



# RETURN TO CASTLE SHADOWCRAG

BY WOLFGANG BAUR AND THOMAS KNAUSS

**PATHEFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

**KOBOLD**  
Press

# RETURN TO CASTLE SHADOWCRAG

**DESIGN:** Wolfgang Baur and Tom Knauss

**EDITED:** Jason Keeley

**COVER ARTIST:** Claudio Pozas

**INTERIOR ART:** Karl Waller

**CARTOGRAPHY:** Tommi Salama

**ART DIRECTION AND GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Marc Radle

**PUBLISHER:** Wolfgang Baur

---

Midgard and Kobold Press are trademarks of Open Design. All rights reserved.

Pathfinder is a registered trademark of Paizo Publishing, and the Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game and the Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Compatibility Logo are trademarks of Paizo Publishing, and are used under the Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Compatibility License.

See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/compatibility> for more information on the compatibility license. Compatibility with the Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game requires the Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game from Paizo Publishing. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG> for more information on the Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game. Paizo, Publishing does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse the product.

**Open Game Content:** The Open content in this adventure includes stats for Inkspot, Fire Death and Glory Death, Bony Death and Bright Death, the Caller in Darkness, Chorvodni, Shadow Fey Rider, Heavy Warhorse Ghost, Black Tapestry, Advanced Stained Glass Golem, Explosive Runes Trap, Dimensional Lock Trap, the Old Lords, Throne of Past Lords Trap, Dark Creeper Warriors, Nightmare Angel, and the Black Oak.

All other material is Product Identity, especially place names, character names, locations, story elements, and fiction. No other portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission.

ISBN: 978-1-936781-89-8

©2018 Open Design LLC. All rights reserved.

[www.KoboldPress.com](http://www.KoboldPress.com)



**KOBOLD  
Press**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Adventure Background.....	3
The Revolt.....	3
Battle of Oros Bridge.....	4
The Castle Falls .....	4
After the Revolt.....	5
The Present Day.....	5
The Curse of the Shadow Fey.....	5
Adventure Hooks.....	7

## PART ONE: THE FAMILY STROSS ..... 8

Evander Stross.....	8
Kranos Stross.....	8
Bellanca Stross, Née Oineros .....	8
Vasilios Stross.....	9
Moira Kinkallen, Née Stross .....	9
Zarek Stross, aka Zarek Rainmark .....	9
The Grimbold Dwarves .....	9
Meeting Evander.....	10

## PART TWO: FLASHBACKS ..... 12

The Winter Garden .....	13
Flashback Sequencing.....	13
The Black Wind .....	13
Flashback #1: Courtyard Murder .....	13
Shadows in the Past.....	14
The Murder.....	14
Ending the Flashback.....	16
Flashback #2: Bridge at Oros .....	17
Kranos, Lord Stross .....	18
The Four Deaths .....	18
Flashback #3: Fall of Hpouse Stross .....	20
Darkness Calls .....	21
Flashback #4: Enslavement of the Kolbolds.....	23
Flashback #5: The Sacrifice on the Hill.....	24
Winning Over the Corrupted Elves.....	24
The Heartwood Pact.....	25

## PART THREE: THE CASTLE ..... 28

THE SURROUNDINGS.....	28
Approaching the Castle .....	31
Shadows of the Dead.....	32
Shadow Events .....	33
Shadowcrag Grounds.....	34

Speaking with Silverwing.....	38
Fire in the Tower.....	46

## PART FOUR: SILVER MINES

### AND DEEP CAVERNS..... 61

The Working Mines.....	62
------------------------	----

## PART FIVE: FINALE..... 68

The Black Oak .....	68
The Scáthsidhe March.....	69
The Castle Falls into Shadow .....	69

## CONCLUSION ..... 70

Further Adventures .....	71
Magic Powers of the Castle .....	71



BUT EVIL THINGS, IN ROBES OF SORROW,  
ASSAILED THE MONARCH'S HIGH ESTATE.  
(AH, LET US MOURN!—FOR NEVER MORROW  
SHALL DAWN UPON HIM DESOLATE!)  
AND ROUND ABOUT HIS HOME THE GLORY  
THAT BLUSHED AND BLOOMED,  
IS BUT A DIM-REMEMBERED STORY  
OF THE OLD TIME ENTOMBED.

AND TRAVELERS, NOW, WITHIN THAT VALLEY,  
THROUGH THE RED-LITTEN WINDOWS SEE  
VAST FORMS, THAT MOVE FANTASTICALLY  
TO A DISCORDANT MELODY,  
WHILE, LIKE A GHASTLY RAPID RIVER,  
THROUGH THE PALE DOOR  
A HIDEOUS THROG RUSH OUT FOREVER  
AND LAUGH—BUT SMILE NO MORE.

—Edgar Allen Poe, "The Haunted Palace"

*Return to Castle Shadowcrag* combines castle exploration with flashbacks into the castle's past. These flashback scenes allow the players to view its most important moments and change the castle's history, though only at particular times and in specific ways. This mix of past and present happens because of the castle's entanglement with the Shadow Realm and its resident shadow fey. If the players lift the castle's curse, they sever the castle's connection to the Shadow Realm and redeem its melancholy steward, Evander Stross. If they fail, the remaining Stross family members and the castle grounds forever slip into darkness and shadow. The adventure is intended for four 11th-level characters or five 10th-level ones. The heroes are expected to gain 1 level before the adventure's climactic ending.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The family Stross ruled in the city and province of Zobeck for nearly 600 years, marrying well, fighting off invasion from the magocracy to the west and holding its own against the advances of Morgau and Doresh to the east. They did it the old-fashioned way: with fistfuls of silver and a ruthless cruelty that scattered their enemies. River trade and a set of deep silver mines filled the Stross' family coffers. The peasants worked hard, kobold miners pulled ore from the earth both day and night, and their forces kept the Morgau undead to the east at bay. But over time, the cost of defense and maintaining the family's luxurious lifestyle grew exponentially.

The peasants paid the price by forking over more and more of their hard-won earnings to the knights and landowners. One day, the merchants, the artisans, and the peasants reached their boiling point. It took only a single spark to light the fuse. As guards began dragging a boy away for denouncing the Strosses as "leeches" and screaming that he did not want to die digging in the mines, people appeared to block their way. Within minutes, an irate mob seemingly materialized from

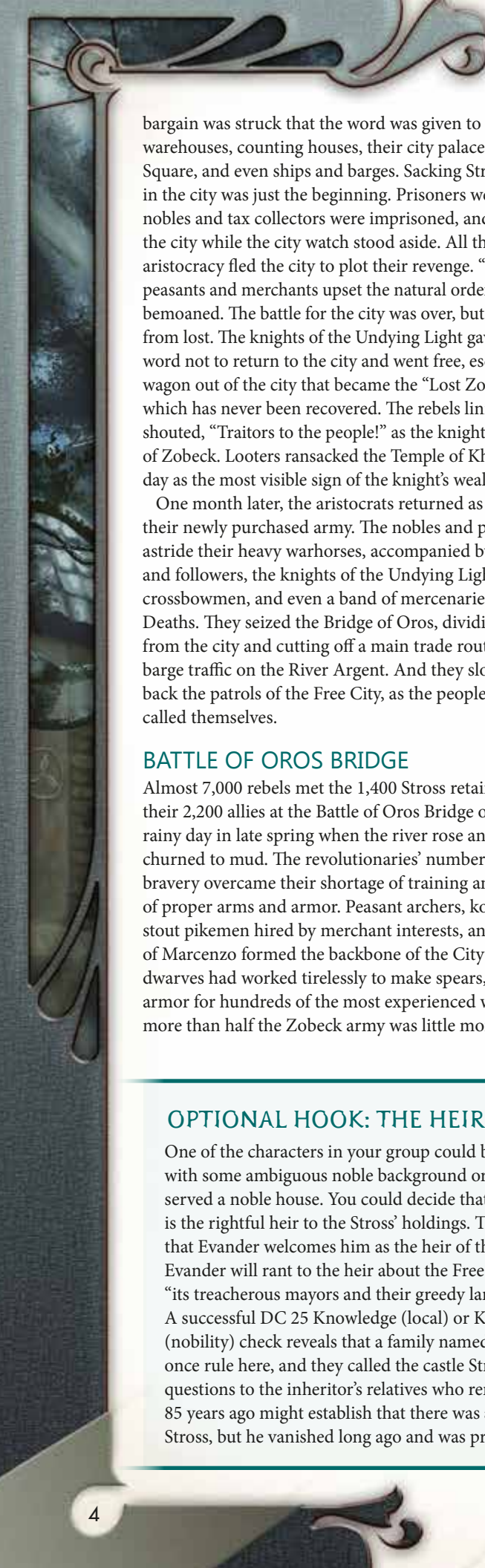
the ether to publicly air their long-simmering grievances. The citizens first threw insults and then cobblestones at the guards holding the boy.

Beset by an angry mob, the hard-pressed guards fought to return to the prison. Mounted reinforcements arrived and rode the mob down, leaving half a dozen people trampled in the street. Amid the chaos, Abelard, a silversmith, and Marcenzo, a journeyman wizard, rallied the crowd and led them in storming the barracks. Within hours, they seized the city barracks, but soldiers from Castle Stross continued to march in, as did the troops from the gatehouses at the river, at the great Southern Road, and at the Griffon Gate. The battle was far from over when the sun set on the first day of the Zobeck Revolt. Looting of the Stross' barracks and armory continued through the night, as weapons made their way into a thousand willing hands.

## THE REVOLT

By mid-morning the next day, Abelard and the wizard Marcenzo accomplished the unthinkable. They chased all the guards and soldiers out of the city, where they regrouped near the Oros Bridge. The citizens and a few adventurers gathered in Crown Square to plan and prepare for the soldier's counterattack. The city folk swore that the revolt would not falter. They vowed to cast off the shackles of the Stross family forever. All day, the rebellious citizens gathered their forces. A huge mob threatened the Commander of the Order of Undying Light, staunch supporters of the Stross family, where the Order was said to have a king's ransom in gold. The knights were kept in their fortified manor, unable to support the city guards who remained loyal to the Strosses. Meanwhile, Abelard and Marcenzo struck a bargain with the majority of the city guard who defected to their side. The deal's terms stipulated that their captain would have a lifetime seat on the city council in exchange for supporting the rebellion. No sooner was the





bargain was struck that the word was given to sack Stross warehouses, counting houses, their city palace on Crown Square, and even ships and barges. Sacking Stross holdings in the city was just the beginning. Prisoners were released, nobles and tax collectors were imprisoned, and mobs ruled the city while the city watch stood aside. All the forces of the aristocracy fled the city to plot their revenge. “How dare the peasants and merchants upset the natural order of things?” they bemoaned. The battle for the city was over, but the war was far from lost. The knights of the Undying Light gave their sworn word not to return to the city and went free, escorting a heavy wagon out of the city that became the “Lost Zobeck Treasury”, which has never been recovered. The rebels lining the streets shouted, “Traitors to the people!” as the knights marched out of Zobeck. Looters ransacked the Temple of Khors that second day as the most visible sign of the knight’s wealth.

One month later, the aristocrats returned as expected with their newly purchased army. The nobles and peers led the way astride their heavy warhorses, accompanied by their footmen and followers, the knights of the Undying Light, mercenary crossbowmen, and even a band of mercenaries called the Four Deaths. They seized the Bridge of Oros, dividing the castle from the city and cutting off a main trade route. They stopped barge traffic on the River Argent. And they slowly pushed back the patrols of the Free City, as the people of Zobeck now called themselves.

## BATTLE OF OROS BRIDGE

Almost 7,000 rebels met the 1,400 Stross retainers and their 2,200 allies at the Battle of Oros Bridge on a damp, rainy day in late spring when the river rose and the ground churned to mud. The revolutionaries’ numbers and their bravery overcame their shortage of training and their lack of proper arms and armor. Peasant archers, kobold miners, stout pikemen hired by merchant interests, and the wizardry of Marcenzo formed the backbone of the City Army. A few dwarves had worked tirelessly to make spears, shields, and armor for hundreds of the most experienced warriors, but more than half the Zobeck army was little more than a militia.

The remainder was the City Watch, now firmly committed to the revolt and supported by the priests of Holda and Volund. Their anger gave them courage.

The first day, the Free City attempted to use that rage and courage to retake the bridge. Despite the Free City’s bravery, the nobles held the bridge against repeated assaults. Confident in their superior skill and equipment, the Stross’ forces counterattacked around noon, pouring over the bridge and overrunning the City Army’s reserves’ supplies. Almost as soon as they reached the reserve line, though, they fell into a clever trap—a field of holes and mud that trapped the nobles’ horses. Kobolds, artisans, and peasants dragged almost fifty knights into the mud and doom. Both sides retreated in good order, though the screaming of maimed horses lasted for hours before falling silent.

The second day, the Battle at Oros continued into late afternoon with only skirmishes, feints, and small raids. The bright sun clearly illuminated the muddy, bloody mess of the previous day’s struggle. The wizard Marcenzo had taken his best men across the river to join a large contingent of kobold reinforcements freed from the Stross silver mines. Suddenly flanked, the Stross line at the bridge collapsed, and the mercenaries took flight, leaving the noble cavalry to struggle alone. The peasants and kobolds took hundreds of noble prisoners, and finally ended the reign of the Stross family in two days of bloody ruin. Prevented from retreating to the Stross castle by kobold archers, owl-flying raiders, and other deadly night fighters, the Stross army retreated east, seeking shelter at the village of Briarwood.

## THE CASTLE FALLS

That night, the mob stormed Strossheim, the Stross family seat in the east. They forced the gate open, and then pillaged and lit fires throughout the castle. They freed prisoners from the dungeons, tore down tapestries, and carted off the food and gold. Fortunately, the fires started in the Great Hall failed to take hold (or were suppressed by water elementals summoned by the Arcane Collegium).

## OPTIONAL HOOK: THE HEIR TO THE CASTLE

One of the characters in your group could be a human with some ambiguous noble background or who once served a noble house. You could decide that this character is the rightful heir to the Stross’ holdings. This means that Evander welcomes him as the heir of the house (and Evander will rant to the heir about the Free City and “its treacherous mayors and their greedy land grab”). A successful DC 25 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nobility) check reveals that a family named Stross did once rule here, and they called the castle Strossheim. A few questions to the inheritor’s relatives who remember Zobeck 85 years ago might establish that there was an Evander Stross, but he vanished long ago and was presumed dead.

Making one character a focus of the inheritance has pros and cons. That player has a greater stake in exploring, clearing, and lifting the curse. On the other hand, if he dies, the party may not have the same sense of urgency as before. Likewise, that player will get more attention from all NPCs who know of his true bloodline, while other players may feel their characters are neglected. It really depends on your party and play style. The adventure assumes that the party does not contain the heir to the castle, but that Evander is restored to rule in the finale. The free city of Zobeck could, of course, give the castle to a PC heir in the finale, making Evander and his children their enemy.

Meanwhile, many looters sought to find the “hoard of silver” that the Stross family vaults contained. Some claimed they had found it guarded by demons. Others never returned, and some were driven mad by the terrors below the hill. By dawn, more than forty bodies hung from the battlements, arranged from the youngest to the eldest. The Stross supporters fled to neighboring states, sought refuge downriver at the castle of the elves in Margreve Forest, or simply changed sides, supporting the new City Praetors and their followers.

After the looting burnt itself out, the castle briefly served as the headquarters of the Free City Army. The army promptly sealed up the entrances to the kobold’s silver mines for a few months until the kobolds offered to work the mines in exchange for a fair share of the silver and a permanent praetor on the city council. The city gratefully accepted the kobolds’ terms over the objections of those who still saw the kobolds as inferior humanoids who deserved their lot as slaves.

Yet amid the chaos, one Stross child—Evander—weathered the proverbial storm, though no one realized it at the time. He was a quiet lad who had always played with the shadows in the great castle courtyard. The looting of the upper halls and the former inhabitants’ violent deaths turned the castle into a dour place haunted by fresh spirits.

## AFTER THE REVOLT

Five years later, the Free City Army abandoned the castle as a headquarters, when the number of missing or simply dead sentries became unacceptable. The rumors of the castle’s haunting date to that time, as does its current name, Castle Shadowcrag. The dwarves of Clan Grimbold stayed at the castle nonetheless. Certain wizards and cultists visit them from time to time to purchase things best not discussed. Likewise, fighters seeking weapons forged of skymetal or pure shadow or arms aligned with the heavens often made their way to the Grimbold dwarves, paying heavy prices for weapons not available anywhere else.

The kobold silver miners continued to work the castle’s mines for more than 30 years. When the deep mines suffered a series of devastating collapses and explosions, even the kobolds abandoned them as haunted, or at the very least unlucky. The mines reopened roughly 10 years ago with the help of clockwork pumps and new techniques for bracing the old tunnels.

## THE PRESENT DAY

The Zobeck Revolt is 90 years in the past and only a few dwarves remember it firsthand. The city found its footing as an independent state—mercantile, brash and rich. The citizens honor Rava the Gear Goddess as well as Lada the Goddess of Dawn, Volund the Forge God, and others. They no longer follow Sarasta, the elven goddess of Night and Magic and the Stross household goddess. Likewise, fewer follow Khors the Sun God than did at the height of the Stross dynasty. The revolutionary praetors became the city consuls and the Lord Mayor, positions elected every few years by the human, dwarven, and kobold citizens of Zobeck. However, the castle has not forgotten. The arrival of an adventurer brings about

changes, plots, and schemes that may draw the party into exploring the shadowy ruins and uncovering the castle’s bloody past.

## THE CURSE OF THE SHADOW FEY

The curse of Strossheim is complicated and tenacious. No spell short of a *miracle* or *wish* can remove it. It dates to more than 1,000 years ago, when the elves living on the hill they called Rosehaven sacrificed a young elf maiden and planted a wicked black oak sapling from the Shadow Realm on the spot where the ritualistic killing took place. The elf king (who was once the Holly King and later became the Moonlight King), misled by his scheming advisor—a shadow lord lammasu who served Sarasta—agreed to partake in the murderous rite under the mistaken belief that he was actually duping the goddess and stealing much of her power. Instead, the evil act forged an unbreakable link with the goddess, allowing her to instantly teleport him and his fellow elves to the Shadow Realm.

While the elves immediately benefited from the vile pact in the short term through the acquisition of great power, their shadowy environment warped their very being into something unnatural. Their newfound mystical might failed to quench their suppressed wants. They desperately longed for their idyllic, former existence atop their lush hill, but the Moonlight King’s terrible bargain forever bound them to honor and uphold the terms of their foul curse. Their hearts turned bitter at the prospect of spending eternity in the shadows. In time, this sad realization led them to willingly serve the goddess and her servants who condemned them to their dire fate. Still, on rare occasions, the goddess granted the elves, who in the interim had transformed from humanoids into fey creatures referred to as the shadow fey or the Scáthsidhe, brief visits to Rosehaven. One such trip changed the castle’s fortunes forever. During this excursion, the fey discovered that the kobolds had turned their beloved hill into a drab, stone keep. In a rage, the Moonlight King and his followers drove the kobolds off the hill, forcing them to seek temporary refuge in their mines. The kobolds regrouped in the dank warrens, led by their fearless leader, Bartoken, who wielded the sword that the elves abandoned after it spilt the innocent blood that gave life to their insidious curse. But the shadow fey could not forgive the kobolds who trespassed on “their” oak. Soon their hidden alliance with an ambitious human merchant family, the Stross, brought about the enslavement of the kobolds and the breaking of their legendary Sword of Broken Shadows.

Sarasta sensed that the union between the shadow fey and the Stross family gave her the opportunity to claim the land for her own as well. She realized that the now ancient Black Oak’s shadowy origins created a link between the Material world and the Shadow Realm and also served as the living contract that bound the shadow fey to her. If the black oak were destroyed, the shadow fey would be freed from her service. Therefore, she commanded her servants to defend the site against all intruders except for members of the Stross family. As beings native to another plane, the shadow fey could not rightfully claim ownership of the hill, but the mortal humans could. At her behest, the shadow fey and the Stross family vanquished





the kobolds from the hill and consigned them to the mines beneath it, where they toil as slave laborers extracting precious silver from the earth. In exchange, the Stross family gained ownership of the property, currently referred to as Strossheim. While the shadow fey seemed to once again receive the short end of the stick in their bargain with the Stross, the ageless fey have a long-term goal in mind. Their goddess told them to bring Strossheim into the Shadow Realm. Sorcery failed to achieve their goal. Instead, they devised an ironic scheme. Just as they had been fooled centuries earlier, they hoped to trick the Stross family by tempting one of their children to swear allegiance to them, to then grow up and swear fealty to their king, and to then bequeath the castle to them upon their death.

The shadow fey and the Strosses negotiated their deal in the Black Oak's ominous shadow within its namesake's bailey. The malevolent tree's connection to the Shadow Realm spreads its baleful influence by tempting those around it into darkness. The Black Oak's unheard whispers try to convince those who live there to beseech Sarasta for aid. Yet, the Strosses proved more resistant than the deity and her servants imagined. For many long decades, the Strosses stayed loyal to Khors. Over

the centuries, the shadow fey patience began to pay dividends. Slowly but surely they led each successive generation further astray and closer to shadow. Although the Strosses paid some homage to the dark goddess, they never turned their backs on Khors to fully embrace her. Simply put, the canny humans turned the tables on their tempters and manipulated them to perform their bidding. When a minor reached the age of 16, the family elders taught the youngster the secret to controlling the shadow fey to act as an agent of the House Stross. That is, until the Zobeck Revolt. With the family elders slain or in exile, no one remained to impart their wisdom to Evander Stross, the uprising's lone survivor. With nowhere to turn for guidance and insight, the introverted boy became their overmatched pawn. The elderly man now teeters on the edge of falling into shadow. Part of him clings to the fleeting hope that he can turn from darkness and be redeemed, but the tragedies of the past and his evil actions weigh heavily on his tormented mind. It is this inner turmoil as well as his dual existence in the Material world and Shadow Realm that gives birth to the flashbacks. With the castle's future imminently hanging in the balance, the adventurers' sudden arrival can change the castle's fate for better or worse. The dark goddess Sarasta also



sees the PCs' intrusion as an ideal opportunity to corrupt powerful agents of good and claim more prizes for the Shadow Realm. If the party makes the wrong decisions, Evander dies and Strossheim disappears from Zobeck only to reappear as a holding of the shadow fey under their dark queen's rule in the Shadow Realm.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters might visit the castle as part of one of several hooks, or Khor's clergy could send them there to deliver a message or act under some other pretense that suits your campaign. Here are three suggestions:

- Arcander Trillam, an elfmarked Star & Shadows mage at the Arcane Collegium offers the PCs cash or magic items if they can recover lost relics of great value from the castle vaults.

- Sir Evander Stross, a reclusive forest warden and a member of the local gentry sends the PCs an invitation to the castle.
- Word about the amazing magical and skymetal weapons and armor made by the dwarven Grimbold clan reaches the PCs' receptive ears. Since these items are rarely for sale, they might be drawn to visit.

Regardless of the PCs' motivations for venturing to Strossheim, see *Approaching the Castle* (page 31) to set the stage for their arrival. The castle seems normal by daylight. If they split up to explore it, the smaller group meets Evander (see *Brandor's Keep*). If they stay together, they are likely to meet Zarek (see *Stables*) and the dwarves (see *Smithing Grounds*).





# PART ONE: THE FAMILY STROSS

So how did the child Evander Stross become the shadowsworn Stross, who fights the shadow fey for control of the castle? The young boy who played with the shadows survived the mob carnage by offering his soul to the darkness in exchange for their protection. They taught him to speak with ghosts and shadows. Since the Fall (as he calls it), he has been a source of many stories of hauntings in the castle. He hates all the councilors and Mayors of Zobeck, as well as its “uncouth” merchants. He often goes with the Grimbold dwarves to visit the Shadow Realm, sometimes living there for months at a time. This keeps him relatively youthful-looking. However, Evander does spend time in the castle proper, aging normally on the Material Plane and speaking with visitors. In particular, he was present one day when the wizard Marcenzo came to visit. Evander and the Grimbold dwarves soon realized who he was: the mage who brought down the family Stross as envisioned in the upcoming “Bridge at Oros” and “Fall of House Stross” flashbacks. Never one to forgive a foe, Evander murdered the man who defeated the Stross armies and executed his mother and younger brothers in those tragic scenes. The deed changed him for the worse. His pact with shadow deepened the stain on his soul. Evander assumed Marcenzo’s identity for a time and visited the Arcane Collegium to learn more magic. In the end, his charade was uncovered, and “Marcenzo” vanished from the Collegium. The wizard’s murder and his body, which was buried in Griffon Tower, were never discovered. His ghost still haunts the tower where he is buried as well as the outer courtyards, where his killing took place.

## EVANDER STROSS

Evander was 6 at “the Fall” and 30 when he murdered Marcenzo and became a shadowsworn. He is now 95 years old, though he looks more like 45 because of the time spent in the Shadow Realm. The exact history of who raised him and just how tainted he is with shadow depends on how far the castle curse has gone, and whether the PCs succeed during the flashbacks. If none of the flashbacks have been successfully completed, he was an orphan raised by the Grimbold as an adopted member of the clan. He resides on the castle grounds either with the dwarves in area 44 or area 32 within Brador’s Keep. If the events of the “Courtyard Murder” flashback were prevented, he was not raised by the Grimbold but fought

against the shadow oath, demanding rent from the Grimbold and stood apart from them. If the PCs rescue a noble from the mob in the “Fall of House Stross” flashback, Evander is no longer at the castle, but grew up in noble-but-poor conditions in a neighboring kingdom. Evander had a wife, Caily Trimboic, for 4 years, among the human shadow creatures of the Shadow Realm. She gave him two children, Vasilius and Moira, though Caily died in childbirth with the second. She is the only good that came of his oath to serve Shadow. Regardless of what transpires in the flashbacks, Evander always meets Caily and has two children, albeit under different circumstances.

## KRANOS STROSS

The last true Lord Stross died on the field of battle at the castle gates, defending his family from the mob. Evander considers his father a giant among men, and a martyr to the greed of the Zobeck merchants. In fact, Kranos was a proud, violent, and power-hungry man, who was almost smart enough to keep the merchants in line. His pride and ambition for a greater title was almost certainly the reason for his abuse of the city of Zobeck. He has a passive role in the Bridge at Oros and Fall of House Stross flashbacks.

## BELLANCA STROSS, NÉE OINEROS

Evander remembers his mother as a strong and kind woman who tried to protect her three sons. The two youngest, Drago and Mikad, died with her, aged 4 and 3, respectively. She was only 25 when the mob tore her apart; the boys were hanged.

## THE LORDS OF PAIN

These sadistic godlings live on a demi-plane of Suffering. Only evil outsiders and a few mortal cultists worship them today. They exist to create pain and claim that they “purify” others through suffering. Skeptics believe that they are powerful evil souls killed by torture or other painful deaths, who merely try to cause as much agony as possible. Believers in the Lords of Pain are sometimes rewarded with the acquisition of the broken soul template (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4*).

She is buried somewhere in an unmarked grave, as Evander fled the castle when the troops occupied it. He had no choice but to leave behind the bodies of all his family. In later years, he recovered some of them. If the party succeeds in the Fall of House Stross flashback, Bellanca survived the mob's attack and is later buried in the Winter Garden (area 12) after she dies of natural causes.

## VASILIOS STROSS

The older of Evander's two children, Vasilios was a strong and handsome boy, proud of his learning and his strength. He planned to become a mighty warrior in the hopes of winning back the family's honor by force of arms. It never worked out. The money dribbled away, he married a lazy minor noblewoman who slipped slowly into muttering uselessness, and together they had only two children, a girl who died in infancy and a son, Zarek, who survived. Zarek was smart, smiling, and his father's delight. At 13 years old, Zarek became a vampire and Vasilios swore his soul away for revenge. Vasilios now lives to inflict pain and to torture himself, a servant of the Lords of Pain, but his revenge is well in hand. He typically roams area 40 or area 42 within Brandor's Keep.

## MOIRA KINKALLEN, NÉE STROSS

Evander's younger child was named for her grandmother. Technically, she is as noble as Vasilios, but she turned to the light as her brother turned to darkness. After her nephew Zarek was turned into a vampire (and her husband Sir Darragh Kinkallen subsequently passed away), her devotion to Khors became all-consuming, eventually driving her mad. She still dreams of a beautiful shrine to Khors somewhere in the castle, a shrine that she seeks but can never find. She typically wanders through area 6 or within or around area 10, provided that the PCs succeed at the subsequent Bridge at Oros flashback, which spawns the shrine's creation.

## ZAREK STROSS, AKA ZAREK RAINMARK

Zarek is Vasilios's son, and a vampire. He is normally found in area 1 or 3. He looks about 13 or 14 years old. He speaks and acts like a commoner, which serves as his own form of rebellion against his father and the "hopeless mess" that the family made of its inheritance and the past. He killed his uncle Panderos and hates the family but he needs the castle's darkness to operate during daylight hours. Zarek hates his father enough that he calls himself Zarek Rainmark and denies being related. Vasilios, Moira, and Evander all think this is a phase, and refuse to humor him. The dwarves are the only ones who use his new name.

## THE GRIMBOLD DWARVES

Led by their patriarch Rumbold, the Grimbold dwarves arrived here 200 years ago to carve out a living. The clan prospered under the Stross and held onto their halls during the sack of the castle just by waiting out the siege. They negotiated with the Free City army for a peaceable "surrender", which quickly turned into working for the new garrison. Rumbold

died about 50 years ago, leaving Mandergrim in charge. The dwarves are a grim, dour bunch. Their hair is gray, blonde, or white in its entirety, and they all have dark eyes.

They work for gold and silver while they secretly hope to seize the castle and its mines for themselves when it slides over the planar boundary. They sell their arms and equipment during the day in area 4. There are currently ten dwarves: Chieftain Mandergrim, his cleric followers Ulfbaerht, Ulric, and Ulfgar (detailed in area 44), and a rotating cast of apprentices, younger sons, and underlings such as Severti, Rolf, Lambart, Gunnar, Wolfram, and the youngest, Edelred (all fighter 1/expert 1). There are no dwarven women; they remain in the Shadow Realm.

While they live two day's ride into the forested hills, they engage in commerce with Zobeck. The clan sells a few trinkets to the people of Zobeck and its mercenaries. These are invariably enchanted not to harm any Grimbold dwarf or their creations.

## GLIMMERSPIKE

The dwarves are suspicious of anyone not bound to the Shadow Princes or the Four Deaths. They may decide to give one of the PCs an "ancestral weapon" named Glimmerspike, a +3 *longsword* of black adamantine with dark gray hilt and a yellow diamond pommel. This "gift" is really meant to subvert and corrupt the bearer. Glimmerspike is an intelligent shadow weapon. It also slowly but surely increases its Ego of 9 by 1 for each day that the bearer does not match its alignment. When its Ego grows strong enough to overpower the wielder, it forces him to perform an evil act, and then uses a special form of shadow walk to return to its makers.

### GLIMMERSPIKE

**Aura** strong evocation; **CL** 20th; **Slot** none;

**Weight** 4 lbs.

**Alignment** NE; **Ego** 11; **Senses** 60 ft. darkvision

**Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 15

**Communication** telepathy

**Special Purpose** corrupt good-aligned creatures

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th; concentration +22)

3/day—*darkness*, *faerie fire*

1/day—*deeper darkness*

Personality Glimmerspike thinks of itself as a smart and superior weapon, and that others should obey it without question. However, it is wise enough to keep its egotism hidden, at least until its power grows. It loves fire, magic, and the subversion of virtuous creatures to its own purposes. It hates elves deeply and speaks only when it feels combat is likely. It hates small talk.



## MEETING EVANDER

This adventure takes place at various points in the past and the present. When the PCs first venture to the castle in search of the castle's owner or ask to speak with the "forest warden" in the present time, the NPCs that dwell in and around Shadowcrag point them to Evander Stross. He may dwell either in Vespertine Hall (area 34) within Brandor's Keep or in area 44 with the Grimbold clan (if the PCs did not partake in the opening flashback yet or failed it). During the day, he always meets visitors in the Lower Bailey.

*The keeper of the castle introduces himself as Evander Stross. He looks about 45 years old or so. His dark black hair and beard are both peppered with gray. He wears a fine cloak and boots, carries both a sword and a wand, and seems very alert and energetic. It is apparent why the castle's inhabitants defer to him. He exudes an aura of confidence.*

*"What can I do for you out here in the forest? Surely you didn't come all the way out here just to visit a silver mine?" He smiles, just barely, and leans against a wall.*

Despite his relatively youthful appearance, Evander is actually 95 years old. His remarkable lack of aging can be attributed to his time spent in the Shadow Realm, where the dream-like state keeps the ravages of time at bay. During their discussion, Evander confirms that the castle is haunted, and that the PCs should go to the kobold mines rather than the castle for shelter. He mentions nothing about the castle's history or his family's alliance with the shadow fey. If the party insists on staying in the castle, he summons his grandson Zarek (see area 1) to escort the visitors to the guest rooms (area 32). The party members get caught in scenes of ancient castle history when they first visit. Those scenes are the shadow flashbacks that may change history (see page 12).



### EVANDER STROSS (AGE 95)

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male human aristocrat 5/shadowsworn 10 (*Midgard Player's Guide*)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex)

**hp** 116 (15d8+45)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 keen rapier +16/+11 (1d6+2/15-20)

**Ranged** shortbow +14/+9 (1d6/x3)

**Special Atk** +4d6 sneak attack

**Shadowsworn Spells Known** (CL 10th; concentration +17)

**3rd (2/day)**—deeper darkness, ghostbane dirge<sup>APG</sup> (DC 16),

**2nd (3/day)**—darkness, dust of twilight<sup>APG</sup>, protective penumbra<sup>UM</sup>

**1st (4/day)**—compelling question<sup>DM</sup> (DC 14), lesser orb of light<sup>DM</sup>, shadow hands<sup>DM</sup> (DC 14), silent sound<sup>DM</sup> (DC 14)

**0 (at will)**—arcane mark, prestidigitation, shadow bite<sup>DM</sup>, silhouette<sup>DM</sup>

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 20

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

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup> (from shadow familiar), Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Familiar, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Appraise +14, Bluff +18, Diplomacy +18, Escape Artist +15, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Knowledge (planes) +10, Linguistics +16, Perception +22, Ride +12, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +31, Use Magic Device +15

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Undercommon

**SQ** command shadow (see below), darkvision, shadow familiar (see below), shadow talents (powerful sneak, sniper's eye<sup>APG</sup> summon shadow (see below)

**Combat Gear** *potion of displacement*, *wand of starbolts*<sup>DM</sup> (CL 7, 10 charges); **Gear** +2 *keen rapier*, shortbow with 20 arrows, *belt of mighty constitution* +4, *bracers of armor* +5, *deep red ioun stone*, *ring of protection* +2, *cloak of elvenkind*, 100 gp clockwork watch.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Command Shadow (Su)** As a standard action, a shadowsworn can channel negative energy through his body to enslave undead shadows within 30 feet. Each shadow can attempt a Will save (DC = 10 + 1/2 shadowsworn's class level + his Charisma modifier) to negate the effect. Undead shadows that fail the save fall under his control, obeying his commands to the best of their ability, as if under the effects of *control undead*. The shadows receive a new saving throw each day to resist the shadowsworn's command. He can control any number of shadows, so long as their total Hit Dice do not exceed his shadowsworn level. If an undead shadow is under the control of another creature, the shadowsworn must make an opposed Charisma check whenever their orders conflict.

