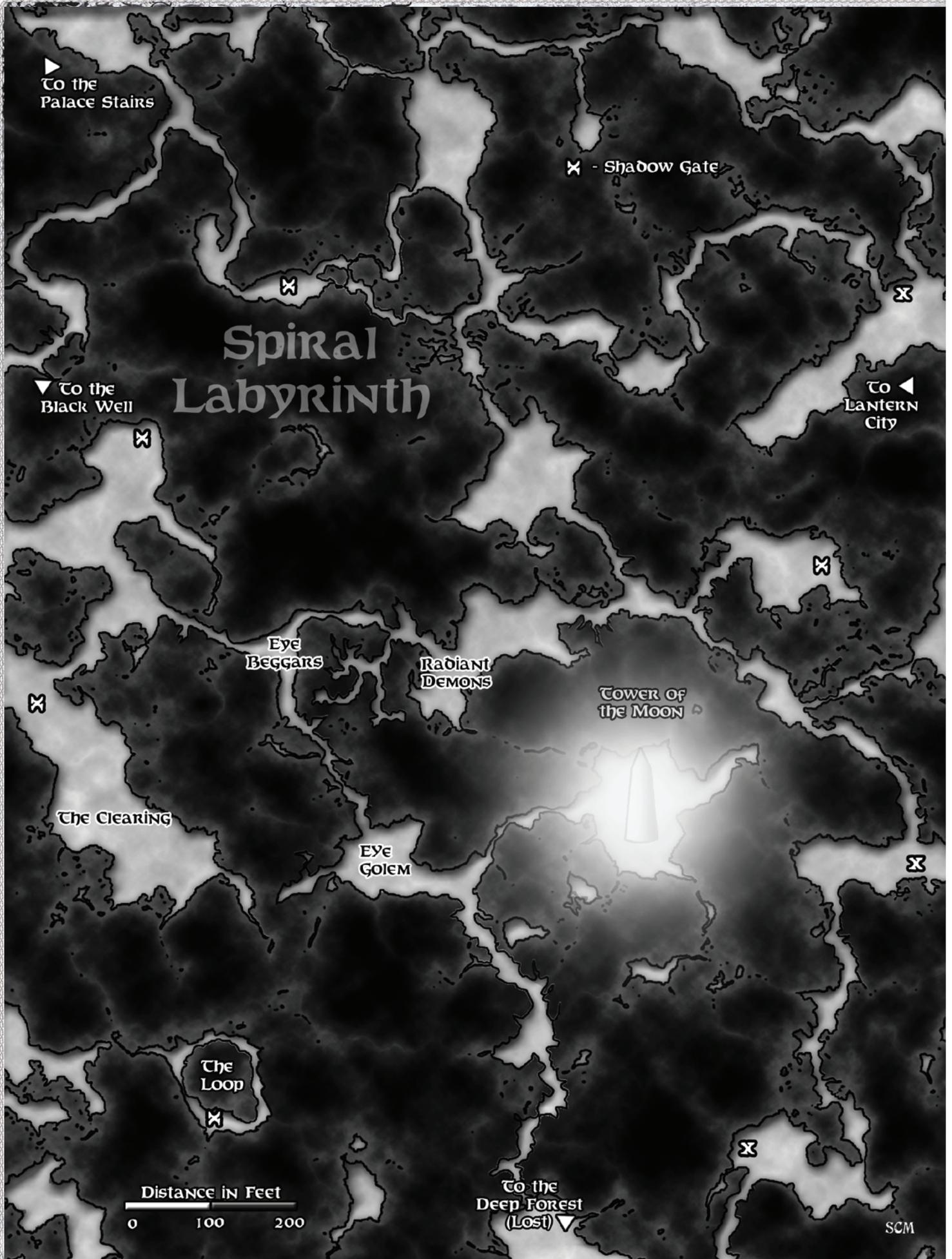
Type magical; **Perception DC 16**; **Disable Device DC 20**

EFFECTS

Trigger When a creature enters or begins its turn in a square of reddish light, the trap activates and attacks that creature and any others in the area; Reset automatic

Effect 50 ft. aura (suggestion, approach brazier); DC 18 Will avoids; multiple targets (target 50 ft. aura)





▶ To the
Palace Stairs

X - Shadow Gate

Spiral Labyrinth

▼ To the
Black Well

▶ To
Lantern
City

Eye
Beggars

Radiant
Demons

Tower of
the Moon

The Clearing

Eye
Golem

The
Loop

Distance in Feet
0 100 200

▼ To the
Deep Forest
(Lost)

SCM

Secondary Effect 50 ft. aura (4d6 fire damage); DC 20 Reflex save for half; multiple targets (target 50 ft. aura)

COUNTERMEASURES

You can attack the brazier (AC 5; hp 65; immune to fire, hardness 10); destroying the brazier disables the trap. Adjacent to the brazier, you can spill the coals with (Survival or Sleight of Hand DC 25), reducing the trap's power and lowering its damage by 1d6 and effect DCs by 2.

SHADOW DEMONS

CR 7 EACH

XP 3,200 EACH

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar, incorporeal)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex)

hp 59 each (7d10+21)

Fort +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities incorporeal; **DR** 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** cold, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, fire 10; **SR** 17

Weaknesses sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +11 touch (1d6 plus 1d6 cold), bite +11 touch (1d8 plus 1d6 cold)

Special Attacks pounce, sprint, shadow blend

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *fear* (DC 18), *greater teleport* (self only), *telekinesis* (DC 19)

3/day—*shadow conjuration* (DC 18), *shadow evocation* (DC 19)

1/day—*magic jar* (DC 19), *summon* (level 3, 1 shadow demon 50%)

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes,

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +14, Fly +22, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +20, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sprint (Ex) Once per minute, a shadow demon increase its fly speed to 240 feet for 1 round.

Shadow Blend (Su) During any conditions other than bright light, a shadow demon can disappear into the shadows as a move-equivalent action, effectively becoming invisible. Artificial illumination or light spells of 2nd level or lower do not negate this ability.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex) A shadow demon is utterly powerless in bright light or natural sunlight and flees from it. A shadow demon caught in such light cannot attack and can take only a single move or standard action. A shadow demon that is possessing a creature using magic jar is not harmed by sunlight, but if it is struck by a sunbeam or sunburst spell while possessing a creature, the shadow demon is driven out of its host automatically.

CONDITIONS IN THE LABYRINTH

The point of the labyrinth is to protect and sequester the king during the winter, and the queen in those rare seasons when the king is ascendant. Entering it requires flight, powerful magic to unlock the wards on the maze, or the use of the key daggers that the queen holds and may give as gifts to worthy visitors (see page 104).

The queen considers other scáthsidhe the biggest threats to her rule, so the labyrinth is built to be most difficult for shadow fey, not for mortal PCs: light-based damage, painfully bright light near the tower, and the need to carry supplies and so forth. The place is a nightmare to the shadow fey, as the tower permits no shadows near it; all of it glows.

Climbing the Walls. The PCs can climb the crumbling, thorny, mossy, or slick walls of the Spiral Maze (Climb DC 25, failure indicates a fall for 2d6 damage). The walls are made of shadowstuff, black wood, bone, crumbling stone, and other materials; they stand about 10 ft. high.

Getting atop the walls doesn't help very much for scouting because of the size of the maze. The climber can see the glow of the King's Tower, but not much on how to get there. Because the "Walls" of the maze are often 50 ft. thick and the passages as much as 20–30 ft. across, it doesn't save much time to climb.

Guides. The party may have fought against the Cockroach Knight during dueling season, and they may have met Akyishigal earlier if they decided they want to explore the palace cellars, plus they'll see him at the Swan Festival (page 75). The knight may show up again as a rival or guide here in the maze—either way, serving the Demon Lord of Roaches to keep an eye on the party.

Resting in the Maze. Resting here is difficult or impossible: the maze's insect swarms, animated hedge creatures, wandering mystic eyeballs, lantern dragonettes, lost children, and crying voices make rest difficult if not impossible. Mist turns to ice, campfires turn to ash, shadows and deathshade wisps howl, and eating food just brings more roaches. Those entering extradimensional spaces, like *rope tricks* or *magnificent mansions*, find the entry way simply loops back into the maze where it opened. A character enters fully and then immediately exits, not realizing the redirection and without interfering with anyone else using the portal.

Development.

- *Demon Lord Appears*—If the party has not met and defeated the Demon Lord of Roaches, he appears here with his roachling servants shortly after the party has rested (or perhaps after they use his hidden treasure cache, see below). He demands that the party cut a deal with him to steal and give him the King's Orb if they succeed in the encounter at the tower.
- *Dragonettes Speak*—If the party succeeds in this encounter without killing a single lantern dragonette, the glowing little dragons speak to the PCs (after spying on the PCs for the entire previous adventure). The little beasts spill all the secrets they know. A generous GM might also use this opportunity to provide information to PCs who have, shall we say, failed to court the courtiers and lack Diplomacy (gather information) skill.

