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INTRODUCTION

It's the journey that matters most. Isn't that what we've always heard?

The destination isn't as important as the events we experience along the way.

Midgard Tales has certainly been an adventure for me, one that has yet to end. It grew in scope and breadth, creating legends, inspiring deep magic, spinning these 13 tales that roam across the face of Midgard, and yet leaving us to face a chained god.

And I have to say, I'm pretty pleased about it. It's been hard. It's been demanding. I won't lie to you, it's been tough. But it's been a chance to grow and improve, a chance I wouldn't have turned down for anything if you asked me again. It's a chance I'm happy I took, but I certainly didn't undertake alone.

Where other projects focused on a single theme, or a particular city, a limited scope, this book challenged me, challenged all of the patrons of this project, to help define Midgard on a grand scale. We needed to reach beyond the smaller usual scope we had explored and take on something larger. It was the opportunity to set the tone and spirit of a world, to show the kinds of adventures awaiting heroes and rascals alike, beyond the horizon and beneath the earth. Together, we needed to forge something remarkable.

I couldn't be happier with the results. We have great, towering monstrosties of the Wastes, hungering savages of the Illyrian Marches, sea serpents and icewalls, airships and gearforged, faerie betrayal, true love, basal greed, and glory unmatched. This is a dynamic place, packed with the unexpected and the intriguing, loaded with opportunities to become immortalized in bardic tales and tavern drinking songs. This is a threshold, beyond which lies deadly excitement, a gate to the lands of Midgard, and I'm confident you'll enjoy playing through it just as much we enjoyed crafting it.

So take up your arms, brace your shield, ready your magics. Are you prepared to face the hazards lurking, waiting to pounce on the unwary? I hope so, because it's a dangerous place out there, and it's time for you to earn your song-we still have a god to find!

-Ben McFarland, March 2013

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Atop The Warring Blasphemieş

By Tim Connors

For days we lay there, tangled with the others. Wide-eyed. Paralyzed. Sucking air past the spiders in our throats. Now the thing is gone and we see...the horror has just begun.

"Atop the Warring Blasphemies" plunges five 1st-level PCs into the madness of the Western Wastes in a pulp-action, escape adventure. Although designed to launch a Midgard Campaign, this adventure works in any campaign featuring a desert, lost technology, and godlike abominations.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Four centuries ago, an eldritch arms race culminated in the summoning of the Great Old Ones, colossal abominations which destroyed everything between the Ironcrags and the port city of Barsella. When the Great Mage Wars ended, no one could banish the rampaging creatures. In desperation, the summoners instead slowed time around them. Today, the "Walkers" stand nigh-frozen in the Wastes, casting their ominous shadows over dune-swallowed ruins.

Two Walkers, the Warring Blasphemies (see **The Great Old Ones**, *Midgard Campaign Setting*, p. 158-160), remain locked in eternal, flesh-ripping combat. Slug-shaped Gorthoga's intestinelike tentacles, as long as bridges, grapple Ashkharak, a skinless humanoid with a forest of leechlike heads. Torn flesh and blood hang in the air around them. Though physically frozen, their godlike minds race and their raging auras of bloodlust still enflame the spirits of creatures venturing too near. Four centuries of victims' bleached bones litter the sand a half mile in every direction.

A few years ago, the Dust Digger goblin tribe unearthed a vril battery fed on rage. The goblins brought it to the Warring Blasphemies, where it siphons (and suppresses) the Blasphemies' bloodlust aura and powers the goblins' cache of vril weapons.

In time, the goblins lashed a rambling, ramshackle city to the Warring Blasphemies and began worshipping them as gods. Soon after, the tribe suffered a religious schism over which Blasphemy would ultimately triumph, and the two factions have waged war from one Walker to the other ever since. Felkin, the "Grafted Shaman," commands his faction from Ashkharak, while Grosgr, a half-barghest goblin, lords over his faction from a "palace" between Gorthoga's eyestalks. During the war, vril tech has changed hands many times. Presently, Grosgr has vril weapons but no batteries, and Felkin has a battery but only one vril weapon.

A few days ago, a skincrawler dragon shattered the goblins' ramshackle city and unbalanced their war. It killed most of Felkin's faction, chased Grosgr's faction into desert bunkers below the Blasphemies, and seized Grosgr's palace as its lair. Grosgr's precious cache of vril weapons now lies beside the skincrawler's body pile, a menagerie of paralyzed victims upon which the skincrawler feeds. Felkin lies in that pile too. And so do the PCs.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs cough up black spiders as they awaken in the skincrawler's body pile in the lair atop the Blasphemies. Paralyzed humanoid and bestial bodies, as well as Felkin, lie under them in a tangle of limbs and horror-stricken faces.

The skincrawler's slave, a cowardly gnome, prepares to recall the skincrawler with a summoning horn. The PCs must convince him to escape with them instead.

The PCs arm themselves with an assortment of vril guns, plunder the body pile for magic and resources, decide who/ what to rescue, and begin their descent on webs pulled from the spinnerets of a giant spider. Far below, drums beat as Grosgr raises his scorpion-stinger polearm and goblins swarm skyward, eager to reclaim their vril prizes.

The PCs blast goblins from the Walker's flanks, but dwindling ammunition and overwhelming odds force the PCs across Gorthoga's tentacles to Ashkharak.

In a vertical maze of stacked shacks, the PCs discover a tortured prisoner and a sickening arsenal of tanglefoot bags made from peeled-off faces. An opened trapdoor reveals the arcing flails of Grosgr's bugbear champions destroying the only way down.

With boards splintering at their heels, the PCs race skyward, where Grosgr and an archipelago of torn flesh hang frozen in the air between them and freedom—a hidden puncture wound through Gorthoga's body that allows them to slide to the desert floor.

But daring long jumps and strategic double-backs won't be enough. To escape, the PCs need to leverage the warring goblins' animosity, trick a half-barghest into reclaiming vril weapons set to overload, and recall a roaring skincrawler.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Days ago, the skincrawler attacked, disabled, and abducted each PC to its Walker lair. Since the PCs were unconscious, they do not know where they are now.

The PCs may be childhood friends abducted together, foes from rival nations abducted days apart, or complete strangers.

İntroduction

This adventure begins at sunrise, 200 ft. above the desert floor.

Part one: Atop the Body Pile

1. WAKING UP (CR VARIES)

You remember the dragon attacking. The moon behind its outstretched, gossamer wings. The impact of its landing. The horrifying revelation that the black sand wafting across its wasted frame was in fact millions of spiders skittering beneath its translucent scales. You remember its spider eyes locking with yours, and then its jaw unhinging and the black motes of its breath weapon billowing over you, and then burrowing, tunneling, and cavorting under your skin. Then blinding pain as the motes erupted from your pores as a spider swarm, and skittered back to the dragon with your life energy. You remember fear, falling, and screams muted by your own heartbeat. Then blackness.

You awoke days ago, paralyzed atop the dragon's stockpile of tangled bodies, where you still lie with humans, goblins, and reptilian beasts in a tangled mass of limbs and wide-eyed faces. Most are conscious. All are paralyzed. Each horror-stricken face breathes with a slow asthmatic gasp, sucking air past spiders crawling from its throat. Each day, the dragon's slave, a gnome with fiery orange hair, force feeds you water and a slurry of horse flesh and dragon bile. Each day, spiders crawl in and out of your open mouth, delivering your lifeblood to the dragon, as you stare helpless.

But something has changed. The dragon has been absent for over a day, and as the sun rose, the spiders climbed out and soon turned to dust. You've since shaken off your paralysis. Looking around, you see a great vulture nudging a paralyzed goblin and ripping flesh from other victims. Wind whistles through the large single opening of this massive wooden shack. Sand covers a hard, pink, mucous floor, and two large columns of the same material provide support. Seeing you move, the gnome slave fumbles for a horn you've heard summon the dragon before.

PC Health & Equipment: The PCs have full hit points, armor, and other items fastened to their bodies (i.e., backpack, quiver, belt pouch, jewelry). Held items, like most unsheathed/ unholstered weapons and shields, fell away at the abduction site. If, however, you would like a PC to have a particular weapon, include it among the bodies. The gnome slave has tossed all ropes to the desert floor.

Read "Looking Down" to any PC peeking out the exit. Read "Another Exit" to any PC succeeding on a DC 10 Perception check while on the opposite side of the room.

Terrain: The lair is 30-ft. square, and its walls are rickety wooden structures, easily bludgeoned to splinters. Like the

rest of the time-frozen, the Walkers' bodies have mithral's 15 hardness and 30 hp/in.

Creatures: The following two creatures are not paralyzed (full statistics and tactics below).

- Nabbit Lusterfiz (CN male gnome, CR 1, hp 17, indifferent), a goblin-hating, skincrawler slave torn between summoning the skincrawler and escaping with the PCs. Speaks Trade Tongue and Goblin.
- Iqua'tha (N male cthuloid vulture spirit guide, CR -, hp 22, unfriendly), an intelligent spirit in the physical body of a vulture whose "feathers" are restless flatworms. It serves Felkin, the paralyzed goblin it's nudging.

The following creatures remain paralyzed in the body pile. All are wide-eyed and aware. Any amount of magical healing unparalyzes them.

• Felkin (NE male goblin, shaman 4, CR 3, hp 10 of 26, unfriendly), a wild-shaping, vril-activating, doublecrossing shaman desperate to seize vril tech and kill his rival, Grosgr. Full statistics and tactics below.

- Meira Yellete (LN female human, CR 1/2, hp 4 of 9, friendly), a comely, bejeweled maiden inclined toward hysteria and vomiting. Wakes panicked. Full statistics and tactics below.
- **Griffon** (N, CR 4, hp 12 of 42, unfriendly) has a powerful build and a 25-ft. wingspan; he's the obvious ticket out, but isn't interested in riders. Full statistics and tactics below.
- Young Behir (N, CR 7, hp 25 of 85, hostile), the skincrawler's greatest prize, longs to kill everything on its way down. Nabbit wrapped the behir's muzzle shut with a 10-ft.-length of silk pulled from the giant spider's spinnerets...just in case.
- Giant Spider (N, CR 1, hp 4 of 16, indifferent)—The PCs can pull 100 ft. of web strands from this creature; Web strand: 12 hp, Break DC 17, supports weight of one fully equipped medium creature.

CR 3

A dead camel and four goblin corpses complete the pile.

Felkin, Goblin Shaman

XP 800

Male goblin shaman 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary; KQ#21*) NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense (only on and fully across Ashkharak); Perception +1

DEFENSES

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 **Dex**, +1 size) **hp** 10 of 26 (4d8+8)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +3 (1d4-1/1d4-1)

Ranged grafted *vril lightning baton* +6 (special) or sling +6 (1d3-1)

Special Attacks wild shape 1/day for up to 4 hours (into a

winged goblin dog with a flayed head and a functional *vril lightning baton* instead of a paw)

Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +5)

2nd (4/day, 2 remaining)—gust of wind

1st (7/day, 4 remaining)—*entangle* (DC 13) (on Gorthoga, erupting clawed tentacles; on Ashkharak, writhing veins), *goodberry, shillelagh*

0 (at will)—create water, detect magic, flare (DC 12), guidance, read magic, virtue

Tactics If the PCs unparalyze Felkin, he spits on the floor (Gorthoga's head), and privately thanks Fate (Ashkharak) for this opportunity to steal Grosgr's vril tech and kill Grosgr with it. Felkin is cunning. He agrees to help the PCs escape (via Ashkharak) if they spare his life. He does not tell them he can wild shape into a flying creature and escape any time. If necessary, he reveals that he knows where the goblins are holding gnome prisoners. If pressed, he tells the PCs about the goblin war and that he leads the devastated Ashkharak faction. To prove his trustworthiness, Felkin instructs the PCs on the use of the vril weapons, since he'll need their help getting down alive. With his own faction in tatters, Felkin hopes the PCs will kill Grosgr and decimate Grosgr's faction. And he hopes to steal the weapons back. Felkin only speaks Goblin and the secret language of his vulture spirit guide, Iqua'tha.

Once "accepted" into the party, Felkin closes the eyes of the four dead goblins and the living behir, subtly implying that the behir is also dead. His plan: When they reach Ashkharak, he will give a goodberry to Iqua'tha to feed to the behir. Once unparalyzed, the behir rampages down Gorthoga, devouring Grosgr's goblins along the way.

When not watched, he casts *goodberry* and multiple *virtues* on himself. When at or below 5 hp, he retreats after wild shaping.

The Shaman Class

The shaman class is a spirit-based class written by Marc Radle and published in *Kobold Quarterly #21* and expanded in the Kobold Press pdf *New Paths #2: The Expanded Shaman*. All rules relevant to this adventure's goblin shaman have been reproduced here.

Option: If the PCs don't unparalyze Felkin, at the GM's discretion, Felkin merely pretends to be paralyzed.

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 14 Base Atk +3; CMB +1; CMD 14 Feats Brew Potion, Natural Spell

Skills Climb +4, Handle Animal +4, Heal +3, Knowledge (vril) +3, Spellcraft +2, Stealth +3, Use Magic Device +6 (+10 vril); Pacial Modifiers +4 Climb +4 Use Magic Device (vril)

Racial Modifiers +4 Climb, +4 Use Magic Device (vril) Languages Goblin

- **SQ** spirit bond (cthuloid vulture animal companion named Iqua'tha; summonable/dismissable from/to spirit realm 1/day; empathic link, share spells, and deliver touch spells as wizard's familiar; speak with shaman in secret language), nature lore (+2 Knowledge (nature) and Heal checks), shaman's touch (*cure light wounds*, 2/day), totem secret: invisibility (Su) (*invisibility*, 4 minutes/day in 1 minute possibly consecutive intervals), totem secret: summon spirit (Sp) (*unseen servant*, 2/day), wild empathy +5, woodland step (as druidic woodland stride plus trackless step)
- **Combat Gear** elixir of fire breath, elixir of tree shape (but as Large shelf mushroom), potion of cure light wounds (2), salve of slipperiness, vril lightning baton (6 charges) (see below) permanently grafted to his forearm bone and removable only by cutting off his arm at the elbow; **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, sling.

Iqua'tha, Felkin's Spirit Guide

Male cthuloid vulture

N Small magical beast

Init +1; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +6
DEFENSES

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 natural armor, +1 Dex, +1 size)

hp 22 (4d8+4)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average) **Melee** bite +3 (1d4+1), 2 talons (1d4+1)

Tactics Fights to the death to protect Felkin. **Str**ategically delays others from realizing its intelligence.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 10
Base Atk +3; CMB +3; CMD 15
Feats Blind Fight, Skill Focus (Perception)
Skills Fly +3, Perception +6
Languages Goblin (cannot speak)
SQ improved evasion

Nabbit Lusterfiz

XP 400

Male gnome rogue 2

CN Small humanoid

Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 **Dex**, +1 size) **hp** 17 (2d8+4)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2 (+2 to will saves vs. illusions)

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

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

Ranged sling +2 (1d3/x2)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Tactics When the PCs awaken, Nabbit threatens to blow the skincrawler-summoning horn as the skincrawler demanded. If the PCs shift Nabbit's indifferent attitude to friendly, he agrees to escape with them instead. If made unfriendly, he blows the horn (see "Blowing the Summoning Horn" below). Dust Digger goblins abducted Nabbit's sister Brinx a month ago. Nabbit followed her lizard familiar toward the Blasphemies. Before he arrived, the skincrawler killed the familiar and enslaved Brinx. Nabbit fears disobeying the skincrawler will send him to the body pile.

He wants to awaken Felkin to find out where Brinx is, how to get down, and what the curious glass baton grafted to the goblin's forearm is (a *vril lightning baton*). Nabbit agrees to act as an interpreter (he speaks Goblin and Trade Tongue), but frequently assumes the goblin lies and colors his interpretations accordingly. Nabbit follows any clue about his sister's whereabouts, even at his own peril.

STATISTICS

CR -

Str 11, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10 Base Atk +1; CMB +0; CMD 12 Feats Alertness, Deceitful Skills Appraise + 4, Bluff +7, Climb +3, Disguise +7, Escape

Artist +6, **Int**imidate +5, Knowledge (Local) +5, Perception +9, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +14

Languages Gnomish, Goblin, Trade Tongue

SQ trapfinding, evasion, rogue talent (minor magic, 3/day *ghost sound* (DC 10))

Combat Gear studded leather, short sword; **Other Gear** disguise kit, summoning horn (skincrawler's hollow fang, hardness 8, 30 **hp**, Break DC 23)

BLOWING THE SUMMONING HORN

When blown, an ominous sound reverberates from the horn. If dropped from 100 ft. or greater height, the same sound escapes as it tumbles, end over end, to the desert floor. Either way, the effect is identical: a magical "alarm" eventually reaches the skincrawler's ear. Treat as *whispering wind* traveling directly toward the skincrawler and with unlimited range and duration.

If someone blows the horn while in the skincrawler's lair, assume the dragon is close. A black shape appears in the distance. After one minute, the skincrawler arrives and blankets the room with its breath weapon. Assume the same result as "Escaping on the Griffon" below.

If someone blows the horn anywhere else, the skincrawler arrives at a time of the GM's choosing. The skincrawler's statistics are in the **Appendix**.

Meira Yellete

XP 200 LN female human aristocrat 2 **Init** +0; **Senses** Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10 **hp** 9 (2d8)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +2 (1d6/19-20)

Tactics Meira is the daughter of Count Tremvar Yellete of Bourgund, Master of the Order of the Rose Knights. The Count's underling, Daiquianas Exeltor, Master of the Armor Bonded, had ruffians kidnap Meira and take her through a secret door in Bourgund, teleporting her to the desert, halfway across the Wastes. Count Yellete knows only that she lives (scrying is weak in the Wastes), and knows nothing of Daiquianas' mounting betrayals. When the skincrawler attacked Meira's abductors, Meira heard them curse Daiquianas for their mission. She longs to reveal his duplicity and promises the PCs a hefty reward (GM's discretion) if they return her to Bourgund. To convince Meira to undertake any new dangerous action or to overcome a bout of hysteria, the PCs must succeed on a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check. Failure by 5 or more makes her hysterical (treat as frightened or nauseated, equally likely). Retries are allowed each minute. Returning her earns the characters a +2 bonus to Status in Bourgund. Returning her torc or signet ring earns a +1 bonus.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 10, **Con** 8, **Int** 12, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 15 **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11 **Feats** Athletic, Persuasive

Skills Climb +2, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, **Int**imidate +4, Sense Motive +5, Swim +2

Languages Trade Tongue

Combat Gear none; **Other Gear** torc terminating in silver pearls worth 100gp; signet ring with braided silver band, identifying her noble family (Knowledge (local/ nobility) (DC 15)) and worth 50gp

Griffon

CR 4

hp 12 of 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Tactics The griffon pauses at the exit, and then returns to guzzle water and rip flesh from the dead camel for 1 minute. If shifted from unfriendly to indifferent via Diplomacy (DC 19) or Handle Animal (DC 18), it reluctantly consents to bear 1 rider. If made friendly via another Diplomacy (DC 14) or Handle Animal check (DC 13), or a single **Int**imidate check (DC 20), it will bear 2 riders.

ESCAPING ON THE GRIFFON

When the griffon leaves, with or without riders, read the following, even if the summoning horn wasn't blown:

The griffon's muscular legs launch it from the lair and its wings flap three times before a spider-swarming dragon snatches it out of the sky in its maw. The dragon lands in the lair, rending the griffon to tatters; it flings the griffon's lifeless body into the corner. With deep-set spider eyes, it surveys its lair. Then its jaw unhinges and black motes billow out. The world goes black.

The griffon is dead. All riders are dying. The PCs and all other previously unparalyzed creatures are dying (-1 hp) on the body pile. Whichever PC stabilizes and regains consciousness first, the skincrawler chooses as its new "tender." All others remain paralyzed. Three days pass before the dragon leaves and the tender can unparalyze others and attempt an escape.

Treasure:

CR 1/2

- Pot of fresh water—3 days' water for 4 medium creatures.
- Large pot of boiling horse flesh and skincrawler bile—3 days' food for 4 medium creatures
- Felkin's quarterstaff.
- A cracked light catapult, missing a throwing arm and irreparable.
- Ten sand-filled, lizardskin, catapult balls, each weighing 100 lbs.
- Mounted to the wall, two masterwork short swords flank a buckler emblazoned with Gorthoga's image.
- Under bodies (Perception DC 12): One *potion of cure light wounds*.
- Locked chest with brass filigree inlay and four locked drawers (Disable Device DC 25) instead of one compartment. Hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 23. One empty drawer. The other three drawers each contain a *vril lightning baton* with 12 charges each.





Vril Lightning Baton

Aura faint evocation; CL 3rd Slot hands; Price 4,500 gp; Weight 3 lbs

DESCRIPTION

Two leather straps cinch this brass-filigreed, 1-ft.-long, glass tube to a forearm, and embedded wires in an attached glove control the device via finger movements. Inside the tube, a translucent blue electrolyte surrounds a copper cylinder containing an iron rod that pokes out the wrist end. Once worn, "drawing" this weapon is a free action.

Five minutes of experimentation, instruction, or a DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals the simple finger motions (standard action) which expend 1 charge and release a crackling bolt of lightning. A successful ranged touch attack deals 1d4 electricity damage to a target up to 120 ft. away. No save. Critical hits apply.

Firing the device twice, instruction, or a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 15) reveals the user can delay discharge up to four rounds, building towards an ever-more-powerful, single-bolt release, by holding specific finger positions steadily against the glove's resistance. Delaying each round expends a charge and requires a standard action and a Strength check (DC 13). Each round of audible revving increases damage as follows:

1. 3d4	3. 10d4
2.6d4	4. 15d4

If any check fails, all spent charges are lost and the bolt deals only 1d4+1 damage to its target. Attempts to rev the device further cause it to explode, dealing 15d4 electricity damage to everything within a 10-ft. burst. A user can also tie or glue the glove's fingers into this overload position to fashion a grenade.

Whenever a user expends a charge, a proportional amount of blue electrolyte visibly diminishes, allowing the user to gauge the number of remaining charges. The device has a capacity of 24 charges. It features a safety and a valve through which a liquid *vril battery* can add electrolyte or another baton can pour its electrolyte.

LOOKING DOWN

A PC approaching the exit sees the following:

A vast desert lies 200 ft. below, and dunes stretch endlessly in every direction. You stand, not on a mountain, but atop a massive creature. Your wooden room sits between the eyestalks of a colossal slug frozen in time. Its pink mucous skin is cracked like a parched desert floor and peels away in great sunburned sheets. About 100 ft. down, the slug's intestine-like tentacles grapple the leg of its larger rival, a skinless humanoid with a forest of leechlike heads, also frozen in time. The rival's hand holds a 100-ft.-long, fluted-bone pin with lines of backward-curving hooks down its length. Between the creatures and the pin extracted gore hangs from the puncture wound like floating islands of flesh and blood. Lesser creatures have lashed ramshackle structures upon the abominations. Most appear smashed. A wooden tunnel stretching between the abominations has collapsed in the middle, where a pair of dead goblins' bodies landed on it. Bridges formerly leading to islands of flesh dangle from ropes. No structures lead down from your perch. In fact, this exit overhangs the slug's face, providing a view straight down to the desert floor.

It is impossible to climb down from this eastern exit.

A Knowledge (history) check (DC 15) reveals the history of the Great Mage Wars, the summoning of the Walkers, the creation of the Wastes, and the Great Slumber that froze the Walkers in time, 360 years ago. A Knowledge (history) check (DC 15) or Knowledge (local) 11 reveals that the Warring Blasphemies exude an aura of uncontrollable bloodlust not currently evident.

ANOTHER EXIT

At the base of the western wall, a missing wall board offers a view down the back of the colossal slug's head. Forty feet down a smooth 70-degree slope, a large shelf mushroom forms a 5 ft. x 10 ft. landing. Below that, the slug's suncracked skin peels downward in a multitude of sheets, forming a lattice of scales appearing climbable.

Part Two: Gorlhoga

2 FIRST STEPS (CR 1, MULTIPLE)

After removing wall boards, the PCs can climb out the lair's back, down the back of Gorthoga's head, to a shelf-mushroom landing 40 ft. below.

Terrain: Climbing down the steep, rippled incline of Gorthoga's head requires a DC 20 Climb check, or a DC 15 Climb check if the giant spider's web thread assists as an unknotted rope, or a DC 5 Climb check for a tied and lowered creature. The shelf mushroom's yielding surface converts the first 1d6 of falling damage to nonlethal damage.

Before the last PC descends:

The sound of drums echoes up from far below. A goblin stands alone on the desert floor, bearing a polearm with an end shaped like a giant scorpion's stinger. The goblin stares up at you. The drums beat faster. The goblin raises the polearm over its head and yells. At the drums' crescendo, a dozen goblins rise from the sands and begin swarming up the slug's colossal body.

On a DC 18 Perception check, the PCs see the goblins are piling out from underground desert bunkers, almost undetectable from above. These are Grosgr's goblins; Felkin doesn't know how many of the tribe's 100 goblins survived the dragon.

Below the shelf mushroom, the slug's skin peels down and away from its body in 5 ft.-wide x 5 ft.-tall sheets, forming a lattice of pockets extending down its nearly vertical flanks. Far below, the goblins advance unnaturally fast, like spiders climbing a web.

The shelf mushroom is on the slug's west side. A PC climbing the skin lattice to the north or south side sees the wooden tunnel sitting atop Gorthoga's tentacle and forming a bridge to Ashkharak, 60 ft. down from the shelf mushroom and on Gorthoga's east side. The PC also sees Gorthoga's puncture wound further below. The PC cannot determine from here how deep the puncture is, but a successful Perception check (DC 15) reveals the wound's flaring skin creates an overhang nearly impossible to traverse (DC 30 Climb).

Terrain: The PCs are 160 ft. above the goblins. Moving up, down, or across Gorthoga requires a Climb check (DC 14). Success indicates progress at quarter speed. Failure by 4 or less indicates no progress. Failure by 5 to 9 indicates the climber falls 5 ft., takes no damage, and lands prone in a peeling skin pocket. Failure by 10 or more indicates the climber falls 10 ft., takes 1d3 damage, and lands prone. Climbers cannot use a shield and do not benefit from Dex bonus to AC. Climbers may cast a spell or take any action requiring one hand, like firing a *vril lightning baton.* The top of each skin pocket is peeled 3 ft. from Gorthoga's body and provides a PC with cover, but only relative to attackers below. A PC can move down Gorthoga's skin-peels in deliberate 10-ft. jumps, each requiring a move action and a DC 12 Acrobatics check. Failure deals 1d3 nonlethal damage to the jumper, who lands prone in a pocket.

Creatures: A dozen Dust Digger goblins, spread across Gorthoga's southern side, climb Gorthoga toward the PCs at 10 ft./round (by making double moves). When the PCs kill 10 of them, or when the first PC reaches the tentacle bridge, two-dozen more goblins emerge from desert bunkers and start climbing. It should be impossible for the PCs to climb down Gorthoga and reach the desert.

Dust Digger Goblins (12+)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each Goblin warrior 1 NE Small humanoid (goblinoid) Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +2 **Dex**, +1 size) **hp** 6 (1d10+1)

Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 5 ft.

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

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

Tactics Takes 10 to climb up Gorthoga at 10 ft./round (double moves). Retains **Dex** bonus to **AC** while climbing. Does not risk accelerated climbing. Once within 80 ft. of the PCs, pulls crossbow from back, fires bolt, and re-stows bow. **Con**tinues climbing to engage with short sword.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 6 **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Climb +8, Stealth +11; Racial Modifiers +8 Climb, +4 Stealth

Languages Goblin

Combat Gear studded leather, short sword, light crossbow

Development: Proceed as appropriate; continuing down leads to the tentacle bridge, area 3.

3 TENTACLE BRIDGE (CR 2)

One hundred feet above the desert, the slug's intestine-like

tentacle creates a bridge to a complex of stacked shacks lashed to its flayed rival, 60 ft. away. A squat wooden tunnel lines the top of the tentacle, and a 4 ft. tall, crooked doorway provides access to the 3-ft.-wide interior. The tunnel stretches the entire distance, except for the center, where two goblin corpses, seemingly fallen from the sky, have partially crushed it. Presently four winged, cat-sized rats pick rotten flesh from the corpses.

Terrain: Light pierces through the tunnel's slatted walls and ceiling. Old ropes barely hold the structure in place. Medium creatures must squeeze (half speed, -4 Atk, -4 AC) to traverse the tunnel. Medium creatures walking atop the tunnel have a 25% chance per move action of punching through the ceiling and collapsing a 5-ft. section. A Climb check (DC 10) is required to traverse a collapsed section at quarter speed, including the winged rats' section. Failure by 4 or less indicates the PC falls prone, dropping everything held to avoid falling over the edge. Failure by 5 or more indicates the PC dangles by his hands from a hastily grabbed rope. A dangler who fails to pull himself up with a Climb check (DC 15) hangs until someone assists him or his strength fails (1 + Str bonus minutes).

Once across, a rope ladder leads 20 ft. up, through an open trapdoor in the floor of a shack.

Creatures: Once the PCs get 20 ft. across, the four winged rats attack until one dies (treat as bats, under Familiar in the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*). If the PCs are in the tunnel, the creatures scratch at the tunnel; punch their wretched, gnashing heads between the wood slats (50% chance to enter); and gnaw at the ropes holding the tunnel to the tentacle. A PC climbing on a collapsed section must make another Climb check each time he takes damage. If the PCs kick the goblin corpses off the bridge, the winged rats disengage, following it.

Once the first PC gets beyond the corpses, Grosgr attempts to cut off their escape by firing a flaming arrow from far below. The arrow sticks in the end of the tunnel closest to Ashkharak, setting it aflame. Smoke fills the tunnel. Creatures inside must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or spend one round choking and coughing. Two consecutive rounds of choking cause 1d6 nonlethal damage. Each 5-ft. section of tunnel burns for 5 minutes before collapsing and burning another 5 minutes. The fire spreads to the next section every minute. Assuming the PCs get across, goblins on Gorthoga cannot pursue until the fire burns out in 22 minutes.

If Felkin does not accompany the PCs, two of the five goblins in area 4 reel up the rope ladder so it's out of the PCs' reach. Then, speaking in Goblin, they demand Felkin's return.

If a PC misses a goblin with a ranged attack, the goblins retract the ladder fully, close the trapdoor (Hardness 5, 5 hp, Break DC 13), and negotiate (loudly) from behind it. If struck with a ranged weapon, however, the wounded goblin drops the rope ladder long enough for a PC to step on it, whereupon the goblin can't retract it again. The goblins close the trapdoor and negotiate from behind it. If the PCs attack the trapdoor, the goblins begin cutting the rope ladder, severing it in 3 rounds. Sans ladder, a DC 30 Climb check is required to negotiate an overhang. The goblins lower the ladder (or rope) if the PCs offer suitable treasure (e.g., a *vril lightning baton*) or aid against Grosgr and send up an unarmed hostage first (see **area 4** for further details).

Treasure: The goblin corpses each have a Small light crossbow and 6 bolts. A *potion of bull's strength* rests in a sand-packed



pouch tied to a corpse's belt.

Development: Grosgr realizes his fire-arrow plan has backfired. He collects two bugbears, the bunker's last occupants, ordering them to climb Ashkharak and destroy the way down (the PCs meet the bugbears in **4f**).

Felkin sends Iqua'tha with a *goodberry* to unparalyze the behir. The behir wakes when the PCs reach the catapults in **area 5**.

4 STACKED SHACKS (CR 2)

Five of Felkin's goblins, wielding needle-like weapons shaped like Ashkharak's bone-pin weapon (treat as rapiers), stand warily inside.

This narrow wooden shack is 8 ft. tall, 10 ft. wide, and only 5 ft. deep. The ropes holding it to the stacked shacks around it creak under your weight. An open 4-ft. doorway leads south, and two open doorways, one atop the other, lead to stacked rooms northward. The room's wooden slats admit dim illumination, and do little to vent the overpowering stench of death hanging in the air.

A Perception check (DC 15) notices a female whimper from the north; succeeding the check by 5 or more indicates the whimper came from the upper doorway. Nabbit believes it must be his sister and begs the PCs to investigate, leaving without them if necessary. Felkin lies, saying the whimper isn't Nabbit's sister—because he knows the PCs won't like what they see there. He encourages the PCs to go south, the direction leading down. Meira, wanting to leave immediately, agrees.

Terrain: In dim light, creatures have concealment (20%

miss chance) from those without darkvision. Consult the Stacked Shacks map. Unlabelled shacks are sleeping quarters, containing hanging hammocks, ruined food, and worthless trifles. All ladders between shacks are wooden (Hardness 5, 10 hp, Break DC 13). The trapdoors (Hardness 5, 5 hp, Break DC 13) in the floor of **4c**, **4d**, and **4f** are closed.

- **Creatures:** The five goblins trust Felkin, distrust the PCs, and hate Grosgr's goblins. They meet PC propositions with wariness and squabbling, but ultimately agree to any plan to cripple their enemy. The PCs must sell other propositions with a Bluff check (DC 15). The goblins want to take the PCs to area 5, where strong PCs can load heavy ammunition onto catapults.
- **Development:** After the tentacle bridge fire expires, a Grosgr goblin scout risks crossing. If the PCs retracted the ladder and closed the trapdoor, the Grosgr's goblins hold their positions on Gorthoga and argue about what to do next.

4a CORPSE LARDER

The overpowering stench of death fills your nose. On the floor 5 ft. below, squirming black motes form a tarp over a pile of six bodies.

The PC must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or become sickened for 1 minute.

When a PC climbs into the room or disturbs the bodies, read the following:

The squirming tarp discorporates into a swarm of flies. The swarm takes wing, buffeting your face as it swirls and buzzes over the corpses. You now see one body is human, one is



goblin, and the other four are gnomes. Their faces have all been peeled off.

These corpses are Nabbit's sister's party members and one Grosgr goblin.

Treasure: A Perception check (DC 20) reveals a belt pouch under the gnome's vest containing magic sand with golden flecks (treat as *dust of tracelessness*), but the dust only functions on desert dunes, and obliterates 1 mile of tracks left behind in the sand.

4b PRISONER (CR 2)

A female gnome with fiery orange hair lies on a butcher's block. Chains secure her hands and feet, and flies ring her face, lining the sutures of her stitched-on goblin's face. A mirror on the ceiling cruelly reflects the horror back to her.

Bloody metal implements lie on the table next to her. Stoppered jugs and open tubs of tar line the walls. Upon a shelf, glass bottles of amber liquid flank a sack bulging with spherical shapes, each the size of a baby's head. A grunt rises from behind the table. A goblinoid creature with downpointed ears and a menacing smile raises itself to its full 7ft. height and stares at you with milky white eyes. It roars through spiked teeth, and raises its morningstar to attack.

Terrain: The table rests in bugbear's square in this 10-ft. x 10-ft. room. Combatants can topple the table (treat the square as difficult terrain) or shove it one square as a move action. Combatants attack from the table, gain a +1 high-ground attack bonus. While it is in the ladder's square, no creature can enter or exit.

Creatures: The tortured gnome lifts her head, locks eyes with Nabbit (or a PC), and then falls unconsciousness, dying. She has Nabbit's stats, except she's dying at -1 hp.

If resuscitated and unchained, the tongue-less, goblin-faced gnome desperately hugs Nabbit. Nabbit, believing the creature to be his sister Brinx, screams and turns on Felkin. Felkin revs his *vril lightning baton* threateningly, but Nabbit pins Felkin's hand. If not interrupted, the baton overloads in 5 rounds, likely killing them both and anyone nearby.

In truth, the gnome is not Nabbit's sister; Brinx lies in **area 8**. This gnome points a broken finger to the sack on the shelf and begins crying. Tongue-less and mentally shattered, she cannot speak coherently. She cowers if she sees a bugbear—her torturer.

CR 2

Bugbear

XP 600

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+1 **Dex**, +3 natural) **hp** 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

STATISTICS

Tactics Attacks and pursues the PCs. He stabilizes dying PCs for future face-swap surgeries. He's loyal to Felkin.

Combat Gear morningstar, 3 goodberries

Treasure: A short hamstring cinches the sack on the shelf. Inside, a dark resin oozes from six small bags, each made from the peeled and stitched face—distorted beyond identifying of a human or gnome. An Intelligence check (DC 15) reveals each is a goblin-made tanglefoot bag. The four bottles of amber liquid are potions of *cure light wounds*. A flatworm "feather" of Iqua'tha writhes in each one.

The bloody metal implements on the table are Brinx's thieves' tools, the bugbears' torture implements. The bugbears used a half-spent healer's kit (under the table) to prevent the gnome from dying too soon.

4c DUST DIGGER FINDS

A hammock swings next to a toppled desk. A large corner of the upper wall is missing where the skincrawler reached in.

Treasure: Two cracked bottles lie under the desk. Another contains blue fluid to fuel the *vril lightning batons*. The eight charges may be divided as desired across batons. A desk drawer holds a *scroll of rage* with a drawing on the back, depicting a stylized angel crying tears into a bottle. A small darkwood box with brass clasp holds a 3-inch-long, packedsand snake. Treat as a *feather token*, swan boat, except it travels like a sidewinder over sand.

4d SUPPLIES

Only two of 15 wooden barrels haven't spilled. Each contains 40 gallons of fresh water, enough to last four medium creatures 10 days.

Treasure: A Perception check (DC 15) uncovers five pints of oil and a spellbook hidden under a bucket. One of Felkin's goblins stole it from a gnome prisoner and studies it in secret. It contains the spells *enlarge person, grease, jump,* and *magic weapon.*

4e UP AND OUT

After much argument, the goblins on Gorthoga fire flaming bolts at the stacked shacks. The PCs hear bolts striking the walls. A lucky shot threads the space between the slats, sticking in an interior wall, inches from a PC's face. Within 2 minutes, those inside begin suffering smoke effects from numerous fire sources. Within 5 minutes, the engulfed shacks begin falling to the desert in ones and twos.

The rope ladder dangling down leads to a cavity in Ashkharak's chest.

4f A TOOTHY SMILE (CR 4)

Read the following, when the PCs open the floor's trapdoor:

A pair of milky white eyes stares up at you, its face inches from the trapdoor. The 400-lb., 7-ft.-tall, hulking goblinoid creature wears leather armor and carries a flail. Below it, a second creature swings its flail and smashes through the floor boards. Severed ropes snake away, and half the floor of their shack, along with every shack below it, detaches and falls. The shacks land 100 ft. below in a heap of splinters and ropes on the dunes. Afterwards, both creatures advance.

The bugbears destroyed the only means down from Ashkharak, as climbing down requires negotiating three overhangs with DC 30 Climb checks.

The PCs can delay the bugbear's ascent by closing and locking intervening trapdoors (requiring the bugbears to break/

destroy the trapdoors) and destroying ladders (requiring the bugbears to make a Climb check (DC 20) to ascend to trapdoor height). A Knowledge (engineering) (DC 15) or Intelligence check (DC 20) reveals which two ropes hold lower shacks to the PCs' shack. Failure by 5 or more reveals an incorrect rope. Cutting a rope is a standard action. If a PC cuts an incorrect rope, the lower shacks fall and the PCs' shack tilts precariously, barely hanging on by the other rope. Creatures inside fall out unless they grab something by succeeding on an Acrobatics check (DC 13) or catch the edge with a Reflex save (DC 15).

Bugbears (2)

CR 2

XP 1,200

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+2 leather armor, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

STATISTICS

Tactics Grosgr's bugbears attack and pursue the PCs and Felkin's goblins.

Combat Gear leather armor, flail

5 SIEGE WARFARE (CR ¹/₂)

A deep horizontal wound across the flayed abomination's chest forms a cavern-sized cavity of corded muscle and bone. Two light catapults sit side by side, facing the colossal slug, but hidden behind wooden shutters attached to cranks. The catapults are neither cocked nor loaded. Seven spiked, lizardskin balls sit on the floor, next to a tunnel curving toward the abomination's spine.

Each catapult has two shutters, each requiring a full-round action to crank open.

Loading requires winching down the throwing arm with a full-round action and a Strength check (DC 10, only one person may aid another). Latching the arm into place is a free action. Loading a heavy spiked ball requires a standard action and a total 16 Strength (normally provided by Felkin's nowdead bugbears).

Aiming requires open shutters. A designated crew chief selects a vertical target square on Gorthoga's east side, as high as the shelf mushroom to as low as the tentacle bridge. The chief (and up to 1 other) spend a total of two full-round actions aiming the catapult.

Firing requires throwing a latch. The crew chief makes a special DC 15 check using only his base attack bonus, Intelligence modifier, and a cumulative +2 per previous miss. Upon success, the spiked ball deals 4d6 damage to any creature in the targeted square (DC 15 Reflex, save for half) and evokes a hurrah and shark-toothed grins from Felkin's goblins. Upon failure, roll 1d8 to determine the angle of misdirection (counting clockwise from 12 o'clock of the targeted square) and 1d2 to determine the struck square's distance in that direction.

While aiming, firing, or reloading, a PC gains partial cover from the catapult itself.

Creatures: Twelve Grosgr goblins remain below the tentacle bridge, the catapults' lower range. The rest spend half their rounds moving to evade catapult fire and the other half firing crossbows back at the PCs.

If Felkin sent Iqua'tha to wake the behir, the behir exits

the lair and rampages down Gorthoga. It roars at the PCs' catapult shots, and heads for the tentacle bridge, pausing only to toss goblins from Gorthoga. Once it reaches the bridge in 6 rounds, the catapults cannot target it. With a +14 Climb check, it scales Ashkharak in pursuit of the PCs.

Development: On the opposite side of Ashkharak, Grosgr levitates to Ashkharak's leech-head forest to block the PCs and seize Felkin's vril battery while everyone is distracted. As soon as Felkin and Grosgr are both touching Ashkharak, Felkin knows Grosgr's location through tremorsense. He attempts to convince (or trick) the PCs into climbing skyward. If necessary, Felkin tells the PCs the truth—if Grosgr removes the battery from the site, the Blasphemies' bloodlust aura will no longer be suppressed, putting every creature left behind in an uncontrollable battle frenzy.

6 CLIMBING ASHKHARAK

The tunnel through the abomination's chest curves toward its spine, where the body segments and legs of a colossal millipede form the vertebrae and spinal-cord nerves. Narrow cavities follow the millipede's legs high up the abomination's back. Along the way, light shines through the skinless creature, highlighting wet veins and cat-sized mosquitoes frozen in time where they drink.

The millipede is a frozen, integrated creature forming Ashkharak's actual spine.

Terrain: Climbing 100 ft. up the millipede's legs requires DC 10 Climb checks. One narrow "chimney" leading up to Ashkharak's head requires the PCs to snake their bodies over a bloated mosquito.

Development: Continue to area 7.

7 LEECH FOREST (CR 1)

A forest of 20-ft.-tall leeches form the abomination's head. Some stand tall, while others arch like cobras, frozen mid-strike. Narrow passages wind between them. Goblin battle cries and screams of pain issue from the far side of the leech forest.

If Felkin accompanies the PCs, he leads them on a circuitous but safe route to the far side. Otherwise, the PCs must each make an Intelligence check (DC 12). Each failure represents a round the PCs spend taking dead-ends and double-backs. All the while, the PCs hear the distant goblin fight intensifying. Three or more failures brings a PC face to face with a giant camel spider and a webbed off passage.

Giant Camel Spider

XP 400

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+1 natural, +3 Dex) hp 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2)

8 WOLF IN GOBLIN'S CLOTHING (CR 1 PLUS CR 3)

CR1

A 15-ft. rope bridge connects the edge of the leech forest to a large floating island of ragged flesh. Ropes attach a windowless shack to the underside of the island. The shack is wider than the island on one side, and an open trapdoor provides entry. The sound of goblins battling issues from inside the shack. Beyond the far side of the island, the flayed abomination's 200 ft. long bone-pin weapon angles downward. Fully withdrawn from the punctured slug, it has extracted a spray of flesh and blood that now hangs like a grotesque archipelago in the air between the abominations.

The floating island is irregularly shaped and roughly 15 ft. in diameter. The shack is 15 ft. x 10 ft. and 10 ft. tall. A Perception check (DC 15) sees daylight at the far end of the puncture's dark tunnel, confirming the wound proceeds clean through the slug.

To escape the Blasphemies by island hopping down into the puncture wound, the PCs must first get to the next island 10 ft. away and 30 ft. down. A successful Acrobatics check (DC 10) clears the horizontal distance, and a successful Acrobatics check (DC 15) reduces 1d6 points of nonlethal damage plus 2d6 points of lethal damage to 1d6 plus 1d6 respectively. Kicking out a wall and jumping from the dangling shack offers better survival odds, since the vertical distance to the next island is only 20 ft. and the successful Acrobatics check (DC 15) reduces 1d6 points of nonlethal damage plus 1d6 points of lethal damage to simply 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

Felkin assumes his goblins are inside the shack attempting to prevent Grosgr from stealing the vril battery. He is anxious to enter, defeat Grosgr, reclaim the battery, defeat the PCs, and take their batons.

A PC who peers through the shack's trapdoor sees the following:

Six goblins, five wielding bone-pin rapiers, battle in the dimly lit interior. The sixth wields a scorpion-stinger polearm and stands in a fountain basin, ankle deep in blue fluid. At the fountain's center, gold filigree climbs up an empty pedestal. A gnome with fiery orange hair cowers in a far corner.

Pried off, the pedestal's gold filigree is worth 150gp. It once held "Gavriel's Sorrow," the *vril battery*.

The gnome with fiery orange hair is Brinx, Nabbit's sister and Felkin's personal slave. None of the six goblins are Grosgr. Grosgr splashed them with Gavriel's tears before dropping his scorpion-stinger polearm and escaping with the battery. Some defenders failed their saves, fell into a rage, and presently attack their comrades. They attack any creature entering the shack. Each goblin's first attack against a PC requires the PC to make a Reflex save (DC 10) to avoid getting splashed with Gavriel's tears. A PC can collect up to five ounces (5 charges) of tears from the fountain basin into a baton.

Enraged Dust Digger Goblin (6)

XP 135 each

Goblin warrior 1 NE Small humanoid (goblinoid) Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

DEFENSE

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

hp 5 of 7 (1d10+2) (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)



Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

OFFENSE Speed 30 ft., climb 10 ft. Melee bone-pin +3 (1d4+1/18-20) Tactics Attacks with raging abandon. STATISTICS Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6 Base Atk +1; CMB +1; CMD 13 Feats Improved Initiative Skills Climb +9, Stealth +11; Racial Modifiers +8 Climb, +4 Stealth Languages Goblin

Combat Gear studded leather, bone pin (treat as rapier)

Grosgr XP 800

Male half-goblin/half-barghest

As barghest, except remove feed and all spell-like abilities except *levitate*.

STATISTICS

CR 1/3

Tactics Bites and claws. Attempts to bull rush PCs close to the edge. Uses *levitate* to make long jumps and prevent falls. After losing half his hit points, drips Gavriel's tears onto himself, transforms to wolf shape, and rages, fighting to the death. **Languages** Goblin, Trade Tongue

Development: Grosgr made his save. He presently *levitates* against the back side of the shack, hidden from view, angel head in hand. He levitates up and steps onto the island if the

PCs enter the shack or if the PCs cut the shack's ropes (sending the shack and occupants careening toward the desert). Grosgr wants the PCs' vril weapons. If the PCs are in the shack, he cuts the rope bridge to Ashkharak.

When the PCs are done fighting, he announces his presence by indulging in a triumphant villain's soliloquy, saying in raspy Trade Tongue:

"I am powerful. I hold an angel's head. The angel absorbs the gods' bloodlust and cries it out as tears of liquid hate. Humans call it Gavriel's Sorrow, but it is a battery. If I leave with it now, the Warring Blasphemies' bloodlust will consume you. You will rip each others' throats out, and I'll return later to collect my weapons from your corpses. Of course, you could hand them over now."

[If the PCs are in the shack and don't respond after 1 minute, he adds:] "Or I could sever these ropes perhaps."

If the PCs do not take action after another minute, he severs the ropes and the shack falls. But he prefers not to, since it may damage the weapons. The PCs can buy time by threatening to destroy the weapons.

If the PCs climb out of the shack and/or attack, Grosgr fights furiously.

If the PCs create a grenade by gluing a *vril lightning baton* into overload position with a tanglefoot bag made from one of Brinx's friend's faces, well that's just too cool not to work. Have fun with it.

If the PCs blow the summoning horn, the skincrawler arrives, blasts Grosgr with its breath weapon, snatches him up in its mouth, and tosses him on the body pile. Gavriel's Sorrow remains on the island (60% chance), falls to the desert (30% chance), or rests in the skincrawler's belly (10% chance). Before the PCs can escape down the floating flesh islands, they must wait quietly until the skincrawler leaves to hunt in 1d3 days. An unlucky someone must risk fetching water in the meantime.

If the PCs dispatch Grosgr and Felkin and Iqua'tha have any chance of winning, they attack the PCs.

9 SLIDE TO FREEDOM

After the first jump from the shack island, descent is a matter of patience more than skill. In places, the PCs make long jumps (DC 10) between flesh islands and Climbs (DC 10) down sprays of giant blood drops. They jump to Ashkharak's bone pin, slide down through Gorthoga's puncture wound, and land safely in the sand on the side of Gorthoga opposite the goblins' desert bunker.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs reach the sand, a long walk through the Wastes lies ahead. Anything could happen. Including finding a door standing alone in the desert, ready to whisk them to a secret counterpart in intriguing Bourgund.

APPENDIX

Millions of shadow spiders crawl under this dragon's translucent scales, pigmenting its pale gray flesh like shifting black sand snaking across its wasted frame. The dragon's diaphanous wings sweep back from its shoulders to its withered, forked tail. Its lips, permanently withdrawn from its toothy maw, snarl with menace, and a palpable hunger emanates from the bony-faced creature's deep-set spider eyes.

Skincrawler CR 11 XP 12,800

NE Huge dragon

Init +4; Senses darkvision 120 ft., blindsense 60 ft., scent; Perception +14

Aura frightful presence (180 ft., DC 15)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 8, flat-footed 25 (+0 Dex, +17 natural, -2 size) hp 175 (13d12+91)

Fort +14, Ref +8, Will +8

DR 5/magic; Immune sleep, paralysis; SR 22

Weaknesses insatiable hunger

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +20 melee (2d8+13), 2 claws +20 melee (3d6+9), 2 wings +18 (1d8+4), tail slap +18 (2d8+13)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (50-foot cone, damage special, **Fort**itude DC 24 negates, usable every 1d4 rounds), crush (2d8+13), slow feed

STATISTICS

Str 28, Dex 10, Con 22, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9

Base Atk 13; CMB 24; CMD 34

Feats Ability Focus (breath weapon), Critical Focus, Flyby Attack, Improved **Init**iative, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Multiattack, Snatch^B, Toughness

Skills Fly +5, Heal +7, **Int**imidate +8, Perception +14, Sense Motive +11, Use Magic Device +8

Languages Draconic

- ECOLOGY
- Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure double

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) A skincrawler dragon breathes a roiling fog of black motes that burrow into the flesh of any living creature failing a DC 24 Fortitude save. The save DC is Constitution-based. Once inside, the motes germinate, grow, and tunnel under the skin. Infested hosts are nauseated; spellcasting or concentrating on spells requires a caster level check; using skills involving patience or concentration requires a DC 20 Will save.

Any magical healing of 8 hp or more destroys the infestation and removes its ill effects.

One round after the initial infestation, the multi-legged motes erupt en masse through the victim's pores, dealing 3d6 damage to the victim and forming a (non-poisonous) spider swarm that scurries back to the dragon.

Once the swarm clambers under the dragon's scales and disperses (i.e., enters the dragon's space), the dragon gains temporary hit points equal to the number of hp the victim lost, up to a maximum of the dragon's normal hp maximum (effectively doubling the creature's total hp).

Insatiable Hunger (Ex) Each sunrise, the skincrawler dragon suffers 6d6 hp damage from intense starvation. The damage

GAVRIEL'S SORROW, VRIL BATTERY (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura faint evocation; CL 3rd

Slot none; Weight 3 lbs

DESCRIPTION

Ankeshelian technology conspired with diabolic sorcery to create this vril battery from the severed head of Gavriel, an angel of peace. In life, Gavriel's ability to absorb rage, convert it to calm, and radiate it back forwarded his divine mission to turn enemies into friends. Now dead and grotesquely modified, he absorbs rage but cannot convert it. Instead, rage collects and distills inside him until it drips from his head as tears of liquid hate. Orichalcum plates, outlined in copper wire, exaggerate his cheeks and penetrate his temples. His wide-eyed face contorts with pain, and he cries translucent blue tears whenever in Hell, war, or within an aura of rage or bloodlust. Gavriel's head suppresses such supernatural auras while it is within range. Producing a single tear requires a

can only be healed through magical healing or the acquisition of temporary hit points.

Slow Feed (Su) A skincrawler dragon can send a controlled number of shadow spiders from under its scales into the mouth of any dying or stable living creature it touches. Any magical healing of 8 hp or more destroys this infestation and removes its ill effects. While infested, a stable victim who regains consciousness is paralyzed (instead of disabled).

The shadow spiders feed for 1 hour per HD of the victim, absorbing 1 hit point an hour; if the spiders can feed for more than 8 hours on a victim (meaning they are feeding on a 9-HD or higher creature), they additionally absorb any hit points the victim would have gained through natural healing from rest. When the spiders absorb the victim's HD in hp, the infestation exits the victim's mouth, scurries as a (harmless) spider swarm back to the dragon, and delivers the siphoned hp to the dragon as temporary hit points.

If the dragon is not within a 60-ft. range of the exiting spiders by sunrise, the swarm crumbles to dust. The spiders' death allows the former host a DC 24 Fortitude save to overcome paralysis. Every day's absence decreases the DC by 4.

Skincrawler dragons are aggressive reptilian beasts with natures more akin to wyverns than chromatic dragons. Territorial and insatiably hungry, the skincrawler attacks with proven tactics and decisive strikes. For those unfortunate enough to wander into its 200-square-mile hunting grounds, the horror has just begun.

A wave of fear precedes this nightmare beast when it wings down from twilight skies. Its gossamer wings stretch, and the ground shakes with the impact of its landing. From afar, its skin appears to shift in shadowy darkness across its flanks. A closer look reveals the writhing motion of a million spiders cavorting under its scales. More spiders crawl over its eyes and pile in its mouth as it unleashes a roar that unhinges its jaw.

The skincrawler's strategy is simple: employ its vampiric breath weapon and fight until it can fly away with at least one dying victim. If the battle goes poorly, the skincrawler retreats, returning to the scene later with a burning vengeance and the maximum complement of temporary hit points. More often, the skincrawler takes its prey with ease. Peasants and heroes have watched helplessly as the skincrawler takes to the skies with a great deal of rage. The Warring Blasphemies' aura generates 8 ounces of tears per day (one ounce = one charge).

Gavriel's tears power any vril weapon accepting liquid fuel. These lose efficacy after 24 hours unless stored in a sealed glass container. Contact with tears causes the victim to experience the effects of a *rage* spell (save: none; duration: 10 rounds). The victim must make a Will save (DC 12) each time it is attacked (even if not wounded) and each time it kills something. Upon failure, the victim must attack a melee target (of his choice) until the target dies or the duration expires.

Knowingly using angel tears to power a weapon with liquid hate is an evil act and may draw celestial or infernal attention. The GM may require acts of atonement.

DESTRUCTION

Gavriel closes his eyes forever if mortal enemies simultaneously kiss his face in genuine friendship.

family member or comrade in its spider-swarm maw.

Skincrawlers lair in remote, difficult-to-reach locations, such as mountaintop caves. Instead of hoarding treasure, skincrawlers stockpile bodies. People, horses, harpies, and hags all lie together in a mangled mass of limbs and wide-eyed faces. Most are conscious but paralyzed by the dragon's slow feed ability. Some have been here for months. Each horror-stricken face breathes with the slow asthmatic gasp, sucking air past spiders crawling from its throat. This pile, the skincrawler's larder, is the horrific fate of every dying creature it secures to its lair.

Some skincrawlers employ "tenders" to keep the dragon's victims bound or unconscious until the dragon returns. The tender also waters the victims daily and force-feeds them a slurry of regurgitated horseflesh and dragon bile.





Curșe of the Witchkeepş

By Morgan Boehringer

A powerful aging-curse turns the dead into undead and threatens the village of Loshtadt. Can you brave cultists and the perils of the Witchkeep to put an end to this eldritch terror?

"Curse of the Witchkeep" is a dungeon-horror adventure suitable for four to six 2nd-level PCs

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Tohl family guarded the village of Loshtadt in the Krakovan hinterlands from their high redoubt of Witchkeep for many generations. Known for their interest in the occult, and spurning the usual Krakovan desire to join the Slahta (council of nobles), the Tohls fiercely protected their demesne with a mixture of tenacity and guile. Recently, Nedaite Tohl, a necromantic dabbler, tampered with a Caelmarathi artifact in the keep's catacombs, the Orrery of the Seven Moons, triggering an arcane accident whereby focused time energy engulfed the keep. Tohl died, his soul subsumed into the Orrery. Since then, the artifact has generated a powerful necromantic aging-curse, animating those it kills. Most of the keep's expired inhabitants have subsequently risen as undead.

Tohl's trusted advisor, the darakhul alchemist Veternes, intent on turning the keep and village into his own domain, actually orchestrated Tohl's demise. After purging important villagers, Veternes formed a cabal of young, malleable peasants. This cabal nominally worships Mordiggian, but ostensibly functions as an extension of Veternes' will.

Within the keep's catacombs dwell others seeking to thwart Veternes' plans: Liraset Tohl, the necromancer's daughter, and her spurned elven lover, Sintuande. A crafty Mharoti dragonkin emissary sides with Veternes for her own necromantic ends.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

After encountering refugees and battling undead in the Whitewood, the PCs arrive at Loshtadt, finding a depressingly grim settlement. Villagers struggle against the Cult of the Harbingers, suffer the predations of a "night-beast" (Liraset's eidolon), and slowly wither under the aging-curse's ill effects. The PCs must navigate the intrigues of the town, extracting information necessary to locate the curse's source. Japek Grivek, a local youth and would-be hero may act as a guide or ally.

Once uncovered, the adventurers explore the Witchkeep, facing skeletons and witchwolves. In the catacombs, more undead await. The PCs then plunge headlong into a power play for the cursed Orrery itself. Within the complex, Liraset and Sintuande may aid the PCs, while the dragonkin Kiskal Nar and her kobolds protect Veternes and the Orrery. Various components and clues regarding the Orrery's operation await discovery.

Finally, the adventures enter the spherical chamber containing the Orrery, a malfunctioning semi-sentient construct. Utilizing the revealed details about the curse, the adventurers must unlock and reverse it. Their failure results in an alert, aggressive Orrery, attacking with Nedaite Tohl's necromancy. Whether destroyed or neutralized, halting the Orrery ends the aging-curse.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventure assumes the Krakovan Slahta sends the PCs to investigate Loshtadt after receiving disturbing reports of walking dead, abominations, and preternaturally aging villagers. Alternate motivations for the adventurers to travel to the Witchkeep include:

- Ramuna Argimas, a villager, finds the PCs in Lodezig and pleas with them to help her stranded family members caught in the grip of monsters and the walking dead.
- While traveling the hinterland between Lodezig and the northern border of Krakova, the party hears rumors of a dark cult and the Slahta's promised reward for its removal.
- An elfmarked PC with relatives in Loshtadt, or even one distantly related to the Tohls, receives a call for help. Alternatively, Jekku Artamas, a Slahta member, personally hires the PCs to locate his missing nephew.

Part One: İn The Whilewood

The adventure begins on the outskirts of the Whitewood. Loshtadt's remote location likely requires the PCs' utilization of mounts or joining a caravan.

THE FOUL WAGON AND THE HUNGRY PIT (CR 4)

The open prairie yields to a light, open forest of white spruce and alder trees. A wheel-rutted, well-traveled path clearly defines your route. After a few hours of travel, the trail widens into a clearing, where the scent of woodsmoke lingers. You see two emaciated, weary horses grazing uneasily by a heavily laden wagon. You hear muffled voices before spotting a ragged band of unhealthylooking humans breaking down a hastily erected campsite. Beyond them, sounds of digging echo behind a low rise.

As the characters approach

A smell of death chokes the air the closer you come to the wagon. The visibly tense refugees eye you suspiciously. A burly human male wearing faded finery and carrying a woodsman's axe climbs onto the wagon, and assumes a threatening stance.

Two families comprise the refugees here: the Griveks, who are trying to smuggle out their zombie elders and find them a "cure"; and the Kurilas clan, who are burying their recently passed elderly family members. If the PCs move toward the digging sounds or closer to the wagon without attempting to sneak up on them, the villagers see them and block their path. A DC 20 Diplomacy check shifts their mood from unfriendly to indifferent, but doesn't allow the PCs to get closer. While the adventurers interact with the villagers, a wretched moan issues from the back of the wagon.

The burly man shrieks in terror as a pustulent corpse rises from the wagon. Another corpse follows. And then another.

As the zombies rise, the horses bolt, forcing anyone mounted or leading a horse to make a DC 14 Reflex save or be knocked prone, taking 1d6 damage from the fleeing animals. The Kurilas family helps fight the zombies, but the burly man, Karo Grivek, prevents anyone from attacking his "grandparents." Two rounds after the zombies attack, six skeletons claw their way out of the mass grave on the other side of the low rise, gaining surprise if the characters fail a DC 18 Perception check.

Grivek Elders (3)

XP 400 each Fast zombies **hp** 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Former Villagers (6) CR 1/3

XP 135 each Skeletons

hp 4 (AC 14, no armor or weapons) (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Kurilas Clan (4)CR 1/2XP 200

Farmers

hp 10 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)

Karo Grivek

XP 135 Caravan guard

hp 16, (**AC** 16, scale mail; weapon: woodsman's axe—treat as battleaxe) (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*)

Aftermath: Grateful for the adventurers' aid, though reluctant

CR1

ENVIRONMENT, EFFECTS, AND CHARACTER

This adventure presupposes a mood of horror and untoward, unnatural effects. Be sure to play up the mood of the countryside and the village: a late autumn of wind, rain, and mud; pale grass and gnarled, leafless trees; no birds or scurrying animals—only undead, skittering vermin. Bereft of their elders, the young human townsfolk mature faster than normal, even physically so. Play the environment as you would a mournful NPC, devoid of hope or happiness. Loshtadt is cursed!

or unable to divulge the specifics of Loshtadt's curse, the villagers thank the party. If the party subdued Karo, his wife gifts them with a small silver gryphon medallion, which later proves useful in interacting with young Japek Grivek.

Part Two: Lospladt

The village of Loshtadt lies nestled between an azure lake and an imposing hill topped by a grey-stone keep. The main road passes north to south; a smaller street heads west, while to the east a few wharves signal lake-borne activity. A narrow road snakes northwest up the rise to the keep. Untended gardens and obviously vacant abodes exacerbate a sense of dilapidation throughout the village. The few people lingering on the main street seem sorrowful and fearful.

LOSHTADT

LE village

Corruption +4; Crime -1; Economy -1; Law -7; Lore -4; Society -2

Qualities strategic location (trade route), superstitious Danger +20; Disadvantages cursed, hunted, impoverished

Pathfinder RPG Game Maștery Guide NPCș

This adventure makes use of the NPCs in the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*; however, the GM should adjust the NPCs' gear. Just use discretion in substituting and providing appropriate and adequate equipment in each case. Because of Loshtadt's remote and rural nature, supply of expensive items, armor, and weaponry is nonexistent. Additionally, unless otherwise specified, NPCs are middle aged. Ignore each NPC's boon entry.

Character types from this book are indicated italics with ^{PFGMG} beside them.

PFGMG= Pathfinder RPG Game Mastery Guide

Demographics

Government secret syndicate (Cult of Harbingers)Population 69 (52 humans, 12 dwarves, 3 elfmarked, 2 tieflings)

Notable NPCs

Mayor Jaszlo Hukimar (LE human rogue 3) Blacksmith Brotislek Hamar (N human warrior 3) Fishmaster Khorek (N dwarf expert 2/fighter 1)

Marketplace

Base Value 200 gp; Purchase Limit 1,200 gp; Spellcasting 1st

Minor Items 1d4; Medium Items 1d2; Major Items —

A once-prosperous village, Loshtadt previously boasted upwards of 400 residents, including those in its outlying areas. The Orrery's curse hit the village hard, however, reducing it to a sixth of its population—though some of the residents fled before death struck them. The curse killed the village's elderly very quickly; they now roam the countryside as undead, and few villagers, even those in the Harbingers Cult, understand the link between the recently deceased and the plague of undead.

Notable Locations in Loshtadt

A1. STRONGHOUSE

This grey-stone building's buttressed corners and sturdy double doors denote its origin as a militia barracks. Those villagers still reporting for militia duty (5-8 N-CG footsoldiers^{PFGMG}) stay here, maintaining arms and armor. Cultist Alkan Telomar (N caravan guard^{PFGMG}) is the militia captain.

A2. SMITHY

The blacksmith and cultist Brotislek Hamar lives and works here. Hamar's wife and son (now full-grown from the curse) are also cultists. Hamar is a crafty judge of character and the mayor's informal second.

A3. VELES' SHRINE

Closed during the day, the shrine hosts Veternes' "ceremonies" here every third night. Veles' symbol on the shrine's doors of a snake biting its own tail is in reality Mordiggian's symbol. A follower of Veles or a successful DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check reveals the deception. Mikosha Lech and two cultists always accompany Veternes during his trips to the village (see Cultists' Ambush, below).

A4. THE WINGED HUSSAR INN

One of the Lady's Few, Taverner Ekmila Vainar (barkeep^{PFGMG}) runs this establishment. Although powerless to prevent Harbingers from frequenting her inn, she maintains an uneasy peace. The mayor and the blacksmith spend most nights here with 5-20 villagers (beggars, bandits, and farmers^{PFGMG}). If approached inconspicuously, Ekmila tells the PCs the location of the skeletons in the keep's tower, Veternes' comings and goings, and the location of Anomar's mansion (**area A6**).



A TOWN DIVIDED

Jaszlo Hukimar, the charismatic, if shady, mayor leads the council, which is composed of young, impressionable villagers. All of the councilors are Harbingers Cult members, with Hukimar acting for and reporting to Veternes.

A small, stalwart band of loyalists resists the council,

TABLE 1-1: RUMORS

Rumors	Cultists		Lady's Fe	w
	Intimidate	Diplomacy	Intimidate	Diplomacy
Loshtadt is cursed by the Tohl family.	10	10		
The Witchkeep is the ancestral home of the Tohls.	14	12	10	10
A strange, feather-scaled night-beast preys on villagers.	10	10	10	10
Lord Tohl is dead, but his daughter yet lives.	20	-	14	<10
The keep is infested with undead.	14	18	16	12
An aging-curse emanates from the Witchkeep.	18	20	18	16
The Harbingers Cult controls the mayor and the council.	18	-	11	10
The alchemist Veternes controls the Harbingers Cult and lives in Witchkeep.	20	18	14	16
Those dying of old age rise as undead.	20	20	-	-
Japek trades with the night-beast. It fancies fish-heads.	_	-	18	16
The beast is Lady Tohl's pet.	21	23	14	12

A5. CLEARING HOUSE

Twin tieflings Markov and Etomir Jaskarde (shopkeep^{PEGMG}) run a smooth operation from the dying trade arriving in Loshtadt, mostly amber caravans using an alternate route from Lodezig to the north. While neither cult members nor loyalists, they know roughly who is and isn't in the cult. The brothers also sell alchemical supplies to Veternes. Gold loosens their tongues considerably (+5 to Diplomacy checks to gather information, DC 20). Cultists Besk and Vlado (street thugs^{PEGMG}) provide muscle and protection.

A6. RESIDENCE

The aging elfmarked patriarch Anomar Argimas (NG cleric 3), his wife Voska (NG adept 2) and son Pol (NG fighter 2) dwell in this faded mansion. All are loyalists, though Anomar is too old to accompany adventurers to the keep. Initially indifferent, if made friendly, Anomar comes to trust the PCs and provides healing and two potions of *cure light wounds*. He knows the location of the secret cache in the infirmary (**area C8**).

A7. RESIDENCE

Widower Kasomir Voort (CN expert 3) lives in this bungalow with his newly teenaged daughter Idrana. Kasomir's wife disappeared recently, and Idrana aged considerably while Kasomir was trapping in the foothills, and she now suffers from delusions and paranoia. Idrana has seen Japek trading with Inhottavuus at the stone circle (area **A10**).

remaining faithful to Liraset Tohl, the former ruler's daughter.

Calling themselves "the Lady's Few," these hardy souls work

secretly to gather information and supplies for Liraset. If the PCs gain the loyalists' trust, they may be alerted to Veternes'

movements, cultists' activities, or introduced to Japek (area A10).

A8. RESIDENCE

The crone Anka Grivek (venerable N witch 3) and her falcon familiar occupy this cottage. Her great-nephew Japek (see **area A10**, below) occasionally visits.

A9. THE LAKEHOUSE DROP (JETTY TAVERN)

Fishmaster Khorek (N dwarf expert 2/fighter 1) leads his fellow dwarven fishermen. A wry pragmatist, Khorek is nominally a loyalist but pays lip-service to the council. He knows of the

EFFECTS OF THE ORRERY'S CURSE

GMs should make the PCs aware of a general feeling of unease and the creeping feeling of biological time passing quickly. The PCs should age roughly a year during their brief stay in the village, though they suffer no game effects at this point. Undead are unaffected, as are darakhul characters.

Undead receive a +1 circumstance bonus to resist positive-energy channeling in the village and surrounds.

THE CULT OF THE HARBINGERS, EVIL, AND CURSED LOSHTADT

Veternes' Mordiggian cult flourished as the curse enveloped Loshtadt. He wields considerable power through the council. GMs should have the villagers provide conflicting opinions about the Slahta to keep the PCs confused and troubled as to how to deal with an "evil" council. Yet, not all of the cultists are evil; some are merely pragmatists. None of the citizens will accept wholesale slaughter of their leaders.

Additionally, Veternes spreads rumors about a dark "feather-scaled night-beast," Liraset's eidolon, Inhottavuus. The villagers live in fear of this prowling menace, which they once previously wounded. The cult has also placed a 15-gp bounty on Japek Grivek's head.

Orrery, and if approached with respect (DC 17 Diplomacy check), he can provide some details of its mundane workings, capabilities, and also its location (see area F8). The fishermen know Japek trades fish-heads with Inhottavuus, Liraset's eidolon.

A10. THE STONE CIRCLE (CR 3 OR 4)

Northwest of the village lies a broken circle of standing stones. Japek Grivek exchanges "tasty" fish-heads with Inhottavuus here for kind words and news from Liraset. A gangly 15-yearold boy six weeks ago, now Japek's a strapping 20-year-old would-be hero, remaining in Loshatdt to aid the Lady's Few.

If encountered here, a skittish Inhottavuus watches while Japek welcomes "heroes" and pleads they travel to the keep. A PC showing Japek his mother's silver gryphon pin likely earns his trust (+5 to Diplomacy checks). Liraset's unfetterAPG spell leaves Inhottavuus fully capable.

Japek Grivek

XP 200

shipmate

hp 11 (AC 18 - fragile scale mail, shield; weapon: handaxe) (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)

Inhottavuus (see area E9)

ENCOUNTERS IN LOSHTADT

THE NIGHT-BEAST! (CR 3 OR 4)

In heavy wind and autumn rain, the PC's stumble upon or hear Japek and Inhottavuus either battling skeletons or fighting villagers keen to destroy the "night-beast" and capture Japek. It may be difficult for PCs to distinguish friend from foe. Inhottavuus obviously fits the bill as the town-terrorizing "feather-scaled night-beast."

Japek Grivek (see area A10)

Inhottavuus (see area E9)

CR 1/2

Former Villagers (8)

XP 135 each Skeletons

hp 4, (AC 14, no armor or weapons) (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Villagers ((8)	CR 1/2

XP 200 Farmers

hp 11 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)

Cultists' Ambush!

(CR 5) If the PCs ignored or insulted the cult, and clearly intend to investigate the Witchkeep, the mayor arranges for his cultists to

Cultists (4)

attack the PCs.

XP 400 each N-CN vagabonds

hp 15 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)

Chief Whip Mikosha Lech	CR1
XP 400	
LE initiate	
hp 13 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)	
Tactics: The cultists poorly ambush the PCs, employin	g missile
fire and Mikosha's alchemist's fire before closing for m	nelee.

Treasure: NPC gear

Part Three: Within The Witchkeep

B. THE WITCHKEEP

A small holding comprised of a gatehouse, a tower and hall, and a 20-foot-tall, two-foot-thick defensive wall built of dressed grey stones. A walkway runs inside the wall from the front on either side of the gatehouse, through the tower to the western side of the hall. All walls are of superior masonry, and the doors are superior quality; floors are smooth stone in buildings and flagstone in the courtyard.

B1. GATEHOUSE, GROUND FLOOR (CR 1/3)

This solid-looking grey-stone gatehouse appears eerily quiet, with its doors flung open, portcullis raised, and wall sconces empty.

In the morning, a lone skeleton posts a watch roster to the notice-board on the eastern wall.

Guard XP 135 Skeleton

CR 1/3

20

hp 4, (**AC** 17, studded leather; weapon: short sword) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

- **Tactics:** If the skeleton spots the party, it attempts to draw them to the upper floor (**B2**) to be targeted by his fellows in the tower (**B7** and **B8**).
- **Treasure:** Two smashed skeletons lie among a pile of two short swords and two suits of studded leather armor in the western guardroom. A silver and copper bracelet (15 gp) adorns one skeleton.

Development: The skeletons arm themselves from the armory (**B6**) to defend the keep.

B2. GATEHOUSE UPPER FLOOR

This crenellated platform overlooks the village to the south and the keep behind to the north. Overturned weapon racks and a woodstove lie among broken and bloodstained chairs.

B3. COURTYARD (CR 5)

This spacious courtyard is a mess of mud and detritus. Decaying humanoid and equine corpses lie strewn about. Two leafless, forlorn trees frame an old stone well.

Witchwolves (3)

XP 600 each hp 13 (see below)

WITCHWOLF

A ghostly blue light limns the skeleton of a large wolf, leaving a trace of ears and shaggy coat.

Witchwolf

XP 600

NE Medium undead animal Init +7 Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 natural) hp 13 (3d8) Fort +1 Ref +4 Will +3

DR 3/bludgeoning; Immune cold, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft. **Melee** bite +5 (1d6+2 plus trip)

Special Attacks: witchflash 3/day

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 17, Con -, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 16 (20 vs. trip) Skills: Perception +1, Stealth +5 Exacts Immerged Initiating Women Facus (hits)

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (bite)

Environment Witchkeep

Organization solitary pair or pack (3-12) **Treasure** None

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Witchflash (Su) The witchwolf's glow expands slightly before

arcing out in a brilliant flash. All creatures within 15 ft. must make a DC 14 Reflex check or be blinded for 1 round. A creature successfully saving against an individual witchwolf's witchflash receives a +2 bonus to saves against that witchwolf's witchflash for the next 24 hours.

The fey-blood coursing through Krakovan guard-wolves mixed with the powerful curse of the Orrery of the Moons, resulting in the creation of the witchwolf, a wolf possessed of a powerful frame and eerie blinding flash.

Tactics: The witchwolves roam the yard at point a. Each wolf must make a DC 14 Perception check to spot intruders 50 ft.+ away. If the PCs approach the stables (B9) or the hall (C), the beasts notice them and attack. After 6 rounds, another witchwolf emerges from inside the hall.

Treasure: The third witchwolf wears a moonstone-set collar engraved with "Swift" (175 gp).

Development: Battling the witchwolves in the courtyard alerts the skeletons in the armory (**B6**) and tower (**B7** and **B8**).

B4. WELL

CR 2

CR2

This stone well has had its wooden crosspiece, rope, and bucket removed. A faint sound of running water echoes from below.

This well drops down over 80 ft. to area E9.

Development: A successful DC 18 Perception check indicates a large, clawed, feather-scaled creature used the shaft recently and often. The eidolon Inhottavuus targets characters descending the shaft.

B5. SMITHY'S LEAN-TO

Smashed benches litter the floor of this ransacked structure.

EFFECTS OF THE ORRERY'S CURSE

By the time the PCs enter Witchkeep, the GM should have aged them by a few years, either through a gradual creeping or through staged sudden bursts. Describe the march of time in physical terms (growing hair and fingernails, tautening of the skin, graying hair, etc.) to give the players a visceral connection to the curse and a good reason to fear it.

Undead receive a +1 circumstance bonus to resist positive-energy channeling in the Witchkeep. Undead are not affected by the Orrery's aging-curse.

Echoes of Life

The mindless undead (basic skeletons and zombies) in this scenario maintain an echo of their former life, and continue to follow a pattern of actions or habits reflected from that life (like performing their former guard-duty tasks); but they are not otherwise free willed, thinking creatures. **Treasure:** Hidden in the rubble and rubbish is an anvil and a masterwork breastplate (Perception DC 12).

B6. TOWER, GROUND LEVEL- ARMORY (CR 2)

Weapon racks line the room's walls, interspersed by armor stands. A stairway to the west leads up.

Four skeletons stand watch here. The stair leads to B7.

Guards (4)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Skeletons

hp 4, (**AC** 17 - studded leather armor; weapons: short sword, longbow or glaive) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

- **Tactics**: Three glaive-armed skeletons pour out of the tower if the courtyard witchwolves alert them. The fourth skeleton stands in the doorway, firing a longbow at foes.
- **Treasure**: 20 short swords, 12 daggers, 15 glaives, 20 maces, 1 masterwork flail, 12 shortbows, 200 arrows, and 2 suits of broken leather armor.

B7. TOWER, MID LEVEL (CR 2)

This open-walled guardroom joins the keep's walkway via doors to the north and south.

Watch captain Keil Huber, now a skeletal champion, guards the walkway to the hall.

Keil Huber

XP 600

Skeletal Champion

hp 17, (**AC** 19, no shield; weapon: Krakovan beaked-mace (see below) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

- Tactics: Any disturbance in the tower, the courtyard, or on the walkway alerts Keil. Engaging the guards or witchwolves near the tower allows him to taunt foes with rude gestures and fire his crossbow at combatants before leaping down upon enemies.
- **Treasure:** three *potions of cure light wounds*, 30 quarrels, and a +1 *light crossbow*.
- **Development:** Before descending to repel invaders, Keil orders the guards above (**area B8**) to alert the watch commander (**C10**) and then Veternes. Keil needs four rounds to reach the stables.

B8. OBSERVATION POST (CR 1)

The crenellated roof affords a magnificent 360-degree view of both the foothills to the north and the lakeside village to the southeast. Two skeletons stand guard here. Success at opposed Perception checks means they spot approaching PCs from the village and alert all guards in the keep.

CR 1/3

Guards (2)

XP 135 each Skeletons

- **hp** 4, (AC 17, studded leather armor; weapons: short swords or shortbows) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)
- **Tactics:** The skeletons fire their bows at invaders in **B2** or the courtyard. If alerted by the watch captain, one guard leaves to contact the watch commander (C10) and then find Veternes; the remaining guard continues to target foes with missile fire.
- **Treasure:** In a woven basket by the hatch sits a new quiver with 10 silver-tipped arrows and 5 + *1 arrows*.

B9. STABLES

The stables are in a shambles and mostly empty. Two horse carcasses in full barding lie jumbled in the easternmost stall.

Treasure: Two sets of full chain barding.

C. TOHL HALL

More ostentatious than dour Krakovan tastes generally allow, the stunning stained-glass windows of this compact hall create an open façade. Filigreed edges and bas-relief mythical creatures (two-headed eagles, great wyrms, and giant wolves) adorn the trim and stonework. The front doors' lock is broken, and the heavy iron bar used to secure the portal lies twisted on the ground just inside.

The walls of the hall are masonry, internal doors are good quality, and the floors are 2-inch wooden floorboards.

The hall's guards remain inside, refusing to fight intruders in the courtyard, wall, or tower.

C1. ENTRANCE HALL

Multicolored light streams into this high-ceilinged entrance hall from large stained-glass windows. Dusty heraldic plaques, ceremonial shields, baronial portraits, and taxidermied trophies line the walls. Doors rest along the east and west walls, and a narrow balustraded staircase leads both up and down.

- **Treasure:** a light mithral shield hangs on the western wall among portraits and stuffed heads.
- **Development:** Excessive noise or combat alerts the inhabitants of **C2** and **C6**.

KRAKOVAN BEAKED-MACE

Two-handed weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Weight	Туре	Special
Krakovan Beaked-mace	25 gp	-	1d8	X3	-	10lbs	B,P	disarm, trip

41

(see

C2. GUARDROOM (CR 1)

A rough table and two chairs are the only furniture in this room.

CR1/3

CR 1/3

Guards (2)

XP 135

Skeletons

hp 4, (**AC** 17; studded leather armor; weapons: short swords) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Development: If left unmolested, the guards shadow intruders either up or down the stairs.

C3. MESS

Orderly rows of benches and creatively scratched tables suggest this is the guards' mess. A barricade of benches and stools fills the southeast corner.

C4. BARRACKS (CR 2)

This dark room smells of oil, smoke, and sweat. Four double bunks surround a rough table and four chairs.

Off-duty guards loiter here, passing the time by playing Slahta's Demise, a Krakovan card game.

Guards (5)

XP 135 each

Skeletons

- **hp** 4, (**AC** 17 studded leather armor; weapons: short swords.) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)
- **Tactics:** These skeletons fight as a unit, targeting spellcasters by flanking when possible.
- **Treasure:** A marked set of cards, 75 sp, and a carved whalebone hairpin worth 10 gp.
- **Development:** The skeletons investigate sounds of combat from areas C1-5.

C5. KITCHEN (CR 2)

A waist-high bench splits this putrid-smelling kitchen. Haphazardly scattered cooking implements lie on the tabletop among rotting foodstuffs squirming with vermin.

The cook, now a ghoul, and his zombie apprentice inhabit this room.

Cook

XP 400 Ghoul hp 13 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Assistant

CR 1/2

CR1

XP 200 Fast Zombie hp 12 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary) **Treasure:** One barrel marked "Darque Sunset" (a dry Magdar red wine worth 425 gp) sits in the southwest corner. Hidden among the recipes stored in a cupboard is a *feather token* (tree) and a *scroll of summon nature's ally III*.

C6. GUARDROOM (AS C2)

C7. LIEUTENANT'S ROOM

The door to this room locked (Disable Device DC 25).

The putrefying remains of a corpse molders in this wellfurnished room, his throat obviously cut by the dagger in his left hand.

Treasure: The former watch lieutenant's body wears scale mail and holds a +1 *keen dagger* in his hand. A healer's kit is tucked in his shirt.

C8. INFIRMARY

An infirmary of some kind, someone heavily ransacked this room.

Treasure: A small secret compartment (Perception DC 20) in the northeast corner holds four *potions of cure light wounds* and *scroll of cure disease*.

C9. STUDY

Full bookshelves line the walls of this chamber. A broad table lies under many open books, quills, maps, and scrolls.

The books are mostly histories, atlases, bestiaries, genealogies, and various northern mythologies.

Treasure: Two scrolls rest atop the broad table: *erase* and *expeditious retreat*.

C10. COMMANDERS QUARTERS (CR 2)

Large windows lend this Spartan room an airy atmosphere. A simple cot sits next to a washstand and armor rack. Several books lie unopened on a small table.

The watch-commander Lemislad Bresk, now a wightspawn, resides here.

Lemislad Bresk

XP 600

Wightspawn

hp 18, (**AC** 20, scalemail; weapon: masterwork flail) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Tactics: If accompanied by other guards, Lemislad targets lightly armored foes first with his slam attack. When alone, he attempts to lure foes into narrow spaces to avoid being flanked.



- **Treasure:** A trapped locker (poisoned dart trap, CR 1, *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*) under the bed contains an eight-sided *lesser extend metamagic rod* and two *scrolls of cure moderate wounds*.
- **Development:** If reduced to 5 hp or fewer, Lemislad attempts to flee toward the Underhalls to warn Veternes.

D. HALL, TOP FLOOR

Cantilevering out over the cliff, this level is more ostentatious than the rest of the hall: much of the northern wall consists of stained-glass panels protected by a metal grille. Doors here are of simple quality.

D1. LANDING (CR 4)

Large stained-glass windows dominate the northern wall of the landing; a broad corridor heads west.

Witchwolves (2)

XP 600 each

hp 13 (see page 21)

Tactics: The witchwolves remain outside the door to room **D2**, ignoring disturbances in the lower hall. Once the PCs reach the landing, the witchwolves attack, attempting to blind and trip foes down the stairs.

D2. GUESTROOM (CR 1)

The door to this room is locked (Disable Device DC 15).

Two beds and a nightstand sit under a broad stained-glass window in the north wall.

A pair of fast zombies—a married merchant couple from Capleon who fell to the Orrery's curse—remain trapped here.

Merchants (2)

XP 200 each Fast zombies

hp 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Treasure: The man wears a platinum gorget worth 125 gp; the woman wears two gold bracelets and silver and shell earrings (230 gp total). A saddlebag between the two beds contains a leather bag with 450 sp, a healer's kit, and two thunderstones.

D3. VETERNES' APARTMENT (CR 1)

The door to this room is locked (Disable Device DC 16).

This bedroom is a shambles. Furniture is broken and overturned; clothing, books, and various alchemical paraphernalia lie strewn about.

These functional rooms were, until recently, Veternes' bedroom. Khaade, Nedaite Tohl's homunculus, thoroughly ransacked the apartment.

Khaade

XP 400

Homunculus

hp 11 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Tactics: Driven to insanity by his master's death, Khaade hides in the darkness and swoops to attack anyone entering the room.

Treasure: A secret panel (Perception DC 17) to the east opens into a storeroom containing adventuring equipment: 50-ft. rope, 2 tanglefoot bags, 2 sunrods, and a left-handed masterwork spiked gauntlet and a vial of antiplague.

D4. APARTMENT (CR 2)

Now completely vandalized, this apartment's opulent furnishings are scratched and torn, its contents thrown about. A skeleton in livery lies near the door.

Creatures: Four bone-kobolds rummage through the detritus, searching for equipment for their mistress (E10).

Bone-Kobolds (4)

Kobold Skeletons XP 135 each hp 5

Rone-Kohold

CR 2

CR 1/2

BONE-KOBOLD (KOBOLD SKELETON)

The skeletal, lizardlike biped cocks it head toward you, as if listening to your heartbeat. Its rictus-grin reveals sharp teeth.

Bone-Nobola	CR 1/3
XP 135	
LE Small undead	
Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0	
DEFENSE	
AC 16, touch 13, flatfooted 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex,	+1 natural,
+1 size)	
hp 5 (1d8)	
Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2	
DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune cold, undead traits	
OFFENSE	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee spear +1 (1d6-1), claw -4 (1d3-1) or 2 claws +	1 (1d3-1)
Ranged sling +4 (1d3-1)	
STATISTICS	
Str 9, Dex 15, Con -, Int, -, Wis 9, Cha 8	Contraction of the second
Base Atk +1; CMB -1; CMD 13	
Feats Improved InitiativeB	

Gear: spear, hide armor

Mharoti necromancers created the bone-kobolds—who share their living counterparts' feral demeanor, if not their cunning—to provide an alternative to the attrition of warfare and conquest.

Tactics: If alerted by combat with the witchwolves, the bonekobolds act accordingly; if the witchwolves appear to be winning, the bone-kobolds wait. If the battle seems evenly matched, they join the fray. If the PCs are obviously winning, they wait by the west door to surprise incoming intruders.

Treasure: A concealed panel in one bed holds an odd multi-

CR1

CR 1/3



faceted gem (500 gp), a masterwork dagger, and *scroll of sanctuary*. The tome *Revolution and Reduction: Astrolabes*, *Orrerys and Tempus Flux* by an anonymous Zobecker (125 gp) lies under the bed.

D5. DINING HALL (CR 3)

Well lit by a bank of stained-glass windows on the northern wall, this room is evidently a dining hall. A large table festooned with a silver dinner service dominates the room. Six skeletons in hanging, grimy, faded livery are polishing and cleaning the table and the remaining room.

Servants (6)

XP 135 each

Skeletons

hp 4, (**AC** 14, no armor; weapons: -4 to hit, improvised weapons: knives, plates, candlesticks) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Tactics: Upon noticing intruders, the skeletons attack.

Treasure: The silver dinner service consists of about 50 items worth 300 gp.