**Shadow Familiar (Su)** If the shadowsworn has the Improved Familiar feat, at 4th level, he can conduct a day-long ritual that permanently releases his own shadow to serve as a familiar for him. A shadowsworn cannot have a standard familiar (gained from another class) and a shadow familiar; he can only have one familiar.

A shadow familiar has the statistics and abilities common to all wizards' familiars, but it doesn't grant its master a special ability bonus. It is not undead, so cannot be commanded by a cleric. It can be cured with normal curative spells. It is incorporeal, and cannot interact with physical objects. The shadow familiar can move under doors and through other tiny openings, can stretch to 10 times the shadowsworn's height, is invisible in partial or full darkness, and can hide completely by posing as its master's normal shadow. The shadow familiar uses the shadowsworn's Stealth skill to remain hidden, and gains a +4 bonus to Stealth checks in dim lighting but a -4 penalty in brightly lit areas.

The shadowsworn can communicate with his unbound shadow normally as soon as he gains it. The alignment of the shadow familiar is the same as the shadowsworn's.

If his shadow familiar is killed, a shadowsworn no longer casts a normal shadow. He may only create another shadow familiar after one month or after spending 24 continuous hours in complete darkness, replenishing his shadow. The shadowsworn cannot cast the *shadow projection* spell if he has a shadow familiar.

**Note:** A shadowsworn can take Improved Familiar at an early level when he's not yet eligible to use the feat.

**Summon Shadow (Sp)** At 9th level, a shadowsworn can summon undead shadows through nearby naturally occurring shadows. He can do this as a standard action once per day plus a number of additional times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. He can summon 1d3 shadows plus one for every three shadowsworn levels above 9th. Once summoned, the shadows obey the shadowsworn's mental commands, although they can only actively communicate with him when they are within 10 feet per shadowsworn level. The shadows last 1 round per shadowsworn level or until destroyed or banished. The shadowsworn can dismiss them as a free action. When a shadowsworn reaches 15th level, he can substitute one greater shadow for every three shadows he would normally summon.

#### INKSPOT, EVANDER'S SHADOW FAMILIAR CR 5

XP 1,200

NE Medium outsider (incorporeal)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)  
**hp** 58 (15 HD)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion, incorporeal

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 40 ft. (good)

**Melee** incorporeal touch +12 (1d6 Strength damage)

**Special Actions** share spells, deliver touch spells, speak with shadows

#### STATISTICS

**Str** —, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Alertness, Dodge

**Skills** Fly +11, Perception +6, Stealth +31 (+35 in dim light, -27 in bright light); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in dim light, -4 Stealth in bright light

**SQ** Alertness, improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, deliver touch spells, speak with master



# PART TWO: FLASHBACKS

The past, more than anything else, haunts Castle Shadowcrag. During the course of the adventure, the PCs learn important backstory and family history through several flashback scenes triggered by the adventurers' actions. In many respects, the PCs' actions or inactions during the flashbacks have a more pronounced effect on the current situation than their interaction with the castle and its inhabitants in the present.

The party's decisions during these flashbacks change current events when they snap back to the present day and time. (Usually, returning to the castle at dawn the next day, no matter what time the flashback happened). If the party successfully changed the past, conditions within the castle improve, and they may even gain access to rooms or items not available before the flashback. If they alter the past for the better, the PCs' chances of lifting the curse increase. If they fail to defeat the flashback's challenges, Evander sinks deeper into darkness, trapped among the ghosts and shadows of the castle. If they fail enough challenges, the party may go with him (see *The Castle Falls Into Shadow* on page 69) into the Shadow Realm.

It would appear that it is possible for the PCs to succeed on just one flashback to alter Evander's perception regarding Sarasta and the shadow fey and presumably save the castle from slipping into the Shadow Realm. However, time has a way of repairing itself, causing it to revert back to the default history. When the cycle of flashbacks begin, the PCs must see the process through to its conclusion, otherwise the default history restores itself 1d4 weeks after they complete their last flashback. Time heals itself chronologically, starting with the oldest events and working its way back to the most recent activities. In short, if the PCs leave Shadowcrag without lifting the curse, the shadow fey ultimately acquire the castle and transport it into the Shadow Realm.

Each flashback begins with a black wind. The party will figure out the time shifts soon enough. The encounters below work backwards in time to the origin of the curse, and that sequence works well in unraveling the mystery slowly. It might be fun to try alternate flashback sequences, as long as the party succeeds in at least four of them to stop the curse. The tables that follow summarize the actions that trigger the flashbacks as well as the major opponents faced during the flashback and their effects on Evander and Castle Shadowcrag.

TABLE 2-1: FLASHBACKS SUMMARY

FLASHBACK NAME	TRIGGER	OBSTACLE	SUCCESS
Courtyard Murder	Midnight on their first evening in the castle	Shadow Evander	Stross curse explained, Grimbold dwarves wield less influence
Bridge at Oros	See shadow fey, experience at least three shadow events, or cast a spell from the shadow subschool*	Four Deaths	Khors shrine opens, Evander is neutral
Fall of House Stross	Light a fire or using a fire-based spell or effect within the castle*	Caller in darkness	Evander vanishes, city troops return to castle
Enslavement of the Kobolds	Defeat dark stalker or dark creepers or succeed on two previous flashbacks and reach the Dragon's Cave*	<i>Sword of Light</i> broken	Open tomb of kobold king
The Sacrifice on the Hill	Capture or kill a shadow fey. Hit a shadow, shadow creature, or shadow fey with the <i>sword of broken shadows</i> **	Archers and lammasu	Black oak awakes, Scáthsidhe freed

\* If the PCs trigger any of these flashbacks prior experiencing the Courtyard Murder flashback, their actions trigger the Courtyard Murder flashback instead.

\*\* This flashback always occurs last. If the PCs' actions would trigger this flashback, their actions trigger the Courtyard Murder, Bridge at Oros, or Fall of House Stross flashback instead. (Do not use the Enslavement of the Kobolds flashback as success would grant the dark folk access to the Kobold King's Tomb.)

## THE WINTER GARDEN

The Winter Garden is attuned to the castle's movement into the Shadow Realm. Successes or failures in the flashbacks are reflected in the colors of the roses in the garden, but do not emphasize this fact. It is appropriate to mention the roses when a character asks about them or if a character succeeds at a DC 20 Wisdom check when that individual first enters the garden. Clever PCs are likely to figure out that dead or black flowers represent doom, while bright, colorful roses symbolize hope. The roses start as mixed black and white.

## FLASHBACK SEQUENCING

You can present the flashbacks in any order beyond the first and last (random or chronological), but I recommend starting with the most recent events and moving back. End with the deepest part of the past and the shadow fey pact with Sarasta. The middle three can go in any order without too much difficulty, though the Bridge at Oros and Fall of House Stross flashbacks are chronologically the closest to each other, thus requiring some adjustments to each flashback based upon the PCs' actions during each encounter. The advantage of this sequence is that it explains the ancient history that hints at the source of the curse. While you could present the events in random order, this fragments the castle history further and forces the players to think a bit more about what they have seen. Depending on how much historical or investigative challenge your players are used to, you might want to mix things up deliberately.

## THE BLACK WIND

When the party triggers one of the flashback scenes by exploring and adventuring, you should definitely change the mood of the game a little. I recommend all the usual suspects: music, lighting, and your tone of voice.

Never underestimate music's ability to set an emotional tone. If you have an unsettling and dissonant piece of music, what are you waiting for? Here are some suggestions from the original project patrons, some of which are available at any local library.

- Phantom of the Opera soundtrack
- Organ music by Bach
- Anything by Rob Zombie

- Bram Stoker's Dracula soundtrack
- Holst's "Planets" symphony, especially "Mars" and "Uranus"
- "Overture" from *The Nightmare Before Christmas* soundtrack
- "The Count of Monte Cristo" from the *Oldboy* soundtrack
- Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* soundtrack
- *The 9th Gate* soundtrack
- *The Red Violin* score (John Corigliano)
- *The Insider* score (Lisa Gerrard and Peter Bourke)

For lighting, use a dimmer, turn off the main light and turn on some floor-level or table lamps. If you have the means, light a candelabra. But for lots of shadows, run the whole game with just one small halogen lamp at the center of the gaming area and darkness in all the corners of the room, (no overhead lights or bare bulbs anywhere). When set up properly, everyone around the table will throw shadows behind them whenever they move in their seats.

For tone of voice, speak more slowly and a little deeper than normal. You want to avoid sounding like a Dracula knockoff, but hitting a grim or extra-serious pitch works wonders.

## FLASHBACK #1: COURTYARD MURDER

In the present, bloody history, Evander Stross grew to manhood in the shadow of the castle's ruin, adopted by the Grimbolt dwarves who located their smithy here and took him under their tutelage. After this murder, they helped him chase off the garrison entirely. Evander learned shadow magic and expanded his power. He also adopted the dwarves' stoic, bitter cynicism as well.

Sixty-five years ago, Evander was 30 years old and an accomplished shadow magician. He and the Grimbolt dwarves were convinced they could soon hold the castle as their own. And they did, until one day, when the Free City sent the wizard Marcenzo to visit the castle. He planned to dispel the rumors of its haunting—rumors Evander had nourished among the villagers, the kobolds, and travelers visiting the castle. Evander met the wizard in the Black Oak Bailey. Evander lured Marcenzo there with promises of selling an old volume of arcane lore he found in the castle ruins.

TABLE 2-2: THE WINTER GARDEN

NET PROGRESS	GARDEN APPEARANCE	STATUS
2 failures	Roses are all dead	Castle transfers into the Shadow Realm
1 failure	Roses are all black	Nighttime conditions all day
Even	Roses mix of white and black	Twilight during the day
1 success	All roses are white	1d4 hours of daylight, twilight for remainder of day
2 successes	Roses mix of white and yellow	1d6 hours of daylight, twilight for remainder of day
3 successes	Roses all yellow	1d8 hours of daylight, twilight for remainder of day
4 successes	Roses mix of red and yellow	Normal lighting conditions
5 successes	Roses all red, curse lifted	Daylight during the day, twilight at night



## TRIGGER

At the stroke of midnight on their first evening in the castle, the black wind whisks the characters away to the moment just before Evander and Marcenzo meet. If the PCs undertook an action that would normally trigger one of the other flashbacks before partaking in this one, this flashback occurs instead. Evander hides in the shadows when the PCs arrive. Rumbold and some dwarves hide inside the Smithing Grounds. Read the following.

*A black wind rushes around you, dousing lights, darkening the skies, and chilling you under your armor. The air seems suddenly damp, and you can't see as well as a moment ago. All the color seems drained out of the castle around you, and the castle itself looks very different than it did. For one thing, many windows in the hall are lit, and for another, you hear a group of men singing near the castle gate. The time is night, and the singers are off-key and probably drunk.*

## SHADOWS IN THE PAST

While immersed in this flashback, the PCs are incorporeal and invisible to the inhabitants of the past subject to the following additional conditions. (As they progress through later flashbacks, they slowly revert back to a more solid state.)

The PCs' gear becomes insubstantial and loses all mundane and magical properties. Casting spells in this unnatural state requires the caster to succeed at a concentration check as if the caster were casting the spell defensively. If another effect requires the PC to succeed at a concentration check at the time of the spell's casting, the concentration check's DC increases by 5 instead. Only spells and effects from the illusion (shadow) subschool as well as those with either the darkness, force, or light descriptor affect the Material world and vice versa.

In their incorporeal forms, the PCs move silently. However, if they wish to be heard (to warn or converse with an NPC, for example), that NPC can hear the sounds with a successful Perception check, though the listener suffers a -20 circumstance penalty on this check. Even with a successful check, the voices or noises sound faint and distant, making it impossible to pinpoint their precise origin.

PCs are unaware of their incorporeal and invisible state until they attempt to physically interact with the material world or succeed at a DC 25 Perception check. Furthermore, a character aware of his present condition that succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) realizes the PCs are reliving a past event where their actions could affect the present. Although they cannot attack with weapons, magical items, magical abilities, and most spells, a PC that succeeds at a DC 15 Will save at the beginning of his turn gains an incorporeal touch attack

until the end of his turn that deals 1d3 points of Strength damage to creatures in the material world. Conversely, an NPC that succeeds at the same Will save can attack the invisible and incorporeal PCs with ghost touch weapons and similar effects.

## THE MURDER

Give the party time to prepare in any manner they see fit, subject to the restrictions that appear in Shadows in the Past above, for two rounds. Then read the following.

*A man in the elaborate robes of a wizard steps into the light of an open door across the courtyard. He sneers a few words to the doorman, who bows and leaves quickly, like a kicked dog. The wizard seems to be examining some papers using magical light, and frowning. The singing suddenly stops.*

If a PC succeeds at a Perception check opposed by Evander's Stealth check, read the following.

*You notice a young man come into the bailey, though the wizard doesn't seem to have seen him. He approaches the wizard slowly and carefully, carrying something like a wand or scroll. You hear him utter a few words of incantation. His accent is strange—upper class and a little formal. The wizard in his black-and-red robes notices nothing, and the loud singing starts up again.*



The party can attempt to interfere, but they are shadows here. The fight between Evander and Marcenzo starts with Evander granting his shadow familiar a lesser orb of light spell. Evander then approaches through the shadows (+26 Stealth) and sneak attacks. Read the following if the party makes no move to stop his ambush.

*The young man in his black cloak slithers right up to the red-cloaked wizard and stabs him through the chest with an exquisite rapier, catching the wizard completely off-guard. Blood gurgles in his throat and then slowly rolls down his lips. As he turns to defend himself, a clawed chunk of darkness reaches up from the ground and tears at his robe in a blinding flash of light that further weakens the wizard. The young man removes his rapier from the wizard's torso and prepares to stab him one last time for good measure.*

In game terms, Evander sneak attacks Marcenzo with his rapier and confirms a critical hit. He deals his base damage of 1d6+2, which is then multiplied by two  $([6 + 2] \times 2)$  for the critical hit resulting in 16 points of damage. He deals +2d6 points of sneak attack damage bringing the total hit damage that Evander dealt in the surprise round to 23 points  $(16 [\text{base damage plus critical}] + 7 [\text{sneak attack damage}] = 23)$ . To make matters worse, the *lesser orb of light* that Inkspot the familiar cast at the wizard deals another 10 points of damage to the critically wounded Marcenzo (a 7th level conjurer who began the encounter with 45 points, use the stats for a conjurer in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*). With just 12 hit points remaining, and an enemy right on top of him, the wizard fights back valiantly, but never really recovers. The sequence proceeds as follows.

### Surprise Round

Marcenzo takes 23 hit points of damage from the critical hit and sneak attack, while sustaining another 10 hit points of damage from Inkspot's spell. Marcenzo drops to 12 hp.

### Round 1

Evander got a result of 15 with his initiative check, which is lower than Marcenzo's lucky 19, so the wizard acts first. Unfortunately for Marcenzo, he already cast *dimension door* and *invisibility* earlier in the day to get past Evander's outer defenses, thus leading him to believe that his intrusion went unnoticed. Fearful of being interrupted while casting his spell, Marcenzo casts *magic missile* at Evander in the desperate hope that he can drop him in one fell swoop or withstand another attack. Without outside intervention, Evander strikes the wizard twice more and deals a total of 13 hit points. Marcenzo falls to the ground unconscious.

### Round 2

Unless the PCs intervene, Evander performs the coup de grace combat action and slays Marcenzo. Inkspot watches for interference, but ignores the PC party of shadows.

Spells cast by the party such as *blindness* or *daylight* work normally and might create enough of a distraction to alert Marcenzo to the presence of enemies giving him an

opportunity to escape. Alternatively, the PCs can attempt to verbally warn the wizard of impending danger before the concealed Evander approaches him, which might negate Evander's element of surprise and even give him a chance to spot Evander or summon a monstrous ally to aid him in the fight or block his escape. Of course, the PCs can attack Evander and relieve the pressure on Marcenzo. In any case, escape is first and foremost on the wizard's mind. He realizes that he is badly outnumbered and outmatched. If Evander detects the PCs, he tries to destroy them with his *wand of starbolts*. It is unlikely that the party can inflict serious damage to Evander in their shadowy forms. However, if that does occur, four greater shadows (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) instantaneously materialize around the characters and attack their fellow incorporeal and plainly visible—at least to them—foes.

Read the following.

*You see the young shadow-cloaked man step into darkness. He vanishes completely, then a line of silver comets flies out of the shadows at you. All around the courtyard lights come on. You hear the distinctive "thunk" of heavy crossbows bolts into windowsills. "Damn you all for interfering!" says a voice with a strong dwarvish accent. "Ghosts and haunts begone!"*

The Grimbold dwarves, annoyed by the outside interference, depart from the Smithing Grounds (area 4 on the Castle Shadowcrag map) and make their way to the Black Oak Bailey to target the unseen trespassers. They oddly ignore Marcenzo, leaving him to Evander and Inkspot. The dwarf Rumbold (use the stats for a mountaineer in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*) uses his *shadow-catching net* (treat as a ghost touch net; shadows caught in it become corporeal for 1d4 rounds on a failed DC 16 Will save). He is a snow-bearded dwarf who dies a few years after this scene, giving leadership to Mandergrim. His 3 followers (use the stats for spell hunters in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*) each carry four ghost touch crossbow bolts that they use to hit the shadowy PCs. These items are in addition to their listed gear.

#### EVANDER STROSS (AGE 30)

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male human aristocrat 5/shadowsworn 5 (*Midgard Player's Guide*)

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 30 ft.; Perception +17

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex)

**hp** 78 (10d8+30)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 keen rapier +12/+7 (1d6+2/15-20)

**Ranged** shortbow +10/+5 (1d6/x3)

**Special Atk** +2d6 sneak attack

**Shadowsworn Spells Known** (CL 5th; concentration +12)



2nd (2/day)—*darkness, dust of twilight*<sup>APG</sup>  
1st (2/day)—*lesser orb of light*<sup>DM</sup>, *shadow hands*<sup>DM</sup> (DC 14)  
0 (at will)—*arcane mark, prestidigitation, silhouette*<sup>DM</sup>

#### STATISTICS

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 22

**Str** 11, **Dex** 18 (16), **Con** 14 (10), **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 20

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup> (from shadow familiar), Combat Casting, Improved Familiar, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Appraise +11, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Escape Artist +13, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Knowledge (planes) +7, Linguistics +12, Perception +17, Ride +11, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +26, Use Magic Device +9

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Undercommon

**SQ** command shadow (see below), darkvision, shadow familiar (see below), shadow talents (powerful sneak)

**Combat Gear** +2 *keen rapier, potion of displacement*; **Gear** *belt of mighty constitution* +4, *bracers of armor* +5, *deep red ioun stone, ring of protection* +2, *cloak of elvenkind, wand of starbolts*<sup>DM</sup> (CL 7, 19 charges), shortbow, 20 arrows, 18 gp, 6 sp.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Command Shadow (Su)** As a standard action, the shadowsworn can channel negative energy through his body to enslave undead shadows within 30 feet. The shadows receive a Will save (DC = 10 + 1/2 shadowsworn's class level + his Charisma modifier) to negate the effect. Undead shadows that fail the save fall under his control, obeying his commands to the best of their ability, as if under the effects of control undead. The shadows receive a new saving throw each day to resist the shadowsworn's command. He can control any number of shadows, so long as their total Hit Dice do not exceed his shadowsworn level. If an undead shadow is under the control of another creature, the shadowsworn must make an opposed Charisma check whenever their orders conflict.

**Shadow Familiar (Su)** If the shadowsworn has the Improved Familiar feat, at 4th level, he can conduct an all-day ritual that permanently releases his own shadow to serve as a familiar for him. A shadowsworn cannot have a standard familiar (gained from another class) and a shadow familiar; he can only have one familiar.

A shadow familiar has the statistics and abilities common to all wizards' familiars, but it doesn't grant its master a special ability bonus. It is not undead, so cannot be commanded by a cleric. It can be cured with normal curative spells. It's incorporeal, and cannot interact with physical objects. The shadow familiar can move under doors and through other tiny openings, can stretch to 10 times the shadowsworn's height, is invisible in partial or full darkness, and can hide completely by posing as its master's normal shadow. The shadow familiar uses the shadowsworn's Stealth skill to remain hidden, and gains a +4 bonus to Stealth checks in dim lighting but a -4 penalty in brightly lit areas.

The shadowsworn can communicate with his unbound shadow normally as soon as he gains it. The alignment of the shadow familiar is the same as the shadowsworn's.

If his shadow familiar is killed, a shadowsworn no longer casts a normal shadow. He may only create another shadow familiar after one month or after spending 24 continuous hours in complete darkness, replenishing his shadow. The shadowsworn cannot cast the shadow projection spell if he has a shadow familiar.

**Note:** The shadowsworn can take Improved Familiar at an early level when he's not yet eligible to use the feat.

#### INKSPOT, EVANDER'S SHADOW FAMILIAR CR 4

**XP** 1,200

NE Medium outsider (incorporeal)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)  
**hp** 39 (10 HD)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion, incorporeal

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 40 ft. (good)

**Melee** incorporeal touch +8 (1d6 Strength damage)

**Special Actions** share spells, deliver touch spells, speak with shadows

#### STATISTICS

**Str** —, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Alertness, Dodge

**Skills** Fly +11, Perception +6, Stealth +26 (+30 in dim light, -22 in bright light); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in dim light, -4 Stealth in bright light

**SQ** Alertness, improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, deliver touch spells, speak with master

#### ENDING THE FLASHBACK

The flashback ends when Marcenzo escapes or Evander slays him. For the purpose of this encounter, Marcenzo is deemed to have escaped when he gets past area 1 or otherwise exits the castle grounds as Evander and the dwarves do not pursue him beyond the castle walls. From there, the wizard can use several scrolls in his possession to dramatically increase his speed and flee the castle.

#### Success

If Marcenzo escapes, the wizard returns to the city with stories that the castle is indeed haunted and best left alone. He sends an exorcist to the castle, the garrison stays a little longer, and Evander does not have blood on his hands. Better still, Evander questions whether the dwarves truly have his best interests at heart. His alignment does not shift to neutral evil over time. The flashback ends. Read the following.

*You feel the black wind rise up all around you even as you see the mortar of the castle start to turn oily and black, the space between the stones releasing shadows that reach toward you for a moment...*

The courtyard is now empty, and the sky turns pink and gray in the east. There's no sign of dwarves, shadows, or

seeping mortar. The castle rooster crows, and the sun breaks over the horizon. It is dawn. Regardless of where they were when the flashback began, the characters are now in the Black Oak Bailey. Evander is no longer a follower of the Grimbold dwarves. Instead, the dwarven leader Mandergrim calls him “the little lord” and grumbles about paying him rent for the use of the castle grounds, the forest charcoal, and the smithy. Mandergrim claims that he taught the man everything he knows. In return, Evander forged a deed to the castle, cheating him. He warns the party against Evander, rather than speaking of him as a favored child or student. After this flashback, Evander does not remember serving as a shadow apprentice to the dwarves, because he never did. Instead of brooding on the murder and pledging himself to deeper shadow, he tried to fight Sarasta’s oath, refusing to help the Grimbold dwarves drag away his inheritance. After all, he says to himself, he offered his soul, but not his fiefdom. He manipulates the dwarves as much as they manipulate him, and he doesn’t turn to outright evil. In the present, he no longer gains any additional shadowsworn levels and retains the statistics presented in this flashback.

## Failure

If this flashback ends with Marcenzo dead, he continues to haunt the castle (see Marcenzo the Wizard on page 32) and the garrison abandons the place completely, as in the default history. Read the following.

*The wizard in his red robe and black cloak falls to the ground, and his last breath rattles from his throat. You hear a deep dwarven voice say, “Well done lad, you’ve avenged your family. Blood for blood is the best way. You can take your castle away from them as well. I’ll tell you how.” Evander lifts his head and gives a grim smile before he turns to face the dwarf.*

*“Tell me everything,” he says. Then the shadows flicker around you and the wind howls through the towers and the tree branches. You close your eyes against the dust and leave. When you open them again, you are in the courtyard. The wizard’s body is gone, and so are the young man and everyone else, including the snow-bearded dwarf.*

A PC that succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check immediately recognize Evander’s younger self. They can also find Marcenzo’s bones buried in area 9. In a final indignity, his killers broke his jaw, among other humiliations, to prevent speak with dead from working properly. His ghost becomes a haunt of the castle (see Shadows of the Dead on page 32). The PCs can question Marcenzo’s ghost in the present day.

## FLASHBACK #2: BRIDGE AT OROS

About 90 years ago, the bridge below the castle was host to a conflict between the Stross family and the city folk of Zobeck. Magical mayhem ensued on all sides, which was always one of the keys to the Stross plan. The shadow fey mercenaries called the Four Deaths were among the Stross retainers.

## TRIGGER

This flashback begins after the party sees one of the shadow fey (such as in the area 19), experiences at least three shadow events, or casts a spell from the shadow subschool. Read the following.

*A black wind tugs at your hair. You feel a chill as color fades from your sight. You are outdoors near a river; all around you are men in heavy armor, many gathered under a raven-wing banner. Roughly a bowshot away is a much larger group of men carrying pikes and axes and clad in makeshift armor. They seem to be the opposing army, but they can barely get a shield wall together. Their movements seem hesitant. You notice the opposing army has pikes, but no cavalry.*

*The well-organized army around you begins to move. You hear the unmistakable hoofbeats of heavy horses. Voices bark orders, and others incant spells near you. “Death to those who oppose Lord Stross! No survivors!”*

Let the party make their own decisions. Attempts to question people near them are ignored. Unlike the first flashback, the PCs are incorporeal, but are now visible. If a PC succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check, read the following.

*You notice that not all the followers of the raven-wing banner are human. A handful of fey creatures ride on shadow mastiffs and carry black banners, marked with white roses and suns. These fey riders seem to be the leading edges of the raven army’s attack. They shimmer and shift in the gray light, giving you fleeting glimpses of them. One speaks a word and unleashes a fragment of pure light into the opposing lines.*

The riders are the Four Deaths, the mercenary shadow fey serving the Stross family. Even if the PCs fail to spot them, the incorporeal PCs instantly attract the Four Deaths’ interest. They ignore their corporeal opponents and immediately set their sights on the battlefield’s latest and most unexpected arrivals. Their banners are all black with different devices: a flame, a single white rose, a skull, and a sun. Their own troops name them the Fire, Glory, Bony, and Bright Deaths, respectively (also known as Torch, Banner, Fingerbone and Eclipse, respectively), and think of them as lucky additions to their side. Associating their garb and spellcasting abilities with shadow magic and necromancy requires a successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check. With a successful DC 30 Perception check, a PC hears voices from the opposing army. Read the following.

*One man seems to be rallying the opposing army, yelling at the top of his lungs. “Freedom, boys! Hired swords will not conquer us! Remember the street massacre!” He is wearing red robes and his features seem familiar.*

This is Marcenzo, the wizard leader of the Free City Army (the murder victim in the Courtyard Murder flashback and the mob ringleader in the upcoming Fall of House Stross flashback). When the party notices him, they see that the spells he casts against the Four Deaths are all unraveled by the scáthsidhe’s innate ability. He can’t help his army much. A PC



who succeeds at a DC 15 Intelligence check remembers him as the red-robed wizard from one or more of the previous flashbacks.

## KRANOS, LORD STROSS

The gray-haired wizard Kranos Stross (use the stats for a cruel conjurer in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*) is here, leading his troops and gesturing with a white staff of rowan wood. He is almost totally inaccessible in combat. A sphere that negates *dimension door* and other teleportation effects surrounds him; in addition, three stone golems (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) have been ordered to protect him. If the party is itching to fight him, they can. However, the Stross' leader leaves such dirty work to the mindless minions that defend him. If the party explored the castle gate during the Fall of House Stross flashback, they remember seeing his corpse alongside his white staff broken in two.

## THE FOUR DEATHS

The PCs can see the Four Deaths in action, and might defeat one or more of them before the party encounters them in other flashbacks or the castle itself (see area 19, for example). They fight as pairs with one sorcerer and one fighter together. For plot purposes, the party should fight Banner and Eclipse here with their heraldic signs of a white rose and eclipsed sun. The Four Deaths typically shadow jump across the battlefield to engage and destroy opposing clerics and arcane casters. They especially hate clerics of Khors or dwarves of any kind. However, as natives of the Shadow Realm, they are drawn to the presence of other shadow creatures. While the shadow fey are not incorporeal creatures, for the purposes of this flashback, they are treated as such when interacting with the PCs. Therefore, the PCs and the Four Deaths can affect each other normally, but any effects they take against each other don't carry over into the material world as explained earlier in *Shadows in the Past* (see page 14).

### FIRE DEATH AND GLORY DEATH

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Female shadow fey fighter 5 (*Midgard Bestiary*)

NE Medium fey

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 20, flat-footed 22 (+5 armor, +4 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 shield)

**hp** 64 each (7d6+7 plus 5d10+5)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, improved evasion, uncanny dodge

**Weaknesses** light sensitivity



#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** +1 *flaming rapier* +16/+11 (1d6+4 plus 1d6 fire/18–20)

**Ranged** mwk shortbow +15/+10 (1d6/19–20)

**Special Attacks** shadow jump, weapon training (light blades +1)

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

At will—*dust of twilight*<sup>APG</sup>, *vanish*<sup>APG</sup>

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 20, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28

**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Mobility<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus<sup>B</sup> (rapier), Weapon Focus (shortbow), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +15, Escape Artist +11, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +11, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (soldier) +9, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +23; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

**Languages** Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon  
**SQ** armor training 1, flicker, stealth in motion  
**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, +1 flaming rapier, +2 buckler, masterwork shortbow with 40 arrows and 8 +2 arrows, 250 gp petrified wooden brooch, 56 gp, 98 sp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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

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

### BONY DEATH AND BRIGHT DEATH

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Male shadow fey sorcerer 5 (*Midgard Bestiary*)

NE Medium fey

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 270 ft.; Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 20, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 54 each (7d6+7 plus 5d6+5)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +15, **Will** +14

**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion, uncanny dodge

**Weaknesses** light sensitivity

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** +1 *quarterstaff* +7 (1d6+2)

**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +11 (1d8/19–20)

**Special Attacks** shadow jump, shadowstrike (7/day)

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

At will—*dust of twilight*<sup>APG</sup>, *vanish*<sup>APG</sup>

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 5th; concentration +14)

2nd (5/day)—*acid arrow*, *darkvision*, *touch of idiocy* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*chill touch* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *sleep* (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *mending*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 14)

**Bloodline** shadow<sup>APG</sup>

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 20, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28

**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Bluff +19, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +10, Escape Artist +11, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +11, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (herbalist) +4, Sleight of Hand +12, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +23, Use Magic Device +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

**Languages** Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

**SQ** alternate form, bloodline arcana (when casting a spell with the darkness descriptor or the shadow subschool, you gain a circumstance bonus on Stealth checks equal to the spell's level for 1d4 rounds), flicker, stealth in motion, unravel

**Combat Gear** *potion of barkskin* +2; **Other Gear** +1 *quarterstaff*, *wand of major image* (CL 6th, 23 charges) (Bony Death only), *wand of fireball* (CL 6th, 21 charges) (Bright Death only), masterwork light crossbow, masterwork rapier, 20 bolts, 83 gp, 29 sp

#### STATISTICS

**Alternate Form (Su)** All shadow fey sorcerers can assume an alternate form as a swift action, typically as a raven, dove, cat, wolf, or fox. This animal form is always white, black, or silver-gray. This ability is similar to polymorph cast by a 12th level character, but the shadow fey sorcerer does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from the forms mentioned above. In his alternate form, he loses spellcasting ability but gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of his new form. He can remain in that form until he takes another or until struck by sunlight.

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

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

**Shadow Strike (Sp)** A shadow fey sorcerer can make a melee touch attack as a standard action that inflicts 1d4 points of nonlethal damage +1 for every 2 sorcerer levels he has. In addition, the target is dazzled for 1 minute. Creatures with low-light vision or darkvision are not dazzled by this ability. The shadow fey can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier.

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

**Unravel (Su)** As a swift action, a shadow fey sorcerer can unravel the spells of his foes. This acts as dispel magic cast at his overall class level. He can use this ability 3/day.



## ENDING THE FLASHBACK

The flashback ends when the PCs slay one of the Four Deaths, a PC dies, or 2 minutes elapse from the start of the flashback, whichever happens first.

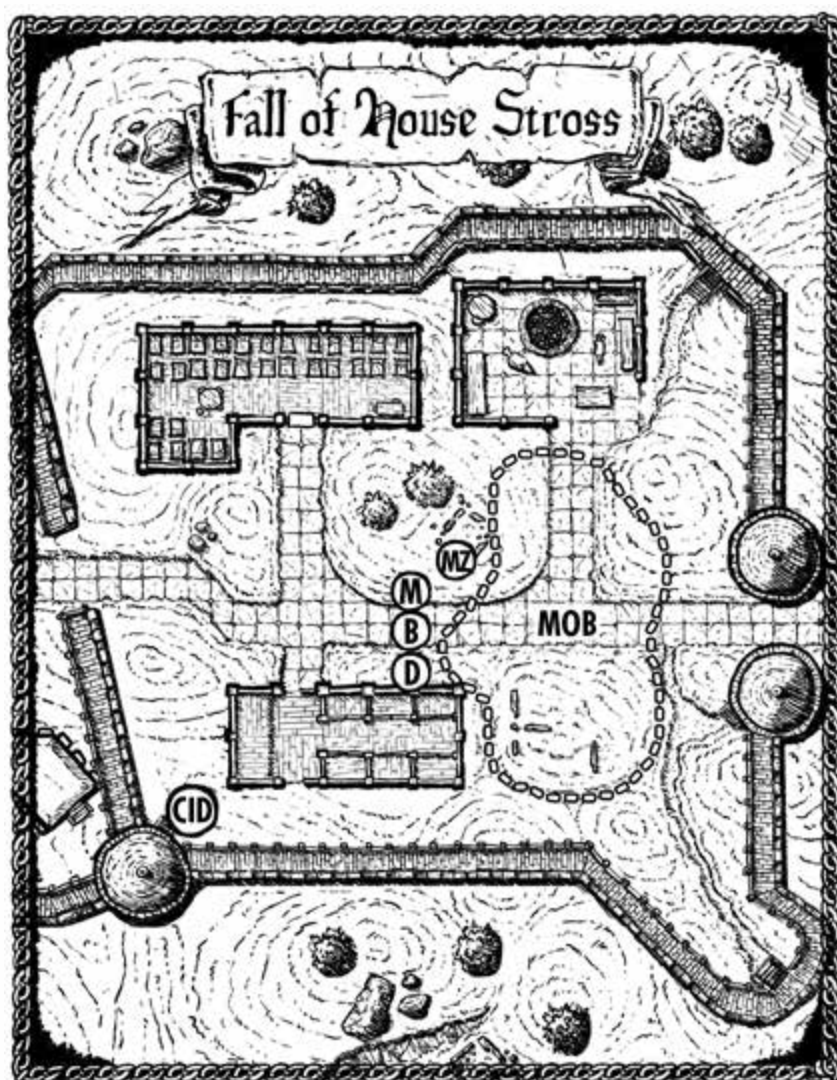
### Success

If the party defeats one of the Four Deaths, Evander's sons and daughter, Moira, live better lives. The Stross family mother, Bellanca, flees the castle with her children before the mob reaches it, instead of being advised to stay behind by the scáthsidhe. (This consequence refers to the events that appear in the Fall of House Stross flashback. If the characters already participated in that flashback, they may have already rescued Bellanca and Evander's two brothers from the mob.) Later, the widow Stross is given a Free City pension to keep her quiet, and she rears Evander as a noble of good character. After the PCs succeeded in this flashback, she is buried in the Winter Garden, where Evander often visits her.