Treasure. While the party digs for treasure, arcane eyes appear in the walls of the maze and can be found in the bottom of the brazier's coals, foreshadowing the danger in the eye golem encounter (see page 117).

If the party knows about the hidden treasure cache from speaking with the roach duelist (see page 87), they can find it easily buried under the hedge where the lantern dragons roost most heavily. If the party wasn't told about the hidden cache of treasure, it requires a Perception check (DC 26) to spot the disturbed earth where it lies buried.

Either way, it takes 1 hour to dig up the treasure from beneath the empty chest marked on the map (half that if the party is carrying a shovel). The treasure itself is very useful later in the maze against the eye golem or the Moonlit King. It is two *potions of cure serious wounds* and an appropriate magic item worth 30,000 gp or less.

The space behind the chest provides a private, tented sanctuary, the only place where the PCs can rest while in the maze. When the tented sanctuary is used once, its magic fades away and cannot be used again until the party leaves the maze.

Scene 3, The Hedge Dryad

The winding path reveals a hedge wall with an arching vine trellis covered in thick and vibrant black-speckled plants. Beyond the archway, a short series of steps lead down into an elaborate hedge maze. The labyrinth gives way to the darker shadows of the tangled ivy that looms overhead and presses down like the closing fist of some leafy titan.

Inside the hedge labyrinth, PCs find twists and turns. Feel free to have them roll Sense Motive, Knowledge (nature), and Perception rolls to navigate the maze and describe their travels, dead ends, and backtracks while creating a sense of tension. Remind them of the urgency of their travel and that there is no time to take an extended rest. Eventually they arrive at the duskthorn dryad's garden.

The maze opens into a wide clearing, contrasted by the imposing height of the hedges. Four gaunt, trollish figures, recognizable as part of a topiary, are frozen midstride, dancing around a great central tree. Dark thorny vines cover the lower trunk of the tree at the core. Its upper trunk stands dead while pale and barren limbs reach into the dusky sky.

The topiary is a pack of trolls that the duskthorn dryad caught and reduced to skeletons. Each is coated with the vines, making it a mindless protector controlled by the magic imbued within the troll hearts kept in a hollow of the dead tree.

The PCs must kill the trolls and the dryad, or simply slay all hearts in the tree, destroying the trolls and sending the dryad fleeing. The hedge closes behind the party as they enter; the apparent opening on the far side of the deadwood tree is an illusion.

Heart of the Deadwood Complex Skill

Challenge

The hearts of the once-troll guardians pulsate within the hollows of the great, ivy-coated tree at the center of the glade. Foul magic flows from the long tendrils and animates the vine-coated skeletons.

Requires: 4 successes before 3 failures. Repeated for each skeleton.

Primary Skills:

- *Acrobatics (DC16); Climb or Sleight of Hand (DC 15)*—You scale the tree to remove a heart from a hollow, severing the connection.
- *Knowledge (arcana) or Heal (DC 21)*—You determine the specific hollows linking a particular vine to an ensorcelled troll heart.
- *Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (nature) (DC 23); Sense Motive (DC 15); Perception (DC 21)*—You realize the umbilical vines grow too quickly to be cut and must be torn out.

Success: With 4 successes, you destroy the troll attuned to a specific heart.

Failure: On a failure, the heart receives a surge of magical essence, and the attuned troll immediately uses its *frenzied strike* power against a valid target as an immediate reaction.

Scene 3, Hedging Bets

- CR 10+—1 duskthorn dryad (does not attack until 2 skeletons are stopped and flees at half hit points)
- CR 11+—1 duskthorn dryad (does not attack until 3 skeletons are stopped and flees at half hit points)
- CR 12+—1 duskthorn dryad (does not attack until 4 skeletons are stopped and flees at half hit points)

DUSKTHORN DRYAD

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female duskthorn dryad sorcerer 12

CG Medium fey

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +25

DEFENSE

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

hp 99 (6d6+12d6+36)

Fort +8, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15

DR 5/cold iron; +4 vs poison and sleep

Weaknesses tree dependent

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +14 (1d4)

Ranged masterwork longbow +15 (1d8)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL12th; concentration +21)

At will—*massmorph* (diminish plants or plant growth)

12/day—*tanglevine*

1/day—*massmorph*: tree shape one willing creature

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

Constant—*speak with plants*

At will—*entangle* (DC 18), *tree shape*, *wood shape* (1 lb. only)

3/day—*charm person* (DC 18), *deep slumber* (DC 20), *tree stride*

1/day—*suggestion* (DC 20)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 12th; concentration +21, touch +14)

6th (3)—*contagious flame**

5th (6)—*suffocation** (DC 24), *wall of thorns* (DC 24), *waves of fatigue* (DC 24)

4th (6)—*acid pit** (DC 23), *command plants* (DC 21), *solid fog*
3rd (7)—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *greater invisibility*, *haste*, *vampiric touch*, *speak with plants*

2nd (7)—*barkskin*, *false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 21), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *web* (DC 21)

1st (8)—*endure elements*, *entangle* (DC 18), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 20)

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 19)

* From the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

Bloodline verdant

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 24

Base Atk +9; CMB +9; CMD 24

Feats Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (conjuration), Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature]), Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Focus (necromancy), Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +9, Craft (sculpture) +11, Escape Artist +30, Handle Animal +11, Knowledge (nature) +25, Perception +25, Stealth +30, Survival +11; **Racial Modifiers** +6 Craft (woodworking)

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan; *speak with plants*

SQ bloodline arcana, tree meld, wild empathy, woodcraft

Gear +4 *headband of alluring Charisma*, 1500 gp worth of ruby dust

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bloodline Arcana Whenever a duskthorn dryad casts a spell with a range of "personal", her skin toughens, granting a natural armor bonus equal to the spell's level for 1d4 rounds. This bonus does not stack with any other natural armor bonuses you might have.

Tree Dependent (Su) A dryad is mystically bonded to a single, enormous tree and must never stray more than 300 yards from it. Most dryad trees are oak trees, but other trees function as well (often having subtle influences on a specific dryad's personality and appearance). A dryad who moves 300 yards beyond her bonded tree immediately becomes sickened. Every hour thereafter, she must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to resist becoming nauseated for an hour. A dryad that is out of range of her bonded tree for 24 hours takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage, and another 1d6 points of Constitution damage every day that follows—eventually, this separation kills the dryad. A dryad can forge a new bond with a new tree by performing a 24-hour ritual and making a successful DC 20 Will save.

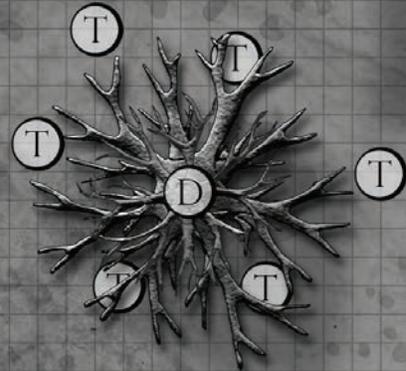
Tree Meld (Su) A dryad can meld with any tree, similar to how the spell meld into stone functions. She can remain melded with a tree as long as she wishes.

Wild Empathy (Su) This works like the druid's wild empathy class feature, except the dryad has a +6 racial bonus on the check. Dryads with druid levels add this racial modifier to their wild empathy checks.

HEDGE MAZE

1 SQUARE = 5 FT.

PCS
START
HERE



T - Trolls
D - Duskthorn

Woodcraft (Ex) A dryad has a +6 racial bonus to Craft checks involving wood, and is always treated as if she had masterwork artisan's woodworking tools when making such checks.

VINE TROLL SKELETONS

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Large plant

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

hp 150 (12d8+96); regeneration 15 (acid)

Fort +17, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

Immunities plant traits, **DR** 10/bludgeoning

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +16 (1d8+8), 2 claws +14 (1d6+8)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d6+16)

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** 28, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 32

Tactics. The duskthorn dryad stays close to the central tree unless the adventurers bypass its defenders, then she *tree strides* away, attempting to escape. She uses her *wall of thorns* and *entangle* spells to force enemies through her *acid pit* while attempting to stay close to her allies, granting them the benefit of her other spells.