D6. WORKROOM (CR ¹/₂)

Once a bedroom, this chamber now serves as an alchemical workroom and arboretum. Stained-glass windows and doors admit much light. Junk lies everywhere, and indoor plants vie with amphorae and vials; flasks and alembics are nestled among tubes and pots on every surface. Veternes requisitioned the necromancer's bedroom as his workroom. He locked the doors in the north and east walls. Veternes' chained slave-assistant, the long-suffering vegepygmy Thrawn, cowers in the northeast corner (DC 12 Perception).

CR 1/2

Thrawn

XP 200 Vegepygmy

CR 1/3

hp 5 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

- **Treasure:** Careful examination of the alchemical equipment (Perception DC 20 or Knowledge (alchemy) DC 14) reveals a flask of alkali, three vials of alchemical grease, and one vial each of liquid ice, casting plaster, and bloodblock—these represent Veternes' attempts to neutralize the Orrery.
- **Development:** Freeing Thrawn allows him to unlock the doors to the balcony (**D7**) and admit his fellows.

D7. BALCONY (CR 5)

Windswept and lofty, the balcony commands a spectacular view of the northern foothills. Plants of all shapes and sizes cover the ground or hang from the roof.

Nestled among ferns in the northeast corner lie a short sword and a pile of bones in a suit of studded leather armor infested with a struggling russet mold and placed here by Veternes in an attempt to grow some pliable servants. The mold's five vegepygmy offspring haunt the balcony and attempt to gain access to the keep. Three large mushrooms near the mold are each equal to a *cure moderate wounds potion* (DC 16 Knowledge (nature) to identify).

Vegepygmies (5) CR 1/2

XP 200 each hp 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Weak Russet Mold

XP 800

DC 12 **Fort**itude save, 1 **Con** damage/round (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

CR 3

Treasure: short sword, studded leather armor.

Part Four: The Underhall

The Tohls constructed the Underhall in order to carry out their darker work unseen. Few outsiders—only the dwarf Khorek (area **A9**)—knows of its existence. The walls are hewn stone and the passages unlit. Doors are good quality (DC 20), and the floors are smooth stone.

The GM should become familiar with the four key NPCs in the Underhall: Veternes, Liraset, Sintuande and Kiskal Nar. It may be necessary for the PCs to ally with one or more of these, depending on how they wish to proceed. These distinct personalities should be played as intelligent adversaries, opponents, or allies with their own goals and motivations. Remember, they are not static entities, and they move about the structure.

Liraset begins in area **E8**, the Heirloom Cache. She desires to end Veternes and destroy the Orrery. She refuses to ally with Kiskal Nar, who supports Veternes. She is cool toward Sintuande. Kiskal Nar is the dragonkin envoy from Mharoti. She begins in Veternes' lab (**E11**). Nar tends to play Liraset and Veternes against each other. Ultimately, she hopes to capture the Orrery for her Mharoti masters.

Sintuande begins in area E5, the apartments. He is trying to aid Liraset, but she doesn't trust him yet. He's trying to stop Veternes, but doesn't have many resources to complete the task. He's uncertain what to make of any newcomers and fears another taking his glory.

Veternes plays sly and obsequious when he thinks he can use it to advantage otherwise he acts cool and calculating. A horridly bent Ishadi darakhul, Veternes is a crafty manipulator, intent on turning the keep and village into his own domain once he eliminates the remaining opposition.

E. UNDERHALL

E1. STAIRS (CR 2)

As soon as the PCs reach the first landing, the clockwork beetle guardian attacks from above.

Clockwork Beetle CR 2

hp 16 (*Midgard Bestiary* p. 24)

Tactics: The beetle gains a surprise round if intruders fail an opposed Perception check.

Treasure: If incapacitated, the clockwork beetle can be sold to a gearmage in Zobeck or elsewhere. Created with a metamorphosis trigger, in three months it will transform into a clockwork hound (*Midgard Bestiary*)—the Orrery's curse does not affect this timeframe.

E2. TERRACED BALCONY

This balcony overlooks a large cavern rising from 50 ft. tall here, to 150 ft. tall further into the cavern. Phosphorescent moss grows over the entire ceiling, shedding an eerie blue-green light over another descending balcony fading into the darkness. A 3-ft.high brass rail runs either side of and down the stairway. It appears a scene of some kind is painted on the right and left walls, each beginning after a pillar stretching from floor to ceiling. The door to the south appears swollen with moisture.

The glowing moss affords dim light, barely illuminating a mural which begins and ends at the doors to the Orrery in area E10; the mural depicts the passage of the rising to setting sun through the history of the Arbonesse elves. A secret door (Perception DC 20) beside the steps leads to area E8. The pillars are carved to look like tree trunks, with branches that reach up into the ceiling, and adequate light reveals the branches continue, painted as "spreading" from the pillars and becoming the greenery framing the murals.

Creatures: Two haunts are bound, one to each pillar. Anyone who approaches the murals without saying "Forever Empire" in Elvish activates the haunts.

Spirit of the Wood (2)

CR 3

XP 800

CE haunt (5 ft. by 5 ft.) Caster level 3rd

Notice: Perception DC 18 (to feel a strange wind)

hp 6; Trigger proximity; Reset 1 day

Effect When triggered the mural trees rustle and the clouds race apart, uncovering the bright gibbous moon. *Summon nature's ally II* spells summon two giant spiders (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*).

Destruction The mural must be washed off and painted over; all the branches of the pillars must be broken. A fresh sprig of a springtime herb must then be crushed and burned over both haunt locations.

Development: There is a 10% chance Sintuande (**area E5**) rests here, paying his respects to his ancestors. He knows the passphrase, and says it aloud as he crosses from one side of the room to kneel before the other mural. Characters who remain unnoticed while he does this can overhear him with a DC 24 Perception check.

E3. SACRISTY (CR 3)

The door is swollen and nailed shut (Break DC 22). Once the PCs descend the stairs and open the double doors, read the following:

The smooth walls of this chamber arch to the ceiling, creating a tunnel-like effect. Complex sigils cover the walls and smooth, glistening tiled floor. Moist air and the smell of vegetation add to the room's strangeness.

Lord Tohl abandoned the sacristy after a yellow musk creeper took root in the sacrarium and captured two victims. The effects of the Orrery's curse keeps them "alive" far longer than is usual.

The shaded portion of the floor is both wet and slippery. The rest of the room is a morass of vegetation and humus that is difficult terrain. The creeper completely engulfed the sacrarium (a) and reaches up into the waterfall at point (b).

Yellow Musk Creeper

CR 2

hp 22 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Yellow-Musk Zombies (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

XP 600

hp 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Tactics: The vegetation grants the yellow-musk zombies waiting in the southern corners concealment. The zombies gain surprise if not noticed by a DC 18 Perception check.

Further Effects Of The Orrery's Curse

As the PCs descend into the Underhall and approach the Orrery, the GM should advance the PCs' age by one category (regardless of race, as the curse affects physiologies differently) and apply all subsequent ability score effects. Additionally, undead receive a +2 circumstance bonus to resist positive-energy channeling.

Treasure: In the sacrarium's basement rest the remains of previous victims. One wears a *ring of swimming*, and another wears a silver necklace worth 275 gp. The last appears to be a child, clutching a gorget marked with a sun, coin, and spear crest. A successful DC 16 Knowledge (nobility) identifies this as belonging to the noble Krakovan Artamas family. The Artamas' will pay 500 gp if the amulet is returned; 1000gp if the remains and the item are returned together.

Development: Those entering from the stream (E9) will likely be moving swiftly and disoriented, granting surprise to the creeper.

E4. LANDING BAY

This natural cavern is open to the cliff-edge on the north side. The rotting remains of a large, armored, winged creature lie in the southwest corner. Double doors lead to the east and west.

The body is that of a griffon (DC 14 Knowledge (arcana)).

Treasure: The dead griffon's barding is hacked to shreds, but a saddlebag under the corpse yields a +1 *short sword*, a darkwood buckler, and a vial of *barkskin*.

Development: If combat with the bone-kobolds (**E6**) spills into this area, the juju zombies in **E7** investigate.

E5. APARTMENT (CR 4)

This former stable has been made comfortable with an air of Spartan minimalism. A large circular sigil is painted on the floor.

This is the abode of the elf Sintuande Ehesskiel, an outcast of Arbonesse for his loyalty to the Black Sorceress (see *Midgard Legends*, p. 10). After finding succour among the elfmarked Tohls, Sintuande became infatuated with Liraset after a brief affair. Though aging and delusional, Sintuande is still a noble personage, and his bearing is refined rather than haughty. Sintuande's pet witchwolf Kuma shadows him at all times.

Kuma XP 600 Witchwolf

hp 13 (see page 21)

SINTUANDE EHESSKIEL CR 2

XP 600

LE Medium male elf antipaladin 3 (middle age) Init +0; Senses low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +2 shield, -1 dex) **hp** 20 (3d10+3)

Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities elven immunities, elven magic, unholy resilience

Immune magic sleep effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 merciful glaive +6 (1d10+3/x3, reach), +1 spiked buckler +5 (1d3+3/x2)

Special Attacks cruelty (sicken), smite good (1/day), touch of corruption

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3th, concentration +6) At will—*detect good*

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 9, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 17 Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 15

Feats Buckler Mastery, Weapon Focus (glaive)

Skills Intimidate +5, Perception +4, Sense Motive +2, Stealth +2;

Racial Modifier +2 Perception (keen senses) Languages Elvish, Trade Tongue

SQ aura of evil, aura of cowardice, plague bringer

Gear masterwork banded mail, +1 merciful glaive, +1 spiked buckler, potion of cure light wounds, scroll of cause fear.

- **Tactics:** Immune to Veternes' *darakhul fever* bite but at risk from the ghast Jadowir's paralysis, Sintuande is always armored and armed with his glaive and buckler, relying on the glaive's reach and the buckler to shield-bash adjacent foes. Sintuande uses his special abilities/qualities with the greatest synergy—i.e., *aura of cowardice* and *scroll of cause fear*. Sintuande delights in using his *touch of corruption* on spellcasters. If outclassing his opponents, he attempts to subdue them with his glaive rather than kill, hoping to turn them to his advantage with regard to his courting of Liraset.
- **Treasure:** Sintuande's simple cot and possessions are in the northern stall. An ornate gold brazier (worth 240 gp) burns on an antique Arbonessan table (worth 400 gp). Two gold-threaded tapestries hang either side of the entrance door; these form a diptych depicting a dawning sun in the Arbonessan forest. Together, these would fetch 500 gp. A +1 mace hangs on an armor stand.

E6. PREPARATION ROOM (CR 2)

- Cool and dank, this room's walls are tiled with black marble and the flagstones here are a smooth, grey basalt. Two carved sarcophagi sculpted like funerary boats—their lids broken and lying beside them—dominate this room. Strips of cloth lie piled on long tables by the north wall.
- **Creatures:** Five bone-kobolds are using this room to besiege the juju zombies in the crypt (E7).

Bone-Kobolds (5)

XP 135 each

hp 5 (see page 24)

Treasure: Careful searching (Perception DC 15) of the western boat reveals a long, thin, wand-shaped device—actually a magnet.

E7. CRYPT (CR 4)

A pool of crystal-clear water sits in a pearlescent tub on a raised dais. A smashed bone-kobold lies nearby. Wide steps lead to a platform in front of the eastern cavity lined walls.

Creatures: Juju zombies Polvlan and Vlotar, two former thieves, are in the midst of prying open one of the cavities, searching for any aid they can use against the bone-kobolds.

Thieves (2)

XP 600 each Juju zombies hp 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2)

- **Treasure:** Polvlan wears a magnificent jeweled sash worth 225 gp and Vlotar wears a gem-studded bracer worth 200 gp. Assign random small treasure as jewelry worth between 50 and 250 gp to the bodies in the remaining twelve cavities, if the PCs stoop to looting them.
- **Development:** When disturbed, the thieves seek to parley, lulling weak-seeming foes into complacency or attempting to Bluff (+0) those that appear stronger.

E8. HEIRLOOM CACHE (CR 2)

A blanket of dust lies on the floor of this odd-shaped room. Junk lies haphazardly arranged without regard for size, form, or function.

The entrance to this room is a secret door (DC 20 Perception) beside the steps leading down to area **E2**. This room conforms to the size and shape of the upper balcony (**E2**, above).

Creatures: Ilmara Tohl, Nedaite's Siwali wife, hid here after she escaped from Veternes' clutches, only to die and rise again as a wightspawn. She's now crazed and addled by her death, transformation, and captivity.

Ilmara Tohl

XP 600

Wightspawn

hp18 (**AC** 16 – nose-ring of protection +1) (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

- **Tactics:** Ilmara attempts to surprise and then use her energydraining slam attack. She fights until slain.
- Treasure: Three sacks hold 800 gp worth of archaic silver coins. Antiques in the room include a filigreed set of Mharoti +1 claw-blades, a +1 bastard sword, (6) +2 bolts, a broken antique spinning wheel, an ingenious clockwork figurine from distant Achillon (worth 800 gp), a vril battery, a

CR 2

hideous portrait of Nedaite Tohl as a young man, an ancient fragile masterwork shortbow, and 30 silver-tipped arrows. On a plinth rests a bowl and a yellowing piece of inscribed bone (DC 19 Knowledge (local) denotes these as Kariv crabdivining equipment). A wineskin containing a *potion of cure moderate wounds* sits in the bowl.

Development: Liraset (**area E9**) remains unaware of her stepmother's presence. If Liraset accompanies the party, the situation quickly results in combat. Ilmara attacks her first.

E9. GROTTO (CR 4)

A narrow shaft drops down into natural cavern containing a slow-moving stream on the edge of a gravelly beach.

This area can only be reached from the well in the courtyard (B4), or by traveling upstream from the Sacristy (area E3). The stream flows west to east and is 5-ft. deep at its deepest and is difficult terrain. Small creatures must make a DC 12 Swim check to cross to the beach.

Creatures: A bone crab in the stream attacks any intruders, except for Inhottavuus. PCs following the stream must make a DC 20 Constitution check to hold their breath long enough to be deposited above the sacrarium in area E3.

Liraset Tohl, last of the living Tohls, resides here. Previously a comely young elfmarked maiden, the now-aged and fearful Liraset relies on her eidolon Inhottavuus more and more for protection and solace. Inhottavuus resembles a cross between a beakless owl and a crab, his dull-black feathered carapace and creaking movements unsettling enough without his dread multilimbed appearance or the wicked longspear he brandishes. He is dimmer than usual for an eidolon, and manages only a poor level of communication.

Bone Crab

XP 600

hp 19 (*Midgard Bestiary* p. 13)

Liraset Tohl

XP 800

N Medium female elfmarked summoner 4 (old age) Init +0; Senses low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor) Hp 16 (4d8-4)

Fort +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities shield ally; **Immune** magic sleep effects **Resistances** +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells and effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee longspear +1 (1d8–2/x3, brace, reach) Special Attacks eidolon, spells Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +9) 8/day—summon monster II Spells per Day 5/2 (CL 4th) Spells Known 2nd—ablative barrier, twisted space 1st—lesser rejuvenate eidolon, shield, unfetter

0—daze, detect magic, message, mage hand, read magic, resistance

STATISTICS

Str 7, Dex 11, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 20 Base Atk +3; CMB +1; CMD +11

Feats Augment Summoning, Elf-marked, Extra Evolution **Skills** Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7,

Perception +8, Spellcraft +10, Use Magic Device +9; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception (keen senses)

Languages Trade, Darakhul, Elvish.

SQ bond senses, elf blood, lifelink,

Treasure +1 studded leather, +1 light fortification bracers of armor, wand of magic missiles (12 charges), brass key

Inhottavuus, Liraset's Ediolon

Base form: Biped

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +2 armor, +2 natural armor)

hp 17 (3d8+3)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft.

Melee longspear +7 (1d8+3/x3, brace, reach), 2 pincers +6 (1d8+3)

STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 11 Base Atk +3; CMB +6; CMD +17

Feats Simple Weapon Proficiency (longspear), Weapon Focus (longspear)

Skills Knowledge (planes) +1, Perception +3, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +4

Free Evolutions Claws*, Limbs (arms), Limbs (legs) Chosen Evolutions Improved Damage (pincers), Improved Natural Armor, Limbs (arms), Limbs (legs), Magic attacks, Pincers (*instead of claws),

Languages Elvish, Trade Tongue SQ evasion, link, share spells

Gear masterwork longspear

- **Tactics:** Provided enough warning, Liraset casts ablative barrier on Inhottavuus and shield on herself. She avoids melee if possible, but fires her wand. She uses her summon monster abilities if Inhottavuus dies.
- **Treasure:** Hidden (Perception DC 16) in a crate under three ft. of sand on the beach lies Liraset's cache of three *cure light wounds potions*.
- **Development:** Liraset avoids Sintuande and seeks to evaluate the adventurers before suing for peace, allying, or attacking. Steadfast and resolute in her desire to end Veternes and destroy the Orrery, she refuses to ally with Kiskal Nar.

Liraset sends Inhottavuus to the village occasionally to gather supplies—she is, however, unhappy with his association with Japek. If Inhottavuus died in a previous encounter, he is now fully healed, but the buried cache is diminished. In this case, or if Japek is present, Liraset's starting attitude is unfriendly; otherwise, she is indifferent.



CR 3



One Square = Five

If Inhottavuus senses any fish-heads carried by party members, he becomes agitated. If they give him fish-heads, the PC's receive a +5 bonus to Diplomacy checks with Liraset; if they keep any fish-heads from the eidolon, Inhottavuus becomes enraged, casts aside his spear, and attacks with his natural weapons, gaining a +2 strength bonus and a -2 AC penalty until he receives his "treats."

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BA

CR 2

CR 1/3

Ro

E10. THE GREAT CAVERN (CR 3)

A mural of a dark forest inhabited by a myriad of magical beasts stretches along all the walls of this massive natural cavern. A deep, yawning chasm edged in white marble occasionally sprays a fine mist along with a gust of wind.

The ghast Jadowir Aptal, always flanked by three skeleton guards, protects the approach to the Orrery by the western wall. This formerly respected townsman now serves as Veternes' reluctant enforcer.

Jadowir Aptal

XP 600 Ghast

hp 13 (**AC** 18 – chain shirt) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Guards (3)

XP 135 each

Skeletons

hp 4 (AC 19 - scale mail; weapons: shortbows or short swords) (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Tactics: Jadowir orders the guards to pepper foes with missile fire until the opponents come close enough to be affected by his stench ability. He targets melee types for paralysis; the skeleton guards focus on casters, either at range or in melee.

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BA

- Treasure: A painted shadowy white unicorn peers out between two trees on the western wall, a DC 20 Perception check reveals its horn as the tip of a +1 longspear set into the masonry. Liraset, unaware of its hiding spot, recognizes it on sight as a Tohl heirloom and demands it be handed over to her if she sees a PC carrying it.
- **Development:** If Veternes resides in the library, Jadowir attempts to lead adventurers to meet "the Master." If Jadowir is present during a PC attack on Veternes, there is a 15% chance that Jadowir turns on his creator.

E11. LABORATORY (CR 4)

A dizzying array of smashed and damaged alchemical equipment, benches, stands, and shelves identify this round chamber as a laboratory. A pile of bottles, tubes, and cases lies against the southern wall.

The Mharoti dragonkin envoy Kiskal Nar makes Veternes' lab her secured redoubt. Nar's minions are responsible for much of the ransacking and destruction throughout the keep. Though allied with Veternes, and aged and injured, Nar still dreams of capturing the Orrery for her Mharoti masters. While Liraset and Veternes cautiously step around each other, Nar offers the alchemist advice and aid.

Bone-Kobolds (3)

XP 135 each

hp 5 (see page 24)

Kiskal Nar

XP 800

N Medium dragonkin witch 4 (gauntlet witch KQ23) (middle aged)

Init -1; Senses darkvision 60ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 9, flatfooted 14 (+4 armor, +1 natural, -1 dex)

hp 18 (4d6+4) (injured - currently on 13 **hp**)

Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +5

Resist cold 2

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee eldritch gauntlet +4 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks aegis strike, hex, pain clasp, spells Patron Unlife

Patron Spells *false life* (2nd) *command undead* (4th) **Hex:** misfortune (DC 15)

Spells per Day 4/4/3 (CL 4th, Concentration

+7)

Spells Prepared

2nd - haunting mists, hold person, summon monster II
1st - burning hands, false life, ray of enfeeblement, sleep
0 - bleed, daze, detect magic, touch of fatigue

statistics

Str 13, **Dex** 9, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; CMD +3 (+5 grapple); CMD +3 (+5 grapple)

Feats Alertness, Skeleton Summoner, Spell focus (necromancy)

Skills Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcane) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +8, Spellcraft +10

SQ (lore, telepathy, unbreakable – eldritch gauntlet)

Equipment

Eldritch gauntlet "Vakkra" – +1 masterwork spiked eldritch gauntlet, +4 armor bonus to **AC**, **Int** 11, **Wis** 7, **Cha** 7, ego 5.

Tactics: If forewarned, Kiskal casts false life before summoning skeletons to bolster her bone-kobolds. She uses burning hands without concern for her minions, and casts *sleep* to capture PCs for Veternes. In melee, Kiskal favors her pain clasp gauntlet ability, seeking to incapacitate armored foes. She directs her minions against casters.

Treasure: A pile of mundane items rests by the southern edge of the room.

The faithful, if dim, bone-kobolds have placed anything resembling a vial, bottle, scroll, or case here.

E12. LIBRARY (CR 4)

C1/3

CR 3

Thousands of books line the walls of this barbell-shaped room on sagging bookshelves or sit on lecterns, low tables, seats, desks, and even piled atop each other. One bookshelf stands completely empty, its books meticulously piled to one side.

The library was the late Lord Tohl's pride and joy. Veternes is methodically searching through every leaf and page of every book searching for a tome relating to the Orrery (**see D4**). If encountered here, Veternes plays sly and obsequious, (attempting to trick or otherwise allay PCs' fears) unless the ghast Jadowir does not accompany visitors—then he acts cool and calculating.

A horridly bent Ishadi darakhul, Veternes, nevertheless, remains a crafty manipulator. He wears a masterwork spiked gauntlet on his right hand. He hides his left arm, long ago replaced by an experimental vestigial arm, within his voluminous wrappings.





Veternes

CE Medium darakhul alchemist 3 (vivisectionist)/adept 1 (Mordiggian)

CR 4

Init +2; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural armor) hp 29 (3d8+1d6+12)

Fort -, Ref +9, Will +8

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, damage reduction 5/ magic and daylight, undead traits

Resistances poison resistance +2

Weaknesses daylight

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft.

Melee masterwork shortsword +6 (1d6+3), 2 claws +5 (1d4+3, plus paralysis), 1 bite +5 (1d6+3, plus paralysis and disease)

Special Attacks disease (darakhul fever), formulae, paralysis, sneak attack +2d6, spells

Cantrips known: ghost sound, read magic, touch of fatigue **Spells per day** 1 (CL 1st, **Con**centration +4)

1st - command

Extracts per Day 5 (CL 3rd, Concentration +7)

Formulae Known (Formula Book)

1st—deathwatch, disguise self, endure elements, enlarge person, expeditious retreat, touch of the sea

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 19, Con —, Int 20, Wis 17, Cha 16 Base Atk +2; CMB +5; CMD 19

Feats Brew Potion, Iron **Will**, Lightning **Ref**lexes, Multiattack, Skill Focus (Perception), Throw Anything, Weapon Finesse (short sword)

Skills Knowledge (dungeoneering) +15, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +8, Spellcraft +6, Stealth+6; Racial Modifier +8 to Climb, Intimidate, and Knowledge (dungeoneering)

Languages Ankeshelian, Caelmaran, Darakhul, Draconic, Enochian, Elvish, Trade Tongue.

SQ alchemy, mutagen*, vestigial arm (discovery)

Gear: masterwork short sword, thunderstone, right-hand masterwork spiked gauntlet, extracts, brass key

*Veternes stats with favored Strength Mutagen – AC 20, Str 20, Int 18, AC 22, +8 mwk short sword (1d6+5), 2 claws +7 (1d4+5) plus paralysis, 1 bite +7 (1d6+5, plus paralysis).

Tactics: If alerted and prepared, Veternes has imbibed his *deathwatch* and *disguise self* extracts to keep tabs on foes and appear friendlier. If confident he can overpower enemies, Veternes imbibes his strength mutagen and then attempts a sneak attack. If surprised or in open combat, he throws a thunderstone at enemy casters, imbibes his strength mutagen, and uses his paralysis touch (again targeting spellcasters first), preferring to attack and winnow foes before quaffing an *enlarge person* extract. Veternes only uses his bite as a last resort—he is extremely leery of creating a creature that might best him. If faring badly, he flees to the sacristy (E3) and imbibes his touch of the sea extract before braving the creeper and the underground stream. **Development:** Veternes flees through the secret door in the south wall if Sintuande or Liraset are present, or if he's wounded (reduced to 5 hp or fewer).

E13. SANCTUM OF THE ORRERY (CR 3)

A dimly lit chamber with a high-domed ceiling completely houses an intricate and complex Orrery. The device's central portion consists of a 5-ft. knob-studded opaline sphere. Seven giant concentric rings of brass and silver spin languidly on several axes piercing the sphere. One of the seven Mage Stars or Midgard moons glimmers from its mount point on a different ring. Other lesser celestial bodies, comets, and moonlets likewise spin while attached to the rings or jutting off from the main sphere on small rods.

A relic of Caelmarathi wizardry, the Orrery of the Stars generates the aging-curse plaguing the keep and surrounding countryside. Nedaite Tohl's soul occupies the Orrery, but poses no immediate threat to adventurers who do not tamper with the sphere's control panel. A Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 20) or Disable/Use Magic Device or Knowledge (history) check (DC 23) reveals the workings of the Orrery. A second successful check permits an untrained individual to operate the control panel, reversing or neutralizing the curse. Failing a check alerts Nedaite Tohl's soul, causing the Orrery to swing into action. Its moon-bearing rings begin spinning with deadly speed and weight.

The following aids may assist in deciphering and operating the control panel:

- Following guidelines in the tome from area **D4** adds a +6 bonus to the check roll.
- Information gathered from the dwarf Khorek (area A9) grants a +4 bonus.
- A clockwork expert (clockwork domain, or gearforged race) grants a +5 bonus.
- Simultaneously inserting and turning both brass keys (carried by Liraset and Veternes) halts the Orrery and reverses the curse; a full turn stops the aging effect. Both Liraset and Veternes know this, and jealously guard their keys.
- Inserting one brass key wakes the Orrery from its slumber and causes it to attack, as does inserting the gem from **area D4** or the metamagic rod from area **C10**.

Once the Orrery "awakens," a character needs three successful DC 23 Knowledge (history/engineering) Or Disable/Use Magic Device checks to operate the control panel and return the Orrery to quiescence. If five checks are failed in total (not necessarily consecutively), the Orrery locks in a berserk mode,

(-1 AC, +1 to attack rolls), and becomes "inoperable" for days. In addition, the following actions may help or hinder the attacking Orrery:

- Inserting both brass keys: The Orrery becomes staggered for 1-3 rounds, one key staggers it for one round. (No save)
- Inserting the multifaceted gem into the ring of the 4th moon counts as a success for Disable Device,

XP 1200



rendering the ring unusable and deactivating one of the Orrery's slam attacks. A successful Perception check (DC 18) or Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 16) ascertains this information—increase both DCs by 2 if the Orrery is attacking.

- Inserting the metamagic rod into the control panel negates the Orrery's fear aura.
- Each application of the alchemical vials from area (D6) to the workings of the Orrery, stagger it for 1-3 rounds
- If the *feather token*, tree (from area C5) is employed the Orrery will be unable to attack for three rounds while it demolishes the tree.
- The Orrery chooses as a target anyone carrying the magnet from area **E6**, receiving a +1 circumstance bonus to attack.
- Khorek may have explained that the Orrery's rings have two "blind-spots" (marked x on map) – standing here provides a +2 circumstance bonus to a creature's AC. A DC 20 Perception check also locates these spots – for every round of combat this DC decreases by 1.

Positive channeling harms the Orrery at half effectiveness, and the Orrery receives a +2 bonus to resist. Negative channeling has no effect.

CR 3

Orrery of the Seven Moons

NE Medium construct (stone)

Init –1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0 Aura fear (DC 15, 1d4 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (5 natural, +4 deflection) hp 36 (3d10+20) Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1 DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune construct traits

Defensive Abilities protective barrier SR 15

OFFENSE

Speed 0 ft. (immobile)

Melee 4 slam +7 (1d4+4)

Special Attacks extended reach (whole chamber) **Spell-like Abilities** 3/day animate dead

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1 **Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** +16 (cannot be disarmed) **SQ** gust

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear Aura (Su) The Orrery emits an aura of fear in a 30-foot radius. Any creature within that radius must make a Will save (DC 15) or become shaken for 1d4 rounds. The Orrery's fear effect is Strength-based.

- **Gust (Ex)** Whenever the Orrery is spinning, it creates a constant blast of air in a 30-foot radius that blows gases away from itself at the rate of 5 feet per round. Missile fire suffers a -1 penalty to attacks.
- **Protective Barrier (Ex)** Whenever the Orrery is spinning, it deflects any physical attacks made against it. This provides it with a +4 deflection bonus. This bonus decreases by 1 for every

9 points of damage it takes, to a minimum of 0.

- **Extended Reach (Ex)** The Orrery's spinning rings and attached orbiting moons grant an extended reach of 30 feet.
- **Tactics:** Being immobile, the Orrery suffers particularly from ranged attacks from outside the room, i.e. beyond the reach of its rings. Nedaite Tohl's hollow screams (animate dead) call forth skeletons from under the flagstones to counteract this.
- **Treasure:** The components of the disassembled Orrery are bulky, weighing in excess of 3000 pounds. Nevertheless, they are worth 4000 gp to the right buyer.

Concluding The Adventure

In a continuing campaign, if Veternes survives the destruction and flees, he either plots to return to the area to repair the Orrery, or, if the machine is utterly destroyed, he plans to build a replacement in another Krakovian community.

Veternes's defeat means Liraset can begin the process of healing and rebuilding her home. She values the characters as heroes, and asks if they are willing to assist. This could begin a much more involved relationship and realm-building theme. Otherwise, she offers them what treasure she can, up to 250gp per character, and declares they are welcome back any time. They gain 1 Status when in her domain or allied domains.

Defeating the Orrery and Veternes earns Sinatuande's gratitude, permitting the antipaladin to continue courting Liraset. If friendly with the party, he thanks them and aids them in recovery in any way he can. If hostile with the party, but he has survived, he remains in hiding until they depart, then eventually weds Liraset with a sufficient dowry, ensuring she can repair much of the damage and lure settlers to return to Loshtadt.

Failure to destroy the Orrery means Veternes' plot destroys the town, creating a growing zone of magical aging which draws more undead under his control. If the characters escape, they will likely be quite aged. Seeking out a method to reverse the effect, or protect themselves sufficiently to return is beyond the scope of this adventure, but a good starting point for further stories.

With the destruction of the Orrery, the undead created by its foul necromancy all wither and crumble into dust. Any remaining witchwolves disappear into the countryside. The Lady's Few faction will be grateful to the PCs for lifting the curse. Surviving Harbingers Cult members gradually drift away. Life in Loshtadt slowly returns to normal.

If hired by the Slahta, the PCs receive 500 gp each and high praise from the council.

Award the PCs 1000 XP each for ending the curse—1500 XP each if they neutralized the curse without destroying the Orrery.



By Ted Reed

Listen now to a song of the North Wind. Hearken to a story of mystery, of honor amidst deceptions, of feud and betrayal and nightmarish horrors, and of those long forgotten rising to walk beneath the icy stars.

Listen now to a Tale of the North

"On the Fourth Day, We Kill Them All" is a Northlands adventure for four to six 3rd-level PCs.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In western Trollheim, the great House Hávardr ("hah-VAR-der," meaning high-guard) is about to fall, destroyed by its ancient rival, Clan Ránulfr ("rawn-ULF-er," plundering wolf). The PCs can save the noble house through a means whose story began centuries ago.

WINTER'S CURSE

From the heart of the Bleak Expanse, where arctic wastelands stretch off the world's end, the cruel god Boreas plots to cover Midgard in eternal winter. Centuries ago, humans of Issedon, a stronghold populated by Hyperborean wizards and Trollheim warriors, joined with Nordheim and Aurvang dwarves to form the Vanguard Kingdom and erect the great Wall to contain Boreas's arctic domain.

House Hávardr stood first among the Trollheim Issedonian nobles. With dwarven stonemasonry aided by Hyperborean magic, Hávardr built Íssvardr ("ice-watch") Tower and held it for generations against Boreas's thuellia, ice elementals, and deadly winds. Hávardr called its garrison the Winter Watch and its commander, always a woman, the Vetrdís ("VEH-TRE-dis"), meaning Winter Lady.

When Boreas unleashed his living glaciers, however, they crushed the Vanguard Kingdom and shattered the Wall. His Illska ("cruelty") Glacier swallowed Issvardr Tower. Inside, the glacier's curse turned the Vetrdís into ice. It terrified some defenders to death. It froze most within many feet of ice to linger alive, forever in winter's grip. Over ensuing centuries, the glacier carried the ice-encased tower hundreds of leagues southward.

Before the living glaciers' onslaught, the Vanguard Kingdom's spellcasters found the most effective magics to resist Boreas's freezing curses embraced symbols of spring's arrival. The glaciers buried most of their lore, but the core of their curse-suppressing magic lives on in the rustic Spring's Kiss ceremony practiced at many spring Ice-Break Pings (festivals, pronounced "things") throughout the Northlands. A maiden chosen for her virtue and pale beauty serves as the Vetrdís, the Winter Lady, and Fate's chosen youth becomes the Spring Lord.

Sourcebook References

Citations to N:RWC refer to Open Design's sourcebook Northlands: Roleplaying Winter's Chill, which adds enormous depth to the adventure's mythology, setting, and events. All references to NPC statistics in bold text, such as, "Use Shipmate statistics," refer to the Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide's NPC Gallery.

On the equinox, the festival's last day, he gives her the kiss that breaks winter's grip. This charming custom may hold the key to House Hávardr's salvation.

HOUSE HÁVARDR'S PLIGHT

For centuries, House Hávardr stood as the preeminent clan west of Three Glacier Fjord in western Trollheim, with an unassailable reputation, extensive lands, and the region's greatest longship fleet. For generations, Clan Ránulfr, east of the fjord, resented Hávardr's status, wealth, and the fame of its wildly successful Viking raids. Last spring, Hávardr's Jarl, Ásvaldr ("ahz-VAL-der," ancient-divine-might), gathered all Hávardr longships and fighters for a massive southbound raid of unprecedented scale, and called all regional clans to join. When Clan Ránulfr, fearing trickery, declined Ásvaldr's invitation, Ásvaldr openly mocked Ránulfr's cowardice. Northlanders deem cowards níðingrs ("KNEE-thingers"), dishonorable objects of loathing and scorn.

No expedition ships returned, however. Few Hávardr warriors remain. Now Ránulfr maneuvers to destroy its debilitated rival when Hávardr's scions cross the fjord for the upcoming Ice-Break Þing.


TRAPPED BENEATH JCE

If someone begins her turn in the water, there's a 25% chance an ice floe pushes over her before she takes any action. She must then choose to make either a DC 12 Swim check (a move action) or a DC 12 Reflex save. Upon success, her turn continues normally. Upon failure, ice pushes her down, and she must make a new DC 12 Swim check to resurface.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs travel down Three Glaciers Ford towards the village Viezla in a longship carrying passengers and Fanna, this year's Winter Lady, to the Þing. In a towering iceberg maze, the ship seemingly strikes a submerged iceberg; in truth, it has bumped the colossal, legendary Firth Monster, which follows and destroys the ship on an ice-pack shelf in front of Illska Glacier. As the Firth Monster crashes into the ice shelf, chasing the fleeing shipmates, the glacier partially collapses, revealing Issvardr Tower encased within, its topmost windows opening on the glacier's top.

Escaping inside, the PCs discover countless soldiers wearing ancient Hávardr heraldry frozen deep in ice. They glimpse a beautiful, armored woman's ice statue. The fugitives' presence awakens undead called frights that terrify victims to death. After a harrowing escape through the tower's top, the PCs lead survivors to Viezla.

Hávardr Hall welcomes and feasts the PCs before sharing its plight and requesting help. Ránulfr is spreading word that all Hávardr will die afraid. The Hávardrs ask the PCs to protect their scions from Ránulfr plots and meet other clan leaders at the Þing to strengthen Hávardr support.

As frights reach Viezla, clan leaders the PCs meet are found dead from fear. When witnesses see frights wearing Hávardr's sigil, Ránulfr denounces Hávardr for summoning monsters to slaughter its rivals.

The PCs discover Ránulfr has allied with the frights. They also uncover Ránulfr's plans to lead its allied clans against Hávardr Hall at dawn on the Þing's final day, butchering everyone within.

The PCs learn the Þing's Spring's Kiss ceremony preserves the essence of an ancient ritual to break Boreas's freezing curses. Racing back to the tower, they perform the ritual on the ice statue, releasing the ancient Hávardr guardsmen. They convince the soldiers to march to their present-day kin's aid before the sun rises. As warriors that time forgot fall upon the army attacking Hávardr Hall, the PCs plunge inside the Hall to stop Ránulfr from feeding Hávardr's scions to the frights.

Hookş

The PCs commence the adventure aboard the Falgeirr (travelspear), a small longship ferrying passengers and merchant wares down Three Glacier Fjord from the port village Skári to Viezla for the Ice-Break Ping. Although the adventure works best if the PCs decide to protect Fanna, there are many roles they could play. The PCs could simply be aboard as:

- House Hávardr guards, escorting Fanna to the Þing;
- Falgeirr oarsmen, guards, or both;

- Þing festival-goers seeking clans hiring adventurers for spring raiding;
- Niál Kormákson's or another merchant's bodyguard.

LONGSHIP CREWMEMBERS

Use **Shipmate** statistics except as follows: **AC** 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex); **Melee** +3 handaxe (1d6+1/x3); **Ranged** throwing axe (1d6+1); **Feats** Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]); Gear leather armor, 1d3 gp.

PASSENGERS

The ship carries merchants, festival-goers (use **Shopkeep** statistics), the characters, plus the following NPCs:

FANNA, THE WINTER LADY

Three House Hávardr women travel the province each winter to select the Ice-Break Þing's Vetrdís. This year, in the far western hamlet Drífa, they discovered Fanna ("snowdriff"), a beautiful, 16-year-old maiden of direct Hávardr descent, with white skin, silver-blonde hair, and startlingly pale-blue eyes. Travel thrills the shy Fanna. Keeping her safe guarantees a warm welcome at Hávardr Hall.

Use Shopkeep statistics, except as follows: AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex); hp 22; Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4; Dex 16, Int 12, Cha 17; Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes; Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +9, Perception +6, Survival +7, Swim +8, Stealth +7; Gear endure elements potion, white arctic-fox cloak (loaned by Hávardr delegation), dagger, 4 gp.

NORD ALREKSON

Fanna's spry grandfather is boisterous, and all but toothless. He tells any who listen how, 40 years ago, his deceased wife became the fairest Vetrdís anyone ever saw. Until now.

Use Barkeep statistics except as follows: AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex); Ref +3; Dex 14; Acrobatics +7, Climb +4; Gear endure elements potion, studded leather armor, dagger, 7 gp.

NIÁL KORMÁKSON

Niál travels throughout Trollheim selling potions, alchemical items, genuine curios, convincing forgeries, and snake oil. Use Shopkeep statistics, carrying 65 gp. This entertaining peddler's chests contain four of every item worth 20 gp or less on the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook's* "Special Substances and Items" Table (except holy water). His reinforced backpack contains:

POTIONS

- 4 *cure minor wounds*, labeled "cure light wounds"
- 4 endure elements
- 3 remove fear
- 1 disguise self
- 1 expeditious retreat

- 1 gliding step
- 1 levitate
- ELIXIRS
- 2 swimming
- 2 tumbling



Part One: Fury Of The North

THE FALGEIRR'S END (CR 1)

After having struck a submerged iceberg, your longship, the Falgeirr, begins taking on water, and the captain has directed it to shore. The closest point is a white, gleaming ice sheet, a few hundred feet deep, which runs along the entire glacier front's width. The glacier's front is a massive blue-ice wall a half-mile wide and 300 feet tall. It stands between sheer, flanking stone cliffs.

This shore is actually a pack-ice shelf several feet thick, floating on 10-ft.-deep water. Treat it as an ice sheet (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, Environment, Desert).

The Falgeirr's speed puts the hull one-third up on a shelf low point. The characters, Fanna, Nall, and Niál disembark the following round, and crew and merchants begin freeing cargo to bring ashore as repairs are completed. Have 10 or 15 crewmembers on the ice when the Firth Monster arrives two rounds later; the monster acts last in initiative order. Shipmates have a 50% chance of fleeing across the shelf in the opposite direction (East or West) of the PCs, while the others, including Fanna, Nall, and Niál, join the PCs.

Suddenly, a creature's colossal head, perched atop a serpentine neck, rises as tall as the mast. The water around it boils and steams. The beast surges forward, seizes the Falgeirr in its massive jaws, and lifts the longship entirely into the air.

Those within 30 ft. of the ship must make DC 15 Reflex saves to avoid 2d6 ice damage, save for half. The following round, the Firth Monster flings the ship, spinning, towards the east. The longship flies 60 ft., shatters, and slides 60 ft. farther in pieces. The beast screams and begins chasing the survivors.

Development: Proceed to "The Sundering Ice."

THE SUNDERING ICE (CR VARIES)

This is a chase-through-obstacles scene, not a combat encounter. Make the Firth Monster an obviously cataclysmic, invincible foe to flee, not an adversary to challenge.

With a deafening howl, the monstrosity surges forward, crashing its scorching bulk into the ice shelf in an explosion of ice shards and spray. Dark cracks fissure forward from the behemoth's impact with a grinding, splintering roar. The horror pulls back and surges forward again. And again.

The monster moves up and down the shelf front. As sections splinter into numerous ice floes careening against each other, the colossus clumsily surges through the wreckage after the fugitives. It overtakes and devours trailing shipmates or flings a massive ice chunk forward, crushing stragglers like fleas.

Obstacles: To cross the fracturing ice-floe field, everyone faces a series of obstacles in the following order:

1. Jump	4.
2. Hazard (on table)	5.

5. One Hazard and a Jump

- 3. Glacier Front Collapse
- 6. Reach the Tower

Jump

Each Hazard occurs on an ice floe 3d10+20 ft. in diameter. Each Jump occurs at its far edge. PCs have 6 rounds to cross each floe and overcome its Hazard or Jump. Thereafter, either the floe splinters, dumping all into water, or the Firth Monster moves into bite range (bite +26 (4d8+22/19-20 plus 8d6 fire). Reset the 6-round limit for each ice floe. Separate groups face different Hazards or different Jump distances. Each obstacle kills 10% of all NPCs not accompanied by a PC. The Firth Monster targets crewmembers and merchants before the characters or named NPCs.

Jump (CR 1 each) Gaps between ice floes are 2d6 ft. wide. Reroll distances every round because floes shift.

THE GLACIER FRONT'S COLLAPSE

As the Firth Monster again crashes the ice, several massive



rents race up the glacier's face with a thunderous sound like tearing metal. A glacier-front section, 300 ft. tall and half as wide, calves away from the ice cliff with a roar, plummeting down amidst ice and spray.

Ice powder billows outward. Everyone must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1 round.

The collapsing ice partially reveals a cylindrical tower encased within the glacier. White against the surrounding blue ice, the tower lists northward at a 15-degree angle. A doorway opens into its black interior, just above the new pile of fractured ice. Its only visible windows stare out just above the glacier's top.

Development: Once the group reaches the tower, the collapse leaves a massive ice-rubble ramp leading up to the tower's open doorway, traversable with a DC 8 Acrobatics or Climb check. After everyone enters, the Firth Monster rages outside through the night. Proceed to **Act Two**.

Part Two: Fear Rising

İşşvardr Tower Features

Fortified by ancient magics, the 300-ft. tower withstands the glacier's crushing weight but lists 15° northward. Air temperature inside is 0° F. Several feet of ice cover most interior surfaces. The wisp-like glow of the guard's souls (see below) provides dim light.

Fifteen 20-ft.-high stories comprise the tower's interior. Other than floors 1, 9, and 15, all are inaccessible, entirely ice-filled, except for the stairwell.

The Glacier Face and Tower Exteriors: Both require DC 30 Climb checks to climb. Each round, a glacier climber faces a 5% chance ice he climbs gives way.

1. CORRIDORS

The doorway opens on a dark corridor of ice (a 4-ft.wide, 8-ft.-high corridor). The entire passage lists 15° northward. Some ice is clear, but other sections are ridged and cloudy. Numerous small, shivering lights hang in the air at different heights, each barely inches from a wall. Blue, silver, and pale white, these ghostly wisps are weaker than candle flames. Although the ice reflects them many times over, they shed little illumination.

The ice walls encase tower guardsmen, frozen in movement. Even with normal light, one needs a DC 15 Perception check to see their suspended figures. A DC 15 Knowledge (history) or (nobility) check identifies their armor's engraved devices as ancient Hávardr's sigils. Only the Spring's Kiss ritual can restore them to life. The incorporeal lights are the guardsmen's souls.

In rooms, PCs can detect furniture and mundane supplies buried within the ice.

2. STOREROOM

A DC 15 Perception check detects crates labeled "Arctic Gear" near the encasing ice's surface. Three men hacking with axes for 15 minutes reach crates with 20 dry cloaks and sets of boot, 100 feet of hemp rope, 100 torches, 4 lanterns, 10 oil flasks, 10 Trollheim crampon pairs, a mountaineer's staff (5 charges), 3 runic talismans (Alzig, TĒwaz, and Berkanan), six frozen potions (*chill heart* (2), *goat's hoof charm, snowblind stare, spellforged sinews III, wolfsong*), and one oil of hero's steel vial (see *N:RWC* Chapter 4).

D6	Hazard	Effect
1	Fissure opens beneath feet	DC 13 Reflex save avoids falling into the water. If fail, DC 15 Reflex to catch the ice floe's edge.
2	Ice floe suddenly tips 20 degrees sideways	DC 15 Reflex save avoids falling prone. While standing, DC 15 Acrobatics to move at base speed; DC 20 to run. If falling prone, DC 15 Reflex save to avoid sliding 2d6 ft. per round. Repeat save each round until stopped.
3	A wave rolls across the ice floe	DC 13 Reflex save or fall prone and become soaked (see Freezing Water Hazards sidebar).
4	Ice floe shudders and lurches as hit by other floes	Each person makes DC 12 Survival or Knowledge (nature), or DC 17 Perception to pick a safe route. If fail, DC 13 Reflex save to avoid crack closing on foot, pinning victim. DC 15 Strength or Escape Artist frees.
5	Ice floe shudders with cracking sounds; small cracks appear everywhere	Each person makes DC 12 Survival or Knowledge (nature), or DC 17 Perception to pick a safe route. If fail, DC 13 Reflex save to avoid crack closing on foot, pinning victim. DC 15 Strength or Escape Artist frees.
6	Shipmates near PCs, facing own obstacle, freeze with indecision	DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate gets them moving. On failure, half suffer obstacle's adverse results.

HAZARDS TABLE (CR 1 EACH)

3. STAIRWELL

Creatures: When anyone approaches the ascending staircase, an ice elemental resembling Boreas—a gaunt, savage-eyed man with spiky hair and beard—bursts from the central ice and attacks.

MEDIUM ICE ELEMENTAL

XP 800

hp 30 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

TACTICS

It kills one target at a time before attacking the next. It retreats through ice walls if badly injured, emerging elsewhere for better positioning. It pursues, fighting until destroyed.

Boreal Frights: Boreas's living glacier brought supernatural terror as well as ice. Some guards died of horror before they could freeze, arising thereafter as boreal frights. All frights manifest death's most ghastly aspects, their twisted visages frozen in a rictus of supernatural horror. Boreal frights are grotesquely distorted skeletons, bound by desiccated gristle strips, rimed with ice. These frights wear ancient Hávardr armor.

Frights exist to torture and terrify the living to death. Cunning, devious, and patient, they devise elaborate plans to achieve their ends. Frights derive exquisite pleasure from mutilating and murdering people they loved, and destroying causes they championed while living. Those here want nothing more than eradicating everything precious to House Hávardr. Sealed inside the tower for centuries by glacial ice, they eventually slid into catatonic stasis. They slowly begin stirring now, called by the living's presence.

BOREAL FRIGHT

XP 600

NE Medium undead

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft; Perception +10
DEFENSE

DEFENS

CR 3

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 Armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural) hp 22 (3d8+9)

Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3

Defensive Abilities DR 5/slashing; **Immune** cold, undead traits **Weaknesses** reflection vulnerability

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 20 ft. (good) (see uncanny glide ability) **Melee** war razor +5 (1d4/18-20), bite +0 (1d6)

Special Attacks create spawn, mortifying appearance, terrifying traps

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th)

5/day—dancing lights, darkness, ghost sound (DC 13), light, silence (DC 15)

3/day-obscuring mist, silent image (DC 14)

1/day—dimension door

TACTICS

During Combat Frights yearn to scare victims to death, not kill them with blows. They dart in and out of sight and cover, far beyond melee reach, until their mortifying appearance overwhelms foes. They dimension door directly behind foes that consistently avert their eyes. They pursue fleeing victims relentlessly.

Morale Frights rarely abandon an attack altogether until they kill





a victim, although they often retreat if reduced below 10 hp to seek better attack opportunities.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 16, Con --, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 16
Base Atk +2; CMB +2; CMD 15
Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse
Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +8, Craft (traps) +9, Fly +13,
Intimidate +8, Perception+10, Stealth +13; Racial Modifiers
Climb +4, Craft (traps) +4, Perception +4, Stealth +4
Languages Trade Tongue

SQ uncanny glide

ECOLOGY

Environment any cold

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3-12)

Treasure standard (1d4 war razors and daggers, leather armor, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Create Spawn (Su)** All humanoids slain by a fright's mortifying appearance die with a horrified expression frozen on their faces. They rise as free-willed frights 24 hours later.
- **Mortifying Appearance (Su)** During each round that a living creature sets eyes on a fright, it must make a DC 14 Will save or become shaken for 1d6 rounds. Anyone already shaken becomes frightened. Anyone already frightened becomes panicked. Anyone already panicked becomes stunned, unable to look away from the fright. Anyone already stunned dies of terror. Anyone who successfully saves twice in 24 hours against a specific fright's mortifying appearance cannot be affected by that fright's mortifying appearance for 24 hours. A fright can suppress its mortifying appearance at will, reactivating it as a move action. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Reflection Vulnerability (Ex) A fright that sees a clear reflection of itself must make a DC 14 Will save or be stunned for 1 round. Once it saves successfully, it cannot be stunned again by the same reflective surface for 24 hours.

Terrifying Traps (Su) Frights imbue mechanical traps they craft with supernatural fear. Anyone snared or injured by such a trap must make a DC 14 Will save or become shaken for 1d6 rounds.

Uncanny Glide (Su) Although frights can fly with a speed of 20 ft. over stairs or any surface with a slope of 45 degrees or less, they can't fly more than 1 ft. above the surface.

STAIRCASE DOWN

Three lightless lower levels lie below, sheathed in thick ice, where frights lie in crevices. Over centuries, the frights' fear essence infused these basements. Anyone peering down must make a Will save (DC 14, or become shaken for 1d6 rounds). Anyone descending repeats this save each round, with repeated failures turning shaken to frightened and frightened to panicked.

One minute after the elemental combat ends, a DC 15 Perception check reveals scratching noises and crackling ice far below. No frights glide up, however, until the PCs reach the 10th floor.

STAIRCASE UP

The counterclockwise staircase rises 300 vertical ft. with no railing. Thin ice covers the steps. The staircase turns a half circuit

in the 20-ft.-vertical rise between floors. Climbers traverse 55 linear ft. along each half loop. Because the tower lists 15° to the north, steps on each southern half loop slant down towards the open staircase shaft. Someone falling off a southern loop drops five floors before hitting a northern loop (unless hitting ground first). These dangerous south loops occur between floors 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, and 14-15.

With darkvision or normal illumination, someone climbing one floor at half base speed must make an Acrobatics or Climb check (DC 5, modify DCs as below):

Situation	DC Modifier	
On a southern loop	+5	
Move ¹ / ₄ base speed	-5	
Move base speed	+5	
Run	+10	
Dim light (no darkvision)	+5	
No light (no darkvision)	+20	

Failing a check produces the following result:

Number by Which Roll Failed	Result	
1 - 5	Nothing beyond no progress	
6 - 9	Tumble down several steps, 1d3 damage	
10 - 13	Tumble down many steps, 1d6 damage	
11 +	Fall off side. North slope, fall 35 feet (3d6 damage) onto northern loop two floors down. South slope, fall 105 feet (10d6) onto northern loop five floors down.	

4. ICE STATUE CHAMBER (CR VARIES)

Although ice bars the doorway to the chamber facing the staircase's landing, a white radiance, bright enough to pierce the barrier, shines within. A fissure corkscrews through the ice wall.

The 7-ft.-thick ice barrier distorts far-side objects' appearances. A Small creature can squeeze through the fissure. A Medium creature needs an Escape Artist check (DC 30, or must break through two feet of ice, Hardness 3, 72 hp). The fissure corkscrews, preventing direct sight and line of effect through it. A Perception check (DC 20) reveals the following:

A crystalline ice statue of an armored, striking woman faces the entrance, its legs merging with the ice wall behind it. A horrified expression grips its beautiful features. A tiny, pure, unwavering white light levitates before its breast, shining brightly. On the floor, two dark forms flank the statue. This statue is the tower's commander, the Vetrdís. Only the Spring's Kiss ritual can restore her to flesh. Without *wish*-level magic, separating the statue from the ice destroys it. To prevent rescue, a permanent *dimensional lock* effect covers the room.

Creatures: Two frights lie prone, flanking the statue. Both stir and rise, shaking off ice, and begin caressing the statue. As they touch it, the levitating light flickers and dims, making the statue's expression seem more horrified.

BOREAL FRIGHT (2)

CR 2

XP 600 hp 22 (see page 39-40)

The frights soon detect the living, gliding forward and scrabbling into the fissure. The foremost gets stuck but struggles forward so violently it crushes its bones with hideous cracking sounds, taking 2d4 damage. Two feet of ice prevent its escape, but here it's clear ice. Anyone looking must save against the fright's mortifying appearance. The ice still blocks ordinary spells' line of effect.

Development: The frights take 15 minutes to claw through the remaining two feet.

FRIGHT ATTACKS (CR VARIES)

When the party passes the 10th-floor landing, a boreal fright reaches the 7th-floor landing.

BOREAL FRIGHT (2)	CR 2	d20	Misha
XP 600		1 - 7	Ino ali
hp 22 (see page 39-40)		1 - /	Ice slie

TACTICS

During Combat The fright's mortifying appearance requires

victims to see it, so its harsh, hissing voice cries, "This tower's curse binds all who enter in eternal terror and torment!" It casts *light* and *darkness* on two different war razors, producing or hiding them to reveal and conceal itself. It darts in an out of cover. It strives to frighten victims into fleeing and falling off the staircase, using *dimension door* if cornered.

Morale It retreats temporarily from a bad position but keeps returning until destroyed.

Every 6 minutes, 1d2 boreal frights glide up, using similar tactics. Seven can rise now, including those in area 4. They attack until the party escapes onto the glacier.

5. TOP FLOOR

Windows on the 15th floor open onto the glacier's top. Threeft.-ice barriers cover each (hp 108, hardness 0). Moonlight or daylight gleams through.

PASSAGE TO VIEZLA (CR VARIES)

The frights don't immediately pursue. A half mile southeast, the flanking cliffs open on a southward pass through the mountains. To reach this edge across the rugged, crevasse-riddled glacier takes minutes equal to 60 minus a Survival-check result. Daylight halves this time. Every 15 minutes, the party must make a single Survival check (DC 15; no limit to number of people who may aid another) to avoid a mishap:

d20	Mishap	Effect
1 - 7	Ice slides beneath 1d4 party members	DC 15 Reflex save or tumble 5d10 ft., 1d2
		damage/10 ft. tumbled.



8 - 15	Overhang collapses on 2d4 party members	2d6 damage, DC 15 Reflex halves.
16 - 18	Ice collapses beneath 1d4 party members, revealing hidden crevasse	DC 20 Reflex save or fall 3d10 ft. DC 25 Climb to climb out.
19 - 20	Encounter a boreal fright	See page 39-40

The pass leads 3 miles to Hávardr Hall.

Story Award Award 300 XP for every shipmate the PCs bring out alive, 800 XP for Fanna.

Development: Proceed to Act Three.

Part Three:

Perils of the İce-Breaking

HÁVARDR HALL

Fanna and Nord or other crewmates encourage the PCs to take survivors directly to Hávardr Hall, confident the Hall will welcome them. All offer to tell how nobody could have saved more shipmates.

A long, peaked roof makes this timber-and-stone mead hall resemble an overturned ship on a snowy hill's crest. Forests flank its west, north, and east sides beyond a 100-ft., openground slope. A solitary, gray-cloaked figure stands by the door centered on the hall's end.

Builders set Hávardr Hall's single story half below ground to hold warmth. Elaborate wrought-iron grills cover windows, with interior shutters forming arrow slits. Built for hundreds, the Hall presently holds 46 people:

The Elders:

- Forni (meaning old) Erlandrson (land-protector'sson) (called Crimp-Beard by detractors): Jarl Ásvaldr's 79-year-old granduncle (use Noble Scion statistics)
- Fastvi (firm-home-devotion): Jarl Ásvaldr's 75-yearold grandmother, Forni's brother (Doomsayer statistics, Str 5)

Ásvaldr's Sons:

- Hákon (meaning high-son) Ásvaldrson: age 15 (Noble Scion statistics, replace longsword with battleaxe)
- Eyvindr (luck-winner) Ásvaldrson: age 12 (Squire statistics, young template, replace lance with short sword)
- Sverrir (troublemaker) Ásvaldrson: age 8
 (commoner 1)

Ásvaldr's Daughters:

- Dalla (shining-one): age 16 (Noble Scion statistics)
- Tyri (beautiful-thunder): age 14 (Warrior statistics, replace greatsword with dagger)

- Ósk (wish): age 5 (commoner 1)
- Guardsmen (Caravan Guard statistics):
- Gunnarr (battle-fighter) Scarfoot
- Ófeig (not-doomed) Blood-Sword
- Torgärd (Thor's-protection)
- Tyggr (trustworthy) the Silent
- 16 Huskarl Cousins (Aristocrat 2), graybeards and children

18 servants (Barmaid statistics)

• Kollr (bald-head), a minor steward, tells everything he hears here to a Ránulfr agent in Viezla's market each noontime for 5 gp.

NORTHLANDS HOSPITALITY

The guard Gunnarr asks everyone's identity and purpose, announcing them within. He invites all to enter the south door, leaving weapons just inside. If the hour's late, the Hávardr elders and huskarls assemble slowly. Fonri makes the traditional hospitality offer:

"Be welcome by our hearths. Take freely of our meat and salt and mead. Warm our hall with words of your road."

If Fanna lives, her cloak identifies her, and the welcome becomes joyous. The elders call for food to honor the guests. The meal grows into a raucous feast.

The PCs' Tale: Tradition mandates guests make their traveling tale spellbinding. Hosts expect exaggeration but not falsehoods. A thrilling description and a Diplomacy or Perform (oratory or singing) check (DC 15) grants the PCs a +2 bonus on all future Bluff and Diplomacy checks against those present and a +1 bonus to Status in the Northlands. PCs can retell this tale at other halls' feasts (even omitting the tower) for similar skill bonuses, but no further benefit to Status.

HÁVARDR REQUESTS AID

Guests repay Northlander hospitality with gifts or aid or by defending their hosts during trouble. Forni and Fastvi describe House Hávardr's plight (see **Adventure Background, House Hávardr's Plight**). Hávardr has extensive lands west of Three Glaciers Fjord, but only this mead hall in the east. Hávardr's reputation means everything. Hávardr must exemplify its words, "Come Storm or Shadow, We Stand." Fonri and Ásvaldr's four older children must be visibly present at the entire Þing, or other clans will deem the House weak, afraid, or broken. Moreover, Hávardr needs the Þing to remind its lesser clans of their allegiance and seek new support.

Body Guards: The elders ask the PCs to accompany Ásvaldr's children to the Þing, protecting them from Ránulfr scheming. Ránulfr is quietly spreading word that all Hávardr will die afraid. All six scions want to attend many Þing events, particularly dangerous ones. Dalla plans to fight in the Longsword Duel and Longsword Melee, Hákon in the All-Weapon Melee. Ásvaldr told both they could fight this year, and their participation would bolster Hávardr's visibility and reputation.

Emissaries: To shore up Hávardr support, Forni asks the PCs to meet with the jarls of **Clans Dómarr, Sigurdr, Ásbojorn, and Hrafnkell**: Hávardr has fought beside and gone a-Viking

with Dómarr and Sigurdr. Ásbojorn's and Hrafnkell's lands lie west of the fjord, benefitting from Hávardr's protection. All four jarls welcomed Ásvaldr, but Forni offended each in the past, so new emissaries are needed.

The Tower: No one knows which tower the PCs found. Fastvi provides basic Vanguard history, and that House Hávardr stood high among Issedon's noble houses. She speculates the tower might have been a Wall fortification, but those were untold hundreds of miles north.

Until the elders or PCs discover more, Forni bids all present swear not to reveal the tower's existence. (The informant Kollr will tell his Ránulfr contact tomorrow, Day 1 of the Þing.) Forni correctly fears evil undead wearing ancient Hávardr's sigil would turn others against them. Forni ask the PCs to ask around—carefully—what the tower is, what happened inside, and the danger the floating undead present. He urges PCs to help at the Þing now, promising to hire them to return to the tower thereafter.

Frozen Guardsmen: Fastvi says the frozen guards seem like some legendary Boreas curse victims. Castle Hávardr's library, far to the west, could provide more information. She offers to send her *silver raven figurine of wondrous power* with a note bearing any PC research questions. She suggests the PCs ask others at the Þing, delicately, who knows about Boreas's freezing curses. Fastvi suspects the níđingr witch called the Ýrr Seiðkonur knows much, but she deems the witch dangerously evil and won't mention her until Day 3.

Frights: Fastvi knows folktales about floating corpses called "frights" so terrifying children who see them perish from fear, but whose own reflections also terrify the monsters.

CLUES TO THE PAST

Fastvi's *silver raven re*turns on Day 3. Before then, PCs can obtain information from:

- 1. Sigurdr's Jarl: frights, Íssvardr Tower, and the Vetrdís;
- 2. Hrafnkell's Jarl: freezing curses; and
- 3. The Ýrr Seiðkonur: all four subjects.

Unfortunately, no Hávardrs mention the witch or know the two jarls have information.

The silver raven returns at dawn on Day 3. Its leg message reveals:

- Ancient Hávardr built and garrisoned Íssvardr Tower on the Wall;
- Living glaciers swallowed it;
- Its commander's position was called "the Vetrdís";
- Living glaciers cursed with both fear and freezing;
- Ancient rituals to suppress Boreas's curses existed.



Now Fastvi urges the PCs to question the Ýrr Seiðkonur about breaking freezing curses.

Viezla

The fishing village Viezla ("meeting place") has only 112 yearround inhabitants. During its four-day Ice-Break Þing, the population burgeons into thousands. Merchants and clansmen make long journeys for the feasting, revelry, trade, and the mystic breaking of the ice. Participants lodge in every house in town, occupy (and repair) large halls vacant all year, and erect tent villages.

VIEZLA DURING THE PING

N large town

Corruption +0; Crime +2; Economy +5; Law -2; Lore +0; Society +4

Qualities Prosperous, Tourist Attraction

Danger +7

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 1,287 humans, 522 dwarves, 32 half-orcs, 9 werewolves, 4 werebears, 3 trollkin, 2 wereboars

NOTABLE NPCS See Clans Table

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,500 gp; Purchase Limit 7,500; Spellcasting 4th

Minor Items 3d4; Medium Items 1d6; Major Items 0

The Spring's Kiss Legend: The goddess Idun grows the Apples of Youth that keep the gods young. Local folklore says Idun once lingered beneath a glorious apple tree on Vætta Isle in Lake Ætla ("AYE-tla"), surrounded by her beloved wild-animal companions. Boreas, believing this tree was the Æsir's immortality source, descended in a sudden blizzard and froze Idun and her animals solid. Just as she froze, Idun moved her animals' souls and her own essence into the tree's leaves, which turned silvery white and never fell.

All Midgard fell into perpetual winter. The gods aged, searching for Idun in vain. Finally, the Fates chose Bragi, god of music and poetry, to find her. Idun's crystalline form was so beautiful Bragi pledged her his love with magical words and kissed her. The lake's ice shattered, melted, and vanished. Idun awoke in Bragi's arms, her animals revived, the silver leaves fell, and the world's winter broke.

The Ceremony's Power: Every year, Lake Ætla freezes before all other local waters. A white-bark apple tree grows on Vætta Isle with leaves that turn silver in winter, gleaming beneath moon or starlight like candle flames. On the equinox, Þing revelers perform their Spring's Kiss ceremony beneath this tree. A young man, chosen by Fate (a simple lottery), says a short verse and kisses the Vetrdís. Usually, Lake Ætla's ice cracks and the leaves fall that same day.

ÞING EVENTS

Trade: Cloth, salt, wax, slaves, raid booty, weapons mundane or magical—in a land with few cities, Þings offers the best trade opportunities. Markets thrive well into night.

Competitions: The Þing presents numerous competitions. Melee combats use blunted weapons. Most combat events draw several participants 1d6 levels higher than the PCs. Drinking competitions of every conceivable kind run continuously in the Main Hall and competition-field tents.

Feasts: Many halls hold daily feasts. All feast on Day 4.

RÁNULFR'S DEFENSES

Ránulfr's clansmen greatly outnumber Hávardr's. Twenty huskarls guard Ránulfr's Jarl, Varghoss Grimólfson, at all times. Ránulfr Hall stands guard like an armed camp.

ÞING COUNCIL

Clan leaders and a village "lawspeaker" form a council. It holds meetings to settle regional, local, and personal disputes. All bing participants may voice opinions. Public opinion holds considerable sway.

Because so few Hávardr-allied clans attend this Þing, while all Ránulfr's do, Varghoss controls rulings. He affects the following:

- **Day 1 Session** Three-day apology period before holmganga reduced to one night.
- Day 2 Session Varghoss challenges Forni to

holmganga for Ásvaldr's personal cowardice charge against Varghoss. This won't resolve Hávardr's broader cowardice accusation against Ránulfr. Duel Day 4.

• Day 3 Session – Ránulfr charges that Hávardr summons demons to murder rivals. Witnesses attest horrors wore Hávardr's sigil. Outraged public deems this legitimate ground for feud. To change public opinion, PCs need two successful DC 20 Diplomacy checks. Failing this, all Hávardrs and PCs thereafter suffer a -4 on Bluff and Diplomacy checks, but +2 on Intimidate checks. (Ránulfr doesn't yet declare feud openly, but he wants grounds established to justify its planned slaughter.)

HOLMGANGA

Duels to resolve crimes, cowardice accusations, and other matters of honor occur on Vætta Isle. See *Midgard Campaign Setting* p. 266 and *N:RWC* 8, for holmganga rules.

Ránulfr secretly hired sellswords to challenge holmganga against Ásvaldr's children or induce the scions to challenge them. If the scions duel, the sellswords can kill them. If scions don't show up, everyone deems them níđingrs, and the Þing council declares them outlaws (See *N:RWC* 7-8).

Sellswords confront the scions at crowded events or feasts. They provoke fights with false claims of physical affronts and escalating insults, like:

"You're the Hávardr jarl's whelp. So you think all Ránulfr are cowards!"

If scion says no:

"Everyone! She admits Ásvaldr lied about Ránulfr honor! She admits Hávardr has no honor!"

If scion says yes:

"I'm Ránulfr! (Pulling steel) You call me coward!"

Ásvaldr's children are headstrong, taught to stand their ground, making them easy marks to challenge.

Run one confrontation each for Hákon, Eyvindr, Dalla, and Tyri, each with a PC present. For sellswords, use statistics for **Trapper** or **Slaver CR 3** (replace masterwork guisarme with masterwork longsword). PCs can calm a scion with a Diplomacy check (DC equals the scion's age +3). A PC can make a holmganga challenge against a sellsword first, thereby dueling before the scion. A PC could "accidently" dispatch the sellsword beforehand in an event like the longsword melee or combat dogsled race.

Absent apology, the duel takes place the following day.

MEETING THE JARLS

Each jarl's clan has its own hall, and jarls can be found during daytime through their clansmen.

CLAN DÓMARR

- Jarl Runí Audunson
- Initial Attitude Indifferent: Perhaps Hávardr's expedition was destined to vanish. One cannot defy Fate. How Hávardr handles Ránulfr's challenge will determine if Destiny still favors Hávardr. Dómarr wishes Hávardr luck and waits to see Fate's hand.

• If Made Friendly: If Hávardr gives Dómarr an ancient keep and surrounding lands near fjord, it will reject all Ránulfr offers.

CLAN SIGURÐR

- Lady Gríma "Twin Blades"
- Initial Attitude Friendly: Once pressed, Gríma says Hávardr guards the northern passes beside Clan Sigurðr. All Hávardr are felags to Sigurðr (see *N:RWC* 12). Sigurðr brought few fighting folk to the Þing (20) but will stand beside Hávardr if Ránulfr declares feud.

Boreal Frights: "It's said that when winter becomes most bleak, undead called 'frights' rise to terrify others to death. They yearn to destroy whatever they loved in life, even entire clans. They are cunning, patient, and make deals with níđingrs to capture their kin."

• Tower: Gríma knows basic Vanguard history, and that ancient Hávardr named its Wall defenders "the Winter Watch" and gave its fortification commanders the title "Vetrdís."

ÁSBJORN

- Jarl Glúmr "Red Beard" Hróaldurson
- Initial Attitude Unfriendly: Hávardr was arrogant. It shared joint-expedition spoils, but always acted superior. "Our oaths were to Jarl Ásvaldr, not his clan pups. Ásvaldr called Ránulfr níðingr without reason, so the gods broke Hávardr. Ránulfr's vengeance will be righteous."
- If Made Neutral or Friendly: If Hávardr swears to

quadruple Ábjorn's spoils if fleet returns, Ábjorn won't support any Ránulfr feud.

CLAN HRAFNKELL

- Jarl Hrókr "One-Eye" Kolurson
- Initial Attitude Indifferent: Honorable Hávardr's strength and prestige wane. Ránulfr is distasteful but ascendant. Mocking Ránulfr was foolish. Pledging Hávardr support risks too much.
- If Made Friendly: Hrafnkell will try to warn PCs of treachery.
- Breaking Freezing Curses: Many quaint ceremonies embody an essence of ancient, powerful rituals. Why does Lake Ætla's ice break so often the same day as the Spring's Kiss ceremony? Because the ceremony preserves a more powerful ritual's essence to suppress Boreas's winter magic. The níđingr witch Ýrr Seiðkonur likely knows more.

FRIGHT ATTACKS AT THE PING

A Dark Meeting: On Day 1, Varghoss learns the Hávardr steward Kollr's story about the glacier-encased tower. Varghoss sends his son Brandulfr (sword-wolf) to lead a small expedition northwest that night. Three frights following the PCs' path attack the expedition in the mountain pass, torturing and killing most. They leave Brandulfr alive, however, when he swears to serve them the victims they most desire—all remaining pure-blooded Hávardrs. Brandulfr reveals Ránulfr stands poised to strip Hávardr's beloved honor away and unite everyone against Hávardr. The frights insist on advancing this plan before collecting their prizes.

EVENT	LOCATION		
Day 1 – Morning			
Ping Council	Main Hall		
Longsword Duel – part 1	Field 1		
Greatsword Duels – part 1	Field 2		
Non-Combat Dogsled Race - Dog Sled Chase Cards, N:RWC 85	20 miles through wilds		
Day 1 – Afternoon			
Archery	Field 1		
Arm Wrestling	Main Hall		
Horse Race – opposed Ride checks or chase, <i>Pathfinder RPG Game Mastery Guide</i> , Chapter 8	Market Square to Lake's far end and back		
Day 1 – Evening			
Dancing with the Bear – drinking game involving crossing balance beam over pit Market Square containing bear, N:RWC 9 Market Square			
Weapon Juggling	Main Hall		
Dog-Pit Fighting	Fisherman's Square		

ICE-BREAK PING'S MAIN EVENTS - DAY 1

Attack(s) Night 1: Varghoss' spies learn which jarls the PCs meet on Day 1. Brandulfr informs the frights. Just before dawn, the frights attack one jarl (or two, separately, if the PCs met more than one) near a square, scare off huskarl companions, and, cloaked by multiple *silence* spells, kill the jarl(s).

When the huskarls return, crowds form. Each jarl's corpse hangs nailed upside down, its face impossibly distorted with fear. One has "NONE DARE BETRAY US, WE STAND" carved into his chest. Several witnesses glimpse the frights, but the undead leave no tracks, escaping with their magic.

Remember all victims slain by a fright's mortifying appearance become spawn 24 hours later.

Attacks Night 2 (2): Whether the PCs meet with all four jarls or not, Varghoss guesses these four jarls' identities. Varghoss also detests female jarls, particularly the dauntless Lady Thordís of Hafgfimr. Brandulfr identifies them all to the frights. Two frights kill one of the four jarls, using *dimension door* to jump into his mead hall. They carve, "COME STORM OR SHADOW WE STAND" into his chest and leave him impaled on a spear. Witnesses see their armor's Hávardr-like sigils.

The second attack involves Lady Thordís and the PCs.

TERROR IN FISHERMAN'S SQUARE (CR 3)

The PCs are in crowded Fisherman's Square on Night 2, perhaps preparing for the Roof-Top Race or guarding Hákon watching wolf-pit fights. The third fright springs from an alley, attacking the extremely drunk Lady Thordís, who stumbles alone just yards from the PCs.

ADVANCED BOREAL FRIGHT CR 3

XP 800 (see page 39-40) **hp** 28

TACTICS

During Combat It attacks Thordís with its war razor, trusting its mortifying appearance to scatter spectators. If badly pressed, it dimension doors close by, attacking again when possible.

CR 1

Morale Overwhelmed by bloodlust, it attacks until destroyed.

LADY THORDIS

Use **Slaver CR 3** statistics. Replace masterwork guisarme with +1 warhammer. Severely drunk, Thordís suffers -6 to attack and weapon-damage rolls, saving throws, and skill and ability checks.

hp 30 (presently 10, 20 nonlethal damage)

Development: Everyone sees the fright armor's Hávardr-like sigils.

VARGHOSS'S NOTE

Thordís carries an unsigned note from Varghoss. If she dies, the note lies crumpled in her hand.

If the PCs save her, she finds them the afternoon of Day 3, shows them the note, and urges them to leave their vile employer. The note reads:

- Throughout, create and spread grounds to dishonor house.
- On the first day, we shorten holmganga apology to the following morning. Sellswords challenge whelps.

ICE-BREAK PING'S MAIN EVENTS - DAY 2

EVENT	LOCATION		
Day 2 – Morning			
Þing Council	Main Hall		
Longsword Duel -conclusion	Field 1		
Greatsword Duels – conclusion	Field 2		
Ice Skidder Race - small pontoon sailboats on skates	Lake Ætla		
Day 2 – Afternoon			
Axe Throwing	Field 1		
Barrel Throwing	Field 2		
Longship Rowing Race – Firth Monster attacks one ship	Fjord		
Holmganga (Duels)	Vætta Isle		
Day 2 – Evening			
Rooftop Race – use chase Example Progression, Pathfinder RPG Game Mastery Guide, Chapter 8.	Viezla		
Lie-tales – tell the most outrageous "tall tale" while keeping it superficially plausible	Main Hall		
Wolf-Pit Fighting	Fisherman's Square		



- On the second and third days, you continue spreading rumors the house is broken and committing níđingr actions to bolster its reputation. Duels kill whelps, or we outlaw them. I challenge Crimp-Beard for a fourth-day holmganga. You prepare, unseen, for the surprise dawn assault. Fools won't expect it because of my Crimp-Beard challenge.
- Your clan shall receive its agreed portion of enemy lands.
- On the fourth day, at dawn, we kill them all.

Even faced with this evidence, the Hávardrs refuse to leave their Hall before the Þing's end, contending if they flee, they're broken anyway. "Come Storm or Shadow, we stand."

THE ÝRR SEIÐKONUR

Shunned as níðingr for practicing forbidden witchcraft, the Ýrr Seiðkonur ("YOOR SEETH-koh-nur," wild-witch) lives in an isolated cabin. She claims her real name is Ásdís (heathen god seeress). Use **Shaman** statistics. A dire wolf she raised frequently follows her, unsettling locals more.

Ásdís studies Boreas through all means possible, traveling to places nobody else dares. Amidst myriad totems and dangling, disturbing fetishes, her smoky cabin brims with scrolls covered with her inscrutable shorthand. Ásdís knows:

- Boreal frights' abilities and weaknesses;
- Vanguard Kingdom history;

- The Vanguard Kingdoms' spellcasters found the most effective magics to resist Boreas's freezing curses embraced simple spring-arrival symbols;
- Illska Glacier swallowed Íssvardr Tower;
- The tower commander's title was "the Vetrdís"; and
- The present-day Spring's Kiss ceremony preserves a real ritual's essence.

Ásdís's initial attitude is Indifferent. She shares information if made Friendly or brought writing materials worth 50 gp. She shrieks after a failed Intimidate check. The dire wolf bursts in 1d6 rounds later.

Ásdís wants a destroyed fright's corpse or a fright victim's cadaver. For either, she'll teach the PCs the Vanguard Kingdom's ice-break ritual from which the Spring's Kiss ceremony derives. Her research takes until Day 3's evening. Teaching the ritual takes 60 minutes (see **Breaking the Freezing Curse**, page 48). Ásdís offers a magic circle against evil scroll for 750 gp and four remove fear potions for 100 gp each.

Ásdís explains the glacier's curse struck the Vetrdís and jumped to the guardsmen, using the spiritual bond their oaths to her forged. Freeing her frees them. Ásdís fears what will happen to all when winter returns.

Story Award: Award 800 XP for learning the ritual.

Development: Proceed accordingly to Act Four.

EVENT	LOCATION
Day 3 – Morning	
Longsword Melee	Field 1
Spear and Javelin Throwing	Field 2
Ice-Top Wrestling	Lake Ætla
Tickling the Brat – like rugby with three fat, greased, baby trolls instead of a ball; killing or be-spelling a brat forfeits game	Northwest of Lake Ætla
Day 3 – Afternoon	
All-Weapon Melee – blunted melee weapons only	Field 1
Northlander Wrestling – on an ice floe	Stream
Combat Dogsled Race – many two-person teams, blunted melee weapons only; disqualified for harming another's dog	Circling Lake Ætla
Holmganga (Duels)	Vætta Isle
Day 3 – Evening	
Þing Council	Main Hall
Fear Not the Axe - throwing axes at a companion by torchlight; whoever comes closest without hitting, or companion flinching, wins	Main Hall
Nettle Eating – (N:RWC 9)	Main Hall
Bear – Pit Fighting	Fisherman's Square

ICE-BREAK ÞING'S MAIN EVENTS - DAY 3

Part Four: Spring's Kiss

RETURN TO THE TOWER

Crossing the glacier requires the same Survival checks needed in **Passage to Viezla** (see page 41-42).

Íssvardr tower has pitched forward, leaning at a 10-degree angle over the water. (The **Íssvardr Tower Upper Levels Maps** serve as vertical cross-sections, with south their bottom.) The glacier face collapsed behind it, forming a 45-degree ice-rubble ramp down to mid-tower. Descending requires two Climb checks (DC 15). Traversing the tower's side to its top windows requires an Acrobatics check (DC 12). The PCs can re-enter the same window, and then climb up into the interior stairwell from below, now a nearly horizontal tube.

AIR ELEMENTAL ATTACK (CR 3)

Creature: When someone enters the stairwell, an air elemental attacks from behind the staircase arc. Shaped like a giant boreal fright's horrifying head with blazing eyes, a hissing ice-shard nimbus whirls around it.

MEDIUM AIR ELEMENTAL CR 3

XP 800

hp 30 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

TACTICS

It uses flyby attacks to kill one target at a time before attacking the next, fighting until destroyed.

BREAKING THE FREEZING CURSE (CR 4)

The 9th-floor ice statue's 20-foot by 15-foot chamber opens below the stairwell shaft. Frights breached the doorway's sevenft.-thick ice barrier. Medium creatures can squeeze through. The crystalline statue faces up now, held just above the ice floor enfolding its legs. The tiny, untainted light hovering above it refracts through the statue, raining colors on the ice beneath. Despite breathtaking features, the statue's expression of horror remains absolute.

To perform the Spring's Kiss ritual, PCs must do the following in order:

1. Cast *consecrate* or *magic circle against evil* around the statue.

2. Inscribe runes on ice around the statute, succeeding on two DC 15 Spellcraft checks. Each check takes three minutes and cannot be interrupted. Failing two checks requires starting again, adding 1 to the DCs.

3. Say or sing the incantation, succeeding on a DC 18 Perform (act, oratory, or sing) check. Failure increases the DC by 1.

Too long have the bleak winds of malice embraced you Too long wed to winter by shackles of ice Too long kissed by cruelty of cold that encased you Abandoned by hope to your dark sacrifice

I pledge you the warmth of the song of my essence Take all of my fire to hold deep inside I kiss you to kindle your lost luminescence As one we shall cast desolation aside

4. Kiss the statute's lips.

Creature: Mid-ritual, a raging cloud of animated ice, a lesser thuellai, bursts from the icy floor, attacking.

CR 4

LESSER THUELLAI

NE Medium outsider (air, cold, elemental, extraplanar, water) **XP 800**

hp 30 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

ICE-BREAK PING'S MAIN EVENTS - DAY 4

EVENT	LOCATION			
Day 4 – Morning	Day 4 – Morning			
Ping Council	Main Hall			
Take the Maiden – like capture-the-flag, but with women instead of flags, played with melee weapons while riding charmed-bear-drawn war sleds	Snowfields northwest of Lake Ætla			
Seidr Duel – "witchcraft" duel, all spellcasters allowed; killing disqualifies attacker	Field 1			
Day 4 – Afternoon				
Holmganga (Duels)	Vætta Isle			
Spring's Kiss Ceremony	Main Hall			
Feast	All halls			
Day 4 – Evening				
Feast	All halls			



Use statistics for **Medium ice elemental**, except as follows: **Special Attacks:** howl of the maddening wind (DC 14), shatter metal (DC 14)

TACTICS

During Combat It howls first, then focuses attacks on whoever performs the most important ritual step, fighting until destroyed SPECIAL ABILITIES

Howl of the Maddening Wind (Sp) Three times per day, as a standard action, it can release a howl affecting all creatures not loyal to Boreas within 60 ft. The howl acts like a confusion spell (CL 4th; DC 14), but with the following behaviors:

d%	Behavior
01-25%	Act normally
25-60%	Do nothing but babble incoherently
61-80%	Deal 1d6 + Str modifier points of damage to self with item in hand
81-100%	Attack nearest creature (not target's familiar)

Shatter Metal (Sp) Upon a successful slam attack against a metalarmored target, or a successful sunder attack against a metal item, the armor or item, whether magical or not, must make a DC 14 Will save (object) or be destroyed.

RETURN OF THE GUARD

For a breathless moment, nothing happens. Then the statue's lips warm. The ghostly light hanging before her flares brilliantly, and then sinks into her breast. As her body turns opaque, she shudders, and the entire tower quakes with a bone-rattling roar. Everywhere, cracks race through the ice, fracturing it. Chunks cascade from ceiling and walls; then hiss and vaporize. In mere heartbeats, dense mist fills the entire chamber. When it clears, all the ice is gone.

Story Award: Award 1,200 XP for completing the ritual.

Throughout the tower, 312 guards awaken from their nightmare. Use **Guard** statistics (replacing half-plate with masterwork chain shirt and masterwork large shield). Those falling from ceilings suffer no injury, thawing just afterwards. Shouts ring out. A few guards strike torches or lanterns, and eventually all move towards the horizontal stairwell. While they are all otherwise healthy, their skin and hair remain forever white, their eyes the palest gray. Even their armor and weapons retain a frosted tint. All share horrifying memories of endless fear and unbearable cold, and all sense the terrible passage of time.

The Vetrdís, named Rangfrid Hávardr, fares less well. Her body feels distressingly cool, and ice continuously forms in her hair tips. She remains too weak to stand, her voice a whisper. While profoundly grateful for her rescue, the cold shadowing her heart suggests everyone's reprieve is temporary.

SECURING AID

The PCs must explain everything, organize the guards, and convince them to march home. They need two Diplomacy checks (DC 20, any number may aid another. One check to successfully make the guards believe, and the second to secure their support.) The PCs receive a +3 circumstance bonus for freeing the guards. Upon success, one guard cries:

"I will follow these Curse-Breakers! I'll bless them for even one day to stand and breathe and fight again! There's battle before us? Foes besiege House Hávardr? Our last kin stand alone? Lead on, Curse-Breakers!"

Others stand, shouting, "Curse-Breakers! Curse-Breakers!" and "Come Storm or Shadow, We Stand!"

GIFTS AND EQUIPMENT

Martial equipment comprises the tower's principal wealth. Guards offer **each** PC:

- Five masterwork weapons of any kind;
- One masterwork armor of choice (leather, studded leather, or chain shirt); and
- One darkwood masterwork shield (any kind).

Rangfrid offers the PCs a fully charged *cure light wounds wand*, her *robe of the steppes*, and her +1 *luck-giving battleaxe*.

When the guards march, eight trail behind, bringing Rangfrid on a litter. Twenty remain to salvage tower supplies.

Part Five: Fury of the Northmen

THE BATTLE OF HÁVARDR HALL

If the PCs' actions alter or prevent the battle set forth below, two frights find the means to enter Hávardr Hall through the forge's secret tunnel.

THE INITIAL ASSAULT

Varghoss convinced all its allied clans and (unless the PCs secured its pledge otherwise) Ásbjorn to join Ránulfr assaulting Hávardr Hall. Just before Day 4's dawn, 290 warriors attack, grouped by clan. Use **Caravan Guard** statistics.

A sheering wind unleashes heavy snow in the pre-dawn dimness. The snowy slopes prevent cavalry. As Ránulfr clansmen ram the south door, other clans brave arrow fire from windows to pile firewood against walls. Nobody sends scouts northwest, however, allowing snowfall to cover the tower guard's approach.

Varghoss and Brandulfr left command to clansmen. They know about the forge's secret tunnel from Kollr's reports. As the assault began, before the PCs and tower guard arrive, Varghoss and Brandulfr led two clansmen and two completely cloaked frights through the tunnel.

As the PCs' forces arrive, Ránulfr troops splinter the south door, surging inside. Hákon and Dalla, the Hávardr guards, 20 Sigurðr fighters, and Lady Gríma (if she lives) meet them in battle in the main hall.

THE ANCIENT HÁVARDR ATTACK

The tower guards expect the PCs to command tactics and lead the initial charge. Nonetheless, the PCs' real task becomes saving

the Hávardr true-bloods from the frights.

Under arrow cover, the ancient Hávardrs blow horns not heard for hundreds of years as they roar from the driving snow. If the PCs join the charge, pit them and two tower guards against five opposing clansmen. The other clans never envisioned full-throated opposition, and the ice-colored warriors descending upon them look terrifyingly ghostlike. After several minutes, one by one, the clans begin retreating or flee.

SILVER WINGS, DARK WORDS

Just as battle joins, before opposing clans begin retreating, Fastvi's *silver raven* brings Fastvi's furiously scrawled note to a PC:

frights killng childrn in bedchmbrs -- use tunnl hiddn inside forge

Ránulfr's host holds the areas before both Hall doors, but the forge stands unguarded. If tower guards accompany the PCs, however, opposing clansmen attack, preventing guards from joining the PCs in the tunnel.

THE TUNNEL (CR 4)

The tunnel's trapdoor lies open with two Hávardr huskarls dead beside it. Inside, children's screams echo along the 8-ft.-tall, unlit tunnel.