While Evander returned to the castle and grew up there, an honest servant of the Free City in his own family's house, his daughter Moira benefited much more. Without the constant badgering of the Deaths, she was not driven mad. She turned to the worship of Khors with joy rather than desperation, married a good man, and her mother built Khors' temple (which is now restored from shadow). This means the party can question her, and visit her in the "new" shrine.

### Failure

If the party defeats none of the Four Deaths, they fail at this flashback. Bellanca, Evander's mother and his two younger brothers remain behind at the castle and are still present when the mob arrives (see the Fall of House Stross flashback). If the party succeeded in the previous flashback, but failed this one nothing changes when they return to the castle. The Winter Garden grows blacker. Khor's shrine is lost, and Moira stays trapped in madness. If this is the second failure in a row, the castle and nearby forest move into the Shadow Realm! The sun never rises, and the party must succeed in the three remaining flashbacks to restore the castle to the Material Plane, otherwise it is forever lost to the Shadow Realm. If you want to give the party a deadline, have a herald of the Moonlight King arrive to prepare his "new fiefdom" for an inspection within 3 days (see The Castle Falls into Shadow on page 69). If the party does not restore the castle quickly, it remains here forever. They must then find a way back through planar travel.



## FLASHBACK #3: FALL OF HOUSE STROSS

About 90 years ago, a mob overran the castle after defeating the Stross armies and allies on the field of battle. The PCs arrive on that night incorporeal yet visible. If they defeat the caller in darkness, they grow stronger in the shadow world. Strong enough that they can choose to save one or more of the mob's targets. They must choose carefully.

### DESIGNER'S NOTE

Ideally, this encounter presents the party with a dilemma. They can save someone else's life by risking their own in the process, or they can ignore her pleas and concentrate solely upon their own self-preservation. To make the decision even more difficult, the PCs could face a painful choice between rescuing the woman and defending a comrade.

## TRIGGER

The flashback begins when the party lights a fire or uses a fire-based spell or effect on the castle grounds. Read the following.

*A black wind swirls about, dousing lights, darkening the skies, chilling you under your armor. The air seems suddenly damp. You can't see as well as a moment ago. All the color seems drained out of the castle around you, and the castle itself is very different. You smell smoke and hear the noise of hundreds of people in the Lower Bailey. Then you hear a scream, "Peasants! Get away!"*

*Looking about, you see a young woman dressed in fine clothes and jeweled rings with two young boys holding her skirt and crying their eyes out. A wizard in a black-and-red robe climbs onto a horse to address the woman over the crowd. "You and Lord Stross have stolen from us for long enough, sending us to die in the mines and taxing us to death! She's a leech! Hang them all!" The mob surges forward.*

## DARKNESS CALLS

Even though the PCs are close to the public execution that is about to happen, they are currently powerless to stop it in their incorporeal forms. However, the PCs are visible to the numerous spectators. Although they can sap Strength from the angry citizens, as described in the Shadows in the Past on page 14, there are simply too many of them to have any significant effect on the mob. Likewise, force spells may fend off small pockets of the irate crowd, but they also fall far short of having any noticeable impact on the horde's mood or actions.

The death of so many soldiers and aristocrats in this charged atmosphere gave rise to a caller in darkness that stalks Griffin Tower, where it feeds on the hate, death, and fury in the courtyard. As an inherently incorporeal monstrosity, it notices the insubstantial PCs long before they detect its unnatural presence. The monster has already used *aversion*, *paranoia* and *telepathic projection* to further rile up strategic members of the crowd. When a fight breaks out, the undead horror uses its psychic magic to sow discord within the party by casting *paranoia* and deals damage with *greater oneiric horror* and *mind thrust V*.

Of course, the combat between the party and the caller in darkness does not take place in a vacuum. The mob continues to demand for and carry out more death. Throughout the

## DESIGNER'S NOTE

The sword can set up a contradiction. The party might have already found a later version of the same sword in the Kobold King's Tomb. Rather than having two present, I think it might mess with players more if their version of the *sword of bright shadows* disappears during the flashback, which they might not notice if they don't attempt to draw the blade. If they do, they see it turn to dust and shadows in their hands (only to return to the scabbard when the flashback ends)

battle, screams ring out in the courtyard. If the PCs succeeded in the Bridge at Oros flashback, the young woman and her two children are Lyssandra Krönnner and her two sons, Hulmet and Wrothgang. While innocent victims in their own right, they have no relation to Evander. On the other hand, if the PCs failed the Bridge at Oros flashback or did not yet experience it, the young woman is Evander's mother, Bellanca. She prepares to face her demise alongside her two children Mikad and Dragos, Evander's brothers. If the PCs ignore the woman's repeated cries for aid (regardless of her identity), the mob, led by the wizard Marcenzo, hangs her and her children 5 rounds after the party first encounters the caller in darkness. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Intelligence check recognizes this younger version of Marcenzo if the group hasn't already done so in another flashback.

Although the PCs can't physically liberate the woman and her children from their captors, they can take some actions to forestall their demise. For instance, plunging the area into darkness creates confusion, giving the victims some additional time, while bathing them in light might lead some witnesses to conclude that a god is interceding on their behalf. Likewise, in their incorporeal yet visible state, the ghostly adventurers can frighten the crowd if they choose to do so. Roughly half the mob flees in terror at the sight of "ghosts," while the remaining half and their leaders steel their nerves for the task at hand. So while the PCs can't directly intervene in the proceedings, they can delay them in a variety of ways. In this regard, the GM must exercise some discretion when determining whether the PCs' actions are effective or not.

Meanwhile, the PCs and the caller in darkness are both incorporeal, thus they deal damage to each other normally. However, the caller in darkness' ability to fly gives it a decided tactical advantage against predominately ground-based PCs by forcing them to rely almost exclusively on ranged weapons and spells rather than melee attacks and touch spells. Furthermore, the caller in darkness excels at hiding from its adversaries. It can merge with or pass through solid objects to escape from or ambush its pursuers.

### CALLER IN DARKNESS

CR 9

XP 6,400

*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 5*

CE Large undead (incorporeal)

**Init** +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

**Aura** unnatural aura (30 ft.)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 20, flat-footed 12 (+3 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, -1 size)

**hp** 97 (13d8+39)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal; **Immune** undead traits

**Weaknesses** sunlight powerlessness

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** incorporeal touch +15 (6d6 plus consume mind)

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



**Special Attacks** consume mind, wrap in despair

**Psychic Magic** (CL 10th; concentration +12)

12 PE—*aversion*<sup>OA</sup> (2 PE, DC 15), *emotive block*<sup>OA</sup> (3 PE, DC 16), *greater oneiric horror*<sup>OA</sup> (4 PE, DC 17), *mind thrust*<sup>VOA</sup> (5 PE, DC 18), *paranoia*<sup>OA</sup> (2 PE, DC 15), *telepathic projection*<sup>OA</sup> (1 PE, DC 14)

---

#### STATISTICS

**Str** —, **Dex** 25, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 27 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Ability Focus (wrap in despair), Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Intimidate, Stealth)

**Skills:** Fly +5, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +18, Stealth +21

**Languages** Abyssal, Common

---

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Consume Mind (Su)** Whenever a caller in darkness hits a creature with its incorporeal touch attack, or begins its turn occupying the same space as a creature, it drains away a portion of that creature's mind, inflicting 1d4 points of Wisdom damage. This is a mind-affecting effect, but not a negative energy effect. If the caller in darkness reduces a living creature's Wisdom score to 0 in this way, it absorbs that creature's mind, killing it. The caller in darkness gains psychic energy equal to the creature's HD and access to all of the creature's memories. A creature whose mind is absorbed in this way cannot be resurrected until the caller in darkness is slain, unless the caster first uses a wish or miracle to free the creature's mind.

**Wrap in Despair (Su)** Any living creature that begins its turn occupying the same space as a caller in darkness must succeed on a DC 21 Will save or be overwhelmed by crippling depression for 1d4 rounds. Affected creatures are unable to take any action. Adjacent allies can offer words of encouragement as a standard action to grant the creature a new saving throw. If the creature succeeds on a saving throw granted in this way, it is immune to the caller in darkness's wrap in despair ability for 24 hours. Creatures with Intelligence scores of 2 or less are immune to this effect. This is a mind-affecting, emotion and fear effect. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

When the PCs finally destroy the caller in darkness, they exit the Shadow Realm and reemerge in the material world giving them a chance to take more substantive actions to save the lives of others. However, they may not realize that fact yet. Give the characters hints that they are no longer incorporeal; tell them they now make noise when they move or that their feet directly touch the ground. If the party still seems oblivious to their transformation, a PC realizes what happened with a successful DC 10 Perception check.

Moving through the crowd on foot in their corporeal form is treated as moving through difficult terrain unless that PC succeeds at a DC 25 Acrobatics or Escape Artist check to weave through the mass of people. Nonetheless, the mob surrounds the PCs at all times. They are considered to be flanked, and they can't take 5-foot steps in combat, even if

they succeeded at the Acrobatics or Escape Artist check. The mob ignores the PCs unless they flaunt the trappings of wealth or power, such as by having a high Charisma score, wearing masterwork or magical gear, or carrying fancy items. In that case, the mob turns on the PCs, attacking them with any improvised weapons at hand. Eight individuals surround each PC, using the statistics for farmers found in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Gamemastery Guide*. When the PCs slay or incapacitate at least ten members of the mob, the crowd disperses and flees. However, killing these ordinary citizens, including women and children, creates a moral dilemma for most good characters.

The elderly wizard, Lord Kranos Stross, is already dead. His broken white rowan staff lies next to his corpse near the castle gate. A PC who succeeds at a DC 5 Intelligence check recognizes him as the leader of the army in the Bridge at Oros flashback, if the PC participated in that flashback.

## ENDING THE FLASHBACK

The flashback ends when one of the following conditions is met: the PCs save the young woman or one of her children and brings them to safety; they destroy the caller in darkness and rescue anyone regardless of their location; the mob executes the young woman or one of her children; or 1 minute passes after the caller in darkness is destroyed.

### Success

The party succeeds if they rescue the young woman and/or one or more of her children. If the mob does not execute the young woman and her children before the flashback ends, they survive the carnage as the crowd's enthusiasm for death wanes with the caller in darkness' destruction.

If they rescue someone (just by getting them out of the castle and into the woods), they succeed completely. Evander is no longer an impoverished former nobleman eking by on rents from his forests, charcoal money, and silver mines. Instead, he and the other survivor of that night flee the castle successfully and grow up in a neighboring kingdom. When the flashback ends, it is dawn once more. The PCs wake up when the rooster crows. Evander is not at the castle. Questions about him get blank stares from the dwarves, who claim they bought the castle 50 years ago. The kobolds know that "the young Lord Evander he lives off in another city. East or west, I think."

### Failure

The party fails if the mob executes the woman and/or one of her children. If the party succeeded in the previous flashback

---

## SARASTA

This dark goddess is based on Hekate (with a shadow fey twist). Humans, kobolds and elves in the Free City of Zobeck worship her. She could just as easily be the Unseelie Queen Mab, Nyx the Greek goddess of the Night, or any similar figure.

but fails in this one, the castle teeters on the brink of sliding into the Shadow Realm. Increase the number of shadow events (see Shadow Events on page 33). Make it clear that the werewolf lord and many shadow fey are waiting outside the castle, as if drawn to it. The party should feel more threatened than ever. The castle feels even darker and more forbidding. If this is the second failure in a row, the castle and nearby forest move into the Shadow Realm! The sun never rises, and the party must succeed in the three remaining flashbacks to restore the castle to the Material Plane, otherwise the castle remains in the Shadow Realm forever. If you want to give the party a deadline, have a herald of the Moonlight King arrive to prepare his “new fiefdom” for an inspection within 3 days (see The Castle Falls into Shadow on page 69). If the party does not restore the castle quickly, it remains here forever. They must then find a way back through planar travel.

## FLASHBACK #4: ENSLAVEMENT OF THE KOBOLDS

More than 800 years ago, the kobolds that once ruled the castle and first dug its mines surrendered to House Stross. The PCs witness the seminal moment when the Stross family deceived them. While the kobolds expected to ransom their king and leave the mines in shame and defeat, the humans enslaved all of them. If the PCs prevent the Stross family from enslaving the kobold king, his tomb appears in the deep mines (see The Kobold King’s Tomb on page 66).

### TRIGGER

The party must visit the kobold mines and defeat the dark stalker and dark creepers that inhabit that area (see Gas-Filled Halls on page 64). Alternatively, PCs that succeeded on at least two previous flashbacks trigger this flashback when they reach area 52. Read the following.

*A black wind rushes around you, dousing lights, darkening the skies, chilling you under your armor. The air seems suddenly damp, and you can’t see as well as a moment ago. All the color seems drained out of the mines around you, and you find yourself standing at the entrance to a mine. You see an untold number of kobolds on the surface, all surrounding a small, empty throne made of silver and set with agates and other precious stones. Among the hundreds of kobolds, a few carry well-made weapons: crossbows, longswords, and shortbows. Most carry their mining picks and hammers. Quite a few seem to be wounded.*

Give the party time to prep and explore a little, ask a few questions, and to notice that the kobolds can see them, bump into them, and perhaps insult them under their breath. They are corporeal and plainly visible for this flashback. The kobolds have a hostile initial attitude to any non-kobold PC, though they do not attack as long as the party is peaceful. The kobolds might trust a half-orc or halfling (an indifferent initial attitude) and certainly trust fellow kobolds (a friendly initial attitude).

With a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, a PC learns that the kobolds have lost a large battle against the forces of “the Lord Stross of the Black Sun” (Evander’s distant ancestor

who was a follower of both the Death God and Khors). The kobolds expect to lay down their weapons here, swear fealty, and then return to the mines to gather tribute to pay to the House Stross.

To get close to the king and the empty throne, the PCs can elbow their way through the crowd. The kobolds aren’t in a fighting mood; hence they offer no resistance. To get beyond the guards near the empty throne, a PC must succeed at a DC 30 Stealth check (as lots of eyes are watching). With a successful DC 20 Knowledge (nobility) check, a PC remembers that Lord Adrastus Stross broke the kobold’s grip on the mines. According to history, he enslaved the kobolds and sundered the power of their kings forever.

When the PCs seem ready or the scene is slowing, read the following.

*You hear trumpets sound and see four black horses, one gray warhorse, and a mass of 20 shadow mastiffs coming toward the kobold camp. Marching behind them are a group of twenty or more grim dwarves carrying war axes, hammers, and a small, lavishly decorated object. It looks like an altar at first, with offerings of grain, hop vines, charcoals, silver thread, and a bright red woolen cloak. But as it comes closer, you see it is an anvil. A column of human soldiers follows the dwarves, at least 200 men-at-arms carrying spears, axes, and longbows. The horses all have riders. The man on the gray steed is in his 40s, bearded and wearing dented but polished banded armor. The others wear soot-blackened chain, and carry four holy symbols and banners of the gods of death, harvest, night, and sun. They ride to the little silver throne. The man on the bearded horse dismounts next to it and shouts, “Where is the son of Brandorek? Where is the king of the mines?”*

*A kobold rises up above the crowd on the surface of a metal shield held by strong bodyguards. He says, “I am here! With my sword, I offer my surrender.” The shield he stands on is passed among the crowd. “My people will pay you tribute each year, as a fiefdom from the Stross.”*

*“Come to me and swear your fealty.” The shieldbearers move closer, and the kobold king turns the hilt of the sword toward the human lord.*

At this point, give the party 2 rounds to take actions, such as casting spells or moving to an advantageous spot, but events unfold quickly from here. With a successful DC 35 Perception check, a PC notices that shadow fey are riding and directing the shadow mastiffs. Then read the following.

*The human lord accepts the sword, which shines with magical light. The kobold steps off his shields and kneels, beginning to swear his oath of fealty.*

With a successful DC 20 Sense Motive, a PC can tell that something is wrong the moment the sword is turned over (and that character gains an extra round to act). With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC sees the following.

*You hear a murmur in the crowd; the human lord hands the sword to a runner who is taking it to the dwarves. With a quick sweep, the dwarves remove the offerings from their altar. A snow-bearded dwarf hefts an enormous sledghammer. The kobolds are*



*screaming, and their king hesitates. The kobolds are saying “The sword of light! They’ll break it!” One of the kobolds begs you to stop the dwarves from shattering their king’s blade.*

---

Other runners are prepared to take the current runner’s place at the end of the next round if the PCs somehow incapacitate the dwarf runner. To succeed in this flashback, the PCs must get the sword from the dwarves and return it to the kobolds. The sly humanoids then quickly hide the blade from the Stross and their allies. However, defeating 50 dwarves (use the stats for guard officers from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* and change the race to dwarf), Lord Stross, the shadow mastiffs, and 200 human soldiers (use the stats for guards from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*) is extremely unlikely.

Luckily, the PCs can take the sword by other means. Humans and dwarves can freely move among the Stross forces until they attack or grab the sword. On the other hand, Adrastus’s forces challenge members of all other races. Spells such as *dimension door*, *invisibility*, *telekinesis*, and *teleport* allow one of the party members to reach the sword and prevent its destruction when used properly. For this flashback, reward creativity. For instance, a clever disguise can allow one of the PCs to take the place of a runner or a character can swoop down from the skies and wrest the sword from the dwarves.

In any event, the PCs have 4 rounds (or possibly longer if they delay the runners from reaching the anvil) to take the sword from the dwarves before they shatter it on the anvil. The snow-bearded dwarf is a younger version of Rumbold (use the stats for Mandergrim; see page 59), and his acolytes are the previously described dwarf fighters. Adrastus Stross retreats immediately when things go wrong.

## ENDING THE FLASHBACK

The flashback ends when the PCs return the *sword of bright shadows* to the kobolds or the dwarves destroy the sword, whichever happens first.

### Success

If the party keeps the sword whole, the kobolds are still enslaved, but they live in hope instead of in despair. Someday, they believe, the sword of the true king will break the curse. A character that succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check suddenly “remembers” this piece of lore when the flashback ends. The entrance to the Kobold King’s Tomb, which was hidden for ages, now opens. The party can recover the *sword of bright shadows* within the tomb (see page 67).

### Failure

If the party lets the dwarves destroy the sword, the kobold resistance crumbles completely. They are enslaved, and denigrate into a broken people that serves the Stross. The sword remains broken in the present time, and a valuable tool is not available for the final encounter.

## FLASHBACK #5: THE SACRIFICE ON THE HILL

Save this flashback for last. It reveals the origin of the scáthsidhe, and makes it possible to end the curse. It is followed up almost immediately with the adventure’s big final combat sequence (see page 68).

### TRIGGER

The party triggers the flashback by capturing or killing a shadow fey (after completing all of the other flashbacks), or a PC hits a shadow, shadow fey, or shadow creature with the *sword of bright shadows*. Read the following.

---

*A black wind rushes around you, dousing lights, darkening the skies, chilling you under your armor. The air seems suddenly damp, and you can’t see as well as a moment ago. All the color seems drained out of the castle around you...again.*

---

You stand near the same hilltop in the same forest, but the castle is now gone. Instead you see a handful of towering trees on the hilltop, each lit with magical lights: green, orange, and pink. Among those lights, elves cavort among the trees in a festive dance celebrating some unknown occasion.

Give the party time to adapt and take whatever stealthy precautions or cast whatever spells they like. They are again corporeal and plainly visible. Then spring the meat of the encounter onto them. The dancers laugh, sing, and circle around a carved wooden tree, its branches still green but its bark stripped away to reveal white wood and glowing runes. Something steps out of the carved tree, a creature even darker and more hunched over than the dancers, surrounded by shadows, and holding out a black sword to an elf wearing a leafy crown. The creature resembles a shadowy lion or sphinx. When the crowned elf takes the sword, the blade turns from dark to bright, and the light fills all the space. This flashback dates to the area’s earliest connection to the Shadow Realm, when the castle was an elven hilltop fortress of wood and magic. Here the elves made the ultimate sacrifice to Sarasta, before she whisked them to the Shadow Realm and turned them into the scáthsidhe. This occurred more than 1,400 years ago. The PCs are witnesses to the creation of the deepest wards and magics of the place. Their curse draws the castle’s inhabitants into destruction and despair and links the hilltop oak and castle itself forever with the goddess Sarasta.

## WINNING OVER THE CORRUPTED ELVES

Read the following.

---

*One of the elves notices you, but says nothing. She slowly slides your way. Eventually she speaks to you in Elven, saying, “You might do well to leave. If you must stay, you should challenge one of the young nobles to archery or magic to win them over.” She turns to look back toward the crowd. “I think perhaps you’ve picked a very dangerous day to visit.” She walks off and disappears into the trees.*

---

If they take her advice, the party might win the elves' respect either through casting magic that cannot be unraveled, or by winning an archery contest. If they lurk around or refuse to participate, the elves ignore them until the ceremony is about to begin. If the party fails, they are told this is elven land, and only elves may linger here past sundown. If they stay, the elves attack them.

**Archery Contest:** The contest takes three shots. The archer that hits the highest Armor Class at a range of 110 feet wins. Critical hits and natural 20s have no added effect on the outcome. The elven archer competing against them is Torch (see page 19). She has a +17 attack bonus with her elven longbow and magic arrows.

**Magic Contest:** To win a magic contest, a PC must foil a 13th-level elf sorcerer who attempts to unravel each of their spells (+13 bonus on his dispel check). Best two out of three wins.

An individual PC cannot participate in the same contest more than once. If a party member wins either contest, the PCs are accepted by the tribe and can stay. They are invited to witness a planting oath, meaning a magical pact related to the cycle of death and rebirth.

## THE HEARTWOOD PACT

This ceremony centers on planting the Black Oak (see The Black Oak Bailey on page 38). Under the watchful eye of Chorvodni, a sphinx-like creature of the Shadow Realm, the elves sacrifice one of their own for power. Read the following.

*As dawn approaches, the young elf archer who spoke to you earlier screams your names. Six guards hold her tight in front of the elven king with the sword. He speaks to her for a moment. Then she bows her head and goes, meekly, to a clearing near the top of the hill, in sight of the stars. All around you, elves stir, moving uphill, and speaking of "the lion's oath." A few are singing something that's not quite Elven. Then you see him: a huge lion, white furred with a shining black mane and wings flecked like a falcon's.*

If the party follows, the elves ignore them. Many of the elves carry both longbows and longswords. If the party did not win over the elves through archery or magic, they are told—politely but very firmly—to leave or be shot. This is a private matter that does not concern them. If they choose to fight, see Fighting below. If the party witnesses the sacrifice, read the following.

*The young elf archer drinks from a chalice, then lies down in a shallow trench. Above her, the elves sing words that seem strangely changed, key words shifting their meaning, slippery hints at power stolen from the darkness, power stolen from the sun. The elf crowned in holly leaves steps forward with a sapling that he places in the trench beside the young archer. He sings the final notes after all the elves have fallen silent. "Darkness, silence, guide us by moon and starlight. Give us power over our enemies, and hide us from their sight."*

The PCs can't speak among themselves without drawing angry hisses from the elves. Any character that succeeds at

a DC 25 Sense Motive check knows that the young woman is under the influence of an enchantment spell. A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Knowledge (nature) check recognizes the lion as a type of lammasu. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check knows the sapling being planted is a black oak. Any character that understands Elven and succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check realizes that the pact is with Sarasta. The souls of these elves are being pledged to her in exchange for power. Furthermore, if the Knowledge (religion) check succeeds by 5 or more, that character also realizes that the ritual requires that the sapling drinks the sacrifice's blood at a precise moment. If the blood rite is delayed by even a few seconds, the pact fails.

*The lion creature flaps its wings just as the song ends. Something falls: Rose petals? Feathers? These bits of white all float into the trench to cover the young woman. The elf in the holly crown draws the bright sword and lifts it.*

If the party does nothing, the young woman is slain, the sapling drinks its fill, and the elves are all sworn to darkness. To stop it, the PCs must disarm the Holly King who later becomes the Moonlight King (CMD 27) or otherwise prevent the victim from dying at that exact moment. They have only 2 rounds to get this right!

If the PCs opt to attack or otherwise disable the Holly King to accomplish this goal, use the statistics for a shadow cleric in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*. Because he is solely focused on carrying out the ritual, he is considered flat-footed. Furthermore, if the ritual fails, he is stunned for 2d4 rounds.

Alternatively, the PCs can attack the sapling, which is treated as a young treant (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*). The sapling simultaneously exists in the Shadow Realm and the material world at the time of its planting, so it is not permanently destroyed, but it is unable to partake in the victim's blood if "killed," thus foiling the ritual as well. They can also whisk the young archer (use the stats for a cautious archer from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*) out of harm's way. She is completely unrestrained, so it is possible for a character to grab her and get her away from the Holly King. She neither resists nor assists in this endeavor. Of course, Chorvodni and the elves try to stop the characters from saving her. If the PCs opt for the immoral yet still effective choice of killing the archer before the Holly King does, the rite has an unintended consequence. Chorvodni attests that the PCs rather than the elves have now sworn fealty to Sarasta! The flashback immediately ends and Chorvodni whisks the PCs away to the Shadow Realm. The scáthsidhe are spared, but the PCs must now find their way back to the Material Plane as described in the Castle Falls into Shadow on page 69. They must also defeat Chorvodni before they can attempt to escape and set things right. In addition, they must now destroy the Black Oak to escape the curse. Of course, PCs that selected this option may find their alignment permanently altered and decide to offer their allegiance to Sarasta instead of fighting alongside their allies.



The preceding exception aside, foiling the ritual murder or the planting that seals the pact doesn't end the flashback. Instead, read the following.

*You have barged through the elven gathering, but the black wind doesn't come. All around you, you hear hundreds of elven bowstrings being strung, quivers rattling.*

Let the PCs bolt if they wish, prepare for melee, or try to talk their way out. It won't help, as the elves are now hostile (requiring a successful DC 40 Diplomacy check to improve their attitude).

*The lion creature speaks with a rumbling voice. "You have marred the pact between their souls and my goddess. You will never see the dawn!" It roars. It seems too true; dawn seems long overdue. You see one moon setting, and another brighter one rising in the east. "That is all you'll see of the sun!" says the lion. "Kill them! Kill them all!"*

### Ending the Flashback

To end the flashback, the PCs must escape the fury of the scáthsidhe and the shadow lord lammasu in a chase or they must kill Chorvodni, Sarasta's devious servant. The characters are in a massive zone of lengthened shadows, where no light reaches. A PC who succeeds at a difficult DC 33 Perception check sees a faint ring of light in the distance that marks the edge of the clearing.

**Running:** The party must get 1,000 feet away from the clearing, out of the range of the darkness around the hill. This brings them into the direct dawn's light, and ends the flashback. They find themselves back at the castle about an hour after dawn.

**Fighting:** The party must cope with constant archery. The 200 elves here fire their shortbows at the fleeing party members. They have a +3 attack bonus with their shortbows and deal 1d8 hit points of damage on a successful hit. To simulate the massive volley, assign an equal number of attacks to each party member; therefore if there are four party members, each is subject to fifty attacks. Rather than make fifty individual attack rolls, go with the law of averages. Thus 2-1/2 elves roll a natural 20 and hit AC 23, 2-1/2 elves roll a 19 and hit AC 22, and so on. When dealing with fractions, as in the preceding case, use percentile dice to determine whether the fractional attack hits that particular AC. So in the case of a natural 20, there is a 50% chance that the remaining archer also rolls a natural 20. If the fractional attack does not hit that particular AC, round the attack roll down to the lower number, i.e. AC 22 in the previous example). Characters with AC of 24 or higher are always hit once for every 20 attacks directed at them. However, these elves can only attack and move. The lammasu Chorvodni and the Holly King's six guards (use the stats for cautious archers from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*) lead the chase and engage the characters in melee combat if they can catch them. Oddly, the Holly King lingers behind,

apparently stunned by the ramifications of what just happened.

**Magic:** If the party uses spells to increase their speed, disappear from sight, or magically transport themselves to another location, they must first survive 1 round of archery (a total of 200 attacks at +3 base attack for 1d8 damage each) and 1 round of combat with a powerful shadow fey fighter named Torch (Istella, see the Bridge at Oros flashback). If they use *dimension door*, the lammasu follows them using the same spell.

## CHORVODNI

CR 11

XP 12,800

Shadow lord lammasu (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*)

LE Large outsider (augmented magical beast, incorporeal [when moving])

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, see in darkness; Perception +15

**Aura** magic circle against evil (20 ft.)

### DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)  
**hp** 94 (9d10+45)

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

**Defensive Abilities** shadow blend, incorporeal step;

**DR** 10/magic [from shadow creature template]; **Resist** cold 15, electricity 15; **SR** 14

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

**Melee** 2 claws +14 (1d8+6), 2 wings +9 (1d6+3)

**Melee** melee touch +14 (1d6 damage [DC 18 Fort save negates damage, on a critical hit, touch attack also deals 1 point of Constitution damage (also negated by the saving throw)])

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Special Attacks** cloying gloom blast (DC 18), pounce, rake (2 claws +14; 1d8+6)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +11)

At will—*ray of sickening*<sup>UM</sup>

3/day—*greater invisibility*, *shadow conjuration*, *shadow step*<sup>UM</sup>

1/day—*dimension door*, *shadow walk*

**Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +10)

3rd (4/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *searing light*

2nd (7/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *lesser restoration*, *resist energy*

1st (7/day)—*bane*, *command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds*, *detect good*, *divine favor*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *mending*, *purify food and drink*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 23, **Dex** 16, **Con** 21, **Int** 16, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29 (33 vs. trip)

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Eschew Materials<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack

**Skills** Diplomacy +13, Fly +13, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +15, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +7;

**Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

**Languages** Celestial, Common

## SQ planar thinning

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Cloying Gloom Blast (Su)** Three times per day, a shadow lord can unleash a 30-foot cone of cloying gloom. On a failed Fortitude saving throw, a creature in the cone is affected by a slow spell (caster level equal to the shadow lord's Hit Dice) and is blinded for the duration of the slow effect.

**Incorporeal Step (Su)** When a shadow lord moves, it gains the incorporeal subtype and quality, including a deflection bonus to AC equal to its Charisma bonus. It loses the incorporeal subtype and special ability when it stops moving.

**Planar Thinning (Su)** Once per day as a full-round action, a shadow lord can thin the barriers between the Material Plane and Shadow Plane, making it considerably easier for creature to cross between the two. This functions like the planar travel aspect of the gate spell (caster level equal to the shadow lord's Hit Dice). This planar thinning is immediately dispelled if in an area of normal or bright light.

**Shadow Blend (Su)** In any illumination other than bright light, a shadow creature blends into the shadows, giving it concealment (20% miss chance). A shadow creature can suspend or resume this ability as a free action.

**Spell-Like Abilities** A shadow lord gains the following spell-like abilities, with a caster level equal to its Hit Dice: At will—*ray of sickening*<sup>UM</sup>; 3/day—*shadow conjuration*, *shadow step*<sup>UM</sup>; 1/day—*greater shadow conjuration* (if the shadow lord has 11 or more Hit Dice), *shadow walk*.

A creature created with *shadow conjuration* or *greater shadow conjuration* that would normally have a celestial or fiendish template (such as a bear) instead gains the shadow creature template.

**Spell Resistance (Ex)** A shadow creature gains spell resistance equal to the base creature's CR + 6.

**Spells (Su)** A lammasu casts spells as a 7th-level oracle (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*), but does not gain any other class abilities possessed by an oracle. It ignores all divine focus material components for spells it casts.



## SUCCESS

If the PCs prevent the sacrifice and escape, the scáthsidhe are freed from the full force of the pact with Sarasta. Although they may still live in shadow they are now free to pursue their own ends. However, the fey do not show themselves, because the Black Oak awakens, and the castle either topples into the Shadow Realm or the structure and its inhabitants are forever freed, provided that the PCs destroy the Black Oak. When the party returns to the castle, it is noon. After sunset, the Black Oak awakes and attacks (see The Black Oak on page 68).

## FAILURE

The scáthsidhe are not freed, and any surviving Four Deaths defend the Black Oak when it awakes at sunset.



# PART THREE: THE CASTLE

Over time, the PCs learn about the castle's reputation. Clerics or paladins likely hear rumors of the dark diabolism and undeath cults that once held sway in the castle. Rogues dwell on the details of the "lost treasury" that the mob never recovered. They might also learn about the Grimbold dwarves or the garrison that once served there. The party can gather information from the locals by attempting a Diplomacy check. Alternatively, a PC can recall information from their breadth of knowledge and experience by attempting a Knowledge (local) check (see Table 3-1: Zobeck City Gossip about Strossheim).

The party can also gather gossip about the castle from the kobolds in the nearby silver mine, which tends to produce more reliable information (see Table 3-2: Kobold Mine Gossip about Strossheim).

The best source of information about the castle's history is a character's recollection of that history. A PC can attempt a Knowledge (history) check to recall these details or consult a local resident well versed in the region's history. The character knows all the information at the listed DC, and any information from lower DCs (see Table 3-3: Knowledge (History) Check).

## THE SURROUNDINGS

The following section describes the sites that surround Castle Shadowcrag as portrayed in the Castle Shadowcrag & Environs map on page 37. Approaching the castle is not

difficult, especially during daylight hours. The castle is two days' ride east of the City-State of Zobeck. In any campaign, it should be just far enough away from cities and villages to feel a little isolated. It is surrounded by a protected forest (kept for hunting and guarded by druids and rangers) and the main visitors are human woodsmen, kobold miners, and dwarven charcoal burners.

### The Vessgau Mines

The famous kobold silver mines of Vessgau are located in the valley below the castle, and the wheelwork is visible from the castle battlements.

### The Margreve Forest

This hilly forest is treated as a dense forest with ample undergrowth and numerous trees. The primary canopy is oak, chestnut, beech, and ash, though rowan, walnut, and some fir stands are also present. The Margreve is home to owlbears, a few hobgoblin bandits, and at least one breeding pair of griffons. Characters wandering around bring random encounters on themselves, but they won't find anything related to the castle other than the werewolf lord Lóránt and his dire wolves (see The Werewolf Lord below).