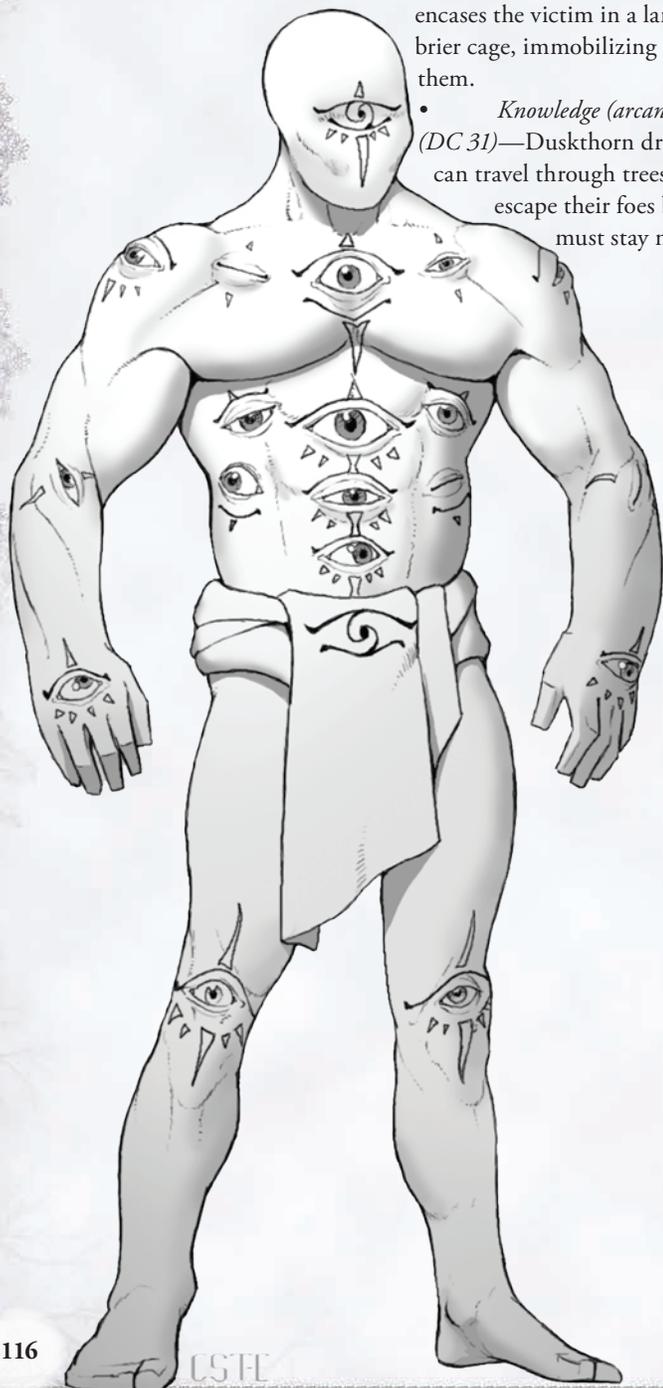
Duskthorn Lore

- *Knowledge (arcana)* (DC 21)—Duskthorn dryads are fey spirits tied to thorn bearing creeper vines. They seek out dead trees and make a home for their vines on the trees trunk. They are found in fey and shadowrealms, able to travel between them with ease.

- *Knowledge (arcana)* (DC 26)—Duskthorn dryads use the plants in their glades to attack intruders. The ground itself sprouts thorns around the dryad, as do any plant allies nearby. Their deadliest attack

encases the victim in a large brier cage, immobilizing them.

- *Knowledge (arcana)* (DC 31)—Duskthorn dryads can travel through trees to escape their foes but must stay near



their vines. They often create defenders out of skeletons. These skeletons defend the tree and are controlled by hearts within tree.

Skeleton Vine Trolls Lore

- *Knowledge (arcana)* or *Knowledge (nature)* (DC 27)—Vine troll skeletons guard duskthorn dryad glades. Their vines regenerate quickly, even after they “die.” Their powerful regeneration allows vine trolls to reattach severed skeletal limbs. Only fire or acid destroy these skeletons and render the living vines harmless.

- *Knowledge (arcana)* or *Knowledge (nature)* (DC 32)—Vine troll skeletons are direct offshoots of the main vine wrapped around the duskthorn dryad’s tree. Magically enchanted troll hearts inside the main tree provide their power. They stay within range of the glade and feed on the rotting flesh.

- *Knowledge (arcana)* or *Knowledge (nature)* (DC 37)—Vine trolls are mindless aside from a desire to defend their parent tree. They usually attack the closest creature. Slaying the heart at the center of the tree kills the skeleton bound to that heart.

Development. As the last troll dies, the dryad fades into the ground along with all the surrounding vines. The way out is suddenly exposed. An exit appears in the shadowy core of the tree itself, a passage leading down and out!

Treasure. Within the space beneath the fallen tree are revealed a brazier of solid, carved red gemstone (7,500 gp), and 1,000 gp in coins of the Shadow Realm.

Scene 4, Lost Children and Eyeless Beggars

This is a two-part encounter with a blinded mother and daughter lost in the maze. It foreshadows the arrival of the eye golem. These unfortunates have gained blindsight from their years in the maze, yet they are cursed never to find one another.

Perception (DC 18)—You hear a woman’s voice up ahead, speaking Elven. She seems to be weeping or distressed, calling out “I hear you little one! I’m not far away.”

Let the PCs make whatever preparations they like. If these take longer than 2 rounds, read the following:

A bedraggled woman wearing layers of rags stumbles out of one of the maze’s side passages; her hands trail along the right-hand side of the hedges, and her eyes are entirely missing. “Who’s there?” she says.

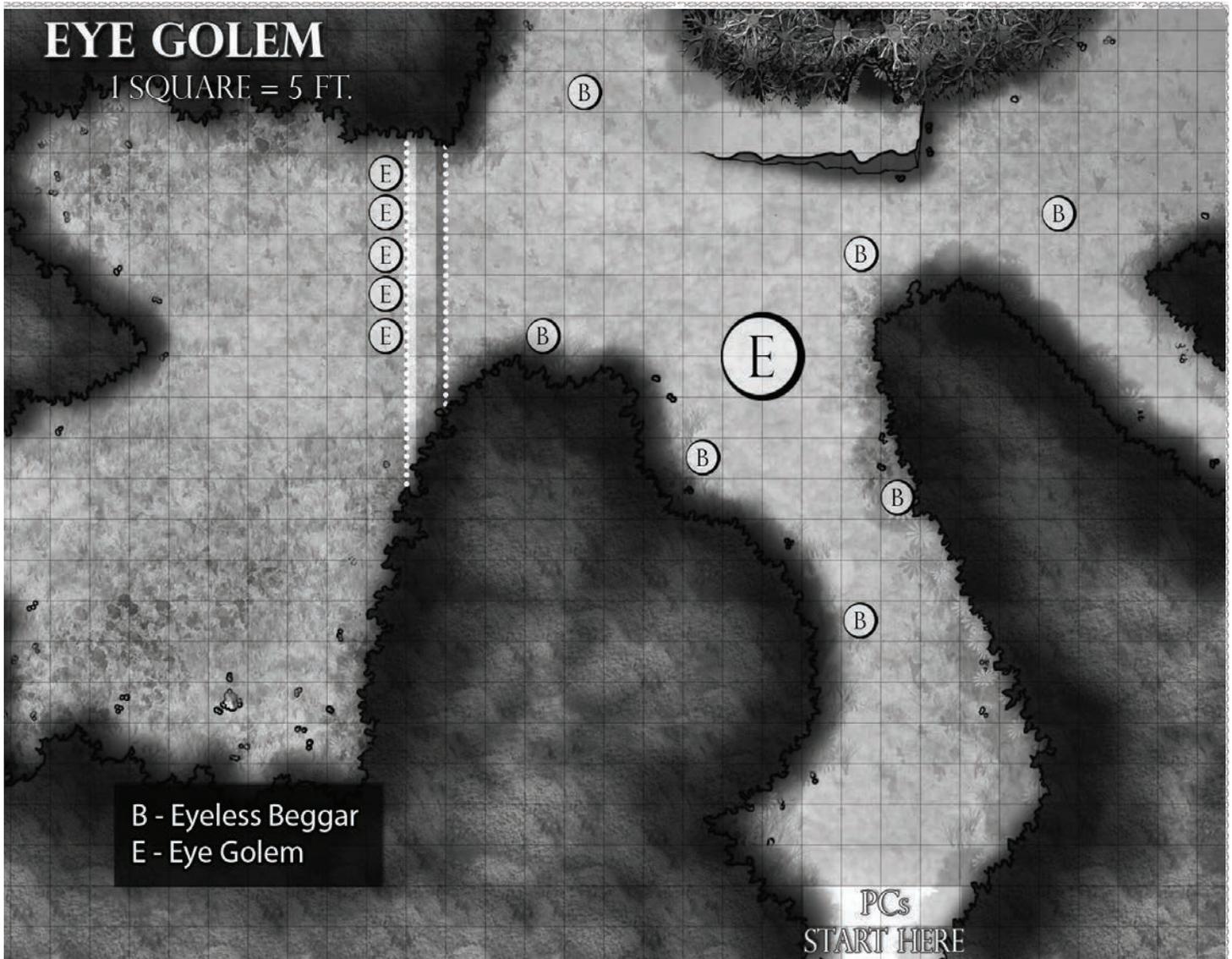
The woman’s name is Ardevallissen Thiemoire, and she has lost her eyes to “a monster” and also lost her daughter, a girl named Helliboshe Thiemoire. The two are both lost and blind, and they seek each other despite knowing a curse keeps them apart.

The Price. To help mother and child find one another, the party must perform the *Incantation of Reunion*, which requires slaying the eye golem and using its largest eye as a component of the *Incantation* (a *Knowledge (arcana)* DC 22 is all that is required for success). This eye is a potentially valuable treasure, however (see page 118 for value and details of this eye).