Creature: Varghoss just saw frights terrify his son Brandulfr to death. With darkvision from a potion, he flees through the tunnel as the PCs enter it. Unless the PCs employ stealth, he hears them, hides at the tunnel's turn, and springs out to attack. He tries to charge through them and escape. He surrenders before being slain, begging the PCs to take him out of here.

Use **Slaver CR 3** statistics except as follows: **AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex); **Melee** +1 battleaxe +9 (1d8+5/x3); **Feats** Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe); **Gear**: *cure moderate wounds potion* (2), masterwork breastplate.

THEY WILL ALL DIE AFRAID (CR 5)

Forni and Fastvi must preserve their bloodline. When the Ránulfr clans attacked the Hall's south door, the elders and four younger scions retreated to Room 3. Fastvi went for her silver raven in Room 6, as her kin locked, barred, and barricaded the interior doors with furniture. Varghoss, Brandulfr, and their two clansmen took the group by surprise, held blades to the younger children's throats, forced the others' surrender, and bound them all while Fastvi hid.

Before the Ránulfr could leave as agreed, however, the two frights caught the two lesser Ránulfr clansmen with tanglefoot bags and dropped their cloaks. Chaos erupted, and both guards and Brandulfr died of fright before Varghoss escaped. Fastvi managed to dispatch her silver raven before being discovered.

The advanced fright tortures Forni, Fastvi, and Eyvindr, all carefully bound, in **Room 3**. The non-advanced fright tortures Sverrir, Tyri, and Osk in **Room 6**. Both suppress their mortifying appearance to protract their pleasure. Both suffered wounds. The advanced fright exhausted his dimension door. Both delight in their torture, suffering a -4 on Perception checks.

ADVANCED BOREAL FRIGHT	CR 3
XP 800	
hp 20 (see page 39-40)	
Gear ring of the ram (25 charges)	
TACTICS	
See below.	
BOREAL FRIGHT	CR 2
XP 600	

hp 17 (see page 39-40) TACTICS

See Below.

Tactics: When the advanced fright notices the PCs, it reactivates its mortifying appearance and expends two charges from its ring of the ram (attack +5 (2d6), CMB +19 (bull rush)), attacking the most threatening individual. It repeats ring attacks each round. Unable to *dimension door* away, it fights until destroyed.

The non-advanced fright arrives in 1d3+2 rounds later. It reactivates its mortifying appearance, and then holds its war razor to the closet Hávardr's throat, demanding surrender. If the PCs continue, it performs a coup-degras, and then tries again with the next bound Hávardr. It dimension doors outside once reduced below 10 hp.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The ancient Hávardr host drives the besiegers from the field. Ninety Vikings lay dead, far more Ránulfr and allies than Hávardr. Hákon, Dalla, and Lady Gríma (if she's here) survive. If Forni and Fastvi survive, they secure the younger children before welcoming the tower guards into Hávardr Hall. If the elders die, Hákon dies. The PCs tell their tale. The elders (or Hákon) name them felags, promising them 1,500 gp from Castle Hávardr. Hávardr Hall empties its coffers, purchasing food for tonight's "Curse-Breakers Feast."

But first, all attend the Spring's Kiss ceremony on Vætta Isle, where a local boy chosen by lottery says the words and kisses Fanna. Just as he does, Lake Ætla's ice breaks. Rangfrid gasps, saying, "I felt it! Íssvardr Tower just broke free from Illska Glacier and crashed into the fjord."

Clan Ránulfr retreats east, broken. If Varghoss survived, he cleaves to his story that Hávardr summoned the frights. As Íssvardr Tower's story spreads, however, few believe him. Varghoss remains a Hávardr enemy, seeking to harm the PCs however possible.

The ancient Hávardrs hunt and destroy frights. Some escape to darken Hávardr's future.

By defeating so many clans in battle, Hávardr and its "Men of Ice" become legend. The present-day Hávardrs offers the ancient Hávardrs lands and keeps west of the fjord. How well the two will integrate remains unseen. Rangfrid warns their freedom from Boreas's curse could end come wintertime. She asks the Curse Breakers to find a permanent cure. The elders or Hákon offer the PCs a new ship and crew for a different job: find the lost Hávardr fleet.



Bloodmarked of the White Mountain Marcheş

By Chris Lozaga

The ghost-folk rise out of legend to destroy and leave their lethal mark on the poor villagers of the White Mountains. This threat must be stopped before the dead rise and add to the ghost-folks' power!

"Bloodmarked of the White Mountain Marches" is a fantasy adventure suitable for four to six 3rd-level PCs.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the dark of night, the ghost-folk (orcs) regularly emerge

from the marches to terrorize border villages. Once in a generation, the orcs bloodmark their quarry to extend the lives of their secret bone-totems. The bloodmarked villagers fall into a deep sleep, die, and later rise as undead horrors serving the White Goddess. Painted white and deformed from a millennium of inbreeding, these savage orcs are unrecognizable, secretive, and fierce. Most Illyrians consider them a terrible myth, but the people of the White Mountains know these white-faced, reaving, inbred mutants are all too real. The ghost-folk are some of Midgard's rare orcs, and few would recognize them even without their white face-paint and inbred mutations.

2

Despite this threat, the mountains remain populated with hearty, simple folk who enjoy living outside the constrictive boundaries of civilization. This freedom, of course, has its trade-offs, chief among them being the protection afforded to the Illyrian nobility. These hardscrabble villages must keep their own peace and defend themselves, even against threats as dire as the reaving orcs of the marches.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

While traversing the White Mountains on the northern border of Illyria, the characters discover the tiny hamlet of Hurvorn, seemingly abandoned. Upon further inspection, they find the village folk asleep, all bearing a curious sanguine mark. Hiding near the village to finish off any survivors, the ghost-folk raiders attack the PCs. Once the orcs are slain, a lone survivor from the village emerges and puts the characters on a path to solving the bloodmark mystery. The characters then must escape an insidious trap en route to a neighboring village. After arriving, the search begins for the mysterious Hermit of the Griffoncrags, who leads them to a final confrontation with the horrible bone-totem responsible for the village's attack.

Success vanquishes the bone-totem, awakens the villagers, and breaks the blood curse. If the characters fail, the village's sole survivor slays the bloodmarked to prevent their undeath.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters may begin this adventure during any trip through White Mountains, and it is suitable to be run as a side adventure in a larger Midgard campaign. The primary hook appeals to the adventurers' good nature, but also contains an offer of reward for rescuing the bloodmarked villagers.



Other motivations might include:

- A PC is from the village, or has a relative in the village who has been attacked.
- The PCs are tasked to speak with a wise man of the village on an unrelated matter, only to find him in the bloodmark's cursed sleep.
- One of the adventurers is bloodmarked while the party is resting overnight in the White Mountains—a useful story arc when one player cannot attend for several gaming sessions.

İNTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place in the White Mountains. Before the night is through, the characters discover a curse and make terrible new enemies.

As the story begins, the characters are traveling along a mountain path, late in the day as dusk falls over the horizon.

Part One: The Bloodmarked

A VILLAGE DAMNED

The evening air is cool and crisp, and the snow-covered mountain is quiet. Rounding a bend, you spot a small hamlet consisting of nine small hovels and a makeshift barn. Several collapsed houses and overgrown paths indicate this village was once larger. No cook fires burn, no candles glow, and yet there are fresh tracks in the road—but you see no people. A cart loaded with timber lies toppled next to the bloody corpse of the workhorse that once pulled it. As you walk toward the village, a stray dog howls.

If any characters attempt a Perception check, they may discern the following:

PERCEPTION

DC	Benefit
<12	The village was attacked, and there is a distinct lack of human corpses
13	The horse's corpse is fresh, and the timber is recently cut
15	The tracks in and out of the village are less than a day old
17	Some of the tracks indicate bodies have been dragged into or out of houses

Upon further investigation, the characters find each house contains a sleeping villager marked with a solid crimson circle of blood.

The first time the adventures enter a home, describe the following scene.



The door to the house opens effortlessly; the air is thick with the smell of blood. Everything is tidy, and you see nothing you wouldn't expect in a peasant home. A high-pitched wheeze from a dark corner breaks the silence. Gray as death, a poor village man lies on the floor, breathing shallowly, a large red circle of blood smeared on his bare chest.

Any *detect magic* attempts reveal strong necromancy on the mark and nothing more. Furthermore, any attempts to remove the mark fail. A DC 10 Healing check reveals the man has a lump on his head, as if he was subdued, but he is otherwise uninjured. If the adventurers go so far as to cut off flesh to remove the mark, the flesh heals over and a new mark appears below. Characters with Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (religion) may discern the following:

KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL OR RELIGION)

DC	Benefit
<12	The White Mountains are subject to a variety of supernatural threats
13	Illyrians whisper about the ghost-folk of the marches
15	The red circle of blood is a symbol of the White Goddess
18	The savage ghost-folk worship the White Goddess

Creatures: Hidden in the woods just outside the village, and intent on killing any survivors, a group of ghost-folk (four reavers and one cleric) wait for the right moment to surprise the characters.

THE GHOST-FOLK ATTACK (CR 5)

After the characters investigate a few buildings, the orcs attack. Although the ghost-folk are not particularly stealthy, their attack has the element of surprise unless the characters have placed a watch.

Tactics: The Supplicant of the White Goddess attempts to cast *hold person* on the strongest-looking party member, while her savage reavers charge.

Be sure to review the **Death Pyre of the Ghost-Folk** sidebar before running this encounter.

Ash-white, deformed, bestial humanoids bare their oversized yellow teeth and charge. Urging them onward, a robed female raises her skull-tipped staff to the sky, her terrible eyes locked on you.

Ghost-Folk Reaver (4)

CR1

XP 400 each

Male or female orc fighter 2 CE Medium humanoid (orc)

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

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 **Dex**) **hp** 17 (2d10+2) Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; +1 vs. fear Defensive Abilities bravery +1, ferocity

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. Melee mwk greatclub +7 (1d10+4/x2) Ranged javelin +4 (1d6+3)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6 **Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Animal Affinity, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub) **Skills** Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (religion) +1, Climb +5, Survival +6

Languages Orc, Trade Tongue

SQ weapon familiarity

Gear masterwork hide armor, masterwork greatclub, flask whitefire oil (1), javelins (3)

Supplicant of the White Goddess	CR 2
XP 600	

Female orc cleric of the White Goddess 3 CE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +5; Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield) hp 23 (3d8+6)

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

Defensive Abilities ferocity

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. **Melee** mwk club+5 (1d6+3/×2)

Ranged sling +3 $(1d4+2/x^2)$

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 11, 2d6), destructive smite +1 (5/day)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; **Con**centration +4) 5/day—*bleeding touch* (1 rnd)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; Concentration +4) 2nd—hold person (DC 14), bull's strength, death knell^D (DC 14) 1st—cause fear^D (DC 13), doom (DC 13), obscuring mist, protection from good (DC 13) 0 (at will)—bleed (DC 12), detect magic, resistance, virtue

^D Domain spell; **Domains** Death, Destruction

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10 Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 15 Feats Extra Channel, Improved Initiative

Skills Heal +6, Knowledge (White Goddess) +3, Perception +5, Spellcraft +4, Survival+3

Languages Orc, Trade Tongue

SQ aura

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** masterwork chainmail, masterwork club, light steel shield, sling and 20 stones, robes, unholy symbol (2), flask white-fire oil (1) **Treasure:** The Ghost-folk do not carry treasure beyond their

equipment.

Development: With the ghost-folk slain, an old peasant, Ovolio, emerges from one of the buildings.

Death Pyre of the Ghost-folk

The ghost-folk are secretive and fanatical, particularly in regard to their dead. No ghost-folk in recent memory has been captured, and all those who die expire in the goddess's white fire. All ghost-folk carry a flask of white-fire oil. By itself, it is inert, but when exposed to the white body paint of their kind, it lights into a brilliant flame, leaving only a scorched heap of fused, unrecognizable flesh. Upon contact with ghost-folks' white war paint, the white-fire oil immediately does 4d4 fire damage and smolders for several minutes thereafter.

Ghost-folk fight to 0 hit points, and then they use their racial Ferocity ability to remain standing and immolate themselves with the white-fire. If an orc falls before being able to apply the white-fire oil, it is considered his compatriots' sacred duty to apply the white-fire oil to his corpse—they perform this rite in the middle of battle, if necessary. Legend has it in another age the White Goddess warred with Marena, who turned the White Goddess's orc champions against her, raising them in undeath. Today the White Goddess's orc followers have no compunction against employing undead against their enemies, but never allow their own to be raised against them.

"Never, never have the ghost-folk marked so many!" an old man cries in anguish as he emerges from an animal pen, covered in filth. "I hid where they could not smell me. I've lived a long time, and I've seen them mark one or two, but never an entire village. Help us... please? If the bloodmark is not defeated in seven days, the villagers will die and rise as vile horrors! I will have to cut their throats on the seventh night to prevent it. And I...I don't know if I can kill my friends... my family."

If the adventurers decline, persuade them to rethink their decision by running the forest ambush encounter in **Part II – A Watched Road**, and make it clear the ghost-folk now stalk the party.

If the adventurers agree to help the village, Ovolio recommends seeking out the Hermit of the Griffoncrags by way of Millinia, the hermit's niece, in the nearby village of Gruzzi.

"Thank you! The people of Hurvorn have no other hope. You have lifted an old man's heart. You should seek out the Hermit of the Griffoncrags, for he is the only living survivor of the bloodmark. His niece Millinia is a merchant from the nearby village of Gruzzi; she will surely help you. Her sister, Dorna, has been marked, and I fear Gruzzi may fall next, as the ghost-folk split off and headed that way after last night's attack!"

Ovolio then offers to keep watch should the adventurers require rest, and directs them on the path to Gruzzi, a 12-hour journey through the mountains to the east.

Part Two: To The Hermit of The Griffoncrags

A WATCHED ROAD

The well-worn, snow-covered path to Gruzzi, a village with far more people than Hurvorn, cuts through the dense forest of the mountainside. A second party of ghost-folk has set off to attack Gruzzi, where they do not intend to bloodmark the people of Gruzzi, but rather terrorize and steal goods and slaves in a nighttime raid.

The ghost-folk set a spider trap to catch people fleeing Gruzzi. The adventurers inadvertently walk into this trap from the other direction as they make their way toward the village.

Dense trees line the eastward, snow-covered mountain road to Gruzzi, and the forest seems to teem with noisy wildlife. The air cools as you slowly ascend.

As the day turns to dusk, the forest quiets. The ghost-folk spot the adventurers coming up the path and lie in wait with their spiders to entrap this unexpected prey.

PERCEPTION

DC	Benefit
<13	The forest is quiet
13	The familiar sounds of forest birds and animals have stopped
15	The path ahead has recently been trod over
20	Strange shadows play on the ground; there is someone ahead in the trees

If the adventurers detect something amiss, or if they linger too long, the ghost-folk attack. If they do not detect anything unusual, the ghost-folk wait for the characters to pass, and then surprise attack.

The trail is 10 ft. wide here, leading east to west.

Creatures: A fast zombie black widow spider bursts out of the snowbank 30 ft. behind the party on the trail's north side. The two giant spiders scramble out of snow-covered burrows 30 ft. ahead of the party on the north side of the trail. The ghost-folk reaver is 50 ft. ahead of the party, on the north side of the trail. The spiders attempt trip, rush, and push adventurers into a hidden pit trap, set on the south side of the trail, 15 ft. behind the party and covered with a thin crust of snow. Ten feet deep, lined with sticky webbing and freshly planted egg sacs, the pit is designed to capture food for the coming newborn spiders.

A hideous, rotten black widow spider bursts from a snow mound, its flesh pallid and glistening with foul ichor. From the north, a white-faced ghost-folk warrior, frothing with rage, brandishes a club and readies to throw a javelin. Two more hungry arachnids, eager to taste your flesh, scramble out of burrows between you and the reaver.

Ghost-Folk Reaver

C 1

CR1

hp 17 (see page 53)

Fast Zombie Giant Black Widow SpiderCR 3

XP 800

XP 400

NE Large undead

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+3 **Dex**, +7 natural, -1 size) **hp** 38 (7d8+7)

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

Immune undead traits, mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft. **Melee** bite +5 (1d4+5 plus poison), slam +5 (1d8+5) **Space** 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks quick strikes

STATISTICS

Str 21, Dex 17, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 10 Base Atk +5; CMB +11; CMD 24 Feats Toughness

SPECIAL

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; save **Fort** DC 13; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1d2 **Str**ength damage; cure 1 save.

Quick Strikes (Ex) Whenever a fast zombie takes a full-attack action, it can make one additional slam attack at its highest base attack bonus.

Note: Fast zombies do not gain **DR** 5/Slashing and do not gain the staggered quality. In fact they attack quickly and ferociously.

Giant Spider (2)

XP 400 each

hp 16 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Webbed Pit TrapCR 1XP 800Type natural; Perception DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect 10-ft.-deep pit (1d6 falling damage); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area); Web (DC 16, 20hp)

Development: After defeating the attack, the group may continue on.

A HUNT FOR A HERMIT

The adventurers arrive shortly after to dusk to find the town's militia has driven off the ghost-folk raiders, but not before the creatures burned several homes and stole various supplies. Gruzzi, compared to the bloodmarked village of Hurvorn,

Tenets of the Ghost-Folk

The ghost-folk's relationship with the White Goddess is one of fervor and devotion. Savage, almost feral, the ghost-folk have benefited greatly from their worship. Over hundreds of years, they have honed their love for killing, and have learned many valuable tactics. Terror is truly second nature to them. Despite existing on the edge of sanity, they follow strict tenets learned from birth. To stray from them is punishable by death:

- I fight to the death
- I do not allow my flesh to be used in death
- I show no mercy to the weak
- I delight in cruelty, as does my Goddess
- I gather bones for Her glory
- I obey the White Goddess and her living voices in all things

The ghost-folk kill any of their members straying from these tenets or drive them out. Although they often take slaves when raiding, followers of the White Goddess hold no ambitions to build or be served, only to destroy. Slaves quickly turn to sacrifices as the novelty of their terror wears thin, the ghost-folks' utter wicked malevolence overriding any practical use for those they capture. Similarly, because of their fanatical nature, ghost-folk are unusually resistant to interrogation. They do not fear death; they only fear their goddess. A captured ghost-folk prefers death over betraying critical information. If *charmed* or compelled to speak, they spout religious babble, which they believe contains the answers to all questions.

is more civilized, displaying the telltale signs of commerce: a blacksmith, a tiny temple to Lada, and a small general store that doubles as the local watering hole whenever the store receives a few barrels of ale. The adventurers may refresh their basic supplies here (torches, rations, etc.) The ghost-folk attack, of course, has the town standing on edge.

The village's informal militia greets the adventurers as they approach with 50 ft. If the PCs inquire about Millinia, they are directed to the general store. If any PC mentions the ghost-folk might be pursuing them, the militia kindly asks the adventurers to leave as soon as possible.

When the characters enter the general store, an unexpected spectacle greets them.

As you enter the shop, you see a tall, raven-haired woman in tight-fitting breeches and an azure blouse. "Ayahhh!" she shrieks, swinging her broom wildly as a small bat flutters wildly about. "Out with you now!" Pausing to breathe, she spots you and calms herself. "Travelers this time of year? And on the heels of a raid?"

When the characters explain the situation in Hurvorn, Millinia curses that her sister never should have run off to Hurvorn to marry. She set aside a small dowry for her sister, not much, but if the characters succeed in lifting the bloodmark curse, then it is theirs, along with a wand Millinia inherited from her mother. She has no knowledge of what the wand does; she has never been able to use it.

Once the adventurers mention the hermit, Millinia lights up with interest.

"You think uncle can help you?" she chuckles. "I've heard the stories of his bloodmark. I thought it just a tall tale, but perhaps there is something to it. He owes me a debt, that one does. I can take you to where I saw him last, but the Hermit of the Griffoncrags is never easy to find..."

Millinia secures some pack animals for the trip. The White Mountains abut the Griffoncrags, and the journey will take at least a full day's travel.

Once the party reaches the Griffoncrags, Millinia leads the adventurers to a jagged outcropping of rock, some distance from the main road. The adventurers take in incredible views from the mountainside as their journey through the wood ends.

The outcropping soars upward. An easy, though intimidating climb leads you to the precipice, where frequent campfire has left a black and sooty mark. Millinia says to you, "This is where we last met. I brought him the supplies he requested: lamp oil, parchment, ink, and a little bauble he wanted to use as a fishing lure. He swore the latter would catch the wiliest fish!" From the outcropping, you can see a shallow recess in the mountainside, all the way down to the valley below. "A quick look tells me there are many places where the old man could be. We have some work ahead of us!" she says.

The characters can surmise a few things from what Millinia has told them: the hermit enjoys fishing, and he is writing something—and so must have dry shelter somewhere nearby. Upon inspecting the nearby streams and caves, the hunt for the hermit begins.

RUNNING THE HUNT

You can run the hunt for the hermit using the standard rules for tracking (a series of Survival checks), or you can run the hunt using the optional rules presented in the next section, which are recommended if no one in the party has the Survival skill.

SURVIVAL CHECKS

The hermit is a normal, medium-sized human. His campfire has been lit frequently enough to indicate he probably stays within a mile radius or two from the outcropping. Given those parameters, finding his trail then would require the following DCs (at half speed):

From the outcropping (hard ground; the hermit was there about 48 hours ago)
From the nearby cave (hard ground, was there recently)
From the stream (soft ground, was last there five days ago)

Have the PCs make at least three successful Survival checks before finding the hermit's trail.

When a trail is successfully found, it leads the characters to the eroded shrine (see **The Hermit Found**).

THE HERMIT FOUND

The hunt concludes when the characters pick up the hermit's trail to the eroded shrine.

As you follow the hermit's trail, you hear babbling ahead. "You think I don't know, but I do! The moon will take you soon, or will you take the moon? Aye, that is the price." Coming closer, you see a weathered old man, wide-eyed, staring at the open sky. Behind him, you see an enormous, ancient statue, carved in the shape of a woman, featureless, eroded with age, dusted with snow. Millinia says, "I don't like this place... I think that was once a likeness of the White Goddess from a time long past, before her followers were driven from these mountains." Upon hearing her voice, the Hermit of the Griffoncrags turns his gaze towards your group and says, "You are Millinia, my niece? I am...I am lost..."

The hermit is mad, bristling at any mention of bloodmarks or ghost-folk. After the adventurers finish trying to question the hermit, Millinia breaks down, sobbing for her sister.

"Uncle Sevellio, you owe me, you old fool! All the goods you've never paid for. You've lived off my charity. Now, you forfeit my sister's life! Do you love anything but yourself?" Millinia cries. You see the hermit stiffen, a glimmer of understanding in his eyes. He replies, "I cannot. I promised. She is already dying... Could you really do it? Maybe. Yes!" An anguished look comes over him as he points to the top of the statue and says, "You must climb to the top, overcome the fear, and retrieve the offering I left there so many years ago." From below, you can see a glittering cache atop the eroded statue—which has now started to hum and pulse with dark energy.

The hermit begins slowly climbing the eroded statue. As he approaches the top, he begins to shake with fear and slides slowly back down. *Detect magic* (or similar) reveals an evil aura around the statue. The adventurers should choose a character to climb the statute (DC 14 Climb check). As the character approaches the top, he or she experiences a waking nightmare and must make a DC 13 Will save vs. fear or be cowed into retreating down, unable to attempt the climb again for 24 hours. Each character may make an attempt. Upon successfully resisting the statue's fear effect, the character finds an indentation atop the statue where oil was once poured and lit; it now holds the hermit's meager offerings to the White Goddess. Among the refuse, decomposed carcasses and tattered cloth, rests a gold ring, tarnished with age.

If the adventurers bypass the climb via a *levitate* spell, snatch the hermit's offering off the statue with a *mage hand* spell, send a familiar or animal companion to retrieve the treasure, or find another way to successfully retrieve treasure, the hermit screams with rage; however, upon seeing the ring, he stops screaming but breaks into tears, his madness, brought on by years of trying to retrieve his ring abated:

With a tearful look, the hermit addresses you in a hushed voice, "My ring... She...a ghost-folk...stole me away when I was young. I was her slave, and then her lover. The ghost-folk have no tolerance for love, so when their totem wept,



they bloodmarked me to spite her. In her rage, Ysolda murdered their leader to break the bloodmark, and then she... she sacrificed her life to save me. Oh, Ysolda, I so miss you, my love!"

His sad visage gives way to icy resolve. He stares at you and says, "Listen. You have only once chance to save the bloodmarked. The magical blood for the mark is drawn from a bone-totem. You must destroy it to lift the curse." Choking on his own words, he says, "Last I knew, the tribe hid in the abandoned copper mines near Hurvorn. You can find the totem there."

The hermit begins babbling, but this time quietly and introspectively. If the adventurers are very persuasive (Diplomacy DC 15), he shares what he knows of the bloodmark magic (see The **Magic of Bloodmarks**). Millinia knows the copper mines' location; getting there involves another day's journey back toward Hurvorn.

Part Three: Curses Broken

INTO THE MINES

Millinia has no difficulty leading the characters to the old mine, the subject of many children's tall tales in Gruzzi.

The path to the abandoned mine is overgrown from disuse, but has obviously been trampled through recently. Dry, frosted vines shroud the dark cave's mouth. A foul stench lingers from the opening. Millinia looks at you warily, "We part ways here; I can risk no more. I hope... to see you again."

The cave is foreboding, but also quiet. The sun is shining brightly, and so it is unlikely that any ghost-folk will emerge.

C1. CAVE ENTRANCE (CR 4)

Brushing through the ivy, it is obvious several ghost-folk have

OPTIONAL RULES FOR THE HUNT

If the characters do not have the Survival skill, or if you would prefer to run the hunt as a game, use the following rules instead. Finding the Hermit of the Griffoncrags requires 8 points. The party starts with 5 points. As the adventurers visit each potential location, they find either a clue, a dead end, or a herring.

Roll a 1d10 at each location and award or subtract points as follows:

1d10

- 10+2The clue is particularly insightful6-9+1The party finds a clue
- 2-5 0 No clues
- 1 -1 Characters find a red herring

Read the description of the clue/herring (see **Clues/Herrings** below), and then have Millinia suggest the next location. At each location, roll a 1d4 to determine if the party has a random encounter (a roll of 1 indicates an encounter, which requires rolling on the random encounter table.

The game ends when the party accumulates 8 points, or ends up at the eroded shrine.

Example play: The party investigates the outcropping. You roll a 6 on a 1d10. They find a clue and gain 1 point toward finding the hermit. You read the first clue description and then roll a 1d4 to see if the party has a random encounter. You roll a 4, so there is no encounter. Give the adventurers time to examine the scene. Millinia then suggests checking out the next location, a hut by the stream.

Millinia suggests 10 possible locations in this order: the outcropping, a hut by the stream, a fishing hole on the banks, a treetop shelter, a forlorn cave, a hunter's perch, the hollowed trunk of a giant tree, an abandoned eagle's nest, a forest encampment, and an eroded shrine.

CLUES/HERRINGS:

• You locate a single set of footprints leading east.

- You find a sun symbol has been drawn in the mud with a discarded stick (he is nearby).
- You find a half-completed feather necklace hanging from a tree limb.
- You detect the scent of recently cooked food, so he cannot be far.
- You find a quill pen with a broken nib stuck in a tree.
- You discover small cache of salted and dried fish, hidden away out of sight, hanging from a tree.
- The silver bauble Millinia sold the hermit lies entangled in a knot of fishing line on a bare bush next to a creek.
- You find a piece of writing-covered parchment under a small pile of stones in the shadow of a pine tree. The ink is faded, and the parchment is rotting. However, a DC 15 Perception check allows the PC to read the following poem:

Dead asleep, our journey begins Fate so wretched and cruel For taking you away so soon

• A makeshift pillow and lean-to is found, with an indentation indicating someone recently slept here.

FOREST RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE (1d8)

- 1. 1d4 dire bats
- 2. 1 Brown Bear
- 3. 1 Dire Boar
- 4. 1-2 Dire Wolves
- 5. 1-6 Elk (No attack)
- 6. Small game (porcupine, rabbit, or raccoon; No attack)
- 7. No encounter
- 8. No encounter

recently passed through, as bits of white body paint coat some of the vines. Fresh footprints lie in the ground. Abandoned picks, carts, and chisels lie under a thick cover of dirt and dust.

Creatures: Three ghost-folk reavers (see Tactics below).

Ghost-Folk Reaver (3)CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 17 (see page 53)

Tactics: Where the natural cave comes to a sharp curve, there is a hidden crevice where two ghost-folk reavers hide, waiting for the PCs to pass. A DC 18 Perception check detects the ambush. To ensure their ruse is successful, as the characters round the bend, a third ghost-folk reaver 30 ft. ahead of the party lets out a shrill war cry and hurls javelins at the PCs.

Treasure: The orcs' gear.

C2. A NARROW PASSAGE (CR 3)

To the north, the cave narrows, requiring the PCs to walk single file at the narrowest point. There is a hidden pull-chain (DC 15 Perception check to spot it) at the narrow point.

The cavern ahead seems partially lit, daylight shining down a long, wide shaft. The cavern contains barrels of ale, shoddy weapons, rusty knives, and other supplies—the Ghost-folk's latest spoils, no doubt.

The pull-chain operates grate-like mechanism that blocks the shaft to the surface.

Creatures: If the characters enter the room without closing the shaft, a giant whiptail centipede descends from the shaft and attacks. The centipede is too wide to fit through the choke point at the cavern entrance, providing a safe escape route for the adventurers.

Giant Whiptail Centipede

XP 800

hp 38 (4d8+20) (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2)

Treasure: Under an overturned mine cart lies a skeleton wearing bloodstained masterwork banded mail. Among the skeleton's possessions are a *potion of pass without trace*, a large garnet stone (150 gp) inside a tinderbox, and a silver holy symbol of Lada. The items stolen from the villages equate to some 550 gp in value.

C3. A PERILOUS SLOPE

The cave widens, and plunges downward, forming a perilous slope, slick with condensation and loose dirt. The slope leads to a rope-bridge over a black abyss. The broken remains of a pulley and cart mechanism are on the rope bridge. A character with Knowledge (engineering or dungeoneering) or Escape Artist (use rope) can attempt to repair the pulley mechanism.

KNOWLEDGE (ENGINEERING OR DUNGEONEERING) OR ESCAPE ARTIST

DC	Benefit
<13	The rest of the pulley and cart mechanism falls into the chasm.
13	The ropes of the mechanism are restored, +2 bonus to traverse.
15	The pulleys themselves are also restored, +4 bonus to traverse.
20	The Cart mechanism is restored, and all characters can bypass the slope.

Note: The character attempting the repair is at constant threat from the slope; therefore, he or she cannot take 10 or 20 to complete this task. A *mage hand* or *mending* spell adds +3 to this check; an *animate rope* or *make whole* spell repairs the mechanism.

The orcs have bypassed this gorge by tunneling under it (not depicted—from a different entrance), creating a passage which emerges near the alcove in **C2**. The tunnel opens one-way, via a chute, at **C2** from the bottom and is detected only after making a Perception or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (DC 22). The orcs leave by climbing it after coating their hands and feet in a sticky resin, and then lowering a spidersilk rope to the others.

(CR 1)

Perilous Slope

Hazard **XP 400**

CR 3

To navigate the slope, each PC must make two DC 10 Acrobatics checks to avoid falling and sliding. If the characters proceed slowly, it takes a half-hour to reach the bottom, but all characters get a +2 bonus to their Acrobatics checks. If the characters have sufficient rope (60 ft.) to reach the rope bridge, they may add another +3 bonus to their rolls. Roped-together characters receive a +3 bonus to any Reflex save made for failing a check. A failing character must make a Reflex save and consult the following table:

REFLEX SAVE

Save	Result
18 +	The character is safe.
15-17	The character slides down a portion of the way before catching a new grip. The character suffers 1d3 damage.
10-14	The character slides down a portion of the way, and runs into a jagged rock, stopping his fall and taking 1d6 damage.
5-9	The character slides headfirst down a portion of the slope. A jagged rock stops his fall, and he takes 2d6 points of damage.

4 or Any precautions fail. The character slides all the less way down, and then falls off of a 30-ft. cliff, taking 3d6 points of damage and falling into the dark abyss (see C4).

C4. A BRIDGE OVER TERROR

The slope has taken to the edge of a dark abyss. A rope bridge spans the chasm. Foul purple gas rises from below, along with the scent of death. Something in the abyss makes ominous clicking and scratching noises.

If the characters drop a torch, cast a spell to illuminate the ravine, or a character falls into the abyss (from C3), a terrible scene is revealed.

Freshly rotting bodies—recent ghost-folk victims—are piled in the ravine below. They look to be the young and the old from the village. Sickly webs connect the bodies, as blue and yellow arachnids pull tasty bits from their pungent feast. A fetid steam runs along the ravine floor, flanked by foul mushroom and other fungi.

The ghost-folk have thrown those incapable of bearing the bloodmark into the pit below. The rope bridge over the ravine looks old and worn. The ghost-folk, leery of uninvited guests, have rigged the rope bridge from the far side of the ravine.

Collapsing Rope Bridge Trap

XP 800

Type: Mechanical; Perception DC 15; Disable Device DC 15 (see below)

Trigger: location; Reset manual

To disable the trap, a nimble character must first tight-rope walk (Acrobatics DC 15) to the far side on the one support rope that is not rigged. Then the character may attempt to disable the device.

Effect: 30-foot fall into the ravine (3d6 damage); multiple targets (all creatures on the bridge); Reflex DC 15 for half damage

Creatures: Five dream spiders scurry up the walls and attack if provoked. They immediately attack anyone falling into their pit.

Dream Spider (5)

XP 200

N Small vermin

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 size) **hp** 5 (1d8+1)

Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d3 plus poison)

Special Attacks dream web

Tactics Dream spiders try to lure opponents into their webbing

before moving in to bite them. Opponents who become senseless due to Wisdom loss are often wrapped in webbing to ensure they do not recover and are slowly devoured.

STATISTICS

CR 3

CR 1/2

Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int -, Wis 12, Cha 11 Base Atk +0; CMB -1; CMD 11 Feats Weapon FinesseB Skills Climb +10, Stealth +10, Perception +5; Racial Modifiers

+4 Stealth, +4 Perception, +8 Climb

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dream Web (Ex) A dream spider can spin webs just like a monstrous spider of the same size but its webs carry an iridescent hue, making them easy to notice (Perception DC 15). Any animal, humanoid, giant, or monstrous humanoid that comes in contact with these webs experiences strange hallucinations, taking 1 point of Wisdom damage per round of contact. A DC 11 Fortitude save negates this damage. If the webs of a dream spider are burned, they create a spread of poisonous gas in a 10-foot radius. This gas deals 1d4 points of Wisdom damage to all creatures in the area (not just to those susceptible to contact with webs as listed above). A DC 11 Fortitude save halves this damage. The cloud of colorful vapor remains for only a single round before dissipating harmlessly. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Dream Spider Poison (Ex)

Type poison, injury; Save Fortitude DC 11 Frequency 1/round for 5 rounds Effect 1d2 Wis damage; Cure 2 saves

Treasure: On a DC 15 Perception check, the PCs find one pearl (50 gp), clutched in the hand of a dream spider's victim.



Development: A survivor has dragged himself to a small alcove west of the spiders' abyss. He is only found if the characters explore the abyss.

Curled defensively in a dark corner, a small man shivers and coughs uncontrollably. "Leave me while you can! I'm sick and dying, and I do not fear it! We thought we could consecrate this place..." As he rights himself, you can see he is a holy man, a priest of Lada, but gaunt and sickly. "They took us to it...the totem. It rejected me, and they threw me in this pit. The others..." He starts to sob. "If you are here to destroy the totem, you must find a dead-end with a small, bloodied altar to the White Goddess. Behind the altar is a secret door. That is all...all I remember. Here, take this [He hands the PCs a calfskin flask]. It will do me no good."

Treasure: A potion of cure serious wounds in a calfskin flask

The survivor passes out shortly after speaking to the PCs. The PCs can attempt treat his disease with a DC 15 Heal check; however, getting him out of the cavern will take a considerable amount of time (up and out of the ravine) and requires eliminating the spiders. If the Heal check is successful, he should live long enough to be rescued on the way out of the mines.

INTO THE HURVORN MINES

Across the dream-spider abyss, the natural caves end and the mines begin. On the far side of the rope bridge, the PCs see the underground passage connecting to **C2**, allowing the orcs to bypass the ravine.

If the characters explore the ghost-folk tunnel, it is a long passage, poorly constructed, that leads to **C2**. It has recently been traversed.

Crossing the abyss, the natural cave behind you gives way to excavated tunnels. The precise stonework indicates human construction. The passage before you is smooth-walled and straight with manmade supports. You also see a tunnel dug roughly and steeply heading under the ravine, then sharply up, obviously ghost-folk work. Beyond your light, there is nothing but the black. Feral chatter echoes throughout the mine.

The characters find the ghost-folk mostly inhabiting the old copper mines the Illyrians abandoned decades ago.

M1. A SURPRISED REAVER

The long shaft comes to a sharp bend. A lone guard (See page 53) is shocked to see intruders. He sets off to gather reinforcements.

The reaver retreats to area **M2**, his superior darkvision allowing him to spot the PCs before combat is initiated, unless steps are taken to approach him unobserved.

M2. A BLOODY MESS (CR 4)

A makeshift stone table sits in the center of a disgusting mess hall. Several reavers are enjoying their daily meal when the alarmed guard interrupts them (unless the PCs eliminated him in area M1—if so, make opposed Perception-Stealth checks here). The orcs take up arms if alerted to intruders. The sickly smell of burnt spider flesh pervades this makeshift mess hall. The floor is covered with piles of dead rats, goblets full of blood, and buckets of fetid fungi.

Creatures: Four ghost-folk reavers with bloodstained faces. They howl when they attack.

Ghost-Folk Reaver (4)

CR1

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 17 (see page 53) **Treasure:** The orcs' gear.

Development: If the adventurers do not follow the guard from **M1** to the mess hall in **M2** and head eastward, the reavers leave **M2** and attack the PCs from the rear.

M3. THE SHAFT (CR 1)

At the end of this tunnel, there is a vertical shaft going straight down.

You see what must have been a long vein of copper, stripped bare, leading to a dead-end. There is a hole carved in the floor, the entrance to a narrow, vertical shaft leading into darkness.

Only one person can climb down the narrow shaft at a time. The PCs may attempt to determine how deep the shaft goes by tossing a coin or pebble into the shaft and making a successful Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (engineering), or Survival check (see below).

KNOWLEDGE (DUNGEONEERING OR ENGINEERING), OR SURVIVAL

DC	Benefit
<13	Falling or slipping would probably be fatal
13	It is at least 150 ft. deep.
15	The air will be stagnant as you descend
18	There is something at the bottom of the shaft, as your object did not hit solid rock.

Vertical Shaft Hazard

XP 400

To descend or ascend the shaft, a character must make three successive DC 10 Climb checks. As the character ascends or descends, the stagnant air and physical strain take their toll, and the second and third checks incur a -1 and -3 penalty, respectively. Lowering a rope part of the way provides a +1 bonus on each check. Bonuses for other climbing gear also apply (see the gear description). A character failing a Climb checks must make a DC 14 Reflex save or take 1d2 temporary Strength damage, using raw muscle power to prevent falling completely down the shaft. Roping together characters provides a +3 bonus to the Reflex save. The character gains experience twice for negotiating this hazard.

Making your way to the bottom of the shaft, you see a crumpled human skeleton in tattered robes.

Treasure: Amidst the jumbled bones is a silver masterwork dagger, a *wand of cure light wounds* (5 charges), and a rotted (unusable) spellbook.

M4. COLLAPSED ROOM

The entry to this chamber is a small horizontal opening, roughly 18 inches in height. In years past, this was a much larger chamber, until it collapsed. Bringing a source of light into the narrow space, the glint of gold can be seen in the far corner.

To crawl through the collapsed chamber, a character must be wearing light or no armor. A DC 14 Will save is required to overcome extreme claustrophobia and to ignore a horrifying swarm.

The collapsed roof looms above you, and tons of rock are poised to break free and crush you. You can barely shift your body, as you slowly make progress across the space. Halfway through the chamber, a swarm of verminous insects emerge from the dark, covering you from head to toe.

M5. FILTHY BEDCHAMBER (CR 1)

Filthy bedrolls line the floor of this chamber. Refuse and odd personal effects are scattered about the room. Awoken by your light, a small brood of ghost-folk children in the far corner awaken. Their unpainted skin is a mottled, greenish brown. **Creatures:** Eight ghost-folk children attack as a swarm, doing 1 point of damage per round to anyone within a 5-ft. radius of their position. If the characters object to killing the young brood, it is possible to back out of the room and jam the door so the children cannot follow. A sleep spell automatically puts the entire brood into a deep slumber.

Ghost-Folk Children (Swarm)

XP 400

hp 8 (AC 10, Fort +1 Ref - Will -2)

Each broodling has 1 hp; there are 8 broodlings. The swarm does 1 point of damage per round in a 5-ft. radius.

M6. WHITE-FIRE CAULDRON (CR 3)

As the PCs approach this room, they hear guttural chanting to the White Goddess. A DC 13 Perception check confirms there are two distinct voices.

As you enter the room, you interrupt the dark chanting of two startled Ghost-folk shamans, their red eyes glaring with hatred. They stand over a steaming cauldron spouting acrid, noxious vapors.

Tactics: The shamans work together to tip over the white-fire cauldron and then prepare to attack. One shaman attempts to block the doorway, while the other stands back to cast cause fear, before joining the fray.

Creatures: Two ghost-folk shamans.



The large, steaming cauldron of white-fire can be tipped over with a DC 14 Strength check made as a standard action. This releases a 30-ft. cone of boiling white-fire from the caldron in the direction of the creature's choosing, and deals 2d6 fire damage to all creatures within the cone. A successful DC 12 Reflex saving throw halves the damage. Flying or levitating creatures are not affected.

Ghost-Folk Shaman (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each Orc adept 3 CE Medium humanoid (orc) Init –1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (+4 armor, -1 Dex) hp 19 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +4 Defensive Abilities ferocity Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. Melee mwk morningstar +3 (1d8+1)

Adept **Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd; concentration +4) 1st—cause fear (DC 12), darkness

0—create water, guidance, touch of fatigue (DC 11)

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 8 Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 11

Feats Alertness^B, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (Morningstar) **Skills** Diplomacy +3, **Int**imidate +4, Perception +4, Sense Motive +3

Languages Orc, Trade Tongue

SQ summon familiar (toad), weapon familiarity **Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds* (x2); **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, masterwork morningstar, flask whitefire oil (1), unholy symbol of the White Goddess (2).

Treasure: The orcs' gear.

M7. THE SHAMANS' CHAMBERS (CR 1)

The ghost-folk fear few things: their Goddess, their bonetotems, and their shamans. These chambers provide a safe place for the PCs to rest—so long as they do not attempt to read the writing on the wall.

The door to this chamber is marked with the symbol of the White Goddess, a large, solid, red circle of blood. The door stands slightly ajar. You hear nothing from inside. Slowly opening the door, you peer inside and see walls covered in symbols drawn with blood. Two makeshift bedrolls sit on the damp chamber floor.

Any PC attempting to read the blood writing triggers the trap below. A character who is forced to flee takes the most direct path back to the mine's entrance.

Hell-Birthed Words Trap

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

CR1

Trigger proximity (each person that attempts to read the words); **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (cause fear, frightened for 1d4 rounds, Will DC 11 negates)

Those who examine the writing envision the White Goddess slowly immolating their companions, one layer of flesh at a time, as they scream in pain. Those who make their save are immune to the writing's effects for 24 hours. Those who fail flee. Washing away the bloody words and blessing the area will permanently remove the hazard.

Treasure: Four flasks of white-fire oil beside the shamans' bedding.

M8. ALTAR TO THE WHITE GODDESS (CR 0)

An ivory statue of the White Goddess stands before you, her arm raised high, clutching an obsidian dagger. The statue rests in a large copper brazier filled with fresh blood. Small bloodstains spot the stone floor, smaller offerings from her supplicants.

If the characters found the priest of Lada in C4, they automatically find the secret door behind the altar. Otherwise a DC Perception check is required to spot the mechanism.

M9. THE BONE-TOTEM (CR 7)

Behind the secret door, a massive pile of bone lies at the far side of the room, the true altar to the White Goddess. A huge reaver stands ready to attack, his muscles taught, his greataxe hungry for killing. A hideous old woman, seemingly made of solid bone is anchored to the floor, blood seeping slowly out of her body. Only her crimson eyes move. Her whispers carry the weight of great age, "You will all die someday, why not today in battle rather than as old, sick things? Yes, you will all die." With great bitterness, she barks the command, "Kill them!" Out of the bone altar, two of the Goddess's sacrifices rise as skeletons, as the reaver champion charges to attack.

The bone-totem is the Hermit of the Griffoncrags' lost love, Ysolda. This is the sacrifice—becoming the tribe's bonetotem—she made to save her lover.

- **Tactics:** Ysolda's reaver champion rages immediately and charges to attack, while the two skeletal champions hang back to defend Ysolda, each holding a tower shield and providing her with 75% cover from missile attacks. The altar behind and around her provides an ample supply of bodies to fuel her animate dead spells, should she exhaust her offensive spells. She cannot move from where she is planted.
- **Creatures:** One bone-totem (Ysolda), 2 skeletal champions, and 1 reaver champion.

Reaver Champion XP 800 Male orc barbarian 4

CE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+6 armor, +1 **Dex**, -2 rage) **hp** 47 (4d12+16)

Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +3

Defensive Abilities ferocity, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge **Weakness** light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk greataxe +12 (1d12+10/x3)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/x2)

Special Attacks rage (8 rounds/day), rage powers (knockback, powerful blow)

STATISTICS

Base Statistics When not raging, the barbarians' statistics are AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Fort +6, Will +1; Melee mwk greataxe +10 (1d12+7/x3); Str 20, Con 15; CMB +9, CMD 20; Skills Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +2.

Str 24, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +4; CMB +11; CMD 22

Feats Improved **Init**iative, Power Attack

Skills Climb +8, Perception +4, Swim +1

Languages Orc, Trade Tongue

SQ fast movement

Gear iron Breastplate, masterwork greataxe, masterwork light crossbow and 20 bolts, 1 flask of white-fire oil

Human Skeletal Champion (2) CR 1

XP 400

NE Medium undead

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 **Dex**, +2 natural, +4 shield) **hp** 13 (3d8)

Fort +1 Ref +2, Will +3; channel resistance +4 DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune cold, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+3/19-20/x2)

STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 13, Con —, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 10 Base Atk +2; CMB +5; CMD 16 Feats Improved InitiativeB Gear mwk longsword, tower shield

Ysolda

XP 1,600

CR 6

Female orc bone-totem sorceress 6 CE Medium humanoid (Orc) Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1 Weakness light sensitivity

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+4 natural, +4 deflection) hp 29 (6d6+6) Fort +3 (+2 vs. poison), Ref +2, Will +6 Defensive Abilities ferocity SR 11; Resist acid 5

OFFENSE



Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +9) 7/day—*wasting ray*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +9) 3rd (4/day) — *animate dead*

2nd (6/day) — acid arrow (DC 15), summon swarm

1st (7/day) — alarm, obscuring mist, decompose corpse, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement (DC 16)

0 (at will)—arcane mark, bleed, detect magic, mage hand, message, ray of frost, read magic

Bloodline Daemon

Bloodline Arcana Whenever you cast a spell that kills one or more living creatures with an **Int**elligence score of 3 or higher, the caster level of any spell you cast in the next round increases by +1 for each creature your first spell killed. This ability does not stack with other effects that increase your effective caster level, and you cannot gain a bonus greater than 1/2 your **Cha**risma modifier (minimum 1). The second spell you cast must be of an equal or lower level than the first one.

STATISTICS

Str -, Dex -, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 16 Base Atk +3; CMB -; CMD -

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative

Skills Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (White Goddess) +7, Spellcraft +6, Use Magic Device +7

Languages Orc, Infernal, Trade Tongue

SQ bloodline arcana

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Wasting Ray (Sp): At 1st level, as a standard action, you can impose either starvation or thirst upon a living creature you can see within 30 feet. This requires the creature to make a Constitution check each round (DC 10 + 1 for each previous check) to avoid taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. The creature must continue to make these checks until, as a fullround action, it quenches its thirst or sates its hunger (see starvation and thirst). You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier, but can only apply it once every 24 hours to any given creature. Creatures that do not need to eat are immune to this effect.

Treasure: Ysolda wears a gold ring (50 gp) identical the hermit's ring, inscribed with the words "For Ysolda, my love." Upon searching the bone altar (DC 15 Perception), the PCs find the desiccated remains of an Illyrian knight and the ghost-folks' shiny offerings to the White Goddess: *potion of keen edge, potion of magic weapon, potion of greater magic fang* (2), large aquamarine 435 gp, inlaid bracelet 278 gp, moonstone 160 gp, masterwork Illyrian half-plate armor, 240 gp, 86 sp, 1130 cp, a brittle scroll containing the knight's orders (see next page)

Development: As Ysolda is struck down, her last words are carried on an unnatural wind.

The bone-totem's bone carapace crumbles, revealing the sickly, decrepit creature beneath. Her eyes roll back in pain. Her dying words, "Sevellio, my love, I am free. I see her whitefire, it calls to me. I can resist it no longer. It is... glorious!" Finally, her labored breathing stops, her life ended.

THE MAGIC OF BLOODMARKS

The bloodmark is a terrible curse, binding those affected in a deep sleep. If the curse is not lifted within seven days, the accursed die and rise as undead in service to the bone-totem. From the blood of a bone-totem, the venom of a dream spider, and a live sacrifice, a vile contact poison is created and then enchanted under a new moon to be infused by the power of the White Goddess. It must be used within 48 hours of creation, and often is the trigger for a surface raid.

The mark may only be applied by a shaman or cleric of the White Goddess. When the magical poison is applied, the victim must make a fortitude save (DC 15) or fall into a comatose state. Each day the save may be attempted again, with accumulating -1 penalties. A remove curse or cure poison spell allows another fortitude save without a penalty, while a break enchantment or greater spell removes the mark and end the curse. On the seventh day the victim rises as a fast zombie. For each victim successfully transformed into a fast zombie, a year is added to the life of the bone-totem.

Treasure: An *efficient quiver*, a *scroll vampiric touch*, 300 gp in jewels.

LEAVING THE HURVORN MINES

The ghost-folk are devoted to the destruction of their enemies. If the adventurers have not cleared the other rooms of ghostfolk before confronting Ysolda, the orcs become aware of Ysolda's death as soon as she sends her message on the wind, and the orcs begin hunting down the adventurers. Every 10 squares the PCs traverse, there is a 25% chance that a group of the remaining ghost-folk finds and attacks the characters. The ghost-folk do not follow the characters out of the cave if it is still daylight outside.

TAKE A HORSE TO THE WHITE MOUNTAINS AND PUT AN END TO THESE GHOST-FOLK RUMORS

ONCE AND FOR ALL. THE FILTHY PEASANTS TRICKLING DOWN INTO THE CITY ARE BEGINNING TO DISTURB THE PROPER PEOPLE.

MESTORUS GANZ, COMMANDER AND MAN-AT-ARMS. Part Four:

Concluding the Adventure

A VILLAGE SAVED

If the characters return to Hurvorn, they find a grateful Ovolio nursing his fellow villagers back to health.

As you approach Hurvorn, the sleepy village looks quite different. The townsfolk have begun to return to their daily routines. Ovolio, beaming, greets you, "You did it! We are forever in your debt!" A few wide-eyed children stare at you in wonder. "You will always be welcome in Hurvorn!"

All of the bloodmarked villagers have awakened and are recovering from the curse, including Millinia's sister, Dorna.

A REWARD CLAIMED

Millinia is exuberant to see the adventurers and hear of her sister's recovery.

Millinia sighs thankfully as you deliver the news of your success. "This, this is all that I have. Please take it, as you deserve it for what you have done!" She hands you a small satchel containing her sister's dowry, as well as a weathered wand.

Treasure: 50 gp, wand of sleep (5 charges)

If the adventurers decline the dowry, she weeps with joy.

Unable to hold back her feelings, tears stream down Millinia's cheeks. "Thank you! You are too kind... I know it isn't much, but it is all that we had. I don't have the words to thank you."

Should the adventurers ever return to the White Mountains, Millinia aids them in any way she can. She is exceptionally familiar with the surrounding area, its villages, and its people. The party gains +1 Status when dealing with any of villages of the White Mountains.

THE HERMIT

As the adventurers leave Gruzzi, they are stopped by one of the townsfolk.

"Aren't you the ones who set off to find the hermit? He was spotted just a few hours ago by our huntsman in the wood bordering the Griffoncrags. The Hermit weeps." The townsman looks down and says, "Well, good luck to you. We hope to see you again."

If the adventurers seek out the hermit, they are unable to find him; however, they encounter traders, travelers, and other mountain folk who have recently spotted the Weeping Hermit of the Griffoncrags, and he soon finds his way into Midgard's legends.





By Michael Lane

"The Dawnsong Tragedy" is a fantasy adventure for four 3rdlevel characters.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

What stilled the Dawnsong? Even 30 years later, the disappearance of the wise woman and her Celestial Yurt troubles the centaurs, elves, and men of the Rothenian Plains. A priestess of Lada, Narantsetseg the Dawnsong raised and protected a shrine with an impossible interior kissed by the sunlight of a beautiful day. But one morning, her yurt disappeared.

An alliance of priestesses representing the three wicked sisters—Marena the Red, Sarastra of the Night, and the White Goddess was responsible. The alliance slew the Dawnsong and desecrated the yurt, but the last of Lada's wards ensnared them. Unable to escape, the priestesses turned on one another, each seeking to gain her deity's favor by transforming the yurt into her goddess's image. Each priestess nears completion of a plot to break her rivals' wards and refashion the Celestial Yurt into the dark twin of its once-holy calling, corrupting the Khazzaki, windrunner elves, and Rothenian centaurs into the service of their goddess.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Three days ago, the pure-white yurt with sky-blue symbols and a crown of golden sunlight returned, floating over the hill where it once greeted pilgrims and weary travelers. Inside, the PCs find the site of a terrible tragedy. Three priestesses transformed the once-sunny interior into a shadowy nightmare, with only a small area protected from their influence. Trapped themselves, the PCs must explore three chilling realms within the yurt and defeat the priestesses to return the yurt to Lada.

Within the yurt, the PCs also find unexpected help guidance from the Dawnsong, traitors to the priestesses, and perhaps even Lada herself. With each defeat, the surviving priestesses grow in power, creating three possible finales driven by the PCs' choices. Success may restore a great beacon of light and hope to the Rothenian Plains. Failure forever unleashes a terrible, land-changing darkness.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters may begin this adventure during any visit to the Rothenian Plains. They could simply witness the yurt's appearance on a hill before them, or they could receive a request from the Khazzaki to investigate its reemergence.

Other motivations might include:

- A PC worships Lada and is tasked with investigating the yurt's reappearance.
- A PC is related to Narantsetseg and is sent to find out the reason for her disappearance.

INTRODUCTION

Ahead, you see the Celestial Yurt gleaming from the next rise. The round structure is covered in snow-white felt, which rises to a golden crown. The yurt seemingly floats above the hilltop. Approaching, you see symbols, including sky-blue flowers and Lada's radiant eye, cover its sides. A simple wood-paneled door set in a frame carved with lifelike wildflowers of the Rothenian Plain is the only entrance.

Part One: Entering the Yurt

Stepping into the yurt entraps the PCs in a demiplane, and the door outside disappears. To gain their freedom, the PCs must explore three cursed areas within the Celestial Yurt: the Scarlet Wood, the Moon Halls, and the Bonelands.

- **Environment:** The Celestial Yurt's vast interior contains several different environments. Each cursed region provides specific details and rules for its locations. The PCs can explore four hexes per 12 hours, regardless of their base speed.
- **Edge of the Map:** Some PCs may attempt to escape the Celestial Yurt by reaching the edge of the map. GMs should use each region's terrain to redirect them. If they grow frustrated, possibly allow them to find a gate back to the steppe, whereby they can reenter at a later time.

Y1. THE DAWNSONG'S PLEA

Stepping into the Celestial Yurt, your vision temporarily shimmers and blurs. When it clears, you find yourselves standing on a sunbathed hilltop with the rolling steppe on all sides. Far off in the distance, you see the dark blur of mountains or forests. As you orient yourselves, the ghostly shape of a middle-aged Khazzaki woman materializes before you. Her hair is shoulder-length and she is dressed in the Khazzaki style, but you see she is wearing a lay of roses and bears a staff with the radiant eye of Lada.

"Greetings, I am Narantsetseg, the Dawnsong of Lada. I'm happy Lada has sent a band of heroes to take back the Celestial Yurt. Some time ago, three priestesses of the evil sisters invaded my home. Their combined might was too much, and I fell before I could rally any defense against them. They soon set to squabbling, however, and each has withdrawn to build her own realm within the yurt in the image of her goddess. I have been hard-pressed to keep this small area free of their influence, and I fear many of the yurt's wonders have been lost, but, then, you have come to purge this holy place of their dark influence. If you can defeat them, I know Lada will transform the yurt to its previous glory.

"To the northwest lies a frozen wood of blood-red trees. This is the land of Khongordzol, the unholy spawn of a vampire and Khazzaki who brought the living dead to befoul those lands for Marena.

"To the south, the elven witch Sarangerel has transformed the lands into twisting, shadowy halls in the image of her patron Sarastra.

"Finally, to the northeast, you will find a sheer cliff with a gap leading to a bone-dry desert. Those lands are the home of Muunokhoi, a centaur battle-priestess of the White Goddess.

"Lada's light go with you."

The Dawnsong can manifest and speak with the PCs as long as they remain on the hilltop. Here are her responses to the PCs' most likely questions:

- Why has the Celestial Yurt reappeared? "Reappeared? Strange, I didn't know it had vanished. I knew the priestesses worked powerful magic to trap me and my servants within the Celestial Yurt, but I didn't realize it affected the outside."
- *Can we get back out?* "Unfortunately, I fear my strength is not great enough to overcome whatever curse the priestesses wrought which now traps you along with my servants. Unless you have magic of your own to exact your escape, I'm afraid you are trapped until the priestesses are defeated."
- What sort of help can we expect in each land? "While I cannot manifest outside this area, some of my servants may have survived the priestesses' hunts. This was once a sacred place for Lada, and some of her power may have protected them. They could aid you. Additionally, the priestesses care little for one another, so it may be possible to turn them against one another."
- Which priestess should we try to defeat first? "That is for you to decide. All three are very powerful. You'd be wise to recover and rest before entering each land; however, but the order of attack is yours to determine."
- Favor of the Goddess: The PCs must defeat each of the three wicked priestesses to remove the curse on the Celestial Yurt. When they defeat the first priestess, Lada shows her favor by transforming those lands back to their original nature. But when they defeat the second evil priestess, the entire yurt,



including the entrance, takes on the form of the priestess' lands (as described for each one). The Dawnsong does know about this consequence, and she is unable to manifest once it happens. Defeating all three priestesses returns the Celestial Yurt to its original form, as described in "Concluding the Adventure."

Y2. ENTERING THE SCARLET WOOD

Over the last few hours, it has become clear a vast bloodred wood lies ahead. The trees form a thick border on the steppe's edge. Ahead, a thin path weaves through the otherwise impenetrable trees.

The PCs may attempt to avoid the path. If they do, they find the trees extremely dense and difficult to traverse through. They make little headway; going back to the path allows them to progress easily toward their destination. Inside the woods, the temperature steadily drops, with snow and ice appearing on the ground and trees. Eventually, by forcing their way through the woods or taking the path, the PCs arrive at area **W1** in the Scarlet Wood (see **Part Two**).

Y3. ENTERING THE MOON HALLS

You head south across the steppe, and after several hours of travel, the rolling hills gradually flatten into an expansive plain. Ahead, a solitary hill rises, within which rests a 10-ft.-high arched door of black stone. Approaching the door, you note its reflective marble contains a pool of shifting shadows just beneath its hard surface.

The door is locked, and neither magical nor mundane attempts to penetrate it meet with success. To enter the Moon Halls, the PCs must await nightfall. Once the moon rises, the door becomes ethereal, and the PCs may walk through its shadows and into the Moon Halls. Entering, the PCs encounter a realm of shifting shadows with a dim moon providing the only illumination. They have entered the Moon Halls (area **M1** in **Part Three**), and the PCs feel wisps of shadow brush gently against their skin and snatch at their hair and clothes as they travel this realm.

Y4. ENTERING THE BONELANDS

Traveling to the northeast, the steppe's gentle hills steadily become steeper until abruptly ending at a sheer whitegranite cliff rising hundreds of feet into the sky. The escarpment face's only blemish is a thin, rocky canyon rising into the cliffs.

Scaling the cliffs requires a series of DC 25 Climb checks, but no matter how long the PCs climb, they never get closer to the top. Once the characters enter the canyon, they find the terrain rugged, but passable. After a few hours, the temperature rises and the humidity drops until they finally emerge in area **B1** (see **Part Four**).



Part Two: The Scarlet Wood

The Scarlet Wood is the realm of Khongordzol, a Khazzaki dhampir priestess of Marena. Khongordzol and Marena transformed the land into a terrible frozen wood of blood-red trees, but this change is bound to Khongordzol. Killing her causes the temperature to warm, the river to run clear, the wood to fall away, and the plains of Lada to return.

- **Environment:** The average daytime temperature in the Scarlet Wood hovers just below freezing. At night, the temperatures dip below 0 degrees Fahrenheit for two hours in the early morning hours, so the PCs need to find a means to stave off the cold. The *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* details cold weather and its effects.
- **River of Death:** A swift-running river flows from the forested hills bordering the Bonelands in the northeast and disappears into the woods to the west, splitting the Scarlet Wood. Floating body fragments and partial corpses choke the waterway. While darakhul fever is normally only transmitted by bites, anyone drinking from or contacting the river risks contracting the disease (see *Disease* below).

Disease (Su)—Darakhul fever: contact or ingested; *save* Fortitude DC 13; *onset* 1 day; *effect* 1d6 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. A creature infected with darakhul fever who dies must make an adjustment check (see *Midgard Bestiary* p. 29). Extremely successful checks (Fort DC 31) indicate the creature rises within an hour as a darakhul rather than as a standard ghoul (Fort DC 10-16). A darakhul is a free-willed undead. Khongordzol controls any creature rising as a standard ghoul or ghast (Fort DC 16-20) here.

The Transformed Yurt: If Khongordzol is the final surviving priestess, read the following:

All around you, the lands transform into the rolling steppe found in the yurt's center. Warm sunlight returns and bathes you in its pleasing glow.

It doesn't last.

Just as suddenly, a howling wind rushes over the hills. With it comes fierce sleet and snow, temporarily blinding you. All around you hear the violent crush of massive objects exploding from the earth, shaking you so hard you nearly fall to the ground. The snow and sleet clears. Around you stands a wood of blood-red trees with snow blanketing the ground.

W1. DEADLY GREETING (CR 4)

The trees on either side of your path thin, but at the same time, the well-defined path disappears, as well. Standing on the snow ahead, you see a skeletal hound wreathed in mist and purple fire. It raises its head and an eerie howl echoes through the dark woods.

Creature: Khongordzol's lich hound ward's the yurt's entrance to the Scarlet Wood. The creature recently chased off an alseid ranger who came looking for visitors and now waits for the PCs to arrive.

LICH HOUND

1,200 XP

hp 42 (Midgard Bestiary p. 69)

TACTICS

Before Combat The lich hound notices the PCs when they enter the Scarlet Wood. It begins 200 ft. away. It initially uses its howl special ability, and then it gives chase with ethereal jaunt. It appears behind its target, potentially surprising the person.
During Combat Once the lich hound reaches the characters, it attacks the least-armored character, attempting to trip and use its gut rip ability to swiftly reduce the number of foes.
Morale: The lich hound fights until destroyed.

Development: Once the PCs have defeated the hound and had a chance to explore the nearby area, they find a trail of blood leading to the north (**W2**). An alseid ranger left the blood trail when it came looking for the PCs; the lich hound forced the ranger to flee. A second trail continues into the wood toward **W3**.

W2. HUNTED OR HUNTER (CR 5)

Further in the woods, you hear the sound of unnatural snarls and growls in the otherwise silent wood. Drawing closer, you see a creature with the upper body of a slim elf and lower body of a deer. It is using a spear to fend off four malformed creatures.

A pack of festrogs roaming the wood caught the alseid ranger's blood trail when he fled the lich hound. Unless the PCs intervene, the creatures rip the alseid asunder in two rounds. The PCs begin 50 ft. from the battle.

Festrog (4)

XP 1,800 hp 9 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3)

Alseid

XP 400

Male alseid ranger 1 **hp** 3 of 8 (*Midgard Bestiary* p. 6)

TACTICS

Before Combat The festrogs are intent on their quarry, and their Perception checks to notice the PCs suffer a -5 penalty. They turn from the alseid if the PCs engage them in battle.

If the alseid notices the PCs, he cries out for assistance. **During Combat** If distracted from the alseid, the festrogs charge the PCs. They fight for themselves, using their feed ability to gain temporary hit points. The alseid is gravely wounded, refusing combat unless the PCs' defeat seems imminent.

Morale The festrogs fight to the death. If the alseid enters the fight, he fights to the death.

Development: The alseid sought the PCs after his king received a message from the Dawnsong: "Heroes have arrived to help; we have hope now." He thanks them for saving him and asks them to come back to village. He speaks with the PCs about the undead dangers of the wood on their journey to the village, knowing everything on the south side of the river as well as the river's dangers. The alseid has five

CR 4

CR 5



sets of cold weather gear with him. Although designed for an alseid, the PCs still receive a +3 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves against exposure to cold weather (rather than the normal +5) for using the gear.

W3. COLD AS DEATH (CR 4)

A small patch of flowers with bluish-white petals, dark sapphire stems, and tiny white leaves sprouts from the snow ahead. A slightly sweet scent wafts through the wood in this area.

Hazard: The patch of flowers is a dangerous plant called rime blooms. If the alseid ranger happens to be with the PCs, he warns them to avoid the plants, which are a variant of brown mold—otherwise, a DC 19 Knowledge (nature) check is needed to identify the plant as dangerous. It occupies a 10-ft. square along the left side of the trail. When the PCs approach within 30 ft., the pleasant scent draws characters to it unless they succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14). If the PCs approach within 5 ft., they take 3d6 points of nonlethal cold damage. Fire brought within 5 ft. of rime blooms causes the plant to instantly double in size. Cold damage, such as from a *cone of cold*, instantly destroys it; cold weather, however, does not affect it.

Development: The trail continues deeper into the vale.

W4. UNEXPECTED ALLIES (CR VARIES)

Through the trees ahead, you see pale shells of white-feltcovered yurts. Two creatures with elf-like upper bodies and the lower bodies of deer emerge, wary and bearing shortbows. **Creatures:** The PCs have reached a small village of 25 alseids, including 15 rangers (use the statistics from **W2**). All are holdouts from Khongordzol's wintry realm, and they huddle against the edge of the wood in an area where the river is not yet poisoned.

The alseids begin as unfriendly, but if the PCs rescued the ranger from area **W2** or return the corpse of their prince from encounter **W7**, the Diplomacy check to improve their attitude receives a +5 circumstance bonus.

- **Treasure:** If made helpful and the PCs return the body of the prince, the king grants them a +1 *longspear* in gratitude.
- **Development:** The Dawnsong informed King Duros of the strangers' arrival, and he sent rangers, including the prince, to seek them out. The PCs may have encountered the ranger in encounter **W2**. Duros' son sought to pass the darakhul wolves at the bridge and has not returned. If the alseids' attitude has been improved to friendly or better, Duros asks the PCs to find the prince.

W5. THE LOST PRINCE (CR 3)

The trees huddle close together here, as if trying to warm themselves; their effect darkens the already shadowy skies. From somewhere in the woods, a deep growl sounds, and suddenly a pale creature with the torso of a sickly elf and the lower body of a starved deer rushes from the trees.

Creature: The lost alseid prince resides in this dark grove in the northern woods. Unfortunately, he contracted darakhul fever from the wolves when he tried to pass the bridge (area W6) several days ago in search of the PCs. Maddened by hunger and the transformation, he mindlessly attacks.

DARAKHUL ALSEID

XP 800

Alseid ranger 2 NE Medium undead (augmented monstrous humanoid)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +5 **Dex**, +4 natural) **hp** 14 (2d8+2)

Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +9

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/magic and daylight; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses daylight weakness

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d8+4 plus paralysis and disease) and 2 claws +6 (1d6+4 plus paralysis)

Ranged composite shortbow +7 (1d6+1/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (magical beast +2), paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 13, elves are immune to this effect)

TACTICS

Before Combat It takes a DC 22 Perception check to notice the darakhul alseid prince. Otherwise, he fires an arrow at the closest PC and then charges the group in the next round.

During Combat The darakhul alseid savagely attacks until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 21, Con -, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 14

Base Atk +2; CMB +7; CMD 22 (26 vs. trip)

Feats Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Heal +10, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +12, Stealth +12, Survival +10; Racial Modifiers +2 Perception, +2 Stealth

Languages Elvish, Trade Tongue

SQ track, wild empathy +3, woodfriend

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Daylight Weakness (Ex) A darakhul suffers a -4 penalty to attack and saving throws when in full daylight. A daylight spell instead inflicts a -2 penalty to a darakhul.

Disease (Su) see *Disease*, p. 68 in **Part Two: The Scarlet Wood: River of Death**.

Woodfriend (Su) When in a forest, alseids leave no tracks and automatically discern true north.

Development: Returning the body of the prince to the village (W4) meets with great despair, but the alseids, nonetheless, thank the PCs for bringing home their prince and beg them to defeat Khongordzol. The alseids fear the dangerous priestess, and refuse to join the fight against them.

W6. THE FROZEN BRIDGE (CR 5)

The sound of running water grows louder and louder here, and through the trees, you see a small stone bridge arching over a river. Two snarling, gaunt, unnaturallooking wolves block the bridge's entrance.

Creatures: Two darakhul wolves guard the bridge.

DARAKHUL WOLF (2)

XP 800

CR 3

NE Medium undead (augmented animal)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 **Dex**, +6 natural) **hp** 14 (2d8+2)

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

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/magic and daylight; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses daylight weakness

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., burrow 25 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d8+4 plus trip, paralysis and disease) and 2 claws +5 (1d6+4 plus paralysis)

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

TACTICS

Before Combat The wolves stand their ground until attacked. **During Combat** If the PCs close within melee range or initiate ranged combat, the wolves attack the foe closest to the bridge and flank. The wolves immediately change opponents when someone tries to cross the bridge, even incurring attacks of opportunity to get to the intruder.

Morale The darakhul wolves fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 19, Con -, Int 6, Wis 16, Cha 12

Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 19 (23 versus trip)

Feats Iron **Will**, Multiattack, Lightning **Ref**lexes, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Climb +13, Intimidate +9, Perception +10, Stealth +8, Survival +3 (+7 scent tracking); Racial Modifiers +8 Climb, +8 Intimidate, +4 Survival when tracking by scent

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Daylight Weakness (Ex) A darakhul suffers a -4 penalty to attack and saving throws when in full daylight. A *daylight* spell instead inflicts a -2 penalty to a darakhul.

Disease (Su) Darakhul fever, see Disease p. 68.

Development: The trail continues onward over the bridge to **W7**. If the characters rest in the area longer than an hour, two more darakhul wolves attack.

W7. THE GROVE OF BLOOD (CR VARIES)

The snow is lighter here, but the trees huddle closer and closer as you crunch across the frozen ground. At last, the trees open wide, but their sweep overhead leaves you with the impression of a vast blood-red cathedral. At the far end of the space, you see a granite altar on a dark, basalt pedestal, about 100 ft. away.

This clearing is oval, roughly 40 ft. across and 100 ft. long. Khongordzol waits for the PCs in her cathedral. When they enter, she prepares for combat and sends her skeletons after the PCs while flying above.

A pale, gaunt woman flies up from the altar, "Fools, how

CR 3

dare you enter the Grove of Blood?" She motions upward, and two skeletons burst from the ground and race toward you, their very bones seeping blood.

Creatures: The two skeletons appear roughly 40 ft. from the characters, and Khongordzol hovers 20 ft. from the ground, 30 ft. from the altar.

KHONGORDZOL

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female dhampir cleric of Marena 5 LE Medium humanoid (dhampir)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex) hp 24 (5d8) Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +6

Defensive Abilities negative energy affinity; Resist undead resistance

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk shortspear +3 (1d6-1)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 3d6 (7/day) (DC 16)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities agile feet (5/day), touch of darkness 2 rounds (5/day)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 5, +2 melee touch,

+4 ranged touch; **Concentration** +7)

3 (1/day) prayer, deeper darkness^D

2 (3/day) desecrate, silence (DC 14), blindness/ deafness^D (DC 15), protection from good, communal

1 (4/day) murderous command^{UM} (DC 13), shield of faith (DC 13), longstrider^D (DC 13), bless, obscuring mist

0 (at will) bleed (DC 13), read magic (DC 12), detect magic, guidance

Domains: Darkness, Travel

TACTICS

Before Combat Khongordzol casts fly (from the scroll) on herself and communal protection from good on herself and two skeletons. Given time, she also casts bless on her skeletons. During Combat In combat, Khongordzol uses area-effect spells like deeper darkness and silence to harry the PCs while channeling negative energy to heal her skeletons or harm foes. Lastly, she casts murderous command on PC fighters.

Morale When reduced at or below 10 hp, Khongordzol pleads for her life, offering to help defeat the other priestesses by telling the PCs of the others' strengths and weaknesses; she won't accompany the PCs into battle, though. Having her break her holy symbols has the same effect as killing her.

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 18 Base Atk +3; CMB +2; CMD 13

Feats Blind-Fight, Command Undead (DC 16), Spell Focus (necromancy), Undead Master

Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Heal +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Linguistics +5, Perception +6, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +5 Languages Darakhul, Khazzaki, Trade Tongue

SQ +5 to caster level of any channeling feat used to affect undead, aura, detect undead (3/day), resist level drain, spontaneous casting

Gear masterwork shortspear, +2 chain shirt, scroll of fly, holy symbol (2)

BLOODY SKELETONS (2) CR 1/2 each

XP 200 each

hp 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Development: If Khongordzol is the first priestess defeated, Lada transforms those lands back to their original nature. If Khongordzol is the second priestess, the entire yurt, including the entrance, takes on the form of her lands, and a bloodstained forest envelopes everything and the sky weeps snowflakes mixed with bitter ash.

Part Three: hė Möön

Sarangerel, a windrunner elf, has transformed the Moon Halls into a series of dark, shadowy courts in honor of Sarastra. Here, the PCs face shadowy beasts, illusion, and Sarangerel's treachery to free the land from Sarastra's clutches.

Environment: Shifting shadows shroud everything in the Moon Halls. Unless otherwise noted, the Moon Halls' ceilings are 20 ft. tall.

Phantasmal Creatures The characters encounter several phantasmal creatures (see Midgard Bestiary p. 78) in this region. Phantasmal creatures appear to those using detect magic to possess moderate illusion (phantasm) auras. They are particularly vulnerable to dispel magic, which forces them to dissipate a number of hours equal to the CL check (no save). Closely interacting with a phantasmal creature allows a character to make a Will save to recognize it is mostly illusory. A character also receives a Will save if killed by phantasmal creatures to avoid death.


The Transformed Yurt: If Sarangerel is the final surviving priestess, read the following:

A bitter laugh echoes from all around you. As the sound fades, a woman's voice speaks, "Thank you heroes. You've been most helpful. You are the perfect sacrifice to Sarastra for helping to deliver the yurt to her!" For a moment, the lands around you transform into a beautiful, sun-splashed landscape of rolling steppe. Then you glimpse shadows at the edges of your vision and the sun is masked. The shadows rush in like a verminous swarm clutching an exposed face and the skies turn black above you.

M1. SLAVERING SHADOWS (CR 4)

After what seems like hours of pushing through the shadows, at last they part, and you emerge into a vast hall of white stone. Overhead, a pale moon shines through a few remaining tendrils. At the corners of your vision, the shadows continue to shift and coalesce. Directly ahead, you see a short, black, powerful hound; its coat draws shadows to him. The creature extends his neck and tilts its head; then it releases a blood-chilling howl.

Creature: A young shadow mastiff stands guard at the entrance to the Moon Halls, alerting Sarangerel to trespassers with its howl. The shadow mastiff begins 100 ft. away from the PCs.

YOUNG SHADOW MASTIFF CR 4

XP 1,200

Male shadow mastiff (Pathfinder Bestiary 3) NE Small outsider (evil, extraplanar) **Init** +9; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +1 size, +4 natural) hp 45 (6d10+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities shadow blend

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d6+3/20/x2), tail slap +5 (1d4+1/20/x2) **Special Attacks** bay (DC 14)

TACTICS

Before Combat As soon as the shadow mastiff sees the PCs, it howls, using its bay ability, and then attacks any unpanicked creatures.

During Combat The shadow mastiff attacks relentlessly, beginning with the closest PC unaffected by its bay. **Morale** The shadow mastiff fights to the death.

Favor of the Goddess

When one of the other priestesses is slain, add two additional bloody skeletons to Khongordzol's retinue. If Khongordzol is the final remaining priestess, increase the bloody skeletons to a total of four with 12 hp each, and increase her ability to channel negative energy to 4d6.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13

Base Atk +6; CMB +8; CMD 23 (27 vs. trip)

Feats Improved **Init**iative, Iron **Will**, Power Attack -2/+4 **Skills** Fly +7, Perception +10, Stealth +18, Survival +10 **Languages** Trade Tongue (can't speak)

Bay (Su) When a shadow mastiff howls or barks, all creatures within a 300-ft. spread except evil outsiders must succeed at a DC 14 **Will** save or become panicked for 1d4 rounds. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the same mastiff's bay for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The DC is **Cha**risma-based.

Shadow Blend (Su) In any condition of illumination other than full daylight, a shadow mastiff disappears into the shadows, giving it concealment (50% miss chance). 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.

Development: The hall continues on to encounter M2.

M2. SARANGEREL'S TREACHERY (CR 4)

This encounter takes place once the PCs have defeated the shadow mastiff. The text below assumes the PCs visit the Moon Halls before going to the Scarlet Wood. See the development section for details on how to handle Sarangerel under other circumstances.

When you defeat the hound, its substance dissipates and drifts away, fading into the remaining shadows. The smiling visage of the Dawnsong appears before you. "Congratulations! A fine victory, heroes! I'm certain Sarangerel has many other similar threats to torment you further, but take pleasure in your first victory in her realm and know it has strengthened me. Yet, it's strengthened Khongordzol, too. Marena has granted her a gift to fortify her, as Sarangerel and perhaps Muunokhoi are weakened. You must go to the Scarlet Wood right away to defeat her before her power grows. However, there is help for you here before you go. One of my treasures, a wand to help protect you from the cold of her realm and the heat of Muunokhoi's, lies not too far from here. Reclaim it and then see to Khongordzol." She gestures to the east and fades away.

Creature: Sarangerel uses *disguise self* and *ghostly disguise* to trick the PCs into leaving the Moon Halls to pursue Khongordzol. See Encounter **M7** for Sarangerel's statistics if necessary, but she does everything possible to evade the PCs, preferring to direct them to the other priestesses or let her minions wear them down. If Sarangerel's plan fails, she returns to her normal form and attempts to bargain with them to go after Khongordzol and Muunokhoi first, in exchange for her promise (a false one) to leave the yurt once the PCs defeat the other priestesses. Sarangerel avoids combat at this time, utilizing a *refuge* token (attuned to the altar in area **M7** by a priest of Lada before the corruption) if the PCs remain unconvinced by her tricks. Breaking this token is a swift action which does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Sarangerel

XP 1,200

Female elf wizard (spellbinder^{ARG}) 5 (see M7 for full stats)

Development: If the PCs return to the yurt entrance to speak with the Dawnsong, they learn she has not conversed with them in the Moon Halls. If the PCs fail to detect Sarangerel's treachery and return after defeating Khongordzol, or if they have already defeated Khongordzol prior to their first visit, Sarangerel attempts to pose as the Dawnsong and send them after Muunokhoi.

Travelling to the east brings the characters to M3.

M3. THE FIRST MIRROR (CR 4)

The shadows in the Moon Halls deepen. To your right, an archway is covered in a shroud of shadowy webs, leading to a small chamber with a small, glowing rod visible in a niche. A giant black spider descends from the web and begins moving toward you.

Creatures: This is home to one of Sarangerel's servants, a forlarren who traveled with her when she came to destroy the Dawnsong and now guards one of Sarangerel's mirrors. A phantasmal giant black widow spider guards her lair. The spider begins 30 ft. from the PCs, while the forlarren hides behind a column in the 30-ft.-circular chamber. The rod is an activated sunrod.

FORLARREN

XP 600

hp 18 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

TACTICS

Before Combat The forlarren hides in a cleft of a pillar (Stealth +9).

During Combat The forlarren uses her *heat metal* ability (3/day, DC 11) on any metal-armor-wearing or metal-weapon-bearing individual fighting the spider.

Morale After exhausting her magic, the forlarren attempts to escape deeper into the halls.

PHANTASMAL GIANT BLACK WIDOW SPIDER (50% REAL) CR 2

XP 600

N Large construct (*Midgard Bestiary* p. 78 and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2)

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

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 9 (+2 **Dex**, -1 size)

hp 45 (5d10+15)

Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1

Defensive Abilities incorporeal; **Immune** construct and mindaffecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft. Melee bite +6 (1d8+6 plus poison) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Special Attacks web (+4 ranged, DC 19, 5 hp)

TACTICS

CR 4

CR 2

Before Combat The spider remains silent in its web until the PCs approach within 30 ft.; it then moves to attack.

During Combat The spider attacks the closest PC with a web, and then moves in to bite.

Morale The spider fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 15, **Con** –, **Int** -, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +3; CMB +8; CMD 20 (32 vs. trip)

Skills Climb +20, Perception +4; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb, +4 Perception, +4 Stealth (+8 webs)

SQ glass heart, incorporeal rejuvenation, strong webs

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disbelieved The giant black widow deals 50% of normal damage, but takes double damage from any disbelieving creature. If disbelieved, special attacks only affect the target 50% of the time.

Glass Heart (Ex) The creature in inextricably linked to the phantasmal glass mirror from which it originated. It cannot travel more than a mile from the plate, and if the plate is destroyed, the creature permanently dissipates at the end of its next turn.

Incorporeal Rejuvenation (Su) When reduced to 0 hp, the phantasm dissipates and cannot manifest again for 24 hours. After this time, it comes back from the mirror again, fully healed.

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Con and staggered; *cure* 2 saves. Save DC is Con-based with a +2 racial bonus.

Strong Webs (Ex) A black widow's webs gain a +4 bonus to the DC to break or escape.

Treasure: A *wand of endure elements* hangs caught in the black widow's web (DC 15 Perception check to locate). Behind the web, the PCs find a looking glass. If the PCs fail to destroy the mirror, the spider regenerates in 24 hours.

Development: The forlarren claims to be Sarangerel's prisoner, forced to defend this place under pain of death. She claims she has been trapped in the chamber with the spider for an unknown period of time (she is -1 to Bluff). If the PCs allow her to leave, she departs back towards the yurt. She then makes her way to M7 through hidden side passages to tell Sarangerel about the party.

The halls continue onward to M4.

M4. HOLDOUTS (CR 3)

From the dim shadows, you hear a sound like the clash of tiny swords accompanied by the high-pitched shouts.

Creatures: Two atomies live here. They are currently sparring. Shy and wary of Sarangerel's trickery, the atomies begin with an unfriendly starting attitude. If made friendly, they tell the PCs to destroy all of Sarangerel's mirrors to prevent her creatures from returning and to free the area. The atomies refuse to join the PCs. If the forlarren is with the characters, the atomies attack instead, believing the PCs Srangerel's allies.

ATOMIE (2) XP 400 each

hp 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3) **TACTICS**

Before Combat The atomies use their ability to turn invisible and

CR 1

- **During Combat** The atomies fight if they become hostile or if the PCs otherwise provoke them. They use *reduce person* to make the PCs their size and attack with their rapiers.
- **Morale** If either atomie is slain, the survivor turns invisible and runs away.

Development: The hall continues onward to M5.

M5. POOL OF SHADOWS (CR 4)

A vast, dark pool blocks the path through the halls. Its surface is impossibly flat and still. A pedestal stands upon an island in the pool's center. A pair of two-person canoes rests by the edge of the pool.

The PCs must cross the pool to continue through the Moon Halls.

Creatures: Two phantasmal bunyips guard the pool, which is 200 ft. across and 30 ft. deep. The bunyips attack when the first canoe makes it halfway to the island.

PHANTASMAL BUNYIP (2) (50% REAL)

XP 600 each

- N Medium construct (*Midgard Bestiary* p. 78 and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)
- **Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, keen scent 180 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 **Dex**)

hp 35 (5d10+5)

Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +1

Defensive Abilities incorporeal; Immune construct traits OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d8+1/19-20 plus bleed)

Special Attacks bleed (1d6), blood frenzy, roar

TACHES

Before Combat The bunyips wait underwater until the first canoe is halfway to the island.

During Combat One bunyip attacks the lead canoe, while the second one uses its roar ability to panic the PCs. **Morale** The bunyips fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 16, **Con** –, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 7 **Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Improved Critical (bite), Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Escape Artist +5, Perception +8, Stealth +10, Swim +9 SQ amphibious, glass heart, incorporeal rejuvenation

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Rage (Ex) A bunyip's blood rage ability activates whenever it detects blood in the water using its keen scent, but otherwise functions as the universal monster rule of the same name.

Disbelieved The bunyips deal 50% of normal damage, but take double damage from any disbelieving creature. If disbelieved, special attacks only affect the target 50% of the time.

Glass Heart (Ex) The creature is inextricably linked to the phantasmal glass mirror from which it originated. It cannot

travel more than a mile from the plate, and if the plate is destroyed, the creature permanently dissipates at the end of its next turn.

- **Incorporeal Rejuvenation (Su)** When reduced to 0 hp, the phantasm dissipates and cannot manifest again for 24 hours. After this time, it comes back from the mirror again, fully healed.
- **Roar (Su)** A bunyip's roar is supernaturally loud and horrifying. When a bunyip roars (a standard action the creature can perform at will), all hearing creatures with 4 or fewer HD with a 100-ft. spread must succeed on a DC 13 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, creatures in the area are immune to the roar of that bunyip for 24 hours. This is a sonic, mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.
- **Development:** Destroying the mirror in the pedestal at the center of the pool destroys the bunyips permanently. It also causes a short tunnel to open in the pool's surface. Following this tunnel leads to **M6**.

M6. THE THIRD MIRROR (CR 4+)

The halls grow more cave-like, with the stonework more rough and unfinished than in the other areas. To your right, an even darker opening appears from the shadows. Suddenly, you hear the scuttle of legs and a large crossbow bolt flies from the opening.

Creatures: This area is home to another of Sarangerel's servants, a spriggan with a phantasmal giant spider protector. If the forlarren is with the group, she turns on the party, joining the spriggan.

SPRIGGAN

CR 3

XP 800

hp 34 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

TACTICS

- **Before Combat** The spriggan has already grown to Large size and fires his crossbow at the foremost PC before following the spider into battle.
- **During Combat** The spriggan seeks to flank with the spider in combat.
- **Morale** The spriggan fears Sarangerel, but wants to live. If reduced to fewer than 10 **hp**, he bargains for his life with knowledge of location **M7** and the power of the mirrors.
- **Gear** masterwork morningstar, wand of cure light wounds with 13 charges

PHANTASMAL GIANT BLACK WIDOW SPIDER (50% REAL) CR 2

XP 600

hp 45 (see M3)

Development: The spider-producing mirror rests in a small white marble pedestal found in an alcove beyond the dark opening from which the spriggan attacked. Destroying the mirror melts away the alcove, revealing a tunnel to M7.

M7. SARANGEREL'S EMBRACE (CR VARIES)

The shadows have increasingly taken the shape of familiar creatures—deer, ravens, owls, and spiders. At last, you enter a large room made of white stone. At the far end, a large altar of dark glass sits monolithic. Above, a crescent moon shines through the open ceiling. Shadows dance at the edges and the dark shape of a shadowy swordsman dances from them as a voice calls out, "You can still leave, my lovelies. Go now, and my shadows might let you escape."