### The Werewolf Lord

Standing a shade over 6 feet tall and weighing 200 pounds, the red-haired, gray-eyed Lóránt looks about 31 years old. Lóránt is a ranger by day and a werewolf lord by night. He is

TABLE 3-1: ZOBECK CITY GOSSIP ABOUT STROSSHEIM - DIPLOMACY OR KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL)

DC	RESULT
<16	No information
16	"Sure, that castle is one of the city's watchposts. There's a garrison and everything." ( <b>Wishful thinking. There was a garrison, but it's long gone.</b> )
20	"The haunted castle has been mostly abandoned for at least 55 years. A few bandits and caretakers probably live there or some dwarves. There's a kobold silver mine nearby; now that's a place to make some money!" ( <b>More accurate. No bandits, though.</b> )
24	"Something's wrong with the Stross castle. It's a dark and grim place. There were massacres there in the old days. The family bathed in blood and the taxes that people paid weren't just gold. The family died out from the wrath of the gods, a curse on them and all their kind!" ( <b>A bit overheated, but the hint of a curse is true.</b> )
28	"The castle belonged to a family named Stross. They were all killed during the revolt that freed the city and granted the merchants their liberties. No one ever did recover their lost hoard of silver; some say demons or magic, or both guard it." ( <b>True, though one Stross survived.</b> )

the grandson of the Captain of Hounds who served Kranos Stross, Evander's father. He keeps the shadow mastiffs around to "chase off wolves"; only his skill in handling them has kept them from attacking him. If the party meets him in daylight, read the following.

*You see a man approaching, dressed in leather armor and carrying a longbow over his back. A pack of eight black dogs follows at his heels, clearly devoted to their master. The man is quite tall with red hair and sharp gray eyes. He says, "My name is Lóránt. I am the keeper of the forests here. Please, be very careful outside the castle walls at night." The dogs sniff at you, but they seem friendly.*

If the party wants to talk, Lóránt is friendly and happy to describe the dangers of the Margreve Forest: owlbears, shadow fey, griffons, deadly gargoyles, and a powerful pack of wolves and werewolves. The party would be wise, in his opinion, to hire a ranger to protect them the next time they travel through the forest. He offers his services for a mere 25 gp per day. If the party refuses him, he mutters under his breath about their stinginess. If they accept him into their service, he's happy to serve them until the full moon approaches, at which time he attacks them with the aid of his 6 dire wolf allies (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) in the deep forest.

### LÓRÁNT SARKOZY, MASTER OF HOUNDS (HUMAN FORM)

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human afflicted werewolf ranger 9 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

**Init** +9; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +12

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +5 Dex, +2 shield)

**hp** 72 (9d10+18)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 longsword +12/+7 (1d8+4/19–20)

**Ranged** +1 longbow +16/+11 (1d8/19–20)

**Special Attack** curse of lycanthropy, favored enemy (outsider [native] +4, humanoid [reptilian] +2)

**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 6th; concentration +8)

2nd—*hold animal* (DC 14), *spike growth*

1st—*delay poison*, *longstrider*, *speak with animals*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow)

**Skills** Bluff +5, Climb +19, Handle Animal +9, Heal +11, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (nature) +13, Perception +12, Ride +12, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +17, Survival +13, Swim +7

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**SQ** change shape (human, hybrid and wolf; polymorph), favored terrain [forest +4, swamp +2], hunter's bond (companions), lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves), swift tracker, track +4, wild empathy +9, woodland stride

**Combat Gear** *potion of greater magic fang* +1, *potion of shield of faith* +3; **Other Gear** +2 longsword, ring of climbing, +1 longbow with 30 arrows, +1 leather, +1 buckler, 90 gp.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Change Shape (Su)** Lóránt has three forms—a humanoid form, an animal form, and a hybrid form. Equipment does not meld with the new form between humanoid and hybrid form, but does between those forms and animal form. Lóránt can assume animal or hybrid form as a full-round action by succeeding at a DC 15 Constitution check, or humanoid form as a full-round action by succeeding at a DC 20 Constitution check. On nights when the full moon is visible, Lóránt gains a +5 morale bonus on Constitution checks to assume animal or hybrid form, but a –5 penalty on Constitution checks to assume humanoid form. He reverts to his humanoid form automatically with the next

TABLE 3-2: KOBOLD MINE GOSSIP ABOUT STROSSHEIM - DIPLOMACY OR KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL)

DC	RESULT
<15	No information beyond the usual politics and weather
15	"Bats. The castle has thousands of bats. Also, howling black dogs. Avoid them." (True, but not very helpful.)
20	"The shadows move in the castle. Staying at night is foolish; even the stupid dwarves shut their gates at night and let nothing disturb them. Why don't you help us chase the reeking assassins who catch and kill miners?" (The party can learn about the dark stalkers if they follow up on this.)
25	"The castle is cursed by shadow creatures and ghosts. Miners who visit don't always come back, though some say they see visions of the kobold king ruling there." (Kobolds have had flashbacks of kobold history, but it's mostly secondhand. The ones who had visions have either vanished or been captured by the dark stalkers.)
30	"Our sorcerer says that the castle is vanishing, and people who visit it vanish too. Drawn into darkness he says. We have plenty of darkness in the mine." (True.)
35	"If the sword of the kobold king is recovered, the curse on the castle will be broken. The sword was a gift to the earliest rulers of the castle, and it has power over shadow." (Mostly true, and helpful.)



sunrise, or after 8 hours of rest, whichever comes first. A slain lycanthrope reverts to its humanoid form, although it remains dead.

**Lycanthropic Empathy (Ex)** Lóránt can communicate and empathize with animals related to his animal form. He can use Diplomacy to alter such an animal's attitude, and when so doing, he gains a +4 racial bonus on the check. He only has this ability in animal or hybrid form.

### LÓRÁNT SARKOZY, MASTER OF HOUNDS (HYBRID FORM)

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human afflicted werewolf ranger 9 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

**Init** +11; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +12

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+3 armor, +5 Dex, +4 natural, +2 shield)

**hp** 81 (9d10+27)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 *longsword* +13/+8 (1d8+5/19–20), bite +7 (1d6+1 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy)

**Ranged** +1 *longbow* +16/+11 (1d8/19–20)

**Special Attack** curse of lycanthropy, favored enemy (outsider [native] +4, humanoid [reptilian] +2)

**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 6th; concentration +8)

2nd—*hold animal* (DC 14), *spike growth*

1st—*delay poison*, *longstrider*, *speak with animals*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27

**Feats** Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow)

**Skills** Bluff +5, Climb +20, Handle Animal +9, Heal +11, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (nature) +13, Perception +12, Ride +12, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +17, Survival +13, Swim +8

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**SQ** change shape (human, hybrid and wolf; polymorph), favored terrain [forest +4, swamp +2], hunter's bond (companions), lycanthropic empathy (wolves and dire wolves), swift tracker, track +4, wild empathy +9, woodland stride

**Combat Gear** *potion of greater magic fang* +1, *potion of shield of faith* +3; **Other Gear** +2 *longsword*, *ring of climbing*, +1 *longbow* with 30 arrows, +1 *leather*, +1 *buckler*, 90 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Change Shape (Su)** Lóránt has three forms—a humanoid form, an animal form, and a hybrid form. Equipment does not meld with the new form between humanoid and hybrid form, but does between those forms and animal form. Lóránt can assume animal or hybrid form as a full-round action by succeeding at a DC 15 Constitution check, or humanoid form as a full-round action by succeeding at a DC 20 Constitution check. On nights when the full moon is visible, Lóránt gains a +5 morale bonus on Constitution checks to assume animal or hybrid form, but a –5 penalty on Constitution checks to assume humanoid form. He reverts to his humanoid form automatically with the next sunrise, or after 8 hours of rest, whichever comes first. A slain lycanthrope reverts to its humanoid form, although it remains dead.

**Lycanthropic Empathy (Ex)** Lóránt can communicate and empathize with animals related to his animal form. He can use Diplomacy to alter such an animal's attitude, and when

TABLE 3-3: KNOWLEDGE (HISTORY) CHECK

DC	RESULT
<10	No information
10	The Stross family owned Castle Shadowcrag before the Zobeck Revolt that ended their dynasty. Ever since then, the castle has been nominally held by the city. In practice, it's mostly abandoned, except for the kobold miners who live nearby.
15	The revolt was nasty. A battle fought at the Oros Bridge had many casualties. Mercenaries and sorcerers called the Four Deaths fought for the Stross legions. So did the paladins of the Undying Light. It didn't matter; the people won the day, stormed the castle, and hung every noble from the walls, even the youngest.
20	The Stross family isn't the first to have ruled Castle Shadowcrag, of course. The kobold King Bartoken held it for his people more than 800 years ago. There's a famous song about his surrendering to the Stross, and the false promises they made him. He died a slave in the mines, his famous sword lost and broken.
25	After the revolt, a garrison of Free City Army held the castle for a while, and even used the old Stross family dungeons to hold prisoners. But ghosts eventually chased the soldiers out of the castle. The place is cursed, though a group of dwarves still live there.
30	The kobold king wasn't the first to have held the castle, either. Ancient elvish tales claim that they built the very first hall on the Black Oak Hill, a settlement they called Rosehaven. They were a very sinister group, selling their souls to Sarasta. Some say the kobold king took over the castle after the elves retreated into the hill or into the night sky.

so doing, he gains a +4 racial bonus on the check. He only gains this ability in animal or hybrid form.

## APPROACHING THE CASTLE

The castle is much safer to approach during day than at night. At sunset, an enormous flock of normal bats flies out of the Griffon Tower. The shadow mastiffs and shadow fey patrol the nearby area at night, keeping the kobolds and other visitors away. If the party asks the kobolds, the miners insist that staying or approaching after dark is suicide. They claim that black dogs, unseen archers, and worse things all haunt the castle and its surrounding woods. They know, because they go to sell their iron and silver there from time to time.

### Daylight Approach

Read the following the first time the party sees the castle.

*Rising out of the forest on a small hill you see Castle Shadowcrag, a mix of walls and towers that seems to grow directly from the cliffs. The walls and windows look dark, but smoke puffs from two of the many chimneys. The castle gate stands open at the top of a long series of switchbacks and shallow stairs. You count three main towers and two large sections of living quarters. The walls are topped with wooden hoardings and battlements. The towers have pointed rooftops of slate or lead. A few abandoned huts, reduced to mere foundations and chimney stones, are scattered at the foot of the hill. The light on the hill seems gray and dim. The faint sound of metal pounding against metal emanates from within the structure.*

The party can enter the castle unchallenged in daylight. The party meets one of the younger Grimbold dwarves when they arrive at the castle gate. A black-bearded fellow named Severti offers to take their horses and tells them that they can bargain with the smiths “before sundown.” If the party includes elves, no dwarf arrives to welcome them. The dwarven clan Grimbold has remained at the castle, even though the Stross family was defeated. Creatures from the Shadow Realm or the mines visit from time to time, so the dwarves are cautious and not especially friendly in their welcome.

### Nighttime Approach

The gates are always closed at night. The party sees lights on the distant hilltop. Read the following.

*The castle looms on a hill ahead, but only a few windows show any light. The path up to the castle is steep and has several switchbacks. You aren't sure, but you think the gate is closed. A large square keep at the very top looms over two smaller courtyards. Something is flying near one of the higher towers, perhaps a very large bat or a small gargoyle. You hear howls in the woods. Several more voices join in, baying at the moon.*

A pack of shadow mastiffs and a shadow fey rider ambush the party in the woods at night. The rider casts spells from deep in the shadows on alternate rounds (and uses shadow jump in between to make it seem as if at least two arcane casters are working in the undergrowth).

## SHADOW MASTIFFS (5)

CR 5

XP 1,600

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

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

### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 51 (6d10+18)

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

**Defensive Abilities** shadow blend

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft.

**Melee** bite +10 (1d8+6 plus trip), tail slap +5 (1d6+3)

**Special Attacks** bay

### STATISTICS

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

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

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack

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

**Languages** Common (cannot speak)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Bay (Su)** When a shadow mastiff howls or barks, all creatures within a 300-foot spread except evil outsiders must succeed at a DC 16 Will save or become panicked for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the same mastiff's bay for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-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 engage this ability; a *daylight* spell, however, does. A shadow mastiff can suspend or resume this ability as a free action.

## SHADOW FEY RIDER

CR 5

XP 1,600

Midgard Bestiary

NE Medium fey

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 240 ft.; Perception +11

### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 32 (7d6+7)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +14, **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion, uncanny dodge

**Weaknesses** light sensitivity

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** mwk rapier +9 (1d6+1/18–20) or falchion +4 (1d8+1/19–20)

**Ranged** mwk shortbow +9 (1d6/19–20)

**Special Attacks** shadow jump

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

At will—*dust of twilight*<sup>APG</sup>, *vanish*<sup>APG</sup>

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*haste*



#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 20, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

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

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +10, Escape Artist +11, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +11, Perform (dance) +9, Profession (soldier) +4, Ride +5, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +23; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

**Languages** Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

**SQ** flicker, stealth in motion

**Combat Gear** *potion of barkskin* +2, *potion of lesser restoration*, *potion of shield of faith* +2; **Other Gear** masterwork rapier, masterwork shortbow with 40 arrows, 45 gp, 56 sp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Flicker (Ex)** All shadow fey seem to fade in and out of vision.

They are very hard to focus on unless they wish to be seen.

This allows them to hide in plain sight (as the shadowdancer class ability), and it grants them a deflection bonus to AC equal to their Charisma modifier.

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

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

If the party chases off the ambush and continues up the path, they must succeed at a DC 15 Handle Animal check to get their mounts (if any) up the slope. The gate itself is closed. Zarek, might open the gate, or he might not (see area 1).

If the party approaches again by night (or decides to camp in the forest), a group of three large owlbeats (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) might go after the party's mounts, or the werewolf lord and his pack might try to attack the party's mounts or companion animals.

#### Flying Approach

Attempting to fly into the castle draws a lot of attention from the swarm of bats in the Griffon Tower, from the margoyles (see Gargoyle Tower), from Silverwing in the courtyard (see The Black Oak Bailey), or from griffons nesting in the Margreve Forest around the castle. The clear landing spots are the Overlook Bailey and Lower Bailey. The branches of the Mossberg Oak (the Black Oak in its dormant state) block the Black Oak Bailey. If the PCs get a good vantage point on the castle from afar, read the following.

*You see the castle from a mile away. A flock of black sheep nibbles the grass around the hill itself, keeping a clear field of fire from the castle. A mile or more from the castle is a cluster of tents and houses, but you see little activity at the castle.*

The castle on the hill has three large towers and three courtyards, none of which are all that friendly for a landing. The towers are roofed over, the largest courtyard is filled with a large oak tree, and the highest courtyard is much too small.

Landing a flying mount in the Lower Bailey might be tricky. It will surely draw the attention of the dwarves doing their metalwork there during the day (see Smithing Grounds).

#### Climbing the Walls

The PCs might resort to move conventional means to gain access to the castle by scaling its roughly 20-foot-high walls. As a military fortress, the walls are not designed to aid trespassers; therefore, it requires a successful DC 20 Climb check to make any progress up the surface. The margoyles in area 13 keep a passive watch on the north wall, while Darius Grindstone in the Ivy Tower (area 15) keeps marginal watch over the south wall. At night, Zarek also scans the skies in bat form, looking both for intruders and potential prey.

#### SHADOWS OF THE DEAD

The castle is a place in disrepair, cool even in summer, and (despite its hilltop perch over the Margreve Forest), always full of jet-black shadows that shift and turn at the edge of vision. Except for the smithy and a few chambers lit by soft lamplight, it is entirely dark at night and sound seems muffled there. Its dwarves, a few ghosts, and the shadow fey aided by their shadow mastiff mounts protect the place. The woods outside are home to a pack of black and silver wolves and their werewolf lord.

The castle's restless spirits can be both foes and allies. They appear in two forms and they represent both the castle and its history. The ghosts can appear in both the present and the flashbacks. Those that have a quarrel with the PCs or are just angry at the world may haunt the castle as greater shadows, spectres, or wraiths (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*). Here are a few named ghosts, though there are many others.

#### Marcenzo the Wizard

They may meet Marcenzo's ghost before they see his murder ("Avenge me!" is his cry), and he's gone if the party succeeds in the first flashback). His body was buried beneath the guano in Griffon Tower, an end Evander finds fitting for the man who dealt so much pain to the Stross family.

#### Kranos Stross the Elder

Evander's father walks the halls with a ballista spear through his chest and a bloodied face, as he was cut down at the main gate during the revolt.

#### Crispin Frost

The elven ghost of one of the Stross family's many victims in the dungeons, Crispin knows a little about the shadow fey, muttering about the "Moonlight King" and the "Winter Garden," but he isn't especially helpful.

#### Lionheart the Necrocampus

Lionheart is the ghost of a paladin's warhorse, burnt to death when it was abandoned in its stables during the revolt.

**LIONHEART, HEAVY WARHORSE GHOST CR 4**

XP 1,200

NE Large undead (incorporeal)

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +8**DEFENSE****AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 11 (+2 deflection, +4 Dex, -1 size)**hp** 13 (2d8+4)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits**OFFENSE****Speed** fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Melee** corrupting touch +4 (4d6, **Fort** DC 13 half)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**STATISTICS****Str** —, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 18 (22 vs. trip)**Feats** Endurance, Run<sup>B</sup>**Skills** **Perception** +16, **Stealth** +8; **Racial Modifiers** +8 **Perception**, +8 **Stealth****SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Corrupting Touch (Su)** All ghosts gain this incorporeal touch attack. By passing part of its incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, the ghost inflicts a number of d6s equal to its CR in damage. This damage is not negative energy—it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural again. Creatures immune to magical again are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A Fortitude save halves the damage inflicted.

**Rejuvenation (Su)** In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: the "destroyed" spirit restores itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. The only way to permanently destroy a ghost is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research, and should be created specifically for each different ghost by the GM.

**The Young Princes**

Ghosts of Evander's brothers Drago and Mikad, the young princes haunt the keep, if they perished during the Fall of House Stross flashback. When the PCs first enter the keep (area 47) at night, read the following.

*You see two young boys walk into the hallway ahead of you. Both are small but hollow-eyed. They have nooses around their necks, and their heads are unnaturally tilted. They look toward you and howl in pain, then sink through the floor.*

Their howl has no magical effect, but it does alert all the creatures in the keep and the Stross family that someone is here. One family member may visit. Evander may investigate the disturbance or send his greater shadows to check on the situation. Vasilios may decide to make one of his rare trips

upstairs. Even Zarek may come to see who is trespassing. If they don't appear (because they've been previously defeated or encountered), the shadow fey do.

**SHADOW EVENTS**

The castle is suffused by shadow creatures and tainted by its slow movement into the Shadow Realm, so things often go strangely awry. The following list of minor encounters is meant to creep out the players a bit. Only a few are combat events. Try out one or two of these on the party before the first flashback if you can, to set the idea in their minds that the castle is an actively haunted and "living" place. Note that several of the events resemble cantrips that shadow fey can cast at will. If you like, the party can catch one of the shadow fey haunting them (and may then dismiss the idea that the castle was really haunted). Then, of course, you can follow up with the most dangerous events, some of which are certainly not caused by the scáthsidhe. The events are listed in rough order from least to most threatening.

**Playful Shadows**

One of the PC's shadows begins acting strangely, pointing at things that the PC isn't pointing at, wandering away from its owner, making rude gestures and the like. It can't be turned or dispelled.

**Douse**

All the lights in one section of the castle go out at once, as per the *douse*<sup>DM</sup> spell.

**Silhouettes**

A shadow play on a wall seems to tell a story, showing a castle being built, small creatures (whether they are dwarves or kobolds is unclear) digging in the earth, people coming to the castle and storming the gates, and ending with a shadow-person twitching at the end of a noose.

**Leaf Storm**

A whirlwind of leaves and raindrops catches one of the characters while crossing the Black Oak Bailey. The leaves plaster every inch of the character, making seeing and breathing difficult for a moment. The leaf storm causes no real damage.

**Brief Candles**

All light sources burn out much faster than normal. Torches go dark in a few minutes, lanterns endure just a little longer and all magical light spells flicker and fade within 1 hour at most. This is especially troublesome if the party is currently underground.

**Shadow Thief**

A shadow fey takes material form to steal a minor magical item from one PC such as a potion, scroll, or the like. Attempt a Sleight of Hand check using the shadow fey's +12 skill bonus opposed by the PC's **Perception**.



### Shadow Bite

A character is “bitten” by a shadow while casting a cure or other downtime spellcasting, possibly ruining the spell, as per the shadow *bite*<sup>DM</sup> spell.

### Animals Panic

A long drawn-out howl panics any animal within earshot for 1d4 minutes if it fails a DC 15 Will save. If the castle gate is open, the animal might flee, stumble, and become lame or suffer falling damage on the slippery slope below the castle walls.

### Terror

A terrifying premonition causes one PC to attempt a DC 17 Will save; failure means she is panicked for 1 minute. Even if the save succeeds, the character is shaken for 1 round with strange memories of being enslaved, chained, and worked to death in a black, suffocating mine.

### Elfshot

A barrage of 20 black arrows with white goose feather fletching (Atk +12, 1d8+1 damage each) flies from one of the towers at the party. If the characters seek the archers responsible, no one is there. A PC who succeeds at a DC 40 Survival check finds the earlier presence of shadow fey.

### Black Tapestry

A tapestry in one of the great halls animates and attempts to smother a random victim. If the PCs aren't all in the same location, one can hear the victim scream for help with a successful DC 30 Perception check (DC 40 if the PC is sleeping). When others arrive to help, the tapestry immediately stops moving, making it seem as if the victim was exaggerating.

#### BLACK TAPESTRY, ANIMATED OBJECT CR 9

XP 6,400

N Gargantuan construct

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (-2 Dex, +9 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 109 (9d10+60)

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

**Immune** construct traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (clumsy)

**Melee** 2 slams +19 (2d8+14 plus grab)

**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** constrict 2d8+21

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 38, **Dex** 6, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +27; **CMD** 35 (cannot be tripped)

**SQ** construction points

### Shadow Swarm

Eight greater shadows (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) attack a sentry or watchman at midnight and create a silence effect around his feet. No matter how loudly he shouts, he cannot wake other PCs with his voice alone. The PCs can move through the incorporeal creatures and awaken their comrade with violent shaking, though doing so provokes attacks of opportunity. The eight greater shadows flee shortly afterward.

### Shadow Creature Template

If the party spends too much time in the castle, they also become suffused with shadow. After three consecutive days in the castle, a character must succeed on a DC 10 Will save each night at dusk or gain the shadow creature template (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 4), which causes their alignment to change. The save DC increases by 1 for each previous check. Dwarves who gain the shadow creature template become lawful evil and join the Grimbold clan. Humans who gain the template become neutral evil and join Vasilios Stross in area 40. Elves who gain the template become chaotic evil and join the shadow fey. All others begin to resemble gargoyles and spend a lot of time around the Gargoyle Tower.

### Black Well

The effects of a black *well*<sup>DM</sup> spell appear in the middle of the party's room and begins devouring their life energies.

### The Ghost PC

This shadow event is ideal if one of your players can't attend a session or a character dies. If the party loses a member or one among them suffers grievous wounds, their blood might bind them to the castle. That character is turned into a shadowy ghost (gaining the shadow creature and ghost templates), possibly stuck within the Shadow Realm's reflection of the past. A character who succeeds at a DC 40 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (the planes) check realizes that PC can only be freed by lifting the curse.

Alternatively, at your discretion, a ghost PC can return to the present in the next game session during a flashback or if the group strikes a bargain with Fingerbone or another shadow fey to “lead your friend out of the shadows.” This shadow event isn't meant to irreducibly hamper a party, just to provide a creepy excuse to drop someone out of play for a while.

## SHADOWCRAG GROUNDS

Pilgrims, hunters, merchants, and tinkers occasionally visit the Castle Shadowcrag. Very few permanent inhabitants are commonly seen aboveground. These people include Evander Stross, the “forest warden” and petty noble who rules the castle; Mandergrim and his fellow dwarves; Moira Kinkallen, the cleric of Khors; Silverwing, the white-winged vrock; Zarek Rainmark, the porter and vampire stableboy; and Lóránt, the ranger and forester who hunts the wolves and griffons of the forest. They few others—Darius the aranea and Vasilios, Evander's son—but they keep to themselves.

## AREA 1: GATEHOUSE

*The gatehouse at the top of the hill feels abandoned; the portcullis is almost rusted in place, and weeds grow between flagstones. But the oak gate itself has bright new hinges, and a knocker made out of smooth gray stone is attached to the gate.*

During the day, the gate stands slightly ajar. At night, Zarek Stross acts as an informal porter while the dwarves are secure in their sealed chambers until dawn. He is indifferent towards visitors, and must be persuaded that they are not bandits, followers of Khors (whom he hates), elves, or other fey creatures.

The young boy is not quite what he seems. He is Evander's grandson and Vasilios's son, but 21 years ago a vampire visitor to the castle fed on Zarek and left him for dead. He became a vampire, and works at the stable because the horses sometimes are his best source of blood. The assault on his son drove Vasilios to swear allegiance to the Princes of Pain. They made him a broken soul and gave him power over the vampire who turned his son into an undead horror (see Vasilios Stross on page 9 for the full story).

The dwarves hide in their halls, the kobolds in their mines, so humanoid blood is scarce at night. Whenever humanoid

visitors venture into the castle after dark Zarek's thirst for blood becomes unquenchable. The clever Zarek tries to isolate a lone enemy by sending other visitors off on wild goose chases or tantalizing them with tales about the dwarves' stores of treasures. He then nonchalantly summons his allies, bares his thirsty fangs, and launches his assault. If forced to retreat, he flies back to area 9, where his coffin lies buried beneath nearly a ton of guano.

### ZAREK RAINMARK (STROSS)

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male human vampire commoner 5/rogue 5 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +19

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, **touch** 16, **flat-footed** 20 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 88 (5d8+20 plus 5d6+20); **fast healing** 5

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +12, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *quarterstaff* +11 (1d6+5) or **slam** +9 (1d4+6 plus energy drain)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 18), energy drain (2 levels, DC 18), sneak attack +3d6

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 28

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Mobility, Spring Attack, Power Attack, Stealthy, Step Up, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12 (+17 when jumping), Bluff +16, Climb +11, Disguise +16, Escape Artist +16, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +14, Knowledge (local) +14, Perception +19, Sense Motive +15, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +22, Swim +11, Use Magic Device +11

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Undercommon  
**SQ** change shape (dire bat or wolf, beast shape II), gaseous form, rogue talents (fast stealth, surprise attack), shadowless, spider climb, trapfinding +2

**Combat Gear** divine scroll (CL 12th; *harm, slay living, symbol of fear*); **Other Gear** +1 *quarterstaff*, ring of jumping, +1 studded leather

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Blood Drain (Su)** A vampire can suck blood from a grappled opponent; if the vampire establishes or maintains a pin, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The vampire heals 5 hit points or gains 5 temporary hit points for 1 hour (up to a maximum number of temporary hit points equal to its full normal hit points) each round it drains blood.

## SHADOW REALM

Treat the castle grounds as being a Shadow Realm location, as it stands on the very edge of that territory. The Shadow Realm is a dimly lit dimension that is both coterminous to and coexistent with the Material Plane. It overlaps the Material Plane much as the Ethereal Plane does, so a planar traveler can venture across the Shadow Realm to cover great distances quickly. The Shadow Realm is a world of black and white. Color itself has been bleached from the environment. It is otherwise similar to the Material Plane. Parts of it continually flow onto other planes. As a result, creating a precise map of the plane is next to impossible, despite the presence of landmarks. The Shadow Realm has the following traits.

- Spells with shadow subschool are enhanced in the Shadow Realm. The caster automatically applies the benefits of the Maximize Spell feat to such spells, even if the caster does not have the feat. The spell's level also remains unchanged.
- The Shadow Realm stifles light and flame. A spellcaster attempting to cast a spell with the light or fire descriptor must succeed on a concentration check as if casting the spell on the defensive. If another condition requires the caster to succeed on a concentration check, the DC increases by 5 instead. In addition, halve the range of any light produced by one of these spells.
- Creatures that have fallen into shadow, most notably the shadow fey, can become incorporeal at will.



**Change Shape (Su)** A vampire can use change shape to assume the form of a dire bat or wolf, as *beast shape II*.

**Children of the Night (Su)** Once per day, a vampire can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or 2d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

**Create Spawn (Su)** A vampire can create spawn out of those it slays with blood drain or energy drain, provided that the slain creature is of the same creature type as the vampire's base creature type. The victim rises from death as a vampire in 1d4 days. This vampire is under the command of the vampire that created it, and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. A vampire may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own Hit Dice; any spawn it creates that would exceed this limit become free-willed undead. A vampire may free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

**Dominate (Su)** A vampire can crush a humanoid opponent's will as a standard action. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a Will save or fall instantly under the vampire's influence, as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

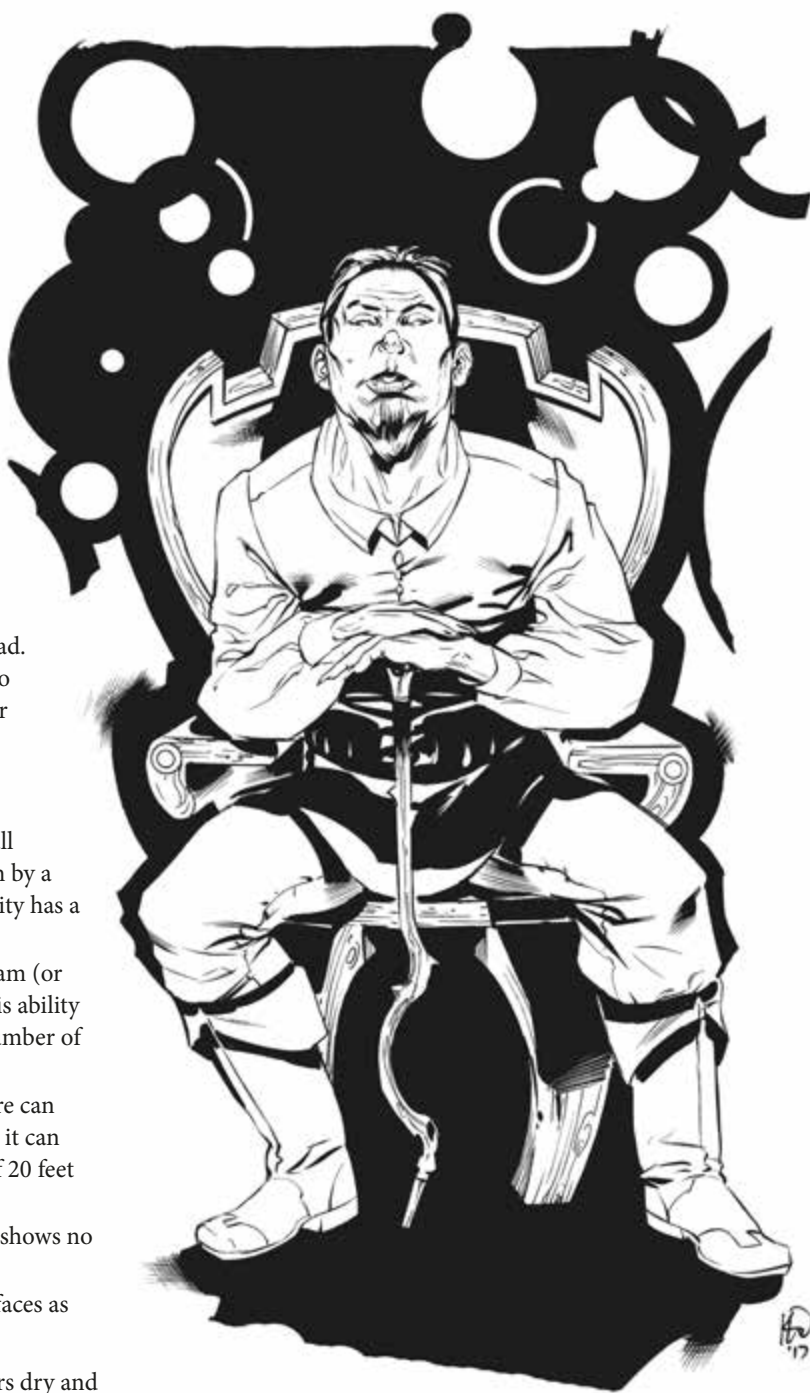
**Energy Drain (Su)** A creature hit by a vampire's slam (or other natural weapon) gains 2 negative levels. This ability only triggers once per round, regardless of the number of attacks a vampire makes.

**Gaseous Form (Su)** As a standard action, a vampire can assume *gaseous form* at will (caster level 5th), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

**Shadowless (Ex)** A vampire casts no shadows and shows no reflection in a mirror.

**Spider Climb (Ex)** A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though under the effects of a spider climb spell.

**Treasure:** Over the years, Zarek bled many travelers dry and robbed them. He now keeps a small, unlocked coffer hidden behind a loose stone in the gatehouse wall. A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check finds the coffer, which contains 376 pp, a *potion of enlarge person*, a bone statue (30 gp), a leather mask of an owl's face (50 gp), an arcane scroll (CL 6th, *detect thoughts*, *gaseous form* and *protection from energy*), another arcane scroll (CL 7th, *glibness* and *modify memory*), and an arcane scroll that contains the shadowsworn spells (CL 8th, *black hands*<sup>DM</sup>, *flickering fate*<sup>DM</sup>, *silent combat*<sup>DM</sup>, and *terror*<sup>DM</sup>).



## DESIGNER'S NOTE

Zarek has levels in commoner rather than aristocrat levels because, frankly, he doesn't have access to the privileges of the aristocracy. The family estate is lost, though the title is still technically his. I suppose a character could have levels in both commoner and aristocrat. It seems odd, but the rules allow it. Unless the party changes things enough that Zarek is freed of the curse, he's a mean and hungry stable boy.



## AREA 2: LOWER BAILEY

During the day, this is often the site of metalwork by the dwarves. At night, the ghost of the necrocampus Lionheart (see page 32) wanders through the stables. Zarek the porter and stable boy receives all guests.

## AREA 3: STABLES AND KENNELS

*Beyond the gate, you see a small courtyard with stables and a long barracks building, all shadowed by the high castle walls. The stable roof is sagging, but the doors are open and the stalls are clean.*

During daylight hours, add the following.

*A young boy of perhaps 13 or 14 stands just within the stable shadows, carefully picking stones out of a pony's hoof.*

The shadow mastiffs bed down here during the day. The optional necrocampus (see page 32) encounter may occur here as well.

## AREA 4: SMITHING GROUNDS

*The ring of hammers on anvils is unmistakable. Two smiths work metal in a cleared area along the castle wall, each with two apprentices. One assistant pumps bellows to keep the fire hot, the second fetches tools, holds the tongs and stokes the fire with coals. The smiths are dwarves, and though they work in the shady side of the courtyard, they are covered in sweat and ashes, turning their skin mottled gray. They seem slightly hazy or translucent.*

The dwarves—Mandergrim and his followers—work metal near the gate during daylight hours. They are not interested in idle chatter; if the PCs are not there to give them gold for metalwork, they are unfriendly until they finish their work (at sunset, when they retreat to their protected halls—see area 44).

During the day, their inventory of exotic skymetal weapons and armor include an adamantite light mace, a horacalcum\* dagger, an inubrix\* hand axe, a noqual\* heavy shield, and a cold siccattite\* dwarven waraxe. They also have an assortment of weapons and armor crafted from normal materials. The dwarves fear no thieves or visitors, so they keep the weapons on display at all times, confident in the castle's reputation for being haunted. See Pathfinder Adventure Path #61: Shards of Sin for more information about the materials marked with an asterisk (\*).