Alternately, the price could be more personal and dangerous to the adventurers. If the PCs sacrifice a 15% of the hit points each and become fatigued, the mother can cast an *Incantation of Finding* that restores the two to each other. Given the lack of opportunities for rest in the maze, this may not be a price the party is willing to pay.

EYE GOLEM

1 SQUARE = 5 FT.



B - Eyeless Beggar
E - Eye Golem

PCs
START HERE

Development. If the PCs ignore the Thimoire's plight, they may meet other eyeless beggars thrown into the maze to suffer: famous shadow fey duelist Dax the Hook-Handed, brownie painter Sollerveg Toma, drow duchess Ioirachne who refused the Black Prince's advances, the innocent and guilty alike. All are eyeless, pale, and terrified; all fear to blame the king and queen for their suffering although they might confess their "crimes" (Intimidate DC 18). There are 16 such beggars who serve the eye golem in exchange for protection from other creatures in the spiral maze, most of which stay close to the golem.

The mother Ardevallissen is a disgraced noble who does not serve the golem; instead, she is under a curse that protects her but prevents her from ever finding her lost child. She begs the PCs to help her find her child, or failing that, to retrieve her eyes from this giant. Ardevallissen claims the giant serves as the ever-watchful bodyguard for the Moonlit King (and she's right, though the creature is older than that).

Treasure. Ardevallissen knows things from her long wanderings in the maze. She shares her most valuable information if the party helps her by recovering her eyes from the golem as outlined above.

She knows that the Moonlit King is either partially or wholly mad and that all those who visit him are likewise mad: this is why his servants are often enormously powerful derro, who thrive on madness, or demons and elementals, who seem likewise to suffer no ill effects of the king's presence. For the fey and others, she knows, the secret is the

application of a simple binding charm involving the use of holly and a firebird's feather (500 gp). This charm grants a +4 bonus to saving throws against the king's madness aura (see **Tower of the Moon** section, page 119).

Scene 5, *The Eyes and the Darkness*

The labyrinth is a trap for the enemies of the Blood Royal, and fey are not infrequently banished to the maze for a time. Most of the fey survive their punishment, but much darker and more dangerous things are banished here permanently. Things from long, long ago, things that even the fey want kept out of sight.

One of these is the eye golem, a creature strengthened by absorbing the eyeballs plucked from those who have displeased the queen.

The maze opens up into a clearing with a ramp up to the top of the walls. Scattered around the area are several shadow fey, goblins, and elves, all dressed in rags and all missing their eyes.

Behind them stands a creature, a giant of great muscle and marble-white skin that almost glows in the light of the tower. It stands at least ten feet tall, and its skin is covered with real eyes as well as tattoos of arcane sigils that resemble eyes. The 117

eyes and the tattoos of eyes all open at once and turn to you, and the eyeless beggars scream and flee.

Features of the Area

- **Glass Wall**—The force field to one side of the clearing prevents creatures from entering the grounds of the Tower of the Moon. Five floating eyes on the far side appear to be monsters ready to attack the party; these are mere illusions. The glass wall can be opened in several ways: by a *passwall* spell, by the sacrifice of the eye golem's largest eye, or by the sacrifice of 15% HP/creature passing through the barrier. Attempts to bypass the glass wall may attract the attention of 2 shadow demons (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*), at the GM's discretion. They may be especially helpful if the party is not yet level 10 when they arrive at the tower.
- **Ramp**—The ramp up is standard terrain and reaches a height of 20 ft., enough to reach the cave entrance which is (strangely enough, and counter to most geography) at the top of a small hill. The cave itself is filled with a number of banished fey and angels, all of them quite dangerous (see **Development**, below, if they are freed).

Scene 5, Eyes in the Dark

- CR 10—1 eye golem
- CR 11—1 eye golem, 1 shadow demon
- CR 12—1 advanced eye golem (add +2 on all rolls (including damage rolls) and special ability DCs; +4 to AC and CMD; +2 hp/HD), 2 shadow demons

EYE GOLEM

CR 10

A muscular giant, well proportioned and with smooth marble-white skin, stands alert, its skin covered with eye-like sigils. One of the eyes opens for a moment, and a beam as bright as the sun shines forth, piercing the night.

XP 9,600

N Large construct

Init +8; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +26

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+4 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 112 (15d10+30)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10

DR 10/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, fire, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +22 (1d8+7/19-20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks gaze of ancient light, primal voice of doom

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 9, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 37

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Blinding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (slams), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Perception +26, Sense Motive +10; Racial Modifiers

Languages Common

SQ piercing sight, shoot into the sun

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Gaze of Ancient Light (Ex) As a standard action, the golem can make a gaze attack, affecting all opponents within 30 ft. These targets must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or be permanently blinded. Targets that successfully save are dazzled.

Immunity to Magic (Su) An eye golem is immune to spells and spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance. Certain spells and effects function differently against it, as noted below.

A *darkness* or *continual darkness* spell cast directly upon an eye golem causes blindness for 1d6 rounds. *Deeper darkness* affects the golem like a *slow* spell for 2d6 rounds (no save).

A magical attack that uses any kind of radiance or light (such as *light*, *prismatic spray*, and even fire spells, such as *fireball* or *scorching ray*) breaks any blindness or slow effect on the golem and deals no damage: the golem heals 1 point for every 2 damage the attack might otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full hp, it gains any excess as temporary hp. An eye golem is allowed no saving throw against attacks that deal light or radiant damage.

Piercing Sight (Su) An eye golem takes no penalties to attack rolls from concealment or cover and benefits from a constant *see invisibility* effect with a range of 120 ft. When faced with illusions, it automatically gets a save to discern them as unreal. This saving throw receives a +4 bonus to reveal the illusion.

Primal Voice of Doom (Su) The golem intones a disturbing invocation of the sun god. Targets within a 30 ft. burst are affected as with a *fear* spell (DC 19). Deaf or unhearing creatures are unaffected by this effect.

Shoot into the Sun (Su) When roused for combat, the golem opens several of its many eyes, emitting blinding light. This standard action grants it partial concealment (20% miss chance) and persists as long as the eye golem desires, up to 1 minute.

Sun God's Hands (Su) As a standard action, the golem can shoot mighty sunray bolts from its hands to a maximum range of 90 ft. Targets struck take 6d6 damage and must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or be permanently blinded. Targets that successfully save are instead dazzled.

The eye golem is a giant creature of great muscle and marble-white skin that almost glows in dim light. It stands at least 10 ft. tall, and its magically durable hide is covered with real eyes as well as arcane sigils that resemble eyes.

An eye golem rarely kills its victims but, instead, steals their eyes once they are on the verge of death. The victims become permanently blind, wandering and tormented, seeing only visions of the eye golem flashing through their memory. This drives some mad while others

instead choose to serve the golem, becoming devoted to the one who still holds sight.

SHADOW DEMONS**CR 7 EACH**

XP 3,200 EACH

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar, incorporeal)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex)**hp** 59 each (7d10+21)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal; **DR** 10/cold iron or good;**Immune** cold, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, fire 10;**SR** 17**Weaknesses** sunlight powerlessness**OFFENSE****Speed** fly 40 ft. (perfect)**Melee** 2 claws +11 touch (1d6 plus 1d6 cold), bite +11 touch (1d8 plus 1d6 cold)**Special Attacks** pounce, sprint, shadow blend**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th)At will—*deeper darkness*, *fear* (DC 18), *greater teleport* (self only), *telekinesis* (DC 19)3/day—*shadow conjuration* (DC 18), *shadow evocation* (DC 19)1/day—*magic jar* (DC 19), *summon* (level 3, 1 shadow demon 50%)**STATISTICS****Str** —, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 19**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25**Feats** Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes,**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Bluff +14, Fly +22, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +20, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception**Languages** Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Sprint (Ex)** Once per minute, a shadow demon increase its fly speed to 240 feet for 1 round.**Shadow Blend (Su)** During any conditions other than bright light, a shadow demon can disappear into the shadows as a move-equivalent action, effectively becoming invisible. Artificial illumination or light spells of 2nd level or lower do not negate this ability.**Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex)** A shadow demon is utterly powerless in bright light or natural sunlight and flees from it. A shadow demon caught in such light cannot attack and can take only a single move or standard action. A shadow demon that is possessing a creature using magic jar is not harmed by sunlight, but if it is struck by a sunbeam or sunburst spell while possessing a creature, the shadow demon is driven out of its host automatically.

Development: *The Golem's Death Scene.* When killed, the eye golem does not simply fall down dead. All its eyes open at once, releasing a scream heard for miles and a burst of light that blots out everything around. When the light and noise stop, the dazed PCs see hundreds of perfectly preserved eyeballs on the ground all around them. Stepping normally squelches them underfoot. Stepping

carefully (Acrobatics DC 15) allows a PC to avoid them. The eyes are still warm and fresh, without scars or damage that one might expect (Heal DC 16).