This room is 30 ft. across and 75 ft. long. The shadowy warrior is a major image; he paces the hall 40 ft. from the characters. Sarangerel crouches behind the altar with total concealment. The nature of the altar is like a one-way mirror. While behind it, Sarangerel can see the room's events and utilizes the belowdetailed tactics.

SARANGEREL

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female elf wizard (spellbinderARG) 5 NE Medium humanoid (elf) Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex) hp 18 (5d6) Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4; +2 vs. enchantment Immune sleep; Resist elven immunities

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +2 (1d6-1)

Special Attacks blinding darkness (2 rds) (9/ day)

Wizard **Spells Prepared** (CL 5, +5 melee touch, +5 ranged touch; +9 **Con**centration): 3rd—*major image* (DC 18), *major image* (DC 18), *gloombind bolts*^{ARG} (DC 17)

2nd—mirror image (DC 17), darkness, ghostly disguise^{UM} (DC 17), haunting mists^{UM} (DC 17)

1st—silent image (DC 16), mage armor (DC 15), charm person (DC 15), disguise self (DC 16), vanish (DC 16)

0 (at will) read magic (DC 14), ghost sound (DC 15), mage hand, prestidigitation (DC 14)

Opposition Schools: Abjuration, Necromancy **TACTICS**

Before Combat Sarangerel casts *mage armor* on herself and then casts *major image* to create the illusion of a shadowy warrior when the PCs enter her hall, maintaining concentration until they are within sight. The swordsman shrugs off damage until a foe is adjacent to it (Will DC 18 to realize its nature). Then, before it expires three rounds after she stops concentrating, she discharges it with her Shadow Gambit feat. This causes the swordsman to attack the adjacent foe for 3d6 damage (Reflex DC 18 for half).

During Combat In the two rounds after ceasing concentration on her *major image*, Sarangerel casts *haunting mists* and *mirror image*, while the PCs interact with her warrior. After triggering the warrior's Shadow Gambit, if still undetected, she casts a *silent image* of a shadow emerging from the wall, having it circle in on the party; she then uses her Shadow Gambit feat in the next round (1d6 damage, Reflex DC 16 for half). At this point, she stands from behind the altar and casts gloombind bolts on the most heavily armored target. She then uses her blinding darkness ability to harry the PCs while fighting with her rapier. She can use her Shadow Gambit to expend her m*irror image* as long as one image remains. She does this as a touch attack against an adjacent foe (+5 touch attack, 2d6 damage.)

Morale Sarangerel keeps *vanish* in reserve, and if reduced to fewer than 10 hp, uses it in conjunction with a *major image* of her appearing, shouting in defiance, and flying through a secret door behind the altar in an attempt to escape. While the party investigates this, she retreats into the Moon Halls, joining Khongordzol (if still alive).

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 13 Base Atk +2; CMB +1; CMD 14

Favor of the Goddess

When one of the other priestesses is slain, add a phantasmal giant black widow spider (see **M3**). If Sarangerel is the final remaining priestess, the spider regenerates from the mirror one round after being slain, until the mirror is destroyed. The surface of Sarangerel's altar to Sarastra is made of a polished black mirror. Destroying the glass (Hardness 5, 25 hp) prevents the spiders from regenerating.

- **Feats** Elven Weapon Proficiencies, Scribe Scroll, Shadow GambitISM, Spell Focus (Illusion), Spell Specialization, Tenebrous SpellISM
- **Skills** Bluff +3, Disguise +3, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +5, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +5
- Languages Draconic, Elvish, Kariv, Khazzaki, Trade Tongue, Umbral
- **SQ** elven magic, extended illusions (+2 rds), shadow, spell bond (*charm person, mirror image*)
- **Gear** masterwork rapier, *wand of minor image* (30 charges), spellbook with prepared spells.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shadow Gambit (Ex) As a standard action, you can draw upon energies from the Plane of Shadow to cause an ongoing figment spell you cast to damage a foe as if the illusion were real. The illusion must be one you retain ongoing control of, such as minor image, and the target must be both visible to you and within or adjacent to the area of your illusion. Using this feat immediately ends the figment's duration.

You must either make a melee touch attack or give the target a saving throw (Fortitude or Reflex) to resist the damage (see below). If you choose a melee touch attack, you use your own melee touch attack bonus, and if you miss, the spell deals no damage. If you choose to allow the target a saving throw, a successful save means it takes half damage. The shadowy attack deals 1d6 points of damage per spell level. If the target disbelieves or sees through the illusion, reduce the damage by half.

The shadowy attack can deal acid, bludgeoning, cold, electricity, fire, piercing, or slashing damage, but the damage must be appropriate to the illusion. For example, an illusory wall that collapses deals bludgeoning damage with a Fortitude save for half, an illusory swordsman strikes with a melee touch attack deals slashing damage, and an illusory wall of fire deals fire damage with a Reflex save for half.

Tenebrous Spell (Ex) When you cast a tenebrous spell in darkness or dim light, the spell's effective caster level and any associated save DCs are increased by 1. Any attempts at dispelling a tenebrous spell in darkness or dim light take a -2 penalty on the dispel check.

Casting a tenebrous spell in bright light is difficult, and requires a concentration check (DC 15 + twice the tenebrous spell's effective spell level). Attempts to dispel a tenebrous spell in bright light gain a +4 bonus on the dispel check.

You cannot use this feat on spells with the light descriptor.

A tenebrous spell uses up a spell Slot one level higher than the spell's actual level, except in the case of spells with the darkness or shadow descriptor or of the illusion (shadow) subschool; this feat does not change the effective level of those spells (but still counts as using a metamagic feat for all other purposes).

Development: Sarangerel need not die to break the hold on this part of the yurt. Destroying all three mirrors is sufficient.

If Sarangerel is the first priestess defeated, Lada shows her favor by transforming this region back to rolling plains. If she is the second priestess, the entire yurt, including the entrance, takes on the form of Sarangerel's dark halls, with impenetrable shadows enveloping everything and surfaces becoming glassy in texture. Other environmental issues, such as extreme temperatures, remain.

Part Four: The Bonelands

While in the Bonelands, the PCs must deal with the mad Muunokhoi, a centaur battle oracle of the White Goddess, and her orcs. The Bonelands are a fiercely hot desert of white sand, dotted with canyons and altars of bone where worshippers of the White Goddess have slain their foes.

Environment: The sun perpetually shines on the Bonelands throughout the adventure, and the average daytime temperature here is 100 degrees Fahrenheit, requiring Fortitude saves each hour to avoid heat damage. For more information on heat dangers, see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*.

The Transformed Yurt: If Muunokhoi is the final surviving priestess, read the following:

All around you, the lands slowly swell and transform into a beautiful day on the rolling steppe. Above you, the sun shines warmly and you feel a sense of relief. But just as you begin to relax, a terrible shadow passes over the sun blotting it out but for a thin corona. All around you the grasses of the steppe die, leaving you in a hostile land under the black, fire-limned sun.

B1. THE HOWLING WATCH (CR 3)

The canyon goes on forever, with little change but the twists, turns, and steadily increasing heat. At last, the walls open onto a vast expanse of white sand interspersed with rugged stone. Standing 50 ft. away on a large rock, a catlike creature with a black mane of quills and leathery skin glares menacingly before beginning a jarring howl.

Creature: Howlers, a reward from the White Goddess for the cruelty of the realm Muunokhoi has crafted, watch the Bonelands' borders. One is found here.

HOWLER XP 800

CR 3

hp 37 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2)

TACTICS

- **Before Combat** As soon as a howler notices intruders, it howls a warning to the realm with the number and type of foes—a warning requiring the PCs to save against the howler's curse.
- **During Combat** A howler avoids combat until after sending its warning howl. Afterwards, the creature attacks.
- Morale The howler fights to the death.
- **Development:** A howler's warning alerts the Bonelands to intruders. The trail continues onward.

B2. THE RAVENOUS (CR 4)

Two gaunt figures rise from the rugged terrain ahead like ghosts materializing from the white sands. Covered in white chalk or paint, with bestial faces sporting large tusks, the pair growls and sprints forward, bearing massive clubs.

Creatures: These fierce warriors are Muunokhoi's orcs—the Ravenous, many of whom guard her lands. They offer no quarter and eat their prey. They do not suffer from the light sensitivity common to most orcs. They charge from hidden clefts in the rocks 30 ft. away.

RAVENOUS BARBARIAN ORC (2) CR 2

XP 600

Male Orc Barbarian 3 CE Medium Humanoid (Orc)

Init +0; Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 8, flat-footed 10 (+2 armor)

hp 41 (3d12+15)

Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +1

Defensive Abilities ferocity, trap sense, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d4+3/20/x2) and greatclub +10 (1d10+10/20/x2) Special Attacks animal fury

TACTICS

- **Before Combat** The barbarians close with the PCs upon noticing them.
- **During Combat** The barbarians rage and attack, using power attack unless they are not hitting. They fight as a team, attacking until their foes or they go down.

Morale The barbarians fight until death.

Base Statistics When not raging, the barbarians statistics are AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; hp 29; Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Melee greatclub +6 (1d10+4/x2); Str 17, Con 12; CMB +6, CMD 16

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 11, **Con** 20, **Int** 6, **Wis** 7, **Cha** 8 **Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 18

Feats Ferocious ActionARG, Power Attack -1/+2

Skills Acrobatics +4, Climb +12, Perception +3, Survival +2 **Languages** Orc

SQ fast movement +10, rage (10 rounds/day)

Gear greatclub, leather armor, waterskin, bedroll, backpack, flint and steel, iron pot

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Animal Fury (Ex) Gain a d4 bite attack while raging Ferocious Action When at 0 hp or less, you lose 2 hp/round but

are not staggered. Lose 1 hp/round if raging.

Ferocity (Ex) Fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.

Development: Continue to B3.

B3. ANNOYING ALLIES? (CR 5)

On the horizon, you see a shimmer of motion as a pair of creatures flies erratically in your direction. They are small humanoid creatures with leathery wings and wicked smiles. A cloud of dust roils around them.

Creatures: Two dust mephitis approach. Curious about the new visitors, they do not immediately attack, but begin as unfriendly and harass the PCs by closely flying around them, kicking up dust and sand.

Dust Mephit (2)

XP 800 each

hp 19 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

TACTICS

- **Before Combat** The mephitis use their blur ability before approaching the PCs.
- **During Combat** If combat develops, one mephit attempts to summon another dust mephit, while the first uses its breath weapon on as many PCs as can. The next round, they reverse actions.

Morale When one mephit is slain, the other flees.

Development: If PCs temper their retaliation and improve the mephits' attitude to at least friendly, they express their own frustrations with Muunokhoi, especially her failure to protect them from the Ravenous (orcs). They warn of the dust digger (**B4**) before departing. The trail continues to **B4**.

B4. DIGGING IN THE DIRT (CR 4)

Another of the rugged canyons of the Bonelands lies ahead, this one appearing to be much larger than others you have passed through already. Suddenly, you find the white dust around your feet collapsing as you slide toward a sinkhole.

Creature: A monstrous creature known as a dust digger protects the approach to Muunokhoi's canyon lair. The orcs know to avoid its path, and clever PCs who have allied with the mephitis may avoid a fight with a Perception check (DC 23).

Dust Digger

XP 1,200 hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2)

TACTICS

Before Combat The dust digger waits until a character crosses above it, and then it collapses the ground within its reach with its sinkhole ability.

CR



During Combat The creature focuses on characters caught within its trap.

Morale The dust digger fights to the death.

Development: The trail continues to B5.

B5. MUUNOKHOI'S CHALLENGE (CR 4)

Passing through the arch provides a view of a monstrous arena. A great circle of white sand is enclosed with a 10 ft.-wide ring of broad-leafed blue flowers, the first plants you have seen in this dead land. All around, tier after tier of white stone ledges rise from the canyon walls. A low drumbeat begins, and you see motion from many of the ledges, as hundreds of orcs pour in from various cliff openings. From the opposite side of the arena, a figure emerges from the swirling dust. A female centaur moves to the center of the arena beside two enormous poles. Her voice is clear and booming, despite the distance. "Trespassers in the lands of the White Goddess, your bones will bleach on my cairn!"

Entering Muunokhoi's 60-ft.-circular arena requires passing through ring of azure lilies (Fort DC 15 or be nauseated for 1 minute).

MUUNOKHOI

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female centaur oracle 2 CE Large monstrous humanoid Init +7; Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, -1 size, +1 natural, +1 deflection) hp 56 (4d10+2d8+24)

Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +8

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.

Melee hooves x2 +9 (1d6+5) and lance +9 (1d8+7/x3) **Ranged** composite longbow (**Str** +5) +7 (1d8+5/20/x3) **Space** 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Oracle Spells Known (CL 2, +9 melee touch, +7 ranged touch; **Con**centration +5):

1 (5/day) shield of faith (DC 14), bless, enlarge person (DC 14), cure light wounds (DC 14)

Favor of the Goddess

When one of the other priestesses is slain, Muunokhoi gains the ability to use a charge action to move, attack, and continue moving in a straight line as if using the Ride-By-Attack feat. If Muunokhoi is the final remaining priestess, she gains the ability to rage like a barbarian for 10 rounds, but is not fatigued when her rage ends. This modifies her statistics as follows: **AC** 16, touch 11, flat-footed 13; **hp** 74; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10; **Melee** hooves x2 +11 (1d6+7) and lance +11 (1d8+9/x3); **Str** 24, **Con** 22; **CMB** +13, **CMD** 28 (32 vs. trip). 0 (at will) bleed (DC 13), read magic (DC 13), detect magic, guidance, vigor

TACTICS

- **Before Combat** As soon as the PCs accept battle, Muunokhoi casts *enlarge person* and pulls one of the enormous poles (a large lance) from the ground.
- **During Combat** Muunokhoi charges the strongest-looking PC and seeks to slay the PCs one at a time.
- **Morale** Muunokhoi is supremely confident of her ability to win any battle and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 16
Base Atk +5; CMB +11; CMD 24 (28 vs. trip)
Feats Improved Initiative, Power Attack -2/+4, Run
Skills Acrobatics +1, Climb +3, Diplomacy +10, Escape Artist
+1, Fly -1, Int imidate +12, Knowledge (nature) +4, Knowledge
(religion) +7, Perception +6, Ride +1, Stealth -3, Survival +8,
Swim +3
Languages Elvish, Infernal, Khazzaki, Trade Tongue
SQ oracle's curse (tongues—Abyssal)

Gear chain shirt, lance (x2), composite longbow (**Str** +5), *ring of protection* +1

Development: If Muunokhoi is the first priestess defeated, Lada shows her favor by transforming the halls back to the rolling plains. If she is the second priestess, the entire Celestial Yurt, including the entrance, takes on the form of Muunokhoi's bright dunes, with swirling white sands enveloping everything and the heat becoming oppressive.

Concluding The Adventure

When the PCs defeat the final priestess, the Celestial Yurt rapidly transforms back into its original form. The skies turn sunny and clear—a perfect crisp, cool, autumn day. The lands change back into a rolling, green steppe dotted with tiny woodlands. The spirit of the Dawnsong manifests a final time to thank the PCs.

The familiar face of the Dawnsong appears once more, but instead of sadness or hope, she greets you with enormous relief, "By your actions, this holy place has been restored, and I can now pass from these lands. A new priestess of Lada already makes her way toward the Celestial Yurt, but your heroism will never be forgotten. If you ever find yourselves in need of shelter or healing from her servants, call on them and Lada will provide what she can. Farewell."

Returning to civilization, characters find any priest of Lada knows their faces. They gain +1 Status when dealing with the clerics of Lada, and may request spellcasting as if a believer. This doesn't eliminate the cost, but does provide access to spells normally reserved for the devout. Followers of Lada gain +2 Status. The clerics also waive the cost of a raise dead spell once for each character.



The Tattered Unicorn

By Matt Hewson

A ghostly unicorn terrorizes the Dornitian village of Astig. Can you find its murderers in time and discover their true purpose before even more horror is unleashed on Astig's inhabitants?

"The Tattered Unicorn" is a horror/mystery adventure for five 3rd-level characters.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the final days before the Great Retreat from the Tomierran Forest, the departing elves charged the unicorn Arvessin with guarding the Eirstone, a gateway to an ancient enemy's prison—Lornan Mortha, the Shrouded Valley, which holds Hlevareth the glabrezu. The elves placed a sacred symbol upon Arvessin's chest, allowing him to bypass the prison's defenses and maintain its power. Some hundred years ago, Arvessin joined forces with a nymph named Rinay to guard the Eirstone and Lornan Mortha.

After Hlevareth's imprisonment, his quasit minion Zebiss wandered Midgard until the Retreat, when he began searching for Lornan Mortha. For 450 years, the Valley's misdirection and concealment magics defeated Zebiss, but a decade ago, he managed to penetrate its borders.

Hlevareth told Zebiss of the Eirstone, the fey door leading to Lornan Mortha, and provided hints on unlocking his magical prison. Zebiss set forth, seeking a mortal wizard to free Hlevareth. He found Deken Bandelaar, steward of Astig Manor.

Two decades ago, Deken spurned the love of the alchemist Klara after she and Ser Linders, the son of Astig's Lord, had a drunken tryst. Linders doesn't remember this dalliance, which his father and Klara concealed, buying her silence through funding her research. Heartbroken, Deken abandoned Klara and left Astig, beginning a career as a wizard. He returned after news of his father's death to replace him as steward of Astig; Linders remained ignorant of Deken's hatred for him. When Zebiss encountered Deken and offered him power over Linders through his master Hlevareth, the wizard agreed immediately.

THE MURDER

Deken and Zebiss enlisted Dob, Klara's (and Linders') mute, idiot son, and Kora, Rinay's forlarren half-sister. While Kora distracted Rinay at the Eirstone with a story of repentance, and the unicorn slumbered, Deken and Dob stole into Arvessin's Grove. Aided by Deken's magic, and wielding his enchanted dagger, Dob swiftly cut Arvessin's throat and removed his tongue (to render speak with dead useless). While Kora taunted a swooning Rinay, Dob skinned the unicorn. Returning to Astig, Deken immediately began preparing the pelt, complete with its sacred symbol. Kora retreated to her lair, awaiting Deken's instructions.

Deken plans to enter the Eirstone at the full moon, travel to Lornan Mortha, and conduct an incantation he has researched to free Hlevareth. With the demon at his command, revenge is certain against Ser Linders and all of Astig.

However, Deken didn't foresee Arvessin returning as a ghost and haunting Astig. Arvessin has stirred up the villagers, who suffer regular confrontations with the horrifying apparition whenever they leave the town at night or enter the surrounding forest. Asmus Winkel, elfmarked sheriff of Astig, is desperate to end to Astig's misfortunes.

The adventurers should arrive near dusk, heading toward Astig.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

A horrific ghostly unicorn confronts the party as it approaches Astig. The townsfolk entreat the adventurers to end the hauntings. While investigating the people and places of Astig and the Blackwood Forest, another murder occurs: Dob is found horribly slaughtered.

The party has two days to unveil Deken as the mastermind, leading to a chase through the Eirstone to Lornan Mortha via fey roads, and into ancient elven ruins. Here, they confront Deken and Zebiss in an attempt to disrupt the gate-opening ritual. Returning Arvessin's pelt to his body allows him to rest in peace.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

So long as the party can be found travelling into Astig at dusk, the first scene provides the adventure's hook. However, for parties unlikely to be drawn in by the horrific apparition of the Tattered Unicorn, consider using the follow incentives to bring PCs to Astig:

- The PCs want to acquire a rare book from Ser Linders' library, perhaps a golem manual or other magical text.
- The party is hired to investigate tales of a forgotten shadow door near Astig.

INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place in the village of Astig and the

surrounding Blackwood Forest. Ideally, the party is approaching Astig from the north sometime near dusk.

Part One: Whodunnit?

ENTER THE UNICORN (CR 6)

This encounter occurs as the adventurers approach Astig from Donnermark. The old road is only 15 ft. wide, with a sward of 15 ft. on each side before the wall-like borders of trees.

The trail widens as it crests the hill, leading down into a small town nestled in a lightly wooded valley about a mile away. Ribbons of smoke float into the air from a number of chimneys, and a large building near the center of town. To the east, the trees of the Tomierran cover the land like a blanket, while hills roll away to the west and north.

A chill breeze arises, causing nearby tree branches to dance restlessly. The long grass beside the road whispers disconcertingly, and a hint of a low, far-off moan can be heard.

Give the PCs 2 rounds to prepare themselves, and then read the following:

A horrible screaming shatters the air, emanating from the northeast. Twenty feet away, a faint glow appears on the border of the trees and quickly brightens. The outline of a horse-like creature appears, its details becoming gruesomely evident.

It's not a horse at all, but a ghostly unicorn! As the vision clears, it becomes apparent that the spectre has no pelt, but is rather a mass of tattered, stringy flesh. It tosses its head and stamps, opening its mouth wide. Bloody froth drips to the ground, disappearing as it hits the grass. The screaming sound grows sharply louder, lancing through the night air with despair and horror. The apparition then charges!

Arvessin, Guardian of the Eirstone

Unicorn Ghost Druid 1 CR 6 XP 2,400

CN Large undead (augmented magical beast, incorporeal) Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +22

Aura magic circle against evil

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 20; (+3 Dex, +11 deflection, -1 size)

hp 78 (4d8+1d8+55)

Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +10; +2 resistance vs. evil

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +6 (6d6, Fort DC 24 half) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks frightful moan (DC 24)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

At will—detect evil (as free action), light 3/day—cure light wounds

5/day—cure light wounds

1/day—*cure moderate wounds, greater teleport* (within its forest territory), *neutralize poison* (DC 23)

Spells Prepared (CL 1st)

1st – detect animals or plants, entangle (DC 19)*, obscuring mist, speak with animals

0 - detect magic, flare (DC 18), resistance

* domain spell

See Battling Arvessin, below.

STATISTICS

Str - , Dex 17, Con - , Int 13, Wis 25, Cha 32

Base Atk +4; CMB +7; CMD 17 (21 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Casting, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (horn) **Skills** Acrobatics +7, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (history) +2, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +22, Stealth

+17, Survival +15 (+17 in forests); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +3 Survival in forests, +12 Stealth

Languages Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan, Trade Tongue

SQ magical strike, nature bond (Plant domain), nature sense, wild empathy +28

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupting Touch (Su) Arvessin passes part of his incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, inflicting 6d6 damage. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A Fortitude save halves the damage inflicted.

Frightful Moan (Su) Arvessin emits a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-ft. spread must succeed on a Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature successfully saving against the moan cannot be affected by Arvessin's moan for 24 hours.

Magic Circle against Evil (Su) This ability continually duplicates the *magic circle against evils* spell effects. Arvessin cannot suppress this ability.

Wild Empathy (Su) Arvessin adds a +6 racial bonus to his wild empathy checks.

BATTLING ARVESSIN

Arvessin, driven mostly insane by his ordeals, wishes to drive the party towards Astig, not destroy them, and uses his frightful moan ability as soon as he appears. If any characters are unaffected, he moves directly towards them, rearing up but not attacking. He *entangles* attacking PCs. As he is tongue-less, Arvessin cannot speak, but responds to Diplomacy checks intended to affect his behavior.

This encounter isn't intended to be an extended battle. However, if the party wishes to play aggressively, take care: Arvessin's corrupting touch is very powerful, averaging 20 points of damage per attack. He uses his defensive powers to avoid being injured, such as *obscuring mist, entangle, flare*, and *greater teleport*.

Strive to communicate the horror and misery of Arvessin's condition to the players. While he is certainly dangerous and unpredictable, he is not bent on the party's destruction. Beneath his confused and tortured mind, his soul worries about why he was killed and what it portends. If the PCs succeed on calming Arvessin through Diplomacy, he may lead them directly to Arvessin's Grove (**B1**, p. 85-86).

aștig

A light fog winds through the village of Astig, giving the village an ethereal appearance. The buildings have an ancient, rustic, elven feel, constructed mostly from the black wood that grows tall and strong in these parts. The lights of a large multistory inn—proclaimed The Jewel of Thorn by a large polished wood sign—beckon, while a few lights gleam high on a hill to the west of Astig.

Astig lies on the fringes of the Tomierran, three days south of Donnermark. Primarily a stop for travelers, Astig is generally friendly. The townsfolk have a bias towards humans, elves, and halflings; they tolerate other races.

Part One describes a village ready to be interacted with, leaving the players largely in control of the flow of the game's events. The PCs can usually find the major NPCs within the village. For simplicity, assume that finding and interviewing an NPC takes an hour of game time.

Arvessin wants the party to stay in Astig and expose Deken. Any time the party attempts to leave Astig permanently, he appears, attempting to drive them back to town.

Astig

NG village

Corruption +1; **Crime** -7; **Economy** -1; **Law** +3; **Lore** 0; **Society** 0

Qualities racially intolerant (all except human, elf, elfmarked, or halfling), superstitious

Danger +2; Disadvantages haunted (danger +2)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord (Ser Linders)

Population 80 (68 humans, 7 elfmarked, 5 halflings)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 500 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp;

Spellcasting 1st

Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major

Items —

A1. THE JEWEL OF THORN

This inn is the town's physical and social center. The Jewel is an ancient two-story stone structure of elven design, refurbished in dark hardwood from the Blackwood. Tunis Brecken, the innkeeper, is a tall, obese man, sporting a livid scar running down the left side of his face, which pulls his mouth up in a constant, eerie half-grin. While appearing an affable, gregarious buffoon, he's really a shrewd individual and a smooth operator (+3 bonus on Diplomacy checks used for **Table 6.1**).

The night the adventurers arrive, Asmus Winkel is here, somewhat drunk and depressed about his attempts to stop the hauntings. He approaches the PCs shortly after they enter,





introducing himself and describing the situation. He asks if the party can assist. The unicorn has obviously been murdered and has returned as a ghost. If they seem unwilling, he instead offers a wager, offering the party 500gp if they can solve the mystery before he can. If he wins, they will owe Astig some future service.

Asmus is courteous and friendly, but also competitive and slightly inebriated. He knows he needs help, but wishes he didn't. Having secured the party's assistance, he provides them with the following leads:

- The haunting began five nights ago. Asmus speculates that the murder may have occurred the night before. This is supported by several villagers claiming to have heard equine screams around midnight that night, and by information gleaned by Albiros the Ranger from the murder site.
- Schorst, Astig's stableman, saw something suspicious that night. Asmus won't elaborate, but suggests seeing Schorst early tomorrow.
- Albiros knows a lot about the unicorn, and where he was killed.
- Henessa the priestess (A5) and Yon the alchemist (A7) might know more about ghosts.

Albiros (CG, use **Trapper** stats, *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) lives at the inn while not roaming, and returns on Day One to resupply and rest. The woodsman is a tall, sun-bronzed man with long braided hair and a close-cropped beard. He squints continually from spending his life outdoors. A gruff man, he is highly suspicious of outsiders. His mother was an elfmarked druid, and Albiros has inherited this bias from her.

Four years ago Albiros stumbled across Rinay frolicking in a nearby pond, and his heart was captured. Since then, he has managed to increase contact with her, and she has told him that though she holds affection for him, her duties to Arvessin come first. Though shocked and horrified about Arvessin's demise, Albiros secretly hopes this means their relationship can progress.

Albiros's initial attitude is indifferent, and must be improved to friendly before Albiros shares much. Druids, rangers, elves, and elfmarked receive a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks with Albiros. Once friendly, he agrees to take the party to Arvessin's Grove.

Albiros knows the following:

- The Eirstone, a shadow door, opens every full moon, leading to an ancient elven site.
- The tracks at the murder site suggest two people murdered Arvessin.
- The unicorn's throat wound was dealt by a different weapon to the one it was skinned with.
- The tracks suggest the murder was six nights ago.
- He, Roth, and Dob are the only proficient skinners in town.
- He has spotted Klara snooping around the woods since the murder.
- He and Rinay love each other, but her duties with Arvessin meant they couldn't be together.

A2. THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Asmus Winkel (LN elfmarked fighter 3) lives and works here, with a spacious office (and three holding cells) at the front, and a comfortable cottage-style residence at the rear. He is rarely here except to sleep, spending his days roaming the village, and

§2



his evenings at the Jewel. His deputy **Farrick** (use **Guard** stats, *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) is often with him.

Asmus is an illegitimate son of House Van Rottsten, an elfmarked warrior who left after a pain-filled youth. He settled in Astig, and quickly proved his worth. Now nearly 40, the Sheriff of Astig remains a man whose sword arm outranks his intellect.

Asmus wants to solve this problem himself, and reveals little to the party beyond the initial leads he provides. If pressed, he discloses the following:

- Linders was out hunting six nights ago.
- Dob was also out that night (Klara came to the inn asking after him).

- Albiros, Roth, and Dob are the best skinners in town.
- His believes Linders and Roth went hunting, Linders killed the beast, Roth skinned it, and they were the figures Schorst saw (see A4).
- A diminutive fiend appeared before him eight years ago, but disappeared when he raised the alarm.

A3. GINNEREK'S

Nennis Falk (LE human expert 3) runs this general store. A rough-spoken woman with a steely gray bun of hair, Nennis knows a lot of gossip, but hates strangers (starting attitude of unfriendly), charging them double the usual prices for her goods.

RUMORS

Table 1.1 details the rumors currently circulating in Astig. Use this table to reveal critical information to the party, working them into conversation if possible. The first time any PC talks to an NPC when their attitude is indifferent or better, use this table as follows:

- A PC's Cha modifier +1 (minimum 1) determines how many rolls made on Table 6.1.
- Roll that many Diplomacy checks (hidden) to determine what information the PC receives. A result of less than 10 gives either no information or a random, irrelevant, and untrue rumor.

Diplomacy result	Information
10	"Schorst beats his wife daily."
11	"Yon and Klara have more than a mentor-apprentice relationship."
12	"Albiros hates everyone. His druid mother was chopped down and killed while in tree form."
13	"Dob is smarter than he looks."
14	"That unicorn was always evil. Chased me once, it did."
15	"The ghost wants us to find or fix something. That's what ghosts always want."
16	"Albiros is in love with that nymph that used to be with the unicorn."
17	"There's some kind of devil woman living in the woods."
18	"Three good skinners in Astig—Albiros, Roth, and the idiot boy."
19	"His Lordship and his Steward were both out of the manor the night the unicorn died."
20	"Poor old Klara That son weren't a happy accident."
21	"Ser Linders likes the herbs a bit too much—he looks like death some mornings!"
22	"I saw the unicorn's ghost the other night. I ran straight home and locked my doors!"
23	"This reminds me of years back, all those demon and imp sightings. Henessa dealt with it though."
24	"Something bad's going to happen at the full moon, something magical."
25	"The Eirstone, a magical door made by elves. Now it houses demons. The stories in Ser Linders' library could tell you more."
26	"The unicorn was killed because it protected Astig and the Eirstone."
27	"A big one and a little one killed the unicorn, they say. That Dob's pretty big"
28	"I don't trust Dob. He hides all sorts of stolen treasures in his room."
29	"I'm pretty sure Deken used to have a thing with our alchemist, but Ser Linders interfered with it. With her. His father covered it up."
30+	"I've heard whispers about Deken, involving magic and monsters."

Timekeeping

Timekeeping is important in this adventure, as many events happen at certain times. There is a definite time limit— Deken enters the Eirstone around 9 p.m. on the second day after the party arrives, unless Zebiss reports that the PCs suspect him (see **E5. Confrontation?**, p. 87). The final encounter (**L4. The Gateway Chamber**) expects you to know approximately how far behind Deken the party is. If you are less particular about this aspect of the game, you can simply decide on how much time remains until Deken's ritual is complete.

TABLE 6.2 – TIMELINE

Adventure Starts (Day One)	Evening Adventurers encounter the Tattered Unicorn, arrive at Astig.
Day One	7pm: Deken visits the Jewel of Thorn to observe the party. 11pm: Zebiss murders Dob, takes back Deken's journal from Dob's room.
Day Two	 7am: Dob is found murdered. 10am: Asmus arrests Linders and Roth. 5nm: Heavy rain falls for 3 hours, obliterating any footprints, but turning grassy areas from firm to
	5pm: Heavy rain falls for 3 hours, obliterating any footprints, but turning grassy areas from firm to soft (Survival base DC for tracking becomes 10 for new tracks).8pm: The full moon rises in the sky.
	9pm: If the PCs haven't confronted Deken, he, Zebiss, and Kora head to the Eirstone. They defeat Rinay and take the shadow road.
Day Three	5.30am: Deken's party reaches Lornan Mortha. Deken begins his ritual at 6 a.m.8am: The ritual is completed, and Hlevareth is freed unless the party has disrupted it.

If her attitude becomes friendly, she reveals information from **Table 6.1** with a +3 bonus to the Diplomacy result. A hodge-podge of adventuring gear can be found here among the shelves of household supplies.

A4. ASTIG STABLES

Schorst Blonniken (NE human commoner 2) runs these stables. A thin, notorious curmudgeon who often smells of horses, Schorst speaks monosyllabically. His initial attitude is indifferent, but if the PCs improve this to friendly (gifts of alcohol or money give a +2 to +5 bonus to Diplomacy checks), he shares the following tale.

On the night of Arvessin's murder, Schorst was working late in the stables (getting drunk before heading home to his wife). As he prepared to leave, he saw two figures walking west along Manor Road, one man-sized, the other larger and carrying a heavy, awkward load. As they passed, one berated the other, saying, "...I want to be ready in eight days!" Once sober, Schorst could not remember the male voice well enough to identify it.

A5. SHRINE OF THE TWINS

This open-air shrine is 60 ft. across and ringed with white, shoulder-high stones. **Henessa**, cleric of Yarila and Porevit (NG, use **Medium** stats, *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*), tends the shrine daily. She is a tall, broad-shouldered woman, with two, thick, red braids hanging behind her ears. Welcoming and giving, she offers whatever assistance she can.

Henessa knows the following information:

- The general connection between Arvessin, Rinay and the Eirstone.
- There is more information on the Eirstone at the library at **A8** (p. 85).

- Neither Linders nor Deken was home the night of the murder (she went there that night to ask for a donation to the shrine).
- Asmus and Roth both came to see her eight years ago after encountering a small, demonic-looking creature.

A6: ROTH'S MEATS

Roth (NG human commoner 1/expert 2) is Astig's huge, gingerhaired butcher and Henessa's brother, although the two don't see eye to eye, Roth's profession being somewhat distasteful to a priestess of the Twins. He took Dob as his assistant out of pity. They both work here every day.

Roth's starting attitude is friendly, but he is quick to anger. He is also a paid accomplice to Linders' drug-taking (see Location **A8**, p. 85), and it requires his attitude becoming helpful, the right questions, and an additional DC 21 Diplomacy or DC 14 Intimidate check for him to admit it. If he admits this, further prodding elicits a confession that he was with Linders the night of Arvessin's murder. The two were searching the woods for bordenleaf, the source of scour, Linders' drug of choice.

Roth knows the following:

- Three nights before the party arrived, Roth encountered Arvessin's ghost while collecting firewood. He miraculously resisted Arvessin's frightful moan, and went on the offensive. Arvessin passed through him and then disappeared, leaving Roth wounded.
- He thought he saw Deken casting a spell on a door at the manor house some years back.

A7. ASTIG AROMATICS

Klara Haanrode (NG human alchemist 3/wizard 1) runs this



alchemy shop, and lives above it with her son Dob and mentor Yon. It is a pleasant place, smelling of flowers, soaps and perfume.

Though forever changed by her indiscretion with Linders, Klara has since become a strong, independent, and kind woman. Linders' father Grunwald von Gorink financed her business and imported her mentor Yon to ensure her silence. She claimed Dob as Deken's, but has only told Dob and Yon this fable.

Klara knows the following:

- Deken is a wizard.
- The unicorn and the nymph are protectors of the forest.
- Dob had the serrated dagger in his room (now confiscated, in Klara's room).

Yon (LN alchemist 4/wizard 3) is a quiet, introspective man of 60 (starting attitude indifferent). He knows the following:

- Klara's history with Deken and Linders.
- The Eirstone is a shadow door, and the library at **A8** holds books on the subject.
- Linders bought a potion of truestrike the day of the murder.

Dob is mute and unintelligent. A hulking man with a protruding lower jaw, he is unhelpful, as his mind is severely over-taxed by the guilt he feels about Arvessin's murder. He avoids eye contact with strangers, and if questioned about the murder or Arvessin, he turns wildeyed and runs searching for Klara.

Deken's research journal is hidden in Dob's room under his bed (Perception DC 16 to find). The journal is a collection of magical equations and theories, and a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 15) allows characters to recognize the writings describe a ritual to open an inter-dimensional door. The ritual involves three gemstones that serve as keys to unlock the door, and removing the gems from their necessary positions can safely disrupt the ritual. The gemstones are hidden in Lornan Mortha, and the author of the journal obviously knows where. If the PCs can obtain a sample of Deken's handwriting, they may compare the two; a DC 15 Linguistics check reveals they are very similar.

A8: ASTIG MANOR

Astig's manor house sits atop a small hill overlooking the village. It is a charming-looking building, with white walls and a red-tiled roof, but a sagging eave here and a boarded window there hint at a creeping decline and neglect.

Astig Manor houses Ser Linders, Deken, the old housekeeper Tonia, and the young servant Berrig (Schorst's son). The manor house is large, and has an air of decline and regret, evidenced by wilting flower gardens, dusty unused rooms, and slightly frayed rugs covering its stone floors.

Ser Linders von Gorink (CN, use Noble Scion stats) looks and talks like an old soldier, despite never entering battle, and is only 42 years old. Pampered by wealthy parents, Linders is completely self-absorbed, and he has a nasty temper. Addicted to scour (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) since his youth, his drooping moustache, spotted balding head, and deeply lined face betray a lifetime of self-abuse. He knows nothing of the murder, Arvessin, or the Eirstone, but is unwilling to discuss his whereabouts that night, except to say he was "hunting alone." His starting attitude is unfriendly, and must be improved to indifferent before he allows access to the library. Repeated queries about the night of the murder reduce his attitude to hostile, and may result in him assaulting the adventurers with his fists before regaining his composure and ordering them to leave. He is a noble, and the lawful authority of the local area.

Deken Bandelaar, a sober, handsome man, is Linders' steward, as his father was before him. If queried about the night of the murder, Deken states he was in the library studying the Hyperborean tongue. Deken wears the pointed boots which created the footprints in Location **B1**.

Deken can reveal the following:

- The details of Linders' drug use, and his "hunting" the night of the murder.
- Albiros is infatuated with Rinay.

Deken's quarters are in the rear of the house, the doors and windows locked with good locks bolstered by *arcane lock* (Disable Device DC 40). If the PCs penetrate his room, they can find a secret door in the floor (Perception 20) under his rug leading, via a 20-ft. ladder, down to a small study. Here, Deken has a desk with notes equivalent to Deken's journal at **A7**, and a cupboard holding *Arvessin's pelt*, a ragged cloak bearing the magical rune.

Tonia (LE human commoner 2) and **Berrig** (LN commoner 1) know little about recent events (-5 to Diplomacy checks on **Table 6.1**), but Tonia confirms both Linders and Deken were out late the night of the murder.

The manor house contains Astig's library, which is extensive given Astig's size. The legacy of Linders' scholarly grandfather, it covers many topics, including lore of the ancient elven empire. It consists of two large rooms with ceiling-high rows of bookshelves. The PCs must obtain either Deken or Linders' blessing to study here. Check Table 1.3 for information the PCs may discover if they investigate Arvessin, the Eirstone, or local legends.

Each skill check takes four hours, and reveals all information with a DC equal to or less than the check result.

BLACKWOOD FOREST

The Blackwood is a dark, dense forest, its trees sporting black bark and dark green leaves with a silvery glint. The lack of animal noise and the stillness of the foliage lend a tense air to the forest, as if it holds its breath. The turf is firm and unyielding.

Travelling short distances without a guide through the eerie forest requires DC 10 Survival checks to navigate. Rinay shadows the party whenever they enter the Blackwood (Perception DC 26 to notice), and the PCs generally feel as if they are being watched.

The party may encounter Arvessin whenever you want to remind them of the horror of the hauntings. He may lead them to a Blackwood location if the party needs a nudge in the right direction.

B1. ARVESSIN'S GROVE

The trees open up into a 50-ft.-wide dale. Here, a fresh fragrance fills the air, and the oppressive feel of the woods recedes somewhat, although the lingering feeling of being watched increases. The grass is short and springy, and the area is empty, except for a large rowan tree in the center draped with garlands of flowers. This was Arvessin's abode, and it's the site of his murder. The area is sacred to the Twins, Yarila and Porevit, and is under the effects of consecrate and an area-effect gentle repose. The yew tree is sacred to the Twins (Knowledge [religion] DC 12). Rinay has not been here since the murder, and Albiros has feared to touch Arvessin's remains.

The skinned unicorn is a horrible sight. Expertly skinned, the magically preserved corpse hangs from the tree, and Arvessin's musculature is almost perfectly intact. The wound across his throat is ragged and gaping, and a successful Survival check (DC 15) reveals a serrated blade was used. (A Heal or Knowledge (nature) check also works here, but increase DCs by 5.)

Two sets of faint footprints can be found in the area (DC 21 Survival or Perception to notice), leading from the west to the corpse and back again. One set (Dob's) is very large, while a pair of pointed boots made the other (Deken's). Near the western edge of the grove, a small red pouch containing red, yellow and blue sand; two eyelashes encased in gum Arabic; and a piece of cured leather hangs from a tree. These are spell components for *color spray, invisibility,* and *mage armor* (Perception DC 15 to notice if searching for objects, otherwise DC 25).

B2. THE EIRSTONE

Past a wall of extremely dense foliage, the forest opens up, revealing a small clearing at the base of a large hill. Set into the hill is an immense boulder, its top mossy and its surface pitted. The shadows seem particularly deep here, and the surrounding woods are strangely silent.

The Eirstone is a fey door that accesses a shadow road to Lornan Mortha. It opens only on the full moon, unless a key of Veles or other method is used. A Survival check (DC 21) finds

TABLE 6.3 – RESEARCH RESULTS (KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA, HISTORY, LOCAL, OR PLANES)

DC Information

- 10 The Eirstone is a shadow door opening into the fey realm, which the Guardian watches.
- 16 The Eirstone can be opened by anybody during a full moon.
- 18 The Shadow Path past the Eirstone leads to Lornan Mortha, the Shrouded Valley.
- 20 Lornan Mortha holds ancient elvish defenses, and is protected by concealment and misdirection magics.
- 22 Lornan Mortha holds the prison of an ancient enemy of Thorn. There are references to other works describing the magic imprisoning this enemy, but those books are absent, except for one scrap of paper tucked in another book (give the players **Handout 1** from the **Appendix**).
- 23 The Guardian is marked with a special sigil, allowing passage through Lornan Mortha's defenses.
- 24 Arvessin the Unicorn is the Guardian of the Eirstone.
- **26** Hlevareth the Glabrezu is the prisoner at Lornan Mortha.

two sets of tracks here. One set is Rinay's small, barefoot tracks. The others are made by Kora's cloven hooves. Another successful Survival check allows the PCs to follow Kora's tracks to her cave.

B3: KORA'S CAVE

This small, rancid-smelling cave only penetrates the rocky foundations of the hill for 30 ft. It is rather bare, holding only the remnants of a cookfire, a mostly devoured rabbit, and a pile of filthy rags.

There is a 75% chance that Kora is here at any time before Deken collects her to enter the Eirstone. If confronted, she flies into a frenzy and attacks the PCs.

CR 2

Kora

600 XP Female forlarren

hp 18 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2) Tactics Kora fights to the death. Gear *feather token* (whip).

If the PCs subdue Kora, an Intimidate check (DC 15) forces her to answer some of their questions. She knows very little about Deken's plan, and answers in fanatical, sibilant hisses. Questions and answers may include the following:

• What do you know about the unicorn's death?

"He stood in my master's way. I distracted my hated sister while the master took care of him."

Now his skin will let us through the guardians, and our wishes will come true!"

Kora was not present at Arvessin's murder, and doesn't know many details.

• Who is your master?

"A great wizard. He will free the Lord, you will all die, and I will become the queen of this wood!"

If pressed further, Kora can give a basic description of Deken, but she does not know his name. Deken has kept it from her and insists she call him "The Master."

What are your master's plans?

"We will travel through the stone, through the shadows to the valley. Then we will free the Lord, and return with power! I will be even more beautiful than my cursed sister."

Development: If threatened with death, Kora takes an oath to remain hidden should Deken seek her out. She has already fulfilled their initial agreement, and believes she need do nothing more to receive her rewards. Deken only intends on taking the forlarren into the prison as fodder. He does not trust her and does not worry if she is missing when he seeks her out.

EVENTS

The following encounters happen at or after specific times during the adventure. Refer to **Table 6.2** (p. 84).

E1. A VISION OF BEAUTY

As Rinay shadows the party in the Blackwood, she listens keenly to their conversations, trying to discern whether they might be helpful. If she decides they are, she reveals herself.

Hiding in the foliage, Rinay calls out to the PCs. As long as the adventurers take no obviously aggressive action, Rinay steps out of the trees to converse. She is desperate for help, for while she is powerful, she lacks confidence in her abilities to foil Deken's plans, and abhors violent confrontation.

Rinay can answer many questions, and readily admits that Kora's story of repentance duped her. When she felt Arvessin's pain through the *status* effect they shared, she swooned, while Kora taunted her, telling of her "handsome master" who would "grant all her wishes once they freed the demon." Rinay knows where Kora lives, although she must be convinced to tell (DC 19 Diplomacy check), as she still hopes her half-sister can be saved.

Rinay, the Nymph

CR 7

3,200 XP hp 63 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

E2. ARREST!

At 6 p.m. on **Day Two**, Asmus takes Linders and Roth into custody. He believes that Schorst's account of two figures, and Yon's admittance that Linders bought a *potion of truestrike* for hunting is evidence enough. Asmus hopes to bring Ser Linders before his liege lord—a tricky choice, as it could mean trouble for Asmus if Ser Linders is found innocent. Roth allows himself to be led away, but Linders, indignantly furious, puts up a fight, causing Asmus and his deputy Farrick to subdue him. As neither Linders nor Roth will discuss the real reason for their jaunt into the Blackwood, Asmus holds them until further "proof" can be discovered.

E3. THE QUASIT'S ATTACK (CR 4)

As soon as Deken is aware of the party's investigation, he sends Zebiss after them (see p. 91-92 for Zebiss's stats). The invisible quasit tails the party, listening intently to their conversations. If he hears them discussing how to capture or confront Deken, or decides they are getting too close to the truth, he waits for an appropriate moment, and then attempts to activate his *wand of monster summoning III* from a hidden position to summon two augur kytons.

Augur Kytons (2) CR 4

1,200 XP

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3) **TACTICS**

During Combat The augur kytons cast *inflict light wounds* before advancing on the PCs from a position of stealth in order to gain surprise.

Morale The kytons attack for the duration of the spell (10 rounds).

If this event occurs, reduce the charges for the *wand of monster summoning III* by two for the final encounter.

E4. ANOTHER VICTIM (CR 0)

On **Day One**, at 11 p.m., Zebiss murders Dob on the edge of the

Blackwood, unless the PCs somehow prevent it. Dob is found covered with claw wounds, and a small maw has torn out his throat. A Knowledge (planes) check (DC 26) reveals a quasit made these wounds—evidenced by a distinctive discoloration left by the demon's poison.

After an initial shock of intense grief, Klara tearfully comes to the party, showing them the serrated magical dagger she found in Dob's room. She admits he may have had something to do with the ghost, but she also shows her feistiness, asking the PCs make sure that Dob's murderer pays for his crime. She allows the adventurers to search Dob's room if they request it.

E5. CONFRONTATION? (CR 0-4)

Hopefully, the party realizes Deken is the mastermind before the full moon rises at 8 p.m. on **Day Two** (if not, see **Albiros's Message**, p. 88). If so, Zebiss should be on hand to hear the PCs discussing it. The quasit summons two augur kytons (see **E4**) and flees back to Deken, alerting him to the danger. Deken immediately gathers *Arvessin's pelt* (p. 92) and his other gear, and he heads to Lornan Mortha.

If the party solves the mystery before 9 p.m. on **Day 3**, they reap significant benefits:

• Kora is not part of Deken's contingent in Lornan Mortha. She is encountered at the Eirstone (see E6: Sisterly Love, below).



- Glimmer (see **The Price of Passage**, below) doesn't attack the party unprovoked.
- Time is likely a non-issue when attempting to disrupt Deken's ritual (see L4, p. 90).
- Zebiss has two less charges in his wand of *summon monster III*.

This event leads to Event E6.

E5A. ALBIROS'S MESSAGE

If the party does not attempt to confront Deken by 9 p.m. on **Day Two**, Deken and Zebiss collect Kora and head to the Eirstone. There, Rinay appears and attempts to stop them. However, love for her evil half-sister causes her to hesitate, and when Kora attacks, Rinay falls to the ground sobbing. The trio then enters the Eirstone.

Albiros finds Rinay an hour later where Kora left her, and hears her story. He rushes to alert the PCs, asking them to follow Deken through the open Eirstone. With the party's help secured, he returns to Rinay.

This event leads directly to Part Two: Into the Shadow

E6. SISTERLY LOVE (CR 2)

A high-pitched cackle and female sobbing split the forest's silence. In the clearing is a twisted, horned form stooping over a supine figure. Behind them, the Eirstone has been transformed—its weathered face glows blue with strange runes and polygons outlining a door-like shape and illuminating the area. The horned figure cries, "Go sister! I will follow my master, and return to complete my revenge!"

Kora stands over Rinay, who is crippled by emotion and will not strike out against her sister. If the adventurers attempt to hinder Kora's passage through the Eirstone, she fights madly to the death, cackling the entire time. Rinay begs the PCs to be merciful, though. Characters who spare Kora gain a +1 Status when dealing with good-aligned fey.

Whether the PCs battle Kora or allow her to enter the Eirstone, they are now free to follow through the shadow door. Go to **Part Two: Into the Shadow**.

Part One: İnlö the Shadow

Whether by the light of the full moon, or thanks to Deken's key of Veles, the Eirstone now stands open. As the party enters the shadow door, read the following:

Stepping through the glowing blue light of the Eirstone, you feel a strange rush through your body, a sensation of stretching, and then a snap back to equilibrium. You stand in a wide tunnel of carved rock, illuminated only by the blue glow behind you. Your shadows stretch out before you into the gloom. The walls curve inwards to form an arch-shaped ceiling above you. A DC 25 Knowledge (planes) check indicates this is a fragment of the shadow roads, and the characters are in no danger of it disappearing while they travel on it.

Development: There is only one road onwards, although the Eirstone door remains open for the three nights of the full moon. The tunnel is 30 ft. wide and 20 ft. high. Travel to Lornan Mortha takes 8 hours.

THE PRICE OF PASSAGE (CR 5)

After what seems like hours of travel, the tunnel opens out into a cavern some 120 ft. across and half as wide. It is split by an 80-ft.-wide chasm that falls away to unseen depths, a shining mithral span connecting the sundered halves of the chamber. A large mithral urn stands at each end of the bridge. A pale, flickering light emanates from an unseen source above the bridge, giving glimpses of the cavern rather than illuminating it, and the tunnel resumes on the opposite side of the chamber.

This dimly lit cavern houses Glimmer, a shadow fey exiled here for 3 more years in punishment for petty crimes against the Shadow Court. He must extract wealth from those wishing to cross the bridge, or better yet, blood oaths to Sarastra, goddess of the shadow fey. Each oath reduces his term by one month.

Glimmer occupies a small cave in the chasm wall on the opposite side, 10 ft. below floor level. He hides in the opening as the party enters. If he needs to check the party's offerings, or fight them, he shadow jumps to the far side of the bridge.

If the PCs did not confront Deken in Astig, he paid Glimmer in gold and unicorn blood to attack any pursuers. If Deken was confronted and fled through the Eirstone prematurely, no such deal has been struck.

As the PCs approach the bridge, read the following:

A chiming voice rings out through the flickering darkness. "Well met travelers. You seek to pass over the bridge; to do so, you must pay the toll. What shall it be: gold and jewels, or blood and promises?"

The party must deposit either at least 500gp worth of gold, gems, and jewelry in the urn; or 1 hp each of blood. If they choose blood, they must also swear an oath to perform a service for the children of Sarastra if ever called upon to do so. The consequences of this choice are entirely up to the GM, and can provide inspiration for further adventures. Characters giving blood gain a black circle tattoo on their forearm, only visible in moonlight, marking them indebted to the shadow fey.

When the payment is deposited into the urn on the adventurers' side of the bridge, it disappears, reappearing in the urn on the other side for Glimmer to verify and collect. If all is well, he shadow jumps back to his chambers, allowing the party to pass.

If the party refuses to pay, or if Deken has struck a deal with Glimmer, he attacks the PCs as they cross the 5-ft.-wide bridge.

CR 5

Glimmer, Shadow Fey Exile Male medium shadow fey

XP 1,600 hp 32 (*Midgard Bestiary*, p. 85)

TACTICS

Before Combat Glimmer casts *haste* upon himself at the first hint of battle.

- **During Combat** Glimmer uses dust of twilight first. He then attacks with his masterwork short bow, focusing on the lead PC. Once reached, he uses vanish, moving to a safe distance, quaffs his *potion of displacement*, and continues to fire his bow. If the party flees through the chamber's exit, he pursues them.
- **Morale** If reduced to 15 hp, Glimmer uses *vanish*, and then shadow jumps to his cave, abandoning the attack on the PCs unless they pursue him, whereupon he fights to the death.

Gear mwk rapier, mwk short bow, potion of displacement.

Development After leaving Glimmer's cavern, the PCs travel several hours until reaching a wall holding a similar doorway to the one they used to enter the Shadow Realm, except this door leads to Lornan Mortha.

LORNAN MORTHA

The blue glow slowly fades to reveal a small, tree-filled valley, surrounded by a perfectly bowl of steep hills. A paved avenue leads to a small, dilapidated stone structure, whose architecture is graceful and flowing where it still stands. The sky has a strange aspect, as if a dome of gauze covers the whole bowl-shaped valley.

The valley is bounded on all sides by very steep, 150-ft.-high hills (Climb DC 17), and is situated deep within the Tomierran, far from any inhabited regions. The small ruins are in the center of the valley, 50 ft. from the shadow door.

L1. MEMORIES OF THE ENEMY (CR 3)

Anyone exiting Lornan Mortha's shadow door without the protection of Arvessin's sacred symbol is immediately affected by a haunt, a vision of the battle to imprison Hlevareth, an imprint of those killed, wounded, or imprisoned during the battle. The fiend rampages through the valley, felling elves with its pincers seemingly at will, until a ring of wizards step forth, chanting in unison. The glabrezu teleports beside them, ready to strike, when it suddenly falls to its knees, screaming with a mad fury that pierces the ears of all that hear.

CR 3

Hlevareth's Fury

XP 800

CN haunt (10 ft. square)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception 20 (to see spectral images forming) **hp** 6; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect Visions of Hlevareth's defeat. All creatures entering the area suffer the effects of a sound burst spell (save DC 13). **Destruction** Hlevareth must be banished to the Abyss.

NATURE'S REVENGE (CR 3)

Long ago, a group of wanderers penetrated Lornan Mortha's defenses. While camped here, the treasure-seekers cut down trees for firewood. The resulting sap demon murdered them all, and roams the valley still. The haunt's sound burst alerts the sap demon to the PCs' presence, and it investigates three rounds later.

Animated by the residual magic of the elves, the sap demon does not attack any group displaying Arvessin's sacred symbol.

Sap Demon

CE Small ooze

XP 800 hp 27 (*Midgard Bestiary*, p. 84)

TACTICS

TACTIC

During Combat The sap demon waits until the party enters the trees or moves down the avenue. Either way, it attempts to position itself for an ambush, springing on the rearmost party member with a slam attack, and then using a soul sap against the pinned PC.

Morale The demon fights to the death.

- **Treasure** (on the skeletons of the treasure-seekers) 35 gp, journal (see below), masterwork bastard sword, *scroll of aqueous orb, scroll of detect secret doors.*
- **Development** A Perception check (DC 20) alerts the PCs to the sap demon's faint trail of sap. A Survival check (DC 16) allows them to follow it back to the treasure-seekers' remains. Their journal is all but rotted away. The following scrap of text is legible:

...Festal and Jax are intent on chopping down trees, despite my misgivings.

I believe the patterns and shapes on the ground around the small structure are the key to gaining entrance...

Otherwise, the ruins lie roughly 100 feet away.

L2. ELVEN RUINS (CR 2)

These ruins are made of faded white stone, although the entire structure has nearly succumbed to creeper vines and the elements. The exceptions are a small circular stone structure in the center, and its paved floor, which displays a bewildering pattern of different shapes. A single stone door is set in the floor.

The pattern of shapes on the floor appears random and asymmetrical. A successful Perception check (DC 18) notices three large triangular stones evenly spaced around the circumference of the building, and a similarly large circular stone directly in front of the door.

The door opens when *Arvessin's pelt* is within 10 ft.; otherwise, touching it triggers a *touch of fatigue* effect. It also opens if the three triangular stones and the circular stone before the door hold at least 50 lbs. of weight (easily accomplished by having characters stand on them), revealing the stairs beyond. Otherwise, the door may be broken down (held weapons do not trigger *touch of fatigue*).

Stone Door Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28

This circular staircase leads 40 feet down, its steps mossy and cracked. Successfully walking down them requires two Acrobatics checks (DC 10) to not to slip and fall, each success granting 20 ft. of successful descent. A failed check results in 1d4 damage per 10 ft. fallen. Any creature on the stairs below a falling creature must make an extra check not to fall.



CR 3

L3. ANTECHAMBER (CR 3)

This musty chamber, lit by four small braziers, is 50 ft. square, and is dominated by stone statues of stern-faced elven warriors, who appear to be wearing actual scale mail and holding real longswords. Directly opposite the entrance is a large stone door, before which stands another statue, this one displaying a gleaming blue gemstone embedded in its forehead.

The braziers hold *continual flames*. The statue in front of the door is a soul-bound statue, infused with a shard of an ancient elven soul, a paladin who offered himself to eternally protect Hlevareth's prison. As soon as any group not bearing Arvessin's sacred symbol moves within 10 ft. of it, the statue uses its *heroism* ability, and then challenges the party to combat.

The statue is sentient, and can be reasoned with. The PCs have one chance to convince it of the urgency of their mission (Diplomacy DC 20, +5 to the check if speaking Elvish). Failing this check results in the statue becoming immediately hostile.

If its attitude is improved to indifferent, the statue confirms a group displaying the sacred symbol already passed through. The statue does not leave the antechamber for any reason, as it is bound to this room. The stone door only opens in response to the statue's touch, or the touch of its soul-focus gem.

If Deken was defeated in Astig, the statue holds the gemstone keys to Hlevareth's prison in a recess beneath its breastplate.



Soul-Bound Statue

XP 800

NG Medium construct

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +3
DEFENSE

CR 3

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +1 natural, +5 armor) hp 28 (4d10+4)

Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1

DR 2/magic; Immune construct traits

Weaknesses susceptible to mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee masterwork longsword +8 (1d8+2/19–20) Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd, concentration +2) 3/day—light, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation 1/day—levitate, heroism Str 15, Dex 10, Con —, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9 Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 15 Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness Skills Perception +3, Stealth +8 Languages Trade Tongue SQ soul focus Gear masterwork scale mail, masterwork longsword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Susceptible to Mind-Affecting Effects (Ex) The weakened

conviction of a soul-bound statue's soul makes it susceptible to mind-affecting effects, despite the fact that it is a construct.

Soul Focus (Su) The soul bound to the statue lives within a focus integrated into the statue, a bright sapphire on its forehead. As long as this soul focus remains intact, it can be used to animate another statue, using the same cost as creating a new construct. Once bound into the soul focus, the soul continues to learn, and so if later it is put into a new statue body, the soul retains its personality and memories from its previous body or bodies. A soul focus has hardness 8, 12 hit points, and a break DC of 20.

L4. GATEWAY CHAMBER (CR VARIES)

The stone doorway rumbles as it slowly opens, and as the noise of the door ceases the sounds of chanting become apparent.

Beyond the door rests a platform from which stairs descend into a large chamber wreathed in shadows. Three slender pillars stand at the points of a triangle-shaped pattern on the floor, and atop each pillar a soft blue glow emanates. Amidst these pillars is a large carved circle, the arcane nature of its runic patterns evident, surrounded at its cardinal points by four lit braziers. In the corners of the room stand four more flaming braziers, casting a flickering light throughout the chamber.

Deken stands in the circle between the pillars, concentrating on the ritual he is performing. Zebiss (and Kora, if she is here) takes immediate steps to deal with intruders. Take note of the positions of the



CR 4

braziers, and the varying degrees of light in this chamber.

The three gemstone keys to Hlevareth's prison are atop the pillars surrounding the ritual circle. Removing each gemstone from its pillar safely disrupts the ritual. The 20-ft.-tall pillars are carved stone, the intricate designs allowing a DC 25 Climb check (a character with a speed of 30 ft. will need two checks to reach a gemstone). While one gemstone remains, Deken must remain in the ritual circle and continue the ritual—all three gemstones must be removed to disrupt the ritual.

If Deken is damaged, he must make a Concentration check to continue the ritual (the ritual counts as a 3rd-level spell). If Deken is interrupted or slain, the ritual ends abruptly, and an explosion centered on Deken results (acts as a widened *fireball* [CL 7]). There is also a 20% chance that Hlevareth is freed and begins to materialize in the ritual circle (takes 2d4 rounds, visible after 1 round).

If Deken fled Astig early, time should not be a factor, but if the PCs dawdled in their pursuit and wasted more than two hours, the ritual is nearing its end.

If Deken left Astig at his leisure, time is an issue. You may keep time exactly, which means the PCs can waste up to one hour in pursuit before Deken finishes the ritual. Alternatively, you can assign a 10-round time limit for this encounter, which a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals (unless the PCs took a 6-hour rest before pursuing Deken, which means they have arrived too late, and Hlevareth is freed!).

CR 4

Kora is here unless previously defeated.

Deken Bandelaar

Male human conjurer 5 **1,200 XP** LE Medium humanoid **Init** +6; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; (+2 Dex, +1 armor, +1 deflection)

hp 29 (5d6+10)

Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +2 (1d4-1) Special Attacks acid dart +4 (1d6+2) Spells Prepared (CL 5th)

3rd – sleet storm, slow, summon monster III

2nd – acid arrow, glitterdust, invisibility, levitate

1st – color spray, grease, mage armor, protection from good, silent image

0 – detect magic, ghost sound, flare, resistance

TACTICS

During Combat If the ritual is disrupted, Deken casts *levitate* and then *mage armor*. He casts slow on the party, *summon monster III* to summon a wolverine, and then begins using his *wand of flaming sphere* and *summon* scrolls.

Morale Deken surrenders if Zebiss and his summoned monsters are dead and he is below 14 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 19, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15 **Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

- Spell, Scribe Scroll, Toughness Skills Appraise +8, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcana)
- +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (planes) +9, Profession (steward) +8, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +12

Languages Abyssal, Elvish, Trade Tongue

- **SQ** arcane bond (*ring of protection* +1), opposed schools (enchantment, necromancy)
- **Treasure** npc gear (Arvessin's pelt, key of Veles, mwk dagger, padded armor, *ring of protection* +1, *scroll of summon monster III* (x3), *wand of flaming sphere* [12 charges])

Zebiss

Male quasit rogue 2 **XP 1,200** CE Tiny outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar) **Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+4 **Dex**, +2 natural, +2 size) **hp** 30 (2d8+3d10+5); fast healing 2

Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +4

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

Arveșșin'ș Pelt

While not providing its wearer any direct bonuses, this unicorn-skin cloak bears the sacred symbol of Lornan Mortha on its back, allowing the wearer and his companions to avoid many of the Shrouded Valley's defenses.

Laying the cloak on Arvessin's magically preserved corpse has a startling result: The corpse suddenly emits a blinding blue light for 20 seconds. When the glow fades, Arvessin is once more whole and uninjured, though he remains dead.

From this point on, Arvessin's ghost no longer haunts Astig. Albiros vows to seek out a divine spellcaster powerful enough to return the great beast to life, even though he knows it will ruin any hope of his being with Rinay. Award each PC 1,000 XP as a story reward for ending the horror of Arvessin's ghost.

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect) Melee 2 claws +13 (1d3–2 plus poison), bite +13 (1d4–2) Ranged hand crossbow +8 (1d2) Special Attacks bleeding attack, sneak attack +1d6 Space 2-1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft. Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th) At will—detect good, detect magic, invisibility (self only) 1/day—cause fear (30-foot radius, DC 11) 1/week—commune (six questions)

TACTICS

During Combat Zebiss flies around using *invisibility* to constantly reposition himself and sneak attack party members, while also using his *wand of summon monster III* (via Use Magic Device) to summon augur kytons until its charges are expended.

Morale Zebiss is desperate to free Hlevareth, and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 6, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13

Base Atk +4; CMB 0; CMD 14

Feats Improved **Init**iative, Weapon Finesse, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device)

- Skills Bluff +9, Fly +22, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +9, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +21, Use Magic Device +12
- Languages Abyssal, Trade Tongue; telepathy (touch)

SQ change shape (bat or wolf; polymorph), evasion, trapfinding **Treasure** *wand of summon monster III* (4 charges)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bleeding Attack (Ex) Zebiss can cause living opponents to bleed by hitting them with a sneak attack. This attack causes the target to take 1 additional point of damage each round. Bleeding creatures take that amount of damage every round at the start of each of their turns. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 15 Heal check or the application of any effect that heals hit point damage. Bleeding damage from this ability does not stack with itself. Bleeding damage bypasses any damage reduction the creature might possess.

Evasion (Ex): Zebiss can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Zebiss does not gain the benefit of evasion while helpless.

Poison (Ex) Claw—injury; *save* Fortitude DC 13; *frequency* 1/ round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dexterity; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Depending on the final encounter's outcome, Deken may be captured or dead, and it is even possible that Hlevareth has escaped his prison. If Hlevareth escapes, wise PCs should flee back to Astig. Hlevareth will not chase the PCs unless they attempt to battle him, but his presence in the campaign world should certainly have consequences.

If Deken is captured, he submits to being returned to Astig for trial, where he will be found guilty of numerous crimes and possibly executed. He is silent and depressed during the journey back to Astig, planning his possible plan of escape. If he is not killed, he could become a recurring villain for the PCs.

The journey back via the shadow road should be uneventful, as Glimmer is happy to let the party pass for free if he remains alive, but if the party escaped without paying for passage and without killing him, he immediately attacks from the shadows. A captured Deken may use such an attack to attempt an escape.

Assuming the party makes it back to Astig with Arvessin's pelt, his ghost is free to pass on. Asmus releases Ser Linders, who rewards the party with 500gp for not only acquitting him, but revealing Deken's treachery in his household and putting the unicorn to rest. The townsfolk celebrate them as heroes. They gain a +1 Status bonus when in Astig and its surrounding area.

The only loose ends remaining are the gemstone keys to Hlevareth's prison.

APPENDIX: HANDOUT J

... ENSURE I AM UNINTERRUPTED WHILE PERFORMING THE RITUAL. MY RESEARCH INDICATES THAT IF THE RITUALIST IS DISTURBED DURING THE PROCESS, MLEVARETH MAY STILL BE RELEASED, BUT THE MYSTICAL ENERGIES CAN RUN WILD. THIS SEEMS LIKELY TO RESULT IN AN EXPLOSION THAT WOULD DESTROY EVERYTHING IN THE VICINITY, ME INCLUDED.

IF THINGS BEGIN TO GO AWRY, THERE IS A WAY TO ABORT THE RITUAL. THE GEMS, BEING THE PHYSICAL "KEYS" THAT UNLOCK THE GATE, MUST BE RE...



To Resurrect The Steigenadler

By Ben McFarland

An unexpected storm caused their airship to crash in a landscape which threatens the characters at every turn. Will they survive? Will they manage to resurrect the Steigenadler?

Easily a transition between regions, "To Resurrect the Steigenadler" is a wilderness adventure for 4th-level parties.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Travel is dangerous, travel across the Wasted West more so. To mitigate the risk, the PCs chartered passage on a faster, safer means across the Wastes—a famed dwarven Wasserluft airship, the Steigenadler, a graceful dirigible carrying goods and passengers. Chance, however, is not on their side, and a terrible storm engulfs the ship.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

A bone-splinter storm shot through with cavorting sparks catches the crew unawares. The dark, boiling clouds rain down flensing razor shards, forcing everyone to scramble below decks. With a great wrenching howl and a terrible shudder, the craft founders, plummeting to earth. How many of the passengers survive the crash depends on the party's timely assistance.

Now, lost in the Wastes and uncertain of the distance to their destination, the adventurers gauge the destruction. Most of the crew is missing, and the survivors consist of passengers, a junior engineer, and a few shiphands. A large, nearby gathering of Walker cultists precludes a return trip overland, and the vessel is too damaged for repairs. Surveying the damage brings an inspiration: Using the wreckage, the group might construct another, smaller airship to complete their journey, but everyone must help. However, someone swears he saw a settlement out in the jagged hills as they fell; perhaps help awaits there.

While debating options, a pilgrim caravan races towards the group, harried by cultists' bows. Witnessing the ship's descent, the pilgrims run to it, seeking salvation, but instead bring bloodthirsty lunatics to the crash site.

After repulsing the attack, the group earns time to salvage the Steigenadler or to investigate the mysterious structures a crewman observed. While picking through the wreckage, though, it becomes apparent the crash was no accident: someone deliberately wrecked the ship, and the saboteur may yet remain in the party's beleaguered camp. As word spreads through the survivors, the midnight killings begin. A vicious, dying spark is responsible, and hungrily desires to sample as many forms as possible before expiring.

Now, the party must quickly find the killer before this makeshift airship is sabotaged, before the cultists return in force, before dust goblins arrive to loot the wreckage, and before unspeakable horrors or the deadly Wastes succeed in devouring them all. Can they stop the deaths, perhaps even forging an alliance with the spark or the occupants of the lost ruins? Most importantly, can they resurrect the Steigenadler and take to the skies before their supplies run out and the wind scours their unburied bones amidst the rubble?

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure takes place during any trip across the Wasted West. The characters could be traveling from any major city on Midgard's western coast to any major city in the east, or Siwal in the south, as dwarvish airships conduct widespread trade. The Steigenadler can cover 1440 miles in a 24-hour flight, and carries enough fuel for 120 hours of flight. The airship crashes near the center of the Wastes, near the Scarlet Rovers, over 150 miles from the nearest settlement, the holy redoubt of The Seat of Mavros.

GMs may heighten the adventure's tension by adding a personal urgency to the trip, such as the PCs' delay possibly causing them to miss important appointments. To make matters worse, the other passengers aren't equipped to defend themselves against the Wastes. This hook relies upon the adventurers' good nature and willingness to help a group of stranded travelers.

Other motivations might include:

- The party couriers an important diplomatic missive. Failure to deliver the document has dire consequences.
- The cargo includes an important, rare material which spoils or ruins if not delivered on time.
- The party escorts a passenger (and retinue) to the destination; the individual's survival is paramount.

INTRODUCTION

The Steigenadler is a modified dirigible, with a command deck atop the framework, an engine and cargo deck beneath the framework, and a deck on either side. One deck houses the passenger compartments, while the other holds the captain's cabin and the ship-mage's sanctum. An image of it can be seen as an inset on the wider area map.

This adventure begins in the Wasted West on a hot, windy, magically stormy day. The characters must land the Steigenadler, explore the wreckage, investigate their surroundings, and then manage an escape.

Part One: Gone to Ground

THIS BODES POORLY (CR 6)

The characters are traveling through the tempestuous skies...

The weather didn't cause the last loud boom and shudder that rocked the Steigenadler. The terrible, unexpected storm has buffeted the vessel for a good 15 minutes now, and more than once, the captain has spoken to the corridors and staterooms via a system of brass pipes, repeating the same message:

"Nothing to worry about, folks," declares his calm, tinny voice. "It's just a storm. We'll be fine."

Now, another explosion rocks the ship. A terrible metallic crunching sound follows, and then a twisting whine of steel being rent apart fills the air. The airship tilts to the side, slamming the unprepared against bulkheads and hatches. Several cries of alarm ring out and a passenger's foot locker spills its contents into the corridor.

Then, three more explosions sound in rapid succession, each closer to the stern than the last.

"Ladies and gentlemen, it appears I was mistaken." His voice remains steady, despite muffled shouts and the roar of flame in the background. Another explosion rattles the decking. "We'll be making an emergency landing. All capable hands, please assist with our preparations." A sudden, mournful scream punctuates the background noise; then it quickly fades. The captain's voice continues over it, unfazed. "The Steigenadler has suffered a catastrophic failure. Extinguish open flames, secure any loose structural components, and brace yourselves for impact! It's been a pleasure serving as your captain!"

Have the characters indicate their location on the Steigenadler as the accident occurs: starboard deck or port deck. They cannot be on the top deck—the bridge—nor on the bottom deck—the cargo storage and engine room. The majority's selected side becomes the passengers' side, with guest cabins, the galley, the workshop, and an artillery emplacement at either end of the hallway.

The ship's other side contains the captain's cabin, the shipmage's sanctum, some crew quarters, and two artillery stations. These cabins are inaccessible; the recent explosions devastated the rooms and cracked the wing, leaving just the enclosed corridor along the central gas bladders and the stern artillery emplacement. Two corridors link the port and starboard decks. Think of the area as a letter "H" with two crossbars, where the crossbars are the linking corridors. The side with intact compartments is 80 ft. long and 20 ft. wide. The guest cabins are 35 ft. x 20 ft., the galley is 5 ft. x 20 ft., the workshop is 20 ft. x 20 ft., and either artillery room is 10 ft. x 20 ft. The other side consists of a 5-ft. corridor and a room that is 10 ft. x 20 ft. at the bottom of the leg. Ballast stones are loose, numerous small fires burn, and the ship is in disarray. The ship's crewmen are either in the Bottom Deck, trying to save the engines, or in the Top Deck, trying to control the airship's downward trajectory. It is currently descending at a dangerous rate and will crash in three rounds. Allow the characters to either strap in safely or remain free, making skill checks to help guide the Steigenadler to the ground. If they choose to help, consider the following complex skill check:

SKILL CHECKS

Craft (clockwork), Diplomacy, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Knowledge (engineering or nature), Perception, Profession (sailor or airman), Survival

DC	Benefit
<17	Failure. The repair attempt or safety precaution seems good, but it doesn't survive impact. (1 passenger dies; for Profession (airman/sailor), 1d4 passengers die.)
17	The repair holds together until impact, when a thrown passenger or piece of debris destroys it. (1 passenger at 0 hp and losing 3 hp per round; for Survival increase to 1d4 passengers)
18+	Good thinking! The choice is solid, and helps save lives. Alternate between: 1 passenger at 1d8 hp after impact +3 to the Reflex save on impact

-1d6 from the maximum damage inflicted on the party upon impact

Activities include locking hatches, sealing steam valves, repairing damaged equipment (buckles, latches, etc.), securing other passengers, or tying down loose components.

Failure results in a loose door causing a crushing blow, a lashing cable cutting someone in half, a break in the hull sucking someone out, a valve exploding outward against someone, a harness breaking and throwing someone against a bulkhead or another passenger. Track the skill checks resulting in failures to tailor the effect.

STRENGTH OR DEXTERITY

Sometimes a strong back or nimble fingers are the best things you can provide.

<15	It's just not enough to help.	
15+	Add +2 to another character's skill check.	

UNUSUAL CHOICES

Allow the PCs to be inventive in their actions. For instance, a *web* spell could easily tie down an entire compartment, providing a +6 bonus to the Reflex save on impact and reducing the damage by 3d6; it also makes further activities nearly impossible. A *rope trick* easily provides a safe space, but has a limited occupancy. An *animate rope* or *shield* provides an additional +3 bonus to the Reflex save on impact for two people. *Protection from arrows* works against the impact damage. Any of these spells could be used in place of a check. **Development:** After three rounds, calculate the number of dead, the number of dying passengers, the total bonus to the coming Reflex save, and the total reduction in damage. Then proceed.

YOU CAN WALK AWAY

The wind roars like a dragon outside the cabin, and the entire structure screams with the pilot's desperate attempts to make the Steigenadler a rubble field instead of a crater. Time slows to a glacial flow, a series of disconnected heartbeats and held breaths, as the airship touches ground with the force of an angry titan.

The floor and the ceiling trade places repeatedly. The grinding, crushing sound of wood on stone mingles with the terrible shriek of twisting metal, punctuated by brief, terrible cries of pain immediately lost in the wreckage.

[GM's: Insert Skill Failure descriptions of deaths and injuries here.]

Before you know it, it's over.

PCs (not passengers) need to roll a DC 15 Reflex save or suffer 6d6 damage. Success indicates half damage, but evasion cannot reduce this damage further. If a PC would be killed, he is instead reduced to 5 hp and exhausted.

Many of the NPCs may be dead or dying. Of the dead, eliminate the passengers in the following order. Each NPC is detailed in the "This Bodes Poorly" section. No matter what, Gunter survives—and thus is not on the list—as should at least three others passengers.

- #1. Sister Yves (NG, female human, commoner 1, hp 4)
- #2. Lady Elia Vaharti (LN, female human, aristocrat 7, hp 31)
- #3. Aleska (CG, female human child, rogue 1, hp 4)
- #4. Sister Renna (NG, female human, commoner 1, hp 4)
- #5. Sister Alice (NG, female human, commoner 1, hp 4)
- #6. Airmaid (LN, female gearforged, expert 5, hp 19)
- #7. Erskoen Von Hugyens (CG, male elfmarked, expert 7, hp 29)
- #8. Lord Erdrine Vaharti (LG, male human aristocrat 6/expert 3, hp 42).
- #9. Glankek (CN, male dragonkin, expert 3, hp 12)
- #10. Varga (NG, female human, expert 2, hp 9)

Read the following:

Looking out over the wreckage, the scene stretches out for a quarter-mile before you. The Steigenadler is down, savagely mauled. The passengers' compartment broke free of the airframe, and lies amazingly upright, near the bottom deck, which wears three partially inflated gas bladders like an enormous, floppy hat. The front of the cargo hold, comprising three-quarters of the bottom deck, broke off. The engine compartment remains remarkably intact, only missing its back wall.

Muffled moans and cries surround you. Bits of broken airship and more than a few bodies litter the ground, and there is no sign of the top deck.

Before the characters act, read the following; then roll for initiative. The scattered, bleeding passengers continue to take damage and may die during this combat.

Out on the landscape, you see them before you hear the first

Descriptions Matter.

Complex skill checks can easily become a rote exercise of die rolling. Avoid that misstep at any cost! The Steigenadler's descent like a broken bird from the sky should be a scene of knuckle-biting intensity. Tie a character's check to an action, but don't detail the consequences until the describing the aftermath!

battle cry. In the distance, stands the immense bulk of an ancient Walker, a ring of tents apparently clustered about its four striding limbs. More disconcerting, however, is the cluster of people racing towards your crash site—and the howling mob pursuing them.

These pilgrims were en route to the Seat of Mavros when Walker cultists of the Great Old One, Pah'draguusthlai (*Midgard Campaign Setting*, page 160), ambushed them. Thinking the airship their savior, the pilgrims run for the wreckage, bringing the pursuing cultists.

- **Terrain**: This land transitions between pebbly rock desert and dunes, with some small, dried brush.
- **Creatures:** The pilgrims begin 150 ft. from the crash and move 40 ft. a round. The pursuing cultists are 20 ft. behind the pilgrims. The cultists refuse negotiation.

THE STRENGTH OF INSANITY

Dedicated in their worship of the unspeakable monstrosity, the nearby Walker of the Wastes, these cultists seek to capture the pilgrims of Mavros traveling overland to the Fist of Mavros as sacrifices, food, entertainment—and for other terrible things.

Cultists (25)

4800xp

1 Cultist Champion

- 2 Cultist Lieutenants
- **6** Cultist Strongarms
- 16 Lesser Cultists, CR 1/2 (non-combat)

12 Pilgrims of Mavros (see below)

TACTICS

The cultists intend to capture the pilgrims. The champion and lieutenants throw bolas at the fleeing pilgrims, tripping and entangling them (assume the bolas hit unless the PCs interrupt the attack). Two lesser cultists then sap the entangled targets and drag them back to the camp beneath the Walker. The lesser cultists do not engage the characters; their sole task is to recover captured pilgrims. They flee first or die gibbering.

CR 8

The six cultist strongarms screen and defend part of this group, engaging the PCs and preventing them from disrupting the pilgrims' capture. They advance in two flanking groups of three, herding the pilgrims, allowing the officers to better use their bolas.

Truly, the party should be able to defeat this group. The question is, "Can the party defeat this group in time to save more than a few of the 12 pilgrims." Six pilgrims are detailed below; use the **foot soldier** in the *Pathfinder RPG Gamemastery Guide* for the other six, and have them taken first, as they attempt to hold off the cultists. The cultists pursue to the wreckage. The strongarms attack in a delaying action, and then the champion and lieutenants flee back to the cult if possible. No matter what, the Walker cultists know the Steigenadler is here.

The named pilgrims are detailed on page 99. The pilgrims are captured in the following order:

THE PASSENGERS

Gunter (N, male human, expert 3, hp 15) claims to be a journeyman geargrinder from Zobeck—with the accent to match. However, he has a secret: He failed to graduate, and has been falsely claiming be a guild member. The guild was about to exact revenge upon him when he fled on the Steigenadler. Now, with strong skills in Knowledge (engineering), Craft (alchemy), Craft (carpentry), and Craft (clockwork), he's the survivors' ticket to civilization, as long as they can keep him alive.

Varga (NG, female human, expert 2, hp 9) is a botanist overseeing the delivery of important plant specimens from Barsella. After the wreck, she finds herself in the midst of a most terrifying adventure. Varga is shy, timid, and frightened, but possesses a warrior's heart; she readily tackles whatever comes their way.

Glankek (CN, male dragonkin, expert 3, hp 12) purports to be an authority on the dust goblins of the Wastes; in reality, he's a scoundrel and shyster, always attempting to squeeze advantage out of any situation. He speaks three dust goblin dialects.

Lord Erdrine Vaharti and Lady Elia Vaharti (LG, male human, aristocrat 6/expert 3, hp 42; and LN, female human, aristocrat 7, hp 31) are monied individuals from Trombei, where Lord Vaharti is a Compassi (parlimentarian). They have survived riots and war. While unaccustomed to hard work, they're willing to pitch in and help. If they are afraid, they do not show it. Lord Erdrine suggests courses of action, but he is not comfortable leading groups out of danger.

Airmaid (LN, female gearforged, expert 5, hp 19) starts out as the Steigenadler's figurehead, but the wreck separates her from the ship. Deeply depressed over the Steigenadler's loss, she enthusiastically supports the crafting of a new airship. She does not currently have the tools to maintain her body.

Erskoen Von Hugyens (CG, male elfmarked, expert 7, hp 29) is a junior astronomer from Starlight Keep in Friulia. A pale, timid, bespectacled scholar, he keeps a small chained and locked valise under his arm at all times. He seems to appear and disappear without explanation.

Aleska (CG, female human child, rogue 1, hp 4) is a 10-yearold street orphan who stowed away on the Steigenadler to escape to a better place. If she lives, the PCs may recognize her sleeping magical talent bursts out when she's scared or angry.

The Sisters (NG, female humans, commoner 1, hp 4 each) are three girls (Yves, Renna, and Alice) on their way to join a cloistered religious order. They are "sisters" only in that they have taken their novice vows. They are frightened and without guidance; their escort died in the crash.

#1-6 Foot Soldier	#9 Mischel	#12 Strict
#7 Mikas	#10 Jagat	
#8 Issa	#11 Ignacia	

Cultist Champion

XP 1,200

CE gladiator

hp 57 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide) Init +7

Ranged bola + (1d4+5 nonlethal plus trip)

TACTICS

During Combat The champion uses the bolas on the pilgrims until none remain or someone attacks him. He then attacks with his battle axe.

Morale Cultists fight until they capture all 12 pilgrims, until they are killed, or until six rounds have passed, as discussed above.

Feats Dodge, Exotic Weapon (bola), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Shield Focus, Weapon Focus (trident) SQ madness

Gear As gladiator plus 5 bolas

Cultist Lieutenant

CR 3

CR 1

CR 4

XP 800

CE guard officer

hp 34 (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) **Ranged** bola +5 (1d4+2 nonlethal plus trip)

TACTICS

During Combat The lieutenants use the bolas until no pilgrims remain or someone attacks them. They then attack with their battle axes.

Morale Cultists fight until all 12 pilgrims are captured, the cultists are all killed, or until six rounds have passed, as discussed above.

Feats Combat Reflexes, Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bola), Improved Trip, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate)

SQ madness

Gear as guard officer plus 5 bolas

Cultist Strongarm

XP 400

CE cannibal

Init +5

hp 28 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)

TACTICS

During Combat Strongarms open combat with a move action and a javelin, repeating until engaged in melee.

Morale These cultists fight to the death.

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness

SQ madness

Gear as cannibal except throwing axes (5)

12 Lesser Cultists CR 1/2 (non-combat)

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex) hp 8 (1d10+1) Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +2 Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD +13 **Scaling to APL5:** To make this encounter a more challenging CR 9, add two lieutenants who are focused on attacking the party. To make it a CR 10, add a champion and 5 cultists, who are also dedicated to attacking the party while the first three officers continue to capture the pilgrims.

Treasure: The cultists have no treasure except their equipment.

Development: With the cultists slain or driven off, the pilgrims approach the PCs, hoping for help; they do not realize the party's dire situation until they've arrived. Now's the time to survey the wreckage and any surviving materials. What can be found is detailed in "Now It's A Party." Allow the characters to make any searches or deal with immediate issues, and then proceed to that section.

NOW IT'S A PARTY

After battle, the PCs learn a few passengers survived, but the Steigenadler's crew did not.

The ship is destroyed. The supplies are gone, somewhere lost in the Wasted West. Things are grim. Once the PCs have collected themselves, performed any healing or taken stock of injuries, have them look back from the airship's obliterated hulk and find this scene:

The early afternoon sun is red in the dust-choked sky overhead. Underneath its rays, the Steigenadler's remnants lie smoldering before you. In the wake of the attack, the few survivors huddle around a small fire being fueled with broken hull bits, dully staring into its flames as the temperature begins to drop. Others pick through the wreckage, tossing aside bits and pieces, gauging their worth.

Surviving pilgrims have little to offer, though, they do know some of the local area. They know about the creature in the date palm orchard, but not what it is. They know a well exists in the ruins, but a group of goblins claims them as home. They offer to join and help.

The cultists stole the pilgrims' supplies when they attacked their caravan and killed the mules. Each pilgrim has a day's water and two days' worth of food. They have some weapons, but no missile weapons and no magic.

THE WALKER

The enormous Walker to the northeast is Pah'draguusthlai the Devourer (the pilgrims know this).

The creature's headless, rubbery-gray torso is supported by a pair of arms from each shoulder which split at the elbow into

MAD CULTISTS

All of the cultists have the madness special quality as detailed below:

Madness (Ex) Cultists use their Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of their Wisdom modifier, and are immune to insanity and confusion effects. Only a miracle or wish can remove a cultist's madness. If this occurs, the cultist gains 6 points of Wisdom and loses 6 points of Charisma. Beyond 4th level, a party with a cleric or oracle can likely sustain a group by sacrificing most of their 3rd-level spells to generate supplies using *create food and water*. This eliminates an important source of tension in the adventure—the need to complete the repairs before starvation sets in. Still, low-level clerics, druids, and oracles—and 4th-level paladins—can cast *create water*, so water is less of a survival problem.

a second forearm. It knuckles across the landscape on threefingered hands, leaving sooty prints. Its jagged, tri-part maw opens where its viscera should be, gnashing glacially, lined with spiderlike mandibles and spinnerets spitting strands of venomous silk to pull victims into its insatiable depths. A structure dangles from the creature's back, secured by webbed strands.

The structure on the creature's back is the wizard Enkada Pishtuhk's sanctuary (See *Midgard Legends*, p. 20). Around the Walker's base lies the cultists' tent city, described in Part Two, "Slouching Towards...", page 103.

WHERE THE HELL ARE WE?

A Knowledge (geography or local) check (DC 15) indicates the PCs are roughly 700 miles from any civilized point to the west, and 150 miles from the Seat of Mavros, to the southeast.