If a PC tries to steal one of the items, a castle ghost shouts, "Curse you! Thieves! The master shall hear of this! Thieves!" The ruckus attracts Zarek's attention, as well as the attention of the shadow fey rider and shadow mastiffs patrolling the outer grounds (see Nighttime Approach on page 31) and any other creature within earshot of the booming voice.

## AREA 5: BARRACKS

*This room contains thirty empty bunks, dirty and dusty. The window shutters are all closed.*

If the party has successfully completed the Fall of House Stross flashback, add the following detail.



*The room is inhabited, despite the sense of neglect. Two of the bunks are covered with sheets and blankets, and you see the white marks that show the whetstone has recently been used to sharpen... something.*

There is no significant treasure. If the flashback was successful, the six soldiers assigned to guard the castle (use the stats for guards from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*) watch over it for the Free City. They think the place is “haunted and creepy.” They have no valuable information. They spend their days at the gate and their nights in deep snoring slumber. Only Zarek keeps watch during darkness, because “the City doesn’t pay enough for that.”

#### AREA 6: THE BLACK OAK BAILEY

*The courtyard is full of fallen leaves heaped in moldering piles. Moss covers the shaded southern wall, and the windows are too dirty to see through. Two of the buildings here are clearly small shrines, with stained glass windows and carvings of the gods and saints over their doors. An enormous oak tree dominates the center of the courtyard, standing at least 70 feet tall and shading the entire area. The bark is old and gnarled, the leaves are dark and sickly, and the lower branches were hacked off years ago, but the tree seems alive. Perching high in the tree’s branches is a large white birdman. Its head is stuck under its wing, sleeping.*

The central courtyard would be a grand, inviting gathering place if it weren’t so overshadowed by its enormous oak, which makes the place gloomy. The branches of the Mossberg Oak (the Black Oak’s dormant state) make flying into or out of the courtyard difficult. A flying creature must succeed at a DC 35 Fly check or take 3d6 points of slashing damage from the thick branches. A creature atop a flying mount must also succeed at a DC 35 Ride check to avoid falling off the mount. On a failed check, the rider takes the slashing damage from the branches noted above, as well as falling damage. If the PCs try to chop down or otherwise destroy the oak, the tree immediately repairs any physical damage dealt to it and remains rooted to the spot. This foolish act also summons 1d4 shadow fey to the tree’s defense.

Evander, Zarek, and Vasilios use the locale to hold audiences with strangers. The shadow fey often hide in the nooks and crannies here. Moira may also wander the courtyard searching for her “lost shrine.” Read the following if she appears, otherwise skip ahead to Speaking with Silverwing.

*You see a woman picking up oak leaves and putting them in her hair. Her clothing is ragged, but she wears a holy symbol of Khors around her neck. She seems to be muttering something to herself and kicking at leaves.*

This is Moira, a lawful good priestess of Khors and Evander’s daughter. If approached, she seems fearful of any dwarves or elves in the party. Her initial attitude is unfriendly (due to fear, not hostility). If she can be won over with a successful Diplomacy check or other means of persuasion, she’s happy to

tell the party all about the “black fey” and the “shadow stealers” who haunt the castle and have “stolen my shrine.” She is bit unhinged but means well. A *heal* spell restores her sanity.

#### SPEAKING WITH SILVERWING

The “birdman” is Silverwing, a redeemed vrock and the custodian of the castle’s curse. He doesn’t wake until the party either experiences the first flashback or physically touches him; doing so requires a PC to fly up to him or climb 50 feet up the tree (DC 15 Climb check).

Silverwing is both a mentor and a bit of a riddle. As a redeemed vrock, he oozes a strange, even chirpy kind of friendliness among all the castle’s shadows and gloom. With his huge claws and sharp beak, he looks much fiercer than he is. A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Knowledge (planes) recognizes him as an albino vrock, a demon of the Abyss. But his alignment detects as moderately good, thanks to a magical item that reversed his fortunes. He is now a devoted servant of Khors, sworn to oppose the shadow fey and their goddess. Silverwing watches over the castle to make sure that the Stross have some hope of keeping it. He tried to help Evander, but has been frequently rebuffed. The advice he offers to the party is simple, and comes in very small doses. For each successful DC 15 Diplomacy check, the party learns one of the following tiny seeds of wisdom (and paladins get one for free). He imparts one piece of information to a character that succeeds at the Diplomacy check no more than once every 2d6 hours.

- “Shadows shift but always return. Only hope is eternal.”
- “The shining shadow sword is broken.”
- “The shining shadow sword cannot be repaired by smith or anvil.”
- “Dark mysteries are shrouded in silver.”
- “The mines, the mines, seek the dragon there.”
- “You must kill the heart of the curse or the Black Prince will come.”
- “No one knows where the heart of the curse beats its black pulse.”
- “The shadow-dancing children are always with you.”
- “Some shadows dance alone. Some dance with packs of friends.”
- “Wolves, dogs, demons, and kobolds are not shadows at all. Dwarves might be.”
- “When the Black Prince comes, the castle will go.”
- “Who can catch a shadow? What might bind it?”
- “Digging at the roots will not unearth a seed.”
- “Shadows change, and some people’s hearts grow ever brighter.”
- “Push back the night for red roses to bloom.”

Avoid giving the players any clues that are too helpful from Silverwing, or they won’t feel any sense of accomplishment from putting it together themselves.

**SILVERWING****CR 10****XP 12,800**Holy vrock (*Advanced Bestiary*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

LG Large outsider (lawful, good, extraplanar)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +29**Aura** grace (30 ft.)**DEFENSE****AC** 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)**hp** 130 (9d10+81)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7; +2 resistance vs. evil**Defensive Abilities** negative energy resistance, protection from evil; **DR** 5/evil; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 20**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)**Melee** 2 claws +14 (2d6+6 plus 1d6 holy), bite +14 (1d8+6 plus 1d6 holy), 2 talons +14 (1d6+6 plus 1d6 holy)**Special Attacks** dance of ruin, holy spellcasting, sacredness, spores, stunning screech**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th)At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *telekinesis* (DC 18)1/day—*heroism*, *mirror image*, *summon* (level 3, 1 vrock 35%)**STATISTICS****Str** 23, **Dex** 17, **Con** 29, **Int** 14, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29**Feats** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack**Skills** Fly +13, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (planes) +14, Perception +29, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +11, Survival +17**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Common, telepathy 100 ft.**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Dance of Ruin (Su)** A vrock can dance and chant as a full-round action. At the end of 3 rounds, a crackling wave of energy explodes from the vrock, dealing 5d6 points of electricity damage to all creatures within 100 feet. A DC 19 Reflex save halves this damage. For each additional vrock that joins in the dance, the damage increases by 5d6 and the DC to avoid the effect increases by 1, to a maximum of 20d6 when four or more vrocks are dancing (the DC continues to increase with additional vrocks, but the damage does not). The dance immediately ends and must be started anew if any of the participating vrocks is slain, stunned, or otherwise prevented from dancing. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Grace (Su)** Every nongood creature within 30 feet of a holy creature automatically takes a -1 penalty on all attack rolls, checks, and saves. Grace is a mind-affecting effect.

**Holy Body (Su)** A holy creature gains double the normal amount of healing from positive energy. Thus, if a *cure light wounds* spell would normally restore 7 hit points, a holy creature would instead regain 14 hit points.



**Holy Spellcasting (Su)** A holy creature's effective caster level for spells and spell-like abilities from the healing subschool and those with the good or light descriptor increases by 1. This benefit stacks with itself, so the holy creature's effective caster level for a spell with both good and light descriptors increases by 2.

**Negative Energy Resistance (Su)** When a holy creature is struck by an attack using negative energy (e.g. energy drain, ability damage or drain) or hit point damage such as that from an inflict spell, the holy creature can attempt a level check (1d20 + total HD) against a DC equal to 11 + the attacking creature's total Hit Dice. If the level check succeeds, the negative energy attack is canceled out in a bright flash. If the negative energy attack was dealt by a melee or melee touch attack, the creature that delivered it takes 2d6 points of damage.

**Protection from Evil (Su)** A holy creature gains a +2 deflection bonus to AC and a +2 resistance bonus on saves against attacks by evil creatures. Furthermore, it is immune to any attempt by an evil creature to possess, charm, or influence it.



**Sacredness (Su)** Each of a holy creature's melee attacks with a natural or manufactured weapon deals +1d6 points of holy damage against creatures of evil alignment. All of its natural and manufactured weapons are treated as good-aligned for overcoming damage reduction.

**Spores (Ex)** A vrook can release a cloud of spores from its body once every 3 rounds as a free action. Adjacent creatures take 1d8 points of damage from the spores, plus 1d4 points of damage per round for 10 rounds as the spores grow into thick green vines. Although ugly, the vines are harmless and wither away in 1d4 days if not shaved off before then. The spores can be destroyed by casting *bleed* on the affected creatures or by sprinkling them with holy water. This attack can also be halted by effects that remove or provide immunity to disease.

**Stunning Screech (Su)** Once per hour, a vrook can emit a shrill screech. All creatures except demons within a 30-foot-radius spread must succeed on a DC 22 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

#### AREA 7: THE ABUNDANT CHAPEL OF SAINT FLORA

*Light emanates from inside the chapel, which boasts four representations of the Harvest Goddess: a young girl sowing the spring crops, and three buxom matrons holding summer cherries and pears, holding the harvest wheat, and finally holding up her hands. Her hands in this fourth pose are positioned to hold offerings of grain sheaves, but they are empty. The statues are simple painted wood, well-carved but probably not valuable. Several rows of pews are positioned within the statues' perimeter.*

The harvest goddess and one of her saints are depicted here. The shrine is not a place of valuables. A successful DC 10 Appraise check confirms the statues are simple peasant work.

Despite outward appearances, the shrine is not abandoned. The castle's convergence with the Shadow Realm attracted the interest of Pharretzz, a shadow demon. The diabolical, incorporeal outsider is completely merged with the statue closest to the entrance. In order to draw living creatures closer to the shrine, the clever outsider casts *light* within the shrine in an effort to prompt passersby to investigate the area. The demon can sense the presence of creatures that pass within 5 feet of the statue, and when he does, he uses his *magic jar* spell-like ability to possess that creature. The shadow demon isn't interested in bringing Castle Shadowcrag into the Shadow Realm. The monster's sole motivation is to spread discord and chaos within the castle. The dwarves, the Stross family, and the shadow fey abide by a shaky yet longstanding truce with the chaotic monster. Visitors, on the other hand, are fair game. Likewise, Pharretzz attacks Silverwing

on sight, though he always ends up fleeing from the superior foe. When forced to retreat, Pharretzz passes through the castle walls and heads for the nearby silver mines.

#### PHARRETTZ

CR 9

XP 9,600

Shadow demon cleric creature (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Monster Codex*)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, extraplanar, incorporeal)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 59 (7d10+21)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal; **DR** 10/cold iron or good;

**Immune** cold, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, fire 10; **SR** 17

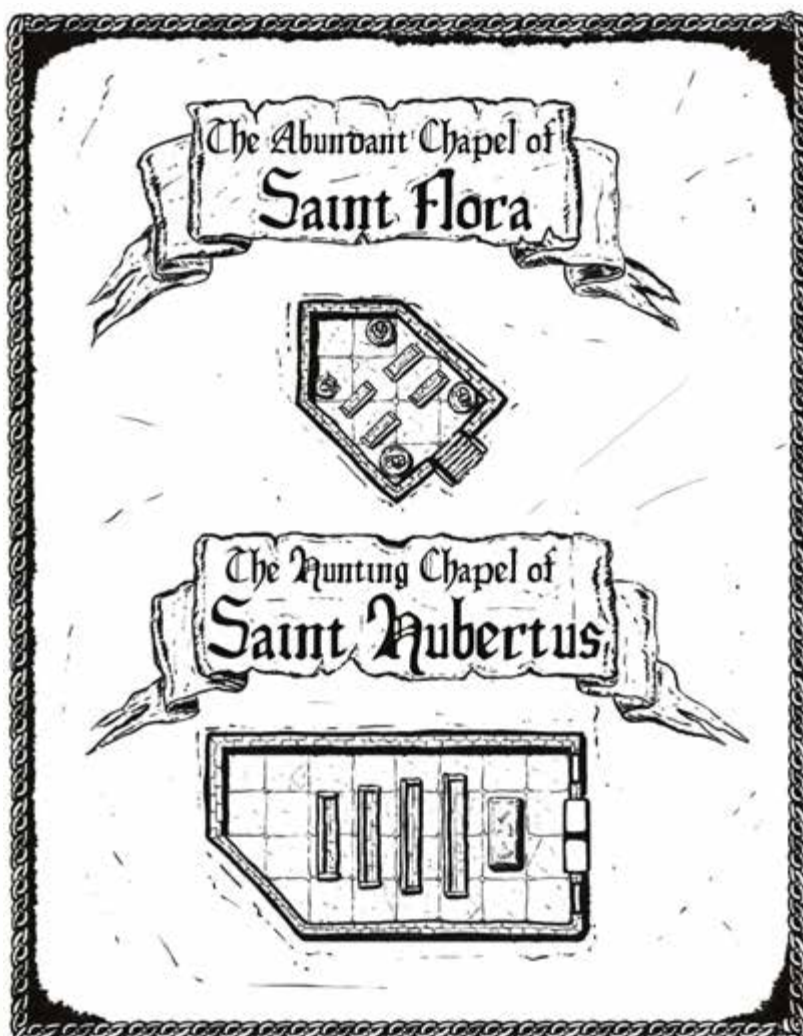
**Weaknesses** sunlight powerlessness

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 40 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** 2 claws +11 touch (1d6 plus 1d6 cold), bite +11 touch (1d8 plus 1d6 cold)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 7/day (DC 16, 3d6), pounce, sprint, shadow blend



### Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *fear* (DC 18), *greater teleport* (self only), *telekinesis* (DC 19)

3/day—*shadow conjuration* (DC 18), *shadow evocation* (DC 19)

1/day—*magic jar*, *summon* (level 3, 1 shadow demon 50%)

### Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +11)

3rd—*prayer*

2nd—*darkness*, *spiritual weapon*

1st—*divine favor*, *protection from good*

0—*create water*, *light*

### STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25

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

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

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, telepathy 100 ft.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Sprint (Ex)** Once per minute, a shadow demon increases its fly speed to 240 feet for 1 round.

**Shadow Blend (Su)** During any conditions other than bright light, a shadow demon can disappear into the shadows as a move action, effectively becoming invisible. Artificial illumination or light spells of 2nd level or lower do not negate this ability.

**Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex)** A shadow demon is utterly powerless in bright light or natural sunlight and flees from it. A shadow demon caught in such light cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action. A shadow demon that is possessing a creature suing magic jar is not harmed by sunlight, but if it struck by a sunbeam or sunray spell while possessing a creature, the shadow demon is driven out of its host automatically.

## AREA 8: THE HUNTING CHAPEL OF SAINT HUBERTUS

*The chapel is cold and neglected, the altar littered with leaves and bones. Two large stained glass windows are set beside the doors: one shows the Hunter God carrying a boar spear, the other shows a leaping deer, a boar, and a hidden fox. Roses twine along the edge of the glasswork. Four rows of pews face the altar.*

The Forest God or God of Hunters is worshipped here, though rarely, by Lóránt, the werewolf lord. The god demands flesh and blood as offerings. The animals sometimes left here are Lóránt's prey, taken from the forest. Anyone examining an offering closely and succeeds at a DC 20 Heal or Knowledge (nature) check notices that the animals have been killed with fangs rather than spears or arrows.

A stained glass golem attacks if the party enters the chapel without showing a Stross family crest or a holy symbol of the saint. In most likelihood, it also surprises the unwary adventurers.

## ADVANCED STAINED GLASS GOLEM

CR 9

XP 6,400

*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*

N Large construct

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 10, flat-footed 24 (+1 Dex, +15 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 96 (12d10+30)

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

**Defensive Abilities** reflect spells; **DR** 5/ adamantine; **Immune** magic, construct traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +18 (2d8+7 plus bleed)

**Special Attacks** bleed (1d8), dazzling brightness

### STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 31

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Dazzling Brightness (Ex)** A glass golem in an area of bright light dazzles any creature within 30 feet that sees it (a successful Fortitude DC 16 negates). Once a creature makes its save against this ability, it is immune to that golem's brightness for 24 hours. The DC is Constitution-based.

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

- A shatter spell damages a glass golem as if it were a crystalline creature.
- A keen edge spell affects all of a glass golem's slam attacks as if they were slashing weapons.
- A magical attack that deals cold damage slows a glass golem (as the slow spell) for 3 rounds (no saving throw).
- A magical attack that deals fire damage ends any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. A glass golem gets no saving throw against fire effects.

**Reflect Spells (Ex)** As a free action once every 1d4 rounds, a glass golem can align its internal structure to enhance its resistance to magic for 1 round. During this time, the golem reflects spells (even spells that function differently against the golem as described in its immune to magic ability) as if under the effect of a *spell turning* spell.

**Treasure:** The only treasure here is a collection of 10 sunrods and a single everburning torch.

## AREA 9: GRIFFON TOWER

Once the home of hunting griffons for the family, this tower is now abandoned to a flock of bats. In a final indignity, Evander and the Grimbold dwarves ignominiously disposed of Marcenzo's corpse in chest-deep bat excrement. At this point, all that remains of the wizard are his skull (missing



its mandible), leg bones, and scattered ribs. It takes a successful DC 25 Perception check to locate any part of his skeletal remains. Naturally, Marcenzo's ghost is frequently encountered here. Surprisingly, he and Zarek both see themselves as victims of the Stross and thus enjoy a cordial, bordering on friendly relationship.

Zarek's coffin is also buried here under five feet of bat guano, and can be found with a successful DC 35 Perception check. A character can dig out the coffin by removing 1,000 pounds of the waste. In 1 minute, a character using only his hands can clear debris equal to five times his heavy load limit. Digging out the tower is always dangerous, even in the daytime, as the tower is dark enough that no direct sunlight shines on the floor. If Zarek hears digging, he'll try to attack as silently as possible, picking off the guards with *dominate* and using the flock of bats to keep his identity hidden. Visibility is reduced to 5 feet inside the swarm.

#### AREA 10: KHOR'S SHRINE

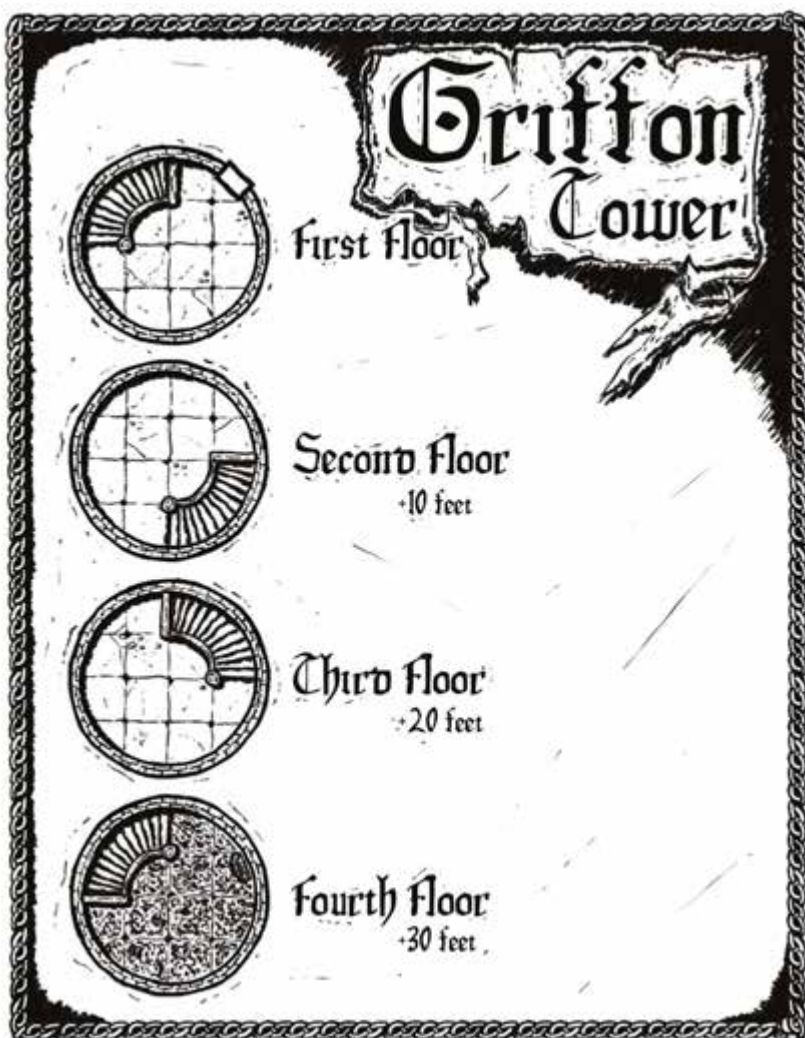
This small building only becomes visible when the Bridge at Oros flashback has been successfully completed. Adjust the description as necessary if the PCs were not in area 6 prior to completing that flashback.

The next time the PCs enter the shrine courtyard, they immediately see a golden door leading into a small building that they never saw before. The door shines with buttery yellow light, and they see a chariot carved over the lintel—one of the signs of Khors, the Sun God. It looks like a shrine; there is even a round stained glass window over the door.

If the PCs have not yet met Moira, omit the following reference about the babbling woman. Assuming the party investigates, read or paraphrase the following.

*Inside, the shrine is well lit by magical light, and the stained glass window over the door throws a perfect beam of sunlight onto the white marble altar. You see a worshipper here, the babbling woman from the courtyard. She is wearing clean clothes, with an over robe of cloth-of-gold, and her hair is more neatly set. She stands up straight at the altar, arms lifted, and her voice clear and steady. Four chairs carved from exquisite wood face the altar.*

The party has both released Khor's shrine from the shadows of the past (Evander's mother paid to build it when her daughter converted) and has pulled the castle back from the Shadow Realm. The shrine courtyard is a little brighter, and the shrine interior is hallowed ground, safe from any attack by shadow mastiffs, scáthsidhe, or the castle shadows. The hallowed ground even provides some possible shelter from the Black Oak (see Finale on page 68) by granting the benefits of the hallow spell to those within the shrine. The shrine's stone



walls have a hardness of 8 and 180 hit points, so it would take the Black Oak at least several rounds to tear it apart to reach characters hiding inside of it. If the party speaks with Moira, she seems puzzled (and mildly offended) to hear that the party thought her mad. In this coherent state, she is happy to aid champions of good in their time of need by healing their wounds or even raising a deceased character. The widow of the minor knight Sir Darragh Kinkellan, she has lived happily at the castle with her father, though her mad brother Vasilios is a constant worry.

#### MOIRA KINKELLAN

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female human Cleric of Khors 9

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses Perception +2

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +3 shield)

hp 53 (9d8+9)

Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +8

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 light mace +10/+5 (1d6+4)

**Special Attacks** channel positive energy 7/day (DC 16, 4d6 [+9 vs. undead])

**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +15) 5/day—*bleeding touch* (1d6)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 9th; concentration +15)

5th—*flame strike*<sup>D</sup> (DC 17), *raise dead*

4th—*death ward*<sup>D</sup>, *discern lies* (DC 16), *poison* (DC 16)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 15), *searing light*<sup>D</sup>, *speak with dead*, *summon monster III*

2nd—*aid*, *death knell*<sup>D</sup> (DC 14), *hold person* (DC 14), *owl's wisdom*, *sound burst*, *spiritual weapon*

1st—*cause fear*<sup>D</sup> (DC 13), *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 13), *endure elements*, *shield of faith*, *summon monster I*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *mending*, *read magic*

<sup>D</sup> Domain spell; **Domains** Death, Sun

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 10, **Con** 13, **Int** 13, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Combat Casting, Extra Channel, Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Selective Channeling, Turn Undead



**Skills** Diplomacy +11, Heal +14, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +2, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +8

**Languages** Common, Undercommon

**SQ** aura

**Combat Gear** *necklace of fireballs, type II*; **Other Gear** +1 *light mace*, +3 *leather*, +1 *heavy steel shield*, *potion of lesser restoration*, gold statue of Khors worth 250 gp, holy symbol, 2 vials of holy water, 145 gp, 34 pp, 60 sp

#### AREA 11: OVERLOOK BAILEY

*This small courtyard is sandwiched between a formidable keep, a dilapidated shrine, and another stone structure.*

This is the only clear landing spot for flying creatures. It sees little traffic other than the dwarves traveling from their hall to the smithing grounds.

#### AREA 12: THE WINTER GARDEN

The rose garden here is only accessible by passing through the Overlook Bailey (area 11). The garden is overgrown and unkempt and thus is treated as difficult terrain. The garden grows over weathered headstones; a number of bones and bodies are buried here (largely servants of the Stross family). If the PCs succeeded at the Bridge at Oros flashback, Bellanca is also interred beneath a marvelous stone monument that depicts her in her radiant youth. The roses are mystically connected to the Shadow Realm. When the castle is tugged deeper into shadow, the roses turn white and then black. When the curse is partially lifted, the roses become more and more colorful, as described in Table 2-2.

#### AREA 13: MARGOYLE TOWER

The castle's margoyles are a sly bunch that hunts at night, when they can be sure that no one is coming to their nesting grounds. During the day, they remain quiet and keep away from the dwarves. The two groups clashed before, and the dwarves cut the margoyle numbers in half. The margoyles steal griffon eggs and attack lone travelers in the Margreve Forest. They are a dim, simple gang that loves to fight. They enjoy inflicting pain, bragging of their triumphs, and bemoaning their losses. The shadow curse makes them a bit morose, even by margoyle standards. Their tall, outer tower is in good repair.

If harassed or threatened, the margoyles attempt to surprise their foes and deal extra damage with the Power Attack feat. They remain airborne whenever possible in order to gain an attack roll bonus for occupying higher ground and also make it easier to escape. When their numbers are halved, the survivors retreat to the tower interior, which grants them full cover against attacks.



**GARGOYLE, MARGOYLE (5)****CR 5****XP 1,600 each***Tome of Horrors Complete*

CE Medium monstrous humanoid (earth)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)**hp** 63 (6d10+24 plus 6)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6**DR** 10/magic**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)**Melee** 2 claws +9 (1d6+3), bite +9 (1d6+3), gore +9 (1d6+3)**STATISTICS****Str** 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 19, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21**Feats** Power Attack, Skill Focus (Fly), Toughness**Skills** Fly +14, Perception +10, Stealth +10 (+16 stony environs), Survival +7**Languages** Common, Terran**SQ** freeze**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Freeze (Ex)** A margoyle can hold itself so still it appears to be a statue. A margoyle that uses freeze can take 20 on its Stealth check to hide in plain sight as a stone statue.

**AREA 14: THE WIZARD'S WELL**

The 50-foot-deep well here has clear, sweet water and a functional rope, hoist, and bucket that the Grimbold dwarves use every day. Because the well shaft walls are damp, a successful DC 25 Climb check is required to scale up and down the surface. There's a hidden door at the bottom of the well, just above water level, which can be spotted with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The passage beyond the door opens in area 45.

**AREA 15: THE IVY TOWER**

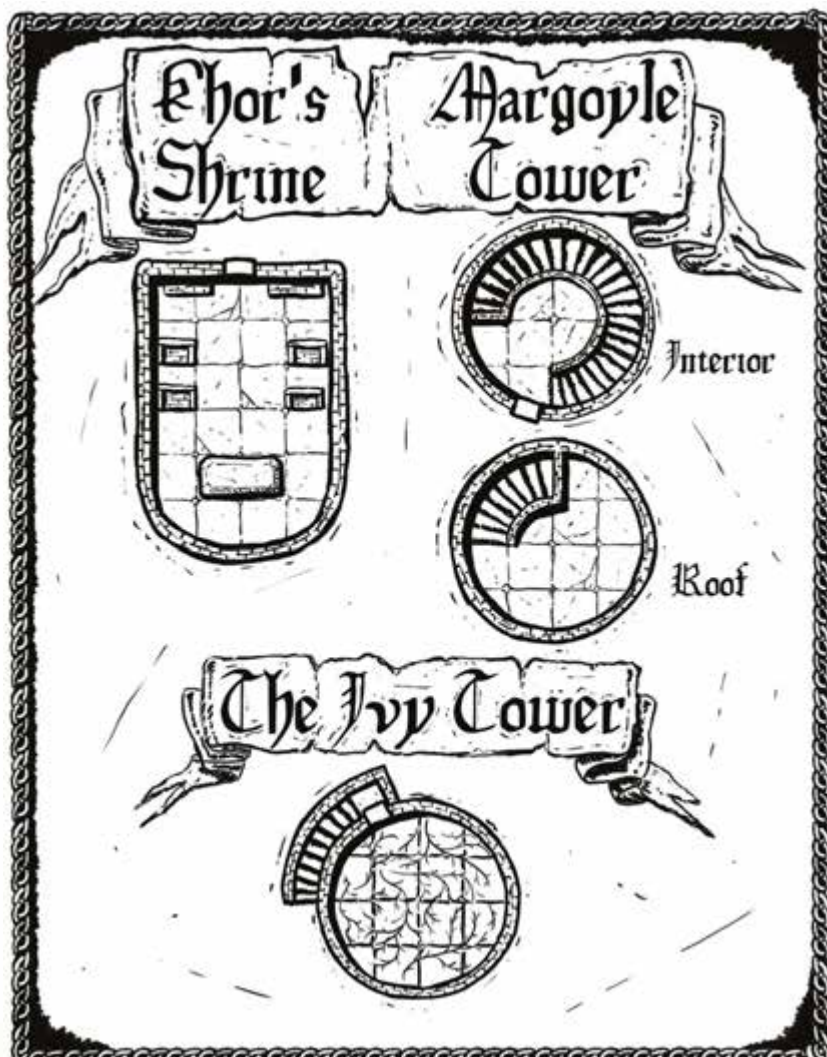
The ivy tower is covered with thick growths of ivy all year round. Even in winter, the dry brown leaves seem to cling to the vines until displaced by new shoots in the spring. Read the following when the party enters.

*The tower interior has no separate floors—the wooden joists and planks burned out, rotted away, or collapsed many years ago. Instead, the interior is a single chamber filled with hundreds or thousands of pale white roots or tendrils; it seems that the heavy ivy is holding this tower together. The only place without the tendrils is a set of spiral stairs attached to the exterior wall and spiraling up.*

The tower is the home of Darius Grindstone, an honored member of the Grimbold clan and a skilled aranea sorcerer. He helps the dwarven smiths enchant the items they create at the forge, and he identifies magical metals or items brought to them. While the tower is filled with roots and tendrils of ivy, as the stairs wind up and up, webs are woven into those tendrils, which is noticeable with a successful DC 35 Perception check to notice the transition.

*At the very top of the stairs is a door made of woven roots, a strangely pulsing and unnatural sort of growth that looks like some kind of tumor. The roots are inscribed with thin black letters shaped like crescents.*

Darius hates visitors. Forcing the door open requires a successful DC 13 Strength check. To reinforce his disdain for visitors, the cunning sorcerer inlaid a magical trap within the writing. Any character that reads the letters on the door unleashes its explosive effects.



**EXPLOSIVE RUNES TRAP****CR 4****XP 1,200****Type** magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable** DC 28**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** none**Effect** spell effect (*explosive runes*; CL 10th; DC 16 Reflex save half [see spell]); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-foot-radius burst)

The door is positioned 35 feet above the ground. As the description suggests, the tower's interior is devoid of any solid floor. Characters who can fly, levitate, and the like have no problem getting around the tower. Creatures that cannot employ an alternative means of locomotion must stand at the entrance or risk falling to the bottom of the tower. Darius and the spiders scurry along the walls and any remaining scraps of floor joists that still cling to the walls. When the party enters, he attacks, sending his six spider minions to hold the line while he casts *black tentacles* (white ones, in his case) and hideous laughter. He climbs out any window and shimmies down the outside wall of the tower to escape when he is heavily wounded.

**DARIUS GRINDSTONE****CR 9****XP 6,400**Male aranea sorcerer 5 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*)

N Medium magical beast (shapechanger)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +14**DEFENSE****AC** 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +3 natural)**hp** 64 (5d10+10 plus 5d6+10)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8**OFFENSE****Speed** 50 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** bite +10 (1d6 plus poison)**Special Attacks** web (+10 ranged, DC 17, hp 10)**Bloodline Spell-Like Ability** (CL 10th; concentration +17)6/day—*laughing touch***Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 10th; concentration +17)5th (3/day)—*mind fog* (DC 20)4th (5/day)—*black tentacles*, *confusion* (DC 19), *poison*3rd (7/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 18), *fly*, *hold person* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 18)2nd (7/day)—*blur*, *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *web* (DC 15)1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *entangle* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *silent image* (DC 14), *sleep* (DC 16)0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 13), *ghost sound* (DC 13), *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *resistance***Bloodline** fey**STATISTICS****Str** 11, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 17**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20**Feats** Combat Casting, Enlarge Spell, Eschew Materials<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +9 (+17 when jumping), Climb +14, Escape Artist +13, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +14, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +9; Racial Modifiers +2 Acrobatics, +2 Perception**Languages** Common, Sylvan**SQ** bloodline arcana (when Darius casts a spell of the compulsion subschool, increase the spell's DC by +2), change shape (humanoid; *alter self*), fleeting glance (10 rounds/day), woodland stride**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Change Shape** (Su) An aranea can take the form of a Small or Medium humanoid or spider-humanoid hybrid. In humanoid form, an aranea cannot use its bite, web, or poison. In spider-humanoid hybrid form, an aranea looks like a humanoid with spidery fangs and spinnerets, with the latter typically located at the small of its back. The aranea retains its bite attacks,





webs, and poison in this form, and can wield weapons and wear armor. When in humanoid or hybrid form, an aranea's speed is 30 feet and it has no climb speed.

**Poison (Ex)** Bite—*injury*; *save* Fort DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Strength; *cure* 1 save.

#### ADVANCED GIANT SPIDERS (6)

CR 2

XP 600 each

*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*

N Medium vermin

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.;

**Perception** +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 13 (+1 armor, +5 Dex, +2 natural)  
**hp** 22 each (3d8+9)

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

**Immune** mind-affecting effects

#### OFFENSE

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

**Melee** bite +4 (1d6+2 plus poison)

**Special Attack** web (+7 ranged, DC 14, hp 4)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 19, **Con** 16, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19 (31 vs. trip)

**Skills** Climb +18, **Perception** +6 (+10 in webs), **Stealth** +9 (+13 in webs); **Racial Modifiers** +4 **Perception**, +4 **Stealth** (+8 in webs), +16 climb

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison (Ex)** Bite—*injury*; *save* Fort DC 16; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Strength damage; *cure* 1 save.

### FIRE IN THE TOWER

Any fire started in the Ivy Tower inevitably burns it to the ground. There's a lot of wood in that ivy, and the leaves and tendrils burn up very quickly. Darius gets out immediately; others who stay in the smoke and fire take 1d6 points of fire damage per round.

Because it is difficult to see through the smoke and flames, creatures attempting to negotiate the winding stairs to escape must succeed on a DC 20 Acrobatics check or risk falling. If the character moves at half speed, the DC decreases to 15. Characters that can see through smoke can move normally. Setting a fire here, accidentally or intentionally, triggers the Fall of House Stross flashback if the PCs haven't experienced it already.