If examined closely (Perception DC 18), a PC may notice that some of the eye golem's eyes are clearly those of fey at the court. In particular, Lord Suvud's missing eye is one of them, and he would be most pleased to have it returned. If the party examines the eye golem's many eyes carefully (Knowledge (arcana) DC 25 or Sense Motive DC 29), they may find that many of them seem to have a thin, flickering beam of arcane energy connecting them to their owners. In this way, they can return twelve such eyes to grateful fey; doing so is a minor quest.

Creatures in the Golem's Cavern. The fey and their eye golem servant have imprisoned many fey and celestial creatures in a horrible, lightless, dreamless, merciless, and pitiful hole found at the end of the ramp in the eye golem encounter. The voices within are begging and pitiful—but unlike the eyeless beggars, these creatures all speak Supernal.

The angelic-voiced creatures so desperate for freedom have long gone mad, and if released, they may attack their tormentors (Intimidate DC 25 avoids, they have been abused into a truly pitiful state); use the statistics for the angel Revich on page 63. They are easily cowed because the fey enjoy pretending to be helpful adventurers, letting an archon or two loose and then stuffing them back into the Night without End. The black hole they are within is magically warded (Knowledge (arcana) DC 28 or Disable Device DC 28 opens the wards).

If the PCs do let the creatures out, they see them as a mix of wingless angels and demented devils, forced to dwell together in too little space. The fey pulled the wings off these creatures to beat them with, leaving them with perpetually bloody stumps. The wings may be found in the tower's upper floor and restored with healing magic.

The eye golem's treasure is within the cave. The angels, archons, fey, and devils are more than happy to trade this wealth for their freedom but not without it.

Treasure. The eye golem's various tattoos and eyeballs become 120 pp, each coin marked with an eye, when the creature dies.

The large eye in the golem's center may be the eye of a primordial or titan of ancient days, and that creature may come looking for that eye when the golem is slain. Depending on the GM's story threads at this point, the eye can act as a crystal ball or can power the ritual to restore sight to the eyeless beggars (see page 116).

Scene 6, The Tower of the Moon

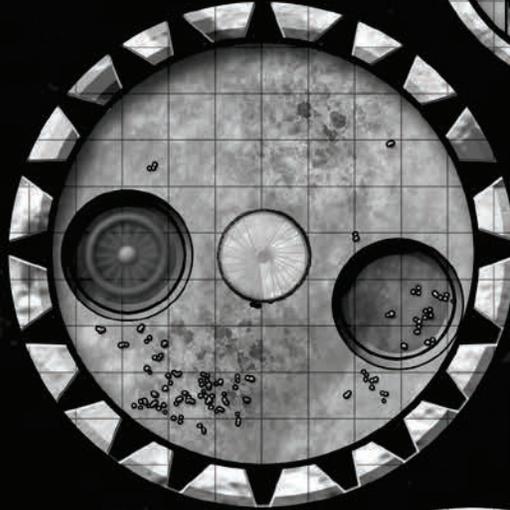
The party begins this encounter outside the tower. It goes by several names, including the Tower of Lost Hopes, the Tower of the Moonlit King (or Tower of the Queen, in season), the Shadow Source, and the Tower of Radiant Death.

The encounter proceeds from outside the door to the entryway, then to the Stairway of Radiant Beams, and finally into the Lunar Audience Chamber. Each section has its own challenges, but lingering in a section draws the attention of Revich from atop the tower. He may urge the party on if they dawdle.

Features of the Area

Illumination—The light from the Tower of the Moon is so bright that it hurts to stare at it. Its piercing light inflicts great

TOWER OF THE MOON



1 SQUARE = 5 FT.

SCM

pain to light-sensitive creatures making it a very safe place to keep things away from the shadow fey. Creatures with the light sensitivity weakness, like most shadow fey, take 5 hp of damage per round when within 30 ft. of the Tower.

Meeting the Moonlit King

Former monarch of the Moonlit Court, exiled here by the queen, the king is fading into a ghost, a psychic impression of his former self. The king is far enough gone, however, that he doesn't know that. Shades and fetches of his retinue attend him in the form of moonlight devils and talking shadows, and he still believes it is possible to reclaim the throne. His physical servant is a mad derro giant, huge and insane and willing to cater to its master's every whim.

The king is mad and talks to the PCs to "enlist" them in his cause. To lure them close he promises secrets and rewards, perhaps even a way out of the labyrinth, none of which he can or intends to fulfill.

But while the king is mad, he's mad in a very particular way. The party can hold a conversation with him, but he's not always part of the same conversation they hear. Sometimes, the Moonlit King doesn't address the PCs directly at all but talks to ghosts and even to his sentient shadow.

This shadow, it should be noted, might be his strongest vestige and animating power. It is strong enough that it can survive his death—his shadow is stronger than he is.

The PCs probably have no idea what they are getting into, though lucky ones will figure it out fairly quickly.

Lunar Audience Chamber

By stealth or strength of arms, when the PCs reach the heavily guarded Tower of the Moon, they soon discover the Moonlit King is mad mad mad.

The interior of the tower is filled with two piles of rubble, a handful of moonbeams, and a bright glowing staircase of blue light. In the back, in shadows, is a throne of pale greenish stone.

The figure on the throne resembles a shadow fey, if a shadow fey were half-transparent, with wild blue hair like a derro savant and grayish-green armor. His limbs are sometimes entirely ghostly and transparent, at other times solid and gray as stone.

An enormous creature stands next to him, a servant or bodyguard of some kind, a hunchbacked giant with the heavy proportions and flowing beard of a crazed dwarf.

The king speaks. "I am the ancient spirit doomed for long aeons to walk this maze, and each day to be chained fast in a dozen tiny fires till the crimes done in my sighted days are purged and burnt away. Have you come to free me?"

Let the PCs respond.

- *Passive Perception* (DC 28)—Some sort of devils are hiding among the moonbeams and strange shadows in the tower. They look like the ghosts of toads or crocodiles—something inhuman.
- *Sense Motive* (DC 18)—The king's stare is odd, and he seems to only half-hear you. There's something wrong with him.

If the party keeps talking, the king enjoys their company but makes it plain he will not truly bargain for Zobeck's release from the fey

unless bribed. Read or paraphrase the following, using as much of the archaic speech as you find useful:

The king's head lolls back, and he pulls a bluish-grey orb out from beneath his short cloak. "Listen, O Crescents, these petitioners have come to give me speech and seek my counsel. Yet I am no scáthsidhe easily bought. What have they brought? What tribute do you render unto me, my shadow, say now, and tell it to mine ear?"

He motions his lumbering servant forward to the glass wall, and waits, expectantly.

- *Diplomacy* (DC 21)—His majesty expects an offering, or bribe, as is customary among the nobility.
- *Sense Motive* (DC 21)—The king mostly likely would accept magic, possibly something more personal, a sign from the queen or proof of a rival's death.

The audience ends unless the PCs can convince the king to speak with them with an offering. Acceptable items include anything the GM likes or those that play into the PCs' previous actions:

- the head of the Demon Lord of Roaches
- a mass of gold or jewels (25,000 gp or more)
- a magical item of 30,000 gp value or better
- a lock of the queen's hair or a memory of hers in physical form
- the complete set of key daggers (see page 104)

Without a bribe to draw his interest, the king continues his conversations but less and less with the PCs. Instead, he speaks more and more to the hulking derro giant and to his invisible shades and servants, barely visible ghosts and tattered spirits. He is behind his wall and content to babble and wait the party out.

Note to GM. To show the king's madness and make it completely obvious, turn away from your players and address a wall or ceiling occasionally. This may be amusing if you have the king ask for impossible things—"fetch me two cups of girlish laughter." It may become very creepy and unsettling if he asks for horrible things—"I demand that you excise my petitioner's conscience, and then his childhood." Make it clear that the king at least thinks he can crush them like bugs—"Where are my boots for crushing mortal hopes? Polish them! Get them on my feet you worthless shade!"

The Tower Proper

The Tower of the Moon is ancient and the outer walls literally resemble the moon; with both glowing light and darker sections, areas that resemble lunar craters and seas. Big holes shatter its walls halfway up, a small balcony perches almost all the way up, and the slate roof is topped by a statue or weathervane.

Beyond the blue glass door is an enormous chamber dominated by a pale grey-blue set of stairs, as if smoke had taken a spiral form and were climbing up. On either side of the stairs are piles of stone rubble, and the enormous oak and iron circle of a wheel fully 10 ft. across lies across the bottom of the stairs. A chain dangles down to the oak wheel from above.

A wall of moonlight divides the room behind the stairs from the front; this wall of force protects the occupant of the blue throne against ranged or

other attacks. Bloodstains or green splatters mark the floor around the throne.

- *Perception (DC 22)*—Something shadowy sits on the throne. See *The Lunar Orb of Rule* for details (page 124) of the wall of moonlight.