WHAT REMAINS

There's a lot of junk in the wreckage to salvage. The crash

obliterated the other decks. The Passenger Deck can act as shelter, but guards need to be posted, or creatures, cultists, and goblins come to scavenge and loot. Scratch idly points this out, if the party doesn't consider it. With guards posted, the cultists and goblins just watch from a distance.

Let the characters drift a bit here, and allow a day to pass if they have no immediate plan.

Otherwise, if approached with a question about the state of the wreck, or if two days have passed, Gunter speaks with the characters.

Gunter clears his throat, announcing his presence. "Do you have a moment? I think I have an idea." He gestures to the Steigenadler's debris field. "With some work, I think we could fly out of here. But I'll need a day or so to be sure, and we need food and water."

An airship flies by dissolving liftgas ore in boiling water. The resulting lighter-than-air gas causes the airship to fly, while the steam powers the propellers to drive the airframe. Gunter understands the alchemical basics of liftgas ore, and he knows a lot of water is needed to dissolve the remaining liftgas ore to create the gas necessary to refill the bladders. He also thinks he knows enough to repair the engine, but he presents his plan as if he's absolutely capable of completing it.

The resulting airship will consist of the repaired engine/ cargo deck and the gas-bladders in the remaining framework attached to it, plus the bits the characters and survivors cobble together. It will carry anyone remaining.

THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON

The following steps are necessary to fashion an airship capable of escaping the area:





- 24 days of labor to clear the debris from the remaining Bottom Deck and secure the liftgas bladders.
- 2. 6 days of labor to repair the engine and boiler. If Gunter does this, it succeeds. If a PC attempts the repairs, the task requires three Craft (smithing or clockwork) checks or four DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) checks. Failing two of these checks in a row adds 3 days of labor to the required time. A character may take 20 on one of these checks by adding a full day of labor to the overall required total per check.
- **3**. 10 days of labor to reinforce the remaining Bottom Deck to carry passengers.
- 4. 500 gallons of water to refill the boiler.

There is a total of 40 days of labor involved. The number of "days of labor" can be divided by the number of people working, with each person counting as a day. Thus, 8 people could complete 40 days of work in just 5 days (40/8 = 5). Gunter needs to make the engine repairs, but he can handle up to two assistants, and each adds a half day of labor to his effective work. Someone with the Knowledge (engineering) skill needs to oversee the work on the Bottom Deck, and Gunter is the only survivor with the skill. If a capable person does not supervise the hull repairs, roll a DC 14 Construction check (1d20 plus the highest Intelligence modifier of the untrained workers, which is +1—unless the characters assist) after each day of work. Failure means the day's work is wasted.

With the galley partially intact, and some of the Bottom Deck on hand, food is not an immediate issue. There are rations for the crew, but not much, as the Steigenadler could travel 1,440 miles in 24 hours. They had intended to resupply at the destination, but did keep some food on board. There is enough food and water in the galley to provide 20 people one day's rations and drink. A waterskin provides one day's worth of water.

The workshop is mostly intact, but is in complete disarray, requiring a full day of labor to clean and reorganize it to make

Task	# of Laborers	Days Needed	Construction Check Needed?
Repair	1	6	No*
Engine	2 3	4	No*
	5	3	No*
Clear	3	8	Yes#
Bottom	4	6	Yes#
Deck	5	5	Yes#
	6	4	Yes#
	7	3.5	Yes#
	8	3	Yes#
	9	2.5	Yes#
Organize	1	1	No
Workshop	2	.5	No
	3	.5	110
	4	.3	No* (No more
		.25	than 4 people are effective)

* As long as Gunter performs the repairs, otherwise, see text # Unless someone with Knowledge (engineering) oversees the repairs it usable; it also contains the tools to maintain Airmaid. With three days of labor spent on repairs, the workshop can provide a +2 bonus to Construction checks. An unseen servant spell can perform this task unattended, and needs 8 hours of effect to equal one day of labor.

Searching the area produces three broken five-gallon buckets, one functional ballista, and three bolts. However, on a "1," the mechanism breaks and no longer works.

The survivors all claim they will work, but Aleska isn't good for much beyond standing guard (+7 Perception, no usable benefit from a day of labor). Erskoen only assists with engine repairs or stands guard. Glankek pretends to work, but his efforts only equal a half day's labor. Scratch always produces two days of labor for every day spent working. If Issa stands guard, Mikas can be as effective as Scratch.

THE DARK PASSENGER

With the time necessary to complete repairs, the characters may think the adventure can simply progress. Unfortunately, there's a killer spark lingering in the wreckage, and it caused the crash.

The Pilgrims

Jagat (NG, male human, commoner 3, hp 12) is a massively muscled, dashing farmer. He's every bit the uncultured gentleman, and is completely without guile. En route to the Seat of Mavros as a disciple, Jagat finds himself drawn to the adventurers, the champions he wishes to emulate. Jagat is handy with any club-like weapon.

Ignacia (LN, female human, expert 2, hp 12), a clerk and a scribe to one of the Temple Elders of Mavros, was headed to serve at the Fist of Mavros. She wears her savings of gemstones (150 gp) in a pouch around her neck at all times. Ignacia cares for her own safety first; getting to the Fist is her secondary concern.

Issa (CN, human female, aristocrat 4, hp 10) is a beautiful, willful, 20-something scion of the minor-but-influential Magdar noble house Perrine. She mourns her parents and is reluctant to leave the crash-site without her pet cat. She disdains but relies on Mikas, her bodyguard, and projects her inadequacies onto other, less-noble individuals.

Mikas (LG, male human, warrior 2, 12 hp) was the least among Issa's now-dead guard-retinue. Just 18 years old, he is out of his depth but is up for the challenge of protecting his lady charge. Long suffering and oft berated, Mikas hides his growing infatuation for Issa behind a veil of stoic duty.

Mischel (LE, female human, commoner 3, hp 12) is an attractive, slightly built woman unaccustomed to hardship or labor who stands to inherit a tidy sum from a former lover if she can get to the Fist of Mavros. She uses her wiles to acquire what she needs to survive.

Scratch (CG, male human, expert 4, hp 22) is a tall, lanky, older man, one whom some might think should be at home, retired, but Scratch is an outdoorsman and trader. He joined the pilgrims to visit his nephew, currently stationed at the Fist. He is hard, but good humored, and is rarely seen without his carved wooden pipe. Scratch is the pilgrims' unofficial leader.

Creatures born from the Wastes' terrible storms, sparks desire to experience as much life as possible before dying, and they do this by inhabiting and controlling people. Caught up by the Steigenadler in the storm, the spark caused three gas bladders to explode before it reached the bridge and started a bloodbath amongst the crew. Now, it wants to sample the survivors' lives.

The spark kills its host during each night. It can only extend its life by inhabiting another person, feeding off and burning up his life force from the inside out (a DC 20 Heal check identifies the electrical damage; a DC 21 Knowledge (planes) check identifies this as consistent with a spark's victim). Use the list of targets in the "You can Walk Away," section and "Strength of Insanity." Start with a passenger, and then alternate between pilgrims and passengers; the spark always successfully inhabits NPCs. The spark tries to inhabit a PC character before targeting Gunter. If identified and peacefully approached, it is willing to talk:

This mote of vermillion electrical energy floats menacingly nearby, erupting in a fine shower of sparks with each breath. Arcs of purple-white lightning snake into the ground as it moves, bobbing up and down slightly, like a cork.

If the party parleys with the spark (DC 30 Diplomacy, +3 to the check if the speaker uses Auran):

"You want to talk?" It hovers in midair, fading from crimson to amber to sapphire blue. The air crackles, thick with ozone, "What do you want to know?"

The spark answers the following questions:

• Why are you killing people?

"To live, but my hosts burn out too quickly."

What do you want?

"To experience as much life as possible."

How do you experience life?

"I inhabit a form, and our essences mingle until the host burns up. The host's last moment is most glorious."

• Do you care who you inhabit?

"No, I only require a living creature, like you."

• What would make you leave?

BUT WE'RE THE HEROES.

Some players might not like the fact an NPC provides them with an escape plan. However, not all groups are certain to have the right skills to execute such a plan. If a player asks:

A DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check reveals a smaller airship could be cobbled from the wreckage.

A DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check suggests the necessary steps.

A DC 30 Knowledge (engineering) check gives the time needed to complete those steps.

Provide the character with a +1 circumstance bonus to this check for every day spent on the crash-site.

"If I had 20 or more guaranteed hosts, I would be willing to leave your group."

Do you want anything else?

"No, I only wish to experience as much of this corporeal life as possible until I cannot survive further."

If offered a larger group of victims, like the cultists or the goblins, and a plan to not only inhabit one, but successfully return to the larger groups, the spark is willing to cooperate.

If the party forces combat with the spark, use the following statistics:

Spark CR 6

XP 1,600

hp 39 (Midgard Bestiary, page 87)

Development: Once the spark is dealt with, the characters may continue repairing the airship and preparing their escape. The cultists only watch them unless actively attacked. Proceed to Part Two: Any Time You Like.

Part Two: Check Out Any Time You Like

This following section details the party's assessment of the area. These regions can be visited in any order.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

If the party clambers on top of either surviving deck, they can see the immediate area.

The terrain surrounding the crash-site is mostly a blasted wasteland of dry, stony hills and rolling plains. The titanic monstrosity of the Walker rises into the sky, a mile or two to the southwest, a crescent of dirty, ragged tents encircling it. Even from here, the cultists' chants are a dim hum in the air and the smoke from their cookfires taints the air with an acrid, foul tang. To the northeast, perhaps two or three miles away, sits a small cluster of stone buildings and what looks like a stand of grey-white trees.

At this distance, however, nothing can be discerned, but if the group approaches within 200 ft. of either encampment, allow Perception checks to detect sentries. Reduce DCs by 1 for every 10 ft. closer the PCs approach. The sentries also make Perception checks (Perception +8) each time the PCs do. The party has a Stealth of 0 (modified by +1 for every 10 ft. from camp) unless they take precautions. If the sentries spot the party, they do not attack, but quietly alert their respective camps.

THE CULTISTS (Perception Skill Check)

DC Benefit

<10 There are a lot of tents, but it's tough to say if anyone's actually standing guard.



- 15 A large gathering of people rests near the camp's center, and there are guards.
- 20 One hundred or more people are worshipping at the foot of that thing!
- 25 They are performing some kind of ritual there, and they have tied-up people in the middle of it. They're planning a sacrifice!

THE STRUCTURES (Perception Skill Check)

DC Benefit

<10 No guards spotted, but may react to them when spotted or attacked.

- 10 A few people move about within or on top of some buildings.
- 15 They people are dust goblins, and they're collecting scraps of metal and junk.
- 20 Those are definitely dust goblins, and they have some kind of giant spider.
- 25 Yes, dust goblins and giant spiders...and a few of them have guns.

Development: The characters going to the ruins first proceed to "Who Runs Bartertown." Those reconnoitering the Walker and cultists, proceed to "Slouching Towards..." on page 103. If they wish to visit the grove first, proceed to "Two in the Bush."

WHO RUNS BARTERTOWN (CR 8)

The dust goblin tribe has recently occupied these former elven ruins, and begun picking the area clean of junk and remnant materials. A confrontation with the dust goblins happens in a causeway lined with old columns during the day, or in the center of the structures at night, when they gather the discovered loot. The goblins rigged the columns as traps and began salvaging the area.

If the party takes precautions to approach stealthily, make Perception checks (+8 -1/10 ft. from the clearing) opposing the party's Stealth checks. Success indicates the dust goblins spot the party's approach. Otherwise, the dust goblins detect the party as they explore the ruins.

If the goblins detect the party:

The figures stop stacking the items they were piling in the clearing. They pause, and then a chorus of long, deep wolf howls breaks the forest's silence, followed by the muted fluttering of birds taking flight.

Terrain: These badly neglected ruins are left from the wars which created the Wastes. A few crumbling buildings and ruined half-walls remain (See **map 2, False Hope**).

Creatures: The goblins recently discovered the creature in **area Y** and want to loot the structure. First, they need their

alchemist/adept back, who the chelicerae in **area X** captured. They are more than willing to attack adventurers trying to steal from their encampment, but if the PCs attempt peaceful negotiation, the group's champions approaches to parley.

Groups not immediately engaging the goblins in combat may attempt to negotiate a peaceful encounter:

Diplomacy Skill Check

DC Benefit

- <28 The dust goblin champions attack.
- <33 The dust goblins do not believe the party and remain hostile. If the party does not immediately depart, combat begins.
- 33 The dust goblins remain unfriendly and aggressive, but do not immediately attack. They offer a deal to the party—if the PCs rescue their shaman from the chelicerae in area X or eliminate creature in area Y, they will establish a truce. Allow another check, adding +10 to the character's roll.
- 38 The dust goblins are indifferent, but they offer the party a truce if they eliminate the chelicerae. If the PCs eradicate the creature in area Z, they may make another Diplomacy check with the dust goblins.

If the party fails to befriend the dust goblins, the goblins demand the PCs depart and stay away from the ruins. Failure to do so initiates combat. Provide a +3 bonus to the Diplomacy check if the party offers the goblins the Steigenadler's wreckage site after their departure.

Befriended goblins allow the party to use the well or orchard on the condition the characters bring something suitable for trade (See "Junk in Trade"), peace-tie their weapons, and stow any symbols or spell component pouches. The goblins never dismount from their spider mounts.

RELICS OF TIMES PAST

By leaping upon a column and leaping away, the spiders can cause the drums of the column to tip and fall, attacking creatures in a line from the column's base.

Toppled Column (+4 touch attack against all creatures in a 25-ft. line, 3d6 damage plus knock prone; +8 CMB to knock prone)

Dust Goblins (12)	CR 8
4800xp	
6 Dust Goblin Reavers (Mounted)	

6 Dust Goblin Reavers (Mounted) 6 Dust Spider Mounts

Dust Goblin Reaver	CR1
XP 400	
Male dust goblin barbarian 1/rogue 1	
NE Small humanoid (goblin)	
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5	
DEFENSE	

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +3 **Dex**, +2 shield, +1 size)

hp 21 (1d12+2 plus 1d8+2)



Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +0

OFFENSE Speed 40 ft.

Melee short sword +4 (1d4+1/19-20, x2) Ranged vril rifle +4 (2d6+1/19-20, x2) Special Attacks rage (6 rounds/day), sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat Leaps and shoots.

Morale Fight until four drop, and then flee.

STATISTICS

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

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

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8*, Disable Device +7*, Handle Animal +5*, Knowledge (nature) +5*, Perception +5, Ride +6*, Stealth +8*, Survival +8*, Use Magic Device +7; *Armor check penalties applied.

Languages Goblin, Trade Tongue

SQ fast movement, trapfinding

Other Gear mwk chainshirt, shortsword, light steel shield, vril rifle

Dust Spider

XP 400

N Medium vermin (spider)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense; Perception +4 **DEFENSE**

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 natural) hp 16 (3d8+3) Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d6+1)

Special Attack web (+5 ranged, DC 14, hp 2)

TACTICS

During Combat Dust spider mounts attack with their mandibles as their rider directs. They use webs on particularly troublesome characters.

Morale Dust spider mounts fight until killed.

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 17, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2
Base Atk +2; CMB +3 CMD 14 (18 vs. trip)
Feats Endurance, RunB
Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +17, Perception +4 (+8 in webs),
Stealth +7; Racial Modifiers +4 Perception and Stealth (+8 in
webs), +8 on Acrobatics, +16 Climb.
SPECIAL ABILITIES
Hunting Leap (Ex) A dust spider makes a jumping attack as part
of a charge, ignoring rough or difficult terrain.

Dust Spiders do not have a poisonous bite, but have a +2 racial bonus to the DCs for their web ability.

Scaling to APL5: Apply the giant creature template to the spiders, and add one to their number to make this encounter CR 9.

Treasure: Six vril rifles, basic survival gear, some junk collected for partial repairs and salvage. Gunter can use this gear to reduce the time needed to fix the Steigenadler by 1 day of labor. The goblins' food is edible, but consuming it requires a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid fatigue the following day.

The goblin rifles have the following statistics:

New Item: Dust Goblin Vril Rifle

Aura faint evocation; CL 5th Slot --; Price 3,000 gp; Weight 8 lbs

DESCRIPTION

CR1

Roughly the size of an arquebus or a quarterstaff, no two vril rifles fire the same way. Each one requires a Use Magic Device check (DC 15) to operate. A successful DC 15 check indicates the wielder may fire the rifle once. A DC 20 check allows the rifle to be fired d6+2 times before another check is needed. A DC 25 check allows the wielder to fire the rifle until it is exhausted, or to reload it with a vril battery.

Attacking with a vril rifle is a ranged touch attack requiring a standard action and provoking attacks of opportunity. Vril rifles explode on an attack roll of "1," inflicting 2d6+1 damage to their wielder and giving the rifle the broken condition. Broken rifles do not fire, but a make whole spell repairs them. A successful DC 30 Craft (gunsmithing) check can remove the broken condition, but a new Use Magic Device check is needed to fire it again. Vril rifles have 1d12+3 shots remaining when found.

Development: With the goblins addressed, the party can secure food and water, even timber for their repairs. Even if made friendly, the goblins refuse to attack the cultists. It takes 2 hours to make a round trip to the well, fill a five-gallon bucket, and return with it to the wreckage.

AREA X: A BIRD IN THE HAND

If the party decides to investigate the "misty" orchard, read the following

A sheet of what appears to be a translucent sheet of silk covers this roughly square orchard of 30 to 40 date palms. The sheet's edges flutter in the wind, giving the orchard a mist-shrouded appearance from a distance. A ring of stumps surrounds the copse, indicating more trees once existed here. It is difficult to discern, but there might be something inhabiting the copse.

Perception checks might spot the beast:

Perception Skill Check

DC Benefit

<25 Yes, there is something in the trees, and people hang from webs within.

<30 The "people" are cocoons. There's definitely a very large spider inside there.</p>

If the webs are set alight from a distance, the chelicerae casts haste and charges out to attack! Otherwise, it lingers in the webs until prey nears, and then it attacks. Currently, it has 12 cultists cocooned and ready to eat, so it need not leave its webs.

Bursting from the webbing, this disgusting spider-like creature scuttles forward, a limp body of a goblin still hanging from its lower jaw. Its upper mandibles work hungrily.

Chelicerae

XP 4,800

hp 110 (Midgard Bestiary, page 20)

Born from the nearby Walker's spawn, the terrible creature is slowly converting this area, building its own brood. Once it consumes the goblin, it seeks out a PC.

Development: If the PCs kill the chelicerae without delivering a critical hit, they can free the goblin, who is slimy and disoriented, but mostly uninjured. He willingly vouches for the party with the dust goblins, and guarantees their safe usage of the ruins. The orchard's date palms are not as productive as they were before the chelicerae moved in. The trees, however, contain enough dates to feed 20 people for 7 days. The dates remain fresh if left on the trees; if picked, they spoil within four days.

AREA Y: SLEEPING DOGS

See the map for the specific location of this structure. Windows and archways on the first floor allow easy observation of the creature within.

This structure seems to be an ancient votive offering temple, or perhaps a lost armory cache, left behind when the wars raged across the Wastes. While the dust is thick, the structure appears to be in good condition. Inside, you can see what might have been two dust goblins, though their forms are bubbled and melted, as if someone fashioned them from wax, and then left them atop a cooling brick oven.

In the center of the room, surrounded with a faint, silvery light, like the moon reflected on a pool, is a strange creature. It has a crocodilian head; a humanoid torso; and a long, coiled tail in place of legs. Its arms end in hands, with two thick, grayish tentacles sprouting from its palms. The beast's hide is yellowish-green, fading to a pale underbelly, and it slowly spins in midair, twisted in a mockery of a fetal position.

The creature doesn't move until someone touches the salvage. Once an item is taken, the beast awakens; roll for initiative.

The temple itself is stoutly constructed, and the armor and weapons here were meant as a resupply cache, but they're less useful now. A wizard bound the protean here to guard the material, but the wizard never returned. GMs should place any desired treasure here within the rusting horde. PCs can find it with a DC 20 Perception check, but only after they slay the protean.

Naunet Protean

XP 3,200

CR 8

hp 94 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

- **Development:** With the protean dead, the PCs can better arm the remaining survivors, or cannibalize the scrap for the airship. Bringing Gunter to salvage materials can cut 1 day of labor from the engine's repair time.
- If the Characters Make a Deal with the Goblins: Providing the goblins access to this structure guarantees the group free use of the well for the duration of the adventure. Proceed as appropriate.

SLOUCHING TOWARDS... (CR 9)

This section provides details about the cultist encampment. Its exact structure is not very important, other than it is a rough crescent, with a ritual space inside, closest to the Walker.

The ragged tent city flaps in the wind, a thick canvas-colored moss blighting the miserable earth surrounding a terrible monstrosity. The city is abuzz with cultists performing a number of activities: drawing ichor from the Walker, digging trenches, stripping carcasses, throwing objects in a pit, etc. They have guards watching, but they're not actively mobilizing to attack.

- **Terrain**: 150 cultists occupy the tent encampment. They are preparing to summon a sliver of the Walker to destroy the airship's wreckage, their crazed minds finding it to be an abomination. They have captured pilgrims for this ritual, but can use their own number if the PCs rescue the pilgrims from the holding pit near the camp's center. The cultists don't have an attack timetable, but they complete their ritual when the party is nearly ready to leave, or after 14 days, whichever comes first.
- **Creatures:** The cultists are poor combatants. They send out groups of 5 cultist strongarms to watch the wreckage at night. If attacked, they send out two groups and then three. If they lose these attacks, they pull back and use scattered, lone observers



CR 7

to watch the Steigenadler's survivors from a distance. The PCs cannot prevent them from watching. The cultists then regroup, attacking when the GM deems it appropriate, bringing twice the number the PCs faced when the Steigenadler crashed. The cultists try to overrun the passenger deck and take captives. They may possibly capture Gunter in this attack.

SERVANTS OUT OF TIME AND SPACE

The cultists refuse negotiation, only wanting to sacrifice the characters. Communication attempts meet with violence. The cultists are insane from drinking the Walker's ichor.

Development: The cultists cannot be eliminated. A very successful attack killing more than 15 cultists means the remaining cultists attack an hour later with torches, setting everything on fire. The characters can flee, but it results in an overland trip beyond the scope of this adventure and likely results in the death of the remaining passengers and pilgrims. Proceed as appropriate.

Part Two: Resurrection And Rebirth

Once the preparation process is complete and escape is imminent, the cultists marshal and attack. The PCs need to fend off the attack as the airship takes off.

BUT YOU CAN'T STAY HERE (CR 9)

When airship is ready to go, Gunter approaches the group.

"To prepare for launch," explains Gunter, "we'll need to boil the water and dissolve what liftgas ore we have left." He looks at the engine. "I've been collecting our charcoal from the fire each day, but it takes a while to make enough gas to take off. I'm fairly certain the cultists will see us."

This process takes about two hours. Once the bladders are nearly full, the cultists come, charging across the plain to the Steigenadler.

Creatures: The cultists, Splinter of Madness.

The frothing lunatics and madmen bolt across the space between the Walker and your airship, propelled by the desire for blood and sacrifice. In their midst, pressing forward on a sea of pseudopods and tentacles, is some amorphous monstrosity.

The cultists begin 120 ft. from the Steigenadler. The party must survive for 6 rounds before the airship lifts off. The Splinter of Madness cannot take a run action.

Cultists (9) and Splinter of Madness CR 8

4,800xp

9 Cultists (Use **Bandits** from the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*)

1 Splinter of Madness



Splinter of Madness, Chaos Beast Variant CR 7

XP 3,200

CN Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar)

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+2 **Dex**, +1 dodge, +7 natural) **hp** 85 (9d10+36)

Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +4

Defensive Abilities amorphous, resistant to transformation

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 4 claws +13 (1d6+3 plus lesser corporeal instability) TACTICS

During Combat the Splinter tries to pummel foes to death.

Morale the Splinter fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11

Base Atk +9; CMB +12; CMD 24 (can't be tripped)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+10 jump), Climb +15, Escape Artist +14, Perception+13, Stealth +14, Swim +15

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Lesser Corporeal Instability (Su) Claw—*contact* (curse); *save* Fort DC 14; *effect* amorphous body and 1 Wisdom damage per round (see below); *cure* 3 consecutive saves. The save DC is Cha-based.

A creature cursed with an amorphous body becomes a spongy, shapeless mass. Unless the victim manages to control the effect (see below), its shape constantly melts, flows, writhes, and boils. An affected creature cannot hold or use any item. Clothing, armor, helmets, and rings become useless. Large items worn or carried—armor, backpacks, even shirts—hamper more than help, reducing the victim's Dexterity score by 4. Speed is reduced to 10 ft. or one-quarter normal, whichever is less. The victim gains the amorphous quality, but cannot cast spells or use magic items, and he attacks blindly, unable to distinguish friend from foe (-4 penalty on attack rolls and a 50% miss chance, regardless of the attack roll).

A victim can temporarily regain his own shape by taking a standard action to attempt a DC 15 Will save (this check DC does not vary for a chaos beast with different Hit Dice or ability scores). A success reestablishes the creature's normal form for 1 minute. Spells changing the victim's shape (such as *alter self, beast shape, elemental body,* and *polymorph*) do not remove the curse, but hold the creature in a stable form (which might not be its own form, depending on the spell) and prevent additional Wisdom damage for the duration of the spell; *shapechange* and *stoneskin* have a similar effect. The victim takes 1 point of Wisdom drain from mental shock every round it ends his turn in an amorphous shape—upon being damage to 1 Wisdom, further Wisdom damage ceases.

Resistant to Transformation (Ex) Transmutation effects, such as polymorphing or petrification, force a Splinter of Madness (chaos beast) into a new shape, but at the start of its next turn, it immediately returns to its normal form as a free action.

The instability and spell resistance of this chaos beast is reduced



due to its increased speed and fervor.

Scaling to CR 9: Apply the advanced creature template to the Splinter of Madness to make this encounter CR 9.

Development: Once the PCs destroy the monsters or the Steigenadler is ready to launch, proceed to "The Sweetest Sound in the World."

The Sweetest Sound in the World

As the Steigenadler flies away, read the following:

The ground falls away as the Steigenadler rises into the sky. Cultists swarm the wreckage below and smoke billows upward as they set what remains on fire. The scent is lost on the wind, however, and the vessel very quickly flies toward the horizon.

Any pilgrims on board help guide the Steigenadler to the Seat of Mavros, so they can be dropped off; even without their assistance, the route is clear enough to follow during the day. The Seat of Mavros' lights allow for basic navigation at night, permitting the ship to reach the holy site by the next dawn. The group gains a +1 Status bonus when dealing with anyone from the Seat of Mavros. Local guides provide directions to the party's destination and supplies for their return trip. At the GM's discretion, the Steigenadler may survive the trip and be further repaired, or the engine may burn itself upon arrival. For now, however, the adventure is over.





By Erik Freund

A woman's desperate plea takes the adventurers on a tour of Capleon's lowest and highest tiers of society, until unforeseen consequences launch them into a prison of madness to right what went wrong.

Masquerade is an adventure of intrigue and horror for 5thlevel adventurers.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Separated by the sea and oaths of war, star-crossed lovers Seletta Cazagoza and Admiral Landris Galantino yearn for one another. Seletta is the sole heir and beloved daughter of Baron Cazagoza of Capleon, and Landris is heir to a powerful military family in the arch-rival city of Triolo. Their parents would never consider peace: grudges run deep, and each family is completely convinced of their ability to destroy the other in war.

The Baron has his own plans for his daughter. For

many years, he sought closer ties to the Mharoti Empire as a bulwark against the rest of the Seven Cities, and now the perfect opportunity presents itself: marriage to the dragon Sugrab Azah, son of the great Yiraz Azah.

Seletta has no desire to be a dragon's wife, and she rightly fears what would become of Capleon once in Mahroti's talons. The situation becoming urgent, she conceives of a desperate plan to publicly fake her own assassination using a special elixir. Then she'll have her body smuggled to Triolo, where Landris and resuscitation await. As her plans effectively destroy the only heir to her family, she cannot trust any Cazagoza in this, and must turn to outside help.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Seletta's nurse, Rosianna, contacts the PCs to help her mistress. The PCs then track down Unjo, a criminal apothecary, to commission an elixir to fake Seletta's death. After shutting down Unjo's operation, the PCs discover Unjo's alternate identity as a respectable Capleon physician, from whom they either purchase or extort the elixir.

At a well-guarded masquerade ball, the PCs act as secret agents, using code words to identify intermediaries who smuggle in equipment, subduing guests to exchange costumes with them, and finally "murdering" Seletta in front of the ruling elite of Capleon—and escaping with their lives and disguises intact.

Seletta's apparent death triggers the start of a succession crisis in Capleon.

After Seletta's funeral, the PCs sneak into the graveyard to enter the Cazagoza family crypt. Within, the PCs encounter haunts and a supernatural attack, suggesting the plan has gone awry. The PCs take Seletta's body to Triolo, where they attempt to resuscitate her, but instead learn her soul remains trapped in the Realm Beyond. Using leftovers of Unjo's elixir, the PCs enter a realm of imprisoned minds. The PCs rescue Seletta from an inhuman jailer, and lead Seletta's soul back to her body.

Meanwhile, Landris sails to Capleon—and to his own destruction.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This is a tricky hook, as it involves both breaking the law and exposing the characters to quite a bit of personal risk. The PCs may find Seletta's request suspicious, and they may even think they are being set up, so you must make Seletta appear as trustworthy as possible. Ways to do this include:

- Try to write Seletta into a PC's back story as a relative, in-law, or old friend from the guild/college/religious order (tweaking Seletta's back story may be necessary).
- As heir to all Capleon, Seletta can use her political connections to make introductions and put in a good word with any powerful entity the characters are looking to curry favor with. Landris is also very well connected, and can offer a fair degree of protection if they can reach him.
- Characters may be most motivated by the political situation: either devotion to Mavros (seeking to protect the integrity of the Seven Cities), or by being enemies of the Mharoti Empire (looking to thwart its expansion wherever they can).

Part I İntroductions

Seletta's nurse Rosianna (LG female commoner 4), a rotund and trusting woman in her middle years, makes initial contact with the PCs. At her mistress' behest, she requests the PCs acquire the *soul-flight elixir* (see page 110) brewed by a Mharoti man named Unjo. Not familiar with Capleon's underworld, Rosianna can only suggest a neighborhood to begin looking for Unjo. Telling the PCs, "I'm only giving you this because my mistress trusts you," Rosianna hands the PCs a leather bag containing 13,000 gp in gems and coins. "You are to purchase two doses of the elixir with this money. Mistress Seletta says you may keep any remaining amount." Rosianna knows nothing else in regards to Seletta's plan, so she cannot provide further details if questioned.

If asked how Seletta fares, Rosianna becomes a worried mother hen, explaining Seletta often seems morose and, at times, quite anxious. If pressed, Rosianna reveals her personal suspicions. "I shouldn't be telling you this—I really shouldn't but one night, I overheard a conversation between the Court Oracle and the master of the Royal Guard, and the Oracle said, "The pride will fall, as the cub is devoured by a lion," or something like that. He said it meant Seletta's life is in danger, and another Cazagoza member schemes against her!" Rosianna believes the elixir will be instrumental in protecting Seletta, but isn't sure how. Rosianna is beside herself, and asks the adventurers to keep her spying a secret.

The nurse and adventurers agree to a discreet location where they can meet in one week's time.

Part II Low Society

SCENE 1. ORDERING THE ELIXIR

Like most of those acting on the grayer side of the law, Unjo operates in Capleon's southern quarter. Many residents know about Unjo and his reputation as a supplier of mind-altering drugs and healing salves, but it requires a DC 20 Knowledge (local) or Diplomacy check to gather information on his shop's whereabouts. Small bribes (20 sp) grant a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

WORKSHOP OF ARIADNE

Unjo conducts business at a small public workshop dedicated to Ariadne.

Sandwiched tightly between a sail-mender's shop and a boarded-up tavern squats a worn-looking public workshop dedicated to Ariadne.

Only a minority of visitors to the workshop know Unjo houses his business here. The overseer, Mariono Vespicci (N male human expert 3/cleric of Ariadne 3) has only met Unjo on a few occasions, and while the man unnerved him, he can find no grounds to evict the alchemist, as Unjo is both a brilliant craftsman and a sincere follower of Ariadne. If asked about Unjo, Mariono reluctantly directs them to a hidden side door opening into the alley between workshop and tavern. As he does so, he remarks, "He's been around for a long time, but too many of his scaly friends have been showing up lately. This city would be better without their kind." Mariono is referring to a recent increase of dragonkin visiting Capleon. Unbeknownst to him, most of the visitors Mariono's noticed are Sugrab Azah's emissaries, which are unrelated to Unjo's enterprises.

UNJO'S SHOP (CR 5)

The alley between the two buildings appears clogged with a large pile of refuse, but a tunnel runs through this debris, connecting tavern and workshop, and providing the only means of entry to Unjo's shop, located in the boarded-up tavern. All the other windows and doors are nailed shut from the inside.

As you approach the door, a peep-door snaps open, and two huge black eyes set in shaggy brown hair stare at you. The fur constricts around the eyes, as this creature furrows its brow.
Regardless of what the adventurers say, the peep-door slams shut, and after a pregnant pause, a minotaur opens the door. After the last PC steps through the doorway, the minotaur closes the door and silently points to another. If the adventurers ask any questions, he lets out a low growl and becomes unfriendly. "In or out?"

The tavern's main room has been converted into a combination hookah-lounge and medical ward. People in various states of altered consciousness lie about on piles of cushions. Some mutter and twitch, while others remain perfectly still, their eyes tracking unseen phantoms. The sickly smell of fermented substances mixes with sweat, pooling together in an oily morass of clinging odor.

A human guard informs them, "The master is busy; you must wait." If the PCs ask questions (such how long they must wait), the guard gives unhelpful responses such as, "Until he's done." Allow the group to wander the room and feel uncomfortable. During this time, one of Unjo's dealers, partially under the influence of his own wares, regales the group about a soul-voyage where he wandered an expanse of gray (foreshadowing things the PCs see themselves in **Part V**), while another dealer tries to pick the PCs' pockets (+9 Sleight of Hand).

Drug Dealers (2)

CR 3

CR1

XP 800 Male human dealers

hp 22 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)

If the PCs draw weapons on the dealers, nearby drunken thugs become involved, escalating the encounter. The guards do not interfere unless the characters threaten them or Unjo.

Drunkards (6)

XP 400

Male human drunkards hp 23 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)

All drunkards begin prone, 2 are also sickened, and another 1 is confused.

After 15 minutes, the guards invite the PCs to see Unjo.

The office is crammed with exotic art, poisonous flowers, and other expensive curios. A heavy-set Mharoti man wearing a gold turban sits behind a desk. His voluminous purple-and-red robe blends with the tapestry hanging on the wall behind him. He smiles with a cruel warmth as he bids you sit in the chairs before his enormous desk.

Unjo is actually a native Septime man of normal body weight. He is practiced with this ruse and has taken 20 on his Disguise check. Unlike his guards, Unjo is gregarious, and happily entertains questions about his craft, though he lies liberally. If any characters have high Status, he extols their accomplishments and flatters them. Once asked about the *soulflight elixir*, he tries to establish a strong bargaining position, "What you ask for, it is not...inexpensive. I hope your patron

understands this." He lets the PCs make the initial offer: If it is 5000 gp or above, he accepts immediately. Any price between

3000 gp and 5000 gp he accepts with a DC 25 Diplomacy check. He rejects offers below 3000 gp. Once they reach agreement, he tells them to place the amount on the desk.

Without getting up, Unjo reaches out with a hand-rake and pulls the treasure across his desk like a pile of gambling chips. He inspects the payment, never taking one eye off you. "Yes. Yes, satisfactory. Tell your patron his elixir will be ready in five days."

Unjo staunchly refuses requests to brew it more quickly: "The process is delicate, and the distillation takes time." If asked for any specifics about the elixir, he gives a florid sales pitch only loosely inspired by reality and devoid of meaningful facts. When business is finished, he stands up, gives one loud clap and two guards appear to escort the group out.

Unjo (Dr. Varisco)

CR 9

XP 4,800

Male human alchemist (psychonaut^{UM}) 10 **hp** 68 (with no buffs); see page 109

If negotiations turn hostile, Unjo uses the escape tunnel behind his tapestry, while his guards deal with the belligerents. If pressed, he uses his extract of *gaseous form* to hide and flee.

Development: Continue to Scene 2.

SCENE 2: LOST AND FOUND

Once the PCs commissioned the elixir from Unjo, his fate became tangled like a fly upon a web, and the strands begin to shake with the threat of murder. The Court Oracle, watching the threads of fate, recently foretold a member of the Cazagoza family plots to kill Seletta. Furthermore (unbeknownst to Rosianna), the Oracle determined Unjo's business is now somehow involved.

Prompted by the Baron's coin, the Teasellers (see *Midgard Campaign Setting* page 142) storm the tavern, quickly killing everyone inside it and the adjoining workshop. They plant evidence indicating a gang of desperate drug addicts perpetrated the break-in. Unjo himself easily escapes, and keeps himself occluded from the Oracle and Teasellers by an extract he imbibes daily.

Well-connected adventurers (passive Knowledge (local) check (DC 15)) learn of the break-in through the rumor-mill; otherwise, the group discovers it when they arrive at the tavern.

Development: Proceed to Scene 3.

SCENE 3: COLLECTING DUES (CR 3)

From the outside, the tavern looks much as it did before. The two city watchmen outside are ignorant of the Teasellers' involvement and derisively cajole, "You'll have to get your drugs elsewhere now." If the adventurers manage to sneak in (or bribe the guards with 10 gp each), they can investigate and discover that a half-dozen men broke in, smashed everything, and made off with anything ingestible or inhalable. A DC 25 Survival or Perception check reveals this as an excellent cover-up job (as other valuables weren't taken—like the curios in Unjo's office), but not who the true perpetrators are.

A few blocks away from the tavern, two sickly addicts approach them, asking if they found "anything left" inside

(whether the PCs entered or not). Regardless of what the PCs respond, one of them screams out that they are "liars"; both addicts attack the group. The next round, two more addicts appear in a nearby alley, hanging back and trying to get the adventurers' attention, "We all want the same thing here. *twitch* Let's just work together, and maybe everyone gets a piece of the pie?"

Drug Addicts (2)

XP 400 each

Male human beggars **hp** 13 (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*)

Claiming to have other friends in low places, they just need someone with the means (gesturing to the PCs' weapons) to help them find Unjo. Their network gives a +10 circumstance bonus to finding Unjo.

The raid destroyed "Unjo" as a persona; however, the man lives on in his legitimate identity, Dr. Varisco, and he had already brewed the *soul-flight elixir* before the Teasellers' raid. He is lying low while operating his legal clinic, biding his time until he decides to resurface.

A DC 30 Knowledge (local) or Diplomacy check to gather information reveals a connection between "Unjo" and "Dr. Varisco." Permit each adventurer two rolls per day. Every failed check narrows the search, granting a cumulative +2 bonus to subsequent rolls, but also results in possible combat with more drug addicts.

Dr. Agosten Varisco operates a clinic in the shadow of Lion's Rock, which absorbs the hammering heat of the afternoon sun. Several people sit on a long bench on the building's porch, waiting for their turn to go inside. A sharply dressed man stands authoritatively in the doorway.

Grolio, the doorman (butler), has served Dr. Varsico for almost a decade. He knows nothing about Unjo specifically, only that Dr. Varsico keeps odd hours. A loyal servant, Grolio knows the names and descriptions of potential troublemakers. If Grolio recognizes any of the PCs (+5 Perception, DC 15), he pulls the concealed string of the "panic bell," which rings in Varisco's office.

If the adventurers try to enter, Grolio asks them to sit and wait. The clinic conveniently closes before the PCs can be seen. Grolio offers an apology (a Bluff +9 check), and asks them to return tomorrow. They will have to either force their way in, or arrive in disguise. If the group tries to storm the clinic, Grolio runs inside to alert Varisco.

Grolio

XP 400

Male human butler (as shopkeep) Bluff +9, Sense Motive +9 **hp** 13 (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*)

The hall leads through a vaulted foyer and into a huge office more accurately called a library, or perhaps a chapel, as the light from the stained-glass windows splashes on the spines of numerous medical tomes. Sitting in a high-backed chair near a leather examining table is a thin, middle-aged man in a fine surcoat.

Dr. Varisco stands as the PCs enter. He has likely probed the group's intentions with *seek thoughts* (or failed and assumed the worst), and knows why they are here. He is not interested in handing over the valuable elixir, as he no longer has the means to brew another, nor does he want to be caught dealing drugs again so quickly. The PCs have to talk quickly if they want to avoid combat.

Unjo (aka Dr. Varisco) XP 4.800

Male middle-aged human alchemist (psychonaut*) 10 NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Senses low-light vision, seek thoughts; Perception +13

DEFENSE

CR1

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +4 shield)

hp 88 (10 HD; 10d8+40)

Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5; +2 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities displacement, Improved Iron Will,

protection from arrows (100 damage)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. Melee surgeon's scalpel +10/+5 (1d3-2)

Ranged bomb +10/+5 (5d4+4 fire, or 5d3+4 force, or dispelling) Special Attacks bomb 14/day (DC 19)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 10th)

4th-dragon's breath (10d6 fire, DC 18), lesser astral projection* 3rd-displacement, elemental aura (DC 17), haste, nondetection 2nd-cat's grace, see invisibility, protection from arrows (100 damage), vomit swarm x2

1st–bomber's eye, disguise self, negate aroma, shield, true strike x2

- **Before Combat** Unjo doesn't take any chances. As soon as Grolio notifies him of suspicious visitors, he immediately imbibes a potion of *seek thoughts* (DC 17) to determine their threat level. Once certain these customers intend to enter his office in the next five minutes, Unjo drinks his mutagen, followed by *shield*, *protection from arrows*, and *cat's grace*, in order. He adjusts his coat using his Disguise skill to conceal the mutagen's effect.
- **During Combat** If negotiations turn hostile, Unjo immediately drinks *displacement*. Unjo tries to catch as many PCs as he can with *dragon's breath*, followed by *vomit swarm* to create a swarm of wasps (vomiting a second swarm if necessary). If his *displacement* has at least four rounds remaining, he drinks his *elemental aura* (electricity) extract, followed by *haste* (*haste* is not calculated into his statblock). He uses the cramped confines of his office to his advantage, using his aura to herd opponents into the swarm, while throwing three force bombs per round to keep enemies prone.

As soon as he takes damage, he activates his spontaneous healing discovery.

MORALE

CR 1

Unjo's determination matches the threat he is facing. If his opponents are merely trying to steal from him, he gives up the fight (and his goods) if reduced below 25 hp. If they are threatening to expose his identity, he fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without his mutagen and extracts, Unjo has **AC** 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; **hp** 68; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +8; **Melee** surgeon's scalpel +8/+3 (1d3-2); **Ranged** bomb +8/+3 (5d4+4



CR8

fire or 5d3+4 force); **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Cha** 13; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16; **Skills** Bluff +15, Disguise +15

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 16, **Con** 19, **Int** 18, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11 [notes: racial to **Con**; level 4&8 to **Int**; middle-aged] **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

- **Feats** Brew Potion, Deceitful, Improved **Init**iative, Improved Iron **Will**, Iron **Will**, Point Blank Shot, Throw Anything, Weapon Finesse
- Skills Appraise +17, Bluff +14, Craft (alchemy) +17 (+27 to craft alchemical items), Disguise +14, Heal +13, Knowledge (local) +14, Perception +13
- Languages Aklo, Rue-Thothka, Trade Tongue, Valeran SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +10, identify potions), discoveries (dispelling bomb, fast bombs, force bomb, infusion, spontaneous healing* (50 hp/day)), mutagen (+4 Con/-2 Cha, +2 natural, 100 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning
- **Gear** surgeon's scalpel, alchemist's kit, formula book (contains all prepared extracts, plus *clairaudience/clairvoyance, seek thoughts, plane shift,* and 1d4 additional formulas of each level he can create), keys (to all doors and cabinets in clinic), *potion of seek thoughts* (3)
- **Spontaneous Healing (Ex)*** As a free action once per round, Unjo can heal 5 hit points as if he had the fast healing ability. He can heal 50 hit points per day in this manner. If Unjo falls unconscious because of hit point damage and he still has healing available from this ability, the ability activates automatically each round until he is conscious again or the ability is depleted for the day.

Caught Unprepared Currently operating in his identity as Dr.

Varisco, Unjo has no combat gear on hand, reducing his CR by 1.

* Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic

Treasure: On the desk, there is a gold-plated skull of a baby drake (worth 1,200 gp) and an abacus in which one of the stones is actually a *turquoise sphere ioun stone*. In the drawers are 817 gp, two *potions of comprehend languages*, and the *soul-flight elixir*.

Development: Proceed to Scene 4.

SCENE 4. THE PLOT THICKENS

At the pre-appointed time and place, Rosianna is nowhere to be found.

A hooded figure steps out of the shadows. Her proportions are feminine, but too small to be Rosianna's. She pulls back her hood and reveals herself as the Lady Seletta Cazagoza. "I'm sorry to surprise you like this, but I must tell you the truth, face to face."

Seletta explains the Court Oracle divined Rosianna's involvement, and the nurse now leads her father's hounds to a different group of adventurers at this very moment. Seletta requests the elixir from them, explaining how its power to thwart divinations is the only thing keeping them undiscovered so far, but she will have to hold on to it for the next part of the plan.

Seletta shows signs of stress, and begins revealing her father's plot to marry her off as the fourth wife to Sugrab Azah, in order to secure an alliance with his mother, Yiraz Azah. (See *Midgard Campaign Setting* page 109.) She becomes more emotional, eventually bursting out with, "I don't want to be treasure in some dragon's horde!" Allow the PCs to react or console her before she continues:

Soul-Flight Elixir

Aura moderate necromancy; CL 10th Slot none; Price 5,000; Weight -;

DESCRIPTION

Imbibers of the *soul-flight elixir* find themselves detached from their body and adrift in another plane, much like *lesser astral projection*, with a duration of 1d4+4 days. (Smaller doses yield shorter durations.) However, the plane is not the astral plane, but a shard of the Realm Beyond. The specific region of the Realm Beyond is unique with each brewing of the elixir. There are risks associated with using the elixir, and the soul could potentially suffer damage or imprisonment in the Realm Beyond, which could indefinitely extend the duration.

Carrying a vial of the elixir on one's person confers a limited *nondetection* effect within a 10ft. radius, foiling divination attempts made with respect to actions resulting from using the elixir.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Infusion, lesser astral projection, nondetection; Cost 2,500 gp



KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)

DC 25: You have heard of the elixir. You know it is used to astrally project, and it makes the imbiber appear dead.

DC 30: You know all the details written above, except it sends the imbiber to the Realm Beyond.

DC 35: You know the imbiber enters a fragment of the Realm Beyond.



"My heart beats for my beloved Landris. Yet, he is of house Galantino, from Triolo. As heir of my father's house, it is my duty to my city and my god to war with Landris with all my being." Her face twists to desperation. "Yet, I deny my father and refuse his name. Help me make stage a false death, so that I may live anew across the sea."

Terrified of her father's power and reach, she fears he might use the Court Wizards to replace her personality or destroy her mind if she doesn't convince him of her death.

Seletta spells out what an "alliance" with Yiraz Azah would mean: Her father becomes Satrap Cazagoza, and within a few years, Capleon will be absorbed into the Mharoti Empire. The new satrapy will slowly integrate with its new liege, and Capleon will eventually adopt the harsh enslavement of the dragons. The Cazagoza family will be under the protection of the Sultana, but the common people will suffer immeasurably.

When the PCs are ready, she talks through her plan to stage a public assassination at the upcoming masquerade ball, using one dose of the elixir to appear dead—the other dose will magically hide the PCs after they escape the ball. After her funeral, the adventurers rescue her unconscious body from the crypt, and take her to Triolo. Once there, she assures them Landris can protect both her and the adventurers from Capleon's wrath.

As compensation, she promises them powerful political introductions and networking to further whatever personal goals they may have. She also offers 2000 gp a person, to be withdrawn from her personal accounts in Triolo, when they get her there safely.

Development: Once the PCs agree to the plot, Seletta provides them each with invitations to the Grand Masquerade Ball 10 days from now (the invitations bear the royal seal, but are addressed anonymously, as befits a masquerade invitation). She collects any weapons, spell components, or other equipment the party may wish to sneak into the ball. Seletta explains which of her agents will have the adventurers' items and the elixir, and she tells the group the appropriate code phrases to retrieve the items (summarizing Part III, Scene 2, Spies at the Masquerade). She suggests a PC stab her with a dagger coated in the elixir at the ball, so the assassination will seem real; but, she allows for other, less painful, suggestions if she finds them reasonably believable and deceptive. Afterwards, the PCs will need to escape the Grand Ballroom through the large window over the hedge maze-she promises to arrange for a hay cart to under it to break their fall (summarizing Part III, Scene 3, Escape). She assures them some of the intermediaries at the ball are guard captains intent on ensuring the disruption of the castle's defenses.

Before she departs, she hands a key to the Cazagoza family crypt, and whispers a word of gratitude.

The characters may make such preparations as they desire before proceeding to **Part III**.

Part III: High Society

SCENE 1: PAPER FACES ON PARADE

Before beginning this act, give the players a chance to describe their costumes. If their description is evocative or creative, give them a +2 equipment bonus to all Bluff and Disguise checks made this act.

A stream of exotic, disturbing, comical, and lavishly dressed, masked guests slowly make their way up the steep avenue. Nobles of such stature would typically hire coaches (and surely will when they retire for the night), but now, the tradition of the grand processional demands this opening act, the chance to be seen, the opportunity to let the mystery and wonderment begin before the castle gates are flung open.

The Grand Masquerade Ball is held at the Baron's castle atop the Lion's Rock, a steep, multi-terraced hill overlooking the sea to one side and Capleon to the other (see *Midgard Campaign Setting*, page 141). A broad, steep avenue cuts through the terraces, while numerous pathways lead to other gardens and noble villas. On the way up, the group passes several areas they will soon revisit: indicate these as they pass each one. On the middle terrace, a path branches to the right and leads past a chrysanthemum garden, where in a few hours a hay wagon will await them. If they followed the path around the bend, they would eventually reach the graveyard with Seletta's intended tomb. As they reach the uppermost terrace, a hedge-maze lies a few yards to the right, beneath the large stained-glass window through which they plan to escape.

The party-goers pass through the royal gatehouse. Rows of guards in bright red livery, fashionable black hats, and large halberds flank the processional. Several guards have sniffing dogs, trained to identify the more common components used in spellcasting. All weapons and spell component pouches are confiscated, to be returned via courier the following afternoon. Allow the characters to see someone ahead of them suffer this humiliation before they do, so they won't feel unfairly targeted. Since there are about 20 guards, each making Perception checks, this approximates one guard taking 20: thus it is a DC 23 Stealth check to sneak in any weapons or components. (The vial of *soulflight elixir* supernaturally evades detection, requiring a DC 25.) The guards also collect invitations and check for forgeries.

The room is alive in grinning yellows and spinning reds, queens and priests, geese and ghouls, a curl of lips, a swirl of gowns, and a sea of smiles.

The Masquerade is held in a large ballroom, glorified by two enormous chandeliers which shed flickering gold light upon the assembled. Two thrones stand at the hall's far end, currently unoccupied. Garlands of fruit, feathers, and blown glass decorate the windowless ballroom. Unmasked butlers purposefully swarm among the masked guests, bearing platters of wine, antipasti, and other treats.

Development: Once inside, proceed to Scene 2.

SCENE 2: BEG, BORROW, AND STEAL

Complex rules proscribing who may speak with whom, with which introductions, and under which circumstances, govern the social etiquette of Capleon. Any apparent breach of social protocol brings quick suspicion or ostracism. At a masquerade ball, the rules are both relaxed and more complicated. Each PC has a number of Access Points (AP) which determines with whom he may talk. The starting AP value equals the PC's Status (see *Midgard Campaign Setting*, page 24). If your campaign is not using Status, PCs begin with 8 AP + their Charisma modifier instead.

Asking around at the ball, of course, draws attention. For this reason, each character also starts with a number of Exposure Points (EP); these equal each PC's starting AP. Characters gain 1 EP every time they attempt an interaction with a masquerade guest or spy, or if they otherwise draw attention to themselves. Making a DC 20 Disguise check for his initial costume reduces a PC's starting EP value by half.

Every guest or spy at the masquerade requires a prerequisite total of AP prior to interaction, an interaction skill and DC, and an AP reward for a successful skill check. Attempting to interact with a guest or spy without the prerequisite AP requires a Diplomacy or Knowledge (nobility) check (DC 20), and causes the character to gain 2 additional EP (total 3), even if successful. PCs may perform introductions for another, lending their AP for purposes of meeting prerequisites (but only one PC gains AP/EP for the encounter). By the end of the night, one PC needs 25 AP to dance with Seletta. If you find the PCs are lagging in AP, invent additional NPCs using the provided ones as templates.

SPIES AT THE MASQUERADE

The Feathered Serpent (CN female wizard 2) smuggles in the adventurers' spell components. Her snakelike mask is made from real scales, and her tight green mermaid-cut gown has copious colored feathers erupting from her back and shoulders. **Prereq AP**: 10; **Interact**: Dance with her, discussing how exorbitant the price of wine has become (Perform or Appraise DC 12); **Reward AP**: +3

Various guards (LN warrior 3) can be seen openly carrying the characters' weapons. **Prereq AP**: 0; **Interact**: Make a bet concerning another guest's identity, where the stakes are the guard's weapon versus "a prize racehorse of pure breeding." The guard makes an outrageous claim and loses the bet. (Bluff or Sense Motive DC 10); **Reward AP**: +1. There are many guards, and this is repeatable.

Miah Parisi (N female bard 4), dressed as the Priest-Commander of Mavros, is smuggling the *soul-flight elixir*. Unfortunately for the adventurers, she is keeping to herself, and they are more likely to notice Dominque Glarno first, who has nothing whatsoever to do with the plan. **Prereq AP**: 12; **Interact**: Debate theology with her for an extended period, and then she offers to drink to the character's wisdom, handing over the elixir from her coat. (Sense Motive or Knowledge (Religion) DC 13); **Reward AP**: +3

GUESTS AT THE MASQUERADE

Leucettia di Vanis (CN female aristocrat 5) is dressed as the Queen of Spades. She struts about the hall, trying to catch a guest saying something unpatriotic, where upon she shrieks to the guards, "Off to the dungeons with these traitors!" The guards make an arrest, but let the perpetrator go a few minutes later. **Prereq AP**: 20; **Interact**: Knowledge (history, nobility, or local) DC 15; **Reward AP**: +5

Gastimo Bears (N male aristocrat 1/rogue 1) sports a large tengu mask. He dances with women and pickpockets them (Sleight of Hand +6). He hides some stolen items on different women throughout the night, simply to sow confusion. If caught, he defends himself as a "magpie," suggesting magpies cannot resist shiny objects. **Prereq AP**: 5; **Interact**: Perception or Sleight of Hand DC [opposed]; **Reward AP**: +3

Dominque Glarno (CN male bard 2) is dressed as a priest of Mavros. He knows next to nothing of the doctrines of Mavros, only the crassest of stereotypes heard in taverns, but Dominque manages to pull off the farce convincingly (Disguise +8, Bluff +8). He takes a joker's joy in pretending to be dour and grave. His choice of costume is merely an unfortunate coincidence for the adventurers: he knows nothing of their plot (but he certainly pretends he does!). Prereq AP: 8; Interact: Sense Motive or Knowledge (religion) DC [opposed]; Reward AP: +5

Celesti Parmes (LN female wizard 3) reprises her angel costume, worn to the last masquerade ball. A bookish woman, the intricate pulleys and wires causing her wings to fold and extend fill her with pride. **Prereq AP**: 12; **Interact**: Disable Device or Knowledge (engineering) DC 13; **Reward AP** +3

Baron Cazagoza (LN male aristrocrat 4/spy 6) wears fine-etched minotaur breastplate, has a greataxe strung over his back, and has even has golden faux-minotaur horns attached to the sides of his crown. **Prereq AP**: 30; **Interact**: Knowledge (nobility) DC 25; **Reward AP**: +10

Dr. Agosten Varisco (CE male alchemist 10) makes an appearance dressed as a vampire lord if he is still alive. **Prereq AP:** 6; **Interact:** Craft (Alchemy) DC 20; **Reward AP:** +5

SWITCHING COSTUMES

There are numerous alcoves, back hallways, and vacant rooms upstairs in which to change costumes. As the Baron knows anonymous romantic encounters are an important part of a Masquerade, the guards quarantine a "safe zone" within the castle for couples to wander about; within this secure zone, the guards turn a deaf ear to any shouts not explicitly summoning their assistance. A Diplomacy check (DC 5+2d10) should be sufficient for a guest of the appropriate orientation to be interested in a liaison. After getting a guest alone, a PC might use combat, magic, or further skill checks (Sleight of Hand, Intimidate, etc.) to switch costumes (or pieces thereof) with the guest. Assume the liaison has a +3d4 modifier to any aristocrat class skill. A successful costume switch reduces a PC's EP by half. Failure grants 1-4 EP, depending on the extent of the failure.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

At the mid-point of the evening (e.g., after one PC gets to 10 EP), there is a break from the dancing, and the butlers set out chairs in a large cloverleaf pattern for a grand match of musical chairs. Handle the game as a series of five Initiative checks: starting at DC 10, with +2 DC for every additional round. Participation is mandatory, but PCs can choose not to roll (and intentionally lose) to limit their exposure. Every roll grants +1 EP, and every success grants +2 AP. If a PC wins the final round (at DC 18),



the individual gains +10 EP and +5 AP, and is crowned Jack (or Jacqueline) of the Masquerade.

Seletta presides over the game, but does not participate. As participants lose, they bow or blow kisses to her.

Development: Once a character possesses 25 AP, proceed to **Scene 3**.

SCENE 3. THE FINAL DANCE

Seletta is the shining center of a galaxy of dancers. Social hierarchy proscribes who may dance within each concentric tier orbiting her majesty. The complex steps, moves, and partner substitutes follow deep-seated noble dogmas and costumed playfulness. A PC requires 25 AP to dance with Seletta. Successfully performing the dance requires a DC 15 Perform (dance) check.

Behind Seletta's mask of feathers and foil, her eyes search, probe, and wonder, "Are you the one? Will yours be the last eyes I look upon?" Her eyes, quivering with fear, suddenly blink, splattering tears of fear upon her cheek, becoming nothing more than the glitter adorning her face. These new eyes of conviction lock upon you and declare, "If you are the one, do it now. I will die with my eyes open."

If everyone at the table is comfortable with it, allow the player to take over narration of the assassination act, how it looks, the way Seletta reacts and slumps, the way the crowd revolts in horror, etc. Otherwise, simply describe the attack and the crowd's panicked response. Then it's time for the party to flee.

Afterwards, call for a skill check relevant to the way the player described it (this could be anything: Sleight of Hand, Perform, Knowledge (nobility), etc.). For groups choosing the "glossed over" option, use the most appropriate skill the "assassin" possesses. Divide the result by 5; the entire party gains this value as a circumstance bonus to Initiative and movement-based skill checks for the remainder of the scene, to represent the assembled patronage being caught off-guard. Have the PC assassin roll a Disguise check, using the character's current EP value as a penalty, and write this number down: in this moment, all eyes are now on the killer, and the PC's image soon graces every wanted poster in Capleon. This check establishes the DC for Perception checks to recognize the adventurer when he is not in disguise.

The other characters' status is determined by their current EP (which can continue to change during the next scene):

5 or less EP – Low Profile. Blend in to the crowd. The character is securely "undercover" for now.

- **6-24 EP Shifty.** A few other patrons have their suspicions; they begin whispering to one another and pointing. The character is "undercover" for now; every other round, however, there's a 20% chance the rumor mill turns the character into an "accomplice." Before this happens, making a successful Bluff or Diplomacy check (DC equal to the character's EP) as a full-round action reduces the character's EP by 5.
- **25 or more EP Accomplice.** The character either reacted suspiciously in the moment, or spent too much time hobnobbing with the assassin beforehand. The character is now an "accomplice."

Eșcape

The adventurers need to run. The following section uses the Chase rules from the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*. If an undercover PC aids an exposed adventurer in any way, the undercover PC must immediately make a DC 20 Sleight of Hand or Stealth check as a free action, or gain 5 EP.

Guards ignore undercover characters, assuming them merely other panicked, fleeing guests, which also fill every card below. Guards attack accomplices.

Alternate Eșcapeș and Avoided Chașeș

Some parties may come up with alternate methods for fleeing. If their plan seems acceptable, appropriate, and detailed, then allow them to execute it. A chase isn't necessarily for everyone, and the primary goal here is a successful escape from the crime scene.

CENTER OF THE DANCEFLOOR

Note: Murderer starts here

Moving on to next card takes a turn, but not a skill check **Interference**: 2 guards attack through the crowd with heavy crossbows -1 (1d10/19–20)

THICK OF THE CROWD

Note: All other members of the group (undercover and accomplices both) start here Squeeze through the crowd: Acrobatics DC 12 "I HAVE A WEAPON": Intimidate DC 5

OUT THE BALLROOM DOOR

Fall and slide: Acrobatics vs CMD 15 Unstoppable: Overrun vs CMD 10 (possible attack of opportunity) Interference: 2 guards attack with halberds +4 (1d10+1/×3)

THROUGH THE HALL

Moving on to next card takes a turn, but not a skill check **Interference**: 2 guards attack with heavy crossbows +3 (1d10/19–20)

DOWN THE FOYER

Leap off the balcony: Automatic, but Acrobatics check DC 15 to avoid 1d6 falling damage

Slide down the banister: Acrobatics DC 12

Run down the stairs: Automatic, but 2 guards attack with halberds +4 (1d10+1/x3)

Interference: Guards are trying to corral all the fleeing guests here. Anyone who is still "low-profile" or "shifty" gets searched. If the guards find any weapons or components, the character becomes an accomplice.

OUT THROUGH THE GARDEN WINDOW

Note: Once a route on this card is open, the route no longer requires a skill check

Open the latch: Disable Device DC 15

Unstoppable!: Strength DC 8, then take 2d4 slashing damage **Interference**: 4 guards attack at range with heavy crossbows +1 (1d10/19–20)

HEDGE MAZE

Note: Characters with Woodland Stride or flight automatically succeed

Solve the maze: Intelligence DC 8

Burst through the hedgerows: Deal 20 points of slashing or fire damage

Find weak points in the hedgerows: Knowledge (nature) DC 13

OVER THE TERRACE AND INTO THE STRAW CART

Scramble down the cliff face: Climb DC 15 Leap of faith: Automatic, but Acrobatics check DC 20 to land in the cart; else 2d6 falling damage

BURSTING THE FINAL PHALANX

Ride that horse like you stole it: Ride DC 10 Scatter into the shadows: Stealth DC 15 Interference: 2 guards attack with heavy crossbows +3 (1d10/19-20)

INTO THE SHADOWS OF CAPLEON

Note: The characters have successfully fled Lion's Rock and disappear into Capleon.

Development: Once the group reaches Into the Shadows of Capelon, they proceed to **Part IV, Scene 1**

Part IV Graverobbing

SCENE 1. A FUNERAL (CR 5)

After Seletta's assassination, Capleon erupts into gossip, paranoia, and martial law. The Baron's fury is unquenchable; his focus is weakened by sorrow. Seletta's funeral is invitation-only, and by all accounts an extravagant affair two days after the murder. When the court diviners reveal Seletta's murderer magically occluded, and her soul is "not with Mavros," the Baron's hysteria distills into despotism. With the city watch preoccupied with witch-hunts, traditional security falls by the wayside. To tangibly underscore this, allow the adventurers to witness (and possibly intervene in) a mugging where calls for the guards go unanswered.

CR1

Street Thugs (5)

XP 400 each Male human thugs hp 16 (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*)

- **np** 16 (Painjmaer RPG Gameinastery Guide)
- **Development:** When the party is ready to recover Seletta's body, proceed to **Scene 2**.

SCENE 2. BACK TO LION'S ROCK (CR 5)

The adventurers must return to Lion's Rock to exhume Seletta's body and abscond with it. The noble's cemetery, the Lion's Rest, is on the eastern side of the middle terrace. There are two main routes to reach it: the avenue and paths one would normally take if visiting by day, or starting directly below the cemetery and ascending up the bluff's face and over the wall.

Taking advantage of the nightly patrol routes (a DC 18 Perception or Knowledge (local) check) grants a +4 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks. Carrying Seletta's body imparts a -4 encumbrance penalty to Stealth. All Stealth checks are compared to a single guard's "take 10" Perception check, including a -4 penalty for low light (i.e., DC 9). A guard spotting them is suspicious and difficult to dissuade, requiring a DC 25 Bluff check (+1 circumstance bonus per 2 gp of bribe). If the guard calls for help, other guards arrive in 2d4 rounds.

Guard Officer

XP 800

Male human guard officer hp 34 (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*)

Guards (1d4+1)

XP 400 each

Male human guards hp 19 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)

Note: Award XP both for combat, and for avoiding it

THE DIRECT ROUTE

The adventurers ascend the main avenue, and at the middle terrace, follow the path east, past the chrysanthemum garden, arriving at the only gate to the Lion's Rest.

There is no need to sneak while on the avenue (unless openly carrying a body), as the thoroughfare is open to the public at all hours. Once the adventurers leave the avenue, their presence at night is more suspicious, and guards move to question them.

THE CLIMBING ROUTE

Guards patrol the base of Lion's Rock throughout the night, but do not confront adventurers unless someone pulls out grappling hooks or otherwise acts suspicious.

The bluff face is natural stone (Climb DC 15). Carrying a body imparts a -8 encumbrance penalty to Climb checks. Allow players to invent creative solutions for hoisting the body down the wall to reduce the encumbrance penalty (such solutions require at least a Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 15). Dropping Seletta is obviously not an option.

Development: Once the characters arrive at the mausoleum, proceed to **Scene 3**.

SCENE 3. A FUNERAL UNDONE (CR 7+)

Beyond the stout wrought-iron bars lies the Lion's Rest, the graveyard of Capleon's elite, watched by a statue of a sleeping lion. Indistinct monoliths slumber in the cold mist, as the wind carries the spray of a fountain from another terrace.

Once the adventurers pass beyond the iron fence of Lion's Rest, no guards patrol, and the PCs no longer risk detection (ask for a Stealth check anyway, to maintain tension). The water spray from the fountain grants concealment (20% miss chance) beyond 15 ft.

A low stone building is adorned with flowers and other mementos. Two human-sized angels, each bearing a shield with the heraldry of Cazagoza, flank the building. Ivy grows along the face of the cold stone, framing a wrought-iron gate, beyond which lies the darkened heart of the crypt.

The crypt's iron gate is securely locked (use Seletta's key or Disable Device DC 25). Once inside, a half-flight of steps leads down into the earth. The walls, floor, and ceiling are all smooth granite, engraved with the heraldry of Cazagoza and bas-reliefs of Charun. The confines are cramped: ceilings are only 5 ft. high, and the tombs are spaced only a foot-and-a-half apart. Small hexagonal holes in the ceiling allow ivy to tumble decoratively into the crypt. Emphasize the cramped confines and the obscuring nature of the ivy before asking for the haunt's Perception check.

Weeping Seletta

XP 1,200

N haunt (20-ft. radius around Seletta's tomb) Caster Level 4th

Caster Level 411

Notice Perception DC 10 (to notice a ghostly image of Seletta kneeling over her own tomb, weeping as if lonely and afraid)hp 8; Trigger attempting to interact with the image of Seletta; Reset none

Effect: The image of Seletta looks up suddenly, her wild eyes flooded in tears. "Is someone there?" Her voice is choked with terror, but also conveys a sliver of desperate hope. Her image fades from sight.

Seletta's strange reaction is unsettling, and all witnesses are subject to the effect of a bane spell (save DC 14).

Seletta's tomb is easily identifiable by the wilted bouquets upon its lid. The stone lid is heavy (DC 16 Strength check). Inside lies the beautiful, seemingly-dead body of Seletta. Suddenly, the next haunt manifests:

SOMEONE'S THERE! CR 6

XP 400

CE persistent haunt (all inside the Cazagoza crypt) Caster Level 6th

Notice Perception DC 13 (to hear the sound of heavy footsteps walking around the graveyard, with a slight jangling of metal, as from a guard's key ring)

hp 27; **Trigger** a few rounds after opening Seletta's tomb; **Reset** none

Effect: The sounds continue for a few rounds, presumably prompting the PCs to dig in or lay low. At a cinematically appropriate time, they hear the sound of a key being inserted into metal lock, and an iron gate being opened (regardless of the state of the crypt's gate). The sound of footfalls inside the crypt follows, accompanied by the echoes of jangling metal. Realizing no-one else is inside the crypt, the inexplicable noises unnerve the PCs. The PCs must save vs. the effects of a *castigate* spell (**Will** save DC 15).

This haunt is psychic leakage from the Realm Beyond, depicting Seletta's jailer's actions as he unlocks and enters an extraplanar cell. He is not in the crypt. No visual component exists.

After removing Seletta's body and resealing the tomb, the group exits the crypt, and should begin replacing the flowers and decorations over the crypt-gate. As they do so...

The wind shifts slightly, coming in from the sea. It catches more of the mist from the fountain, soaking the graveyard with even more wet and cold. Soon thereafter, some yards off, you see the blurred silhouette of a stooped man. You think you can make out Seletta's muffled sobs coming from somewhere behind him. He raises a hand, the jangling sound of its draped chains quickly drowned out by a sudden otherworldly



CR 4

CR 3

CR1

barking. A four-legged creature lunges from the mist!

The spray has the effect of *haunting mists* (Will save DC 15) over the whole graveyard. The silhouette is a projection of Seletta's jailer (see **Part V: Scene 3**). He is not fully manifested on the Material Plane, and, therefore, is more of a thematic element than enemy. If any character possesses an ability affecting ghosts (e.g., *magic missile* or a *ghost touch* weapon), it deals damage to the Jailer, and he immediately ceases manifesting. The Jailer and Seletta's crying seem always out of reach and impossible to approach for 3 rounds, after which they fade away. The Hound of Tindalos, however, used *plane shift* and is physically present.

Hound of Tindalos CR 7 XP 3,200

hp 85 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2)

Tactics: The hound relies on its ripping gaze ability while it can; it then resorts to hit-and-run tactics, using the graves' headstones to outmaneuver the party with its angled entry



ability, possibly leading them to believe there are multiple hounds.

- **Morale**: The hound *plane shifts* back to the Realm Beyond if reduced to 30 hp.
- **Development:** To return to Capleon, the adventurers perform **Scene 2** in reverse, now carrying Seletta's limp body, and possibly choosing a different route. Afterwards, proceed to **Part V**.

Part V: Unforeșeen Conșequenceș

SCENE 1 TO TRIOLO

As tensions rise in Capleon, so does the port's security. Everyone is looking for the assassin, and the responsible character is continually subject to Perception and Sense Motive checks. Boarding a ship for Triolo requires tough negotiating (Diplomacy DC 25) or hefty bribes (20 gp per passenger). It is four days' journey across the Middle Sea to Triolo. Two days into the journey, a small fleet of Triolon warships passes them, bound for Capleon.

Observant PCs should become worried Seletta has not yet naturally awoken. Once in Triolo, they follow Seletta's directions to the small shrine of Ceres on the edge of town. An elderly priest, Garamicci Galantino (CG male human cleric of Ceres 10), meets them there. Garamicci knows of Seletta and Landris's relationship, but not the fake assassination plot. Seeing her body in his temple shocks him. While gravely concerned (see **Part V**, **Scene 4**), he focuses on the present crisis of Seletta's refusal to awaken. He requests the adventurers partake of the *soul-flight elixir* (used to protect against divination), and try to help Seletta return to her body. The small dose should allow them a brief effect. He will guard their helpless bodies in the meantime.

Development: Once the characters agree to drink the elixir, proceed to Scene 2.

SCENE 2. INTO REALMS BEYOND

As your lips depart the glass rim, already your head is lolling about and the room's colors begin to blur. You think you hear the priest intoning a blessing, but the sound of his voice is distant. Fog crashes over you like a wave; you see your body carried away in the tide. From whatever vantage point you now stand upon, you see your body pulled further into the surf, and eventually drown, as you too fall into a sea of fog...and fall...fall ...

The adventurers stand near each other, on a level, featureless plain, surrounded by an oppressive supernatural darkness (as per *deeper darkness*). Though they are merely souls psychically projecting on this plane, they behave in every way as if they were physical creatures. Damage, ailment, and death suffered here apply to their real bodies. However, items consumed or destroyed here are not consumed/destroyed in the real world. The PCs have all the equipment they carried at the time of consuming the elixir.

Resting on the ground in their midst is Sanity's Light, the flame flicking away the otherwise impenetrable darkness. Initially, Sanity's Light reveals Seletta is far away. After an hour of following the flame through featureless bleakness, they reach the edge of the Jail:

Out from the featureless darkness, a tall, up-thrust sheet of metal slants toward you. The edges are rusted and razorsharp. Its dull-grey surface is pocked and several brownish rust holes permit vision beyond.

If the adventurers walk around this wall, they find others nearby, each 10-25 ft. long, with their tops obscured by the mist. They are canted at odd angles, none perfectly upright, and are battered, dented, driven with bolts, rent by deep claw-marks, or corroded. This garden of metal becomes more closely arranged as the adventurers move deeper. Then the sheets start to intersect, effectively forming a maze.

The jail is essentially a mapless dungeon-crawl. Sanity's Light guides the adventurers through the maze, revealing Seletta lies roughly a half-hour's walk inside. The jail is dynamically constructed by a random encounter table. For every three minutes of forward progress through the maze, roll on the table below, triggering the next event of a particular type. For example, the first time a "1" is rolled, the "shallow chains" event is triggered. The second time a 1 is rolled, the "moderate chains" event is triggered. If an element is already at "deep", then the effect repeats. (If a particular effect repeats too many times in a row, reroll.)

Development: After 10 total rolls upon this table, Seletta's cell is around the next corner. Sanity's Light provides a mechanism for communicating a sense of forward progress to the group: but don't allow it to become too precise and risk damaging immersion. Proceed to **Scene 3**.

JAIL ELEMENTS

Roll 1d6 to determine which element increases in level:

- 1 Chains
- 2 Chains
- 3 Edges
- 4 Holes
- 5 Force
- 6 Other cells

Halfway through the jail (i.e., after 5 rolls), the party finds a dead human, seemingly strangled to death by chains. In his backpack there are two *potions of lesser restoration*.

CHAINS (CR 5)

Many chains hang from the darkness above, their length impossible to determine, spaced roughly 5-20 feet apart.

Shallow: The chains are visibly bloody

Moderate: The chains are now covered in hooks and barbs, dripping with blood. DC 12 Will or become shaken.

Deep: A skinless dead body hangs upside down wrapped in a barbed chain. Upon inspection/interaction, it springs to life, flailing wildly and attacking.

SANITY'S LIGHT

Aura moderate conjuration and divination; CL 7th Slot none; Price 12,500 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This hooded lantern has a small flame burning at the end of its oil-fed wick. Whenever the lantern is held aloft by someone genuinely seeking another for their own good, the flame inside flickers and bends in the direction of the imperiled other (provided they are on the same plane). The lantern bearer has an intuitive sense of roughly how far it is to the target. Both lantern-bearer and target may ignore the effects of damage or drain to any one mental ability score chosen by the bearer.

The light is dim, but carries a spiritual strength, illuminating dim light out to 30 feet regardless of magical interference (as produced by deeper darkness). All within this light receive a +2 sacred bonus to Will saving throws.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, daylight, locate creature, restoration; Cost 6,250 gp

Revenant

XP 1600

hp 76 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

Hanging from Chains (Ex): This revenant cannot free itself from the chain, but it can swing about by jerking its bodyweight: it can only move up to 15-ft from its starting location. Due to this swinging action, it provokes attacks of opportunity every round, as the pendulum-energy pulls it away after each attack. This reduces its CR by 1.

EDGES (CR 5)

The rough edges of the metal walls are incredibly sharp, dealing 2d6 slashing damage (halved by a successful Reflex saving throw). Anyone cut by these filthy razors must make a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw vs. demon fever, with no incubation period.

- **Shallow**: New passive effect: from now on, each time someone makes a Reflex saving throw or is the target of an attack versus AC or CMD, he could accidentally stumble into the hungry walls while trying to dodge the other blow: a DC 13 Reflex saving throw.
- Moderate: As Shallow, except the Reflex DC is now 16.
- **Deep:** Whichever adventurer has the lowest Perception score (or seems the most distracted) makes a DC 21 Reflex saving throw as the adventurer "bumps into" one of the gruesome edges. It is unclear whether the adventurer stumbled or the wall actually moved in the way.

HOLES

Some of the rust-holes in the metal sheets are openings to other dimensions. An object put into these holes does not exit the other side of the wall, but is lost on another plane. It is a DC 20

Perception check to passively notice "something seems off." Any PC noticing this peculiarity might go slightly mad: as per CL 5 confusion (Will DC 18).

Shallow (CR 1): *Something* worms its way out of one of the extra-dimensional holes. There is no clear consensus on what it looks like (variously describe it as a tentacle, rodent, clawed hand, etc). It attacks with +12 to hit, and deals 1d6 piercing and 1d6 acid damage.

Moderate: (CR 4): Six more *things* erupt, two per round, each targeting a random adventurer.

Deep (CR 6): A swarm of *somethings* erupts: the walls ooze tendrils of gore like a pasta-maker.

Swarms from Beyond(as Leech Swarm) (2)CR 4

XP 1200 each

hp 39 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Metaphysical Absorption (Ex): as the Swarm from Beyond drains blood, it causes the swarm to bloat and change colors as it feeds upon the soul

FORCE

An unexplainable malicious force moves through the jail. **Shallow**: All adventurers discern the faint vibration of

building energy. DC 14 Fortitude or become sickened.

Moderate (CR 4): A terrible screeching noise blasts through the area, as a CL 10 shatter (DC 19 Fortitude).

Deep (CR 4): A random PC feels a powerful force move through his body. A bloody body-print immediately appears behind the character, as if the invisible force had passed through and splattered the character upon the metal wall. At the start of each turn for the next 3 rounds, the character must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or be nauseated and vomit organ tissue, dealing 2d6 damage.

OTHER CELLS

Seletta is not the only prisoner of this psychic hell. Anyone else the adventurers find here has gone completely mad, and is beyond redemption. All cells have: **hardness** 10, **hp** 30, **Break** DC 26, **Disable Device** DC 25.

- **Shallow**: A far-off wailing is heard with a DC 20 Perception check. DC 16 Will or become shaken.
- **Moderate (CR 1)**: The group finds a small cell with iron bars and a locked door. Inside, a man rocks back and forth, curled in a ball. He is difficult to interact with, but with a DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidate check he tells his story of being trapped here for many years. He remembers little of how he came here. He slavishly follows his rescuers wherever they lead him. However, he is completely unhinged and terribly dangerous. At the appropriate moment (likely during the next hazardous encounter), he attacks the group, attempting to kill whomever he can.

Cannibal

XP 400

hp 25 (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*)

- **Equipment**: +1 *anarchic dagger* (a shiv made from the metal of the jail)
- **Deep**: in this cell lies a woman, her back to the door, who at first glance appears to be Seletta. However, she is unrelated to the Cazagoza family, and is already dead, though both of these facts are difficult to discern without entering her cell. Upon examination, her cause of death is obvious: She plucked out her eyeballs and choked to death trying to swallow them. DC 19 Will or become shaken.

SCENE 3: SELETTA AND JAILER (CR 6)

"W-w-who's there?" The voice sounds pathetic, terrified, and more than a little unhinged, a female voice on the verge of mental death.

Seletta crouches in a cruelly tiny cage, serrated rusty metal blades inches above her head and sides, preventing her from either standing or reclining. However, the iron bars and padlock seem straight-forward (see stats under "other cells"). Seletta's memory is frayed, but she remembers wandering the astral plane for some time before being captured by the Jailer. Shortly after her cell is opened, the Jailer arrives:

jangle ... *jangle* ... Your blood runs cold in your veins as you hear the same clinking of chains you heard in the graveyard, only this time, it is only a few feet behind you, and worse, on the same plane of existence. With a morbid chuckle of confidence, the Jailer steps into view, and the chains dangling from the ceiling come to life...

The Jailer (Kyton, Evangelist)

XP 2,400

hp 60 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

- **Tactics:** The Jailer fights defensively, continuously moving away from the party, tempting them to give chase (if they travel more than 60 ft. from Seletta's cell, be sure to roll on the "Jail elements" table). If they realize this plan, he brachiates through the suspended chains, trying to stay above the party, directing his attacks downward. While Seletta is in the cell, he does not target her. However, once she is freed, he tries to capture her, if given an opening.
- **Morale**: If dropped below 20 hit points, the Jailer climbs upward into the mists, relying on his regeneration while pursuing the party, taking shots from above. If they reach the edge of the maze, The Jailer fights to the death to prevent them from escaping.
- Weakness: Sanity's Light is the Jailer's bane. His DR, SR, and regeneration special defenses are suppressed while within its radius, as the flesh beneath his chains smokes. Once this is observed, he uses Dancing Chains to steal the Light (disarm maneuver) and pulls it up into the dark, where it disappears. The round after the Light is gone, the priest Garamicci notices something is wrong, and the PCs can hear his concerned

voice echoing from the darkness: they can follow its sound to find their way out (see below).

Seletta (Noble Scion)

XP 600

CR 1

CR 6

hp 20 (Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide)

Development: Fleeing the Maze

The party can stand and fight the Jailer, or flee. It takes 13 rounds, regardless of speed, visibility, or other factors to get out. Every 4th round (for a total of three), the group encounters a randomly determined "deep" element, as the jail shakes with wrath.

Passing the final metal sheet, they return to the bleak, empty expanse. After another half-hour of traversing the darkness, the background brightens, as the light of the waking world seeps into this plane.

You drown in the light... With a harsh and vital intake of breath, you find yourself lying on the floor of the church, with a terribly stiff back, looking up at the stained-glass windows of Ceres. Your companions are also awakening. Seletta's eyes flicker open.

Proceed to Scene 4.

SCENE 4: FIN

Seletta is mentally wounded, but glad to be in Triolo. Garamicci despairs. He explains that Landris marshaled his fleet for a rash raid on Capleon, one Garamicci believes too small and hastily planned, and doomed to end with Landris's capture and likely execution.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The story could end in tragedy, as Landris has already spent himself against Capleon's walls and failed. Or it could end in joy, as Garamicci managed to cast sending while the PCs were in the jail, and Landris is already on his way back to join Seletta.

In either scenario, the PCs can savor their success: Seletta is saved from her forced betrothal, and Capleon is saved from possible annexation the Mharoti Empire. However, Yiraz Azah surely harbors some bitterness, setting her sights upon Triolo if she learns Seletta lives.

Additionally, every member of the party gains 2 Status, as they gain the favor of both Seletta and the powerful Galantino family in Triolo. They also receive the money Seletta promised them.



CR 2





By Mike Franke

Strange noises heard in the deep. Hushed whispers echo through pitch-black passages. Experienced dwarven miners have gone missing. Something is very wrong in the deep mines beneath Brescia.

"Whispers in the Dark" is a fantasy adventure suitable for four 6th-level PCs.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Brescia, the Iron Redoubt, was, until recently, the home of some of the deepest and most productive iron mines in Midgard. Unfortunately, something is very wrong in the deep places beneath the city. Several weeks ago, the dwarves heard strange metallic scraping noises in the mine's remote areas. A few days later, the first dwarven miner disappeared. When the disappearances continued, the dwarves sent soldiers to the deep mines to supplement the normal guards, but the rate of disappearances only increased, and strange accidents began to occur. Miners were found wandering aimlessly, and when questioned, they had had no recollection of their previous hours. One dwarf walked straight over the edge of a crevice, falling to his death, despite his comrades' shouts. Miners began to return to the surface, claiming that maddening voices could be heard whispering gibberish in the mine's darkest areas. Production in the deep mines then ground to a halt as investigations proved fruitless. The Censors of Melana regretfully ordered the deep mines closed until the situation could be resolved.



Unbeknownst to the Brescian miners, a derro cult of Zmtoy, the demon lord of fungus, has tunneled its way into the deepest levels of the mines. The derros are searching for a rare mineral used in the cultivation of the hallucinogenic basidirond fungus. Once they breached the mines, the derros immediately began kidnapping miners, both for experimentation and to gain information about the location of the rare minerals. Most of the derros' captives are still alive, although almost all have been experimented upon or altered in some way.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Lord Smith Seppo Voller, one of the Canton of Melana's most influential citizens, contacts the PCs and hires them to investigate the deep mines beneath Brescia. His primary concern is the miners who have recently gone missing. Lord Voller wants the characters to find the miners and, if possible, put an end to whatever is causing the disappearances. If the adventurers succeed, Seppo handsomely rewards the PCs for each dwarf they rescue; Melana's Censors also reward them for ending the threat and reopening the mine.

Seppo provides the characters with an escort, who shows them into the mines and to the Great Seal, the locked gate that closes off the dangerous deep mines from the more settled midand upper-level mines. Before the characters reach the Great Seal, however, cries of alarm and the sounds of combat draw them to an area of workshops in the mid-level mines. When the characters arrive, they find a group of fungal-infused dwarven miners tearing apart the workshops. If subdued, the dwarves keep repeating, "Where are they? Do you have some?"

After encountering the altered miners, the characters may continue through the Great Seal, or, if they deduce the fungalinfused dwarves somehow bypassed the Great Seal, they can locate the kobold express lift and enter the mines that way. Either route eventually brings the PCs to the mine's lowest level.

The deep mines are a dangerous environment that is part dwarf-made tunnel and part natural cave system. The characters must search several locations in the mines to locate where the derros have gained entry.

In the Fractures, an area filled with a multitude of cracks and crevices mined for gemstones, a troll the derros drove into the mines attacks the characters. Near the foundry, the characters may attempt to rescue prisoners attached to a runaway rail car, only to discover the "prisoners" are long dead and the railway is a track to disaster. While exploring the cold storage, the characters are confronted by a belligerent group of dwarven warriors intent on solving the mystery "without the help of outsiders." Finally, just as the characters discover an unusual route from the foundry, two death butterfly swarms, set loose by the derros to discourage intruders, attack the PCs.

After the PCs avoid or defeat the swarms, they are drawn to a strange light emanating from a recent hole in the tunnel floor. Unfortunately for the adventurers, the light is from a cavelight moss placed to guard against intruders. Investigation of the natural cave system reveals it to be the home of the derro cult.

In order to navigate the cult's lair, the characters must defeat the derros' fellforged ally, scale a near-vertical tunnel while combating a fleshwarped spider derros wielding hallucinogenic bombs, and confront the sanity-shattering power of a derro fetal savant in a makeshift temple of Zmtoy. If they survive, the adventurers find many of the missing dwarves but learn a derro raiding party has already set out for a storage depot in the city above, where the

STATUS IN MIDGARD

The *Midgard Campaign Setting* delineates an optional rule for status on p. 24. Status is an optional attribute generated at character creation. It can, however, fluctuate based on character actions. Status determines which player character most NPCs will defer to.

dwarves have been storing the derros' precious minerals.

Finally, the characters race to the surface and arrive in time to attempt to interrupt the derro raid. If the characters are successful, they become the heroes of Brescia for rescuing the missing miners and stopping the derro threat.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

At the beginning of this adventure, the PCs should be well-known adventurers in the Canton of Melana. Lord Smith Seppo Voller summons the PCs to a meeting and asks them to investigate the deep mines beneath the city of Brescia to determine and eliminate the cause of the miners' disappearance. They are to rescue the missing miners, as well.

OTHER MOTIVATIONS MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Mustering Captain Roleto Tijinesto (LN male human fighter 5), captain of the dwarven infantry in Brescia, hires the characters to put an end to the trouble in the deep mines so the mines can be reopened.
- The characters are members of the miners' guild in Brescia and decide to look for their missing comrades in the deep mines.
- The characters are members of the Church of Volund or another local temple to which many of the missing miners also belong. The local priest asks able-bodied members to enter the mines and find the missing miners.

INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place in the mines beneath the fortress city of Brescia in the Canton of Melana. The characters enter the mines to find the missing dwarven miners and put a stop to the disappearances. In the mines, the characters discover the root of the problem is a deranged derro fungus cult. The adventure begins with a message from Lord Smith Seppo Voller.