#### AREA 16: BRANDOR'S KEEP

This large keep is the oldest part of the castle, built by the kobold King Brandorik, and updated since then. Its outer walls are 2-1/2-foot-thick masonry walls. Interior walls are 3-inch-thick stone walls, thus accounting for the placement of support columns on each level. Its interior doors are made from strong wood. None of them are locked or stuck unless otherwise noted in the room's description. The spiral staircases connect all of the floors with the exception that the northwest staircase also descends 10 feet into the cellar beneath the castle. The original first floor was designed

for kobolds, but over the years the Stross family renovated the keep adding an additional three floors to the original structure, while making them more spacious for human accommodations. The first floor is only 6 feet high, while the ceilings on the remaining floors are 10 feet high.

#### AREA 17: ENTRY HALL

The door to the keep is kept shut; however it is unlocked and opens with practically no effort. In the castle's heyday, servants would store coats and other personal belongings in the two niches adjacent to the entrance, but the foyer is now empty and undecorated. The door to the adjoining chamber is kept ajar.

#### AREA 18: GREAT HALL

*This is a large hall with enormous rafters overhead, two stone hearths at opposite ends of the room, and many once-glorious tapestries on the walls, now torn and rotted. There are a few benches and a dais, but no sign of the chair at the head of the table atop the dais. A shredded tapestry covers a portion of the table and dais.*

This room was thoroughly looted, and the throne, silver, tableware, and even chairs were all taken long ago. The benches and tables were too big to take away, as were the tapestries. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Appraise check notices that one much smaller silk tapestry, the one resting upon the dais, is still intact. It is clear after careful cleaning (which is part of the skill check), the tapestry depicts a shrine to Khors. Its portrayal of a holy site may account for the looters' decision to leave the valuable artwork behind them. A character who visited area 6 and succeeds on a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) realizes that the background depicted in the tapestry indicates a shrine was intended to be built at that locale. If the characters already succeeded at the Bridge at Oros flashback, a PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check identifies area 10 as the tapestry's subject. Sun symbols are skillfully woven into the edges of the tapestry with gold and copper thread, and the whole tapestry is worth at 1,400 gp.

The spiral staircases in the northwest and northeast corners of the great hall access all three upper floors, while the stairwell in the northwest corner also descends 10 feet into the cellar.

#### AREA 19: THE BLUE ROOM

*The room is decorated with deep blues, from leathery wallpaper to a ceiling painted dark night blue with scatterings of stars and comets. The single window is set high in the wall. Three magical lights burn in wall sconces, though their light seems dim and flickering. The room's chairs and table seem well used, upholstered in worn gray leather. A dried rose sits in a small red vase on the table. There is a bed tightly packed into a far corner. You get the uneasy feeling that you are being watched by the paintings on the wall, each of them showing a man in armor, with his face slashed by a knife that ruined the canvas.*

The Blue Room is the residence of Fingerbone, the shadow fey caretaker of the curse who oversees the Stross family's

slow descent into despair. At the same time, he does not want their complete destruction or the extinction of the bloodline, as then he would have no one left to taunt and mock. This caretaker is the fourth of the Four Deaths, now retired from mercenary life. In the default history of the castle, Fingerbone survived the battle of the Oros Bridge, the castle siege, and many other moments of the Stross family's decline (see the Bridge at Oros flashback on page 18 for his stats). If the PCs killed him during that flashback, use one of the other Four Deaths instead.

Fingerbone uses his +23 Stealth skill bonus to attempt to hide if he hears the party approach, and wait for them to investigate the room and leave. If the party spots him despite this, he uses his hide in plain sight ability to disappear again the following round. Fingerbone then creates a *major image* of a talking white raven to speak through.

*A white raven flies in through the window and perches on the back of a nearby chair. It squawks, "Leave the Rosehaven, leave the castle, or the curse will eat your souls, too! Fly! The curse is coming!" Its wings flutter and dust stirs on the tabletop*

If the party doesn't immediately leave, Fingerbone tries to creep up behind one of them and delivers a touch of idiocy. The shadow fey sorcerer does not otherwise relish a fight alone against the PCs, so he escapes the fray by any means possible, including resorting to using his spell-like abilities to disappear or simply become incorporeal and fly through the window and into the night. His bat familiar Phalanges is in another room.

It can follow the party from a great distance after the PCs meet Fingerbone in the Blue Room; a successful DC 35 Perception check is required to spot the bat.

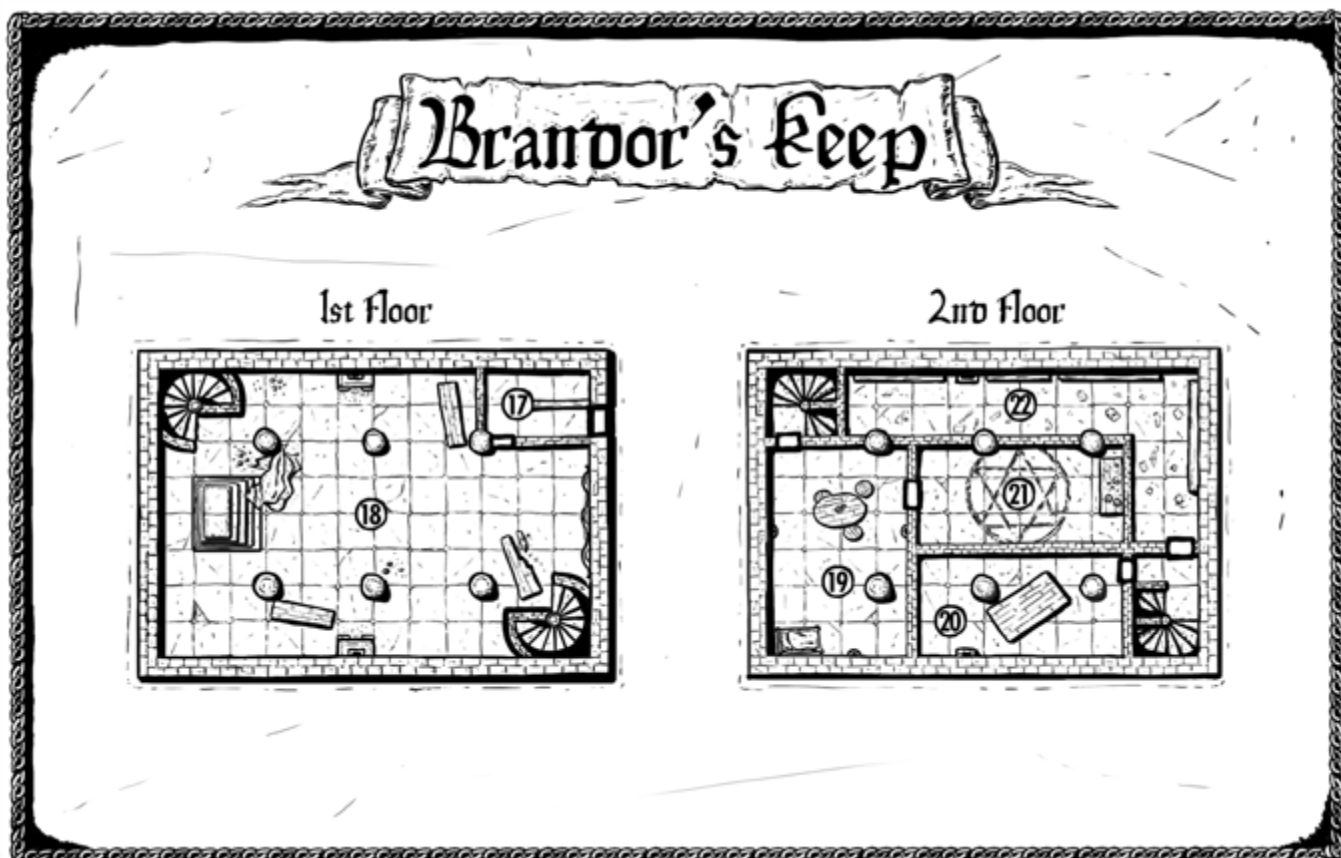
#### AREA 20: YELLOW ROOM

*This room is wallpapered in yellow cloth—old silk perhaps. The windows let in drizzly light, and the floorboards are creaky. There are four paintings of women here, each of them slashed by a knife. A large table sits in the center, but there are no chairs. Strangely, the table appears too large to fit through the doorway.*

This room has been looted except for the destroyed paintings and the table. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check notices some of the figures depicted in the painting vaguely resemble the Stross family members that they encountered earlier. This is also an ideal place for a ghost to visit (see *Shadows of the Dead*).

#### AREA 21: ARCAN E STUDY

Mafriel, a pitiful half-breed ghaele, is bound here. It is the offspring of a ghaele mother and a demon lord magically disguised as her husband. When born, the abomination was cast out of the Court of Stars and the lands of the eladrin. It wandered many years across the planes before the Stross family summoned and bound it here as a weapon against their enemies. When the time came to unleash it though, its master Lord Kranos Stross, who could have commanded it against the army of the Free City, died at the castle gate before





he got a chance to use it. His pride led him to believe that he could talk the peasants into seeing reason. His death was just the first shock at the castle, and was quickly forgotten in the ensuing events.

The magical bonds keeping the creature here demand that it can only be released by a member of the Stross family. Evander and his children are far too canny to release a major fiend unless the circumstances are desperate. The shadow fey and dwarves who know about Mafriel are terrified of him.

Without a Stross to unbind it and end its service, Mafriel has been trapped in a summoning circle that functions as a hedged version of the *binding* spell for 90 years. Read the following if the party uses normal vision.

*The creature within the summoning circle is a shining angel, with feathery golden wings, elfen features, and deep purple eyes. It opens its mouth and says, "I have been trapped here for long years. Please, kill me, or release me. I am fading into dust!" The angel carries a greatsword with a bone hilt, and a long silver trumpet. A golden scabbard clings to its side. A table containing ten vials and jars lies beyond the circle.*

This merely what Mafriel looks like with *disguise self* in place. If the party has *true seeing* or dispels his illusion, read the following:

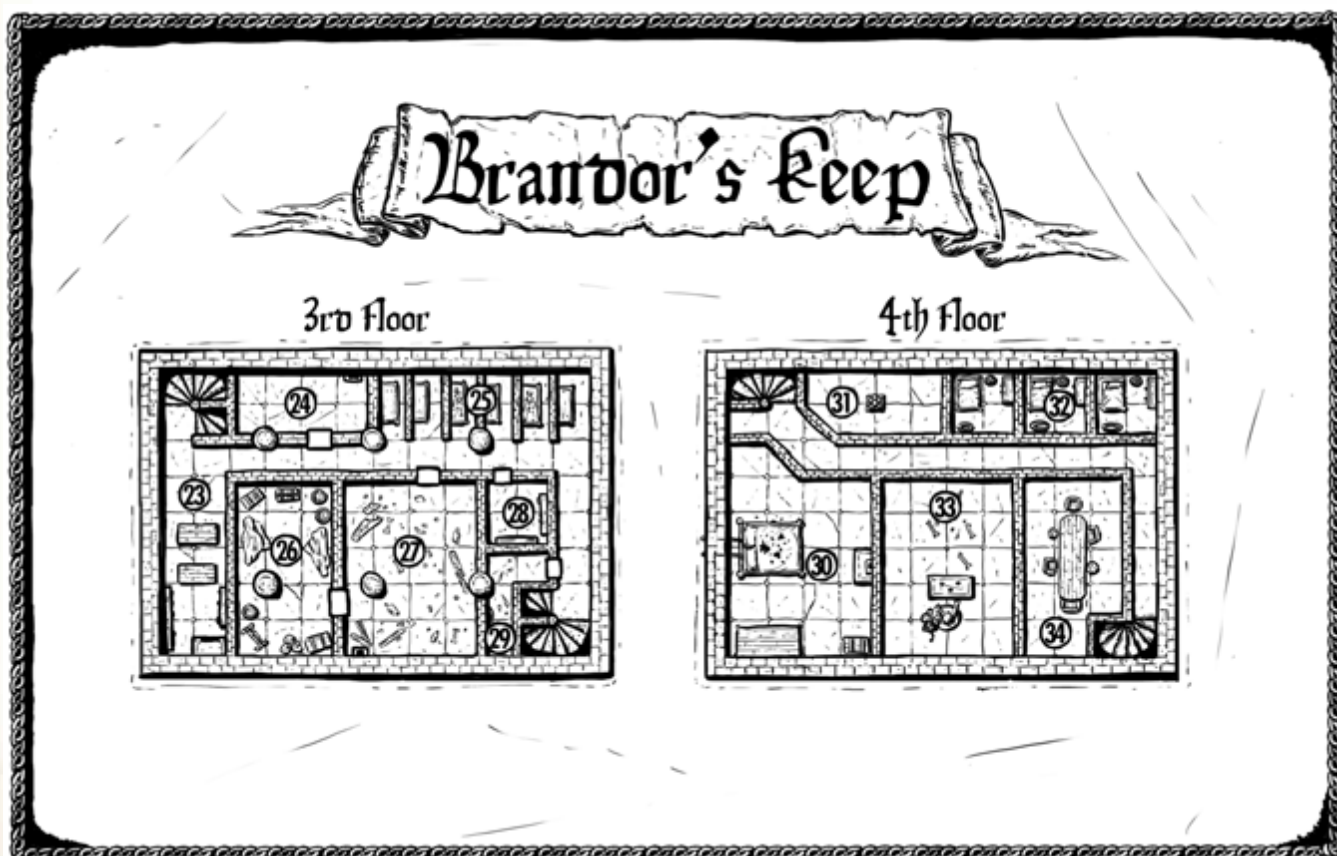
*The creature within the summoning circle looks masculine, and it is lit by greenish glow from within. It stands about six feet tall, with blond hair, pointed ears, and white, scaly skin, and the dark, long wings of a buzzard or eagle. It's definitely not a standard*

*resident of the planes. Perhaps it is a half-demon, but then, its facial features are so human and its eyes look much like those of an elf. A green globe of light surrounds it.*

A character who succeeds at a DC 23 Knowledge (planes) check figures out Mafriel is some form of eladrin/demon hybrid, most likely a ghaele, provided of course that they can see its true form. If the PC succeeds at this check by 5 or more, she recognizes Mafriel as half ghaele and half incubus, and likely to be extremely nasty if it inherited the light powers of its ghaele parent and the demon powers of the incubus. *True seeing* reveals both its normal form (demonic as described above), and its ghaele light form, a 5-foot-diameter globe of greenish light. Neither is a preferred form, so both are visible.

After each brief exchange with the party, Mafriel casts more clerical spells: *divine power*, *divine favor*, *bear's endurance*, *aid*, and *prayer*, in that order. To prevent the PCs from disrupting its spellcasting, the half-fiend may use its *greater invisibility* or *darkness* spell-like abilities to conceal its activities, though its incantations are still audible.

When it finishes casting these spells or is interrupted in the process, Mafriel attacks. He can't escape the circle, so he tries to lure the PCs near the circle so that he can engage them in melee combat or uses his spell-like abilities and spells to attack them from afar. It focuses its attacks against lawful creatures. It tries to use *wall of force* or *blade barrier* to split the party into two smaller groups. It flies up to the ceiling here (just 10 feet up) and uses *chain lightning*, *unholy word* (one innate, one learned), and *prismatic spray* against the party if it can. If



it is forced into melee, its greatsword is its weapon of choice. Fortunately for the PCs, Mafriel cannot follow them if they leave the room, though it can cause tremendous destruction to the surrounding structures in an effort to find them.

## MAFRIEL

CR 16

XP 76,800

Half-fiend ghaele azata (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

CE Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect evil, low-light vision, *see invisibility*; **Perception** +22

**Aura** holy aura

### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 17, flat-footed 27 (+4 deflection, +3 Dex, +14 natural)

**hp** 162 (13d10+91)

**Fort** +19, **Ref** +13, **Will** +18

**DR** 10/cold iron, evil and magic; **Immune** electricity, petrification, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft., fly 150 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** +2 *unholy greatsword* +23/+18/+13 (2d6+14), bite +16 (1d6+4)

**Ranged** 2 light rays +16 (2d12)

**Special Attacks** gaze, smite good 1/day

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +21)

Constant—*detect evil*, *holy aura* (DC 22), *see invisibility*

At will—*aid*, *charm monster* (DC 18), *continual flame*, *cure light wounds*, *dancing lights*, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *disguise self*, *dispel magic*, *hold monster* (DC 19), *greater invisibility* (self only), *major image* (DC 17), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *telekinesis* (DC 19)

3/day—*darkness*, *globe of invulnerability*, *poison* (DC 18), *unholy aura*

1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 21), *chain lightning* (DC 20), *contagion* (DC 17), *desecrate*, *prismatic spray* (DC 21), *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 17), *wall of force*

**Spells Prepared** (CL 13th; concentration +23)

7th—*holy word* (DC 23)

6th—*banishment* (DC 22), *heal*

5th—*flame strike* (DC 21), *raise dead*, *true seeing*

4th—*death ward*, *dismiss* (2) (DC 20), *divine power*, *restoration*

3rd—*cure serious wounds* (2), *prayer*, *searing light* (2)

2nd—*aid* (2), *align weapon*, *bear's endurance*, *lesser restoration* (2)

1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 17), *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*, *sanctuary* (DC 17), *shield of faith*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 27, **Dex** 16, **Con** 24, **Int** 18, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 34

**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Diplomacy +20, Escape Artist +19, Fly +27, Handle Animal +20, Knowledge (nature) +17, Knowledge (planes) +20, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +19

**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, truespeech

**SQ** light form

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Gaze (Su)** In humanoid form, a ghaele's gaze attack slays evil creatures of 5 HD or less (range 60 feet, Will DC 18 negates, shaken for 2d10 rounds on a successful save). Nonevil creatures, and evil creatures with more than 5 HD, must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or be shaken for 2d10 rounds. A creature that saves against a ghaele's gaze is immune to that particular ghaele's gaze for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Light Form (Su)** A ghaele can shift between its solid body and one made of light as a standard action. In solid form, it cannot fly or use light rays. In light form, it can fly and gains the incorporeal quality—it can make light ray attacks or use spell-like abilities in this form, but can't make physical attacks or cast spells. This ability otherwise functions similarly to a bralani's wind form ability.

**Light Ray (Ex)** A ghaele's light rays have a range of 300 feet. This attack bypasses all damage reduction.

**Smite Good (Su)** Once per day it can add extra damage equal to its HD (maximum of +20 against a good foe).

**Spells** Ghaeles cast divine spells as 13th-level clerics. They do not gain access to domains or other cleric abilities.

**Treasure:** Mafriel has no treasure other than his +2 unholy greatsword and his long silver trumpet worth 1,000 gp. The contents of the beakers and vials on the table evaporated decades ago. They are now just ordinary vials.

## AREA 22: THE LIBRARY

*This was once a library, but was long ago looted and burnt. Scraps of scrolls and books remain, and empty shelves.*

A successful DC 25 Perception check reveals a book called *The Stross in War and their Dominions*, which describes the history of the family from the time of the "kobold insurrection" until the crowning of Lord Kranos Stross. The most recent date mentioned is 90 years ago.

## AREA 23: KITCHEN

*Warmth emanates from an unlit stove. Some pots and pans rest on the shelves of a mostly bare cupboard. Two tables are covered with rusty utensils, metallic goblets, and dull blades.*

This cooking area is clearly used and functional, though the number of pots and dishes is much smaller than expected in a castle of this size. One of the dwarves may be here cooking early in the morning or late afternoon, preparing foods for the smiths or the Strosses who still require nourishment.

## AREA 24: MUSIC CHAMBER

*The room is empty except for murals of musical instruments on the walls and marks of blades and blood on the floor.*



The instruments here were all carried off long ago, but a character who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check hears “shadow echoes” of the past times. You might use those sounds as the prelude to a flashback (which happens only if the party “follows” the sounds into the Shadow Realm).

## AREA 25: SERVANT’S ROOMS

*The remnants of bed fill the niches in the walls of these tiny rooms. There are human bones in two of the rooms.*

These rooms were fully looted. A speak with dead spell used on the servants’ skulls found here reveals out-of-date gossip, and the names of Evander’s father, mother, and two younger brothers respectively (Kranos, Bellanca, Mikad, and Drago).

## AREA 26: TREASURY

*An invisible wall prevents access into the adjoining room. The chamber is stacked with rugs, chests of gold coins (some open), sacks of copper and silver, silver plates, sculptures, goblets, and many locked coffers. A line of red jewels sits below a gold-and-mahogany-framed mirror, blinking in the room’s steady magical light.*

The room is both protected by a wall of force and guarded by adamantine wasp swarms. The wasps appear to be small coins or bits of jewelry to the casual eye, hiding as they do among other silvery objects. Members of the Stross family could command the swarms with a single word, but the command word has been lost since the untimely death of Kranos and Bellanca. Lord Kranos’ ghost might tell the PCs the secret (see page 32); the command word is “Rosehaven.”

Although the party can use dimension door, teleport, or similar magic to enter the treasury, getting out is an entirely different matter, as a dimensional lock trap imprisons any creature that enters the treasury.

## DIMENSIONAL LOCK TRAP

CR 9

XP 6,400

Type magic; Perception DC 33; Disable DC 33

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** none

**Effect** spell effect (*dimensional lock*; CL 15th; no save); multiple targets (all targets on opposite side of the wall of force)

To make matters worse, the adamantine wasp swarms immediately attack intruders. If the character survives the constructs’ onslaught, the *dimensional lock* imprisons trapped creatures for 15 days, giving them plenty of time to talk to ghosts or even Evander, who comes to visit via the Shadow Realm. In addition, not experiencing any flashbacks for 2 weeks allows time to repair itself as described at the beginning of the Flashbacks section.

## ADAMANTINE WASP SWARMS (2)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

*Tome of Horrors Complete*

N Fine construct (swarm)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

### DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 24, flat-footed 18 (+6 Dex, +8 size)

hp 82 (15d10)

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

**Immune** weapon damage, construct traits, swarm traits; **SR** 21

**Weaknesses** swarm traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

**Melee** swarm (3d6 plus poison)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** distraction (DC 17)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 1, **Dex** 22, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

**Skills** Fly +18

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison (Ex)** Swarm—injury; save Fort DC 17; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1d4 Dexterity damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.

A creature reduced to Dexterity 0 freezes solid (similar to a flesh to stone spell) for 1d4 hours as his body hardens into ice. If reduced to 0 or less hit points while frozen, the creature shatters into pieces and dies. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Treasure:** The treasury holds 100 heavy silver ingots (8,000 gp worth, weighing 2,400 pounds), plus 4,986 gp in coin, and 3,275 gp worth of gold and silver bracelets, necklaces, chalices, circlets, medallions, rings, and ornamental daggers. There is also a bronze sculpture of an aristocratic man worth 1,500 gp, but it weighs 200 pounds. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Appraise check can determine the rough value of these objects without physical inspecting them from outside the wall of force.

## AREA 27: SILVER ROOM

*This room contains one cabinet of broken wood and room for several more. The walls are smudged with black soot, and even the window frame is burnt away. Bones, broken bottles of beer, mead, and wine inexplicably cover the floor along with rotted rose stems.*

The door leading into the neighboring treasury is secured by an *arcane lock* (CL 15th) and an excellent but rusty padlock (break DC 35 or DC 25 Disable Device). The PCs must still overcome the *arcane lock* barring the portal even if they destroy or pick the padlock.

All the family plates and silver have been looted and the remnants were burnt. A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals a single baby spoon of platinum (worth 50 gp). The initials on it are ES. Although none of the looters successfully broke into the neighboring treasury, one literally died trying.

The wretch's name was Percival Dunvorse, who spent 6 sleepless days trying to break into the vault only to perish from dehydration and exhaustion. He rose as a gaki. To add further injury to insult, Khors cursed the greedy abomination in an apropos fashion by transforming it into a silver-clad creature.

The ravenous undead monster is typically invisible or disguising itself, using its spell-like abilities to appear as one of Shadowcrag's dwarves. No longer enamored with the treasure, Percival longs to escape Shadowcrag and indulge his hunger, but the Stross family refuses to let him leave for daring to pilfer their wealth. He tries to fly off the grounds at the very first opportunity, though not before tasting a few morsels from the PCs' supple flesh.

#### PERCIVAL DUNVORSE

CR 10

XP 9,600

Silver-clad gaki (Advanced Bestiary, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 4)

NE Medium undead

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect evil; **Perception** +14

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge, +15 natural)  
**hp** 94 (9d8+54)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** light fortification, mirrored finish;

**Immune** undead traits; **Resist** fire 5

**Weaknesses** aversion to sun and moon, compulsive hunger, vulnerable to cold, electricity, and fire

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (average)

**Melee** 2 claws +9 (2d6+3), bite +9 (2d6+3 plus grab)

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

**Special Attacks** blood drain (1d2 **Constitution**), fear cone (30 ft., DC 16)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +10)

Constant—*detect evil*

At will—*invisibility*

1/day—*disguise self*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9 (+13 grapple); **CMD** 21

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Intimidate +16, **Perception** +14, **Stealth** +10

**Languages** Common

**SQ** metallic attack (silver limbs)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aversion to Sun and Moon (Ex)** A gaki takes 1d4 points of fire damage every round it is exposed to the light of a full moon. It takes 1d4 points of cold damage every round it is exposed to direct sunlight.

**Compulsive Hunger (Ex)** Despite being undead, a gaki is plagued by an insatiable hunger, and believes it can gain a normal body or rest in peace if it consumes the right mixture of flesh, food, and drink. A gaki that finds a corpse or is offered food, wine, holy water, or flowers must succeed at

a DC 20 Will save or spend one turn trying to grab and consume it. Its narrow neck prevents it from swallowing more than a tiny amount, and it gives up after 1 rounds of attempting to do so. A gaki that consumes holy water in this way is not harmed by it.

**Mirrored Finish (Su)** A silver-clad creature reflects gaze attacks and is immune to gaze attacks as well. Thus, a creature with a gaze attack that actively gazes at a silver-clad creature must save against its own gaze attack, suffering the consequences of a failed save even if it would normally be immune.

**Silver Limbs (Ex)** A silver-clad creature's natural attacks and grapple deal damage as silver weapons, overcoming damage reduction just as a silver weapon would.

#### AREA 28: TUTOR'S ROOM

*This room contains empty shelves and black marks of soot; a bonfire must have been built here years ago.*

The tutor's room was looted and burnt.

#### AREA 29: PRIEST'S ROOM

*This room is empty except for splinters of wood and a small niche in the west wall.*

Anyone approaching the niche sees an image of the death of Khor's priest.

*There are a pair of gouged-out eyes in the niche. The eyes blink and swivel, as a voice cries out, "Revenge for the Stross! Revenge! Swear you will avenge me!"*

Unless the party swears to vengeance, the ghostly voice does not stop speaking until the party leaves the room.

#### AREA 30: LORD AND LADY'S ROOMS

*The room is empty, with the horrifying exception of bloody sheets on the bed and two ropes running out the window. Both ropes are taut.*

Anyone inspecting the scene finds the mummified bodies of Lord Kranos and his mistress dangling at the end of the ropes hung out the window. If the ropes are disturbed, begin the Fall of House Stross flashback if it hasn't happened already (see page 17). The events that occurred during that flashback might influence this scene. PCs who rescue Kranos' mistress find one of Kranos' female servants at the end of one rope instead. A character that retrieves and examines the bodies confirms with a successful DC 20 Heal check that the hanging took place post-mortem.

Once that flashback has been completed, the party might encounter two ghost of Lord Kranos in this room. If the party is close to ending the curse, Lord Kranos may tell the party about the password for the treasury, unless the party harmed Evander or his children, in which case the aristocrat has no interest in helping the PCs. He's happy to explain some of the history of the curse to anyone who spends a night in his room



(use a shadow event; see page 33), but doesn't want to confide his secrets to a crowd.

**Treasure:** The room holds the shadow of a treasure chest in one corner, which contains 4,400 gp and six 1,000 gp emeralds. Making the shadow treasure permanent requires casting a *major creation* spell before sunlight touches the items. A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (planes) check or a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) spell know this property of shadow matter.

### AREA 31: PRINCE'S ROOM AND NANNY'S ROOM

*This room has been thoroughly looted. Only the paintings on the walls remain, faded drawings of knights at a joust, of a family tree shown in heraldic devices, and, oddly, a pyramid of neatly stacked square stones at the center of the room.*

This pyramid is a cairn containing the bones of the two princes (Evander's brothers), provided that the PCs did not rescue them during the Fall of House Stross flashback. Evander recovered their bones from where they had been scattered below the castle walls after animals devoured their flesh. If the PCs did rescue the princes, the cairn is just a pile of stones.

Any PC who studies the heraldic chart and succeeds at a DC 22 Knowledge (nobility) check learns the Stross family lineage up to Evander and his brothers. Faint markings in charcoal seem to show the addition of at least one unnamed child from Evander, possibly two; these markings were put there by Vasilios.

### AREA 32: GUEST ROOMS

*This room contains a freshly made bed, a single half-shuttered window looking out over the forest, and a washbasin and oak wardrobe. A small brazier of coals in one corner is unlit. The door has a bolt that so it can be locked from the inside.*

These guest rooms were all looted but have been restored. One of them should always be haunted (see *Shadows of the Dead* on page 32). In addition, Zarek enters one through a window at midnight using his climbing ability, dominates the occupant if he can, and tries to drain blood from the weakest party member. If confronted, he flees.

### AREA 33: TENCANDLE HALL

*The room beyond the doorway is shining and beautiful. You see golden candlesticks on a black stone altar and other bright offerings. A four-foot-tall statue stands in front just behind the altar: the Goddess of Night holding one hand high and invoking power, the other hand on a white winged lion, one of her servants. A crystal chandelier hangs overhead. Behind the altar is an untarnished screen of hammered silver. Underfoot, you see a carpet of well gnawed bones. And somewhere behind one of the screens, something is rustling.*

This richly appointed hall is a private chapel for the family priests and monks of Sarasta. It was not looted, because it

is protected by a greater barghest appointed to defend this shrine. The greater barghest uses its rage and blink spells if it hears anyone at the doorway. It then casts crushing despair and attacks.

### MACTIGAL

CR 8

XP 4,800

Divine guardian greater barghest (*Advanced Bestiary*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

LE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful, shapechanger)

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +23

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 85 (9d10+36); fast healing 5

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

**Defensive Abilities** ability healing; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** disease, poison, mind-affecting effects

#### DEFENSE

**Speed** 80 ft.

**Melee** bite +14 (1d8+6), 2 claws +15 (1d6+6)



### Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +13)

At will—*blink*, *dimension door* (within sacred site only),  
*invisibility sphere*, *levitate*, *misdirection*

3/day—*alarm*, *knock*

1/day—*arcane lock*, *augury*, *charm monster* (DC 18),  
*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *commune*, *crushing despair* (DC  
18), *dimension door*, *dismissal* (DC 19), *hold portal*, *mass*  
*bull's strength*, *mass enlarge person*

---

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 23, **Dex** 15, **Con** 19, **Int** 18, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 28 (32 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative,  
Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Bluff +18, Climb +15, Diplomacy  
+18, Intimidate +18, Perception +23, Sense Motive +23,  
Stealth +10, Survival +16, Swim +15; **Racial Modifiers** +5  
Perception, +5 Sense Motive

**Languages** Infernal, Goblin, Worg

**SQ** aura, blessed life, divine swiftness, sacred site

---

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aura (Ex)** A divine guardian with the chaotic, evil, good, or  
lawful subtypes has an aura as if it were an aligned outsider  
of equivalent Hit Dice (see the *detect evil spell* for details).

**Blessed Life (Ex)** A divine guardian does not age or breathe. It  
does not require food, drink, or sleep.

**Divine Swiftness (Ex)** A divine guardian is gifted with  
incredible speed, granting it a +4 bonus on initiative rolls.  
In addition, each of the base creature's speeds is doubled.  
If the base creature has a fly speed, the divine guardian's  
maneuverability becomes perfect if it was not already. If the  
divine guardian acquires the air, earth, or water subtype, it  
gains a fly, burrow, or swim speed equal to its highest speed.

**Sacred Site (Ex)** Each divine guardian is assigned to guard a  
specific site sacred to the deity that invested it with power.  
This area may be a structure, a series of structures, or a  
natural site with clearly defined borders. It can be as large  
as a city, but in most cases it's a single temple or a sacred  
grove. Gods don't waste their powers on places that their  
worshippers can protect, so most divine guardians keep  
watch over abandoned burial grounds or lost temples. The  
divine guardian of such a site is charged with protecting it  
from harm and preventing incursions by those not of the  
faith. It must keep its vigil until the god deems the guardian's  
task done.

If the divine guardian ever moves out of the area defined  
as the sacred site, it immediately loses the divine guardian  
template and any spellcasting ability the deity might have  
granted from class levels. It cannot regain the template unless  
it atones for its failure (usually by completing some quest  
or via an atonement spell) and reenters the site within 1  
week. Otherwise, it loses the template permanently, taking  
6d6 points of Constitution drain as the years of lost food,  
drink, and sleep return to it tenfold. A creature that lacks a  
Constitution score takes 2d6 points of damage per Hit Die  
from this process. Even if it survives the Constitution drain,  
the creature can never regain the template.

The greater barghest can be freed only by ending the curse  
and releasing Sarasta's grip on the castle. When released from  
its service, the barghest quickly becomes an ally of Lóránt,  
the werewolf lord, and tries to eat any shadow fey that remain  
within the castle. It can track them by scent fairly well, and  
may later offer the party an alliance against a mutual foe.

**Treasure:** The offerings on the altar include a gold and violet  
garnet bottle stopper (value 600 gp), a gold chalice with jacinth  
gems (value 600 gp), a mithral comb with moonstone (value  
200 gp), two gold candlesticks (400 gp each), and a silver comb  
with set with a black pearl (value 1,000 gp). A successful DC  
16 Knowledge (Religion) check reveals that combs and chalices  
are favored offerings to Sarasta. The two statues are carved  
wood: ebony for the goddess, and a white witchwood for the  
lion. They are worth 1,000 gp each to her worshippers, but will  
definitely attract attention from the shadow fey if the party  
removes them from the shrine. The hammered silver screen  
is worth 1,200 gp for its workmanship and quality, but is very  
awkward to carry (equivalent in size to 10 large shields).

---

### AREA 34: VESPERTINE HALL

*The hall here is a fine one, with well-carved white oak chairs  
and a table of ebony, walnut, or some other dark wood. Half the  
chairs seem sized for humans, the others are somewhat smaller.  
An ugly tapestry of various shades of black and gray hangs along  
one wall.*

While this room was looted, the dwarves restored it with  
furniture to fit them. Mandergrim and his followers meet  
here to discuss matters with the Stross, using it as an informal  
audience chamber. It's also a good place for a shadow event  
such as the Black Tapestry (see page 34). Evander generally  
lives and sleeps here or with the Grimbold clan. He can't dwell  
in his former living quarters.