The Radiant Stairway. The stairs in the center of the tower glow with bluish light, and they are transparent. The king or the person holding *the Lunar Orb of Rule* (see page 124) can turn the stairs on or off each round as a swift action. When they are on, they act normally. When turned off, the stairs disappear and creatures on them plummet to earth normally. The Moonlit King tends to fly up to the top and use the Radiant Stairway to allow his derro ravagers to

climb up to him since he considers them his valets. He's also willing to let his ravagers plummet if it takes his enemies down as well.

Creatures falling through an interior level of the tower can grab hold of the beams or edges of the floor and arrest their fall (Acrobatics DC 18). Failure to grab it means an additional 1d10 damage from the impact of the wall or floor against an arm or leg, plus falling damage.

The First Floor. Two holes look down to the ground floor, and the smoky bluish spiral stairs continue up although they are paler here than below. The chain comes up through the western hole and continues up.

The Charred Beams & Hoist. A dangerous floor that seems solid at first:

This burnt-out floor is a strange one: two enormous holes mar the outer walls and a layer of bluish smoke stops just over the charred remains of many floor beams, creating a sort of arcane floor. Two of the charred beams still run all the way from one side of the tower to the other. One is near a block-and-tackle hoist that connects a heavy chain to the bottom floor.

Knowledge (arcana) (DC 18)—The smoke is magical, but won't hold weight.

Knowledge (dungeoneering) (DC 21)—The charred beams will fall apart pretty soon. Don't count on them for long!

The floor holds very little weight (Acrobatics DC 23 when walking on the beams or fall to the floor below 100 ft. down). The floor collapses in round 3 of combat or when a third creature steps onto a beam.

The Upper Level. The spiral stairs become quite spongy underfoot by this point. Two open doorways lead out to the balcony and balustrade.

The Balustrade. Fully 130 ft. above ground level, the 6-ft.-wide balcony has a simple marble wall, about 2 ft. high. Exterior stairs go up to the battlements and rooftop.

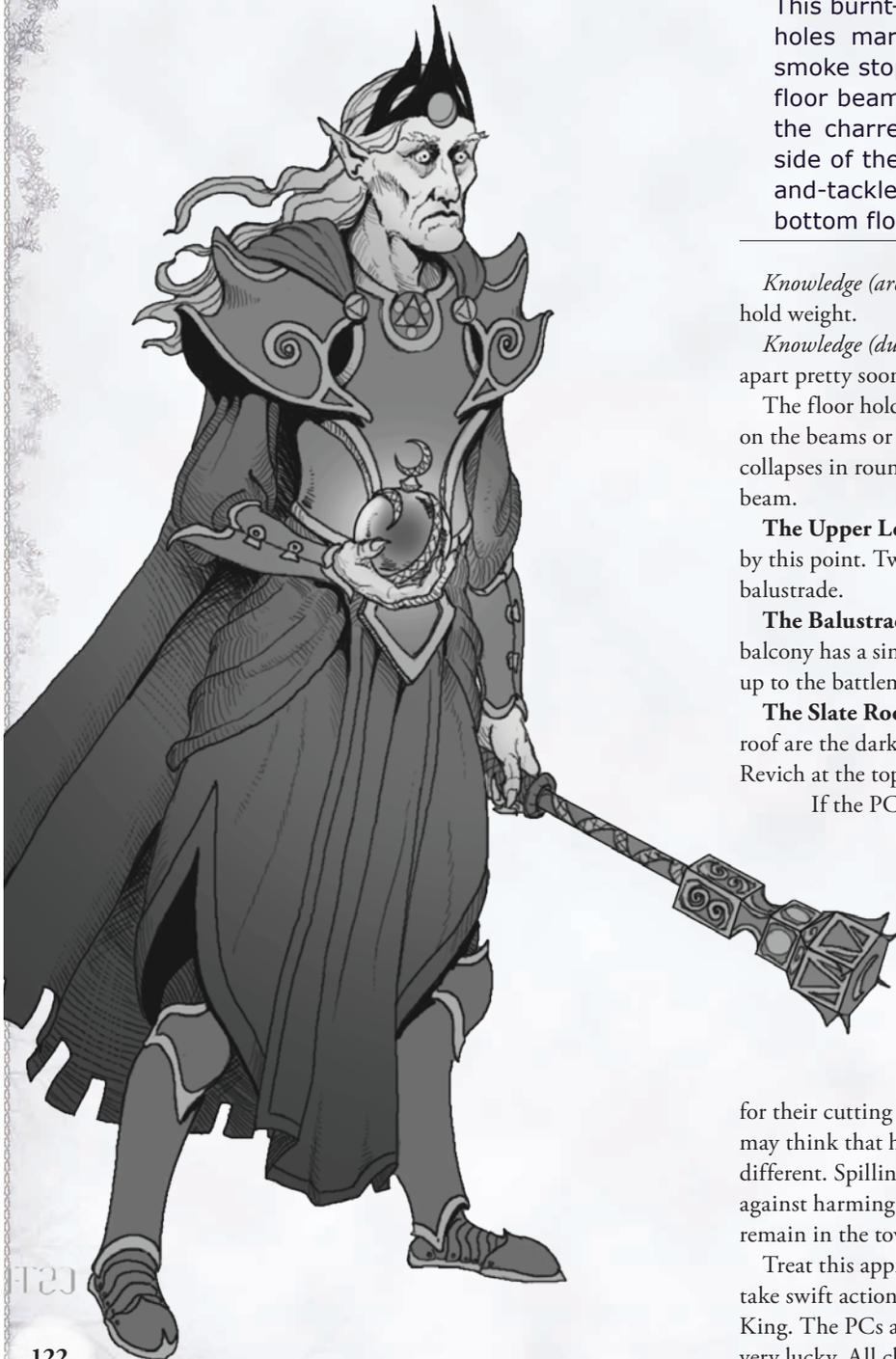
The Slate Roof and Angel. The battlements and the 35-ft., slate roof are the darkest part of the tower although the blindfolded angel Revich at the top glows with a pure warm light.

If the PCs befriended him in the Lords of Light encounter, he may assist each member of the Lords of Light faction by healing them for up to 50 hp each and with a divination and warning of their fate (treat the next critical hit against the PC as normal instead).

The King's Madness

The King offers what the PCs want, the relinquishing of the claim to Zobeck, in exchange for their cutting him and spilling his blood in the Tower. The PCs may think that he is a Joker-style masochist, but the truth is slightly different. Spilling the king's blood breaks an ancient prohibition against harming the king and frees him from his sworn oath to remain in the tower—and it even helps relieve his madness.

Treat this approach as a modified complex skill check; PCs can take swift actions to gain successes in a race condition against the King. The PCs are preordained to fail this challenge unless they are very lucky. All checks for this challenge are meant to be very difficult.



Trust and Mind Complex Skill Check

The king asks a lot of questions that the PCs likely don't know answers to, such as:

- “How long has my bride ruled the realm?” (Knowledge (history) DC 28, “100 years or more, Your Majesty.”)
- “Who brought this madness upon me?” (Diplomacy DC 30, “the Demon Lord of Roaches did, Your Majesty.”)
- “Who sent you here?” (Sense Motive DC 29, “The queen worries for your continued health, and sent us to you for reasons of state.”)
- “Where is my daughter?” (Diplomacy (gather information) DC 30, “She abides far from the realm of shadows, in the forests of Midgard.”)
- “How has the queen ensorcelled me?” (Knowledge (arcana) DC 28, “She uses the light of the firebird to weave the chains that bind your mind, Your Majesty.”)

If the characters actually know the answers, they may speak them to avoid rolling and acquire a success. Each time the PCs answer incorrectly, the king shouts the following in order:

1. “You offer me trifles! You know nothing! Lord Stross, I compel you to attend me.”
2. “Wrong again! You must be traitors sent against me! Master Quickstep, I compel you to attend me.”
3. And finally “What you say is not possible, you are false ghosts sent to torment me. Archduke Bonerattler, I compel you to destroy them!”

With each failure, he also summons another moonlight devil to fight the party.

Requires: 8 successes before 3 failures.

Primary Skills:

- *Acrobatics, Climb, Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (religion), Survival* (DC 28)—Quite likely to result in neither a success nor a failure, depending on how they are used.
- *Bluff* (DC 26, limit 1 success)—The king is surrounded by treachery and is a raving paranoid (with reason). Bluffs won't work well, or at least not often.
- *Diplomacy* (DC 25 +3/additional attempt)—The king has no patience for etiquette and no tolerance for protocol. He wants answers, not niceties.
- *Diplomacy (gather information)* (DC 25)—Complex understanding of current events is just as important as historical ones. What the king wants is a long list of everyone who has betrayed him or stayed loyal, so his vengeance can be swift and complete. He'll want that list down to the goblin servant level.
- *Heal* (DC 20 +3/additional attempt)—The king can be healed, but it's quite difficult to cure a patient who trusts no one near him and suspects treachery from every touch.
- *Intimidate* (DC 26, limit 1 success)—Only threats that involve the queen's power really draw the king's attention.
- *Knowledge (arcana)* (DC 28)—The forms of the magic used against the king, and how to counter them, might be of interest. They are, however, epic-level magic that a PC will have trouble explaining briefly... and the king has little patience.
- *Knowledge (history)* (DC 24 +3/additional attempt)—Deep knowledge of the court's century-long power struggle is required. Few mortals know so much about the shadow fey.
- *Sense Motive* (DC 20 +3/additional attempt)—Who can understand the whims of a mad and wounded monarch? Seeing his love for the queen and his fear for the realm clearly wins his



trust, which is crucial. Misunderstanding his fears may only stoke them further.