1. A JOB IN BRESCIA

Assume the PCs have gathered in a favorite spot somewhere in Brescia in the Canton of Melana to relax and discuss future opportunities. A soot-covered dwarf wearing the heavy leather apron of a blacksmith makes his way toward your table. You hear the approaching dwarf grumpily mutter something about "not having time to act as an errand boy." When he arrives at your table, he quickly pulls out a crumpled piece of paper, hands it one of you, and then stares angrily at you as he awaits your response.

Although crumpled and sooty from the messenger's hands, the parchment is fine and the writing on it meticulous. The note requests the PCs' presence at the Brescia Ironworks to discuss a matter of great importance to the city. It is signed Seppo Voller. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check identifies Seppo Voller as the de-facto leader of the dwarves of Melana. With a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check, a PC remembers that Seppo Voller has recently spoken with concern about the sudden closure of some of the mines under Brescia. If asked any questions, the dwarven messenger gruffly states that Lord Voller will answer all questions, including those having to do with payment. Assuming the characters agree to the meeting, proceed to "Meeting Lord Smith Seppo Voller."

2. MEETING LORD SMITH SEPPO VOLLER

Whether the characters follow the dwarven messenger to the Ironworks or are familiar with Brescia and find their own way there, when they arrive, they are treated as if they were expected and ushered into a noisy workshop.

Hammers ring on anvils and steam hisses from vats of oil as fine steel is beaten and quenched by numerous dwarven weaponsmiths. Overseeing all of the work is a graying dwarf with an intricately braided beard and sparkling eyes. He waves



you over upon noting your entrance. Although the room is filled with noise, you can easily hear his low, rumbling voice when he speaks, introducing himself as Seppo.

Seppo waives off any usage of honorifics like Lord or Master Smith. Seppo informs the PCs about the situation in the mines and his concern for the safety of the missing dwarves. He wants to hire the characters to investigate the deep mines and, if possible, rescue the missing miners. He also tells the PCs that the Censors of Melana are also offering a reward for securing the deep mines' safe access for work. Seppo personally offers the characters 100 gp each for every rescued miner, and the Censors offer each character either 1500 gp or 2000 gp worth of dwarf-forged weapons and armor if they resolve the situation. If the characters have any further questions, Seppo can relate any of the information in the first paragraph of the Adventure Background above, but does not know anything about the derros or what is actually happening in the mines. If the characters agree, read the following:

"Excellent! Dombur, one of my assistants, will escort you to the deep mines' entrance, where you may begin your investigation. May Volund watch over you and allow you to return our brothers safely to us."

Seppo motions over the same sooty dwarf who brought you to him. Dombur initially tries to ignore Seppo, and then exaggeratedly rolls his eyes, making a great show of putting down his tools before joining the characters. With a gruff "follow me," he heads off down the hall. A DC 13 Perception check allows the exiting PCs to notice that the working dwarves glare at them as they leave. A DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals that they are openly hostile toward the PCs, especially toward any non-dwarves hired to investigate. A PC succeeding on a DC 20 Knowledge (local) knows that a recent negotiation did not go well for the dwarves, with a kobold representative acquiring many concessions from Seppo. For some reason, many dwarves believe a human conspiracy was responsible for the kobolds winning such concessions.

Development: Once the characters and Seppo have finished their discussion, they are escorted to the mines. Proceed to **Part Two: The Mines of Brescia**

Part Two: The Mines Of Brescia

1. THE MAIN ENTRANCE

The PCs' reluctant guide leads them down the street to the mine entrance. Rather than the expected hole in the side of a hill, the mine entrance looks more like a fortress with large, squat stone towers flanking a massive ironbound oak gate.

From a distance it is hard to determine the scale of Brescia's mine entrance. As you approach, however, the true scale of the mine becomes apparent. Large, squat stone towers flank

a massive ironbound oak gate currently standing open. The entrance to the mine is big enough for two horse-drawn carts to simultaneously enter or exit the mine. A small detachment of dwarven soldiers stands ready at the gate, watching your approach.

In front of the gate, two small stone buildings serve as the storage depot for ore waiting to be transported to the primary foundries in the Canton's warrens.

If the characters allow him to do so, their guide does all of the talking. The characters are eventually given wooden pass tokens indicating they have permission to proceed beyond the Great Seal, where they will be given a new set of badges for entry into the now-closed deep mines. If the characters attempt to do the talking, they require a Diplomacy check (DC 15) to persuade the guards they should be allowed entry into the mines.

Development: Dwarven miners wanting to know what their business is in the mines will harass any PCs without pass tokens. A Diplomacy or Bluff check DC 15 allows the characters to evade these questions and continue on to the Great Seal.

2. THE MID-LEVEL MINES (CR 4)

The massive mine entrance tunnel spirals slowly downward, and a multitude of tunnels—big and small periodically branch off in several directions. After many minutes, the tunnel levels off, opening into a large space. A bustling underground courtyard confronts you. Storefronts, smithies, and workshops of all kinds ring the outside of the open space, and tunnels branch off in every direction. Dwarves jostle and haggle everywhere you look. Your guide points down one of the tunnels. "The Great Seal lies down that tunnel."

The characters' guide knows the way well and quickly leads the characters through the bustle of the mid-level mines into the less-occupied passages leading toward the Great Seal. After several minutes of traveling, the PCs hear a sudden commotion:

Angry shouts emerge from a nearby tunnel. Investigation reveals a small cluster of workshops and a puzzling scene: A group of dwarven miners appears to be smashing up the various storefronts. While some are bashing everything in their path, another group stands in the middle of the passage with slack faces and hammers hanging at their sides. As you approach, one miner turns his bright-yellow eyes your way, and asks, "Where are they? Do you have some?"

These are some of the missing miners, but once the characters are close, a DC 12 Perception check reveals something is clearly wrong with the miners: Their eyes are bright yellow, and patches of fungus cover their exposed skin.

Fungal-Infused Dwarven Miners (3) CR 1

XP 400 Male dwarf expert 3 N Medium humanoid (dwarf) Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1 DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor) (+4 dodge vs. giants)

hp 25 (3d8 +12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0; +2 against poison, spells, and spelllike abilities

OFFENSE Speed 20 ft.

Melee warhammer +5(1d8+3/x3)

Special Attacks +1 on attack rolls vs. orcs and goblinoids STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 6

Base Atk +2; CMB +5; CMD 15 (19 vs. bull rush, 19 vs. trip)
Feats Skill Focus (profession: miner), Great Fortitude
Skills Acrobatics +4, Appraise +2 (+4 to appraise non-magic goods containing precious metals or gemstones), Climb +7, Craft (carpentry) +2, Craft (stonemasonry) +2, Knowledge (engineering) +3, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +3, Knowledge (local) +1, Perception +1 (+3 to notice unusual stonework), Profession (miner) +7
Special Quality fungal infused

Special Quality lungar infused

Languages Dwarvish, Trade Tongue Gear leather armor, warhammer

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fungal Infused (Ex) Fugal infused creatures gain a +4 alchemical bonuses to Str and Con and a -6 alchemical penalties to Int and Wis. They also permanently gain the confused condition and become highly subject to a suggestion given at the time of creation per the spell *suggestion*. When acting normally, a fungal-infused creature does its best to carry out the implanted suggestion. A *remove disease* removes the fungal infusion from the body, but a *remove curse* or *lesser restoration* is required to remove the confusion. A *heal* spell removes both.

The Breșcian Mineș

The Brescian Mines are divided into four sections: the upper mines, the mid-level mines, the deep mines, and the kobold tunnels. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) reveals the division of the mines into the upper mines, mid-level mines, and deep mines, but a DC20 Knowledge (local) is required to know the kobold tunnels are the fourth section of the mines. The dwarves tapped out the upper mines long ago; that section now mainly serve as storage areas and lodgings for miners who choose to live cheaply on the premises. The mid-level consists of workshops, foundries, and the majority of the community's currently operating mines. The deep mines are the newest, and they consist of a mixture of dwarven tunnels and natural caverns. The deep mines include many connections to the realms below and cannot be effectively sealed off from below. As a result, the deep mines are a dangerous place. Guards always stand vigil there, ensuring not only the safety of the miners, but that the entire complex is isolated from the rest of the mine by a massive stone gate called the Great Seal. The kobold tunnels run between the other levels, allowing the mine's semi-oppressed kobold workforce to better move supplies and ore away from pedestrian traffic. The dwarves generally ignore the kobold tunnels, but they do sometimes utilize the kobolds' lifts.



- **Tactics:** These dwarves suffer from permanent confusion, and as a result, can't really make tactical decisions. When not confused, the dwarves do their best to locate the rare blue mineral the derros desire.
- **Morale**: The dwarves cannot be turned from their current course of action without being subdued or cured.
- **Treasure:** The dwarves have their armor and weapons and 36 total gp.
- **Development:** If the miners are cured of their confused state but their mental faculties remain affected, they can't communicate what happened to them because of their impaired intellects. The best the characters can learn is something like "little blue people hurt me." It may occur to some players that these infected dwarves have somehow bypassed the Great Seal. Investigation of the area, a Perception check (DC 15) or Survival (track) check (DC 20) leads the characters to **area 4**, the kobold express lift. If the characters capture or subdue any of the infected miners, their dwarven guide takes responsibility for the prisoners, giving the characters directions to the Great Seal (**area 3**) if they are headed there.

3. THE GREAT SEAL

Either Dombur leads the characters to the Great Seal or he gives them directions to its location (if their guide has taken responsibility for infected captives).

The end of the passage is completely blocked by a great 10 ft.-tall granite plug hanging from massive adamantine hinges. A full complement of 20 dwarven warriors stands vigilantly before the gate.

If Dombur is still with them, he speaks with the guards, whereby the turn a great gear wheel, slowly opening the gateway into the deep mines. If the characters are by themselves, their wooden pass tokens eventually convince the dwarves to open the gate, allowing the characters entry. Feel free to play up the guards' suspicious nature, making the players work before the dwarves agree to open the gate.

4. THE KOBOLD EXPRESS LIFT—MID-LEVEL (CR 3)

A small hole in the wall leads to a short, cramped passage. The passage ends in a steeply sloping tunnel dominated by a large, rickety-looking wooden basket attached to a set of iron poles. The poles extend up toward the surface and down into the unknown depths. Off to the side, a tangle of ropes, gears, and leavers can be seen. A single, yellow-eyed kobold stands before the strange contraption. He stares in your direction and flatly asks, "Run lift?"

A DC 10 Perception check notes the kobold's bright-yellow eyes and fungus-covered scales. A DC 15 Heal check confirms the kobold is suffering from the same infection as the miners previously encountered. The party may use this lift to descend to the deep mines or to ascend to the surface. Unfortunately, the lift is meant to be run by a whole crew of kobolds, who are now gone, hiding in the kobold tunnels until the derros are gone. The derros captured the unfortunate kobold in the lift, and, after a little bit of experimentation, pressed him into their service. Without the full crew, the lift will descend out of control and crash into the bottom of the shaft at a high rate of speed. The insane derros consider this great fun, and so have the kobold gather more victims. This is not technically a trap, but rogues or characters with Knowledge (engineering) may notice the problem.

Out-of-Control Lift Trap (CR 3)

- Type mechanical; Perception or Knowledge (engineering) DC 20; Disable Device DC 20 Trigger kobold pulling lever; Reset manual
- Effect Crashing lift cart (all individuals in the lift cart up to 7 medium creatures), 4d6 damage (DC 20 reflex save for half damage)

With a great creaking and rather ominous moaning, the lift starts to slowly descend into the depths. Soon, however, you notice the lift is gradually increasing in speed as it descends and shows no sign of slowing down. Within moments, the lift is rapidly hurtling toward the shaft's bottom.

CR 1/4

Kobold

XP 100

hp 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*) **SQ** fungal infused

- **Tactics:** This kobold is a little more stable than most of the fungal-infused in the mines. Perhaps the kobolds' lawful nature makes them more resistant to the process. This kobold is obsessed with running the lift and refuses to do anything else.
- **Morale**: The kobold's obsession with running the lift keeps him from running away from his precious machinery.
- Treasure: None. The derros have taken everything but his clothing.
- **Development:** The lift crashes into **area 9**, where the heroes can debark and explore. Although the lift won't suffer much more abuse, a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check discerns a return trip remains possible.

5. THE FRACTURES (CR 5)

Ahead of you, the tunnel opens into a large cavern whose floor is crisscrossed by numerous cracks and crevices, some only a few inches wide, others over 10 ft. across. The dwarves have placed a number of wooden ladders and planks across the larger crevices. Ropes attached to sturdy anchor points descend into the larger cracks

A successful DC 10 Profession (miner) check or DC 15 Craft (gems or jewelry) check allows a character to note this terrain is often where precious or semi-precious stones are mined. As the characters investigate the area, they come to the attention of a troll which has found its way up from the depths through the largest crevice and now rests on a ledge 10 ft. beneath the lip of the crevice and underneath the plank bridge. The troll waits for a character to cross the plank before rising up to attempt to knock the character off and into the crevice. Anyone knocked into the



crevice falls either 30 ft., 60 ft., or 90 ft., taking appropriate falling damage (3d6, 6d6, or 9d6) before coming to rest on a ledge. After every 30 ft., the character may attempt a DC 15 Reflex save to halt the fall. A fallen character may take advantage of the dwarven ropes to climb back to the cavern's surface.

When you are about halfway across the plank bridge, you hear a sudden monstrous roar and a large, horribly deformed humanoid figure rises up from beneath the plank. It swings its twisted, overly muscled arms in an attempt to knock you into the crevice.

Troll XP 1,600

hp 63; **AC** 16; replace Skill Focus (Perception) with Improved Bull Rush (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Tactics: The troll uses its Bull Rush to knock anyone on the plank into the crevice. It then takes a full-round action to climb out of the crevice to continue attacking.

- **Morale**: Lost and starving, the troll sees the characters as a perfect meal. It fights to the death.
- **Treasure:** The troll is very proud of his collection of polished skulls, which can be found on the ledge below the plank with a DC 15 Perception check. He also has 380 gp and is wearing a *ring of protection* +1.

6. THE FOUNDRY (CR 4+)

Forges and smithies, now dormant, dominate the corners of this large room. Several sets of iron cart tracks begin in the center of the room and lead into various tunnels. On one of the tracks, a cart occupied by two bound and gagged dwarves is rolling quickly toward a tunnel exit.

Unfortunately for the characters, this is a trap. The dwarves are already dead, having died during the fungal-infusion process. If inspected, they show the characteristic yellow eyes and fungus patches the characters should now recognize. The cart takes 1 round to travel 75 ft. down the track, where the derro have engineered the cart's derailment by damaging the tracks. The derailment then triggers a trap by knocking out the tunnel's supports. As the characters arrive to investigate the bodies, the collapse begins.

Partial Ceiling Collapse

CR4

CR 5

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device none Trigger mine cart crash; Reset never; Onset 1 round after crash

Effect Attack +15 melee (6d6); multiple targets (within 15 ft. of the crashed cart)

Alternatively, this encounter could be run as a chase using the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide's* chase rules. The characters encounter—and must successfully navigate—1d4 +1 of the following chase elements before they catch up with and stop the out-of-control mine car and investigate the dwarven bodies.

1. Pointy Stalagmites. Carefully avoid with an Acrobatics check (DC 10) or Reflex save (DC 25).

2. Thick Webbing. Escape with an Escape Artist check (DC

25), rush on through with a Strength check (DC 15), or avoid with a Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (DC 15).

3. Mushroom Spoor Cloud. Hold your breath, Fortitude save (DC 25), or avoid with your superior dungeon knowledge, Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (DC 15).

- **4. Rubble Pile.** Leap over with an Acrobatics check (DC 20) or climb over with a Climb check (DC 10).
- **5. Wide Crevice.** Find a way around, Survival check (DC 10), or jump, Acrobatics check (DC 15).
- Development: A DC 25 Perception check notes a small cloaked individual ducking into a tunnel on the far side of the room at the same time the cart starts rolling. If pursued, the derro who set the trap in motion utilizes his darkness ability to cover his escape and ducks into a nearby tunnel, which leads into the larger mines. He then hides in a concealed side tunnel. A DC 20 Perception check locates the concealed passage, but only after the darkness has expired or has been dispelled. Medium characters must squeeze to get into the small tunnel, where they quickly find numerous branching passages. If tenacious characters insist on tracking or otherwise following the derro, describe the long, tedious process of crawling through tunnel after tunnel until exiting a chamber beyond area 8 and down the chimney to area 10. If captured, the derro does not reveal anything about the cult's plans. Instead, he just laughs maniacally and occasionally screams for no reason. He additionally rambles about mushroom farms and butterflies in Undercommon, as well. Ideally, he should escape and join his comrades in area 13, which makes that a tougher fight.

If the characters ignore or miss this creature, they can later find the small, rough passage leading to **area 8**. A separate, well-cut passage leads to **area 7**, and a service corridor allows access to **area 9**.

Derro CR 3

XP 800 hp 25 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

7. COLD STORAGE (CR 5)

This cavern connects with both the kobold lift (area 9) and the Foundry (**area 6**).

This small cave is quite a bit colder than the surrounding areas. Large blocks of ice line the walls of the cave and crates are stacked in the middle of the area. Several well-armed dwarves are searching about the area and rooting through the crates.

Unless the PCs are stealthy, the dwarves note their presence and turn to stare at the PCs. These dwarves have decided they will solve the mystery of the missing miners by themselves and are not happy that outsiders have been asked to do a dwarf's job. Not to mention, they want what they are sure will be the large reward for solving the problem and reopening the mines. The dwarves begin the encounter as hostile and only a Diplomacy check (DC 24) avoids conflict.

Belligerent Dwarven Mine Guards (4) CR 1 XP 400 each

Male dwarf warrior 3

Derros are not widely known in Midgard. Characters can discern the following information with a Knowledge (dungeoneering) check:

DC Benefit

- 13 Derros are pale bluish-skinned dwarf-like creatures. They are degenerate and evil subterranean creatures with a fascination for molds, fungi, and alchemy.
- 18 Derros have afflicted themselves with a form of racial madness through their incessant alchemical experimentation and interaction with creatures from the realms beyond. As a result, they suffer from sadism and delusions of grandeur. Derros resist magics which attack an individual's willpower.
- 23 Derros are natural spontaneous casters. They are also highly adept at stealth and subterfuge, and they have a rogue-like ability to take advantage of unaware or distracted foes. Derros' experimentation with unnatural substances has made them adept with poisons, and they suffer no risk of exposing themselves to the toxins they employ.
- 28 Derros are resistant to magic but vulnerable to long-term exposure to sunlight. It is possible for derros to be cured of their madness, but only through the use of powerful magics.

N Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor) (+4 dodge vs. giants)

hp 27 (3d10 +6)

Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1; +2 against poison, spells, and spelllike abilities

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee greataxe +5(1d12+1/x3)

Special Attacks +1 on attack rolls vs. orcs and goblinoids STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9
Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 14 (18 vs. bull rush, 18 vs. trip)
Feats Weapon Focus (greataxe), Great Fortitude
Skills Climb +5, Craft (stonemasonry) +4, Intimidate +4,

Profession (miner) +5

Languages Dwarvish, Trade Tongue Gear chainmail, greataxe

Tactics: These dwarves don't want any outside interference in the mines, but they also don't want to kill the characters, just

rough them up and send them on their way. If the characters appear seriously wounded, the dwarves strike to subdue, not kill.

- **Morale**: The dwarves are highly motivated, but they won't fight to the death. If the characters start hacking them down and two fall, the remainder quickly surrender.
- **Treasure:** The dwarven warriors have their gear, a total of 85 gp, two flasks of alchemists' fire, and two flasks of holy water.

8. PRETTY BUTTERFLIES (TIMED ENCOUNTER) (CR 5)

This encounter occurs as the characters discover the entrance to the derro caves, **area 10**, through the new tunnel into the Foundry, **area 6**. The derros unleashed these two death butterfly swarms into the passageway to discourage investigators. The swarms won't drop down the chimney into **area 10**, and so characters who quickly climb down can escape them. This encounter can be used to add tension and an atmosphere of danger to the deep mines. A DC 15 Perception check is necessary to first notice the distant droning of the swarms; however, this check lowers to (DC 10) just before the swarms fly from the walls and attack.

What started out as a faint, distant humming or droning has suddenly become much louder, as if a strong breeze was blowing through a forest of trees. Moments later, a large cloud of butterflies swarms into the area, heading straight for you.

CR 3

Death Butterfly Swarms (2)

XP 800 each

Midgard Bestiary for *Pathfinder RPG* p. 30 CE Diminutive vermin (swarm)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 size) hp 40 (9d8) Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +4 Defensive Abilities swarm traits; Immune weapon damage Weakness swarm traits OFFENSE Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee swarm (2d6 plus poison)

Special Attacks distraction (DC 14), poison, weight of wings DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str 1, Dex 13, Con 10, Int -, Wis 12, Cha 15

Base Atk +6; CMB -; CMD -

Skills Fly +13, Perception +9; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception **SQ** swarm traits, vermin traits

ECOLOGY

Environment forests, mountains, temperate hills, and warm marshes

Organization solitary, pair, or cleansing (3–5 swarms) **Treasure** none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Swarm—injury; *save* Fort DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1 Con; *cure* 1 save. This poison also affects

undead creatures, dealing 1 Cha damage/round.

Weight of Wings (Su) Creatures affected by the swarm's distraction effect must also make a DC 16 Will save (Cha-based) or suffer from the effects of hold person. This paralysis only lasts as long as the victim is within the swarm.

Tactics: The swarms head straight for the nearest characters, whereupon they paralyze them and then feed.

Morale: As unintelligent vermin, the swarms fight to the death.

9. THE KOBOLD EXPRESS LIFT—DEEP LEVEL (CR 3)

The entrance to the kobold express lift is small and concealed. A DC 20 Perception check is needed to notice the entrance.

A small hole in the wall leads to a short, cramped passage that ends in a steeply sloping tunnel. A large rickety-looking wooden basket attached to a set of iron poles extending up toward the surface dominates this area. Off to the side, rest a tangle of ropes, gears, and leavers.

A rogue or other character utilizing Disable Device (DC 20), or a character succeeding on a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check, can study the lift to discern how it operates. A successful check also tells the character the lift is designed to operate with a crew of 5 or more, else the ride is likely to be a bumpy, dangerous one. Obviously, characters who already descended the lift know this.

Out-of-Control Lift Trap

CR 3

- Type mechanical; Perception or Knowledge (engineering) DC 20; Disable Device DC 20 Trigger manual; Reset manual
- **Effect** Crashing lift cart (all individuals in the lift cart up to 7 medium creatures), 4d6 damage (DC 20 reflex save for half damage)
- **Development:** Riding the lift to the surface—assuming the characters survive the crash at the top— is the fastest way up. The lift exits in an area of the kobold tunnels near the surface, where a group of very surprised kobolds can direct the characters to the streets above and the Ironworks storage depot.

10. A LIGHT IN THE DARK (CR 6)

In the tunnel ahead, the faintest of lights can be seen coming through a narrow crack in the wall. You have to hold your breath, but you should be able to squeeze through.

This is the entrance to the derros' caves. The crack is small and size Medium creatures have to squeeze through the 10 ft.-deep crack before they reach the larger cave beyond. Once through the crack, they find an apparently empty Medium-sized cave illuminated by the pale glow of bioluminescent moss. A tunnel exits the opposite side of the cave.

CAVELIGHT MOSS

CR 6

XP 2,400 hp 76 (*Midgard Bestiary* for *Pathfinder RPG* p. 19) **Tactics:** The moss can reach most of the cave from its position at the center of the ceiling. It waits until as many targets as possible are within range before attacking.

Morale: The moss is basically unintelligent and fights to the death.

Treasure: The moss has no treasure, as the derros are quick to clean up any victims' remains.

11. EVIL ARMOR (CR 5)

A twisting passageway leads to a small chamber. A bed roll, a small table and chair, and a pair of intricate suits of brass armor in the corner, framing the passage on the opposite side of the room, indicate someone occupies this room.

This room's setup is, of course, a sham. One suit of armor in the corner is actually a fellforged, a creature created when the attempt to create a gearforged goes horribly wrong; a wraith occupies its clockwork body instead of a soul. The fellforged does not sleep and has no need for the table or chair—those are just set dressing to throw off intruders. The derros have ordered the fellforged to take out any arcane or divine casters who have penetrated the complex. The fellforged waits until a likely target enters the room before suddenly moving to attack.

CR 5

Fellforged

XP 1,600

hp 53 (*Midgard Bestiary* for *Pathfinder RPG* p. 48)

- **Tactics:** The fellforged attacks any obvious arcane or divine spellcaster entering the room. It then focuses its attacks on one such individual. After it kills a caster, the fellforged attempts to retreat to join the derro.
- **Morale**: The fellforged retreats and joins the derros if brought below 15 hp.
- **Treasure:** A DC 20 Perception check DC 20 locates an intricate clockwork toy beneath the table worth 400 gp to the right collector.

12. EMPTY CAVE

This small cave appears to be empty.

The cave is indeed empty and has no other exits. It was a completely mined some time ago.

13. AMBUSH (CR 6)

The short passage ends in a wide steeply sloping tube stretching up and away from you, beyond the limits of your vision. The sides are rough and should be easy to climb.

This 30 ft.-wide tube angles sharply up for about 120 ft. About 90 ft. up, there are two support columns added to fortify the structure, one on either side. Hidden beyond the range of most vision and lights sources, two fleshwarped derros with spider legs hide on the upper side of the tube at about the 80-ft. point. Their spider legs allow them to easily cling to the sides and even the tube's ceiling. They wait until they are discovered or until the characters are directly below them before attacking. Safely ascending the tube requires a DC 10 Climb check.



CR 4

Fleshwarped Derros (2)

XP 1,200 each

CE Small humanoid (fleshwarped derro) Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +4 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 19 (3d8+6)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

SR 14

Weaknesses vulnerability to sunlight

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft. Melee short sword $\pm 6 (1 d4/1)$

Melee short sword +6 (1d4/19-20/x2) or aklys +6 (1d6/x2) Ranged repeating light crossbow +6 (1d6/19–20 plus poison) or spore bomb +7 (see sidebar) Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

At will—darkness, ghost sound (DC 11)

1/day—daze (DC 11), sound burst (DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str 11, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 10,Wis 5, Cha 12 Base Atk +2; CMB +1; CMD 15 Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse Skills Perception +0, Stealth +15 Languages Aklo, Undercommon SQ madness, poison use

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Madness (Ex) Derros use their Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of their Wisdom modifier, and are immune to insanity and confusion effects. Only a miracle or wish can remove a derro's madness. If this occurs, the derro gains 6 points of Wisdom and loses 6 points of Charisma.

- **Poison Use (Ex)** Derros are not at risk of poisoning themselves when handling poison. They use basidirond poison on their crossbow bolts, and generally carry 10 pre-poisoned bolts at all times.
- **Tactics:** The derros hide on the tube's ceiling, behind the columns, and wait for the characters to approach. They then utilize their spore bombs to confuse as many characters as possible before entering melee. When in close combat, the derros use their aklyses to attempt trip attacks.
- **Morale**: These derro are more afraid of the fetal savant in area 14 than the characters, and they fight to the death.
- **Treasure:** In addition to their equipment, the derros have 350 gp and a small ruby statue of their demon lord Zmtoy (worth 430 gp) in a niche at the top of the left column. The niche requires a DC 25 Perception check to locate.
- **Development:** It is highly likely a character confused by a derro's spore bomb or poison may fall down the tube. Because the tube is steep but not vertical, a falling character takes 1d3 damage per 10 ft. If the derro from area 6 escaped, he is here hiding, waiting to join the attack on the PCs.

14. CAGED BABY (CR 8)

At the top of the incline a large space opens in front of you. Purple drapes have been roughly attached to the walls, and mushrooms sprout from every crack and crevice. In the middle of the cave, about 50 ft. ahead, is a roughhewn altar guarded by three large bugbears. On the altar is a small iron cage in which something small insanely giggles and titters.

The bugbear guards of the fetal savant have had their ears removed and are deaf. They are thus not affected by the savant's insane giggling. They attempt to keep between the savant and the characters at all times. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check enables the identification of the altar and objects found in the room as belonging to the worship of Zmtoy, an obscure demon lord of fungus worshipped in the lightless depths beneath Midgard.

Bugbears (3)

XP 600 each

hp 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Derro Fetal Savant

CR 7

CR 2

XP 3,200

hp 7 (Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder RPG)

- **Tactics:** The fetal savant begins to babble as soon as the characters appear at the room's entrance. On the second round, the fetal savant attempts a soul exchange with the toughest-looking fighter type. If unsuccessful, the savant attempts to exchange places with a different character every round until it runs out of targets. Once successful, it uses the possessed character to attack the other characters, starting with obvious spellcasters.
- **Morale**: The bugbears fight to the death to protect the savant, and the savant has no choice but to fight to the death, as it can't move on its own.
- **Treasure:** In addition to the bugbears' equipment, this room contains a small pouch of gemstones on the altar worth 1400 gp, a block or rare fungal incense worth 300 gp, and a +1 *dagger* with a handle made from a dwarven leg bone.

15. FUNGUS LABORATORY

When you enter this small cave, you see that bloodstained manacles line the walls. A low wooden table covered in odd skin bags, clay pots, glass tubes, and metal syringes sits in a corner to your right. In the room's center rests a large iron cauldron. Despite no apparent heat source, a sickly grey sludge in the cauldron bubbles and gives off a noxious smoke, filling the air with acrid fumes.

Spending just a single round in this cave requires a character to make a DC 12 Fortitude save or become nauseated for as long as he remains within the smoke. This cave is where the fungal-infusion process takes place. A DC 15 Perception check allows a character to notice there is something in the cauldron. Careful investigation of the cauldron reveals the remains of a dwarf within the grey sludge. A DC 20 Knowledge (alchemy) check can identify most of the implements in the cave as tools for mixing and injecting. The skin bags are filled with the fungal stew from the cauldron and attached to the syringes to allow for injection into prisoners. A DC 10 Perception check allows one to note the leftover blood and bits of skin on the manacles indicate prisoners were recently hung here.

Treasure: The cauldron is magic and quite valuable (2000 gp). It heats any liquid placed within until it boils whenever the derro

word for fire is spoken. It stops heating when the derro word for ice is spoken. It also weights roughly 1000 lbs and would be quite difficult to move.

Development: Any character failing a Fortitude save from the smoke or who comes into contact with the liquid in the cauldron (say from removing the dwarf or attempting to empty and remove the cauldron) begins to sprout fungus on exposed areas of skin within 1d3 rounds. This is harmless and withers and falls off within 10 minutes. However, the PCs don't necessarily know that (a DC 15 Heal check would reveal it), and it's a good way to scare the players!

16. PRISON

This long, narrow cave is filled with the dirty bodies of dwarves shackled to the walls. Some dwarves call for help, but most simply stare blankly ahead or sag limply in their chains.

This is where the derros have been keeping and interrogating their captives. Most of the prisoners show the signs of fungal infusion. Some have just been outright tortured. Twelve dwarves are still alive, but only six are conscious and coherent. One babbles insanely, "The minerals are in the depot," over and over again.

Development: The coherent dwarves are extremely happy to be rescued; they warn the PCs that a derro war party recently left for the city above, having learned the rare minerals they seek are being stored in a storage depot near the Ironworks. The dwarves tell the characters they will help get the other



shackled dwarves out of the deep mines and beg the characters to help the city above. The characters must race for the Storage Galleries they passed as they entered the mines.

17. ASSAULT ON THE STORAGE DEPOT (CR 9)

When you arrive, the area near the Ironworks is in chaos. Dwarves stumble about in confusion, and smoke issues from the storage depot's destroyed doors. Cries and the clang of combat can be heard from within the building.

By the time the characters reach the storage depot, the defenders have been subdued or stumble about in confusion. The characters must stop the derro assault!

Creatures: The fleshwarped derros in this encounter have a breath weapon.

Derros (5)

XP 800 each

hp 25; Replace medium spider venom with Basidirond Poison and spore bombs from the sidebar; (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Fleshwarped Derros (2)CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 19 (p. 128)

Tactics: Two derros begin combat with spore bombs, while the remainder fire poison crossbow bolts. The fleshwarped

derros begin combat with their breath weapons. The derros then engage in melee, while the fleshwarped continue to use their breath weapons until depleted.

- **Morale**: The derros are totally focused on the recovery of their precious minerals. If they see an opening, they attempt to escape back to the mines—but not without their minerals.
- **Treasure:** In addition to the derros' equipment, they have 5 doses of basidirond poison worth 100 gp each, 325 gp, an enchanted ivory flute (which plays strange off-key melodies on command) worth 800 gp, and 3 bags of strange blue crystals.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After the battle is over, the missing miners emerge from the mines and tell their tale, including how the derro were obsessed with the strange blue crystals that they intended to use to grow a huge garden of basidirond fungus. With the defeat of the derro and the rescue of the missing miners, the characters are the heroes of Brescia and indeed of all the Canton of Melana. The leaders of Brescia insist on having a public ceremony honoring the characters during which they are given their promised rewards as well as one masterwork mithral weapon of each character's choice. These weapons are unique dwarf-forged works of art that identify the wielder as a hero of the Canton of Melana. If you are using the optional Status system from the *Midgard Campaign Setting*, openly bearing these weapons gives the character a +2 to his or her Status with dwarves and in the Canton of Melana and a +1 bonus elsewhere.

DERRO HALLUCINOGENIC WEAPONS AND SUBSTANCES

CR 3

The derro cultists of Zmtoy, the demon lord of fungus, have experimented extensively with the hallucinogenic properties of the spores of a dangerous fungal creature, the basidirond fungus. They've created a fungal poison easily applied to ammunition or made into primitive alchemical bombs.

BASIDIROND POISON

Type injury; Fort DC 15; **Onset** immediate **Frequency** 1/rd. for 4 rounds

Effect affected creature gains the confused condition; **Cure** 1 save; Cost 100 gp

BASIDIROND SPORE BOMB

Basidirond spore bombs explode upon striking a creature or solid surface, creating a small cloud of basidirond spores. Spore bombs can be thrown as splash weapons. Treat this attack as a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 ft. A creature struck and any adjacent creatures must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or gain the confused condition for 1d4 rounds.

Alternatively, you can apply the following instead of using the confused condition for victims of basidirond poison and spore bombs.

BASIDIROND HALLUCINATION

Rather than confusing an opponent, you can randomly determine hallucinations for each affected creature.

1d8 Hallucination

1	Individual believes he is in a swamp and strips off gear and armor to avoid sinking.
2	Individual believes he is being attacked by a swarm of spiders. He attacks the floor and surrounding area.
3	Individual believes a held item has turned into a viper; he drops the item and retreats away from it.
4	Suffocation—the individual believes he is suffocating and gasps for air and clutches at his throat.
5	Individual believes he has shrunk to 1/10 normal size. He begins yelling for help.
6	Individual believes his associates have contracted a disease. He remains at least 10 ft. away from them at all times.
7	Individual believes he is melting, and grasps self in attempt to hold himself together.
8	Individual believes his back is covered with leeches. He tears off armor, clothing, etc., from his back to get at the creatures.





By Richard Pett

"The Wedding Party approaches... Bells toll as the groom nears, but the banners in town are black. The bride sobs as the groom drags himself closer..."

"Sorrow" is a 7th-level adventure set in Twine, an insignificant crumbling township on the edges of the Scolwingmire, which lies on the Runnel River, in a desolate corner of the Principality of Morgau. The adventure can be set in other regions of Midgard having nearby fey neighbors. Simply adjust the names to fit your chosen location.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Lord Mallow's beloved daughter Celandine is due, by ancient right, to be married to the deathless dark fey neighbor, the King in Rags.

The wedding day approaches.

The King in Rags comes to take his bride, his host gathering behind, eager, hungry.

But Lord Mallow is determined to end this tradition...a tradition that began when the old Lord Mallow, the foolhardy Dunnock Mallow, faced a determined assault by his neighbor, Baron Storn, who besieged the town for six months. As supplies ran out, and everything from saddles to shoe leather was eaten, Dunnock risked all by making a pact with his distant fey neighbor, the King in Rags, whose fey kingdom was linked to Dunnock's by a hidden magical path known only to the fey. The King in Rags obliged Dunnock's request to decimate Storn, his friends, his family, his kingdom, and even his memory, in return for Dunnock's firstborn daughter, the impossibly beautiful Foxglove— and his sons' firstborn daughters upon reaching their sixteenth birthday.

Desperate, Lord Dunnock Mallow, disregarding the warning ringing in his ears that the curse following a broken oath to the King in Rags would make Storn's erasure and all about him seem like a wasp sting compared to the King in Rags' vengeance, agreed. SORROW

Since that day, on the coming of age of every Lord's first daughter, the black rose arrives and the wedding occurs soon afterwards.

The brides are never seen again....

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs are invited to the wedding, with possible hooks detailed below. As guests, the PCs participate in the wedding feast with the strange fey. These odd social encounters take up the first half of the adventure, with Lord Mallow richly rewarding the victorious for success against his unwanted guests.

Soon, the wedding day arrives, and the hall is packed. The PCs are squeezed into a corner which, unbeknownst to them, is faced with bars made of cold iron blessed by a bishop long ago.

As the wedding reaches its climax, the King in Rags is struck by four iron crossbow bolts coated with poison; Lord Mallow's wedding gift.

But the bolts do not kill the fey king; they merely anger him.

As he screams his fury and swears to bed the princess within the hour, vines and thorns overtake those residing in the hall, and the hall transforms into part of the fey King's kingdom.

But the PCs are protected, hidden from his wrath by blessed iron.

As the hosts slowly become one with the thorns and briars engulfing them, the fey depart, leaving the PCs as the only creatures in this strange twilight world who can stop the consummation.

The PCs face a nightmare journey through a dark fey forest enraged by betrayal and hungry for their innocence. They encounter twisted feasts; broken fey; and dark, lustful anger given flesh, before facing the King in Rags in his bedchamber.

Princes and Princesses

Not all groups will want to pursue the very fairy tale plot of rescuing the lord's daughter from the King in Rags. There are alternatives to this option, changing the gender of the lord's daughter from female to male. The King in Rags may be a quintessential faerie trickster, masquerading as a male, and becomes a female when she removes her cloak. In this case, she seems to be claiming the boy as her hostage, but intends to wed him in secret. The wedding ceremony becomes a "hostage transfer" ceremony dressed in pomp and circumstance.

You may choose to change the lord's daughter into a son, and keep the King in Rags as a male faerie. In this case, the King may choose to either "adopt" the lord's son, turning him into a warped protégé who will eventually replace the King in Rags and merge the two realms, not unlike Modred in the King Arthur saga, or he may be an immortal creature who does not care which gender he takes as a lover, intent on brutally consuming the boy's vitality until he becomes a creature similar to his lost sister in the bog.

In any case, do not feel that "rescuing the princess before she's ravished" is your only option with the great story presented in Sorrow. Consider these options and tailor your plotline to best fit your group. Can the PCs separate the king from his coat of rags and strike a killing blow? And will the princess return from her ordeal unscathed or carrying his child?

The future of many lies in the hands of the few....

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters begin this adventure when they receive the invitation in the Appendix, which GMs should modify to suit.

Three options are given here to introduce the wedding. Use the one that works best, or create one of your own.

- The PCs have done Lord Mallow or his township a service. The service can either be directly to Lord Mallow, or for an intermediary of your choosing. This intermediary does not have to live at Twine, nor have ever mentioned it; perhaps she was born there or has kin there. She has an invitation, and wants to share the good fortune with the PCs.
- The PCs are emissaries of someone else. The PCs' church, guild, or their betters send the PCs as emissaries. Again, the invite is second hand.
- The PCs receive an invite from someone attending Lord Mallow's court. This NPC can be someone who has heard of the PCs and admires them, or who has heard a tale about them and wishes to meet them. This NPC has no tough or exceptionally gifted friends, but, not wishing to be left out, invites the PCs based on their reputation.

Each invite largely follows the same format; and some text is given in the **Appendix** for you to use as a basis for the invitation. The PCs are invited to a once-in-a-lifetime event: the wedding of a fey lord to Celandine, beloved daughter of Lord Mallow. The wedding promises to be spectacular. It is a long tradition of the Mallow's that gifts are lavished on those who can best the fey at feats, skills, and contests. It also offers the PCs a chance to meet up with the strange fey at close quarters.

INTRODUCTION

The PCs need to accept the wedding invitation for the adventure to take place.

No matter the reason or method of invitation, Lord Mallow wants the wedding bursting with able-bodied men and women. He's using the pretence that he intends to lavish gifts upon those who best their fey guests at contests of strength, wit and courage, but Lord Mallow actually intends to have the King in Rags slain, and, because he is unsure of the consequences of the curse, he wants himself surrounded by tough allies when it strikes.

Lord Mallow expects war with the fairies. What he gets is far different.

How the journey is handled is left to you. If the PCs seem reluctant to attend, you may wish to add a story or two about what happened during the last wedding, using events in Part One as inspiration. Have NPCs wish they had been invited and had a chance at a fortune, a tale with a reward of a weight in gold should be enough.

The adventure proper begins with the PCs approaching Twine. They should meet other wedding guests on the road and begin to see that perhaps this is more of a dreaded event than a celebration, as many guests arrive all dressed in black—and conversing with others can reveal such. If the PCs arrive in gaudy

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apparel expecting a celebration, then the partygoers likely amuse themselves with jokes at their expense. Of course, the PCs can purchase black garb anywhere within distance of Twine.

Part One: Sorrow

THE TOWN OF TWINE

The causeway you're on has been picking its way across marshes for the past hour, tall grasses swaying at your sides, fens snaking away from you. All around are the curious and mournful calls of bitterns. At last, the town of Twine appears through the marsh, but your first sight is not what you expected. The entire place slumps, as though about to topple. Once-grand structures lean, jaded, staring at the marshes caressing this small, walled town. Black banners hang from every corner, and ebony rags hang limply in the wan daylight. The dark material flaccidly proclaims the town in mourning.

Twine is, indeed, a town in mourning, mourning for the coming wedding of her beloved and beautiful only child of the nowwidower Lord Mallow.

Twine is a small township on the edges of the Scowlingmarsh, which lies in the Principality of Morgau. A large mire surrounds the town, requiring entrants to the town to arrive by small boat or along the Lord's Causeway, a road that seems perpetually in a state of disrepair.

Twine exists because of the eels—the tastiest eels to be had in Morgau, in fact. For this reason, the place has become a township in its own right and has an autonomous lord, a gift from those in power with appetites.

The town heaves with people, its population of 1,100 now doubled by Lord Mallow's guests. The town watch, represented by Master Grosche, a man with countless chins whose face seems about to ripped in two by his (forced) smile, greets arriving PCs with great respect. Groshce directs honored guests up the Great Wheel, a roadway snaking its way around and around the narrow streets until arriving at the summit Castle, the great Citadel. Hawkers, other guests, and the curious line the roadway, and the PCs must push their way through. Traders bombard the PCs, other guests engage them in conversation, surprised at the dour atmosphere. The PCs see NPCs weeping and sobbing. Talking to locals reveals more about the coming wedding.

The locals are sure of one thing: The wedding must take place, or the town is accursed.

THE GREAT CITADEL

Probably the most startling thing about the ramshackle castle of Twine is that it's still standing. This is a rambling, decaying place where plaster has a habit of falling off walls, where ivy has groped its way inside, and where creaks and groans of decay are a constant choir.

Only the main (throne) room of the citadel is

detailed in this adventure, as it is the location for the events. Detail other areas as you wish. The PCs' rooms are draughty places where even the stone seems to be about to die.

ARRIVAL: THE ASHEN HALL

Servants direct the guests to their cramped sleeping chambers in various corners of the dilapidated citadel. The servants tell the guest of the events to come and warn them that a good rest before events is wise, as the last wedding and feast went on all night and well into the next day. Visitors are then invited to present themselves to Lord Mallow and his daughter at the Ashen Hall, a chamber named after the withered trees decorating it.

When PCs first enter the Ashen Hall, read or paraphrase the following:

The most remarkable part of the citadel is saved for last, it seems. A demented space of tangled timber, heaving stone, and contorted frescoes sits at the heart of the place, somehow remaining whole. A series of 12 ashen tree trunks props up this claustrophobic space. Four huge doors open up, one on each side. Each is large enough for a man mounted upon a shire horse to enter.

Upon a throne of bones in the room's center sits a troubled

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THE BRAVE Adventurer Angle

Some PCs are not going to stand for a fey king deflowering an innocent maid, no matter what tradition says. A chaotic good warrior may decide to try to take the King of Rags' head off as soon as he sets eyes upon him, curse be damned!

Such PCs risk not only angering their host and local law, but also invoking a terrible curse upon the kingdom. Remember that as soon as the King arrives, he is surrounded not only by his daughters and mounted on a dire ram, but is also attended by (neutral good) guards. Such an attack is likely to be regarded as an outrage against Morgau.

man, who stares at his hands. A pale young woman stands by his side, and 12 guards dressed in fine tunics stand throughout the space, protecting their persons.

Guests and an honor guard (a dozen NG male human fighter 3) surround **Lord Mallow** (CG male human fighter 4/Aristocrat 5) and his daughter **Celandine** (NG female human Aristocrat 3).



The Mallows greet the PCs cordially, though a sadness haunts their faces. If the PCs make a DC 20 Perception check, they note the Mallows have made an effort to conceal their tears, but their eyes are quite red. The Lord and his daughter invite the PCs to eat and drink their fill at tonight's feast.

Some PCs may offer their services in stopping the wedding, even at this early stage. Lord Mallow rebuffs such offers, greeting them with horror. Despite his hidden anger and his plan, Mallow appears resigned to his fate, and he suspects everyone, especially newcomers, as being potential fey spies.

A feast takes place the night before the great feast itself. This adventure assumes the PCs arrive the day before the wedding; however, they are at liberty to stay as long as they wish, and if they arrive early, they may learn more of the tale.

Before the King in Rags' arrival, the hall is prepared for events at the great feast. An enormous smooth stone sphere is dragged to the room's center (Marran's Labor, see below). If asked about the throne of bones, the PCs are informed that it is in honor of the rulers of Morgau, a gift from their beloved rulers.

Characters making DC 25 Diplomacy checks can learn the background to the King in Rags' tale as detailed in the **Adventure Background** section. Although the idea of marrying the beautiful Celandine to the King in Rags is repulsive, the idea of invoking a terrible curse upon the kingdom is much worse. What consoles the locals are the

> challenges before the feast; no one has yet to beat the King in Rags in any of them, despite the offer of a sack of gold for anyone who can better him. That the looser must bend his knee to the winner is enough to put off most competitors—that, and the fact that the King in Rags is incredibly strong, big, and possessed of a feral charisma.

THE KING IN RAGS' ARRIVAL

The fey king's arrival generates fascination among the locals, who line the streets to catch a glimpse of the curious creature. GMs can use this opportunity to demonstrate how crowded Twine is.

The hall becomes packed as news of the King in Rags' arrival reaches it. A dozen local watchmen (NG male human fighter 3) armed with spears act as honor guard to the fey king. It takes little to provoke these guards to use lethal force to defend their guest.

When the PCs first set eyes upon the strange wedding party, read or paraphrase the following:

You smell him before you see him; a heady feral musk, almost overpoweringly male, precedes him. The King in Rags is well named, for he is clothed in the rags of feather and broken birds, which wrap about him in a living cloak covering his flesh. He is huge, fully eight feet tall, and he holds an axe that is too big for him. His face is invisible beneath a huge helmet fashioned from the skull of some vast stag; beneath the helm, his eyes glow red with anger, or is it hunger? He sits in a great saddle

SORROW



FAIRY TALE—RUMORS ABOUT THE KING IN RAGS

The following table shows the results of any Diplomacy (Gather Information) checks the PCs make during their stay in Twine. Higher results reveal all the information of lesser checks.

Check	Tale
5	Lord Mallow loves his daughter, but he also loves his kingdom and honor. He has let it be known that anyone harming his guests and breaking the oath of hospitality will be beheaded on the spot.
10	This wedding has taken place for five generations, with the firstborn Mallow Lord's daughter receiving a black rose to signify her coming wedding. This always occurs on the girl's sixteenth birthday, and the groom is always the same, the fearful King in Rags.
15	The King in Rags always arrives mounted upon his dire ram, the Bearer of Ills, and is accompanied by his daughters; ragged, fearful, twisted things that were once women but are now something altogether different.
20	The King in Rags is a huge figure, fully eight feet tall, and he wears a coat of living crows and bears an enormous hooked great axe which sobs when it is swung. He leans upon a great staff soaked in old men's tears bound in barren maiden's hair. Some say he is the bastard son of the Moonlit King, ruler of the Winter Shadow Court of the fey.
25	The last bride was Lord Mallow's twin sister Hazel, who was taken over 20 years ago. Lord Mallow still wears a necklace with an amethyst set in a gold hand, identical to the one his sister wore. Sometimes he can be seen toying with the necklace, a tear in his eye.
30	Some say the King in Rags' father gave him his kingdom, a wood on the first day of winter. Others say he was exiled there.

carved from the bole of a tree, which is perched upon the back of a great ram.

Behind him crawl six maidens, naked animal things that slither along the ground behind their master. Red hair cascades about their bodies, which are almost too perfect, too voluptuous, for words. Yet at the edges of these beauties something disturbing lurks, a look of want, a smile that is as dangerous as it is alluring, and a wildness that is not of this world.

Yet this is not all: one final indignity remains. Trailing behind the procession, like slime behind a snail, are insects and the corpses of small animals, thousands of them. They blindly crawl after the King in Rags. Among them, you see the pitiful remains of a young dog, its face a blank ruin, sniff the air and howl. The tattered remains of a robin hop blindly, unable to fly anymore, while a carpet of cockroaches engulfs the staggering form of a cat long since dead, which ends the ghastly visitation.

Creatures: The King in Rags rides haughtily in and dismounts, his ram remaining where he leaves it.

For more information on the King in Rags and his retinue, see the **Great Feast**.

King in Rags – Debased Fey Satyr Ranger 3 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 1, Tome of Horrors Complete) (see page 144)

The Tattered Daughters (Debased Fey Baccae)(6) (Tome of Horrors Complete) (see page 142)

The Bearer of Ills, Dire Ram (*Tome of Horrors Complete*) (see page 145)

THE GREAT FEAST

The King arrives late in the afternoon, in good time for the wedding, and makes his way through the crowded Ashen Hall to Lord Mallow and his daughter. Play up the King's lust for his bride to be, a lust matched only by her grace and cordiality. Read or paraphrase events below:

When he arrives, the King in Rags stands before the throne, and Lord Mallow greets him. "I welcome my honored guest the King in Rags, and bid him enjoy his last night of freedom before marrying my daughter!"

The King smiles a smile that could curdle milk, and licks his lips. He pulls an enormous sack from his steed's back. Crows fly from the sack as he opens it, and from within it, he hauls out three even bigger sacks, groaning with gold.

"I am the King in Rags, the Sovereign of Yellow Decay. I am honored, great Lord, but before the wedding we should make merry. Shall we honor your ancestors and make our usual wager—a sack of gold for three games, three tests, to see who is stronger—mortal man or deathless fey?"

Lord Mallow accepts the wager, and matches the King in Rags' trio of sacks laden with gold coin.

"And he who loses shall kneel to he who is victorious!"

Characters making a Perception check (DC 15) can see that, despite the great wealth, there is a look of fear upon the people inside the chamber. The bag holding the King's three bags of coin is a *bag of holding type IV*.

The feast is a significant part of this adventure. Emphasize the food, the drink, but above all, the cramped surroundings. The King and his daughters smell of sweat and the earth, of hunger, and want. They are primal things of passion. Be sure to play up that fact, as it has an important role to play in the coming adventure. These are not courteous guests: They are things of abstract wants and needs, with ideas altogether different to mortal men. Have fun with this part of the adventure and role-play as much as you and your players are comfortable with. Casting spells in the feast is a serious breach of etiquette, although the PCs may be able to find quiet corners to cast suitable spells. Casting spells openly arouses Lord Mallow's anger, for chivalrous men have no

J KNEEL TO NO ONE

PCs being PCs, someone likely refuses to kneel to the King when losing. To accept a wager and then refuse the consequences insults the host. Sore-loser characters interacting with the feast's guests (mortal and fey) do so at a –2 penalty. This penalty affects all Bluff, Intimidate, Diplomacy, and Perform checks. Afterwards, the character gains a -2 Status penalty when dealing with fey creatures and citizens of Morgau; and he gains the appellation "Oathbreaker."

need for trickery and magic to win his contests.

The feast begins; an army of servants enter, carrying trays. Oysters, rabbits stewed in milk, broiled beef, and collared calf's head begin the fare. They are soon followed by fried flounders, hot crabs, wild duck, and fairy butter to honor the guests. Cider flows from countless barrels, and elderberry and flower wine is brought out by the case. The feast culminates in a huge eel pie, the local delicacy, shaped like a wedding cake.

Countless toasts are made while the food is served, but the King in Rags betters each one made by the gathered men and women. The PCs can attempt a toast, using Perform (oratory), or they may risk an Intimidate or Bluff (Diplomacy being too long-winded for toasts). If characters make a check over 25+, the King in Rags is clearly unhappy with the quality of their toast and raises his glass to call one similar, making a Bluff check to do so. If the PC's check is higher, Lord Mallow smiles at the PC, and wild applause breaks out. The PC should receive an immediate story award of 500 XP.

The PCs are seated for the feast, but should be near enough to one of the King's daughters to both see and interact with them. Guests also frequently move around the cramped hall. Allow the PCs access to everyone at the feast. PCs making either a Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Perform check in excess of 25 should gain the interest of a daughter, who moves to the PC's side and does not leave throughout the feast. Remember that the daughters are fey and totally loyal to their King, but they are also the embodiment of carnality; act up their fey ways as you see fit. That PC interacts with the baccae at +2 favorable circumstance bonus for the rest of the evening. If

An Important Tale to Tell

The contest has more than just financial reward. Fey put great stock upon their abilities in tale telling and games with mortals. They expect to win. Any mortal who beats them is someone to be admired, and perhaps a little feared. Any character winning a game of chance with the fey has successfully *demoralized* any fey he faces, as though he has made a successful Intimidate check. This does not require an action from the PC; it automatically succeeds. The ability remains for this adventure only, and against followers or summoned aids of the King in Rags only. Afterwards, the character gains a +2 Status when dealing with fey creatures. a similar check in excess of 30 is made, the baccae declares her love for the PC, a declaration you should take wherever you see fit. In gaming terms, that baccae does not lay a glove upon the PC throughout the adventure, an action that has consequences when the PCs later enter the King in Rags' kingdom.

Baccae become more feral as they become more intoxicated. Here, away from their fey home, the effect is not long lasting, but PCs looking closely enough should catch a glimpse of a mouthful of sharp teeth, see something more than hunger in their eyes, and catch occasional glimpses of thorns and briars in their flesh. These effects vanish when stared at. The baccae resist using their spells while they are guests of their host. That does not mean you should belittle their charms, however.

Characters asking questions may learn a little of the King in Rags, both during and after the feast. Allow each PC to make three attempts at any of the skills listed previously to learn something useful. The daughters know about the King's home and his lair, and the PCs should be able to learn useful things about the Stale Wood at your discretion. For more information, see **Part Two** (page 138) of this adventure.

Throughout the feast, characters may wish to sing, perform, tell tales, or attempt acts of strength. Allow the PCs to take part in this. For skill check attempts in excess of 25, or ability checks equal to 20+, the mortal crowd offers up wild applause. Assign 250 XP for the first such success in the cramped hall.

THE THREE CHALLENGES

When everyone has eaten and drunk their fill, Lord Mallow stands and asks for volunteers to challenge the King in Rags. Few come forward, as they do not wish to kneel to the King. They also know that he has never been beaten. Different challenges involve different characters, but each is against the King in Rags.

Play up the challenges; the King expects to win them all. If he does not, not only does this have a reward, a sack of gold containing 1000 gp for each event, but it also has a game effect (see sidebar).

The King in Rags receives +4 bonus to all tasks, as he has performed them numerous times.

CHALLENGE ONE: MARRAN'S LABOR

The Ashen Throne has a singular object resting in its center, Marran's Labor, a huge stone sphere worn smooth. Stories say a previous ghoul king of Morgau pushed the sphere for a hundred years. Upon the one day he rested, a pack of crows devoured him.

The sphere is six feet round and weighs several hundred pounds.

This game requires one to push the sphere across the Ashen Hall before the sands fall through in a timer. The King in Rags manages it easily; can anyone else? Assume a handful of NPCs are unsuccessful, despite their best efforts; act up the King's laughter as they fail; he mocks, he taunts, he parades. Unless the PCs do something, the King in Rags wins his sack of gold.

The sphere must be moved 25 ft., across the room to the far wall, within 8 rounds. Pack mules return it to its starting position. Pushing the sphere 5 ft. requires a DC 20 Strength check. To win, the PC must successfully push the stone within fewer rounds than the fey king. In the result of a tie, the King in Rags suggests a second game or a race. Play a decider as necessary if there is a further tie.

If a PC fails, Lord Mallow expects him to graciously accept defeat and kneel before the King in Rags. If the PC decides not to, see the I Kneel to No One Sidebar below.

If the PC succeeds, he receives an immediate 500 XP story award and a sack of gold (1,000 gp) from the King in Rags. The King stares at the winner as he hands over the sack. PCs making a Sense Motive check opposed to the King's Bluff (+16) can see he is slightly afraid of the winning PC. Assume he has been demoralized as detailed above. The winner gains a +2 Status bonus within Morgau, a +1 Status bonus when dealing with fey, and he may preface his name and title with "Mighty."

If the King looses, he kneels to the PC very begrudgingly. This time, both anger and fear appear in his crimson eyes (DC 20 Perception). When and if the PCs meet him in his own kingdom, the King remembers this PC well (see area **SW 9** in **Part Two** of this adventure, page 144, for more details).

CHALLENGE TWO: STORYTELLING

The next, tale telling, is resolved by the highest Perform (oratory) check. If PCs have Perform (oratory), allow them to make the check at +2. Characters without the skill can still participate, using a Charisma ability check, instead, or the GM may allow them to substitute half of their Diplomacy or Bluff skill for the task.

The King tells a story that begins at the end, a story without summer, one telling of true love lost and found and of a place which cannot be. His Perform (oratory) check is 30, and at its end, even Lord Mallow's eyes leak tears.

If the PC beats this check (he gets one chance), his story is even better, and provokes an astonishing reaction from his audience, who are (mostly) delighted. He gets an immediate 500 XP story award. The audience sobs in misery or screams with laughter, depending upon the tale told. The King kneels and hands over the sack of gold of 1,000 gp as he does so. The King's reaction echoes those of the previous challenge. The character gains a +1 Status bonus when dealing with fey creatures and the appellation "Silvertongue." The character gains a +1 Status bonus within Morgau.

CHALLENGE THREE: THE WANTON DANCE

The final challenge is the hardest. The King calls his daughters to his side. "Who can resist my beautiful daughters?" he croons. "Who here is man—or woman—enough to dance with them?" He claps his hands and a wild jig begins. A drum beats out a slow rhythm, and the daughters begin to dance, eyes eagerly seeking a partner.

This challenge looks easier than it is. The baccae are ferocious dancers, and the music is wild, the mortal players are somehow taken over by the fey's wild, lustful dancing.

PCs attempting this dance are taken in a fey's arms

and whirled wildly, spinning and turning for what seems like forever. The fey's wanton eyes stare, needing. Characters must make an Acrobatics check (DC 20), or fall. Those with 4 or more ranks in Perform (dance) make the check at +2, and they can substitute that check for Acrobatics. The fey women toss aside those falling, viewing them as unworthy of their wants and passions.

If a PC succeeds the check, the baccae leaps into the PC's arms and rides him, wanting to be whirled ever faster. Again, play this up as strongly as you wish, but the wildness is full of lust and passion. Characters must make Strength check (DC 15) to keep hold of their wild partner and stay on their feet.

Finally, the sweating, wild baccae dance enters its final part, as each baccae tosses her head back like a creature possessed and cavorts madly, grasping the PC in a feral embrace. This last part never seems to end. If the character makes a DC 20 Fortitude save, the baccae drops to the floor exhausted; she then declares her love for the PC. This has an effect similar to that listed above. The character gains a +1 Status bonus when dealing with fey creatures or those from Morgau and the appellation "Heartspinner."

> If a character fails any of the checks on any part of the dance, he is fatigued for 24 hours.

DAWN: THE WEDDING DAY

The feast goes on through the night; add other events or role-playing opportunities as you wish.

Soon, the sun glints through the chamber's cracks, and servants begin ushering out the guests to prepare for the noon wedding. The PCs are assigned a helper to find them a place to observe the wedding from, as only family are allowed into the cramped Ashen Hall. The helper Lucie (NG female human expert 2) is obsessive, fretting over the PCs' appearance and punctuality, and she informs them they will view the wedding from Saint Pious' Gaol, a sanctum overlooking the hall.

Throughout the preparations, the King in Rags dozes, surrounded by his daughters, who remain vigilant, as do his honor guard. Six other guards remain outside the Ashen Hall's doors. They politely stop non-family members from entering. Remember, the area is incredibly cramped, and casting spells within is certainly conspicuous. If the PCs attempt to get into the hall or remain there, the guards politely remove them. PCs attempting to bully their way through are reminded they have a special place reserved for them as guests.

Guards lock and bar the Ashen Hall's doors a half hour before the wedding begins. The castle is not only bursting with guests, but interested onlookers crowd the outer corridors. The packed hall is standing room only; other guests overlook the celebration from balconies and cramped galleries, some of which afford little view of the wedding.

If the PCs refuse to go to their allotted place (players being players), remind them they will be unable to see the events. If they still refuse, you must decide how events continue.

SAINT PIOUS' GAOL

A narrow secret passage behind the Ashen Hall links to an old gaol. The gaol is barely eight feet wide, and overlooks the Ashen Hall from the north. It sits some 30 ft. above the hall floor and 70 ft. from the throne. A narrow grill, barely 1 ft. wide, allows those within the cramped chamber to view events in the hall some 20 ft. beneath them. A hefty (lockable) door bound in iron seals the room.

The small gallery window is barred, with 6-inch-wide gaps. Only one or two characters can watch the events below clearly from here. On a DC 20 Perception check, characters looking at the bars realize they are made of old iron and marked with curious old glyphs. A DC 25 Spellcraft or Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the faded glyphs as protecting against chaos in some way.

The bars are actually made of cold iron blessed by a priest long, long ago. The cell kept fey prisoners (fey cannot pass the blessed cold iron). The bars offer protection against fey magic and have a major effect upon the adventure.

NOON: MALLOW'S TREACHERY

At noon, the King in Rags kneels before a priest and Lord Mallow. Celandine, who up to this point has been garbed in a long hooded cloak, throws back her garment, revealing her white gown. She wears a beautiful tiara set with emeralds. She is a figure of loveliness, and she smiles with great dignity as the vows are read.

The wedding vows do not take long. PCs making a DC 35 Perception check notice Lord Mallow seems nervous, and he anxiously looks about. At some stage, the King in Rags also notices this, and he also begins to glance about. Finally, the last vow is spoken, and the King in Rags is asked if he accepts his new bride.

PCs making DC 35 Perception checks note several figures in

narrow alcoves overlooking the wedding party. Seconds later, the assassination attempt takes place.

Read or paraphrase the following events, which take place in a handful of seconds. The PCs may naturally wish to react, but they have only moments to do so, use your judgement accordingly

The sound of a quartet of crossbow bolts, flying from the upper chamber, cuts through the air. Two bolts strike the King in Rags, one in his chest and one in his back; the other two miss. A hiss emanates from his body as a mist of poison erupts on him.

PCs making DC 25 Perception checks note the striking bolts were both critical hits.

The King in Rags drops. Lord Mallow draws a knife and shouts, "Faithless fiend! Did you think I'd let your dirty hands sully my daughter as you did my sister? Here is my wedding gift to you, filth!" He strikes the King in Rags with a coup-de-grace and stands back, a smile on his face.

All is still.

Suddenly, the rags stir, and a pair of black crows fall from the King's cloak, dead. He stands and shakes himself. Then, the room erupts in an infestation of thorns and ivy. The ivy strikes through everyone within the chamber except the King, his followers, and his bride. You catch a glimpse of ivy bursting from Lord Mallow's mouth as the King in Rags leads Mallow's daughter away. The King screams, "Traitor! Faithless! Liar! Have my curse. I shall have your daughter within the hour!"

Barely seconds after the attack, the ivy gropes the Gaol's bars, but it is immediately repelled by them. A wall of ivy now blocks your view. Below, a screaming choir echoes through the Ashen Hall. Soon afterwards, the intoxicating smell of honeysuckle and scorched meat invades the chamber. All then all is still once more.

Part Two:

The PCs are safe within the Gaol, but, due to the broken fey pact, those below have suffered the King in Rags' dreadful curse. The Ashen Hall, and those structures attached to it (the Old Gaol included), have been absorbed into the King in Rags' home, a place called the Stale Wood.

SW 1. THE ASHEN HALL (CR 5)

The PCs can grope their way through the secret corridor behind, which is strangled by thorns and vines as if a thousand years have passed and the plants have grown unmolested. This growth fills the corridor as per a wall of thorns spell was cast within it, filling a 10-ft. section.

When PCs reach the corridor's end, read or paraphrase the following:



The narrow corridor ends suddenly and abruptly. Where less than a few minutes ago there was a cramped castle room, there is now nothing. The corridor ends 30 ft. above the ochre floor of a forest, which stretches sickly away from you. Below, the pocked ruins of the Ashen Hall remain, her occupants bound, frozen in ivy and thorns. The forest seems to be angered all about you, and echoes with the fury of a gale, which whips branches and decayed leaves into a frenzy.

The castle's walls are crumbling and the ivy dying. A DC 20 Climb check is required to reach the forest floor below. Falling characters drop onto a carpet of dead leaves and decay, taking only half the normal falling damage.

Creatures: Two centipede swarms cling among the ivy directly below the PCs. If the PCs delay for more than a couple of rounds, the centipedes attack.

Centipede Swarm (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each hp 31 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

The Ashen Hall below is in utter ruin, and her occupants are now part of the plants they have been infested with; and like the plants, they are dying. Where once there were doors, now there are thorn-throttled openings that seem about to collapse.

Development: The people imprisoned within the ivy are paralyzed and cannot take any actions; they will die in 24 hours unless the PCs lift the curse. PCs may be tempted to cut free the prisoners or kill the plants around them, but this is a mistake. The people are so intertwined with the plants that it is impossible to extricate them safely. Spells or attacks against the plants affect the prisoners within. No spells short of *wish* or *miracle* have any beneficial effect.

Some PCs may be tempted to check their hosts for treasure. Although none is listed, use your judgement in determining if anything valuable or useful remains. Of the King, his daughters, his steed, and his new bride, there is no trace.

CHASING THE KING IN RAGS

The King and his entourage immediately *polymorph* into ravens, and a daughter turns Celandine into a dove with a *baleful polymorph*. The birds fly randomly into the wood, but soon end up at the Feral Feast (area **SW8**), where an hour-long feast takes place, after which, the king beds his new queen. The fey attack any familiars or summoned creatures chasing them.

A pathway of sorts, marked by the dotted line on the map, exists between the king's lair (area **SW9**) and Twine. The king used this route earlier to attend his nuptials. Signs of the debased fey's passing litter the trail: the trees sprout ugly, cancerous fungal growths; briars wither; and the carpet of rotting leaves blacken. Characters can follow these signs with a DC 16 Survival check (DC 21, if they move at normal speed) or a DC 21 Perception check (DC 26 if moving at full speed).

If the PCs become lost, you may wish to have them alerted by Celandine's distant screams, or the sound of revelry drifting mischievously upon the wind.

THE STALE WOOD

The Stale Wood stretches in all directions. It is in perpetual

THE OLD GAOL'S BARS

If they were good enough to protect the PCs against fey magic, perhaps they are useful weapons...

Indeed, the cold-iron bars were once weapons, long spearheads. The iron bypasses the fey's Damage Reduction and deliver damage to fey as though they were +1 weapons of wounding. The 10 bars require a DC 20 Strength check to remove, and they count as improvised weapons that deliver 1d6 damage. A mending spell can turn them into usable weapons, removing the reduction for improvised weapons, and a *fabricate* spell can change them into normal small weapons of any type. Your PCs may be able to change these bars into other weapons using their skills; but, bear in mind that time is of the essence: within an hour, a major part of the adventure protecting Celandine from rape—will have passed. Remind your players of this if needed.

autumnal decay on the first day of winter. The sun never breaks through the foliage, and the temperature is chill. The forest consists of pine trees with thick coverage that stand between 40 and 70 feet high (DC 15 to Climb). There is little or no undergrowth. The wood is in a state of arousal and anger due to its host's betrayal and the curse; a strong wind throws about the decayed leaves, obscuring tracks.

The PCs make tactical movement through the forest at 2 miles (20 ft. base move) or 3 miles (30 ft. base) per hour. Each hex is a quarter of a mile across, which should give the PCs time to reach the final encounter in good time.

The edges of the map are marked as healthy pine forest; these hexes echo outwards for several miles, and the PCs should soon realize that once within them, they are leaving the King in Rags' kingdom, which is located deep in Wendestal Forest—though GMs could easily place it elsewhere. A hidden magical path known only to the fey facilitates travel between the two locations. PCs' attempts to find and use this path should prove fruitless, however.

Creatures: The King in Rags has allowed areas of his forest to thrive with a peculiar infestation of ground-dwelling violet fungi. When such fungi threaten the Stale Wood, he sends his daughters out to blight them. The fungus infects hexes marked with a **P**. Characters passing through these hexes have a 50% chance of encountering a grove of 3-12 plants.

Violet Fungus

CR 3

XP 800 hp 30 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

SW2. THE RING OF DEADWOOD (CR 9)

When PCs leave area **SW1** (Ashen Hall), they come upon a circle of dead trees:

Bent and aged, a line of large, black trees dances in the swaying forest; their limbs crack and occasionally fall in the angry wind.

The Stale Wood: Following the Bride

When your PCs leave Ashen Hall's ruins, hand your players a blank sheet of hex paper and ask them to indicate the direction they are heading and their speed. As mentioned earlier, speed/time is of the essence, and you may wish to give your players a few clues by having Celandine's screams echo throughout the wood. Tell the PCs what they encounter or perceive in each hex, and then have them continue mapping their path.

The 20-ft. trees are all dying. They form a more-or-less-perfect circle about Ashen Hall's ruins.

Creatures: A flock of cockatrices roosts in the trees. The creatures spot characters passing through the ring of trees without precaution on a DC 20 Perception check; those who sneak past make the check opposed. Assume a cockatrice lies within 100 feet of any PC. They call out to alert their kin when they spot intruders.

Cockatrice (6)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 27 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Tactics: If a call is given, the other cockatrices answer by flying towards the caller. Have 1d2 cockatrices arrive every 1d4 rounds (until all six arrive). If the PCs manage to kill all the alerting cockatrices, then the others wander about the wood calling to each other; they are encountered at your discretion.

SW 3. THE GREAT NEST (CR 7)

Characters entering these hexes and making a DC 15 Perception check notice the presence of some sort of hunting creature. Bones and piles of excrement lie about, and there are occasional signs of outright vandalism: a lacerated tree or a temporary nest in the boughs of a tree. With a DC 20 Perception check or a DC 15 Survival check, the PCs can use these signs to locate the creature's lair.

Creature: A chimera, a creature the King in Rags refers to as his Herald, hunts this section of the wood. On a DC 20 Perception check, the creature scents characters moving through hexes without taking precautions (roll once per hex passed through) or when they pass through the center hex.

Chimera, green dragon headed CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 85 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Tactics: The Herald flies from its nest (see below) and rapidly flies into combat, using the tree cover to mask its dive-bomb attacks. The Herald has Flyby Attack rather than Improved Initiative feat (Initiative +1), and it has a grab attack with its bite (CMB +18). It flies back to his nest with any tasty morsel it grabs.

The Herald is not clever, but it does flee back to its nest when reduced to 20 hit points or fewer.

- **Development:** The Herald has built a huge nest of flotsam some 90 ft. up a great pine tree marked on the map.
- **Treasure:** Among the corpses in its nest are a withered hand with a *ring of protection* +2 still attached, a lucky rabbit's foot pendent on a thong set with a small topaz worth 400gp, and a broken silver mirror surrounded by chips of small diamonds worth 500gp.

SW4. BROTHER STALE (CR 7)

Upon entering this are, PCs can note crude signs of development with a DC 20 Perception check: the odd tree has been chopped ready for logging, a cold fire pit lies near a series of stones, a stream has a bucket in it, there are numerous pathways, and so forth.

This area's occupant, who keeps a respectful distance from his enemies, is Brother Stale, a hill giant who wandered this way. The PCs can track the paths to the cottage below with a DC 10 Survival check (DC 10) or a DC 15 Perception check.

Traps: The giant has trapped this area of the wood for game. Every time the PCs move through a hex here, they have a 1 in 3 chance of encountering a pit trap.

CR 4

Deep Spiked Pit Trap

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20 (25 is hustling); Disable Device DC 15

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; Reset manual

- Effect 40-ft. pit trap (4d6 falling damage), DC 20 Reflex save avoids; pit spikes (Atk +15 melee, 2d4 spears per target for 1d6+4 damage each). Bell ring—those falling also trip a rope attached to bells hung in the trees above; when they ring, the giant makes an immediate **Perception** check (DC 20) to notice. If the PCs set off a trap in the **SW4** hex, he automatically notices.
- **Creature:** Brother Stale is large, even for a hill giant. He wears animal skins and furs, and he is wrapped in a hefty manticore hide cloak. He wields a huge woodaxe.

Brother Stale, Advanced Giant, Hill CR 7 XP 3,200

hp 114 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

OFFENSE

Melee large woodaxe +14/+9 (3d6+10)

- **Tactics:** Although he has his axe, there are no boulders large enough to be used as weapons in the wood. The giant therefore lumbers quickly and thoughtlessly into combat, pushing over trees as he charges. This doesn't achieve much (unless a PC is behind such a tree) but looks good.
- If reduced to 25 hit points or fewer, Brother Stale attempts to bargain for his life. He doesn't know much, but he roughly knows the direction in which the King in Rags' home lies.
- **Development:** Brother Stale has built himself a crude timber cottage in the marked hex. The cottage has timber walls and a roof made of moss. A hefty circular door made from the hewn trunk of a tree allows entry. A DC 15 Strength check is required to push open the closed door.



Within, the cottage is quite homely, and has a large roaring fire on which cook several squirrels. It also has a huge bed made of wolves stuffed with pines.

Treasure: The giant has an enormous, chained chest (requiring a DC 20 Dex check to unravel, or it can be destroyed (Hardness 10, Hit Points 5 Break DC 26)). The chest contains 1,002 sp; 875 gp; and a large gargoyle pot, within which a small black pearl worth 400gp was embedded in its clay was soft. The room also contains a barrel of brandy and the squashed, mummified body of Dapple, his beloved pig and wife, whom he accidentally crushed when drunk one night.

SW5. THE WAKING WOOD (CR 6)

The trees here are thicker and darker, and the sunlight barely touches the forest's floor, which is covered in a thick carpet of leaves and needles. A curious moaning sigh, almost musical noise, accompanies the swaying branches.

This area of the wood is wrapped in an *aura of misery* affecting everything entering the area, the griffons below included. Every creature entering a hex here must make a DC 11 Will save or become shaken. The effect remains in place as long as the character remains in the hex.

Creatures: A pair of large griffon roost in a nest fashioned from two leaning dead trees near the edges of Stale Wood and marked on the map, and they hunt this region. The King in Rags placed the magical aura upon the griffons' home as a curse for killing a deer he was hunting. According to the King, the curse will make them wither and die if they attempt to leave the area. That part of his curse is a lie.

Characters entering these hexes may see signs of predators

at work. With a DC 25 Perception check, the PC observes the odd carcass, and notices signs of something large having perched in trees. With a DC 20 Survival check or a DC 25 Perception check, characters can follow the signs of hunting areas to the creatures' lair.

The griffons are always looking for food, and for each hex the PCs pass through, the griffons make a DC 25 Perception check to smell them with their scent ability. This automatically succeeds if the PCs arrive in their nest hex.

Advanced Griffons (2)

XP 1,200 each

hp 58 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

- **Tactics:** If aware of intruders, the griffons swoop in to attack as a pair, pouncing from above and making full attacks. The griffons use this tactic until they have killed or knocked unconscious any foes. They immediately take dropped creatures back to their nest to devour them. If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, they flee back to their nest, from where they do not retreat again.
- **Treasure:** The griffons' nest hangs in a pair of fallen pine trees of great height (120 ft.). A DC Climb allows access to the nest, which is built from the main remnants of a gypsy caravan. Within the nest are a small leather bag of coins hanging from a 15-ft.-long branch that requires a DC 25 Acrobatics or Climb check to reach. The bag contains 67 pp. Also in the nest and found on DC 20 Perception checks (one per item) are a silver and walnut whistle worth 125 gp, a rusting iron flask with a green glass stopper containing *elixir of fire breath*, and 20 ft. of silk rope.

CR 4

SW6. THE MIRE AND THE MOCK BRIDE (CR 8)

The rotting wood ends at the edges of a dark mire. Drawn up to the shore is a very decayed pier with a boat resting beside it.

The Mire is deep and dangerous, and weeds choke its still waters. A DC 10 Swim check is all that's needed to travel it, but for every round spent in the water, PCs must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or become entangled as per the spell (DC 15 to escape). Swimming characters may also encounter the eels or the green hag (see Creatures below).

The pier is rotten, and any character stepping onto it must make a DC 15 Reflex save to cross it without falling into the water. A similar pier lies at **SW** 7.

Creatures: The Mock Bride is the King in Rag's last lover, Lord Mallow's beloved sister Hazel. Unfortunately, as with all brides of satyrs, the King soon grew tired of her and cast her aside. Deprived of his attentions, Hazel went mad, and was slowly consumed by hatred and remorse for her lost life. In time, the sick wood overcame her and she became a green hag.

Giant moray eels inhabit the water.

The Mock Bride - Green HagCR 5

XP 1,600

hp 58 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Tactics: The old queen has seen the King in Rags and his entourage at the **Feral Feast (area SW 8)**. If she sees anyone following, she uses her disguise self ability to appear as Celandine. She then swims through the mire towards the characters, pleading for help. She flounders some 200 ft. out in the mire, waiting for them to save her. If no one answers her screams, she moves in invisibly, swimming below the dark water's surface to gain a vantage to attack with her claws.

Eel, giant moray (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 52 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Tactics: These simple creatures attack anything entering the mire except the green hag.

Development: Hidden underneath the weeds and dirt on Hazel's neck (DC 20 Perception check) is a necklace with an amethyst set in a gold hand worth 750 gp. If slain, Hazel reverts to her original form, a very bedraggled but oncebeautiful woman. With a DC 25 Perception check, a PC can notice the family resemblance to Lord Mallow. If she remains alive after the King is slain, see the end of this adventure for further developments.

SW 7. THE SECOND PIER

This pier is identical to the one found on the opposite side of the mire.

SW 8. THE FERAL FEAST (CR 10*)

The sounds of music and shrill laughter reach your ears. You follow the noise to a section of the river that cascades towards a mire, and then slowly dies. You see a henge, raised above the water's level with a surrounding earthwork, rests in the river's center of this river. Nine standing stones sit upon the earthwork. Among the stones, the King's daughters are dancing to the music being played by a dozen or so insect-like creatures. The daughters seem to be celebrating.

No vegetation exists near the river.

Several stepping stones, requiring a DC 10 Acrobatics check to cross them, lie in the riverbed. Falling characters drop into the fast-flowing water (DC 15 Swim check) and are rushed, 30 ft. per round, towards the mire (**area SW 6**).

Creatures: The King in Rags' daughters, whom the PCs met at the wedding, lair here. Their debased presence blighted the vegetation along the river. If the PCs arrive before an hour has passed, the King in Rags is also here, with his mount and bride, all of whom have reverted to their natural form. Add them into the description.

The daughters have already drunk plenty of wine of Baccus-Dionysus, and when the PCs enter, roll a 5% chance per half hour since the PCs arrived in the Stale Wood that they fly into a rage as soon as they see the PCs. Only daughters who have declared their love for the PCs are immune to this effect (see below).

The Tattered Daughters
(Debased Fey Baccae) CR 4
(Tome of Horrors Complete)
XP 1,200
CE Medium fey
Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +7
DEFENSE
AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)
hp 27 (5d6+5 plus 5)
Fort +2; Ref +7; Will +3
DR 5/cold iron
OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft.
Melee greatclub +5 (1d10+3), 2 claws +4 (1d4+2), bite +5
(1d6+2)
Special Attacks beast form, charming gaze, rage, defiling touch
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)
At will—coven powers*, polymorph self (raven only)
Raging Debased Fey Baccae
AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex , +2 natural, -2 rage)
hp 37 (5d6+15 plus 5)
Fort +4; Ref +7; Will +5
Melee greatclub +7 (1d10+5), 2 claws +4 (1d4+4), bite +5
(1d6+4)
Str 19, Con 16
CMB +6; CMD 19
TACTICS

Before Combat If at least three daughters are present (enough to form a coven), they cast *insect plague*. The daughters then dance into combat, mirroring their frenetic movements from the wedding feast in Twine. The laughing baccae dance and cavort the entire combat.

- **During Combat** The daughters do not attack anyone they declared their love for at the wedding feast; such daughters do not take part in the combat at all, but instead withdraw to the edges of the fight, attacking only if attacked. Other baccae lead with charming gaze, luring PCs toward them and having the charmed PCs toss their weapons into the waters surrounding the henge.
- **Morale** The daughters, terrified of interrupting their King's consummation, fight until reduced to 5 hit points. They then flee via the river and into the mire.

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 16 Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 17

Feats Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Skills Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, Escape Artist +10, Knowledge (planes) +3, Knowledge (religion) +3, Perception +7, Stealth +11 Languages Sylvan, Trade Tongue

SQ anathema SPECIAL ABILITIES

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Beast Form (Su): When angered or intoxicated, a baccae takes on a beast-like visage, growing sharpened fangs and claws. The baccae cannot end this

transformation voluntarily, and it lasts for up to an hour.

- **Charming Gaze (Su):** In human form, a baccae's gaze can charm any creature meeting her gaze and within 30 ft. An affected creature can attempt a DC 14 Will save to resist the effects. Failing opponents act as if affected by a charm person spell (caster level equals the baccae's HD). A baccae can suppress this ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma-based.
- **Rage (Su):** Once per day, a baccae in beast form can fly into a berserk frenzy, which lasts for 1 minute (10 rounds). In this rage, she gains temporary bonuses to her ability scores: +4 Strength, +4 Constitution. She likewise gains a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class. A baccae cannot voluntarily end her rage.
- **Defiling Touch (Su):** The damage from a daughter's natural attacks resists all magical healing (though it can be healed normally through rest). A creature attempting to cast a *cure* spell or a *heal* spell on a creature damaged by a debased fey's natural attacks must make a successful caster level check (DC 22), or the spell has no effect on the injured creature.

Special Qualities: A debased fey retains all the special qualities of the base fey. Saves have a DC of 10 + 1/2 the debased fey's HD + the debased fey's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

Anathema (Su): The purity of nature rejects all debased fey. Normal plants within 20 ft. wither and die if the debased fey remains

in proximity for more than 5 minutes. Pure environments, such as untouched forests and clear streams and ponds, may become spoiled and polluted if the debased fey remains in that environment for more than 1 day. Plant creatures (such as shambling mounds, for example) take 1d2 points of damage each round they remain within 20 ft. of a debased fey. A DC 15 Fortitude save negates the damage for that round. A new save can be made each round.

Resistance to Fey Magic (Su): Debased fey gain a +4 resistance bonus on all saves against the spells or spell–like abilities cast by any good–aligned fey.

Coven Powers* (Sp): When three or more daughters gather, they can form a coven to gain increased magical ability. Whenever three daughters are within 10 ft. of one another, they can work together to use any of the following spell-like abilities: *animate dead, baleful polymorph, insect plague.* The spell-like abilities can each only be used once, once per day.

All three daughters must take a full-round action to take part in this form of cooperative magic, which is identical to a hag coven's ability. The save DCs are Charisma-based (base save DC 14+1 per level of spell), and function as if with a Charisma of 18, unless one of the daughters has a higher Charisma score; in


which case, the spell-like ability is adjusted by that daughter's Charisma modifier.

CR 1/4

Mites (16)

XP 100 each

hp 3 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Tactics: The mites are the baccae's playthings. The mites play musical instruments for them, and they tumble about and act buffoonish—until they eventually get killed, often accidentally, but sometimes intentionally. The mites are petrified of the baccae.

If the baccae are slain, the mites vanish into the woodlands to become another story.

Development: Daughters who previously declared their love for a PC do not attack, but they do attempt to use their charms to lure the desired PC away from combat and into their arms. Their love is genuine—though temporary, for they are fickle and soon grow bored of mortals. As GM, you should decide how this part of the story develops.

Each daughter knows the King only removes his cloak for two reasons: to sleep, or to fornicate.

Treasure: 12 bottles of wine of Baccus-Dionysus worth 100 gp each, a small bagpipe carved with intricate dragon figures worth 125 gp, two masterwork flutes, a tin whistle, a fine nose flute set with small tiger eyes worth 75 gp, a fiddle set with pearl inlays worth 130 gp, and 6 bodhrán (one of which is made from a cloaker's taught skin and is edged in beautifully carved cloakers) worth 250 gp each.

The quarter-mile long path between the henge and the King's Hall (area **SW 9**) is made of large flagstones, worn smooth by passage. The path picks its way through dead wood until the roar of a waterfall drowns all noise ahead.

*You should still consider this area a CR 10 encounter, even if the PCs do not fight all the baccae.

SW 9. THE CONSUMMATION (CR 10)

A waterfall cascades into this area of the forest, where the taint is thickest. Bark hangs from trees in think growths, as though shedding skin. The trees themselves are bent at impossible angles and look as though they have been deliberately made to suffer. The waters flow between largesized, smooth stones, which act as stepping stones.

The King's path passes directly through the waterfall and into his hall. This pathway is slippery, requiring a DC 10 Acrobatics check to safely cross it. Failing characters fall into the swiftflowing waters and must make a DC 15 Swim check, or be taken at 30 ft. per round back toward the henge and then the mire.

The pathway under the waterfall is a different matter; a DC 10 Strength check is required to pass below it. Failing PCs must make a DC 20 Reflex save, or be cast into the chill waters, taking 2d6 damage from the rocks below. Falling characters are not swept downstream; instead, the weight of the water continually batters them. A DC 25 Swim check, or the help of someone on land (with a rope or other aid) and a DC 20 Reflex save is required to escape the torrent. Those within the water continue to take 2d6 damage per round and may drown. Beyond the roaring waterfall is a curious space, a mock throne room set around a bed of deep pines and decayed leaves. A great peg rests by the entrance, and a bubbling cauldron sits over a visible roaring fire on a huge hearth.

The King and Celandine are herein if only an hour or more has passed since the PCs arrived. If the PCs arrive early enough, they face the King, who is wooing his new bride with soft songs while still wearing his *cloak of living crows*. If they are too late, then two figures are naked, and the King's cloak hangs on a nearby peg.

The King's steed, the dire ram called the Bearer of Ills, lies beside the bed, its flanks smelling of damp wool and dirt.

The hearth has a 40-ft.-long, narrow chimney, which is wide enough for Tiny characters or smaller to climb through (DC 15). The chimney eventually arrives in a tumble of boulders near the top of the waterfall.