---

### AREA 35: ROOT STORAGE

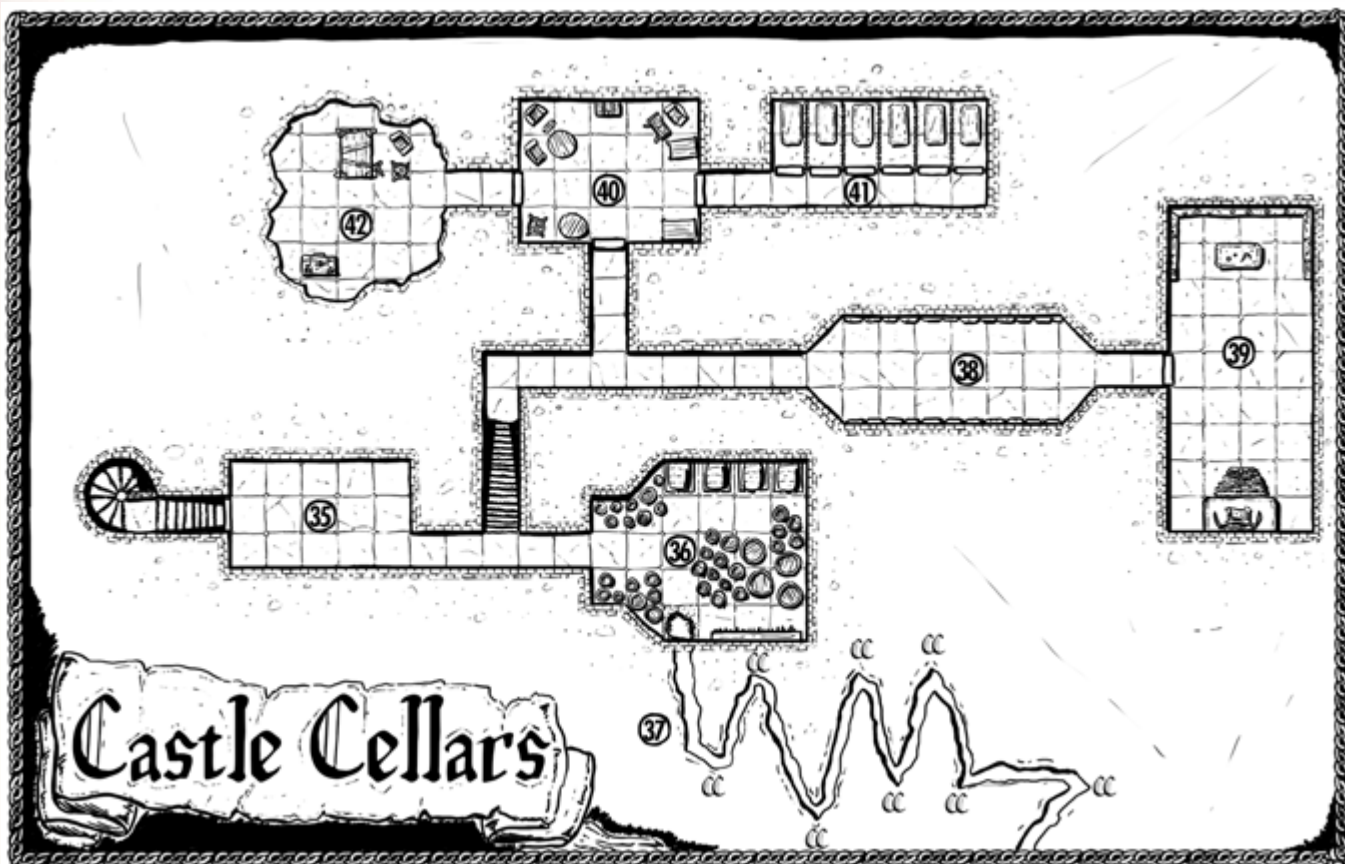
The dungeon and cellar were partially looted during the  
uprising. The Grimbold dwarves still use a portion of the  
cellars as a stronghold against the creatures that haunt the  
castle at night, from the werewolf lord to the more aggressive  
shadows and vampires. The entrance to these areas is barred  
with an imposing door.

*The door ahead is made of heavy black wood, probably walnut,  
and bound with inscribed metal bands of silver and iron. The  
steps leading down to it have been stained with blood.*

The door is usually kept locked with a shadow lock, a  
particularly tricky form of lock whose inner workings and  
wards are partially made of shadowstuff. It takes a successful  
DC 28 Strength check to batter down the door or a successful  
DC 28 Disable Device check to bypass the shadow lock.  
Evander, Mandergrim, and Vasilios each hold a key.

The area at the bottom of the stairs was a storage cellar. It was  
entirely looted decades ago, and has been empty ever since.





#### AREA 36: WINE CELLAR

*This is an old cellar, cool but not damp, full of dozens of barrels of wine and plenty of dust. The barrels seem to have been undisturbed for many years.*

These barrels hold a rich malbec, oloroso (a sherry aged even longer than amontillado), golden ice wine, brandy, and cheap vinegar. With a successful DC 30 Appraise check, a character can tell the good casks from the vinegar. The entire collection weighs 2,800 pounds. However, the casks of oloroso, ice wine, and brandy weigh just 150 pounds, but are worth 4,500 gp. The remaining wine stores are worth 350 gp. The vinegar is worth 50 cp.

A circular opening in the floor leads into area 37.

#### AREA 37: ESCAPE TUNNEL

*A narrow, three-foot-wide tunnel leads down and into darkness. There are no doors or cross passages visible.*

The tunnel descends more than 900 feet to the base of the hill. Handholds and footholds cut into the surrounding walls make it easy to climb down (DC 10 Climb check) the tunnel at its steepest points marked as CC on the map above. On a failed check, the creature falls 1d4 x 10 feet and takes 1d6 points of falling damage for every 10 feet beyond the first 10 feet. The tunnel exits from beneath an overgrown stone that

requires a successful DC 20 Strength check to lift from inside (and a successful DC 35 Perception check to find from the outside).

#### AREA 38: FAMILY CRYPTS

*The walls here are carved and decorated with briar roses, ravens, owls, and even a seagull. In the center of these carved panels are the names of members of the Stross family, men on the right, women on the left. There are at least 50 or more burial sites here.*

The black skeletons hidden in these crypts rest motionless while the party moves through the area. They only stir when the party reaches the ancestral hall (area 39) or someone opens one of the crypts.

*The sound of grinding stone fills the area. Eight skeletons suddenly rise from their graves, each with glistening black bones and pinpoints of red light burning in their empty eye sockets. With a sword in each hand, they speak in whispering unison.*

*"We ruled the castle, we kept the secrets, and ours they shall stay... You are not our children, there's a price you must pay." They raise their short swords and advance.*

If a character successfully turns one of the Old Lords, the skeleton meekly returns to its crypt, closes the lid, and resumes its slumber. It doesn't return to this battle, though it fights again if the party returns at a later time.

**THE OLD LORDS (8)****CR 6****XP 2,400 each**Advanced black skeletons (*Tome of Horrors Complete*)

CE Medium undead

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft; Perception +16**Aura** frightful presence (60 ft., DC 17)**DEFENSE****AC** 24, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+6 Dex, +8 natural)**hp** 59 (7d8+28)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/bludgeoning and good; **Immune** undead traits**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** 2 shortswords +12 (1d6+2/19–20 plus 1d3 Strength damage) or 2 claws +11 (1d4+2) plus 1d3 Strength damage)**Special Attacks** superior two-weapon fighting**STATISTICS****Str** 15, **Dex** 23, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 23**Feats** Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shortsword)**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Climb +15, Escape Artist +13, Perception +16, Stealth +20**Languages** Abyssal, Common

Gear two shortswords

**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex)** A black skeleton usually fights with a shortsword in each hand. Because of its magical nature, its Two-Weapon Fighting feat allows it to attack with both weapons at no penalty.**Treasure:** The skeleton's grave goods are excellent quality and well preserved. They include 8 golden signet rings (250 gp each), six silver and gold chains of office (1,000 gp each), boots of levitation, a staff of frost (6 charges), an arcane scroll (CL 5th level, darkness, halt undead, and slitherDM), and a +1 heavy steel shield.**DESIGNER'S NOTE**

*Speak with dead* is a spell I personally like a great deal. It lets me talk in a spooky raspy voice and it requires players to think and to ask questions. I think that role-playing it out is better than using a table like the one above, but if someone has taken ranks in Diplomacy, I think they should get more out of the spell than the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* Core Rulebook allows. Thus, bards are better at asking the questions than, say, typical clerics. For ideal use of the spell, note when the player says his character casts the spell (or sits down), then check a watch. Use the one minute per level duration in real time; it puts pressure on the party to actually get the interrogation done in a timely way.

**AREA 39: ANCESTRAL SUMMONING HALL**

Skulls sit on shelves next to a small shrine. Small silver sickles, white candles, and an empty oil lamp sit on an offering altar. Behind the altar is a painted screen showing a boatman, a river, and a mass of ghosts and zombies in the water. On the far side of the screen is a golden city glowing on a mountaintop.

At the far end is a heap of bones arranged as steps leading up to a chair made entirely of bones. Over the chair hang a tattered black banner and a crossed set of two silvery, untarnished scythes.

The Stross family at one time included priests of the Death God. These priests asked departed members of the family about matters of law, parentage, history, or war using *Speak with dead*. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (Religion) check reveals this chamber was used for summoning ancestors, an uncommon but not unheard of ceremony for worshippers of the Death God. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that anyone who sits on the throne may use *Speak with dead* or similar magic to communicate with Evander's deceased ancestors. At the GM's option, one of the black skeletons or the living Stross can mention this ability. Although the Stross no longer venerate the Death God, the Throne of Past Lords (as it is known) still sits here, dusty and mildly magical with faint conjuration and summoning magic.

Read the following if the party expresses any interest in the throne.

*The chair is made of bones and inlaid with black adamantite runes, showing a carved crown and many names and dates: Kranos Stross, Leander Stross, Adrastus, Haides, Kleitos, Isidoros, Podarge, and a dozen more. The bones themselves include small ones that might be kobold bones, larger human bones, and others that can only be giants, horses or dragons of some kind.*

If anyone actually sits on the Throne of Past Lords, it's a trap with benefits.

**THRONE OF PAST LORDS TRAP CR 9****XP 6,400**

Type mechanical; Perception DC 26; Disable DC 30

**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic**Effect** Atk +15 melee (scythe; 2d4+10 plus poison [deathblade, DC 14 Fort, 1/round for 4 rounds; 1d3 Con])

Anyone that sits on the throne and survives the scythe must attempt a DC 20 Will save. If a creature fails the Will save, spirits possess that creature. The possessed creature can attempt one Diplomacy check with a -4 circumstance penalty to communicate with the spirits and receive one piece of information from the table below according to the result of the Diplomacy check. If the sitting PC succeeds on the Will save, he is not possessed, but can command any intact black skeletons in area 38 to obey for 1d6+2 minutes as if he successfully cast *control undead*, even if the skeletons' total Hit Dice exceed the spell's normal limitations. During that time, he can ask questions and compel answers, attempting



a Diplomacy check each minute that he controls the undead, gaining information similar to that presented in the table below. If that character is a cleric or paladin of a death god, he gains a +4 circumstance bonus to this check. Of course, the bones know the Stross side of the story, and don't know anything about Evander's fate. A creature can only sit on the Throne of Past Lords once every 24 hours.

#### DIPLOMACY CHECK RESULT INFORMATION GAINED

19 or less	<i>"The Stross family has always ruled with fairness and justice. Their word has been a soothing oil on troubled waters. Only peasants and foreign enemies would dare to suggest otherwise."</i>
20	<i>"Yes, the Stross have ruled wisely and well. It was a shame that the kobold revolt had to be put down."</i>
30	<i>"My child, how is it that you do not know of our ancient alliance with the Scáthsidhe? They have always been our friends. In times of danger, look to them."</i>
35	<i>"I fear the family's close ties with the shadows have blinded us to the dangers of our alliance. They seek to take our lands, our lives, and our souls into their dark kingdom."</i>
40	<i>"I was an alchemist and a scholar, my name was Haides Stross. Strike the heart of the black oak—it poisons all our children and their children. Save those you can from its corruption! Save the Stross before you become as we are!"</i>

#### AREA 40: GAOLER'S ROOM

*This is a warm, dry room furnished with three chairs, a footstool, small tables, a padlocked chest, and a brazier of hot coals. A man in a dirty but well-made jacket stands at a lectern reading a book. The man's skin is corpse white, and his eyes are bright sparks sunken deep in his head. He wears a wig. One of his legs seems injured, as it is bandaged, causing him to favor the other leg. A loose cravat is tied around his neck, but something like stitches or scars peek out where the cloth has slipped down a bit. The man looks up, and frowns. "Who let you in here?"*

Vasilios's main room is a comfortable place without windows or light. He is usually found here unless "working" on a victim in the Rack Chamber (area 42).

Vasilios's mutilations affect his neck, back, upper left arm, and upper left leg, so they are mostly invisible to casual inspection. His disjointed upper left arm is braced and bolted back into shape. His upper leg has been flayed to reveal portions of his muscles, and he has dozens of hooks and rings embedded in his chest that pass entirely through his body connecting to bolts and metallic bracing on his back. His

neck has extensive stitching, as if his head had been sewed on. Vasilios is initially unfriendly to the party, but not foolish enough to try to engage superior numbers. He tries to talk the PCs into leaving his room. If only one PC is visible, he tries to capture her for later torture, first locking the room's door remotely with a switch concealed on the lecturn. Hearing the muffled "click" of the lock requires a successful DC 29 Perception check, while finding the release on the lecturn requires a successful DC 22 Perception check.

Vasilios's grotesque appearance forces anyone who gazes upon him to succeed at a Will save or suffer ability drain. In addition, his agonizing wail can shake opponents to their cores. If the characters overcome these obstacles, the broken soul feigns friendliness and tries to shake hands with a PC in order to use his torturous touch ability. Vasilios always keeps rope and iron manacles here, just in case.

#### VASILIOS STROSS

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male human broken soul fighter 10/expert 3 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4*)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 13, flat-footed 25 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 163 (10d10+70 plus 3d8+21)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +3; **DR** 5/—; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5, sonic 5

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 ghost touch heavy mace +21/+16/+11 (1d8+7/19–20) or torturous touch +16 touch (2d6 plus 1d6 Dex damage and convulsions)

**Ranged** +1 light crossbow +16 (1d8+1/19–20)

**Special Attacks** agonized wail (DC 13), baleful gaze (DC 13), weapon training (hammers +2)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** 23, **Int** 13, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Cleave<sup>B</sup>, Combat Reflexes, Dazzling Display, Diehard<sup>B</sup>, Endurance<sup>B</sup>, Great Fortitude<sup>B</sup>, Greater Weapon Focus<sup>B</sup> (heavy mace), Improved Critical<sup>B</sup> (heavy mace), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Power Attack<sup>B</sup>, Shield Focus, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus<sup>B</sup> (heavy mace), Weapon Specialization<sup>B</sup> (heavy mace)

**Skills** Climb +13, Handle Animal +6, Heal +13, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (nature) +12, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +7, Sense Motive +6, Survival +6;

**Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, –10 concentration

**Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Combat Gear** potion of cure moderate wounds; **Other Gear** +1 glamered breastplate, +1 ghost touch heavy mace, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 light crossbow with 40 bolts, key to the locked chest and doors in area 41, 56 gp, 98 sp

## SQ armor training 2

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Agonized Wail (Su)** As a standard action, a broken soul can emit an agonized wail that inspires terror in those who hear it. All creatures within 120 feet must succeed at a Will save or become shaken for as long as they remain within 120 feet of the broken soul. A successful save renders a creature immune to that broken soul's agonized wail for 24 hours. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect.

**Baleful Gaze (Su)** Any creature within 60 feet of a broken soul must succeed at a Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Strength, Constitution and Charisma drain. Whatever the result of the saving throw, the creature cannot be affected by the same broken soul's baleful gaze again for 1 minute.

**Torturous Touch (Su)** A broken soul can make a touch attack to cause hideous, painful wounds to rip open in the target's body. This touch deals 2d6 points of slashing damage and 1d6 points of Dexterity damage, and causes the touched creature to fall prone in a fit of convulsions and be dazed for 1d4 rounds. A successful DC 13 Fortitude save negates the Dexterity damage and the convulsive fit.

**Treasure:** Vasilios has a locked (DC 27 Disable Device or DC 30 Strength check to open), copper-plated chest in the room that contains his personal funds: 25,456 sp, two 600 gp sapphires, a pink diamond worth 4,000 gp, and an 800 gp black pearl.

### AREA 41: DUNGEON CELLS

*Six cramped prison cells crafted from thick iron bars line the wall. Each contains a stone slab that presumably functions as a bed and is secured by a locked door also constructed from iron.*

The original prisoners in the dungeon cells were let go when the castle was stormed, but Vasilios keeps his victims here. They have included travelers, tinkers, woodsmen, and other unwary visitors to the castle. Several of the manacles show signs of recent use (within the last month), but all of the cells are currently empty. Because they are not in use, the doors are all unlocked. Vasilios normally sleeps in a random cell.

### AREA 42: THE RACK CHAMBER

*Stairs descend into a spacious, rough-hewn chamber filled with the stench of sweat and fear. There is a large table with a winch at one end, most likely a rack for stretching prisoners. Nearby are a metal chair and a cold brazier filled with poker and knives. There's also a large wooden trunk with strange golden seals and sword hilts sticking out of it in the opposite corner.*

This is clearly a torture chamber. Signs of dried yet still visible blood on the floor confirms that it has been used, and not that long ago. With a successful DC 20 Heal check, a PC can determine the blood was spilt approximately 1 week ago. Vasilios caught and tortured a shadow fey here, using Rumbold's old shadow-catching net. If a character succeeds on a DC 20 Perception check, he can hear muffled screams

coming from inside the padlocked wooden trunk. Vasilios calls the wooden trunk his "Box of Screams". Read the following if the PCs examine it closely.

*The chest is made of fine wood, perhaps cherry or apple, and is tightly sealed against moisture or rattles. There are three slots in the top and four in the front where sword hilts with golden pommels stick out. Muffled screams come from within the trunk, and it quivers slightly.*

The box contains the vampire who transformed Zarek into his current undead state. Tortured for decades, he relinquished his hold over Zarek long ago in a vain effort to appease his captor. The box contains some of his grave soil and allows him to recover hit points, but the golden seals and enchanted silver weapons cut into his undead flesh, and one of the weapons always releases a daylight spell each day at dawn.

The lock is easy to open (DC 22 Disable Device). Argostad has tried to escape hundreds of times, so he thinks that any PCs are an illusion or a trick. If convinced that they are not, he attacks to taste blood and gain vitality, or to be forever destroyed.

### ARGOSTAD

CR 10

#### XP 9,600

Male human vampire monk 9 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 29, touch 21, flat-footed 25 (+2 armor, +2 monk, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +5 Wis)

**hp** 78 (10d8+30); fast healing 5

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14; +2 vs. enchantments

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, improved evasion;

**DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** disease, undead traits;

**Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 65 ft.

**Melee** unarmed strike flurry of blows +14/+14/+9/+9

(1d10+5/19–20) or unarmed strike +13/+8 (1d10+5/19–20) or slam +12 (1d4+7 plus energy drain)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 17), energy drain (2 levels, DC 17), flurry of blows, stunning fist (10/day, DC 20)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +15 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 31 (33 vs. grapple)

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Deflect Arrows<sup>B</sup>, Dodge<sup>B</sup>,

Fleet, Gorgon's Fist, Improved Critical<sup>B</sup> (unarmed strike),

Improved Grapple<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Improved Unarmed

Strike<sup>B</sup>, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Mobility<sup>B</sup>, Spring Attack, Power

Attack, Run, Scorpion's Style, Stunning Fist<sup>B</sup>, Toughness<sup>B</sup>,

Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12 (+22 when jumping), Appraise +8,

Climb +16, Escape Artist +12, Heal +10, Intimidate +11,



Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +16, Perform (dance) +9, Ride +10, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +11, Survival +11, Swim +12

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Undercommon

**SQ** change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), fast movement, gaseous form, high jump, ki pool (10 points, cold iron, lawful, magic, silver), maneuver training, purity of body, shadowless, slow fall 50 ft., spider climb, still mind, wholeness of body

**Gear** bracers of armor +2, cloak of resistance +2

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Blood Drain (Su)** A vampire can suck blood from a grappled opponent; if the vampire establishes or maintains a pin, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The vampire heals 5 hit points or gains 5 temporary hit points for 1 hour (up to a maximum number of temporary hit points equal to its full normal hit points) each round it drains blood.

**Change Shape (Su)** A vampire can use change shape to assume the form of a dire bat or wolf, as *beast shape II*.

**Children of the Night (Su)** Once per day, a vampire can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or 2d6 wolves as a standard action. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might summon other creatures of similar power.) These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

**Create Spawn (Su)** A vampire can create spawn out of those it slays with blood drain or energy drain, provided that the slain creature is of the same creature type as the vampire's base creature type. The victim rises from death as a vampire in 1d4 days. This vampire is under the command of the vampire that created it, and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. A vampire may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own Hit Dice; any spawn it creates that would exceed this limit become free-willed undead. A vampire may free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

**Dominate (Su)** A vampire can crush a humanoid opponent's will as a standard action. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a Will save or fall instantly under the vampire's influence, as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet. At the GM's discretion, some vampires might be able to affect different creature types with this power.



**Energy Drain (Su)** A creature hit by a vampire's slam (or other natural weapon) gains 2 negative levels. This ability only triggers once per round, regardless of the number of attacks a vampire makes.

**Gaseous Form (Su)** As a standard action, a vampire can assume *gaseous form* at will (caster level 5th), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

**Shadowless (Ex)** A vampire casts no shadows and shows no reflection in a mirror.

**Spider Climb (Ex)** A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though under the effects of a *spider climb* spell.

**Treasure:** The blades poking through the box include six +1 silver short swords and a +1 silver longsword that allows the wielder to cast *daylight* once per day as a 10th level caster.

#### AREA 43: DWARVEN HALLS

The dwarves reside and store their inventory of armor and weapons within this secure space. The door is made from the same shadowstuff that protects the entrance into the cellar (see area 35). It takes a successful DC 28 Strength check to batter down the door or a successful DC 28 Disable Device check to

bypass the shadow lock. Evander, Mandergrim and the three dwarven clerics are the only people with keys.

#### AREA 44: LIVING QUARTERS

*Beyond the well-made door lies a crowded, yet still spacious chamber illuminated by soft gray magical light. The ceiling is a bit low, perhaps just six or seven feet high. Bunk beds occupy each corner adjacent to the entrance, while a more ornate bed rests against the far wall. Several weapons are on display within a sturdy weapon rack. A closed yet unlocked wooden chest sits against one of the walls. A dark, wooden table surrounded by four chairs takes up the center of the room.*

The dwarves of the Grimbold clan and sometimes Evander live here. They sell their wares of skymetal armor and weapons, and stake a claim to the castle when it (as they hope) slips across the planar boundary into the embrace of the Shadow Realm. Their leader, clan chieftain Mandergrim, is a bitter fighter and a hard-working smith. The other three dwarves—Ulfbaerht, Ulfgar, and Ulfic—are all smiths, clerics, and fighters. Their weapons' enchantments come from both divine and arcane sources. In particular, Darius Grindstone, the aranea in the Ivy Tower has long been Mandergrim's friend and ally.

The beds feature merely adequate sheets and furs that are moldy and worthless. The concealed trap door between the beds and the chest can be located with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The dwarves use it as an escape hatch as the tunnel beneath it connects with the secret door at the bottom of the well in area 14.

If a fight breaks out here, the dwarves let Mandergrim hold the narrow passage while the clerics use *bless* on their side and *doom* on their foes, plus using their *spiritual weapon* spells to strike at the party from a distance. They heal Mandergrim if he is badly hurt, and then escape to a safe meeting point deep in the forest if any one of them is knocked down.

#### MANDERGRIM

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male dwarf shadow creature fighter 7/stalwart defender 2 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4, Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide)

LE Medium outsider (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +13

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +2 dodge, +2 shield)

**hp** 90 (7d10+21 plus 2d10+6)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4; +2 vs. poison, spells and spell-like abilities

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2, defensive stance





(9 rounds/day), defensive training (+4 dodge bonus to AC vs. giants); **DR** 5/magic; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 5; **SR** 15

---

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 *inubrix dwarven waraxe* +15/+10 (1d8+6/x3)

**Ranged** +1 heavy crossbow +12 (1d10+1/19–20)

**Special Attacks** +1 on attack rolls against goblinoid and orc humanoids, weapon training (axes +1)

---

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27 (31 vs. bull rush or trip)

**Feats** Critical Focus<sup>B</sup>, Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Power Attack<sup>B</sup>, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus<sup>B</sup> (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization<sup>B</sup> (dwarven waraxe)

**Skills** Handle Animal +7, Heal +4, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Perception +13 (+15 vs. stonework), Sense Motive +6

**Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Combat Gear** *potion of rage*; **Other Gear** +1 *cold siccitate\* breastplate*, +1 *inubrix\* dwarven waraxe*, +1 *light steel shield*, +1 *heavy crossbow* with 40 bolts, 96 gp, 128 sp

**SQ** armor training 2, defensive powers (clear mind)

---

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Shadow Blend (Su)** In any illumination other than bright light, a shadow creature blends into the shadows, giving it concealment (20% miss chance). A shadow creature can suspend or resume this ability as a free action.

\*These special materials appear in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #61: Shards of Sin*.

---

### ULFBAERHT, ULFGAR, AND ULRIC

CR 6

**XP** 2,400 each

Male dwarf shadow creature fighter 3/cleric 3 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 4)

LE Medium outsider (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft., low-light vision; Perception +4

---

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

**hp** 52 each (3d10+9 plus 3d8+9)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6; +2 vs. poison, spells and spell-like abilities

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, defensive training (+4 dodge bonus to AC vs. giants); **DR** 5/magic; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 11

---

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 *dwarven waraxe* +10 (1d10+4/x3)

**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +7 (1d8/19–20)

**Special Attacks** +1 on attack rolls against goblinoid and orc humanoids, channel negative energy 7/day (DC 15, 2d6)

**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +3)

5/day—*touch of darkness* (1 round), *touch of evil* (1 round)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

2nd—*align weapon*<sup>D</sup> (evil only), *darkness*, *spiritual weapon*

1st—*bless*, *doom* (DC 13), *obscuring mist*<sup>D</sup> (DC 13), *protection from good*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *mending*, *read magic*

<sup>D</sup> Domain spell; **Domains** Darkness, Evil

---

#### STATISTICS

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

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19 (23 vs. bull rush or trip)

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Extra Channel, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus<sup>B</sup> (dwarven waraxe)

**Skills** Appraise +6 (+8 for nonmagical goods that contain precious metals or gemstones), Heal +9, Knowledge (religion) +7, Perception +4 (+6 vs. stonework), Spellcraft +5

**Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Combat Gear** *potion of shield of faith* +2; **Other Gear** +1

*breastplate*, +1 *dwarven waraxe*, masterwork heavy steel

shield, masterwork light crossbow with 40 bolts, 96 gp, 128 sp

**SQ** armor training 1, aura

---

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Shadow Blend (Su)** In any illumination other than bright light, a shadow creature blends into the shadows, giving it concealment (20% miss chance). A shadow creature can suspend or resume this ability as a free action.

**Treasure:** The weapon rack holds an *inubrix\** longsword, an adamantine dagger, a *noqual\** mace, and a *hot siccitate\** scimitar. The unlocked chest contains four pounds of raw adamantine, three pounds of *inubrix\**, six pounds of *noqual\** and two pounds of *cold siccitate\**. See *Pathfinder Adventure Path #61: Shards of Sin* for more information on the materials marked with an asterisk (\*).

---

### AREA 45: ESCAPE TUNNEL

The crudely cut stone tunnel descends at a steep angle into the bottom of area 14. A black tapestry separates this passageway from the door into the well. The portal is plainly visible from this side. It opens with ease into the bottom of the adjoining well.

# PART FOUR: SILVER MINES AND DEEP CAVERNS

Not far from the castle is the central mineshaft of the kobold's enormous silver mines. The small mining encampment is the closest thing to a village within 2 days walk, allowing the party to rest and recuperate here. However, the amenities are minimal, and the kobolds range in alignment from LN to N to LE, so the service ethic isn't what it might be.

*Activity bustles around an active mining operation among the trees ahead. Large sections of trees chopped away, a large stone building with an enormous chimney, and a huge wheel with oxen inside pulling a load up or down into a shaft in the earth. The surprise is that it's not dwarves doing the digging. Instead, it is fifty kobolds. There are at least 50 or 75 tents and wooden shacks. An elderly kobold with an escort of young toughs watch the visitors from a second stone building built more like a tower.*

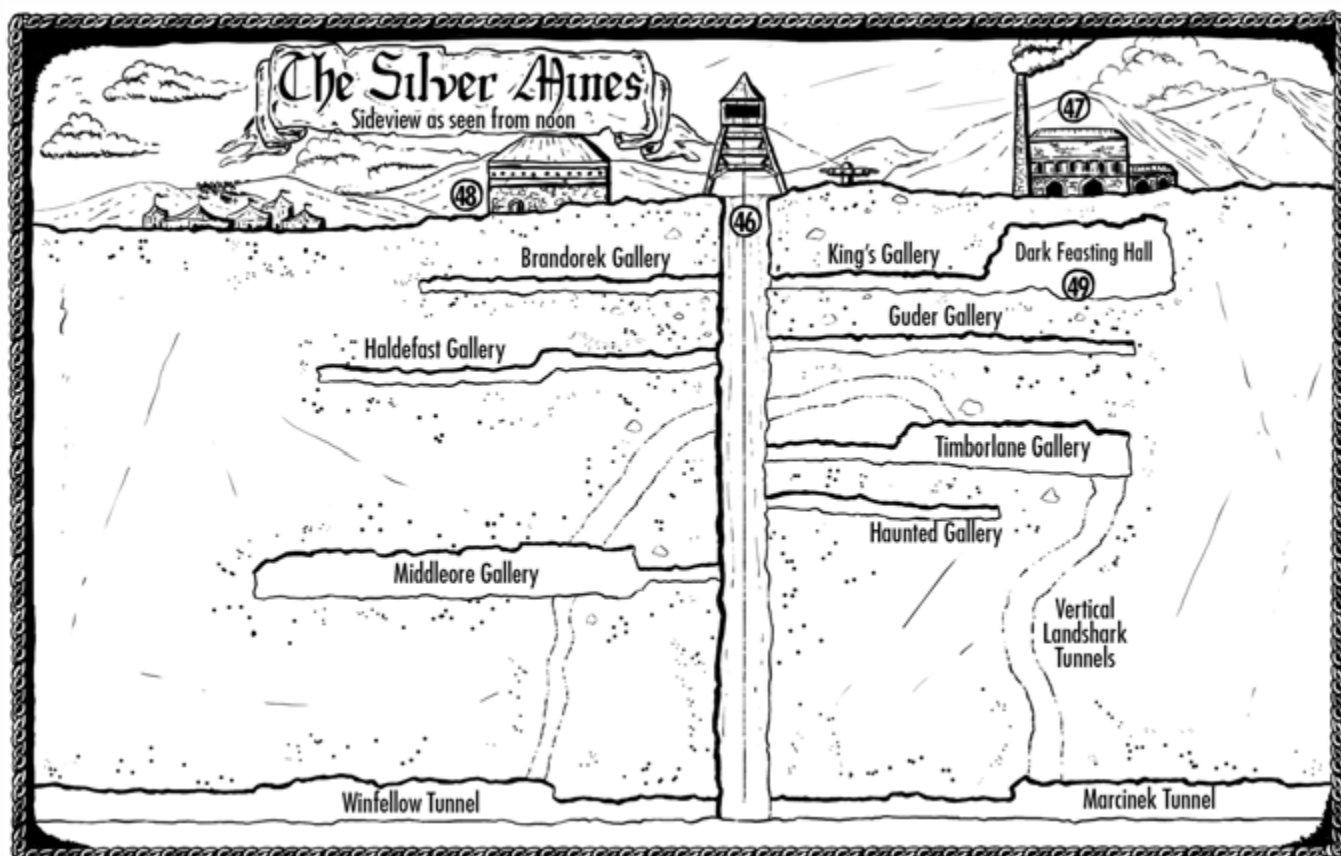
Unknown to anyone but the senior kobolds, their silver mines connect to the Underearth caverns at the very deepest

levels. A group of shadow creatures slowly but surely extends their hold here, as the Shadow Realm's influence steadily grows. If the party proves itself competent and trustworthy (such as by killing the werewolf lord, or by driving away one of the major haunts at the castle), they may be asked to investigate the lower levels of the mines.

## AREA 46: KOBOLD MINESHAFT AND WINDING GEAR

*Two oxen walk around a gigantic wooden wheel that towers over everything else in the camp. The wheel connects to an iron chain that lifts and lowers ore and miners into a mineshaft.*

The 25-foot-tall winding gear moves a wicker and oak basket large enough for 8 Small, 4 Medium, or 2 Large creatures at a time. The mineshaft is 200 feet deep. Commanding the oxen to move without permission of their kobold handlers requires a successful DC 20 Handle Animal check.





The kobolds offer no resistance to any creatures that attempt to climb down the shaft. Although it is likely that the characters can use alternative means to reach the bottom of the shaft (*feather fall*, *fly*, *levitate*, *spider climb*, and the like), the heavily gouged walls can be scaled with a successful DC 15 Climb check.

#### AREA 47: SMELTER

*Near the gigantic wooden wheel are mounds of stone and slag and a brick building with a tall chimney. The buildings doors are open arches. Inside is a powerful fire stoked by a reptilian creature practically wreathed in flames and ten small, fiery humanoid creatures with leathery wings, small horns, and devious grins. Crushed stone and bars of gray and silvery metal are stacked in piles all around them.*

The salamander foreman Vesuvian (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) and his ten flame mephits (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) don't have time to talk or fight. Vesuvian is too focused on extracting silver, zinc, and lead into separate crucibles and pouring ingots to take any interest in anyone other than volunteers and his mephit subordinates. The seven newly made silver ingots here are worth 190 gp. Most are moved quickly to the vault.

#### AREA 48: SILVER VAULT

*There's exactly one heavily guarded stone building in the mining camp. A lone iron door appears to be the only entrance. The windows are round holes too small for even a kobold to wriggle through. Two black-scaled kobolds guard the windows nearest the door, and two more stand on the rooftop.*

Six 9th-level kobold rangers guard the vault at all times. They work in tandem with the off-duty bulettes to guard the silver from the smelter. New ingots are brought in twice a day using passwords.

The goal of the guards is to buy time until a mob of kobolds overwhelms any foes, and the bulettes can be summoned (see the Working Mines below). Mortukuk, the group's leader, wears a *robe of bones*, which he uses to create additional foes each round, stalling even further. The first bulette shows up in round 4, the second in round 5, and the last bulette ally joins the defense in round 8. If the party attempts to outrun the black-scaled guards, they send a pair of scouts to follow.