Success. The king finds that he is angrier at the queen and her treachery that has kept him half-mad than he is at the PCs. However, all hell breaks loose as he rallies the eye golem to his side (if it is dead, he rebuilds it in an eye blink) along with the shades of many dead and ancient fey and shadow demons from all over the maze and goes to seize power from the court—unless the PCs get in his way.

Failure. Combat continues but with additional moonlight devils on the king's side.

Combat with the King

*even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
—Psalms 139:12*

If the challenge fails or the PCs do not even try to bargain, combat ensues in a more traditional way.

The Moonlit King is a glass demon, a translucent creature of light and hardened glass, but stays behind a wall of force with his lunar devil and his attendant shadow demon.

Scene 6, Combat with the King

- CR 12—The Moonlight King.
- CR 13—The Moonlight King, 1 lunar devil.

THE LUNAR ORB OF RULE

The Orb of the Moon is a glowing bluish-grey orb that always reflects the phase of the moon; black at new moon, glowing on its entire surface at the full moon.

This ornate orb harnesses the power of the moonlight, giving its wielder significant power. In combat the Orb can be commanded to take the form of a +3 *brilliant energy heavy flail* as a free action. The Orb also gives its wielder access to the following spells as a staff would, except that the wielder uses their full hit die as their caster level and can use the spells whether they are a spellcaster or not.

Immune spells with Light or Shadow descriptors as an immediate action

Spell-like Abilities

At will—empowered *magic missile*

3/day—*resilient sphere*, *wall of force*

1/day for 1 hour—*shapechange* (bat (gain darkvision and fly 30 ft.), owl (gain low-light vision and fly 40 ft.), black wolf (gain speed 40 ft.), or black panther)

- CR 14—The Moonlight King, 1 eye golem, 1 lunar devil, 1 shadow demon

Features of the Area

- *Moonbeams*—The tower is filled with 4 moonbeams, shafts of pure lunar light inside the walls that empower and strengthen the king's magic. So long as he stands within them, he can use his *madness* aura is active. When he is outside a moonbeam, the aura is inactive. The moonbeams are mobile terrain; they are 2 squares by 2 squares, and they begin in the squares immediately adjacent to the King. The King can move all four moonbeams 1 square/turn as swift action. Likewise, PCs with light-based spells memorized can take a move or swift action each turn to move a moonbeam 1 square; a character with a shadow spells can quench a moonbeam entirely with a successful caster level check (adding the level of the spell to the roll) (DC 25).
- *Knowledge (arcana)* (DC 20)—Creatures with light based spells can probably move or control the beams of light.
- *Knowledge (arcana)* (DC 25)—Creatures with shadow based spells can probably quench the moonbeams.

THE MOONLIGHT KING

CR 12

XP 19,200

NG Medium outsider (devil, extraplanar, evil, lawful)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +26

Aura madness 30 ft.

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 24 (+4 Dex, +14 natural; +4 deflection vs. good)

hp 150 (11d10+90)

Fort +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9(+13 vs. good)

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/good; **Immune** fire, cold, poison; **Resist** acid 10; **SR** 24

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., lightwalking 100 ft

Melee *Lunar Orb* or scepter +23/+18/+13 (1d10+11/19-20 plus stun) or slam +20 (1d8+8)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th)

At will—*aid*, *continual flame*, *detect good*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *dispel good* (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *unholy aura* (DC 24), *unholy blight* (DC 20), *invisibility (self only)*, *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear*

7/day—*cure light wounds*, *see invisibility*

1/day—*blade barrier* (DC 22), *heal*

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 19, **Con** 21, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 37

Feats Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Acrobatics +18, Craft (origami) +18, Diplomacy +20, Escape Artist +22, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (planes) +18, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +18

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal; *telepathy* 100 ft.

SQ change shape (*alter self*)

Gear *The Lunar Orb of Rule*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Madness(Su) When standing in moonlight, the Moonlight King radiates an aura that drives creatures insane. Any non-outsider starting their turn or moving within 30 ft. of the Moonlight King must make a will save DC 21 or be confused. Affected targets get a save at the end of each turn, but will be re-affected each round that they are within the aura of madness.

Lightwalking (Ex) The Moonlight King can move from one beam of light to another within 80 ft. as a move action.

Stun (Su) If the Moonlight King strikes an opponent twice in one round with his scepter, the creature must succeed on a DC 23 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Strength-based.

LUNAR DEVIL

CR9

XP 6,400

LE Large outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +19

Aura fear aura (5 ft., DC 19, 1d6 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+5 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 105 (10d10+50)

Fort +12, **Ref** +12, **Will** +7

DR 10/good; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), lightwalking 80 ft.

Melee bite +14 melee (3d4+5), 2 claws +14 melee (1d8+5),

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

Constant—fly

At will—*dimensional anchor*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *invisibility* (self only), *major image* (DC 17), *wall of ice*
 3/day—*quicken invisibility* (self only)
 1/day—*summon* (level 4, 1 bone devil, 35%)

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 21, **Con** 20, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 31

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*invisibility*)

Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Fly +21, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (planes) +16, Perception +19, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +14

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal; *telepathy* 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Light Incorporeality (Su) A Lunar Devil is semi-incorporeal when standing in moonlight, he is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it takes only half damage from a corporeal source (except for channel energy). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead. Corporeal spells and effects that do not cause damage only have a 50% chance of affecting an incorporeal creature. Force spells and effects, such as from a magic missile, affect an incorporeal creature normally.

Lightwalking (Ex) A Lunar Devil can move from one beam of light to another within 80 ft. as a move action.

SHADOW DEMONS

CR 7 EACH

XP 3,200 EACH

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar, incorporeal)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex)

hp 59 each (7d10+21)

Fort +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities incorporeal; **DR** 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** cold, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, fire 10; **SR** 17

Weaknesses sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +11 touch (1d6 plus 1d6 cold), bite +11 touch (1d8 plus 1d6 cold)

Special Attacks pounce, sprint, shadow blend

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *fear* (DC 18), *greater teleport* (self only), *telekinesis* (DC 19)

3/day—*shadow conjuration* (DC 18), *shadow evocation* (DC 19)

1/day—*magic jar* (DC 19), *summon* (level 3, 1 shadow demon 50%)

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes,

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +14, Fly +22, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +20, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sprint (Ex) Once per minute, a shadow demon increase its fly speed to 240 feet for 1 round.

Shadow Blend (Su) During any conditions other than bright light, a shadow demon can disappear into the shadows as a move-equivalent action, effectively becoming invisible. Artificial illumination or light spells of 2nd level or lower do not negate this ability.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex) A shadow demon is utterly powerless in bright light or natural sunlight and flees from it. A shadow demon caught in such light cannot attack and can take only a single move or standard action. A shadow demon that is possessing a creature using magic jar is not harmed by sunlight, but if it is struck by a sunbeam or sunburst spell while possessing a creature, the shadow demon is driven out of its host automatically.

Development: The Weary King's Price

Once defeated in combat or convinced to stop fighting in the skill battle, the Moonlit King slumps and falters. Indeed, his crown grows heavy, and he is suddenly the Weary King, burdened by his failures and madness in the past—but also sane. Read the following:

The king slumps in defeat, and the blue-grey orb of power falls from his hands to the floor. "I am tired of battle. I am tired of the ghosts that haunt me. That time is past." His eyes seem unclouded, and when he looks forward, it's clear that his madness has passed.

"My mind is my own, but perhaps time is short. Let us strike a bargain: I shall give you the city of the kobolds, and you shall give me enough help that my own purposes will blossom like cherries in springtime. Let us... haggle."

At that point, the Moonlit King can certainly be convinced to put his seal to a PC's flesh as a royal sign that proves he has renounced the shadow fey claim to the human/kobold city. He does not do so for nothing, but he certainly accepts the mortal claim to Zobeck—and the end of fey edicts and assassinations—in exchange for whatever the GM feels is most appropriate, given the character of the mad king. The decision is not one over which he is willing to linger. Here are four likely options:

1. A female PC must spend the night with the Moonlit King atop the tower or in some secluded place. This leaves her with either *discern lies* or *see invisibility* 3/day (at CL equal to total character level, based on ability score of character's choice for DC), but forever scarred by a touch of shadow and light (gaining a -3 to saving throws involving those effects).
2. The party must sacrifice the greatest and most powerful item it holds, which is used to restore the king's powers using mortal Knowledge (arcana)—something the fey can never quite master.
3. The party swears and witnesses a divine oath that they will pursue and slay the Demon Lord of Roaches (thus

perhaps setting up a future adventure). Failure to pursue this goal has dire consequences, as the PCs waste away and become deathshade wisps.