King in Rags, Debased Fey Satyr Ranger 3
XP 6,400
NE Medium fey
Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +18
DEFENSE
AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)
hp 101 (8d6+3d10+55)
Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +9
DR 10/cold iron
OFFENSE
Speed 40 ft.
Melee +2 large greataxe +14 (3d6+7/x3), or 2 claws +12 (1d6+5)
and horns +7 (1d6+4)
Ranged short bow +9 (1d6/×3)
Special Attacks pipes, favored enemy (human),
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
At will—charm person, dancing lights, ghost sound, sleep,
suggestion (DC 20), polymorph self (raven only)
1/day—fear (DC 20), summon nature's ally III
TACTICS
Before Combat The King is an overconfident foe. He uses his
pipes to cause fear in his foes (Will save DC 19), and then he
summons a boar to his aid. Finally, he strides in with his axe.
During Combat The King uses his fear ability only if
overpowered; otherwise, he laughs as he wields his axe at
foes. He attacks anyone who bettered him in contests at the
feast first (if more than one PC defeated him, then he attacks
the one who demoralized him the most).
Morale The King does not surrender to mortals; however, his

Morale The King does not surrender to mortals; however, his death marks an important moment in the adventure. See the **Development** section below.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 21, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20 **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

- **Feats** Dodge, Endurance, Mobility, Point Blank Shot. Precise Shot, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse
- **Skills** Bluff +16, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +9, **Int**imidate +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +18, Perform (oratory)



+20, Perform (wind instruments) +20, Survival +7; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +4 Perform, +4 Stealth

Languages Sylvan, Trade Tongue

SQ favored terrain (forest), track, wild empathy

- **Combat Gear** +2 *large greataxe* (this weapon can be wielded by a Medium creature at no penalty), *coat of living crows* (see **New Magic Item**, page 146), staff soaked in old men's tears and bound in maiden's hair (*staff of swarming insects*, 34 charges), big helm.
- **Other Gear** The King does not carry the remainder of his equipment, which is held in saddle bags on his ram and consists of 3,000gp in a *bag of holding type IV* and held in sacks made of flayed unicorn skin bound with rope made from human sinews. If the PCs won some of the contests, the amount may be less or more; if the king won all three contests, the cache is 6,000 gp in all.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Pipes (Su) The King in Rags can focus and empower his magic by playing haunting melodies on his panpipes. When he plays, all creatures within a 60-ft. radius must make a DC 18 Will save or be affected by *charm person, fear, sleep,* or *suggestion,* depending on what tune the satyr chooses. A creature successfully saving against any of the pipes' effects cannot be affected by the same

set of pipes for 24 hours, but can still be affected by the satyr's other spell-like abilities as normal. The satyr's use of his pipes does not count toward his uses per day of his spell-like abilities, and if separated from the pipes, he may continue to use his standard abilities. The pipes are masterwork, and a satyr can craft a replacement with 1 week of labor. The save DC is Charisma-based.

- **Defiling Touch (Su):** Damage from the King in Rags' natural attacks resists all magical healing (though it can be healed normally through rest). A creature attempting to cast a *cure* spell or a *heal* spell on a creature damaged by a debased fey's natural attacks must make a successful caster level check (DC 22), or the spell has no effect on the injured creature.
- **Special Qualities:** A debased fey retains all the special qualities of the base fey. Saves have a DC of 10 + 1/2 the debased fey's HD + the debased fey's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.
- Anathema (Su): A debased fey has been rejected by the purity of nature. Normal plants within 20 feet wither and die if the debased fey remains in proximity for more than 5 minutes. Pure environments such as untouched forests and clear streams and ponds may become spoiled and polluted if the debased fey remains in that environment for more than 1 day. Plant creatures (such as shambling mounds, for example) take 1d2 points of damage

each round they remain within 20 ft. of a debased fey. A DC 19 Fortitude save negates the damage for that round. A new save can be made each round.

Resistance to Fey Magic (Su): Debased fey gain a +4 resistance bonus on all saves against the spells or spell–like abilities cast by any good–aligned fey.

*The King in Rags CR is 8, but has been increased to 9 due to his coat of living crows (q.v.)

The Bearer of Ills, Dire Ram (Tome of Horrors Complete)

XP 800 N Large animal Init +6; Senses low-light vision; Perception +14 AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size) hp 63 (6d8+30 plus 6) Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +4 Defensive Abilities ferocity Speed 50 ft. Melee gore +8 (1d8+7) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.



NEW MAGIC ITEM

COAT OF LIVING CROWS

Aura strong abjuration and general; CL 13th Slot shoulders; Price 68,250 gp; Weight 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

When wearing the *cloak of living crows*, the wearer is protected from critical hits. When subjected to a critical hit, no damage is inflicted. The protection afforded by the cloak, however, is limited. And at the start of this adventure, only 13 uses of this ability remain. The cloak cannot be recharged short of a *limited wish*, *wish* or *miracle* spell

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *limited wish, repulsion*; Cost 34,125 gp

Str 20, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 1, Wis 15, Cha 8

Base Atk +4; CMB +10; CMD 22 (26 vs. trip) Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness Skills Perception +14

Tactics The ram assists its master in combat, charging in and using its gore. It fights until dead.

Celandine (NG female human Aristocrat 3)

Development: When the King in Rags is killed or reduced to a point where death is inevitable (less than –3 hp), the following event occurs:

As your blow strikes the King in Rags, he drops. In a flash, his body transforms into a murder of mangy-looking, evil black crows, and then vanishes. His dying words echo in your [the one who slew him] mind: "A curse on you and yours, forever," he cries, and then he is gone.

Moments later, the Stale Wood fades away. You and your friends, along with the King in Rags' gear, rest at the edges of a mire. Nearby, a town is visible, and as you look, the sun begins to set behind it. Bells begin to toll.

The town is, of course, Twine. The characters gain another +1 Status bonus when dealing with fey, and the character dealing the killing blow gains the appellation "Crowslayer," or "Kingbreaker." The curse upon the Mallows and Twine is forever lifted. What curse rests upon the King's slayer is left to your discretion.

Concluding the Adventure: A Tragic Tale?

Be careful concluding this adventure. The return of Lord Mallow's insane sister, freed after decades of captivity, and the possible rescue of a pregnant Celandine may leave a bitter taste with your players. However, it is a rare thing indeed for a tale to end with, "And they all lived happily ever after." If your players like the occasional twist of fate and end up bringing back two problems to Twine, then, great. However, if they don't enjoy dark adventures, then alter the ending to a more upbeat one: Mallow's sister is cured, and the King in Rags' child is stillborn just a few days later—or, perhaps, Celandine births a normal, beautiful boy nine months later.

If you like your fantasy very dark, then have a future King in Rags born into the loving arms of Celandine, with Mallow's sister's screams tormenting him into mania. A new King in Rags could make a solid start to further adventures in the doomed township of Twine.

The curse on Twine is seemingly lifted, and everyone within the throne room returns to flesh and bone. A grateful Lord Mallow learns what has happened from his daughter and considers a suitable reward for characters who have saved his kingdom, such as land or titles—or maybe a place at his side as his son-in-law.

That remaining story is yours.

Appendix:



LORD MALLOW OF TWINE ANNOUNCES THE WEDDING, BY LONG CUSTOM, OF HIS BELOVED DAUGHTER CELANDINE, TO THE FEY KING IN RAGS.

ME REQUESTS YOUR PRESENCE AT THE EVENT, HELD AT THE ASHEN MALL IN THE CITADEL OF TWINE.

IT IS THE CUSTOM OF THE LORD TO BEST HIS FEY GUESTS IN GAMES OF SKILL AND COURAGE, AND THE LORD ANNOUNCES A PRIZE OF A 1,000 PIECES OF GOLD FOR ANYONE WHO CAN DEFEAT HIS GUEST AT SUCH.

ME HOPES YOU WILL PARTICIPATE AND SHOW THAT MORTAL FLESH CAN BETTER THE TRICKERY OF THE FEY

SINCERELY



By Brian W Suskind

In their arrogance, the White Knights prepare to awaken and fight an ancient evil, not realizing they will fall...and with them, Bourgund itself. Can you thwart the city's guardians before an army of primordial giants awakens once more?

"Among the Red Monoliths" is an urban fantasy adventure suitable for four 7th- to 9th-level PCs.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Before there was Midgard, Aurgelmir, the first and greatest giant, arose in the crucible of life, where rime met flame. This first entity created two groups of creatures: primordial giants, copies of his physical image, and the eldest of the gods, reflections of his vast power. The giants bred true, spawning the ancestors of the giant kin seen today, but the gods produced children far more slowly. Seeing a threat to their power in the amassing number of giants, the gods struck first. During the war that erupted, the gods slew their father and built Midgard from of his body. Defeated and brought before their victorious siblings, the remaining primordial giants pled for the lives of their children. Granting mercy to the offspring, the gods went on to imprison each primordial giant within a menhir of crimson stone.

The task of keeping the prisoners within their cages fell to Marena, the Red Goddess of Winter. Born from the darkest days of the war, the Blood Maiden knew only too well the horrible power of the sleeping giants, and throughout the centuries, she has performed her task as warden well. After the emergence of the common races, however, Marena passed her charge to her human priestesses, giving them a ritual to perform every decade to reinforce and renew the power of the giants' prison.

Ignorant of the true nature of the red monoliths, mortals built the city of Bourgund in and around the standing stones. The Red Sisterhood of Marena formed a secret cult within the duchy, called the Shrouds, solely dedicated to performing the ritual once every 10 years. Though some among the upper echelons of the city's guardians, the Order of the White Knights, knew of the giants, they left the matter in the Shrouds' hands. With the White Knights protecting the city from known threats, and the Shrouds, working in secret, protecting the city from the threat beneath their very nose, Bourgund prospered.

For a long time, that was enough.

Recently however, Lord Markus Alavaine learned the truth about the monoliths. The youngest of the White Knights' elite Order of the Rose, Markus burns to match the deeds of the White Knights of old, famous for felling Zhergthoth, one of the Old Ones. Declaring to his superiors that he could not stand idly by with the threat of the giants and the Shrouds hanging over everyone's heads, he convinced them to allow the White Knights to bring down the red monoliths (Aurgelmir's Teeth) once and for all.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Upon arriving in Bourgund, the adventurers find the city under martial law, with the White Knights patrolling the streets and barricading the areas around Aurgelmir's Teeth, the huge crimson stones scattered around the city. While the knights confidently claim to be ready to defeat the evil soon to emerge from the stones, they actively confiscate powerful magics from visitors and citizens alike to aid the cause. When asked to surrender their most powerful items, the PCs must comply with the order, flee from the city, or attack the knights—or somehow Bluff the guards.

Once free of the knights, the PCs meet the last surviving members of the Shrouds, who bring the PCs to a hidden temple of the Red Goddess. Their leader, Priestess Lethana, begs for their aid. Markus Alavaine seeks to stop the ritual keeping the giants within the stones asleep, believing that the White Knights can defeat the ancient giants, but Lethana knows the knights will fail. If the PCs do not help the cult complete their dark rite, Bourgund will be destroyed.

While scrambling to avoid searching patrols, the PCs brave the thriving Bourgund black market to secure *scryward stones* and *amulets of proof against detection and location*. In their dealings with the black market, they encounter the wily Songraven (see *Midgard Legends*). How the party handles that meeting could provide benefits later in the adventure. Then, the adventurers enact daring plans to clear out the White Knight defenders from five locations across the city, so the Shroud's cultists can perform their ritual. Four sites can be tackled in any order, but the centermost monolith, the one in the Duke's Court, must be last. The decisions the PCs make at these sites can create difficulties for them later in the adventure.

The number of giants who break free, if any, depends on the party's successes or failures leading up to the final ritual site, the Duke's Court. There, at the feet of the largest monolith, the adventurers face off with Lord Markus and his White Knights. While doing so, the menhir cracks open, freeing a primordial giant, an Aspect of Aurgelmir! It then takes the combined might of the adventurers, the Shrouds, and the White Knights to save Bourgund from utter destruction.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

While this adventure begins upon the PCs' arrival at the Bourgund's gates, the hook (Priestess Lethana's call for aid) occurs a bit later on. Some groups might decide to side with the White Knights, and, though this is not a route supported by the main text, a sidebar does present options for groups following this path.

GMs are urged to set up and/or foreshadow reasons why the PCs might side with the cult. Such motivations could include:

- One of the characters has a relative in the city (who is secretly a member of the Shrouds).
- A mentor of the party sends them to Bourgund to investigate the White Knights' strange behavior.
- The Commander of the White Knights, Count Tremvar Yellete, sends the PCs an invitation to come to the city. Tremvar wants the cultists' ritual to succeed, but he cannot publically support a group dedicated to Marena, so he brings in the adventurers, hoping they can thwart Markus.

İNTRODUCTION

The characters have travelled for some time along a dusty trade road among the stark features of the badlands outside the Wastes. Now, with the looming figures of the Walkers at the horizon and the decaying carcass of Zhergthoth just outside the city, the gleaming, pristine walls of Bourgund come into view.

Part One:



Bourgund, the Jewel of the West, is a shining city of exceptionally privileged citizens, where crime is rare and the signs of affluent comfort abound. However, these advantages come with a price. The soldiers of the Order of the White Knights and their armor-bonded wizards in the towers of Mageholme keep a tight watch on the city. Citizens, who never know when wizards might be scrying with spell or familiar, maintain a somewhat foppish, smiling facade to hide their very real terror of the strict laws preserving the city's veneer.

Famous for defeating the Old One Zhergthoth in ages past, the White Knights arrogantly believe they are the paragon of martial skills, especially with the added magical support of their armor-bonded wizards. In recent times, however, this assertion has never been truly tested. And, some believe the knights' reliance on their wizards has actually made them more complacent and soft.

ENTERING THE CITY (CR 7+)

The morning air is dusty, metallic, and tinged with decay wafting in from the Wastes as you draw near Bourgund.

The city's white walls, strangely unmarked by time or weather, present a stark contrast to the badlands of the surrounding countryside.

With mages watching by spell and scrying, Bourgund is a very secure city. By the time the party reaches the gates, the tower mages of Mageholme Citadel have detected, evaluated, and scanned the PCs for magical auras.

Several junior White Knight guards wave the group through, but once the PCs enter beyond the gates, matters quickly turn dire.

After passing through the city's gates, you find yourselves in a small plaza bordered on all sides by city's high walls. Directly across the plaza, another smaller gate opens into the city itself.

Behind you, the entrance gates' great metal doors swing shut. Two knights, resplendent in gleaming plate mail, step up to block the way ahead, as two more approach from behind you.

"Halt, travelers," says one of the knights. "Bourgund is under martial law until the present crisis passes. We see you possess magical objects of certain strength. These are hereby confiscated to be used in the city's defense."

Caught between the White Knights, the party finds itself in a tricky spot. Thanks to their armor-bonded mages' insights, the White Knight guards unerringly point out at least one magic item—the most powerful one held by each member as decided by the GM—per party member. Those are the items they want, and they will not accept any trade or bargaining for other items.

Should the party parley with the knights (DC 15 Diplomacy), they can learn the following:

Question	Response
What crisis?	An army of sleeping giants, long imprisoned within stone pillars within the city, stands poised to awaken and slaughter us all. But fear not, for the White Knights shall be triumphant.
Why take our items?	Our mages tell us we need to power their enchantments with magical objects to break the giants free under our terms. This won't harm your items, and we will return them to you once we resolve the crisis.
What kind of giants?	Big ones. Ancient ones. Who knows? They've been trapped in stone longer than the city's been around.
Why deal with them now?	Because we cannot let that sort of threat hang over our heads. Our predecessors defeated a Walker by themselves. Can we show any less bravery or commitment?
What if we refuse?	Then you'll be arrested, and we will confiscate the items anyway.

WHITE KNIGHT GUARDS (4)

XP 800 each

Male or female human (armor-bonded) fighter 4 **hp** 30 (see **Appendix** for stats)

TACTICS

Uses subdual attacks unless damaged with lethal force. Reinforcements teleport in during round two.

OUTCOME

The party's choices boil down to four options: Bluff the guards, surrender their items, fight to keep the items, or attempt to flee. The consequences of these choices are as follows:

Bluff or Enchant the Guards

If the party succeeds at a DC 25 Diplomacy check and a DC 15 Bluff check, the guards reluctantly let them pass into the city without surrendering their items. This should not be a flat dice roll, however; players should be encouraged to roleplay this encounter.

PCs may also attempt to *charm person* or use *suggestion* (or other such magic) against the guards. If this works, they can convince the guards to take something of lesser value instead. This gives them a reprieve of 1d4 rounds—until the wizards realize the knights gathered the wrong items.

Soon after entering the city, the characters notice (DC 10 Perception check) increasing numbers of White Knight Guards trailing them. The priestess Lethana approaches them (see below) within a few minutes after they enter the city.

Surrender Their Items

If the party meekly hands over their items, the White Knights thank them for their support and promise to return their items once the crisis has passed. Then they allow the PCs to enter into the city. The items are taken under guard to one of the four locations detailed in **Part Two**. Soon afterwards, Lethana approaches the heroes (see below).

Fight to Keep the Items

If the party fights, use the stat block above. However, keep in mind that their armor-bonded wizards scry the White Knights almost constantly and teleport in reinforcements as needed: One knight in the second round, and then two additional knights every round afterwards.

Should the White Knights capture the party, they drag the PCs to Greengate Prison, where the characters are stripped of their belongings (DC 15 Sleight of Hand to hide small items opposed by the guards' +0 Perception) and thrown into cells. The prison is not detailed in this adventure, so GMs will need to improvise in such a situation. Lethana frees the party in the middle of the first night, and returns their belongings except for the items the knights confiscated for their upcoming battle. She then takes the party to the hidden shrine (see below).

Attempt to Flee

While retreat either into or away from the city may seem like the best course of action, the White Knights refuse to let the party leave without confiscating their items. With their wizards' abilities to teleport them ahead of the adventurers, the knights should be able to quickly overtake the party, thereby forcing them to either fight or surrender.

If the party should manage to escape and evade the White Knights, Lethana approaches them at the next logical resting point (see below).

MEETING LETHANA

CR 3

No matter which choice the party makes in regard to their confrontation with the White Knights at the city gates, Lethana eventually finds them. While GMs should feel free to change this meeting to reflect the outcomes listed above, having the priestess come to the party just after a fight or chase is ideal.

Nearby, you hear the hard drumming sound of a White Knight patrol's hobnailed boots.

"Hold, please," a voice calls out to you softly. "Be at peace. I am a friend."

An older woman with silver eyes and dressed in red priestly robes materializes out of empty air. She holds her hands down with palms open, signifying she has no weapons. "I am Lethana, part of the underground here in Bourgund. Come with me, I beg you. I have a safe place where you can hide from the White Knights." Lethana ensures the party is alone when she approaches them, and she promises to answer their questions when they are safe. If they agree to accompany her, she leads them into the sewers below Bourgund.

If the party languishes in prison when Lethana meets them, she exacts a promise from them to come to her shrine to hear her proposal before she aids them. If they agree, she produces a key from a pocket, unlocks their cells, and shows them a hidden passage into the sewers below Bourgund.

If the party managed to escape from Bourgund, Lethana approaches them after they battle or elude the White Knights. She offers to help; if they agree to her terms, she uses magical means to transport them to the sewers outside the hidden shrine.

QUESTIONING LETHANA

Question	Response
Who are you?	I am Lethana, a priestess of Marena the Red Goddess, and leader of the Shrouds.
What is this place?	A hidden shrine dating back to Bourgund's founding day. The Goddess' faith is not beloved in this part of the world, so we hide from those above.
The Shrouds?	We are an ancient sect charged with performing a sacred task given to us by the Goddess.
Task?	Every decade, we enact certain rites at each of the crimson stones scattered across the city to keep an army of primordial giants asleep.
What rites?	The rites to ensure the primordial giants remain asleep.
Giant's story	Lethana knows all of the information in the Adventure Background section. GMs should paraphrase that as they see fit.
What's changed?	Please understand, the leaders of the White Knights have known of our task for centuries. They trusted us to keep the giants asleep and to curtail our Goddess's moreenthusiastic practices. But when Markus Alavaine learned about the giants, he became obsessed.
Markus's Plan	Markus is an ambitious and newly appointed member of the Order of the Rose, and elite group of White Knights. He convinced the influential group that the knights could crush the giants if they woke them on their own terms. Markus is wrong. The White Knights once defeated a Walker of the Wastes, but that was generations ago, and the current crop of knights do not have a tenth of their predecessors' skills. If they wake the giants, they— and perhaps Bourgund itself—will perish.
What have you done?	Under Alavaine's direction, the White Knights were spread too thin guarding all of the red monoliths. It was easy for my priestesses to begin conducting our rituals. Easy at first, mind you, and we've cleared seven. But the more stones we renewed, the greater the White Knights guarded the remaining sites. In our last attempt, the White Knights killed many of us, and those remaining are not strong enough to make another attempt (she points to the wounded being tended). There are still four stones remaining, as well as the centerstone, which the ritual demands be last.
What do you need from us?	My daughter, Darcia, will guide you through the sewers to make contact with a small group of Shrouds near each monolith. Protect them from harm and distract or remove the White Knights at each area. Then my priestesses will rush in and perform the ritual. I am not asking you to kill anyone, though my Goddess does appreciate a good slaughter. We need the guards out of the way; how you do it is up to you.
What about our items?	The objects taken from you are no doubt located at each of the remaining monoliths. The Knights plan on using their power to force the giants awake.
What's in it for us?	For aiding us, I will part with some of my Goddess' favored gems, a red diamond for each of you (DC 15 Appraise – red diamonds are worth 3000gp each).

Lethana

XP 1,600

Female human aristocrat 2/cleric of Marena 5 **hp** 51 (see **Appendix** for stats)

TACTICS

Uses her spells to disable her foes, and then finishes them with her melee weapon.

CR 5

THE HIDDEN SHRINE OF THE RED GODDESS

Lethana guides the party into cleanly sewers which mage-bred creatures cleanse weekly. The trip through the sewers takes about an hour and can be glossed over, or the GM can add in a random encounter.

OPTIONAL RANDOM ENCOUNTER (D10)

D10	Result
1-5	White Knight Patrol 1d6 White Knight Guards
6-8	Cleaning Crew 1d3 Gelatinous Cubes (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i>)
9-10	Cleaning Foremen 1d3 Otyughs (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i>)

Eventually, Lethana opens a secret door in an otherwise unremarkable sewer tunnel and leads the party down a flight of stairs.

The stairway empties into a long antechamber draped with red banners hanging from the high-arched walls. The heady odors of incense, wood smoke, and the faintest metallic tang of blood hang in the air. A makeshift infirmary occupies one side of the room, where a few women in red robes tend to a dozen injured people. A stylized skull, painted with ocher and fading crimson, dominates the far wall above an altar.

"Welcome to the Shrine of Marena," Lethana says, gesturing at the room. "Here, you are safe from scrying. In exchange, I hope that you will aid us in our hour of need. But you must have questions. Ask them. I am at your disposal."

Despite the assurances, the party might not feel safe in a shrine dedicated to the Goddess of Winter, Sickness, and Death; however, Lethana does whatever possible to convince them. She does not attack them, and she only uses her spells as a matter of last resort.

NOTE: This adventure assumes the party arrived in Bourgund in the morning, giving them until sundown to complete their tasks. However, GMs should feel free to alter this timeline for an earlier or later arrival.

THE FIVE LOCATIONS

The five monoliths left can be found in the following places. GMs should paraphrase this information if needed.

Chandler's Plaza (**Market District**) – a busy shop- and stalllined square in a highly patrolled commercial area.

Council Street (Banking District) – a wide avenue between two banks patrolled by mounted Knights.

PLAYERS AND ITEM LOSS

Some players may violently object to losing their characters' items rather than going along with the story. To ease the players' concerns, GMs can reassure them that opportunities to recover the items appear later in the adventure.

Flower Fountain (Bouquet District) – a decorative fountain surrounded by small incense shops and large perfume emporiums

Victory Park (near Mageholme Citadel) – a monument honoring the first Bourgund duke's defeat of a goblin king. It lies in a small grass-covered commons outside the gates of Mageholme.

The Grand Plaza (Duke's District) – the centerstone rests in a courtyard in front of the Duke Ignatius Metenne's palace. Though probably the best guarded, the ritual demands it be tackled last.

If the party agrees to help, Lethana introduces them to her daughter, Darcia.



Joining Forces With The Knights

While not the main point of this adventure, it is possible some groups may decide to side with the White Knights rather than the Shrouds. GMs should use the following guidelines if such an outcome occurs.

- If the party either refuses to help Lethana or kills her (and/or her priestesses), the next group of White Knights they encounter thanks them profusely. The knights bring the PCs before Markus Alavaine, who tries to enlist their aid, promising gold and magical items if they agree to help fight the giants.
- At sundown, the giants awaken. The rituals to return the giants to sleep are no long effective, and Bourgund's dozen monoliths produce one giant each (see stats in **Part Three** below), creating a battle beyond the scope of the White Knights' prediction. GMs should play up the dire and desperate circumstances as the White Knights find themselves woefully unprepared to face the giants' fury.
- The party can work with the knights to conduct guerrilla raids against individual giants, or they can struggle to guide groups of refugees out of the city and then hunt down the giants. With the giants' rebirthing ability, this becomes a never-ending battle—unless or until the ritual can be enacted.

Lethana calls to her side a young woman just out of childhood with dimpled cheeks and bright, excited eyes. "This is my daughter, Darcia," the elder priestess tells you. "She will guide you through the sewers to the monoliths. But first, we shall need something to hide you from the White Knights. Luckily, a sympathetic friend in Bourgund's black market will provide us with *scryward stones*. Darcia?" The girl grins at you. "When you're ready, I'm ready!"

CR 1/2

Darcia

XP 200 each

Female human cleric of Marena 1 **hp** 13 (see **Appendix** for complete stats)

ROLEPLAYING NOTES

A plucky, 14-year-old girl with a wine-colored birthmark on her neck, Darcia seems to possess the exuberance and energy of three teens. She knows all of the information about the monoliths (see the Adventure Background) should the party have questions. While she already dedicated herself to the Red Goddess, she feels that all the blood and pain required for the ritual is "somewhat yucky."

If the party agrees to go to the black market, she leads them through the sewers to visit Songraven. Otherwise, Darcia leads them to the monolith they have chosen to attempt first.

BOURGUND'S BLACK MARKET (CR 7)

The sewer exit opens onto an alley looking out onto a rather plain-looking warehouse district. Very wide, threestory buildings line both sides of a long, slightly curving street. Silently, Darcia indicates a building just ahead as your destination.

As the party moves toward the building, there is a 20% chance the PCs encounter a patrol (4 White Knight Guards). If this occurs, GMs should improvise the encounter.

At the warehouse, Darcia knocks a complicated pattern on the door. A voice from within asks, "Yes?"

"A crown in the tree," Darcia responds, and the door opens. She hurriedly gestures for you to go inside

Within the dark, cramped interior of the warehouse, make-shift stalls perch between towering rows of crates and boxes. Nervous figures dart from merchant to merchant, making their purchases as if they were afraid of their own shadows. Darcia leads you through the black market to a small table, where a shifty-looking man pours odd-smelling liquids into the waiting customers' cups.

"Croak-Eye has what we want," she says, pointing to a ravenheaded creature (huginn or tengu) dressed in ragged finery.

"Well, well," the huginn says, turning around. "Look what the magpie's brought. Darcia I know, but you...adventurers, yes? You, I do not know. I am Drouin Stroud, called Songraven by some, less polite things by others. How can I help you?"

The Songraven (*Midgard Legends*), an 11th-level huginn bard, has built up a reputation for tweaking the noses of the powerful with his witty verses and satirical antics. He owes the Shrouds a favor, so if a party member battles him in a Performance Contest, he will provide the PCs with as many *scryward stones* as they need. No matter the outcome, the PCs gain the stones for merely participating in the contest, though he won't let on to this fact.

PERFORMANCE CONTEST

This is a modification of Performance Combat (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*), but if GMs wish, they may use those rules instead.

If the party agrees to the contest, read this:

The Songraven leaps up onto the table, crying out, "Friends! Ruffians! People who do not wish to be identified! Come and witness to a battle of entertainment with yourselves as the judges!"

A small crowd begins to gather.

For three rounds, the Songraven and one PC make opposed performance contest checks.

d20 + Charisma bonus + bonus from base attack + bonus from ranks in a relevant skill

The crowd's attitude serves as the jury. The same character need not compete in each round.

In this contest, the relevant skill depends on what the heroes are doing to entertain the crowd. Possibilities include:

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Perform (sing), Knowledge (any monster-lore-related knowledge), Acrobatics (juggle), Acrobatics (tumbling), etc. Some feats, spells, or other circumstances may grant additional bonuses at the GM's discretion.

Base Attack Bonus	Bonus to Performance Contest Check
0	+0
1-5	+1
6-10	+2
11-15	+3
16+	+4

Skill Ranks	Bonus to Performance Contest Check
0	+0
1-5	+1
6-10	+2
11-15	+3
16+	+4

The winner raises the crowd's attitude toward them by one step. The loser's crowd attitude remains unchanged, unless their opposed check failed by 5 or more; then it lowers one step. At the end of the third round, whoever has the highest crowd attitude wins. The crowd's initial attitude toward both competitors begins at indifferent.

Crowd Attitude	Round 1	Round 3	Round 3
Hostile			
Unfriendly			
Indifferent			
Friendly			
Helpful			

SONGRAVEN'S TACTICS (PLUS HIS CHECK MODIFIER):

Round one – mimes being chased and then stepped upon by a giant (d20 + 6)

Round two – juggles and palms coins from behind people's ears (d20 + 4)

Round three – sings "The White Donkey," mocking the White Knights (d20 +9)

When the contest ends, the crowd applauds loudly for the winner. Win or lose, the Songraven aids the party; he just enjoys making people perform.

SCRYWARD STONES

Aura moderate abjuration; CL 8th Slot -; Price 1,500gp; Weight -

DESCRIPTION

This small rune-carved stone protects the holder from detection spells. Upon activation, the stone generates a field that blocks spells like scry, locate person, and so forth, for 24 hours. After that time frame has elapsed, the stone crumbles to dust.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, nondetection; Cost 3000gp

"Well done! Well done, indeed. I am thoroughly entertained. You shall have your *scryward stones* as my name is the Songraven!"

He hands the PCs a bag containing enough stones to go around.

If the party defeated or tied the Songraven, he also says the following:

"Not many can match me at my own games, my friends. For that you gain my favor. I know what dangers you face in Bourgund, and I wish to help. Take this *feather token*. If you have need of an old raven like me, throw it to the ground, and I will appear and help as I can."

THE SONGRAVEN'S AID

If they gain the huginn's favor, he can provide a number of benefits should they make use of the token he gave them.

NOTE: GMs can inform their players that, in game terms, using the *feather token* allows the party to use the Songraven's bardic abilities in one of the monolith locations detailed in the next section. He does not fight in melee, but he will use his spells and talents to help the party

SONGRAVEN'S BARDIC ABILITIES

Fascinate (DC 21 Will save) Inspire Competence +4 Inspire Courage +3 Inspire Greatness Suggestion (DC 21 Will save)

SONGRAVEN'S SPELLS (CL 11th)

4th (3/day) dominate person (DC 20), greater invisibility, rainbow pattern (DC 20)

3rd (5/day) charm monster (DC 19), crushing despair (DC 19), haste, slow (DC 19)

2nd (6/day) cure moderate wounds, hold person (DC 18), minor image (DC 18), silence (DC 18), tongues

1st (7/day) charm person (DC 17), cure light wounds, disguise self, expeditious retreat, hideous laughter (DC 17), identify

0 (at will) dancing lights, detect magic, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic

When they are ready, Darcia leads the party through the sewers to the selected monolith.

Part Two: Trials And Rituals In The Streets

Handled in sandbox fashion, the party's attempts to clear the monoliths for the priestesses of the Shroud have no set order apart from the centerstone being last. While some groups might just resort to swords and spells, this approach may quickly backfire, given the White Knights' ability to teleport in reinforcements (one White Knight Guard in the second round and then 2 more every round after).

How the party clears a given location is up to them. GMs should arbitrate the final word on success or failure. Detailed in each area are various terrain elements, NPCs, objects, and situations that provide characters with ample ingredients to enact their plans. This information should be given when asked for, not as a result of general rolls. GMs can apply other skill checks as necessary.

CHANDLER'S PLAZA (CR 7)

This lone monolith stands in the center of a busy market square, perhaps 200 feet to a side, lined by stone-walled shops. Illuminated glass globes hang from metal cords crisscrossing the cobblestone plaza above a scattering of wooden stalls with well-dressed and reserved merchants politely hawking their wares to the shopping citizenry. Three streets open evenly onto Chandler's Plaza, while a fourth leads up a sharp incline to more buildings perched on a higher elevation.

A contingent of White Knights encircles the monolith.

THE SHROUDS

The five Shroud priestesses at this location each carry a rabbit in a wicker cage.

GLASS GLOBES

DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) – The glass globes contain a constantly burning resin which can quickly spread to flammable objects.

Globes - hardness 1, hp 2, break DC 10.

Resin – 2d6 fire damage + 1d6 per round for 1d10 rounds (unless extinguished).

WAGON

DC 20 Perception – A wagon full of hay rests at the top of the incline street with a brick under its wheels to keep it from rolling downhill. AC 25 to hit the brick with a ranged attack.

UNSTABLE BUILDING

DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) – One of the shops surrounding the plaza is quite old and appears to be structurally unsound. Dealing at least 40 hp of damage to one of the building's walls causes it to collapse.

WHITE KNIGHTS (CR 7)

The following force guards the monolith:

- 2 White Knight Guards
- 1 Mageholme Wizard
- 4 White Knight Squires

Any additional reinforcements from successes at other locations (see **Monoliths and Rituals Sidebar**).

NOTE: If the White Knight Guards are attacked, additional reinforcements can arrive at a rate of 1 in the first round and 2 each additional round, at the GM's discretion.

THE RITUAL

When the Shrouds begin the ritual, they each slit the throat of their rabbits and spread blood on the monolith by hand while casting in unison.

TREASURE

In addition to the White Knight's combat gear, one item confiscated from the party can be found here.

COUNCIL STREET (CR 8)

This monolith waits on one corner of the intersection of Council Street and Duke's Way. Built into the side of nearly renovated Alabaster and Sons Bank, scaffolding and crates of building supplies almost obscure it from view. A White Knight contingent guards the area from the base of the monolith.

Across the way, another bank, Fanrit Lending, occupies most of that side of Council Street. Facing into the intersection along Duke's Way, the tolling bell in the tower of the Temple of Ailuros calls the faithful to worship.

THE SHROUDS

The Shroud priestesses at this location each carry a scourge or whip of knotted cord.

SCAFFOLDING

DC 15 Knowledge (engineering)—the scaffolding could be collapsed with simultaneous attacks of at least 20 points of damage on 2 key points (GMs can place these points where they wish). Falling scaffolding deals 10d6 damage (Reflex DC 15 half).

DC 20 Perception—with enough stealth (DC 20 Stealth), it is possible to approach unseen via the scaffolding.

BUILDING SUPPLIES

DC 15 Perception—there are stacks of bricks and mortar on the various scaffolding platforms, even above the monolith and knights.

THE BANKS

DC 10 Knowledge (local)—both banks have alarm bells, which are rung in the event of a robbery.

TEMPLE OF AILUROS

DC 20 Knowledge (religion)—the priests of Ailuros store the clay jars containing the highly flammable incense they use in their rituals in the bell tower.

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CR 3

CR 4

Monoliths and Rituals

SUCCESS INCREASES DIFFICULTY

Victory at each location causes the White Knights to reallocate their forces to the remaining monoliths. GMs should use the following table:

INCREASING DIFFICULTY TABLE

For every successfully cleared monolith, adjust the remaining locations as follows:

- Add 2 White Knight Squires
- +2 DC for the listed skill/ability checks
- Increase the time it takes to complete the ritual by 1 round per success

TRAVEL BY SEWER

On the way to each monolith, Darcia guides the PCs through the sewers. It takes about an hour to travel from location to location. GMs should assume sewer exits exist within a block or two of each area.

The GM can gloss over this travel time, or he may add a random encounter at his discretion.

OPTIONAL RANDOM ENCOUNTER (D10)

1-5	White Knight Patrol:	1d6 White Knight Guards
6-8	Cleaning Crew:	1d3 Gelatinous Cubes (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)
9-10	Cleaning Foremen	1d3 Otyughs (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

SHROUD PRIESTESSES

A group of five Shroud priestesses awaits the party at each location's sewer exit. They obey the party's orders/ plans, and they move to the monolith when told to do so.

SHROUD PRIESTESSES (5)

(5) CR 2

XP 600 each

Female human cleric of Marena 3 hp 25 (see Appendix for stats)

TACTICS

Follows Lethana's lead; spells to disable then melee.

If the characters do not tell share the plan with the Shrouds, then read this:

"Excuse me, my lords," one of the priestesses says, "but when should we go to the monolith?"

The ritual at each monolith takes 2 rounds to accomplish, plus any additional rounds from previous location successes (see above). **NOTE**: If three out of five Shrouds perish, or if the ritual is irrevocably interrupted (GM's decision), the location is considered a failure. After a failure (or success), Darcia urges the party to move to the next one.

WHITE KNIGHTS

The following quick stats should be used for the encountered White Knights.

WHITE KNIGHT GUARDS

XP 1,200 each

Male or female human (armor-bonded) fighter 4 **hp** 30 (see **Appendix** for full stats)

TACTICS

Engage attackers, but concentrate on the Shroud priestesses if spotted.

MAGEHOLME WIZARDS

XP 1,600

Male or female human wizard 5

hp 25 (see Appendix for full stats)

TACTICS

Provide ranged spell support for knights, focusing on using high-damage spells first.

WHITE KNIGHT SQUIRESCR 1/2

XP 200 each

Male or female human fighter 1 hp 25 (see Appendix for stats)

TACTICS

Work in pairs to engage all foes.

The White Knight Guards can each be bolstered by the following spells (1/round):

- **Divine**: air bubble, bull's strength, cure light wounds, cure moderate wounds, detect poison, divine favor, guidance, protection from evil, resistance, resist energy, shield of faith, stabilize
- **Arcane**: blur, detect magic, dispel magic, endure elements, feather fall, haste, heroism, invisibility, jump, light, mending, protection from arrows, spider climb, true strike, vanish

XP AWARDS

While fighting is always an option, GMs should reward creative players who manage their tasks without resorting to combat—or use magic that does not harm the knights (like hold person or deep slumber). So, if the heroes drive away the knights from a location without fighting (or without harming the knights), award an equivalent amount of XP.

WHITE KNIGHTS (CR 8)

The force guarding the monolith includes:

- 2 White Knight Guards
- 2 Mageholme Wizards
- 2 White Knight Squires
- Any additional reinforcements from successes at other locations (see Monoliths and Rituals Sidebar).
- **NOTE**: If the White Knight Guards are attacked, additional reinforcements can arrive at a rate of 1 in the first round and 2 each additional round, at the GM's discretion.

THE RITUAL

When the Shrouds begin the ritual, they begin whipping themselves on the back with their knotted cord scourges, flinging their own blood upon the monolith as they chant in unison.

TREASURE

In addition to the White Knights' combat gear, one item confiscated from the party can be found here.

FLOWER FOUNTAIN (CR 7)

This monolith rests in the center of an ornamental fountain at an intersection in the heart of Bourgund's famous Bouquet District. Plastered over long ago and decorated with flowering vines, the menhir offers no clue to its true nature as jets of water rain down all around it.

Small incense shops and large perfume emporiums occupy the buildings in the area, filling the air with the sensual odors of thyme, verbena, and other exotic herbs. A fragrance distillery with large wooden vats displayed on the roof takes up one corner of the intersection. Down the opposite street, a group of protesters holds up signs in front of the Elven Embassy of Arbonesse.

Citizens and foreigners alike walk the pristine streets, literally following the enticing aromas and pretending to ignore the White Knights camped out around the fountain.

THE SHROUDS

The Shrouds in this location each carry skull-shaped branding irons that have been dipped in naphtha.

FOUNTAIN

DC 15 Perception—the water in the fountain is about three feet deep.

WOODEN VATS

DC 15 Knowledge (local)—the vats hold hundreds of gallons of raw grain spirits used to create various perfumes and scents.

DC 20 Knowledge (engineering)—dealing at least 15 points of damage to the struts holding up a vat causes it to fall off the building.

EMBASSY PROTESTORS

DC 20 Bluff/Diplomacy/Intimidate—inflames the anti-elven feeling in this otherwise sedate group into a mob.

WHITE KNIGHTS (CR 7)

The force guarding the monolith includes:

- 1 White Knight Guard
- 1 Mageholme Wizard
- 8 White Knight Squires

Any additional reinforcements from successes at other locations (see Monoliths and Rituals Sidebar).

NOTE: If the White Knight Guards are attacked, additional reinforcements can arrive at a rate of 1 in the first round and 2 each additional round, at the GM's discretion.

THE RITUAL

When the Shrouds begin the ritual, they all cast *spark* on the branding irons, setting them afire. Then they put their palms on the monolith and brand the backs of their hands while casting in unison.

TREASURE

In addition to the White Knights' combat gear, one item confiscated from the party can be found here.

VICTORY PARK (CR 8)

Located in Victory Park, under the shadow of the many spires of Mageholme Citadel, this monolith lurks as part of a monument honoring Sun Duke Martenne's victory over Dizzerax, the goblin king. With trails leading to clearings between densely packed trees and shrubbery, the park itself covers about one-fifth of a mile along a side wall of the Citadel.

About 170 feet away, at the other side of the park, the temporary corrals and tents of a horse-fair attract nearby citizens away from the area around the monument and the White Knight guards encamped at its base.

THE SHROUDS

The Shrouds at this location each carry small iron orbs containing human souls (recently "gathered"). A DC 25 Perception check reveals whispering moans of pain and suffering coming from the orbs.

HORSE FAIR

DC 15 Knowledge (nature) – a sufficient explosion or fire would spook the herds of horses in the corrals.

WALLS

DC 20 Perception – junior mages stand on the rail-less wall of Mageholme Citadel looking at the park.

TREES

DC 15 Perception – some of the trees are tall enough to overlook the monument and the White Knights.

WHITE KNIGHTS (CR 8)

The force guarding the monolith includes:

- 2 White Knight Guards
- 2 Mageholme Wizard
- 4 White Knight Squires
- Any reinforcements from successes at other locations (see the **Monoliths and Rituals Sidebar**).

NOTE: If the White Knight Guards are attacked, additional reinforcements can arrive at a rate of 1 in the first round and 2 each additional round, at the GM's discretion.

THE RITUAL

The Shrouds break the orbs open, releasing the souls. Over the duration of the ritual, the ghostly forms, screaming in terror and despair, break apart while the Shrouds chant in unison.

TREASURE

In addition to the White Knights' combat gear, one item confiscated from the party can be found here.

Part Three:



After the final success or failure at the other monoliths, Darcia urges the party to rush to the final location, the centerstone.

DUKE'S DISTRICT

Darcia leads you from the sewers onto a small street, where Lethana and six priestesses await you. Up ahead, the street empties into a wide-open area.

"We must hurry," Lethana says. "There is not much time left."

Lethana allows the PCs any last-minute preparations or questions, but she urges them to hurry. If it comes up, Lethana conceals Darcia's role in the final ritual.

THE GRAND PLAZA (CR VARIES)

The wide expanse of the Grand Plaza stretches out before you, leading toward the Duke's palace and the final monolith. Set into side of the Ducal Palace itself, the centerstone seems to glow as dusk approaches. Two staircases run up on either side of the monolith, leading to the palace's front entrance.

A cadre of White Knights waits upon the flagstones of this courtyard, all eyes upon the monolith.

From your position at the edge of the buildings surrounding the plaza you can see an impressive-looking knight standing in between the other knights and the monolith.

"It's Markus Alavaine, himself," Lethana mutters, and you can just make out Alavaine's voice in mid-speech.

"...our mighty mages have linked the stones so our foes shall all emerge here and face our blades!

So trust in your training and the honor long carried by our Order. Though the hands of evil have tried to thwart us, we shall defeat this threat to our beloved city as our predecessors once did to the Fallen One. Is our dedication less than theirs? No. Is our honor less than theirs? No! Is our strength less than theirs?"

"No!" The assembled knights cry out in one voice. The glow around the monolith intensifies.

"Then prepare yourselves for battle, my brothers!"



If the party succeeded at all of the locations, then Lethana calls out to Markus as he finishes his speech:

"It is over, Markus!" Lethana shouts. "We have completed our ritual. The giants will not awaken this day!"

If the party failed at some or all of the locations, then Lethana says the following:

"You must stop, Markus!" Lethana shouts. "This mad quest for glory cannot end in anything but failure for us all!"

Either way, Markus' reply is the same:

Markus snarls at Lethana. "Evil witch! You're the one who's failed. I always have a second option. In this case, my mages have already broken through the enchantments on this stone. Soon this giant will lay dead at our feet—as will you. Knights, draw your blades and attack!"

The White Knights turn to face you in a well-practiced maneuver. Then they pull out their weapons and advance.

The party and the Shrouds begin where the westernmost street opens onto the plaza, some 70 feet from the White Knights. Let the battle between the White Knights and the party/Shrouds play out for 1 round.

WHITE KNIGHTS

The contingent includes:

5 White Knight Guards 10 White Knight Squires 2 Mageholme Wizards Markus Alavaine

MARKUS ALAVAINE

XP 3,200

Male human (armor-bonded) cavalier (emissary) 7 hp 67 (see Appendix for stats)

TACTICS

Engages any attacker coming close, but concentrates on shouting orders to his men.

CR 7

CR 5

CR 1/2

SHROUDS

In addition to the standard priestesses, Lethana and Darcia are at the site:

LETHANA

XP 1,600

Female human aristocrat 2/cleric of Marena 5

hp 51 (see Appendix for stats)

TACTICS

Uses her spells to disable her foes, and then finishes them with her melee weapon.

DARCIA

XP 200

Female human cleric of Marena 1 hp 13 (see Appendix for stats)

TACTICS

Does not engage in combat, but circles the battlefield, heading for the monolith.



PRIMORDIAL GIANT(S) (varies)

XP 6,400 each Huge humanoid (giant)

hp 153 (see Appendix for stats)

TACTICS

Charge largest group of foes. Fight to the death.

After one round has elapsed (or longer if the GM wishes), read the following:

CR 9

Everyone in the plaza freezes with horror and surprise as the centerstone monolith erupts into a blazing column of cascading energy. A huge figure steps out of the inferno and the menhir seems to shudder as one of Aurgelmir's first children stands upon the world made from the slain body of his father.

Beneath his flat, forward-sloping head, this giant's cold, black eyes stare cruelly, while a smirk peeks out from behind the bestial tusks jutting up from his jaw. His hair and beard are blue fire, and his finely chiseled features and the glowing tattoos etched all over his body exude sheer power. The bone armor he wears seems to grow from beneath his pale-white skin, and he holds an oversized maul with hands and arms that appear as if they were carved from stone.

With one sweep of his maul, the primordial giant slams three of the White Knights to the ground and roars in fury at you. Behind him, another titan emerges from the blazing column.

How the party did in at other locations determines the number of giants who break free of the monoliths.

FAILED LOCATIONS	NUMBER OF Freed Giants	CR
0	2	11
1	3	12
2	4	13
3	6	14
4	8	15

So, if the party failed at any of the other ritual locations, add this:

More columns of energy stab into the sky from elsewhere in the city before arcing down into the centerstone. Other primordial giants emerge from the energy cascade to stand beside their brother.

WHITE KNIGHTS AND SHROUDS

With this new development, both Markus and Lethana rally their forces. On their turns, they attack the giants.

DARCIA

Trying to be stealthy, Darcia heads toward the monolith in order to complete the ritual and seal the primordial giants back inside their stones.

DC 25 Perception – Unseen by the other Shrouds, Darcia skirts widely around the battlefield, making her way toward the centerstone.

REBIRTH AND BEGINNING THE RITUAL

GMs should be flexible about the amount of time it takes Darcia to reach the centerstone and complete the ritual. Allow the party (with the middling help of the White Knights and the Shrouds) to kill at least one primordial giant, only to have it be restored by its rebirth ability.

As the giant falls, the thrill and satisfaction of victory rushes through you, but abruptly elation turns to dread as the body vanishes and the same giant, his wounds mostly healed, emerges from the monolith ready to renew the fray.

As soon as the giants move at least 60 feet away from the monolith, Darcia rushes over to it and begins the ritual. When she does, read this:

Darcia steps out in front of the monolith, a wicked-looking dagger in her hand, and begins to cry out a mystical-sounding ritual. "Be you bound…"

At the first words, the giants bellow with rage and fear. Then they turn to advance on the young girl.

Lethana cries out, "Protect Darcia! What she does is the only way to return the giants to their prison!"

BINDING RITUAL

Be you bound, by the grace of Marena, be you bound, By the hand of this anointed acolyte, be you bound!

By the will of the faithful, be you bound, By the blade of this sacred dagger, be you bound!

And by this sacrifice of my life and soul...Be. You. Bound!

- Consider every two lines of the ritual to be one round, so she completes it on her turn, three rounds after starting. If interrupted (by a giant attack, for example), she must start over at the beginning, requiring another three rounds.
- If any PC realizes Darcia means to sacrifice herself (DC 25 Sense Motive or Knowledge (religion)) and wishes to stop her, the PC has two rounds to do so.
- However, both Lethana and Darcia know this is the only way to return the giants to their stone prison. So, if the party stops one, the other jumps in to begin the ritual again.
- Unfortunately, the giant knows it, too, and upon hearing the ritual, moves to attack the chanter.

COMPLETING THE RITUAL

When either Darcia or Lethana complete the ritual, read this:

With her words ringing out in triumph, Darcia (or Lethana) finishes the ritual crying out, "...And by this sacrifice of my life and soul...Be. You. Bound!"

At the last word, she drags her dagger across her own throat, falling back into the blazing cascade of the monolith with her blood spraying into the air.

With a detonation like thunder, the energy blazing around the monolith reverses, the column becoming a vortex



AMONG THE RED MONOLITHS

pulling only upon the primordial giants. Howling with fury, fear, and anguish, the giants claw at the ground, as unseen forces pull them inexorably toward the blazing red stone. When the giants enter the monolith, the vortex of energy gutters out, leaving nothing but a few wisps of smoke that soon vanish in the breeze.

Part Four: Concluding The Adventure

Once the party defeats the giants and Darcia or Lethana sacrifices herself, Duke Ignatius Martenne arrives on the scene with Count Tremvar Yellete, High Commander of the White Knights, and a sizeable number of troops.

The ruler of Bourgund quickly secures the area and asks for a report. Visibly angry about how the White Knights endangered his city by trying to wake the giants, he promises to "discuss" the matter with Count Yellete later. Nevertheless, he thanks the party for their assistance and offers them a sizable reward for their service.

THE Dicke's Grand Plaza

THE KNIGHTS

If Markus Alavaine still lives, he is taken into custody by his own commander for "over-reaching." The Count promises to demote Markus and to remove a significant amount of his honor. This seems to please the Bourgundians at least. At the GM's discretion, Duke Martenne may imprison Tremvar for allowing the knights to interfere with the Shrouds.

THE SHROUDS

If any of the Shrouds survived the battle, Count Yellete attempts to arrest them, but the PCs can easily dissuade him from doing so. Surprisingly, should he still be alive, Markus Alavaine also speaks up on behalf of the Shrouds, claiming the priestesses defended the city with honor. Duke Martenne swears to give Lethana (or the highest surviving Shroud) a place on the White Council to prevent future misunderstandings.

THE HEROES

The adventurers receive their reward from the Shrouds (a red diamond worth 3000 gp for each character) and the Duke provides them a coffer of gems and platinum totaling 7000 gp. He also invites them to dine with him, whereupon he honors their role in saving the city.

If using the optional Status Rules (*Midgard Campaign Setting*), then award each character 1 status point for saving Bourgund from the threat of the giants. Optionally, GMs wanting

> to explore mythic-level play can have PCs exposed to the ancient magic containing the primordial giants gain access to mythic tiers.

> Many knights, believing the characters robbed them of their chance at glory and honor, may feel less than kindly toward the party (especially if the heroes killed any knights during this adventure). They seek their revenge sometime soon. What form this vengeance takes is a matter for future adventures.

APPENDİX: NPC ŞTATİŞTİCŞ

WHITE KNIGHT SQUIRE CR 1/2

XP 200

Human fighter 1 NG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex)

hp 12 (1d10+2)

Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee heavy steel shield bash +4 (1d4+3/x2) and mwk bastard sword +5 (1d10+3/19-20/x2)

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10 Base Atk +1; CMB +4; CMD 15 Feats Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack **Skills** Ride +3, Survival +5, Swim +1

Languages Trade Tongue

Combat Gear masterwork bastard sword, mithral chain shirt, heavy steel shield; **Other Gear** pouch 8 sp.

WHITE KNIGHT GUARD

XP 1,200

Human (armor-bonded) fighter 4 NG Medium humanoid (human) Init +0; Senses Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (+9 armor, +3 shield) hp 30 (4d10+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 bastard sword +10 (1d10+7/19-20/x2) and mwk heavy steel shield bash +8 (1d4+4/x2)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12 **Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 18

Feats Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack -2/+4, Shield Focus, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

Skills Diplomacy +5, Ride +4, Survival +7, Swim +1

Languages Draconic, Trade Tongue

SQ armor training 1, armor bond

Combat Gear +1 *bastard sword*, mwk heavy steel shield, mithral full plate; **Other Gear** pouch (5 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Armor Bond (Su) Linked to Mageholme through a specially crafted suit of armor, the White Knights can receive spells from their mages. However, the bond has a weakness to one energy type: acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic. Whenever the armor or its wearer suffers damage of the selected type, the bond between the wizard and the armor is severed for 1 round per 10 damage dealt, rounded down. No special abilities may be shared during this time, though any previous spells granted through the impart spells ability with an ongoing duration continue to function on the armor's wearer as normal.

The White Knights (including Markus) can each be bolstered by the following spells (1/round):

Divine: *air bubble, bull's strength, cure light wounds, cure moderate wounds, detect poison, divine favor, guidance, protection from evil, resistance, resist energy, shield of faith, stabilize*

Arcane: blur, detect magic, dispel magic, endure elements, feather fall, haste, heroism, invisibility, jump, light, mending, protection from arrows, spider climb, true strike, vanish

MARKUS. WHITE KNIGHT OF BOURGUND

XP 3,200

Male human (armor-bonded) cavalier (emissaryUC) 7 LN Medium humanoid (human) **Init** +0; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (+10 armor, +3 shield) hp 67 (7d10+21)

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

OFFENSE Speed 30 ft.

CR 3

Melee +1 bastard sword +11/+6 (1d10+6/19-20/x2) and +1 heavy steel shield bash +10/+5 (1d4+5/x2)

Special Attacks cavalier's charge, white knight's challenge^{MPGWW} (+9 damage, 3/day), fearsome reputation^{MPGWW}

STATISTICS

Str 21, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12

Base Atk +7; CMB +12; CMD 22

Feats Armor Proficiency (heavy armor), Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Cleave, Mobility, Mounted Combat (1/round), Power Attack -2/+4

Skills Climb +12, Diplomacy +11, Handle Animal +11,

Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (nobility) +6, Perception +7, Ride +10, Survival +7

Languages Draconic, Trade Tongue

SQ animal companion link, mount, white knight's skills, expert trainer +3, orders (order of the white knights^{MPGWW}), armor bond

Combat Gear +1 mithral full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 bastard sword; **Other Gear** cloak of resistance, +2, potion of cure moderate wounds (3), alchemist's fire (2 vials)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Armor Bond (Su) Linked to Mageholme through a speciallycrafted suit of armor, the White Knights can receive spells from





their mages. However, the bond has a weakness to one energy type: acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic. Whenever the armor or its wearer suffers damage of the selected type, the bond between the wizard and the armor is severed for 1 round per 10 damage dealt, rounded down. No special abilities may be shared during this time, though any previous spells granted through the impart spells ability with an ongoing duration continue to function on the armor's wearer as normal.

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MAGEHOLME WIZARD CR 4

XP 1,200

Human wizard 5 LN Medium humanoid (human) **Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+3 armor, +4 shield, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 deflection)

hp 25 (5d6+10)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d4, 19-20/x2)

Ranged light crossbow +4 (1d8, 19-20/x2)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 5; concentration +9)

3rd—hold person (DC 17), lightning bolt (DC 18)

2nd—blur (DC 16), scorching ray, web (DC 16)

1st—grease (DC 15), magic missile, obscuring mist, shield 0 (at will)—acid splash, detect magic, mage hand, message

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 12, Cha 10 Base Atk +2; CMB +2; CMD 15

Feats Arcane Armor Training, Armor Proficiency (Light), Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Evocation), Toughness +5

- **Skills** Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +12, Survival +2
- Languages Aquan, Cyclops, Daemonic, Draconic, Trade Tongue

SQ arcane familiar, hand of the apprentice (7/day)

Combat Gear +1 Leather; **Other Gear** amulet of natural armor +1, ring of protection +1, wand of magic missile (CL 3, 7 charges)

SHROUD PRIESTESS

XP 600

Female human cleric of Marena 3 LE Medium humanoid (human) **Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor) hp 25 (3d8+6)

Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk whip +5 (1d3+1/x2)
Special Attacks channel negative energy 3/day (DC 11, 2d6)
Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3; concentration +6)

6/day—bleeding touch (1 round) 6/day—touch of darkness (1 round) Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3; concentration +6) 2nd—blindness/deafness^D (can only cause blindness)(DC 15), hold person (DC 15), sound burst (DC 15) 1st—cause fear^D (DC 14), command (DC 14), doom (DC 14), shield of faith (DC 14) 0 (at will)—bleed (DC 13), detect magic, guidance, stabilize ^D Domain spell; Domains Darkness, Death STATISTICS Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 10 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 13 Feats Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (whip)

Skills Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (religion) +7, Perception +6, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +7

Languages Draconic, Trade Tongue

SQ aura, spontaneous casting

Combat Gear chain shirt, mwk whip; **Other Gear** cloak of resistance +1, potion of cure light wounds

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bleeding Touch (Sp) 1 round (6/day) Melee touch attack deals 1d6 bleeding damage.

Touch of Darkness (Sp) 1 rounds (6/day) With a melee touch attack, target suffers 20% miss chance

CR 1/2

DARCIA

XP 200

Female human cleric of Marena 1 LE Medium humanoid (human) **Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural) hp 13 (1d8+4)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. Melee mwk whip +2 (1d3+1/x2) Special Attacks channel negative energy (3/day, DC 11) Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1; concentration +4)

6/day—agile feet

6/day-dazing touch

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 1; concentration +4) 1st—*cure light wounds* (DC 14), deat*hwatch, longstrider*^D 0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *create water, resistance* (DC 13) ^D **Domain spell; Domains** Charm, Travel

STATISTICS

CR 2

Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 10 Base Atk +0; CMB +1; CMD 13 Feats Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Knowledge (planes) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Spellcraft +4 Languages Trade Tongue SQ aura, spontaneous casting Combat Gear mwk whip, mithral chain shirt; Other Gear

amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of resistance +1, grappling hook, rope, silk (50 ft.), sunrod, thunderstone

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Agile Feet (Su) For 1 round (6/day), Darcia ignores difficult terrain.

Dazing Touch (Sp) Melee touch attack dazes target (6/day).

LETHANA, HIGH PRIESTESS OF MARENA CR 5

XP 1,600

Female human aristocrat 2/cleric of Marena 5 LE medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+7 armor, +4 shield, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 51 (7d8+14)

Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +13

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +3 human bane whip +8 (1d3+4/x2) and +2 heavy steel shield bash +5 (1d4+1/x2)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 14, 3d6) **Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5; concentration +13)

7/day—bleeding touch (2 rounds)

7/day—dazing touch

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 5; concentration +9) 3rd—animate deadD, cure serious wounds, magic circle against good (DC 17)

2nd—*bull's strength (DC 16), calm emotions*^D (DC 16), cure *moderate wounds, hold person* (DC 16)

1st— bane (DC 15), *cause fear* (DC 15), *charm person^D* (DC 15), *command* (DC 15), *cure light wounds*

0 (at will)—bleed (DC 14), detect magic, guidance, read magic ^D **Domain spell; Domains** Charm, Death

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 14

Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 18

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Selective Channeling, Toughness +7

Skills Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Heal +10, Intimidate +7,

Perception +12, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +10,

Languages Draconic, Trade Tongue **SQ** aura, spontaneous casting

SQ aura, spontaneous casting

Combat Gear +2 scale mail, +2 heavy steel shield, +3 human bane whip; **Other Gear** cloak of resistance +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bleeding Touch (Sp) 1 round (6/day) Melee touch attack deals 1d6 bleeding damage.

Dazing Touch (Sp) Melee touch attack dazes target (7/day).

Selective Channeling Exclude targets from the area of your channel energy.

PRIMORDIAL GIANT

CR 9

XP 6,400

N huge humanoid (giant)

Init+2; Senses darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7
DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+4 natural, +6 natural, +6 boneplate, -2 size)

hp 153 (9d8+27+45)

Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +10

Defensive Abilities elemental symmetry, rock-catching, DR 5/-Resist 10 (all energy types); Weaknesses elemental symmetry OFFENSE

Speed 20ft

Melee huge maul +13/+8 (2d8+11+1d6 energy/x3) or 2 slams +13 (1d8+8+1d6 energy)

Ranged rock +7 (1d8+8+1d6 energy)

Space 15 ft,; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks sweeping strike, elemental essence, rock throwing (100 ft.)

TACTICS

Primordial Giants charge into the largest groupings of foes to better use their sweeping strikes. They fear returning to their monolith prisons so will fight to the bitter end.

STATISTICS

Str 23, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 7

Base Atk +6; CMB +13; CMD 23

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

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

SQ rebirth, war-bred

Language Primal Giant

Combat Gear huge maul, large boneplate

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sweeping Strike (Ex) As a full-round action, the primordial giant can attack three adjoining squares with a single attack at his highest attack bonus. Apply this attack to targets in each square separately.

Elemental Essence (Su) As the ancestors of the modern giants, the primordial giants are imbued with elemental energy. As a result, they may choose to add an additional +1d6 damage of an energy type of their choice each time they attack.

Elemental Symmetry (Su) Primordial giants have great resistances to elemental attacks, but their resilience is also their weakness. While they receive Resist 10 to all energy types, in any round where they apply that resistance, they become vulnerable to an opposite type as shown on the chart below.

ENERGY TYPE	OPPOSITE TYPE
Fire	Water
Air	Earth
Electrical	Sonic

This vulnerability only applies until the next energy-based attack or the giant's next turn whichever comes first.

War-Bred (Su) The primordial giants' natural war-like state grants them a +2 bonus to attack and damage.

Rebirth (Su) Though nearly immortal, the primordial giants can be "slain," but when that happens, they are instantly reborn within their red monoliths; they return at half their maximum hit points. This damage can be healed naturally or with cure spells. The only way to permanently seal the giant within the monolith is the sacrifice of a humanoid life via the ritual.









By Brian W Suskind

Come one and all! The great dragon-lord Yiraz Azah invites you to a grand race across the razed planes of Pharos. The prize?...a portion of her vast horde. Though you can struggle against competitors, obstacles, and the elements, can you brave the final challenge and win?

"Five Trials of Pharos" is a wilderness adventure race suitable for four 10th-level PCs.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

At the beginning of the Mharoti Empire, a twisted abomination named Kar'vatu rose to power beneath the ancient city of Pharos. Born of the unnatural melding of silver dragon and aboleth, this Dark Dragon wielded mind- and soul-twisting magics. However, after his depravities threatened the fledging Empire, flights of dragons razed Pharos to shattered ruins, killing Kar'vatu with flame and spell.

A few centuries later, the wind dragon Yiraz Azah adopted the mantle of Morza and took control of the province of Marea. She believed that peace and prosperity better served the Empire than wrath and subjugation, but despaired that the other dragon-lords did not follow her example.

Then the strange whispering began.

From the shattered ruins of Pharos, Kar'vatu's disembodied spirit sent subtle and sly whispers into Yiraz's mind. Over time, he convinced her it was better to bring territories swiftly under her peaceful protectorate than to let them fall to the other rapacious dragon-lords. All the while, Kar'vatu's manipulation actually led to one goal: a new body and his rebirth.



Now, convinced by what she believes are her own ideas, Yiraz has struck upon a plan to gather enough power to bring a final peace to not only her own province but to the Empire. Through the use of ancient ceremonial magics and aboleth glyphs, Yiraz seeks to change the path of four ley lines, bringing them to intersection as a vastly powerful node. With this power, she knows she can achieve apotheosis and gain godlike power, if not actually become a god.

But she has been deceived

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The heroes arrive outside the gates of the city of Tyrku in the Marea province, one team among many summoned from across Midgard to compete in Yiraz's grand adventure race. Among the swirling tents and festival atmosphere, they meet the other competitors, including the Argent Rats, the Black Band from Verrayne, and the Ivory Company of Bourgund.

When everyone gathers for the start, Yiraz explains the rules: race along a set course on specialized horses, pausing at waypoints to complete ritualistic challenges. Items for these rituals await the teams at each stop. The dragon-lord cautions the teams to adhere to the rules, for violators will be eaten.

Yiraz starts the race with a roar, and, immediately the Black Band summons as a bebilith, blocking the others' way to the horses. How quickly the heroes deal with, or avoid, this monster determines where they fall in the race's order.

As the heroes race onward, they confront treachery from the other teams at each waypoint, and they also must overcome the challenges themselves.

At the first waypoint, the heroes must fill glyph-carved basins from vials of boiling blood before ritually washing them with sea water. At the second, they must smash huge teeth with glyph hammers on menhir stone altars. At the third, they must melt stacks of ancient coins before pouring the molten coinage into glyph-shaped molds. Finally, at the fourth, they must affix dragon scales to a glyph-marked kite and fly it in a perpetual storm above a wind-whipped tower.

Once the waypoints are behind them, the heroes enter the haunted streets of Pharos itself. There, they find Yiraz waiting for them (along with the bodies of other teams if the heroes are not the first ones there). With her body connected to ley-line crystals and her ritual already underway, she gloats about her forthcoming ascension until the Dark Dragon makes his move. He assumes control of her body and stands reborn.

The heroes must fight against the reborn Kar'vatu, either by sheer force of arms or by breaking his connection to the ley-line crystals surrounding the area.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters begin this adventure when they receive the following invitation:

Due in no small part to reports of your prowess, valor, and bravery, do I, Morza of the Silver Frost, Yiraz Azah, Khanum of the Province of Marea, invite you to take part in a grand adventure race from the city of Tyrku to the ruins of Pharos. The prize for winning this competition shall be a sizable portion of my vast horde! So come to Tyrku and test yourselves against Midgard's best, and may the most powerful prevail. The invitation includes vouchers for transportation and a date for the race in two weeks (or whenever is convenient for the GM). This hook relies upon the heroes' greed and/or willingness to test themselves against other adventurers. Other motivations might include:

- Mentors or friends are invited to the race, but they cannot compete, so they ask the heroes to stand in for them.
- Suspecting what Yiraz is up to, agents of Ruzgar, dragon-lord of Zaldiri, hire the heroes to compete in the race and uncover the truth.
- Illyrian agents encourage the heroes to participate in order to vaunt a win over the dragons.

INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place in the Marea province in the Mharoti Empire between the city of Tyrku and the ruins of Pharos to the east. As the story begins, the characters arrive at the city gates on the afternoon before the race.

Part One:

Anșwering The Summonș

FESTIVAL IN TYRKU

A festive atmosphere pervades the fairground just beyond the gates of the city of Tyrku. Excitement and anticipation abound among the brightly colored tents arranged around the semicircular grandstand. Among the colored banners, hawkers offer up bits of fried food on sticks, bands play lively music, people shriek with delight, and passersby chatter exuberantly about the race.

Upon presenting their invitation to any one of the Silver Guards (Yiraz's personal troops), who are conspicuously keeping the peace, the heroes receive directions to the heavily guarded Competitor's Tent, where they can relax and store their belongings in safety.

A servant in silver livery soon arrives with a refreshment of cool juices and rare wines.

"Welcome to Marea, my lords! I am Boran. This chamber has been built for your comfort and to provide a secure oasis from the tumult outside. Her lordship invites you to a light supper this evening, where you can meet your fellow competitors. Then, tomorrow at dawn, your race begins! In the meantime, I am to attend to your needs."

What the heroes do during the hours before race starts are best left to individual GMs, but among the various activities available are the following:

- Games of brawn (running races, wrestling, axe tossing, disk throwing...etc.)
- Games of skill and chance (dice and card games, gambling, chess...etc.)

- Food merchants, beer and wine tents
- Jugglers, storytellers, and musicians on every corner, as do prostitutes

MEETING THE COMPETITION

At the appointed hour, Boran fetches the heroes for supper.

This massive tent abounds with the odors of delectable foods and spirits. A sumptuous buffet waits on scattered tables, while silver-clad servants pass around trays of wines, ales, and infused fruit elixirs. The other racing teams, perhaps 40 people in all, mill about, mostly staying close together in groups of four or five, sampling the fine food and ample drink.

This is a role-playing opportunity for the party to meet and size up the competition. Aside from the top three (found in the adventure's **Appendix**), five other teams eye each other suspiciously.

- The Black Band Cunning and ruthless mercenaries who see morals more like vague guidelines.
- **Ivory Company** Arrogant, elitist knights softened by decades of instantaneous magical aid.
- **Argent Rats** Small and fierce kobold mercenaries with chips on their shoulders.
- **Trollhaugen Pikemen** Glaive-using Northmen seemingly intent on drinking as much as possible.
- **Bodkin's Gearmen** Three gearforged led by a disgraced noble fop from Barsella.
- **Grayforest Blades** A squad of elven women from Arbonesse with a hatred of all non-elves.
- **Riders for Svarog** Fierce Khazzaki horsemen, mistrustful of everyone and not afraid to show it.

No one here likes anyone else, so GMs should play up the animosities and hatreds already present. Use these teams as foils.

YIRAZ'S RULES AND AN UNWANTED GUEST (CR 10)

In the morning, the heroes prepare themselves, and then Boran leads them to the grandstand.

In the golden light of dawn, the semicircular grandstand teems with cheering spectators waving flags and calling out encouragement. Though the ovation repeats for each entering team, most cannot help but gawk at the massive silver dragon lounging on a raised dais at the far end of the arena. A colorful cloth obscures a huge shape beside her. Several other dragons recline on massive platforms at the tops of the grandstand, watching the proceedings closely. When all the teams arrive, the silver dragon raises one claw. The stands go silent.

DRACONIC SPECTATORS

During the heroes' entrance to the arena, and afterward, the four dragons in attendance loudly discuss the merits of the spectators and place wagers accordingly. Bravado amuses them, as does the presence of powerful magical auras.

The dragons also enjoy loudly disparaging the competitors; however, they do not actively harm any teams, as Yiraz watches them closely.

"Welcome adventurers, heroes, mercenaries and soldiers. Welcome to my Race! I am the Khanum of Marea, Yiraz Azah. Some of you have come for competition. Some have come for the honor of their homelands. Some come for... more nefarious reasons. But you are all here for the chance to win this!"

Yiraz gestures and servants whisk the cloth away, revealing a huge pile of treasures gleaming in the morning's light: stacks of gold, twinkling gems, piles of coinage, glowing weapons, gleaming armor, and even strange artifacts clearly of vril origins (See Kobold Press' Sunken Empires). The crowd gasps in awe at the amassed wealth.

"However, this is but a taste," Yiraz continues. "The winners shall also receive a noble title within my realm and all the glory accompanying such a position. But first, you must win the race. Adhere closely to my words, brave competitors, for those who violate my rules...shall be eaten."

The dragon grins toothily. "You shall race on specially augmented horses to the ruins of the city of Pharos. Along the way, you must pause at four waypoints to complete ritualistic challenges. The course is marked, but the route you take is yours to choose; however, the waypoints must be reached in a specific order."

"Success at a ritual activates the scepters being passed out to each team, allowing you to proceed to the next waypoint. Once you leave here, all teams are forbidden from using transportation magics of any sort, and I shall be watching closely."

Yiraz looks from team to team. "Are these rules understood?"

As Yiraz recites the rules, silver-clad servants pass out one scepter-like marker to each team. These two-foot-long mithral scepters possess engraved runes and glyphs; a milky-white crystal rests atop each scepter. Examining the scepter reveals the following:

KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)

DC Information

- 25 The symbols on the scepter are similar to ceremonial magics found in the more ancient or primitive cultures.
- **30** The runes appear to be keyed to specific ley lines

Additionally, those players wishing to have their personal mounts or animals augmented may use this time to do so.

Yiraz answers polite questions about the race's rules, but she does not brook stupidity easily. GMs can find more specifics about the race's rules in this adventure's **Appendix**.

When the rules have been read and all questions answered, Yiraz rises on her haunches.

"Now is the time," the silver dragon bellows. "At my breath, you may race!" Yiraz pauses for a moment before roaring her freezing breath into the air. Almost simultaneously, a horrible, blue, elephant-sized, demonic spider appears, blocking the route to the horses with its barbed, razor-edged claws.

Mala of the Black Band secretly summoned the creature, a bebilith. It primarily targets the PCs, whom Mala has deemed



her band's biggest competition. Yiraz allows the summoning, figuring it to be yet another way to weed out the weak.

The Black Band departs the arena before initiative is rolled and takes no part in this battle. The characters begin 150 ft. from the bebilith and 200 ft. from the corral of augmented horses.

CR 10

BEBILITH

XP 9,600

hp 150 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary) TACTICS:

Following its orders, the bebilith concentrates on the party, using its web and size to keep them from the horses. It attacks anyone who approaches the horses, but it does not pursue those riding away.

DC 15 Perception: The Ivory Company and Argent Rats maneuver to avoid the monster to get to their horses.

DC 20 Perception: The Black Band just happened to be on the other side of the monster. By the time battle began, they had already mounted up and galloped away.

Race Order: How quickly the party defeats or avoids the bebilith determines their position in the race's starting order.

Before Battle - Black Band leaves

End of Round 1 - Argent Rats tumble to their horses and leave

End of Round 2 – Ivory Company charges past the bebilith and leaves

Part Two: ace

Due to the nature of adventure writing, it is not feasible to track every possible movement of each team. While the players think they have a chance to get into the lead, they really do not. The order in which the heroes encounter the other teams is set. Yet, GMs should make it seem as if this is not the case.

Here are some suggestions as to how to create the illusion of choice:

- Keep the players in the dark about who is in the lead.
- Play up the urgency of the race to keep them moving.
- Increase the tension by adding narration to the individual legs rather than making it just a series of skill checks.

GMs can find more specific rules for how the race works in the adventure's Appendix.

ALONG A ROAD SOUTHWARD

Mark 1: Uneven Ground (2 successes needed)

Under bright sun and clear skies, the horses run like the wind, and you speed down the rocky trade road through the hills southward from Tyrku.

Skill Checks: Bumpy Road (DC 15 Acrobatics or Reflex) or Nimble Riding (DC 10 Ride) Failure Consequence: DC 10 Reflex save or fall off

WAVPOINT DERDE WANPOINT OND WANPOINT FOUR WAVE OINER TIMO ARGENT RATS A В BLACK BAND IVORY COMPANY А Miles



Mark 2: Steep Hill (2 successes needed)

The twists and turns along the rocky path smooth out, just before plunging down into a steep gully.

Skill Checks: Cling to Saddle (DC 15 Reflex save) or Safe Path Down (DC 10 Survival check)

Failure Consequence: None

Mark 3: Landslide (CR 7)

Thundering hooves echo loudly off the canyon sides, but not louder than the flood of stones plummeting down at you!

Use the rules for Avalanche (see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*), except the party is considered to be in the "slide zone," and thus cannot be buried.

WAYPOINT ONE: COLLAPSED SEA CAVE

The marked route winds down toward the coast to the rim of a collapsed sea cave; a 200-ft.-wide open shaft descends 300 ft. to the tidal pool below, where hundreds of gulls currently float.

Four small ledges cling to the cliff-like walls 30 ft. above the water. Stone basins carved with glyphs hang from chains beside each ledge. Pulleys and wheels next to basins suggest the basins can be raised or lowered. A natural column of stone topped with a milky-white crystal rises up in the center of the tidal pool.

Where your horses come to a halt, a silver-clad servant

stands next to a large wooden sign which reads: From the flasks and fluids within A basin each must fill. Once it boils, lower the basin to the waves. Hoist it back when it is clean. Touch your scepter to the crystal and you are done. The servant holds out a large sack toward you.

The Sack

Within the sack are glass flasks containing a viscous red-black liquid (DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) to identify it as dragon blood), one for each adventurer.

The Basins

Four stone basins, each decorated with strange, twisting glyphs, hang over small ledges 30 ft. above the water. DC 25 Knowledge (arcane) to recognize the symbols as aboleth glyphs for cleansing and renewal. An iron wheel and pulley system protrudes from the wall beside each basin, allowing them to be raised and lowered.

The Ritual

Given the number of spells and items available to 10th-level heroes, options abound as to overcoming the physical obstacles of this ritual. GMs should reward creative solutions. The method below is a purely physical solution.

- Each hero must take a flask and climb down the sides of the sea cave (DC 15 Climb check) to the basin.
- Fill the basins with the dragon's blood from the flask.
- The magic of the basin's glyphs boil the blood away.
- Wheels next to the basins allow them to be lowered into the sea below.
- DC 15 Strength check to hoist the basins back into position.
- With all the basins returned, the crystal on the column begins to glow.
- Touching the scepter to the crystal completes the ritual.

Complications (CR 9)

If the party succeeded at the skill checks in the leg leading up to this location, then they lead the Black Band going into this waypoint. The team from Verrayne catches up during the middle of the ritual.

If the party failed at the skill checks in the leg leading up to this location, then they arrive to find the Black Band studying the sea cave's walls. The Verraynians quickly offer the party a deal. For 3000gp they will let them go first. A DC 20 Diplomacy check drops this price down to 100gp.

Gull Attack - Once the characters reach the ledges to begin the ritual, the Black Band's members throw vials of alchemist fire down the shaft of the sea cave. The explosions whip the gulls into five swarms of ripping claws and pecking beaks.

MURDEROUS FLOCKS OF GULLS (5) CR 4 each

XP 1,200 N Tiny animal (swarm) **Init** +6; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

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DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 **Dex**, +2 size) **hp** 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +4

Defensive Abilities half damage from slashing and piercing weapons; **Immune** swarm traits

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (average) **Melee** swarm (2d6 plus distraction and eye rake) **Space** 10ft.; Reach 0 ft. Special Attack eye rake

TACTICS

The swarms of gulls attack anyone on the ledges first then target those near the rim of the sea cave.

STATISTICS

Str 1, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6

Base Atk +4; CMB +4; CMD 9

Feats Improved Initiative, Lighting Reflexes, Ability Focus (eyerake)

Skills Fly +12, Perception +8

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Eye-Rake (Ex) Any living creature damaged by a murder of crows must succeed on a DC 17 Reflex save or be blinded as the swarm scratches and tears as the victim's eyes. The blindness lasts for 1d4 days or until healed with remove blindness. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Distraction (Ex) Creatures damaged by the swarm become nauseated for 1 round; a DC 15 Fort save negates the effect.

If threatened, the Black Band retreats until the PCs leave the area.

CLUES

Check	Clue
DC 15 Perception check	Carvings along the sea cave's inner wall depict humans worshipping a strange dragon with tentacles protruding from its neck.
DC 20 Knowledge (arcana)	After the ritual, magic-wielding characters sense a shift in the area's natural magic. More specific information takes 2d6 hours of intense study.

AMONG MAREA'S MARSHES

Mark 1: Muddy Slog (2 successes needed)

Faster than ever, you plunge into the next leg, heading east from the coast into marsh-dotted countryside, as clouds gather in the skies.

Skill Checks: Find Dry Path (DC 15 Perception) or Power Through (DC 20 Ride)

Failure Consequence: Sticky Mud. Suffer +5 DC to the remaining marks of this leg

Mark 2: Snakes in the Trees (3 successes needed)

As you charge through the fens, among willow and alder

trees, serpents strike from low-lying branches.

Skill Checks: Probably Harmless (DC 15 Fortitude save) or Duck! Dodge! (DC 15 Reflex save)

Failure Consequence: Weak Poison causes -5 to Ride Checks for 24 hours

Mark 3: Quicksand! (2 successes needed)

At the edge of the marshlands, you gallop toward a suspicious-looking sandy area.

Skill Checks: Skirt the Edge (DC 15 Survival) or Jump it (DC 20 Ride)

Failure Consequence: None

WAYPOINT TWO: THE OOZED RAVINE

Once past the marshes, the land rises into rocky hills, and the marked path descends sharply into a jagged ravine. Forced to a normal rate of speed by the terrain, you reach the bottom of the gorge and approach a collection of 11 ancient menhir stones arranged around a milky-white crystal. The cool air reeks of decay and mold. Shallow slime-rimmed pools dot the area.

A wooden sign bears instructions for the next ritual, and several leather sacks hang from a gallows-like stand.

The sign reads:

With ancient stones as anvils, Each must crush the fangs to powder. Spread the dust on the crystal till it glows. Touch your scepter to it and you are done.

The Sacks

Only one sack can be removed from the stand at a time. Within each, the heroes find four glyph-inscribed hammers and four fist-sized teeth (DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) to identify them as dragon's teeth).

Menhir Stones

Ten ancient rectangular stones form a circle around the crystal. Each towers up 15 feet except for a single horizontal stone which fell sometime in the past.

The Ritual

To complete this ritual, the heroes must each take a tooth and smash it to powder on the horizontal menhir stone. After throwing the resulting dust onto the crystal, it begins to glow. They can touch their scepter to the crystal to finish the ritual.

Complications (CR 10)

If the PCs succeeded at the skill checks in the leg leading up to this location, then they lead the Argent Rats going into this waypoint. The kobolds do not arrive quietly, so a DC 10 Perception check allows the party to hear their approach. The standing stones can provide the PCs perfect cover for an ambush.

If the PCs failed the skill checks in the leg leading up to this location, then the Argent Rats arrived first and have prepared their own ambush.



ARGENT RAT SKIRMISHER (3) CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 59 (Argent Rat statistics can be found in the Appendix) TACTICS

Skirmishers immediately flank the toughest combatant, using their improved flanking feats to grant themselves bonuses to hit and damage.

ARGENT RAT CASTER (2) CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 42 (Argent Rat statistics can be found in the Appendix) TACTICS

Casters use slow to inhibit their foes and then target enemy spellcasters.

The Argent Rats fight until reduced to half their numbers. They then flee. If possible, they continue the race.

CLUES

|--|--|

Faint paintings on the upright stones seem to show red, gold, green, and silver dragons confronting a dark, tentacled dragon above a battlefield.

DC 20 Knowledge	The worsening weather is not natural
(arcana)	and may be a side effect of the rituals.

INTO THE CLOUDED FOREST

Mark 1: Lost in the Steam (2 successes needed)

You storm into a stretch of gnarled trees shrouded by mists. Despite the speed of your travel, you feel the slight tremors shaking the ground and notice newly opened cracks in the earth, leaking steam in to the darkening skies.

Skill Checks: Follow the Trail (DC 15 Survival) or Got a Map (DC 10 Knowledge Geography)

Failure Consequence: None

Mark 2: That's a Strange Mist (3 successes needed)

Thick clouds of mist flash by as your mounts dart ahead. A sulfurous stench fills the air.

Skill Checks: Tastes like Blue (DC 20 Fortitude save) or Hold Your Breath (DC 15 Reflex save)

Failure Consequence: Confused! Take + 5 DC to next mark

Mark 3: Geysers! (3 successes needed)

Steam and rocks explode upward as geysers erupt all around you.

Skill Checks: Time your Jump! (DC 20 Ride) or That was Close! (DC 15 Acrobatics)

Failure Consequence: Take 5d6 Damage from scalding water geyser

WAYPOINT THREE: TURIG'S BASIN

Emerging from the mist-shrouded trees, you come upon what was once a shallow stone quarry. Now, however, a bubbling mud pool occupies the quarry's open pit, while, arrayed around it, four iron scaffolds hunch over flamebelching cracks in the earth. A milky-white crystal seems to float in the center of the mud pool. The stifling hot air drips with sulfur and brimstone. A sign awaits you, as does a large leather sack. The sign reads:

Melt you must, each coin Till all drown in a golden pool. Then pour this bounty So four molds fill. Touch the crystal with your scepter and be done.

The Sacks

The leather bag contains four pouches of golden coins of ancient design (DC 15 Appraise check to denote about 500gp worth in each). Avaricious characters may wish to keep the money, but the ritual cannot be completed without these specific coins.

The Molds

The iron scaffolding harkens back to a long ago attempt to use these natural fire fissures as forges. Now, however, each holds iron crucibles (to hold the melting coins) and glyph-shaped molds.

Fissures of Fire

These natural volcanic vents emit extreme heat. Just standing nearby to melt the coins causes 1d6 points of damage per round (no save).

Mud Pool

This pool of boiling mud has effects similar to lava (see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*).

The Ritual

At one of the scaffolding areas, each hero must first melt their pouch of coins in a crucible. The melting process takes 5 rounds, after which the molten gold can be poured into the glyph molds.

With all the molds completed, the pool's crystal begins to glow, and touching the scepter to it completes the ritual.

Complications (CR 11)

If the party succeeded at the skill checks in the leg leading up to this location, then they lead the Ivory Company going into this waypoint. As soon as they approach the mud pool, a pair of irate elementals attacks.

If the PCs failed the skill checks in the leg leading up to this location, then the Ivory Company arrived first and made a deal with the elementals. When the PCs approach the mud pool, the Ivory Company and the elementals attack from opposite directions.

HUGE BOILING MUD ELEMENTALS (2) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 68 As Large Mud Elemental - *Pathfinder Bestiary 2* (except as follows)

Immune fire, acid, elemental traits

Melee 2 slams +12 (1d8+5 plus entrap) **Ranged** mud ball +10 (1d6+7+2d6 fire)

TACTICS

The elementals throw mud balls at the nearest foes until they can use their melee attacks to engulf them.

IVORY COMPANY WHITE KNIGHTS (4) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 68 (see Appendix)

TACTICS

The knights immediately challenge the strongest-looking melee combatant, splitting into pairs to take out the frontline foes.

CLUES

Etched into rocks around the fire fissures (DC 15 Perception check), canny heroes discover pictographs showing a ghostly, tentacled dragon floating above his own bones. He is reaching out to gather silver lines.

Survival (DC 25)The geothermic activity in thisor Knowledgearea is very, very recent.(geography) DC 20)

ACROSS THE OPENLANDS

Mark 1: Groundhog Country (3 successes needed)

As storm clouds rage overhead and the wind picks up more and more, you ride into open grasslands dotted by small rodent holes.

Skill Checks: Fast Stepping (DC 20 Ride) or Saw Them Coming (DC 20 Perception)

Failure Consequences: Stumble. Take a -5 penalty to all rolls in the next mark

Mark 2: Wildfire! (3 successes needed)

Clouds of dark smoke on the horizon quickly reveal themselves to be a wall of raging wildfire. It's right in your path!

Skill Checks: Frightened Mounts (DC 20 Handle Animal) or Push on Through (DC 15 Intimidate)

Failure Consequence: 4d6 fire damage from smoke inhalation (no save)

Mark 3: Chasm (4 successes needed)

At the far edge of the burn zone, the ground drops away into a yawning chasm!

Skill Checks: Leap it! (DC 20 Ride check) or A Risky Bridge (DC 20 Survival)

Failure Consequence: Horse strains a tendon. The PCs are -5 to the first mark in the next leg unless they expend a *cure light wounds* or such.

WAYPOINT FOUR: A STORM-DRENCHED TOWER

The wind becomes a howling storm as you rapidly approach a lone tower. Through the flashes of lightning

and the deep tolling thunder, you can just make out the stairs spiraling around the outside of the spire and the sign awaiting you at its base.

The sign reads:

With plated kite, climb to the storm torn heights. Some must set it to fly upon the winds. Some must hold spike to crystal. With lightning's stroke the connection's made, Touch the scepter to the crystal and you are done. A stand near the sign holds large leather bags.

The Bags

The heroes' sack contains a kite made from silver scales (DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) to recognize dragon scales), and a long line of metal cord with an iron spike tied to one end.

The Tower

Standing 200 ft. high, this ancient fortification rests amidst a perpetual storm raining wind and lighting down upon the immediate area. There is no obvious door or entryway into the tower's interior. The 5-ft.-wide staircase spiraling around the outside of the tower has no guardrail or barrier. The 50-ft.-wide circular rooftop surrounds a milky-white crystal embedded in the middle of a mosaic-patterned floor (see clues below for more information).

Climbing Risks

The wind blows so violently that those climbing the stairs must make DC 15 Acrobatics checks or be knocked down. A DC 15 Reflex save prevents those affected from falling off the stairs altogether.

Every 1d4 rounds, there is a 10% chance of lighting striking anyone climbing the tower or standing on the rooftop.

The Ritual

The adventurers must climb the tower and fly their kite into the storm. Then, while some control the kite, the others must hold the metal spike to the crystal. When lightning strikes the kite, the energy will travel down the metal cord to power up the crystal. Then the party must touch their scepter to the crystal to complete the ritual.

Canny characters (DC 15 Intelligence check) will realize they must tie the metal cord to the kite before flying it into the storm. Those who do not must descend to the ground and find the kite before trying it again.

Complications (CR 10)

If the party succeeded at the skill checks in the leg leading up to this location, then they lead the Black Band going into this waypoint. As soon as the characters reach the top of the tower, the Black Band arrives and immediately attacks. But as their group must climb up the stairs, the PCs have a distinct advantage.

If the PCs failed the skill checks in the leg leading up to this location, then the Black Band arrived first and stands ready atop of the tower, prepared to repel any attack.

MALA

XP 3,200 Female human sorcerer 8 hp 50 (see Appendix for stats) **CR 7**



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VINOND

XP 2,400

Male human fighter 4/rogue 3 hp 55 (see Appendix for stats)

TENAL MAR

XP 1,600

Male elf druid 6 **hp** 34 (see **Appendix** for stats)

NILAS

XP 1,600

Male human barbarian 3/fighter 3 hp 78 (see Appendix for stats

TACTICS

They fight until down to half their members, at which point, they flee, hoping to finish the ritual once the party leaves. They then race for the finish line.

CLUES

Etched into rocks around the fire fissures (DC 15 Perception check), canny heroes discover pictographs showing a ghostly, tentacled dragon floating above his own bones. He is reaching out to gather silver lines.

Survival (DC 25) (or Knowledge (geography) DC 20) The geothermic activity in this area is very, very recent.

THROUGH ANCIENT FIELDS OF DEATH Mark 1: Crude Graves (4 successes needed)

With the ruins of Pharos looming in the distance, you race the howling winds and lightning through an ancient battlefield marked with burial mounds, broken rusty weaponry, and broken bones piercing up from the ground.

Skill Checks: A Clear Path (DC 20 Perception) or Hurdle Them (DC 20 Ride)

Failure Consequences: Twisted Something. Take a -2 Reflex save penalty for 24 hours

Mark 2: An Unnatural Presence (4 successes needed)

Like skeletal hands trailing down your spine, a foreboding chill suddenly envelops you all!

Skill Checks: Soothe Mount (DC 20 Handle Animal) or Frightened Away (DC 15 Will Save)

Failure Consequences: Horses become spooked. Take a -2 Will save penalty for 24 hours

Mark 3: Wall of Skeletons (4 successes needed)

Approaching the gates of Pharos, a phalanx of skeletons gripping rusted weapons bars any easy approach to the city, but at your speeds, you cannot stop your horses anyway! **Skill Checks:** Barrel Through (DC 15 Intimidate + DC 15 Ride) or Jump Over (DC 15 Handle Animal + DC 15 Ride)

Failure Consequences: Nicked by a Rusty Blade. Take a -2 Fortitude penalty for 24 hours

Part Three: Pharos

CR 6

CR 5

CR 5

Once a seat of learning and trade during Kar'vatu's reign, the dragons razed Pharos and the remains of the city now lie fallow and forgotten. At the center of the city, Yiraz awaits her racers in the Grand Plaza, while Kar'vatu's dark spirit prepares for his rebirth.

Past the gates, Pharos awaits. Though swamps, vines and trees have mostly taken over the ruins, the forest-flanked streets provide natural pathways through the greenery. Here and there, towers, hilltop fortifications, and half-flooded caverns pierce through the overgrowth. The skies, now dark and foreboding, unleash blinding lightning strikes as the wind screams through the ruins.

Just past the gates, a silver-garbed servant awaits at the far end of a wide court. "Welcome to Pharos," he says when you reign in. "I will take your horses and give them the draughts they need to survive the Imperial Augmentation. Her Mighty Eminence awaits you at the Grand Plaza at the city's center.

The servant does not answer any questions about the race or Yiraz. He gladly shows interested characters the antidote if they ask.

If the party succeeded at the majority of all of the skill checks in the race legs, then they are the first to reach the city.

If the party failed to win a majority of the skill checks in the race legs, then the Black Band managed to arrive first. Their four, hard-used horses stand off to one side, glazed with sweat. Should the adventurers ask, the servant says the Black Band just left, but the heroes might catch them if they hurry.

THE GRAND PLAZA (CR 14)

Five streets empty into a wide plaza enclosed by growthcovered buildings and half-collapsed ruins. Below the nowraging storm of wind, thunder, and lightning, you emerge from the western-most street to behold a concentric ring of 12 columns, each topped with a glowing milky-white crystal. The columns surround a platform in the middle of the plaza. Upon that dais, Yiraz waits.

If the party is the first team to arrive, Yiraz says...

Welcome brave ones! You are the first team to reach here. Place your scepter upon the pedestal to prove you completed all of the rituals, and I shall declare you the race's victor!

Though eager for her apotheosis, Yiraz knows the fickle hearts of mortals and does not risk giving away how much she wants the scepter. She continues to maintain the façade of the race, but does not hesitate to resort to spell or physical altercations if the party refuses to complete the ritual.

To Resurrect The Steigenadler

Yiraz, old silver dragon CR 17

XP 38,400

hp 195 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*) CL 11th, cold aura, *control winds*

If another team reached here first, the party enters the area just as that team places its own scepter on the pedestal. Read the following:

As soon as the scepter touches the pedestal, a blinding explosion of light fills the area. Storm clouds writhe and circle as beams of energy pour from the crystals set into the columns to transfix Yiraz where she stands.

"It is done!" The wind dragon laughs triumphantly. "Ley lines changed and conjoined into a new node. I have done this! I, Yiraz Azah, have succeeded where centuries of others have failed. And you, brave adventurers, were the pawns of my plan."

Yiraz basks in the every-growing glow of the energy pouring into her from the crystals. "You have my thanks and my apologies for the deception. When my apotheosis is complete, I will reward you with wealth and powers undreamed of by the lesser races, my new friends, and...and..."

Thunder peals, and suddenly Yiraz doubles over with pain as the energy beams from the crystals intensify. Four rubbery tentacles explode from her neck, writhing with unnatural grace. The dragon's silver eyes widen with agony and fear as her shining scales darken like ink poured into water. When she looks upon you once more, it is through solid black orbs.

"Friends?" The dragon says in a male's voice, deep and scratched from long disuse. "Fools, more like! Fools, as this wretched body was a fool. I whispered in her mind, telling her to alter the ley lines. She thought to gain power; instead, that same power has pushed her aside. Though the dragons thought me long ago thrown down, through idiots like you, my revenge shall blanket the plains with blood. I, Kar'vatu, scion of dragon and aboleth united, am reborn!"

Despite Kar'vatu's bravado, his newly reborn body remains weak from the transformation. He must remain in the area of the Grand Plaza until his hold on Yiraz's body is complete. This gives the party a small amount of time to dispatch him.

KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)

Information
Internation

- 20 The transformation has damaged Yiraz's body and thus the weakened Kar'vatu is vulnerable for a short time.
- 25 The crystals channeled the power of nearby ley lines to fuel the Kar'vatu's transformation, but the process is not complete yet. If the energy could be halted, then Yiraz might regain control from the Dark Dragon.

During the battle with Kar'vatu, if the GM feels that the party could use assistance, have one or more of the other teams arrive on the scene.

KAR'VATU

A horrible melding of silver dragon and aboleth, four rubbery tentacles mar this creature's beautiful draconic features. Solid black eyes exude malevolent intelligence.

KAR'VATU

XP 38,400

LG Gargantuan aberration (Dragon, cold, aquatic) Init +4; Senses dragon senses, fog vision; Perception +25 Aura frightful presence (180 ft., DC 23)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 8, flat-footed 29 (+23 natural, -4 size) hp 195 (17d12+85)

Fort +15, Ref +12, Will +17

DR 5/magic; Immune acid, cold, paralysis, sleep; SR 25

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (average, currently disabled)

Melee bite +24 (2d8+12), 2 claws +23 (2d6+8), and 4 tentacles +19 (2d6+4 plus slime)

Space 20 ft.; Reach 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite, 30ft with tentacles)

Special Attacks breath weapon (50-ft. cone, DC 23, 10d8 cold), paralyzing breath (DC 23), slime (DC 23)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th; concentration +19)

3/day—dominate person (DC 20)

1/day—mirage arcane (DC 20)

At will-hypnotic pattern (DC 17), fog cloud

Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +14)

4th (3/day)—black tentacles, confusion (DC 19), crushing despair (DC 19)

3rd (5/day)—cure serious wounds, dispel magic, slow (DC 18)

- 2nd (7/day)—augury, cure moderate wounds, invisibility, web (DC 17)
- 1st (7/day)—hypnotism (DC 16), magic missile, ray of enfeeblement (DC 16), shield, true strike
- 0 (at will)—detect magic, flare (DC 15), light, message, prestidigitation
- Though a sorcerer, Kar'vatu casts divine spells as if they were arcane.

TACTICS

Kar'vatu opens with a paralyzing breath to incapacitate as many foes as possible. He makes ready use of his free tentacle attacks each round.

He follows with his dominate spell-like ability and orders anyone who falls under his sway to protect the crystals.

The Dark Dragon fights to the death, knowing that even if this body should perish, the party will have destroyed Yiraz in the process.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 20, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 20 **Base Atk** +17; **CMB** +27; **CMD** 37 (41 vs. trip)

Feats Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will,

Lightning **Ref**lexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vital **Str**ike, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Acrobatics +17, Diplomacy +25, Fly +16, Heal +25,

Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcane) +25, Knowledge (local) +25, Knowledge (nobility) +25, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +25

Languages Auran, Draconic, Dwarvish, Giant, Terran, Trade Tongue

SPECIAL ABILITIES



Tentacles (Ex) As a result of his aboleth heritage, Kar'vatu may strike with 2 tentacles as a free action each round. In a full-attack action, he may use all four tentacles along with his normal attacks.



Slime (Ex) A creature hit by Kar'vatu's tentacle must succeed on a DC 23 Fortitude save, or his skin and flesh transform into a tender, slimy membrane over the course of 1d4 rounds. Each hit negates the victim's natural armor bonus (if any). The creature's new "flesh" is soft and tender, reducing its Constitution score by 4 as long as it persists. If the skin isn't kept moist, it dries quickly, and the victim takes 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes.

These effects are permanent until the condition is healed. Remove disease and similar effects restore an afflicted creature to normal, but immunity to disease offers no protection from this attack. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Fog Vision (Ex) Kar'vatu can see perfectly well in fog and clouds.

Paralyzing Breath (Su) Instead of a cone of cold, Kar'vatu can breathe a cone of paralyzing gas. Creatures within the cone must succeed on a DC 23 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

COLUMNS

Each of the 12 columns ringing the plaza rises 50 ft. high and has a radius of 5 feet. The crystals at the top are very strong (**Hardness** 15, 60 hp; **Immune** spells, energy attacks).

For every crystal broken, impose a -1 penalty to all of Kar'vatu's dice rolls.

VICTORY

If the party reduces Kar'vatu to negative hit points, or when last crystal breaks, read this:

As the final crystal shatters, the beams of energy gutter out and die. "No! My vengeance won't be denied," Kar'vatu screams, but the darkness begins leeching out of the dragon's scales. With a last scream of defiance, the dragon collapses to the ground.

AFTERMATH

If the party defeats Kar'vatu but Yiraz dies, then they can return to Tyrku where Boran, the servant, awaits with their prize.

If the party managed to defeat Kar'vatu without killing the body he inhabited, Yiraz quickly recovers from the dark dragon's attack.

Though grateful for the party's aid, she wishes to keep the news of this from the other dragons. She offers the reward for winning the race plus her eternal gratitude if the party swears an oath to keep the secret. If they agree, she uses her own magics to transport them all back to the Tyrku grandstand where their prize awaits.

If the Kar'vatu defeated the party, he eats their bodies while waiting for his hold upon Yiraz's body to become permanent. Then he begins his revenge upon the dragons.

THE PRIZE

Coins: 15,603gp, 413pp

Goods: 14 gold trade bars (50 gp each), 4 golden pearls (110gp each), 25 azurite gems (11gp each), 50 moss agates (8gp each), ancient harp of whale bone strung with dragon-hair strings (1,605gp)

Items: Arcane scroll of *teleport*, *wand of beast shape I* (13 charges), *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of magic vestments* (CL 5), *potion of gaseous form*, *rod of wonder*, +3 *heavy steel shield* emblazoned with Yiraz's image, +1 Ankeshelian-charged spear with vril battery (46 charges), *blessed book*, and *gloves of storing*.

- **Other Goods**: Patents of Nobility (Esquire) for each party member, granting each the noble rank of Marquis. This entitles them to attend high-society functions throughout the Empire.
- If she survived, Yiraz offers up an additional prize. This extra gift is left up to individual GMs to fit into their campaigns. However, some suggestions include:
 - A minor artifact

Ownership of a small keep or town within her domain A hefty annual stipend

OPTIONAL RULE: STATUS REWARD

If you are using the Status rules from the *Midgard Campaign Setting*, then successfully completing this adventure advances each character's status to 11 (equal to a knight or petty noble), or provides a +1 Status bonus, whichever is greater.



Appendix One: Race Rules For The Gm

OVERVIEW

The goal of these race rules is to give the impression of a real race without being too bogged down in minutia. The rules provide something more than simply rolling opposed dice checks, but they are but one method to run this adventure race. If GMs have their own preferred method, they are encouraged to use them instead.

WAYPOINTS, LEGS, AND MARKS

The race is divided into two groups, waypoints and legs. Waypoints are the stops at which the racers must complete certain rituals and legs are the racecourse between the waypoints.

Each leg of the race is denoted by a series of three "marks." GMs need to decide if a "mark" is a measurement of time or distance, or if it is simply a challenge to overcome.

This abstraction allows GMs to track the heroes in relation to the other teams, and it provides a method of gaining and/or losing ground on the Race Order.

Winning a mark adds to the total needed to "win" a leg. Winning requires that, as a group, the PCs must make a number of successes as indicated beside the mark. PCs failing checks suffer the listed consequences (fatigue, injured leg... etc.), and the incurred penalties may increases the difficulty of the leg's remaining marks. The consequences of failure are listed for each leg.

GAINING AND/OR LOSING GROUND

The heroes face skill checks or saves in order to overcome each individual mark. For example...Steep Hill: Cling to Saddle (DC 15 Reflex Save) or Safe Path Down (DC 15 Survival check).

At each mark, everyone rolls for these skill checks. A certain number of total successes is needed in order to "win" the mark, and the players must win 2 out of 3 marks to "win" the leg. The number of needed successes increases as the race goes on, and they are each indicated on the individual entry for that leg.

Winning a leg results in the party being ahead of the enemy team associated with the next waypoint. For example, if the characters win the "Across the Openlands" leg, they will arrive at the "Waypoint Four: The Storm-Drenched Tower" ahead of the Black Band. Failure means the party arrives behind the other team.

If GMs wish, they can describe passing the other team or even run mounted encounters. It should be stressed, however, that combat at the speeds the augmented horses travel is very risky.

AUGMENTED HORSES

The horses provided by Yiraz are standard heavy horses but receive a special incantation called "The Empress' Wings," which is reserved for the Empire's elite messengers. This spell gives the animals the statistics listed below.

Heavy Horse (as *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, except as follows) **XP 600 hp** 30 **Speed** 300 ft. (30 miles per hour, 240 miles per day)

If players choose, a silver-robed imperial mage will cast the spell upon the PCs' own mounts (animal companions, paladin's charger...etc.)

However, unless given a special draught at the end of the day, the animals burn out from the inside, killing them instantly.

FALLING RULES

Animals under the effect of the *Empress' wings* incantation move at such high speed that falling off becomes a painful risk. The following two rules are exceptions to the normal rules for falling off a horse (see Falling in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*).

If you are moving more than 50 ft. per round, you cannot use a soft fall Ride check to negate damage.

If you fall, you take 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage for every 50 ft. of speed past the first 50 ft. Thus, falling off at top speed metes out 5d6 points of damage.

Appendix Two: The Teams

The following information provides stats and characterization notes for the three opposing teams.

THE BLACK BAND

Cunning and ruthless mercenaries who view morals as vague guidelines

Туре:	Elite bodyguards and agents
Affiliations:	Verrayne
History:	A small, highly trained and experienced band dedicated to protecting Duke Valis from any and all threats. Occasionally he sends them out to accomplish other jobs for the greater glory of Verrayne.
Methods:	To achieve their primary goal of safeguarding the Duke, the Black Band views any and all actions as necessary; honor and dishonor are pointless, only getting the job done. So they employ dirty tricks, poison, anything to reach their goal.
Renown:	They claim to be the greatest warriors and mages in the West and many consider them to be so.

Team Roster:

MALA

CR 7

A severe-looking woman with close-cropped hair and several facial scars, Mala leads the Black Band. To antagonize her foes, she delights in creating obstacles, be they monsters, natural hazards, or ambushes.

XP 3,200 Female human sorcerer 8

CN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +3; Senses Perception +6
DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +3 **Dex**, +2 natural) **hp** 50 (8d6+16)

Fort +5; +2 vs. poisons, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Resist electricity 5
OFFENSE

Smood 2

Speed 30 ft.

Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20/x2) Special Attacks claws (8 rounds/day, 1d6)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 8, concentration +13)

4th (4/day)—summon monster IV

3rd (6/day)—fireball (DC 18), fly (DC 18), rage*

2nd (7/day)—bull's strength* (DC 17), invisibility, scorching ray, web (DC 18)

1st (8/day)—cause fear* (DC 16), grease (DC 17), mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement (DC 16), summon monster I 0 (at will)— arcane mark, detect magic, detect poison, launch

item, mage hand, message, prestidigitation (DC 15), ray of frost Bloodline abyssal*

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 20 Base Atk +4; CMB +4; CMD 17

Feats Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Great **Fort**itude, Spell Focus (**Con**juration), Toughness +8, Weapon Focus (ray) **Skills** Acrobatics +5, Perception +6, Spellcraft +11, Survival +3, Use Magic Device +16

Combat Gear mwk light crossbow; **Other Gear** amulet of natural armor +2, bag of holding I (empty), bracers of armor +2, pearl of power (2nd Level), ring of protection +1, scroll of freedom of movement, greater invisibility, slay living, stinking cloud, stoneskin

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Abyssal Summoned creatures gain DR 4/good.

Augment Summoning Summoned creatures have +4 to Strength and Constitution.

Claws (Ex) 2 magic claw attacks deal 1d6 damage (8 rounds/ day).

TENAL MAR

CR 5

Older and more reserved than his companions, Tenal Mar served as a recruiter for the Order of the Seekers for many years before joining the Black Band. His arcane power and battle tactics have been honed by years of fighting in the Wastes. Tenal Mar evaluates everything, searching for potential threats.

XP 1,600

Male elf druid 6 CN Medium humanoid (elf) Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +3 **Dex**, +1 natural) **hp** 34 (6d8)

Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +11; +2 vs. enchantments Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +7 (1d6+2/18-20/x2)

Ranged +1 composite longbow (Str +2) +8 (1d8+3/x3) Special Attacks storm burst (1d6+3 nonlethal, 7/day)

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 6; concentration +10)

- 3rd— *call lightning*^D (DC 17), *communal cure moderate* wounds (DC 17), *protection from energy* (DC 17), *spider climb*
- 2nd—*barkskin, flaming sphere* (DC 16), *fog cloud^D*, *lesser restoration* (DC 16), *summon swarm*
- 1st—charm animal (DC 15), cure light wounds (DC 15), entangle (DC 15), longstrider, obscuring mist^D (DC 15)
 0 (at will)—detect magic, detect poison, light, read magic
 ^D Domain spell; Domain Weather

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 10 Base Atk +4; CMB +6; CMD 19

Feats Combat Casting, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Acrobatics +2, Handle Animal +9, Perception +15, Ride +11, Spellcraft +10, Survival +15

Languages Draconic, Druidic, Elvish, Trade Tongue

SQ nature bond (Weather domain), nature sense, resist nature's lure, spontaneous casting, trackless step, wild empathy, wildshape (2/day), woodland stride

Combat Gear +1 composite longbow (**Str** +2), mwk scimitar, rhino hide armor; **Other Gear** amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of resistance +2, oil of greater magic weapon +2, potion of barkskin +3, potion of cure serious wounds (2), potion of fly

SPECIAL ABILTIIES

Storm Burst (Sp) 7/day, a 30-ft. ranged touch attack deals 1d6+3 nonlethal damage and inflicts a -2 attack penalty for 1 round.

Wild Shape (Su) 2/per day, Tenal Mar can shapeshift into an animal (up to large size) or a small elemental.

NILAS

Blood-thirsty and vicious, Nilas emerged from the Wastes with no memory of his past, just a notched greatsword and a chip on his shoulder. Recruited by Tenal Mar and trained by the Seekers, he loves nothing more than breaking his foes as violently as possible.

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human barbarian 3/fighter 3 N Medium Humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses scent; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +2 **Dex**, +2 deflection)

hp 78 (3d12+3d10+36)

Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +4

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 adamantine greatsword +11/+6 (2d6+5/19-20/x2) **Ranged** throwing axe +8/+3 (1d6+3/x2)

Special Attacks rage (13 rounds/day), rage powers (scent) STATISTICS

TATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8 Base Atk +6; CMB +9; CMD 23 Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness +6, Weapon Focus (greatsword) Skills Acrobatics +8, Handle Animal +6, Perception +9, Ride +8, Survival +7

Languages Trade Tongue

SQ armor training 1, fast movement +10

Combat Gear +1 adamantine greatsword, +1 breastplate,

throwing axe; Other Gear handy haversack (empty), oil of keen edge, potion of barkskin +3, potion of bull's strength, potion of *cure moderate wounds, ring of protection +2*

VIROND

CR 6

A jovial young man with a boyish face who perpetually dresses in yellow, Vinond would gladly cut the throats of strangers just because it strikes him as funny. Loyalty to the Duke somewhat mutes his psychotic tendencies.

XP 2,400

Male human fighter 4/rogue 3 CN Medium humanoid (human) Init +3; Senses Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural, +1 dodge)

hp 55 (4d10+3d8+14)

Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +4

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

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 keen scimitar +12/+7 (1d6+5/15-20) **Ranged** mwk dagger +9/+4 (1d4+4/19-20/x2) Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +6; CMB +10; CMD 24

Feats Blind-Fight, Dodge, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Shield Focus, Spring Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +8, Handle Animal +8, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +11, Survival +8, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Draconic, Trade Tongue

SQ armor training 1, trapfinding +1

Combat Gear +1 keen scimitar, mwk dagger, mithral chain shirt; **Other Gear** *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of incredible* dexterity +2, boots of striding and springing, wand of expeditious retreat

IVORY COMPANY OF WHITE KNIGHTS

Arrogant, elitist Knights softened by decades of instantaneous magical aid

Туре:	Famous, elite cavaliers and guardians
Affiliations:	Bourgund
History:	In their intricate armor and pristine white tabards, the White Knights enforce order and the Duke's laws within and around Bourgund.
Methods:	White Knights meet danger head on, trusting their wizard bond-mates to cast spells to buff or heal them as needed.

Renowned in the past for felling one of the **Renown:**

ancient Walkers, the modern White Knights display an arrogance that belies their heavy reliance on spells from their wizards

Team Roster:

- Sir Markus Alavaine A proud and arrogant knight, still smarting from a recent and public failure that led to his demotion. Winning this race would earn him back a smidgen of honor.
- Sir Gormun Junior knight, brash and quick to anger but loyal to his brother knights.
- Sir Vasili Junior knight, schooled in diplomacy and tactics without much real world experience.
- Sir Talos Junior knight, quiet and coldly conceited; secretly an agent from Allain.

WHITE KNIGHT OF BOURGUND CR 6

XP 3,200

Male human (armor-bonded) cavalier (emissaryUC) 7 LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (+10 armor, +3 shield) **hp** 67 (7d10+21)

Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 bastard sword +11/+6 (1d10+6/19-20/x2) and +1 heavy steel shield bash +10/+5(1d4+5/x2)

Special Attacks cavalier's charge, white knight's challenge^{MPGWW} (+9 damage, 3/day), fearsome reputation^{MPGWW}

STATISTICS

Str 21, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12 Base Atk +7; CMB +12; CMD 22

Feats Armor Proficiency (heavy armor), Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Cleave, Mobility, Mounted Combat (1/round), Power Attack -2/+4

Skills Climb +12, Diplomacy +11, Handle Animal +11,

Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (nobility) +6, Perception +7, Ride +10, Survival +7

Languages Draconic, Trade Tongue

SQ animal companion link, mount, white knight's skills, expert trainer +3, orders (order of the white knightsMPGWW), armor bond

Combat Gear +1 mithral full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 bastard sword; Other Gear cloak of resistance, +2, potion of cure moderate wounds (3), alchemist's fire (2 vials)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Armor Bond (Su) Linked to Mageholme through a speciallycrafted suit of armor, the White Knights can receive spells from their mages. However, the bond has a weakness to one energy type: acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic. Whenever the armor or its wearer suffers damage of the selected type, the bond between the wizard and the armor is severed for 1 round per 10 damage dealt, rounded down. No special abilities may be shared during this time, though any previous spells granted through

the impart spells ability with an ongoing duration continue to function on the armor's wearer as normal.

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The White Knights can each be bolstered by the following spells (1/round):

Divine: air bubble, bull's strength, cure light wounds, cure moderate wounds, detect poison, divine favor, guidance, protection from evil, resistance, resist energy, shield of faith, stabilize

Arcane: blur, detect magic, dispel magic, endure elements, feather fall, haste, heroism, invisibility, jump, light, mending, protection from arrows, spider climb, true strike, vanish

ARGENT RATS

Small and fierce kobold mercenaries with chips on their shoulders

Туре:	Mercenary band specializing in stealth and incursion.
Affiliations:	None.
History:	Originally river bandits from Magdar, the Rats legitimized themselves, becoming one of the more successful mercenary companies.
Methods:	Never straight forward, the Rats prefer trickery and cunning to up-front attacks.
Renown:	Best known for only recruiting kobolds and halflings, the Rats operate as stealth and intrusion units getting into places others cannot.

Team Roster:

Captain Vrip – Cunning leader of the Argent Rat unit; does not take insults from "big folk."

Lieutenant Merril – Second in command, proud and fierce; attracted to tall humanoid women.

ARGENT RAT SKIRMISHER (3) CR 7

XP 2,400

Male kobold rogue 8 CN Small Humanoid (reptilian) Init +5; Senses Darkvision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +1 size, +2 natural)

hp 59 (8d8+16)

Fort +3, Ref +11, Will +2

Defensive Abilities Evasion, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense; Weakness Light Sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +10/+5 (1d4+1/15-20) **Special Attacks** sneak attack +4d6

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8
Base Atk +6; CMB +6; CMD 21
Feats Blind-Fight, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar), Outflank, Precise Strike, Toughness +8, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Acrobatics +16, Escape Artist +9, Perception +10, Stealth +13

SQ surprise attacks

Combat Gear +1 studded leather armor, mwk scimitar; **Other Gear** amulet of natural armor +1, bell, blue whinnis poison, potion of keen edge*, silk rope (50 ft.), tanglefoot bag (* Bonus already applied)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Outflank Flanking bonus increases to +4 if the other flanker also has this feat, and ally gets an AoO if you score a critical hit against the target.

Precise Strike +1d6 precision damage for melee attacks if you and an ally with this feat flank the same target.

Lieutenant Binnik – Sister of Krina; loathes humans and believes her bloodline is more noble.

Lieutenant Krina – Sister of Binnik; brutally protective of her unit; enjoys fine wines.

ARGENT RAT CASTER (2) CR 7

XP 2,400

Female kobold sorcerer 8 CN Small Humanoid (reptilian) Init +6; Senses Darkvision; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size, +2 natural, +1 deflection, +1 dodge)

hp 42 (8d6+8)

Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6

Resist acid 5, Dragon Resistances; Weakness Light Sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d6/19-20)

Special Attacks claws (1d6-2, 8 rounds/day)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 8; concentration +13)

4th (4/day)—dragon's breath (DC 20)

- 3rd (6/day)— *fly** (DC 18), *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *slow* (DC 18)
- 2nd (7/day)—blur (DC 17), invisibility, resist energy* (DC 18), scorching ray
- 1st (8/day)—expeditious retreat, grease (DC 16), magic missile, mage armor*, obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement (DC 16)
- 0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 15), *detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 15), *launch item, message, prestidigitation* (DC 15), *ray of frost, resistance* (DC 16)

Bloodline draconic*

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 20 **Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 15

Feats Dodge, Improved **Init**iative, Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Focus (Evocation), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +3, Perception +2, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +6 **SQ** Draconic (Green Dragon [Acid])

Combat Gear mwk light crossbow; **Other Gear** handy haversack (empty), potion of cure light wounds (2), potion of cure moderate wounds (2), ring of protection +1, wand of fireball (3 charges)

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By Crystal Frasier

To Zobeckers, the Bibliolethe, the former Stross Family Library, is an urban legend, one drunks ramble about and Arcane Collegium scholars discount. In truth, the Stross' great library still exists. Casting about the void between worlds, it occasionally washes ashore like flotsam on some Zobeckan back alley or far-flung shadow road. Always, the morning sun unmoors the library's tenuous grasp on substance, setting it loose upon the planar tides anew

Tonight, the Bibliolethe again darkens Zobeck's streets. Those entering and emerging before sunrise can return wealthy. But those remaining inside at dawn's first light are cast back into infinity, forever doomed to share the Bibliolethe's curse. The "Stacks Between" is an urban/dungeon adventure suitable for 11th-level characters.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Stross Family Library, the academic jewel in the Stross' crown, archived everything from personal records and historical epics to hard-won trophies and arcane treasures. As such, it proved too tempting a target for the Great Revolt's angry fires. But the Bibliolethe's prideful master, Gorman Stross, turned to dark magic and a mysterious shadow fey music box—the *black nightingale*—to save his repository. Using the artifact, he thought to propel the Stross family's legacy into the
THE TICKING CLOCK

If the PCs act quickly, they have 10 hours to rescue Avalista and unravel one of Zobeck's most unusual urban legends. Adventurers have—at best—one chance to heal or rest long enough to restore their spells. The adventure assumes a certain amount of stealth, bargaining, and resource discretion.

NO RETURN

The Bibliolethe blocks all magical attempts to leave (teleportation, plane shifting, etc.), and it prohibits scrying upon its residents. Any person lost in the library as dawn lights, cannot be found, short of a *wish* or *miracle* spell. However, Avalista's uncovered incantation can call forth the library for others to investigate it and rescue lost persons.

Plane of Shadow and be welcomed as a refugee by the shadow fey. Instead, his clumsy attempts unhinged the library and all within from reality, casting all adrift on the currents between shadows and light.

When Gorman Stross died in the magical accident, the music box's magical energies rent his very soul, splitting it into two damaged spirit shards. One shard—the sum of his intellect and reason—became a ghost haunting his precious books. The other—his madness, passion, and noble entitlement—warped into a skittering, dark embodiment of fallen pride. The fey music drove its hooks into the library's other survivors' souls, forever tying them to the cursed building.

When the library arrived in the Plane of Shadow, the shadow fey, who coveted it as a treasure, dispatched the Ebon Delegation, led by the Duchess Chaimella Ventre, to claim it. But the true horror of the *black nightingale's* corruption revealed itself when the Plane of Shadow's dismal dawn arrived: The library broke free from the world again, taking the Ebon Delegation with it.

Over the decades since, the Stross library faded from memory, another casualty of the Great Revolt. In its place sprang up rumors of the Bibliolethe, the haunted library that appeared and vanished at random, stealing curious bystanders here or treasure-hunters there. Not long ago, it claimed Zora von Zeerghast, eldest daughter of one of Zobeck's remaining noble families. Laughed out of the Arcane Collegium for her fascination with the myth but determined to prove her theories, she crafted an incantation to force the Bibliolethe to appear beneath a lunar eclipse. Zora vanished that night, never to be seen again.

Now, five years later, Avalista, Zora's younger sister, reenacted her lost sibling's ritual, and, with all the passion and foolishness of youth, she called down the Bibliolethe under the lunar eclipse, determined to find Zora and prove her sister's theories correct.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins as the noble house of Zeerghast hires, cajoles, or threatens the PCs into retrieving Avalista, their youngest daughter, last seen entering a mysterious building just after sundown. If the urban legends are true, the building is the infamous Bibliolethe, the wandering library, and anyone not emerging from its halls by dawn, a mere 10 hours away, vanishes forever.

Within the library, the PCs encounter its bizarre cavalcade of cursed prisoners: ghostly and living arcanists, hostile shadow fey, and horrific mutations.

The PCs easily locate Avalista, now a captive of the Ebon Delegation, but she refuses to leave. Her sister Zora vanished into the library five years earlier in an attempt to prove her ridiculed theory and bring glory to their family. Avalista seeks to redeem her lost sibling. She shares her sister's journal, detailing information about the library's curse. The adventurers may finish their mission, removing Avalista by force or magical coercion, or pursue the wealth and status that breaking the curse would deliver. To do so, the PCs must finish the *black nightingale's* song. Notes from the Ebon Delegation and Master Stross combine to yield enough information to complete the music box's melody.

Reaching the *black nightingale*, which rests within the legendary Vaults of Ruddermere beneath the library, requires courage and cleverness. The PCs must unravel a riddle hidden in Stross family seal and locate an arcane key (concealed in Gorman's old office), to reach it. In the vaults, the PCs face the Stross family's most diabolical traps and guardians, as well as the monstrous half of Gorman Stross' fractured soul, which the nightingale has sung into a derghodaemon to protect itself.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

By 11th level, PCs are well-known individuals in Zobeck. Upon learning of their daughter's disappearance, the Zeerghast family needs swift, competent agents to rescue their legacy, and so they contact the PCs through a personal agent, offering them 5,000 gp apiece as a reward for their daughter's rescue. Other possible adventure leads include:

- Avalista von Zeerghast is the PCs' friend or contact, and her disappearance into the wandering library reaches the adventurers quickly by a mutual friend.
- The Collegium asks the PCs to look into a rogue student: Avalista von Zeerghast. Investigation uncovers notes in her apartment, leading them to the back-alley entrance to the Bibliolethe
- Some valuable artifact, plot-device, or critical piece of information thought lost in the Great Revolt may still exist within the Bibliolethe. The PCs may discover a copy of Zora von Zeerghast's journal, detailing the ritual to call down the Stross Family Library under the lunar eclipse, and undertake the task themselves.

introduction

This adventure takes place entirely the Bibliolethe, and it assumes the library has appeared in a quiet back alley of the Market District about an hour after sundown, remaining unnoticed by locals. The PCs are contacted an hour later, leaving them 10 hours to find Avalista—and any treasures they desire— before the library vanishes at dawn.

The "Stacks Between" offers a secondary goal for the truly courageous: With Zora's journal and the notes of several of the Bibliolethe's residents, the PCs can unweave the *black nightingale's* magic, thereby returning the untold treasures of the Stross Family Library to Zobeck.

The Bibliolethe is a confusing nest of conflicting residents and schemes, but its major territories and their residents include:

THE WEST WING

In its day, the Bibliolethe's west wing housed visiting Stross family members, and, to this day, contains many of the noble family's personal records. It is as much richly appointed noble estate as archive.

The Ebon Delegation, the party the shadow fey sent to capture the library on the Plane of Shadow, now makes this wing their home. Duchess Chaimella Ventre's attempt to unravel the black nightengale's song drove her to madness and suicide, transforming her into a banshee. The Delegation now bows to her assistants, Fortiger and Trom, who plot escape from the Bibliolethe's curse by trading their souls with new captives.

Fortiger and Trom captured **Avalista von Zeerghast** after she entered the library, and plan to trade their curse to the mortal girl in a ritual.

The Ebon Delegation despises the insane ghost Master Gorman and Dromus, his assistant, but worries the two's destruction would sever the library's ties to reality; thus, the shadow fey tolerate the mad arcanists.

THE NORTH WING

Formerly library offices and servant quarters, the north wing hosts a bizarre menagerie. Foremost is the elfmarked, **Dromus**, Gorman Stross' assistant and bastard nephew. Madness claimed him shortly after the curse took hold, and decades spent drifting between reality enhanced the trace magical taint in his blood. He considers himself a pureblood shadow fey, and he expects a hero's greeting at the Moonlit Court once he removes the curse and delivers the Bibliolethe permanently to the Shadow Realm.

Dromus'S obsession with lifting the curse led him to commit atrocious experiments upon the poor souls whose greed or curiosity delivered them to the library, creating numerous horrors now sealed in various rooms. In particular, he twisted *Zora von Zeerghast's* body and soul into a vampire, and then sealed her within the servant quarters.

Besides the sorcerer and his creations, **Clauvrex**, a bound contract devil, calls the north wing home. She passes her time idling through the family accounts and chortling at her fellow prisoners' machinations.

THE MAIN HALL

The main hall contains the bulk of the Stross family collection. Every book ever written or purchased by a member of the bloodline was copied and stored on these shelves. The **Nacre clan**, a family of gargoyles, lairs in the open lobby. Tonight, the Ebon Delegation engaged the clan to retrieve additional souls for their liberation ritual. Sufficient victims ensure the gargoyles' freedom, as well.

The undead shade of one-half of Gorman Stross' tortured soul, Master Gorman, haunts the stacks themselves. A being of organization and mathematical precision, **Master Gorman** jealously guards his pristine tomes, lashing out against anyone disturbing the books' organization.

THE VAULTS OF RUDDERMERE

Sealed behind a magical door sideways from the Bibliolethe's twisted reality, the Vaults of Ruddermere hold some of the Stross family's greatest treasures. **Melianne**, a ghaele enslaved by planar contract, protects the vaults. Beyond her cautious gaze, the second half of Gorman Stross's fractured soul, Madman Stross, broods and rages while guarding the *black nightingale*.

DROMUS (CR 12)

As the library's most mobile resident, Dromus's statblock is listed here. He begins the evening in the garden (**area 11**), taking tea with his trusty servant, the shrubgaunt. If he suspects intruders, he moves to his kitchen-come-laboratory (**area 15**), preparing for new experiments. After an hour, he goes to the foyer (**area 1**) to confront any intruders attempting to leave.

Long since mad, Dromus demands subjects for his experiments to remove the *black nightingale's* curse, allowing him to deliver the Bibliolethe to the Moonlit Court, where he craves a hero's welcome and recognition as a noble heir.

If located in the garden, Dromus fights alongside the shrubgaunt; if encountered elsewhere, two Nacre gargoyles accompany him.

CR 10

DROMUS

XP 9,600

Male elfmarked monk 2/sorcerer 9 Medium humanoid (elfmarked)

Init +8; Senses low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 20, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 dodge, +3 Wis)

hp 62 (2d8+9d6+22)

Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +14; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 quarterstaff +5 (1d6)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (4/day, DC 18) **Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +13)

7/day—laughing touch

9 rounds/day—fleeting glance

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +13)

4th (5/day)—leeching lanthorn^{ZGP,} poison, rainbow pattern 3rd (7/day)—deep slumber, hold person, major image, ray of exhaustion

- 2nd (7/day)—blur, command undead, glitterdust, hideous laughter, lock armor^{ZGP}
- 1st (7/day)—*cause fear, entangle, mage armor, shadow hands*^{ZGP,} *ray of enfeeblement, silent image, unseen servant*
- 0 (at will)—bleed, dancing lights, disrupt undead, flare, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, resistance

Bloodline fey

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 18 Base Atk +5; CMB +4; CMD 24

Feats Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved **Init**iative, Improved Unarmed **Str**ike, Lightning Stance, Mobility, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device)^B, Spell Focus (necromancy), Stunning Fist, Disruptive Spell^{APG}, Minor Spell Expertise (shadow hands)^{APG}, Elfmarked^{MCS}

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +13, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Linguistics +2, Perception +5, Spellcraft +9, Use Magic Device +15; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception **Languages** Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon **SQ** bloodline fey (+2 DC for spells of the compulstion subschool), elfblood, woodland stride

Combat Gear potion of cure serious wounds, potion of invisibility, scroll of cat's grace, scroll of stoneskin (2); **Other Gear** +1 quarterstaff, ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +2, headband of inspired wisdom+2, Stross family amulet and signet ring (500gp each)

Tactics: Dromus lights the lantern on his staff, activating his *leeching lanthorn* spell, hoping to distract PCs for a few rounds while it drains their Constitution. If they attack, Dromus activates his fleeting glance and casts *rainbow pattern*, and finally turns his shadow hands on anyone not fascinated by the spell. He tries to subdue one or two weak-willed subjects with deep slumber if possible.

Part One:



The building, with its stained marble walls and domed roof, blends well with the surrounding architecture. Few Zobeckers have even noticed it.

Unless otherwise indicated, the illumination within the library is dim, the ceilings rise 15 ft. tall, the walls are reinforced masonry, and the rooms have strong wooden (unlocked) doors.

1) THE GRAND LOBBY (CR 11)

This cavernous entryway drips opulence. Marble tiles cover the floor, while the ceiling rises to an impressive, 20-ft.wide dome. Six statues of stern, noble figures, four red and two white, flank the corners, while above them stained glass windows depict a half-dozen different Midgardian landscapes. Inset on the floor, an enormous brass ring enshrines the Stross family crest; dozens of names encircle it.

The grand lobby's furniture has been repurposed into a nest for the Nacre gargoyles living in the dome above.

The stained glass windows once tied into the fey network of shadow roads, connecting the Zobeck library to far-flung Stross outposts. Meanwhile, the center crest serves as a sealed doorway to the Vaults of Ruddermere (see **Part Two**).

Creatures: The Nacre gargoyles became trapped 70 years ago when the "abandoned" building they claimed as a rookery vanished, cursing them all. Decades without the sun faded their rocky hides to alabaster white. Left idle, they've turned to reading in the intervening years, becoming intellectuals. They enjoy arguing philosophy with one another, or even opponents, in battle.

The clan hunts mortal victims for Trom's ritual to exchange their curse (see **area 6**), but four remain behind to watch the nest.

NACRE CLAN GARGOYLE (4) CR 7

XP 3,200

Advanced gargoyle rogue 4

LE Medium monstrous humanoid (earth)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 90 (5d10+4d8+45)

Fort +7, Ref +13, Will +6

Defensive Abilities evasion, brutal beating, uncanny dodge OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +16/+11 (1d6+7), bite +10 (1d4+3), gore +10 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 20, **Con** 20, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 13 **Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

Feats Dazzling Display, Hover, Improved Initiative, Intimidating ProwessB, Shatter Defenses, Weapon Focus (claws)

Mare W Rolle 201

Skills Acrobatics +13 (+17 jump), Climb +12, Fly +14, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9,

Knowledge (dungeoneering) +),



Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +10, Perform (sing) +9, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +18; **Racial Modifiers** Acrobatics (+4 jump), +2 Stealth

- **SQ** rogue talents (fast stealth, strong impression), frightening, freeze
- Tactics: Two gargoyles stand in the foyer, their wings wrapped around them as cloaks and posing as white statues. Two more watch stealthily from above for a round or two, hoping to gauge their opponents' weakest members. On the first round, one lands and uses her Dazzling Display to demoralize the group; her compatriots focus on affected PCs. Their Shatter Defenses feat allows them to sneak attack any shaken opponent. They always trade 1d6 of sneak attack damage to sicken opponents. Arrogant and unhinged, the Nacre do not flee.
- **Treasure:** The gargoyles attack newcomers first, and have squirreled away a horde in their nest above (requiring climbing or flight and a Perception check (DC 20) to locate). It includes 409gp, 48pp, three-dozen minor pieces of jewelry (worth 300gp total), a string of pearls (400gp), seven fashionable cloaks from various eras (125gp each), 50 books on philosophy and civics borrowed from the library, and two *potions of cure serious wounds*.
- **Development:** The Stross seal in the floor is actually a puzzle door that opens a gateway to the Vaults of Ruddermere, far below. A Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (nobility) check (DC 15) reveals the Stross family names encircling the seal are out of proper birth order. Touching the names in proper order (requiring either a successful Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (nobility) skill check (DC 35), or taking notes on the family lineage in **area 8**) reveals a square keyhole in the

seal's center. The magic seal also requires the proper key hidden in Gorman's old office (**area 14**). Alternatively, the magic protecting the lock can be dispelled with *greater dispel magic* (CL 18), after which the lock can be picked manually (DC 40).

See Part Two for details on the Vaults.

2. ENTRYWAY (CR 9)

Portraits of previous librarians line this grand hallway. The final portrait, Gorman Stross, has been shredded and defaced with ink.

Traps: To deter thieves, the Stross trapped the library. Decorative niches in the ceiling fire arrows down on those traversing the room if a hidden switch by the door is not deactivated.

HAIL OF ARROWS TRAP CR 9

XP 6,400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25 EFFECTS

- Trigger visual (arcane eye); Reset repair
- Effect Atk +20 ranged (6d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. line)
- **Treasure:** The 10 portraits are worth 150gp each, but Gorman's is marred beyond repair and worthless.

3. NOBLE FOYER (CR 10)

Rich silk draperies, now mildew-stained, hang from the walls of this exquisite lounge. Musty, overstuffed couches, chairs, and stools hint at lost atmosphere. Playing cards clutter a nearby table. This casual entertaining space formerly served as the library's reading lounge. Countless nobles and academics used the space to study, debate, and cut shady deals. It's now the Ebon Delegation's recreation area. Whenever the Bibliolethe settles in Zobeck, the shadow fey leave guards here to keep out prying eyes.

Fortiger casts *alarm* in this room at the beginning of the night, immediately alerting him to intruders.

Three shadow fey myrmidons and a single shadow hound remain watchful of intruders.

SHADOW MASTIFF CR 5

CR 7

hp 51 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3)

SHADOW FEY MYRMIDON

XP 3,200

Shadow fey expert 2/warrior 2 (*Midgard Bestiary*, p 85) NE Medium fey

Init +9; Senses darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +14
DEFENSE

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 21, flat-footed 17 (+2 armor, +4 deflection, +5 Dex, +2 dodge, +1 shield) hp 68 (7d6+2d8+2d10+24) Fort +12, Ref +14, Will +13 Defensive Abilities flicker, improved evasion, uncanny dodge Weaknesses light sensitivity OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +13/+8 (1d6+2/18–20) and mwk dagger +11 (1d4+1/19–20) Ranged mwk shortbow +13/+8 (1d6/X3) 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

STATISTICS

Base Statistics AC 23, +1 rapier +12/+7 and mwk dagger +10, mwk shortbow +12/+7, **Ref**lex +11, speed 40 ft. Str 12, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 18

Base Atk +6; CMB +7; CMD 27

Feats Combat **Ref**lexes, Double Slice, Improved **Init**iative, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +18 (+22 jump), Bluff +14, Climb +9, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +10, Escape Artist +16, Knowledge (planes) +9, Perception +14, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (soldier) +7, Sense Motive +13, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +23; Racial Modifiers Acrobatics (+4 jump), +8 Stealth Languages common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

SQ shadow jump, stealth in motion

Other Gear masterwork leather armor, +1 *rapier*, mwk dagger, mwk shortbow, 25 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (see Midgard Bestiary, page 85)

Shadow Jump (see Midgard Bestiary, page 85)

Stealth in Motion (see Midgard Bestiary, page 85)

Tactics: The guards are disorganized without a leader present. One casts haste before combat or as it begins; then they rush in. If two fall, the remaining guard falls back to reinforce Fortiger's blockade in **area 5**.

Treasure: The shadow fey playing cards and three books (worth 200 gp each) are all penned in opalescent ink.

4. STROSS READING ROOM

Stern portraits stare down from the walls of this large study, disapproving of the desk, work table, and chairs. One corner now serves as a shrine of some sort, flanked by candles, dried herbs, and purple silk.

Once the Stross family's private study, young nobles learned the ways of rulership and prepubescent arcanists drilled in the various magical languages here. The Ebon Delegation transformed the room into a shrine to Sarastra, identifiable with a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20). Trom has been preparing it for her ritual, but is currently in **area 9**, gathering incense and reviewing her notes.

Treasure: The altar is studded with 37 shade-silver coins, worth 10gp apiece.

5. GRAND HALL (CR 0 OR 11)

Marble pillars and silk draperies give this alreadyimpressive room the illusion of monumental size.

The Stross family entertained many visiting nobles and wizards at the library, throwing ostentatious banquets amid the books to flaunt their sophistication. The Ebon Delegation finds the space too agoraphobic, and only uses it for drilling or meeting with Dromus.

Creatures: If the PCs alerted the Ebon Delegation to their presence through combat, Fortiger lies in wait here with his assistant and two hounds, prowling behind the hanging silks. If the PCs remained stealthy thus far, Fortiger is in **area 6** with Trom.

CR 9

FORTIGER

XP 6,400

Male shadow fey ranger 4 (*Midgard Bestiary*, p. 85) NE Medium fey

Init +11; Senses darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +12
DEFENSE

DEFENS

AC 25, touch 20, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +4 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 dodge)

hp 72 (7d6+4d10+26)

Fort +14, Ref +21, Will +13

Defensive Abilities improved evasion, uncanny dodge **Weaknesses** light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 70 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +16/+11 (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged +1 composite shortbow +16/+11 (1d6+4/x3)

Special Attacks shadow jump, favored enemy (humans +2)

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

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

3/day—suggestion (DC 17)

1/day—haste

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +3) 1st—alarm

STATISTICS

Base Statistics AC24, Rapier +15/+10, +1 composite shortbow +15/+10, **Ref**lex +13, speed 40 ft.

Str 17, Dex 24, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18

Base Atk +7; CMB +14; CMD 32

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Endurance, Improved **Init**iative, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Finesse

- Skills Acrobatics +20 (+24 jump), Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +11, Escape Artist +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +11, Knowledge (nature) +11, Knowledge (planes) +3, Perception +12, Perform (dance) +12, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +27, Survival +15; Racial
- **Modifiers** Acrobatics (+4 jump), +8 Stealth

Languages common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon **SQ** favored terrain (urban +2), flicker, hunter's bond

(companions), stealth in motion, track +2, wild empathy +8 **Combat Gear** *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, mwk rapier, +1 *composite shortbow, cloak of resistance* +1, masterwork platinum and ebony flute (1,200gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (see Midgard Bestiary, page 85)

Shadow Jump (see Midgard Bestiary, page 85)

Stealth in Motion (see Midgard Bestiary, page 85)

SHADOW MASTIFF (2)

XP 1,600

hp 51 (6d10+18) (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3)

SHADOW FEY MYRMIDON

XP 3,200

hp 68 (7d6+2d8+2d10+24), see area 3

Tactics: Fortiger and cohorts hide in plain sight, ordering the PCs to surrender. The echoing nature of the chamber allows them unmodified Stealth checks to conceal their position, despite speaking. Willing to bargain, they admit to having "a girl" they'll trade for any two Zobeckers brought to them, though Fortiger insists the fate of any new hostages doesn't concern the heroes.

In combat, Fortiger's assistant casts haste, and Fortiger uses his hunter's bond to augment the myrmidon's attacks. While his hounds and assistant charge into combat, Fortiger uses Manyshot and Rapid Shot to focus on casters from concealment.

If reduced below 20 hit points, Fortiger uses shadow jump to retreat to **area 9** and back up Trom.

6. FAMILY QUARTERS (CR 0 OR 12)

Finely crafted, dark-stained oak furnishings fill out this large bedroom suit. An amateurish forest mural decorates two walls. Sickly sweet incense still hangs in the air.

Reserved for Stross family visiting the city or involved in long-term research projects, the shadow fey claimed this suite. Fortiger and Trom share the room—and one another when it's convenient. To fight his claustrophobia, Fortiger painted the woodland scene, copying an illustration from a copy of *Tales of the Old Margreve*, a book of fey stories resting beside the bed.

Creatures: Fortiger and Trom sleep here together, but spend their days apart. If the PCs haven't raised any alarms, there is a 50% chance the pair is together here. Otherwise, see **areas 5 and 9**.

Treasure: Much of the Ebon Delegation's treasury rests here in a locked trunk (Disable Device DC 30), including 160 gp, 8 pp, a bracelet woven from disappointing first nights (1,700gp), a *potion of resist energy* (fire), a *potion of rage*, a *scroll of mass inflict wounds*, and a fully-charged *wand of produce flame*.

7. ATTENDANTS' QUARTERS

These well-appointed but cozy quarters obviously serve as a small barracks, with a makeshift armor rack and weapon stand. Someone has begun sketching and painting intricate geometric patterns across the walls. The sketches remain unfinished.

Formerly staff quarters for visiting nobles, this chamber now serves as the barracks for the Ebon Delegation's myrmidons. Taking a lead from Fortiger, the soldiers recently began decorating the walls using a fractal-based pattern they discovered in a book.

Treasure: Four shadow-fey-penned books depict nudes in various non-Euclidean poses. They cause minor headaches in mortal readers, but fetch 100 gp each.

8. GENEALOGY HALL

CR 5

CR 7

A massive brass door dominates this open hall. Frescoes covering the walls show a massive tangle of tree branches, each bearing a name ad two dates.

The genealogy hall contains the most accurate record of the Stross lineage, and was carefully maintained and updated every year until the Great Revolt. The exquisite fresco still looks fresh and new, even after seven decades of neglect.

Any noise in this room automatically alerts Trom in area 9.

9. PROPERTY RECORD ROOMS (CR 12)

This misused archive is a mess of broken filing cabinets and official-looking documents spread across the shelves, floors, and even stuck to the walls.

These rooms house information on all the property holdings and transfers within Zobeck, including many original land maps and claims scratched out by kobold claws. The southern chamber has been used as the shadow mastiff kennel for 70 years, ruining most of its records. Trom transformed the northern chamber into a study.

Trom's ritual is untested, and its viability is left up to the GM. Whether useful to her or not, the incantation is built to unburden shadow fey from the curse, and cannot free humanoids.

Creatures: Trom and her three assistants prepare for the ritual they will begin once the Nacre clan returns with additional victims.

TROM

CR 10

XP 9,600 Female shadow fey inquisitor 5 NE Medium fey **Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 21, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +5 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 99 (12 HD; 7d6+5d8+41; 1d8+6 temporary) **Fort** +15, **Ref** +17, **Will** +17

Defensive Abilities improved evasion, uncanny dodge Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 70 ft.

Melee +1 frost rapier +15/+10 (1d6+1/18-20 plus 1d6 precision plus 1d6 cold) or mwk dagger +15/+10 (1d4 plus 1d6 precision/19-20)

Ranged mwk dagger +15/+10 (1d4/19-20)

Special Attacks shadow jump

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +12)

At will—detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, dust of twilight* (DC 16), vanish*

3/day—suggestion (DC 17)

1/day—haste

Inquisitor Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +8)



2nd (3)-aid, desecrate, invisibility

1st (5)—burst bonds, disguise self, doom, protection from good 0—bleed, brand, detect magic, detect poison, read magic, stabilize **Domain** trickery

STATISTICS

Base Statistics 87 hp, rapier +13/+8, Ref +14, speed 40 ft. Str 10, Dex 23, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 20 Base Atk +6; CMB +6; CMD 28 Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Step Up, Weapon Finesse Skills Acrobatics +17 (+21 jump), Bluff +20, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +9, Escape Artist +14, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +17, Perform (dance) +13, Profession (noble) +14, Sense Motive +15, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +25; Racial Modifiers Acrobatics (+4 jump), +8 Stealth Languages Elven, Sylvan, Trade Tongue, Undercommon SQ bane, cunning initiative, discern lies, judgment, monster lore +3, stern gaze, stealth in motion, solo tactics (precise strike), track Other Gear +1 chain shirt, buckler, +1 frost rapier, mwk dagger, onyx Sarastra holy symbol (150 gp) SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flicker (see Midgard Bestiary, page 85)

Shadow Jump (see Midgard Bestiary, page 85)

Stealth in Motion (see Midgard Bestiary, page 85)

SHADOW FEY MYRMIDON (3) CR 7 XP 3,200

hp 68, see area 3

- **Tactics:** One of Trom's assistants casts *haste* on the group upon hearing intruders in **area 8**, while Trom casts *aid* on herself, then *invisibility*. On the third round, she and her three assistants charge the intruders. Trom activates her bane to target the deadliest-looking foe. Her total hasted, bane attack bonus is +17/+17/+12 (1d6+3, plus 1d6 frost, plus 2d6 bane, plus 1d6 precision). One of her myrmidons also attacks Trom's target, while the other two harry other enemies, protecting Trom from being swarmed. If all her allies fall, Trom shadow jumps to the garden and hides until dawn; she'd rather live than be freed through death.
- **Treasure:** Despite the room's state of disarray, a DC 20 Perception check uncovers Trom's incense: 10 cones smelling of weeping soldier's tears, each worth 100 gp. Hidden in the box is her single remaining *incense of meditation* cone. A large brass key on the desk opens **area 10's** door.
- **Development:** Avalista von Zeerghast (female human bard 2) sits bound and gagged in the northern records room. If freed, she's thankful, but eager to continue exploring the library despite her injuries, and she refuses to leave the Bibliolethe without finding Zora, her lost sister (see **area 16**) or validating her sister's theories. Avalista's eager to discuss Zora's theories, even handing over Zora's journal detailing her findings (see sidebar). PCs must use force or magical coercion to remove her, unless they agree to assist her.



CR 7

Completing Zora's experiments—breaking the *black nightingale's* spell— requires her journal, the musical compositions of Duchess Chaimella Ventre (see **area 10**), the extensive notes on the curse's arcane nature held in Master Gorman's spellbook in **area 18**, and the final song assembled from these notes must be performed in front of the *black nightingale* in **area 27**.

10. STROSS HISTORICAL COLLECTION (CR 13)

This large chamber is the private sanctum of all Stross family's history and writings. Personal journals, letters, speeches, and spellbooks are all stored and organized here, for the exclusive perusal of family descendants.

The large bronze doors are locked (Disable Device DC 35). The key rests on a desk in **area 9**.

The original commander of the Ebon Delegation, Duchess Chaimella Ventre, commandeered this area as her private sanctum. She attempted to decode the shadow fey tune sung endlessly by the *black nightingale*, eventually falling to madness and taking her own life. Now, her soul rages throughout the room as a restless banshee, bound to the notes that consumed her in life and unable to move on.

THE LATE DUCHESS CHAIMELLAVENTRE (BANSHEE)CR 13

XP 25,600

hp 161 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

- **Treasure:** The collected knowledge here is priceless. The Duchess's dried corpse still wears her two hand-flowers woven from lapis thread and silver chain (2,000gp each). Nearby (Perception DC 25) rests her *pearl of power* (2nd-level).
- **Development:** Chaimella's personal volumes on shadow fey music and her notes detailing the *black nightingale*'s song still sit open, unfinished, on her desk. If the PCs decide to end the library's curse, these notes are one-half the information required to do so.

11. THE GARDENS (CR 10 OR 11)

This large garden once was a grand sight, but the plants now droop sickly or dead, and the center pond is stagnant and green with algae. A stone path winds from a covered patio, through the gardens, and to a small table by the pond.

The library's gardens once hosted exotic plants from across Midgard, and were Dromus's only joy. Zobeck's greatest minds once gathered here to read, debate, and lecture.

The unkempt garden grounds count as difficult terrain everywhere except the stone walkway and patio.

Ten-foot tall reinforced masonry walls surround the garden, topped with rusty steel spikes. Failing the Climb check (DC 15) to clear the wall by 5 or more impales the climber on the spikes, causing 1d4 damage and exposure to the shakes (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*).

Creatures: When the library was first cast into the darkness, the garden withered and died. Dromus used every spell and alchemical trick at his disposal to nourish the rare plants back to health, his efforts resulting in the shrubgaunt, a collection of plant matter given crude life and year-round blossoms by

the young sorcerer's fumbling spells and alchemical reagents. Dromus often takes tea with his bizarre construct, which mechanically fumbles through the ritual's motions.

If the PCs have not made much noise, Dromus is here with the shrubgaunt (CR 11), enjoying the stars and a cup of tea. If alerted to the PCs' presence, Dromus goes to the kitchen (**area 15**) with two gargoyles, leaving his "friend" to wander the grounds absent mindedly with two Nacre gargoyle babysitters (CR10, see **area 1**).

THE SHRUBGAUNT (UNIQUE ADVANCED FLESH GOLEM) CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 97 (9d10+48) (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

NACRE GARGOYLES (2)

XP 3,200

hp 94 (5d10+4d8+49), see area 1

Tactics: The mindless shrubgaunt drops its treasured teapot to attack strangers. If it grapples an opponent, the shrubgaunt impales him on the garden wall (see above), dealing its slam damage+1d4 plus disease on a successful pin attempt. For the tactics of the Nacre gargoyles or Dromus, see their relevant areas.

ZORA'S JOURNAL

Zora's journal is the rambling, confusing book you'd expect from a personal notebook. Its second half relates directly to the Bibliolethe.

Zora's notes discuss the *black nightingale*—mentioned in early Stross journals—and relates the creature to the unnatural music reported alongside the Bibliolethe's appearances. She concludes the repetitive tune is one refrain of a larger song used to weave the magic, and finishing the song may break the curse, returning the Bibliolethe and its incredible wealth to Zobeck.

The journal suggests finishing the *black nightingale's* song requires understanding shadow fey music, gleaning the curse's arcane signature, and playing the song within arm's reach of the artifact. Ironically, the library's competing factions each hold half the puzzle: The Ebon Delegation brought with them musical tomes and lost their mistress to insanity and suicide when she attempted to decode the *black nightingale's* tune. Meanwhile, Dromus and Gorman spent decades scientifically analyzing the curse. Combined notes from both parties yield enough information to complete the melody and break the curse.

Finally, Zora's scribblings include the incantation for summoning the library, which must be performed under a lunar eclipse and requires both an expensive alchemical serum and a master musician to play the first two bars of its haunting melody. PCs wishing to leave the library and return later can do so, but are dependent on astronomical affairs. **Treasure:** The shrubguant's body contains a small fortune in rare plants. With a successful DC 10 Craft (alchemy) or Profession (herbalist) check, a PC can extract 250 gp worth of rare reagents and spell components, +250 gp for every 5 by which the skill check succeeds, up to a maximum of 2,000 gp. The scuffed teapot is a Stross family heirloom, worth 350 gp.

12. ACCOUNTING HALL (CR 10)

Wooden filing cabinets line the walls of this chamber, while accounting desks fill the central space. All but one desk stands empty, their inkwells long dry; but fresh parchment and numerous quills cover the furthest desk.

- **Hazards:** Daily before beginning her work, Clauvrex scribes a fresh *symbol of pain* on her desktop, which triggers when anyone besides herself looks at it or searches the desk.
- **Creature:** Clauvrex, a contract devil enslaved by the archmage Abderus Stross himself, was bound to this chamber as a scrivener for centuries before the Bibliolethe's vanishing. In life a Triolo merchant princess named Claudea Vrexus, Clauvrex considers the curse an inconvenience, but is unwilling to make any great sacrifices to end it. She's immortal, and is willing wait it out. In the meantime, she gleefully offers her services to the PCs, arguing that, "Eternity in hell is by far better than an eternity in this accursed place. At least hell offers a view."

CLAUVREX (CONTRACT DEVIL) CR 10

hp 136 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

- **Tactics:** Clauvrex avoids combat. If attacked, however, she uses a move action to sweep the papers from her desk, exposing the *symbol of pain*, and then summons 1d6 bearded devils to protect her. Afterwards, she lashes out with her contracts and gore attack. Clauvrex teleports away if reduced below half hit points, but she's bound to the accounting hall and surrounding offices and can't go far: She *dimension doors* to the next office, and then hides within her *mage's private sanctum* until the PCs leave.
- **Treasure:** If the PCs return her heart, Clauvrex allows herself a moment of sentimentality and "forgets" to pack her scroll of *limited wish* (normally tucked safely in her *private sanctum*) when she gathers her things. She goes to the garden to enjoy her newfound rein of the library. The library's petty cash rests in a desk's secret compartment (DC 25 Perception check to locate); it contains 50 cp, 97 sp, 112 gp, and 23 pp.
- **Development:** If made friendly with a DC 40 Diplomacy check (+10 bonus per PC who sells their soul to her; -10 penalty if the PCs threaten or attack her), Clauvrex explains the circumstances of her binding: her heart of coal has been sealed away somewhere in the vault below the library. She has no illusions of anyone returning her heart free of charge, so she offers to tear up one contract in exchange for her freedom. Since Clauvrex holds Melianne's contract (see **area 20**), the PCs can free the azata by returning the devil's heart.

13. LIBRARY OFFICES

Dusty notes and ancient tomes clutter the half-full bookshelves and desk of this posh but neglected office.

These offices once hosted long-dead librarian assistants, the remains of which now reside in **area 14**.

14. GORMAN STROSS' OFFICE (CR 9)

This door is locked (Disable Device DC 30).

This office is covered in dark woods and burgundy fabric. Every book and bauble has been torn from the shelves and scattered on the floor. The office's far wall is curtained off, and strange mumbling sounds emanate from beyond the curtain.

This chamber was Gorman Stross's office and private quarters. Upon his death and the onset of the Bibliolethe's curse, Dromus took up residence here. When experiments on his fellow librarians went awry, he sealed the offices and moved to the storage room (**area 17**).

The curtain conceals Gorman's bedchamber, where the experiments' four survivors, former co-workers, "debate," babbling endlessly in their misery.

The Survivors (4 Gibbering Mouthers) CR 9

hp 46 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

- **Tactics:** If anyone approaches within 5 ft. of the curtain, the gibbering mouthers attack, gibbering and spitting and screaming snippets of historical trivia interspersed with cries of "kill me!"
- **Treasure:** Sitting on the desk is Gorman Stross's former pride and joy: his *tome of understanding*. Exposure the gibbering mothers has warped the valuable book into a vacuous grimoire.
- **Development:** Hidden in a secret compartment (Perception DC 20) in Gorman's desk is large, square key forged from brass and bearing the same family crest from the floor in the lobby (area 1). No keyhole appears in the floor, though, unless PCs show a respectable knowledge of the Stross family.

15. KITCHENS

This once-impressive kitchen has been transformed into a twisted laboratory. Hand-drawn medical and metaphysical diagrams cover the wall, and burbling tubes and bottles of colored liquid cover most surfaces.

Dromus and the spirit of Gorman Stross use the kitchen as their makeshift lab in their attempts to reverse the *black nightengale's* curse.

Treasure: The kitchen contains a full alchemist's lab and three *potions of bear's endurance.*

16. SERVANTS' QUARTERS (CR 10)

Sturdy bunks and simple furnishings of dark wood fill much of this room, but the overwhelming stench of death overpowers all other impressions.

These old servants' quarters now play prison to yet more of Dromus's failed experiments.

Five years ago, attempting to prove her theories about the



CR 7

CR 10

lost Stross Family Library, Zora von Zeerghast summoned the library and entered, only to be captured by Dromus as one of his experimental subjects. Attempting to remove the musical hooks the curse drove into her soul, the clumsy sorcerer only succeeded in mutilating her essence, transforming the woman into a sort of vampire. Though by far his most successful attempt, Zora proved too difficult to control, and Dromus sealed her in the servants' quarters with four of his earlier failures.

ZORA VON ZEERGHAST (VAMPIRE) CR 8

hp 102 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Note: Zora knows lightning bolt instead of fireball

THE SOULLESS (4 ADVANCED CARRION GOLEMS)

CR 5

hp 50 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

Tactics: Zora shrieks at the first sign of lights, ordering newcomers away from her before grumbling about her ravenous hunger. She casts *lightning bolt* on her carrion golem horde, and then attacks with the fury of a starving animal.

Zora is half-mad from loneliness and hunger, but if her appetite for living blood can be slaked (by draining at least four points of Constitution), she regains control of herself, halts combat (if she can), and is eager to communicate. She worries about her sister, and willingly shares any information she has about the Bibliolethe and the nature of its curse (see her journal details in **area 9**).

Zora's four fellow prisoners lack any intellect, and attack outsiders mindlessly.

Zora's CR has been reduced by one, as she doesn't rely on her spells or other vampiric abilities, and ends combat if she can feed on enough blood to restore her mind.

Treasure: If the PCs subdue Zora or show mercy, she is thankful. She offers her hairpin as a reward, which acts as a *headband of alluring charisma* +4.

Development: The black nightingale's curse and Dromus's experiments caused Zora's vampirism, making her condition reversible. Reducing her to 0 hit points by positive energy (channeled energy or various cure spells), cleanses the taint, transforming her to an ordinary human, though she's still bound by the library's curse. Silencing the black nightingale instantly cures Zora.

17. STORAGE

Crates and barrels serve as makeshift furniture, transforming this former storeroom into a well-kept apartment.

After being chased from Gorman's office, Dromus transformed the old storeroom into his private quarters.

Treasure: Although Dromus carries most of his valuables, his etymological study of the Elven language, *Eloquence of Elven Etymology* (500gp), remains here. Reading it in its entirety grants a +2 bonus to Linguistics used to decipher elven writing or break elven ciphers.

18. GREAT HALL (CR 11)

Shelves groaning with books line every wall of this cavernous chamber, from the floor to the ceiling 35 ft. overhead.

This central hall contains most of the Stross family's collection. Every book ever printed in Zobeck, or purchased by a member of the Stross family, is represented here, along with hundreds of other finds from far beyond the city's gates.

Hazards: The cold, analytical obsession of Gorman's ghost infects the library's books.

READING THE STACKS HAUNT

XP 3,200

LE persistent haunt (lining the library's shelves) Caster Level 7th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to notice the book titles casually shifting)

hp 31; **Weakness** required victims to search the shelves; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

EFFECT

Any mortal perusing the shelves must overcome with an obsessive urge to reorganize them (DC 16 Will save). This fascination effect allows a new saving throw every hour, though being attacked or injured allows a victim a new save.

DESTRUCTION

Destroying Gorman Stross's ghost ends the effect until the undead reforms. Destroying both his logical ghost and his passionate poltergeist (in **area 27**) permanently ends the haunt.

Creatures: Gorman Stross's attempts to pervert the *black nightingale* ripped his soul in half. His reason and intellect now haunts the library stacks. Newcomers (or "fool-born bootlicks," as he calls them) fascinate him, and he academically lectures them on any subject they mention. The ghost is obsessed with understanding the library's curse, and requires fresh test subjects to explore his theories with his "clay-brained whoreson" nephew, Dromus. As such, Gorman attempts to "subdue" and "restrain" anyone attempting to leave the great hall. He attacks anyone disturbing his orderly shelves.

MASTER GORMAN

XP 9,600

LE Human ghost transmuter 9 Medium undead (human, incorporeal)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +3 Dex, +2 shield) hp 79 (9d8+45) Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +8 Defensive Abilities incorporeal, channel resistance +4; Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +7 (10d6)

Special Attacks corrupting gaze (DC 18), malevolence (DC 19), telekinesis

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +12)

- At Will—change shape (*beast shape II/elemental body I*, 9 rounds/day)
- 6/day—telekinetic fist (1d4+4 bludgeoning)
- **Transmuter Spells Prepared** (CL 9th; concentration +12) 5th—animate construct^{ZGP} baleful polymorph (DC 18) 4th—animate construct IV^{ZGP} black tentacles (DC 17), resilient sphere (DC 17)
- 3rd—clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, gentle repose, secret page, sepia snake sigil (DC 16)
- 2nd—animate construct II^{ZGP}, blindness/deafness (DC 15), detect thoughts (DC 15), false life, make whole, shatter (DC 15)
- 1st—erase (DC 14), *identify*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *reduce person*, *shadow hands*^{ZGP}, *unseen servant*
- 0 (at will)—detect magic, mage hand, mending, open/close, read magic

Opposition Schools Enchantment, Illusion

STATISTICS

Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 18

Base Atk +4; CMB +7; CMD 21

Feats Ability Focus (malevolence), Combat Casting, Improved Iron **Will**, Iron **Will**, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [nobility]), Spell Focus (transmutation), Spell Penetration **Skills** Fly +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +17, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +8, Profession (scribe) +7, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +16

Languages Elvish, Sylvan, Trade Tongue, Undercommon **SQ** arcane bond (*ring of force shield*), physical enhancement (dexterity) +2

Gear ring of force shield

- **Tactics:** Gorman casts *animate construct V* to transform one of the study tables into a wood golem. He then uses malevolence to "assert command" over the strongest or noblest-looking hero before attacking with *black tentacles*, *resilient sphere*, and *baleful polymorph*. To the best of Master Gorman's knowledge, he's never been defeated, and finds the idea of retreat laughable.
- **Treasure:** The thousands of books contained in the main hall are a priceless treasures, but any given book is only worth 4d6 sp, and selling more than a few at a time would be an impossible task. Instead, donating the collection to the Arcane Collegium of Zobeck would earn the PCs incredible renown (a +3 Status bonus within Zobeck). Currently, PCs will find more value in Master Gorman's *blessed book*, which contains all his listed spells, plus all 1st- and 2nd-level spells, except those from the schools of enchantment and illusion.

The book also contains Master Gorman's extensive notes on the *black nightingale* and the arcane formula behind its curse.

> Adventurers searching the stacks for 15 minutes (risking the music box's curse) can make a Perception check (DC 15). Success indicates discovery of one of the following scrolls: arcane eye, charm monster, cone of cold, control water, cure critical wounds, dispel magic, holy smite, make whole, reincarnate, remove blindness/ deafness, slay living, and summon monster IV.

19. MAIN HALL, SECOND FLOOR

This 5-ft.-wide balcony runs the perimeter of the great hall, offering access to high shelves and a breathtaking view.

This balcony level runs along the main hall, 20 ft. above the main floor.



Part Two: The Vaults Of Ruddermere

Deep below the Stross Family Library rests an entry to the noble house's greatest treasure: The Vaults of Ruddermere. The exact special relationship between the Vaults and any given Stross holding are poorly understood, as many major sites contain secret entries to this dangerous network of chambers through seemingly-mundane secret passageways. Few have returned from the Vaults, as the deadly traps and harrowing guardians recognize Stross descendants on sight, showing no mercy to anyone else.

This portion of the Vaults of Ruddermere below the Bibliolethe are torn free from the larger dungeon complex. It contains only a smaller portion of the infamous secrets—and treasure—of the lost family.

The Vaults sport walls of magically reinforced masonry and doors of bronze-coated cold iron. Ceilings are 15 ft. high in the halls, and tower to 30 ft. in the various chambers. So close to the *black nightingale*, its faint, haunting melody echoes throughout the vaults. This constant distraction inflicts a -5 penalty to all hearing-based Perception checks.

ENTERING THE VAULTS

As mentioned in **area 1**, the entry to the Vaults of Ruddermere lies hidden in the Stross's family crest in the entryway. Opening the secret door reveals a spiral staircase leading down an indeterminate distance.

20. MELIANNE'S LANDING (CR 12)

The stairs end in a massive gallery surrounded with angelic columns and sweeping arches. Three large sets of bronze double-doors are sealed firmly.

PCs descending the stairs from **area 1** will be confused to find themselves ascending into this chamber; a non-Euclidean trick of geometry forces visitors to ascend into either of the Stross family's treasures, a deliberate metaphor.

This vast entrance both impresses and protects. The three sets of doors are all locked (Disable Device DC 40), but only to slow trespassers down for the chamber's true guardian, Melianne.

Creatures: Melianne, an ancient ghaele azata, sold her celestial essence long ago to save a mortal lover who fell to darkness and redeemed herself too late. Various wheelings and dealings delivered her to the contract devil Clauvrex (see **area 12**), and eventually the Stross family. Matriarch Ivelossa took particular joy at enslaving the azata to forever keep family treasures and prisoners stored away. And so the scarred and miserable celestial has protected the Vaults of Ruddermere ever since.

MELIANNE (GHAELE AZATA) CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 136 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

Tactics: When strangers enter the chamber, Melianne hovers invisibly near the ceiling. She shouts for interlopers to leave, and uses her illusions to make the doors "vanish," and uses enchantment effects to order intruders away. She converses with newcomers so long as they stay in the stairwell, but



HEROES OF NOTE

This adventure offers many chances for adventurers to earn fame or infamy in Zobeck. If using the optional Status rules from the *Midgard Campaign Setting*, award the following status changes:

ACTION

STATUS

	CHANG
Traded Zobeck's citizens to the Ebon Delegation	-2
Sold their soul to Clauvrex	-2
Failed to retrieve Avalista	-1
Became cursed by the Bibliolethe	-1
Allowed Dromus to escape punishment	-1
Saveed Avalista	+1
Freed Melianne	+1
Restored Zora to Life	+1
Broke the black nightingale's curse	+2
Donated the library or its collection to Zobeck	+3

cannot prevent herself from attacking if they enter the room. In combat, she attempts to kill one opponent and chase their allies away, later using *raise dead* to restore the victim.

Treasure: If PCs manage to release Melianne rather than kill her, award them XP as if they'd defeated an additional CR 8 encounter. Whether freed or slain, PC's can claim the azata's +2 greatsword, Emphemarie, though it functions only as a +1 greatsword for anyone not of chaotic good alignment, and imposes a -1 luck penalty to saving throws on neutral or evil wielders. Emphemarie can be upgraded to a +2 holy greatsword with a tincture of angel feathers (costing 12,000 gp) and two uninterrupted weeks of prayer.

Development: Clauvrex holds Melianne's contract; she's unwilling to part with it for anything less than another soul of equal repute (such as a PC, Dromus, or a leader of the Ebon Delegation) or the return of her own heart of coal. If the PCs announce they intend to find the heart and bargain for Melianne's freedom, Melianne still cannot let them pass, but her contract allows her 10 private minutes for prayer shortly before dawn, after which time she must hunt them through the Vaults. If the PCs slay Clauvrex, Melianne's contract reverts to a random lost descendant of the Stross family, somewhere in Midgard.

The merciful tactics and thorough warnings reduce the CR of this encounter by one.

21. THE NEIMHEIM COLLECTION (CR 11)

Portraits, tapestries, baskets, jewelry, and clothing—all obviously crafted by and for a smaller hand—fill the aisles of this gallery. The bright colors and bold geometric patterns easily overwhelm the subtle furnishings. Something in the warm colors and flagrant motifs settles uncomfortably in your mind. As scholars of the infernal, many Stross scholars studied the culture of Neimheim, the most thoroughly devil-touched of Midgard's nations. The family collection of gnomish handicrafts includes samples from both before and after their infernal deal, though the pre-infernal wing has partially collapsed.

Understandably, the Neimheim collection is warded against creatures of the outsider type, preventing infernal visits but also preventing Melianne from entering. Because of this, it became the sanctuary for two of Gorman and Dromus's earliest experiments. The pair turned to the kobold kitchen staff, engorging their souls against the curse's effects by massively augmenting their bodies. The process killed the victims, but the magic lingered, creating distended, skeletal abominations the arcanists hid away in the basement.

KOBOLD SERVANT (2) CR 9 XP 6,400 Unique kobold bloody skeleton Large undead (kobold) Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0 DEFENSE AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 21 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size) hp 123 (19d8+38); fast healing 10 Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +11 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune cold, undead traits OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee 2 claw +20 (2d6+7) Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. STATISTICS Str 25, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 14 Base Atk +14; CMB +22; CMD 33 Feats Improved Initiative

SQ deathless

Tactics: The kobolds shriek in rage and attack any living creature.

Treasure: Two-dozen pieces in the collection are valuable, worth 100 gp each. One exquisite devil-born knife is actually a *dagger of venom*.

22) THE FAMILY MENAGERIE

A thin layer of dust tarnishes the bright hides, colorful plumage, and glass eyes of the taxidermied animals and monsters filling this hall. Here and there, a menacing, motionless human or elf interrupts the parade of beasts.

This trophy hall is filled with taxidermied beasts, abominations, and tenacious rivals the Stross family members felled.

23) THE HALL OF PLANES

Sulfur and cinnamon suffuse the air. Hundreds of tiny niches line these granite walls, each housing an oddity. The various contents smolder, wiggle, glow, or hum of their own accord. At the far end of the room, twin altars flank a low dais.

Also warded against outsiders like area 21, this chamber

contains wonders from the myriad planes. Many of these treasures are rare spell components or historical artifacts in their own right, but lack any magical power (or their powers are legendary abilities only activated under specific circumstances).

Treasure: Treasures include a variety of mundane relics and spell components worth 2,000 gp total, a catalogue of the world market (650 gp), *Mirvan's speartrodding boots* (1,200 gp), two jars labeled "pit fiend ichor" (250 gp each), *Wotan's incorrigible vest* (actually just a clever forgery, but a +1 glamered banded mail nonetheless), a fire elemental gem, and the coal heart of Clauvrex, the contract devil bound upstairs (area 12).

24) SUMMONING CHAMBERS (CR 9)

The walls of these cyclopean chambers are worn a smooth as glass. A dozen man-sized circles of copper are set into the stone floor, and elephantine circles in the center of each chamber hum with unseen power. In the far chamber, a massive pyre burns.

Among the oldest, the Stross used these large chambers to summon and bind extra-dimensional creatures to serve the noble house, especially in regard to the Vaults' construction and maintenance.

Creatures: The chamber's summoning circles automatically summon a huge earth elemental and fire elemental each time the Bibliolethe returns to Zobeck.

FESHRAK (HUGE FIRE ELEMENTAL) CR 7

hp 85 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

GRAINIK (HUGE EARTH ELEMENTAL) CR 7

hp 95 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

Tactics: Feshrak and Grainik are furious over their continued, pointless summoning. The sulking Feshrak appears to be a pyre in the far chamber, while Grainik hides below the floor with her earthglide. They assume anyone entering the chamber can release them, so they attack and demand their freedom. Both grapple opponents, crushing the life from them while barking commands in extraplanar tongues.

25) THE MISCREANT GALLERY

These twisting, dull halls are lined with glass bars and tiny, one-man cells.

This maze of empty cells once housed enemies of the Stross family whose deaths would be inconvenient, or prisoners family members wished to gloat over. Beside every door, a small brass plaque extols the prisoner's name and crimes like a museum display. Each enchanted 5-ft.-square cell can sustain a single mortal humanoid without food or water, extending their lifespan by 50%. The glass bars are alchemically treated and as hard as iron.

26) THE FILIAL STEPS (CR 10)

The doorway into this chamber bears the Stross' family crest and a simple message: "Remember your lessons, scion of

THE BLACK NIGHTINGALE

Aura strong necromancy; CL 18th Slot none; Weight 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Only one mortal beast bore witness when the Holly King struck that horrible sacrifice that enslaved his kin to Sarastra, and so mortified was that lone nightingale that its blood ran black and its feathers shod themselves in silver to ward against the wicked sight. The Sunflower Princess discovered the poor beast's corpse. Longing for the sun now denied her, she crafted it into an exquisite mechanical birdcage music box whose songs could carry her dreaming mind back to a world of sunrises and warm breezes. When the scathesidhe signed their pact with the Stross family, they offered the *black nightingale* as a gift so the mortals could seek shadow fey counsel and be more prone to their influence.

When the music box is wound and set next to a sleeping creature, the song loosens its soul and casts it beyond the walls of reality. This effect functions identically to the *astral projection* spell (Will DC 25 negates), but sending a mortal's shadow duplicate to the Plane of Shadows rather than the astral plane, and the sleeper does not need to be willing for the *black nightingale*'s magic to affect it. Up to six creatures can be projected at once. The *nightingale*'s song lasts 1d8 hours, but experienced users can wind the music box's song to any duration up to eight hours. Anyone affected by the artifact suffers a -5 penalty to all saves against enchantment and illusion spells for 24 hours.

DESTRUCTION

If carried to the black oak in Castle Shadowcrag, and used in an act of unparalleled kindness, the *nightingale's* horror will subside and it will transform back into an ordinary animal.

Stross, and go far." The room beyond is shadowy and cold. Each floor tile bears one of four large, wicked runes.

The family reliquarium stores the Stross' greatest treasures, and none but the most loyal descendants were permitted entry. The chamber of filial steps ensured that only scions who lived and breathed the family values could approach. The four runes represent power, pain, submission, and enlightenment; a Linguistics check (DC 15) identifies them. The Stross family philosophy preaches:

"In pain, submit to your better. Through submission, learn. Through your enlightenment, gain power. With your power, turn your lash on others, so they might submit, learn, and grow strong."

This mantra was once a closely-guarded secret, but became infamous among Zobeck's fellow nobles shortly before the revolution. It can be recalled with a DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) or a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check.

Hazard: Each chamber tile is trapped. Stepping on it triggers a bolt of negative energy (1d8+4 damage; DC 16 Fort for half



damage), affecting any creature in the tile and immediately attempting a bull rush (CMB +12) to push the victim back into its previous square.

The Stross family teaches that one experience gives way to the next. Consequently, the trap does not discharge if someone steps from one rune to the next in appropriate sequence: from pain to submission to enlightenment to power and back to pain.

The family also expects willfulness and learning. When someone steps on the second "pain" tile, he must also loudly decry the lash or ignorance or some other burden heaped upon him by life, or else the chamber shall provide one.

Creatures: Failing to decry some pain or burden when stepping on their second "pain" tile opens a vent in the ceiling, releasing a pair of oculo swarms, which attack anyone present.

OCCULO SWARM (2)

CR 4

hp 37 (Midgard Bestiary, p. 76)

Tactics: The oculo swarms crave new additions, swarming over as many targets as possible to confuse with their gaze and extract fresh eyes. Being flying creatures, they don't trigger the floor plates, but are still vulnerable to damage triggered in squares they occupy.

27) RELIQUARIUM (CR 13)

Walls of black granite, inset with silver runes, enclose this colossal room. On a dais across the room, atop a pillar of gray stone, rests a small brass bird. Crude drawings of a noble court cover the walls, interspersed with gibberish. The music sounding throughout the dungeon grows to a bone-shaking cacophony here.

This chamber houses some of the greatest treasures of the Zobeck's former ruling family: arcane gifts from the Shadow Courts. Once its usefulness passed, the family stored the *black nightingale* here until the fateful night of the Great Revolt. Now it repeats the first few bars of its melody indefinitely, forever unshackling the Bibliolethe and its contents from any stable reality.

Contents of this chamber are deliberately left blank; Game Masters should include as many or as few shadow fey artifacts or hooks for further adventures, as desired.

Creatures: Here, bound to the shadowy artifact that created it, prowls the second half of Gorman Stross's soul. Torn apart spiritually, dying in agony and madness, and suffused with bizarre dimensional energies, the once-mortal shreds of soul-stuff have collected into a hideous abomination vaguely akin to a derghodaemon. Now, Madman Stross scurries throughout the chamber, fawning over the forsaken melody and recounting half-remembered family stories to friends he's drawn on the walls.

MADMAN STROSS

XP 25,600

Unique Advanced Derghodaemon **hp** 189 (14d10+112)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Immortal Guardian (Su) Like a ghost, Madman Stross's soul is bound to the *black nightingale*, and he cannot be permanently destroyed while it continues to sing. Even if destroyed, he rejuvenates 2d4 days later and resumes guarding the artifact or hunting those who may have stolen it. Silencing the music box's song instantly and permanently slays Madman Stross.

- Tactics: Madman Stross spends weeks at a time sleeping in the niche he's carved into the ceiling. He watches newcomers enter the room from here (+8 to his Stealth checks for the distance and cover), and casts *creeping doom* to create four swarms in his surprise round. Afterwards, he teleports down, attacking with his Greater Vital Strike before switching to full attacks. Madman Stross lashes out at the closest opponent and summons new swarms as his existing allies fall. He exclusively targets anyone trying to touch the *black nightingale* or counter its curse.
- **Development:** The PCs do not necessarily need to defeat Madman Stross to break the curse and return the Stross Family Library to Zobeck; in fact, defeating him does *nothing* to affect the library's enchantment. Adventurers recovering Zora's journal, Master Gorman's arcane notes, and Duchess Chaimella Ventre's musical compositions can make a DC 20 Craft (songwriting) or Profession (musician or poet) or DC 25 Perform check to create the finished melody. Singing or performing this music within the reliquarium for five uninterrupted rounds (requiring a standard action each round to make a DC 15 Perform check) tricks the *nightingale's* sensitive clockwork into believing its performance is done, silencing the artifact after seven long decades.

If Madman Stross is still in combat, each successful Perform check to finish the melody causes him physical pain, inflicting 2d6 sonic damage (no save).

Treasure: Destroying the guardian and silencing its song allows PCs to claim the *black nightingale*. If slain by violence, Madman Stross's tattered overcoat retains some of his verminous taint, functioning as a *cloak of arachnida*. His right hand becomes a +1 *spiked gauntlet* capable of casting *web* once per day (CL 6).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs receive their pay if they return one of the Zeerghast daughters alive. Returning both earns them a hero's welcome, with a banquet and potential for long-term relationships with the family. If the PCs break the *black nightingale's* curse and return the Stross Family Library to Zobeck, they become legends in the city.

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