- In a game that inclines toward the tragic, the Moonlit King might wish for his own death—but he warns the party that this will unleash dark powers throughout the Shadow Realm (and a deadly fight for the PCs to escape). Indeed, if anyone claims his crown, they also inherit his shadow and memories, and in time his madness.

“Putting his seal to a PC’s flesh” means that at least one character is marked with a crescent moon and acknowledged as a servant of the king. As soon as this is done, move on to the **Dawn in Zobeck** scene (page 126) unless you especially wish to reprise all the courtly thanks and honors. It’s perhaps as well that they are dropped unceremoniously back among the mortal world.

Development: Death to the King, Angel of the Light

If the PC who strikes the final blow obeys the queen’s implicit wish and chooses to kill the Moonlit King, read the following:

The tower lights are all immediately doused, as if by rushing waters or a wave of shadows. A great howl goes up from all the animals and creatures of the forest: wolves, birds, owls all giving voice. Darkness presses in, and there’s the sudden thought that perhaps the tower is surrounded by monsters on all sides.

This is the end of light in the darkness, and the start of a dark age in the court where the Black Prince, the Demon Lord of Roaches, and the queen herself commit murder daily, executing dissenters, running arcane battle of demons versus fey with death to the hindmost.

Trying to leave by going back out through the maze is suicide; there are hundreds of shadow demons (they dissipate with a single hit, but reform immediately in an endless supply) roaming the maze. There are two practical options for escape:

- Seize the Orb.** The PC who first touches *the Lunar Orb of Rule* becomes the new Moonlit King; this condition is temporary if the PC leaves the Shadow Realm within a day, but the orb’s power is enough for the party to command the shadow demons and return to the queen. She holds up her end of the bargain if the PCs return the orb to her, and she solidifies her rule. The party gains 140 pp, and she opens a Shadow Road back to Zobeck and the dawn if they wish to live. If no PC takes the *Orb*, the Demon Lord of Roaches claims it not long after, and the queen is very angry.
- The Angel on the Tower.** If the party is willing to trust their lives to a blind angel, Revich will fly them back to the queen—in return for their promise to undertake a quest for him as soon as they return home to Zobeck (the next adventure the GM has prepared). The angel burns through the sky like a comet to the queen’s audience chamber, and he demands that the demon lord be banished from the court. The PCs may attempt to push his demands as well or remain true to the original bargain, giving the queen some token of her husband’s death in exchange for a release of all fey claims and a return home.

Development: Back through the Maze

Akyishigal waits outside labyrinth to get the king’s tattered soul and—more importantly—his *Lunar Orb of Rule*. If he cannot take it by force, he raises up a hoard of cockroaches and many roachling minions on every hand, drowning the shadow demons in pure darkness and chittering insects. This is a combat that the demon lord intends to win; double the numbers of servants from the Black Well (page 92).

Development: A New King

If the PC retains the *Orb* and wishes to take the title of king or queen, that’s certainly possible. They gain the shadow of the king and over 1 month’s time gain his memories, hear his advising voice, and gain his vulnerability 5/slowed to necrotic attacks.

Ruling the Shadow Realm successfully, though, is outside the scope of this adventure.

Conclusion

The Returning Mortals

*But, O malignant and ill-boding stars!
Now thou art come unto a feast of death,*

A terrible and unavoided danger:

Therefore, dear boy, mount on my swiftest horse;

And I’ll direct thee how thou shalt escape

By sudden flight: come, dally not, be gone.

—William Shakespeare, *King Henry VI, part I (IV.v)*

If one PC has taken the title of king and stayed behind in the fey kingdoms, he or she will soon be driven mad. For the others, read the following:

The return to Zobeck is as quick as the step from shadows into the light of dawn.

Few mortals escape the Shadow Realm alive, and fewer still after handing a defeat to the King and Queen of the Shadow Fey. But while a few return to Zobeck, the city has forgotten the fey entirely. It’s as if it was all a midwinter night’s dream; indeed, the city’s Winter Festival is well under way, and everyone is welcome to attend. The ambassador is the only one who remembers your deeds... and indeed, the only one who thanks you.

And fat flakes of snow fall from a measureless sky. It has been a year and a day since you left the city. Winter is here, and spring is coming soon.

The adventure has taken them away from the city for a year and a day no matter how long they thought it was.

*Night’s candles are burnt out,
And jocund day stands tiptoe
On the misty mountaintop.*

—William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet (I.iii)*

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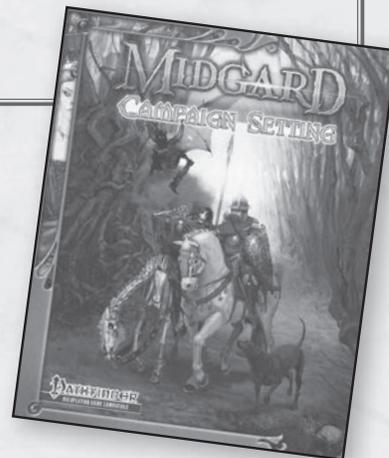
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The Shadows Strike Back

Courts of the Shadow Fey takes you from the mortal world to the heart of darkness itself—the Shadow Realm, home to the shadow fey.

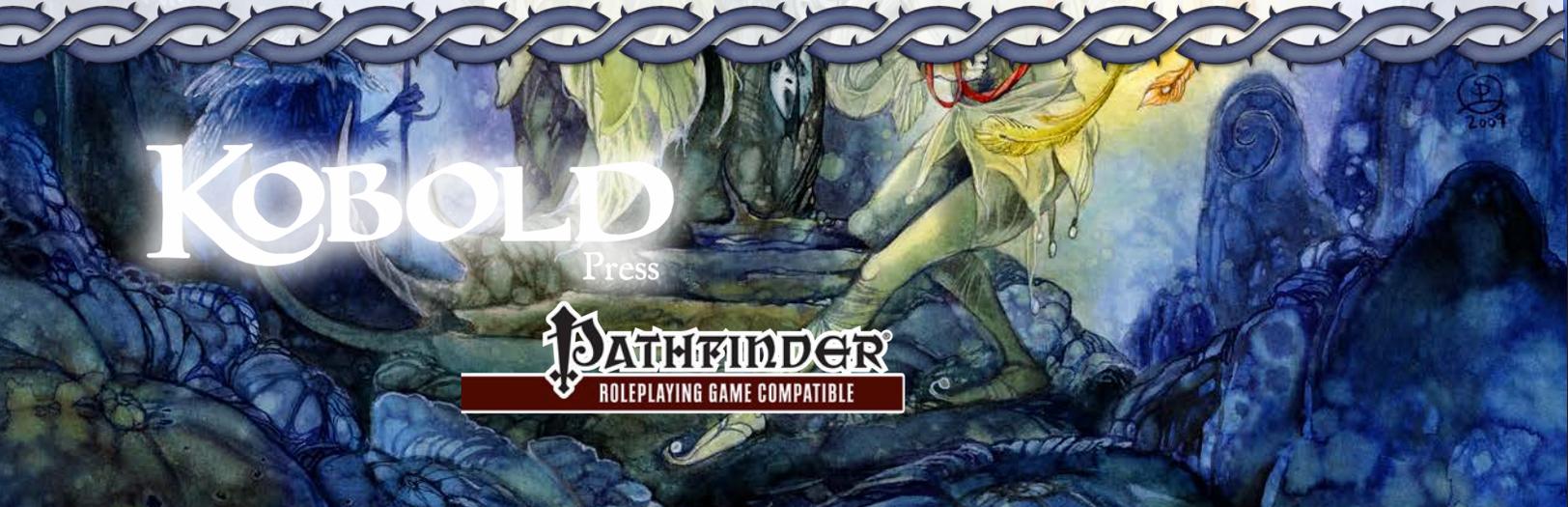
The Free City of Zobeck has thrived since overthrowing its tyrannical king. But before his rule ended, the king made a pact with dark forces...and those powers have returned to collect their due.

Now the shadow fey have claimed Zobeck as their own. All who oppose them will be beaten, shaved, and run through the streets like dogs! Step aside, mortal; your new masters are here!

Zobeck's only hope lies with a band of heroes who can outfight and outwit the shadow fey in the heart of their own realm: the maze of treachery and deceit that is the *Courts of the Shadow Fey*.

- Fight your way to the shadow fey's home in the Shadow Realm
- Increase your Status within their royal courts
- Duel for honor, win the hand of a lover, find the mythic Firebird
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- Negotiate for Zobeck's freedom with the King and Queen of the shadow fey—or earn their dire displeasure!

Courts of the Shadow Fey is a Pathfinder Roleplaying Game adventure for levels 7–10, designed by Wolfgang Baur and Open Design patrons with frequent review, playtest, and feedback to maximize playability.



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