#### BRANDOREK, BRUNDERVAL, JINGVER, JORSH, EKNDERKEK, AND MORTUKUK CR 8

**XP 4,800 each**

Female and male kobold ranger 9 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

LN Small humanoid (reptilian)

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

##### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +5 Dex, +1 natural, +1 shield, +1 size)

**hp** 63 each (9d10+18)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

**Weaknesses** light sensitivity

##### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *shortsword* +14/+9 (1d4+2/19–20), +1 *light pick* +14/+9 (1d3+2/x4)

**Ranged** mwk sling +15/+10 (1d3+1)

**Special Attack** favored enemy (aberrations +4, humanoid [dwarf] +2)

**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 6th; concentration +9)

2nd — *cure light wounds*, *snare* (DC 15)

1st — *detect poison*, *resist energy*, *summon nature's ally I*

##### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 20, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Double Slice, Improved Initiative, Improved

Two-Weapon Fighting, Point Blank Shot, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Appraise +10, Climb +8, Craft (trapmaking) +12, Handle Animal +8, Heal +12, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +14, Profession (miner) +14, Ride +12, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +20, Survival +8, Swim +5

**Languages** Draconic, Dwarven

**SQ** favored terrain [underground +4, mountains +2], hunter's bond (companions), track +4, wild empathy +9, woodland stride

**Combat Gear** *potion of shield of faith* +3; **Other Gear** +1 *light pick*, +1 *shortsword*, +1 *leather*, masterwork sling with 25 bullets, 82 gp

**Treasure:** The vault contains 28,900 gp worth of silver ingots, which weigh 3,000 pounds and will be defended by the entire camp. If stolen, the thieves have to deal with a kobold lich who uses *discern location* to find the ingots again. The undead wizard plays no part in this adventure.

## THE WORKING MINES

The following section applies to all mining tunnels and chambers, including those bearing a name, that are not designated on the Silver Mines map or the Vesslau Bergwerk map (on page 63).

*The mineshafts are small and almost completely dark. The working sections are tiny tunnels that are five feet high in most sections, where miners follow the veins of metal ore. Hundreds of kobold miners work in complete darkness. Overseers use magical light only to check the grade of ore and to write tallies on tattered vellum. The sound of scratching like claws on stone floats through a larger tunnel, followed by a roar that shakes dust and grit from the ceiling. The miners ignore the noise, hammering at stone without pause.*

The noise is Timborlane, one of the kobold's three tame bulettes, following the most promising veins and to burrow

quickly through unproductive stone. The bulette attacks the party if provoked in any way. The kobolds use the bulette against any party daring to threaten, rob, or murder a kobold—especially at the silver vault on the surface.

Although the kobolds are unaccustomed to seeing visitors, they completely ignore the characters unless a party member speaks directly to them. In that case, the kobold curtly responds with short, staccato answers in a deliberate effort to get rid of the distraction. However, if a PC mentions the *sword of bright shadows* or liberating the kobolds from servitude, the kobold drops everything and merrily engages the character. He refers to the fabled sword as the “instrument of freedom,” though he can provide no details about its current whereabouts other than to insist that it must still be somewhere in the mine, perhaps in their king’s lost tomb. The reptilian humanoid expresses excitement at the prospect of being emancipated, but he dourly concedes that “what is done is done.”

#### **MAGROLANE, TEMMYLASHA, & TIMBORLANE CR 8**

XP 4,800 each

Advanced bulettes (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

N Huge magical beast

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +13

#### **DEFENSE**

**AC** 26, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+4 Dex, +14 natural, –2 size)

**hp** 100 each (8d10+56)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

#### **DEFENSE**

**Speed** 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +15 (2d8+11/19–20), 2 claws +14 (2d6+8)

**Special Attacks** leap, savage bite

#### **STATISTICS**

**Str** 27, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 2, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 32 (36 vs. trip)

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (bite)

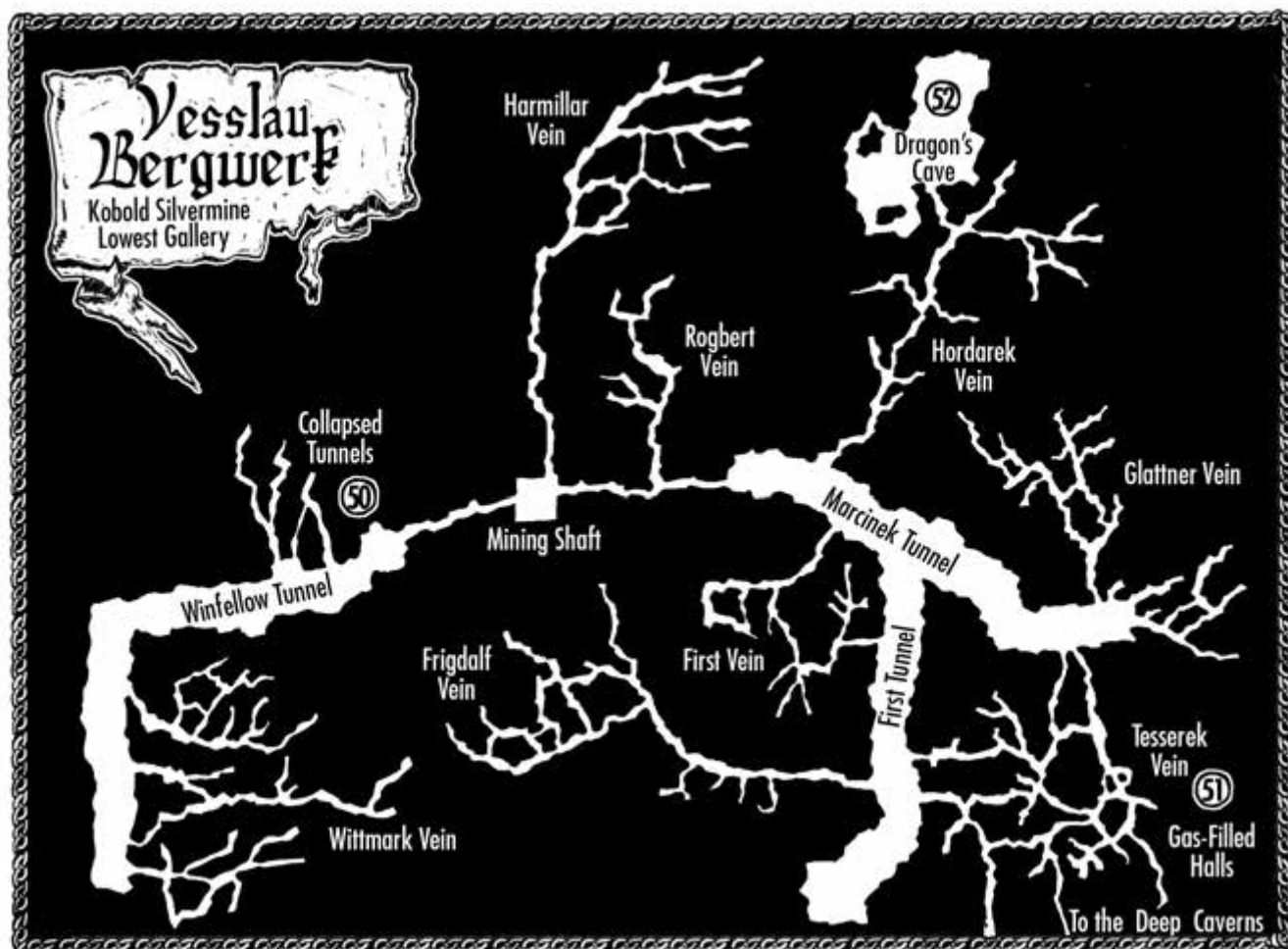
**Skills** Acrobatics +11 (+19 when jumping), Perception +13;

**Racial Modifiers** +4 on Acrobatics checks to jump

#### **SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Leap (Ex)** A bulette can perform a special kind of pounce attack by jumping into combat. When a bulette charges, it can make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to jump into the air and land next to its enemies. If it makes the Acrobatics check, it can follow up with four claw attacks against foes in reach, but cannot make a bite attack.

**Savage Bite (Ex)** A bulette’s bite is particularly dangerous. It applies 1–1/2 times its Strength modifier to damage inflicted with its bite attack, and threatens a critical hit on a 19–20





## AREA 49: DARK FEASTING HALL

*The walls of this enormous cavern are beautifully carved with scenes of a kobold king leading his people to victory over elves, dwarves, and humans. He carries a shining sword and shield, and in many areas is shown with a halo. Several verses of script accompany the artwork.*

If a character speaks and reads Draconic and succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check, she can see that these images do not all depict the same kobold king. Rather they are members of a dynasty that ruled here hundreds of years ago. There are some references to the “blessings of the herald of light” and “the invincible sword of light” in the text, but the writing provides no further details.

## AREA 50: COLLAPSED WORKS

This section of the mines has collapsed. Dozens of phantom kobolds in the form of shadows, greater shadows, and spectres (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) are its only inhabitants. They bemoan their people’s slavery under the foot of the Stross family and their dwarven allies. Although they attack the PCs without mercy, they also beseech the characters to find the lost tomb and free their descendents from bondage.

## AREA 51: GAS-FILLED HALLS

These halls are filled with low concentrations of explosive gasses. Each character can attempt a single DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check to notice the blue caps on their torches or lanterns when entering this section of the mines (dwarves and kobolds gain a +4 racial bonus to this check). If the party notices the danger, they know that they must extinguish fires such as lanterns and torches or risk an explosion. If the PCs are wise enough not to use fire, the five dark creepers and dark stalker master (see below) attack them in an opportune location, such as a tight, narrow tunnel that bottles up the PCs or an intersection that allows the dark folk to surround the characters. In addition, the air is bad enough in these tunnels that it might cause fatigue. Each PC must succeed at a DC 17 Fort save each hour or become fatigued; a fatigued character that fails this save becomes exhausted.

Read the following if the party fails the Knowledge (dungeoneering) check.

*You have walked for hours in the narrow passages below the earth, and the air has always been foul. Now, though, you notice that it is getting worse, as you walk down a sloping passage beside a trickling stream of water. The air around you suddenly turns to fire. The pressure from an explosion rattles the walls and ceiling.*

Each PC takes 10d6 points of fire damage from the explosion and is stunned for a round. A successful DC 19 Reflex save halves the damage and negated the stunned condition. Continue with the following.

*The afterimages from the fireball have barely ended when you hear at least three distinct “chunks” as the crossbows fire from somewhere back the way you came.*

The party encounters five dark creepers and their dark stalker leader, who use their *fog cloud* and *darkness* abilities to keep themselves hidden. The dark folk try to avoid melee, circling around the passageways to attack the party from all sides. The party can attempt Perception checks opposed by the dark folk’s Stealth checks to locate the skulking creatures. If successful, they hear movement both ahead and behind them, retreating. If they spot the dark folk (who stay more than 50 feet away whenever possible), read the following.

*You finally see one of the lurkers, a man-sized humanoid with pale, almost translucent skin. He is clothed in filthy and tattered robes of blackish-gray, and he hisses as he brings his crossbow up to fire.*

The dark stalker knows that the *sword of bright shadows* is here somewhere in the tomb of the Kobold King. She can just about smell it, and she has tortured a handful of kobolds to find out where it is. Unfortunately for her, her information is incomplete. The tomb is inaccessible from here. It is only visible as a shadow during the flashbacks, so she’ll never find it. In the meantime, she’s making life tough for the kobold miners.

## SABELLA INKPOT

CR 9

XP 9,600

Female dark stalker rogue 5 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

CN Medium humanoid (dark folk)

**Init** +5; **Senses** see in darkness; Perception +16

### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +5 Dex, +1 deflection, +2 natural)

**hp** 71 (6d8+12 plus 5d8+10)

**Fort** +5; **Ref** +14; **Will** +6

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

**Weaknesses** light blindness

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *short sword* +13/+8 (1d6+2/19–20 plus poison) or +1 *short sword* +11/+6 (1d6+2/19–20 plus poison), mwk *short sword* +11/+6 (1d6+1/19–20 plus poison)

**Ranged** mwk hand crossbow +13 (1d4)

**Special Attacks** death throes, +6d6 sneak attack

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th, concentration +8)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *detect magic*, *fog cloud*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 21, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Stealth), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Bluff +9, Climb +10, Craft (traps) +13, Disable Device +12, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +11, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +16, Sense Motive +12, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +28, Survival +6; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb, +4 Perception, +4 Stealth

**Languages** Dark Folk, Dwarven, Undercommon  
**SQ** rogue talents (lasting poison, resiliency), trapfinding  
**Gear** masterwork leather armor, +1 *short sword*, masterwork short sword, masterwork hand crossbow with 20 bolts, *ring of protection* +1, black smear (6), 20 bolts

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Death Throes (Su)** When a dark stalker is slain, its body combusts in a flash of white-hot flame. This acts like a *fireball* that deals 3d6 points of fire damage to all creatures within a 20-foot-radius burst. A successful DC 15 Reflex save halves this damage. A dark stalker's gear and treasure are unaffected by this explosion. This save is Constitution-based.

**Poison Use (Ex)** Dark stalkers are skilled in poison use and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves. Like their kin, the dark creepers, dark stalkers use black poison on their weapons and generally carry six doses on them.

**Black Smear**—injury; *save* Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 1 save. The poison DC is Constitution-based.

**See in Darkness (Su)** A dark stalker can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, including that created by *deeper darkness*.

### DARK CREEPER WARRIORS (5)

CR 3

XP 800

Male dark creeper warrior 3 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

CN Small humanoid (dark folk)

**Init** +8; **Senses** see in darkness; Perception +5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +4 Dex, +1 size)

**hp** 42 (3d8+6 plus 3d10+6)

**Fort** +4; **Ref** +8; **Will** +2

**Weaknesses** light blindness

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** dagger +9 (1d3/19–20 plus poison)

**Ranged** sling +9 (1d3)

**Special Attacks** death throes, +1d6 sneak attack

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd, concentration +2)

At will—*darkness*, *detect magic*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand), Weapon Finesse

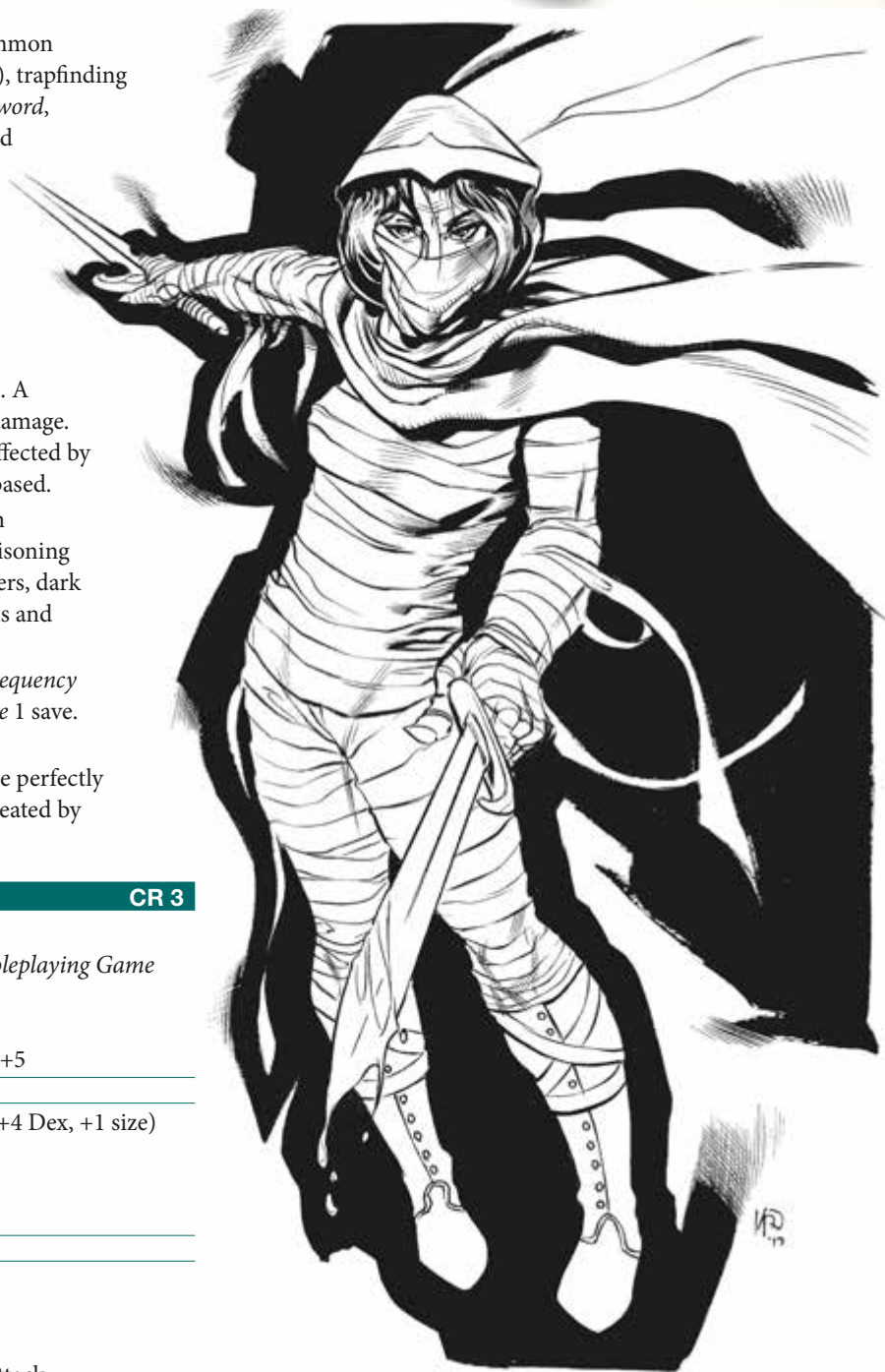
**Skills** Climb +9, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb, +4 Perception, +4 Stealth

**Languages** Dark Folk

**Gear** dagger, sling with 10 bullets, rags, black smear (3 doses)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Death Throes (Su)** When a dark creeper is slain, its body combusts in a bright white light, leaving its gear in a heap



on the ground. All creatures within a 10-foot burst must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d6 rounds. Other dark creepers within 10 feet are automatically blinded for at least 1 round, due to their light blindness. This save is Constitution-based.

**Poison Use (Ex)** Dark creepers are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves. Dark creepers favor a foul-smelling black paste distilled from certain deep-underground fungi known as black smear.

**Black Smear**—injury; *save* Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 1 save. The poison DC is Constitution-based.



**Rag Armor (Ex)** A dark creeper's multiple layers of filthy rags function as leather armor when worn by one of their kind.

**See in Darkness (Su)** A dark creeper can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, including that created by *deeper darkness*.

## AREA 52: DRAGON'S CAVE

*At first glance, a dragon appears to be sitting in this natural cavern, its nostrils curling smoke and flickering with fire. A closer look reveals the beast to be only an expert carving into the stone. The room's air is filled with the smell of charred stone and sulfur. Stone benches, tables, and hearths made for small creatures are scattered about the cavern, while bones and broken utensils litter the floor.*

There's nothing here beyond what is described, unless the party has completed the Enslavement of the Kobolds flashback, which occurs when the PCs defeat the dark stalker and dark creepers, or they reach this locale after succeeding on any two prior flashbacks. When one of these conditions is met, see the "Kobold King's Tomb" below.

### The Kobold King's Tomb

*The carved dragon's mouth looks different now. Instead of a closed snout puffing steam and fire, the dragon's mouth is wide open, as if about to swallow a knight whole.*

Anyone looking inside the dragon's mouth sees a narrow entrance. Read the following.

*Within the dragon's mouth is a tiny room, no more than ten feet square. Hanging from the ceiling are the dragon's teeth; one fang is a bright, shining sword. The thing glows as if it were white hot, but it emits no heat. Underneath, in the area where the throat should be, something stirs its black wings.*

The weapon is the *sword of bright shadows* (see below), which can help lift the curse in the Black Oak Bailey. However, a nightmare angel guards it. The twisted creature strikes out against anyone that enters the room or attacks it.

## NIGHTMARE ANGEL

CR 11

XP 12,800

Nightmare movanic deva (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 4, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 2)

LE Medium outsider (angel, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., detect evil, low-light vision; Perception +20

**Aura** fear (60 ft., DC 22), frightful presence (30 ft., DC 22), protective aura

### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 15, flat-footed 21 (+5 Dex, +11 natural); +4 deflection vs. evil

**hp** 126 (12d10+60); regeneration 5 (good spells and weapons, silver)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil  
**Defensive Abilities** illusion resistance, nature's pacifism, protected life force, protection from good; **DR** 5/good or silver; **Immune** acid, cold, electricity, fire, death effects, energy drain, petrification; **SR** 21

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** +1 unholy scythe +17/+12/+7 (2d4+7/x4)

**Special Attacks** night terrors (DC 16)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +18)

Constant—*detect evil*, *protection from good*

At will—*aid*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *dispel evil* (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *holy smite* (DC 20), *invisibility* (self only), *plane shift* (DC 21), *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear*

7/day—*cure serious wounds*

3/day—*detect thoughts*, *dream*, *nightmare*, *suggestion*

1/day—*antimagic field*, *awaken*, *holy aura* (DC 24), *shadow walk*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 21, **Con** 18, **Int** 19, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 23

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike

**Skills** Craft (weapons) +19, Diplomacy +21, Fly +24, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (planes) +19 [+1 increase from Int increase], Knowledge (religion) +19, Perception +20, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +24, Survival +18; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Intimidate, +4 Perception, +4 Stealth

**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

**SQ** feign death (DC 22)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Fear Aura (Su)** All creatures within a 60-foot radius that see or hear a nightmare creature must succeed at a Will save or be shaken for as long as they are within the aura. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same nightmare creature's fear aura for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

**Feign Death (Ex)** Whenever a nightmare creature is unconscious, it appears dead. A conscious nightmare creature can also make itself appear dead as an immediate action. Any creature that physically interacts with a nightmare creature feigning death must succeed at a Heal check or Will saving throw (DC = 10 + 1/2 the nightmare creature's Hit Dice + the nightmare creature's Intelligence or Charisma modifier, whichever is higher) to recognize it is actually alive.

**Frightful Presence (Su)** This ability activates when the nightmare creature charges, attacks during a surprise round, succeed at a DC 15 Intimidate or Perform check. Its frightful presence has a range of 30 feet.

**Illusion Resistance (Ex)** A nightmare creature automatically disbelieves illusions (no saving throw required) and has a +4 bonus on saving throws to resist illusion effects.

**Nature's Pacifism (Ex)** Animals and plant creatures do not willingly attack a movanic deva, though they can be forced to do so by magic. If the deva attacks a plant or animal, its protection against that creature ends.

**Night Terrors (Su)** Once a nightmare creature enters a target's mind with its *dream* or *nightmare* spell-like ability, it can attempt to control the target's dream. If the target fails a Will saving throw, it remains asleep and trapped in the dream world with the nightmare creature. Thereafter, the nightmare creature controls all aspects of the dream. Each hour that passes, the target can attempt another saving throw to try to awaken (it automatically awakens after 8 hours or if the nightmare creature releases it). The target takes 1d4 points of Charisma damage each hour it is trapped in the dream; if it takes any Charisma damage, it is fatigued and unable to regain arcane spells for the next 24 hours. The target dies if this Charisma damage equals to exceeds its actual Charisma score.

**Protected Life Force (Ex)** Movanic devas are never harmed by positive-dominant or negative-dominant planar traits.

**Regeneration 5 (Ex)** Good-aligned weapons, silver weapons, and spells with the good descriptor cause a nightmare creature's regeneration to stop functioning for 1 round.

**Treasure:** Once the PCs defeat the nightmare angel, they can retrieve the *sword of bright shadows*.

#### SWORD OF BRIGHT SHADOWS

**Aura** strong transmutation; CL 16th

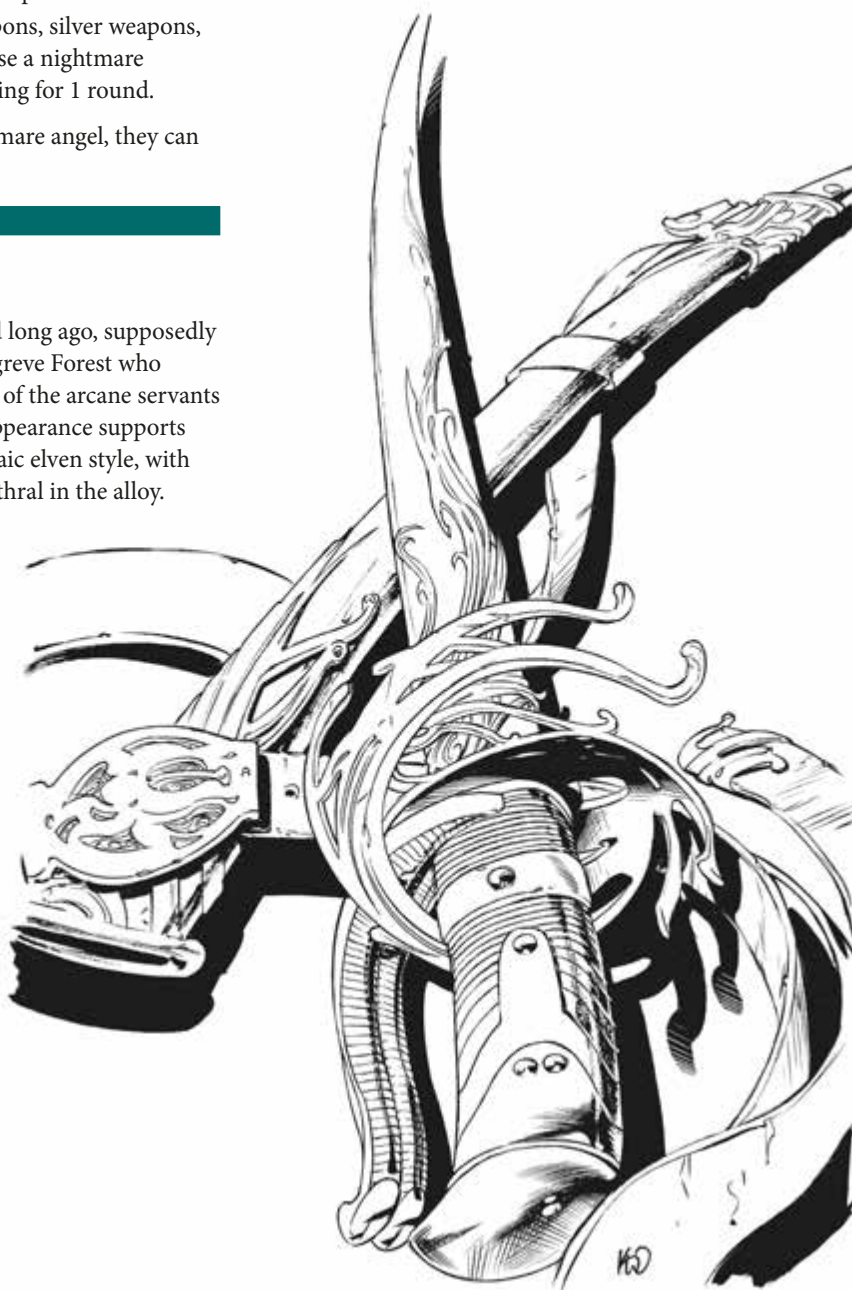
**Slot** none; **Price** 99,315 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

This beautiful steel longsword was forged long ago, supposedly by the Holly King, an elf lord of the Margreve Forest who founded the shadowdancers and the first of the arcane servants called the shadowsworn. The weapon's appearance supports this legend. The blade is made in an archaic elven style, with a three-pronged hilt and heavy use of mithral in the alloy. The weapon gives off a 40-foot-radius glow when drawn from its black wyvern-hide scabbard (equivalent to a *daylight* spell). The weapon is a +2 *brilliant longsword*. In normal combat, the glowing blade is a +2

*longsword*, though its enhancement bonus increases to +4 against shadow creatures, shadow lord creatures and tenebrous creatures (*Tome of Horrors Complete*). Unlike most brilliant energy weapons, it can strike undead creatures. The wielder of the sword never casts a shadow, though in dark conditions he casts a reverse shadow—a dimly glowing patch of ground that shows his form. This property gives the sword its name, but it also effectively negates *invisibility* for the sword's bearer in twilight or dark conditions. The wielder always takes a -8 circumstance penalty to Stealth checks, and cannot hide in plain sight.

#### CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *continual flame*, *daylight*, *gaseous form*; **Cost** 49,815 gp





# PART FIVE: FINALE

When the flashbacks are all done and the castle garden blooms with red or yellow roses, the curse assumes the physical form of the fiendish plant that was planted during the scáthsidhe's blood sacrifice so many years ago (the very sapling that was shown during the Sacrifice on the Hill flashback). Defeating it in this final encounter lifts the curse.

## THE BLACK OAK

When the party has recovered from the last flashback and walks through the Black Oak Bailey, allow them to each attempt a DC 30 Perception check. If a character succeeds on the check, read the following.

*You notice that a few white feathers are scattered near the tree trunk and the tree is empty. Also, the courtyard oak's leaves shake out of time with the gusting wind.*

If they all fail the Perception check, none of them can act in the surprise round when the Black Oak attacks.

*The gargantuan black-barked tree opens a pair of hideous eyes, stretches its creaking branches, and speaks in a rumbling tone. Its branches fan out toward you. A sinister cloud of black and silver leaves flies off the branches and moves your way.*

The black oak is a formidable melee opponent, and unlike the typical treant, its fiendish nature grants it resistance to fire, an unexpected development that might throw experienced

players for a loop. The Black Oak singles out lightly armored foes, using its Power Attack feat to increase its damage. The monstrous creature also despises champions of good, which prompts it to target such enemies with smite good. If possible, the Black Oak moves close to the outer walls to animate up to two trees outside the castle to come to its aid. If the party is on the verge of defeat (or massive losses), Silverwing reappears to cast *heal* on one or more lawful or good party members. He shouldn't fight the oak directly, though.

### THE BLACK OAK

CR 13

XP 25,600

Advanced fiendish tenebrous treant (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, *Tome of Horrors Complete*)

NE Huge outsider (extraplanar)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +14

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 31, touch 9, flat-footed 30 (+1 Dex, +22 natural, –2 size)

**hp** 162 (12d8+108)

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** plant traits; **DR** 10/slashing and good;

**Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 18

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +20 (2d6+12/19–20), bite +19 (2d6+6 plus 2d6 acid)

**Special Attacks** acid bite, bristles (DC 25, 3d6 **Con**), rock throwing (180 ft.), smite good (1/day), trample (2d6+18, DC 26)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 35, **Dex** 12, **Con** 29, **Int** 16, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 34

**Feats** Alertness, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

**Skills** Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (nature) +13, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +14, Sense Motive +17, Stealth –7 (+9 in forests); **Racial Modifiers** +16 Stealth in forests

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Sylvan, Treant, Undercommon

**SQ** animate trees, double damage against objects, treespeech

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Acid Bite (Ex)** The bite of a tenebrous creature is acidic. Any melee hit with its bite attack deals 1d6 points of acid damage if the creature is Medium or smaller size or 2d6 points of acid damage if the creature is Large or larger.

## DESIGNER'S NOTE

While CR 13 might seem low as a challenge against the party (especially if they have leveled up during the adventure), the Black Oak can easily acquire minions to allow you to fine-tune the challenge. One or more of the Four Deaths could help defend the Oak, as their oath to Sarasta demands (though they might fight reluctantly). Shadow mastiffs give a smaller increase to the encounter difficulty, but might be worthwhile for flavor reasons. Finally, all the shadows and darkness within the castle's stones could become a literal black wind of greater shadows. Any or all of those creatures helping the Black Oak can easily bump this encounter to CR 15 or more.

**Animate Trees (Sp)** A treant can animate any trees within 180 feet at will, controlling up to two trees at a time. It takes 1 full round for a tree to uproot itself, after which it moves at a speed of 10 feet and fights as a treant (although it has only one slam attack and lacks the treant's animation and rock-throwing abilities) gaining the treant's vulnerability to fire. If the treant that animated it terminates the animation, moves out of range, or is incapacitated, the tree immediately takes root wherever it is and returns to its normal state.

**Bristles (Ex)** A tenebrous creature is covered in many small filaments that inject a deadly poison into any living creature that comes into contact with them. An opponent attacking a tenebrous creature with natural weapons, unarmed attacks or handheld weapons must succeed on a Reflex save or contact the many bristles that cover the tenebrous creature's head and be subjected to its poison.

On a failed Reflex save the opponent is paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. Immediately after the paralysis wears off, the opponent must succeed on a Fortitude save or take Con damage (the exact amount is based on the tenebrous creature's Hit Dice)—3 HD or less, 1d6 Con; 4–9 HD, 2d6 Con; 10 HD or more, 3d6 Con.

*Neutralize poison* removes the effects of the poison and if cast before an opponent makes it Fortitude save prevents the need for such. Creatures with resistance to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws, and creatures immune to poison are unaffected by a tenebrous creature's bristles.

**Double Damage Against Objects (Ex)** A treant or animated tree that makes a full attack against an object or structure deals double damage.

**Smite Good (Su)** Once per day, Black Oak may smite a good-aligned creature. As a swift action, Black Oak chooses one target within sight to smite. If this target is good, Black Oak add his Charisma bonus to attack rolls and gains a damage bonus equal to its Hit Dice against that foe. This effect persists until the target is dead or Black Oak rests.

**Treespeech (Ex)** A treat has the ability to converse with plants as if subject to a continual *speaking with plants* spell, and most plants greet them with an attitude of friendly or helpful.

If the black oak is defeated, read the following.

*With a last attack, you split the ancient oak's trunk in half. Its leaves curl into shriveled pieces, and a grayish sap spills out onto the courtyard dirt. The gusts of wind end, and the last shadows and chills in the castle seem to disappear.*

*You hear the croaking call of that white vulture that roosted in the tree. "The curse is broken! The goddess no longer rules here!" It launches itself from the tallest tower. Wind lifts it as it flies east, into the rising sun.*

Give the party time to recover before hitting them with the scáthsidhe response given below.

## THE SCÁTHSIDHE MARCH

If the party defeats the Black Oak, the curse is broken. While the party rests and recovers, the shadow fey march out of the Shadow Realm and into the castle, returning to stake their

claim, or so it seems. It rather depends on how well the party did. If the castle has fallen into the Shadow Realm, the march is the evil scáthsidhe's triumphant victory (see The Castle Falls into Shadow below). If the castle is freed of the curse entirely, then the scáthsidhe are free as well. Continue with the following.

*The light in the castle shifts and changes. A purplish-blue twilight comes and goes very quickly, followed by the bright light of noon. You hear harness bells jingling, and the distinct liquid cadences of voices speaking Sylvan and Elven.*

*Looking up you see a procession of shadow fey rushing toward you, some on their own wings, others riding on shadow mastiffs, still others riding white horses. They are coming straight toward the central courtyard. Banners of red and gold and green float beside them, snapping from their rushing speed.*

Give the party time to prepare, heal, or take cover. Then read the following.

*A small shadow fey, delicate as a butterfly, lands on the ruins of the Black Oak. She speaks with such a high voice that it is difficult to understand. Then she bows and points to a single shadow fey coming closer, shaded by a black, rose-embroidered canopy held up by thin, pale figures.*

The small fey speaks in Undercommon saying, "Make ready for the Prince of the Scáthsidhe and his court! He honors you with an audience." This figure under the canopy is Orik, the Moonlight Prince. He is accompanied by 120 of his courtiers, sorcerers, and fighters, including any surviving members of the Four Deaths. They are now neutral aligned and no longer Sarasta's servants. This does not make them friendly, exactly. But unlike the Stross family, the shadow fey remember the vow they once swore and their enslavement to the Shadow Realm (and the PCs' role in changing that history). Not all scáthsidhe have followed them out of shadow, but they are grateful for what the party has done.

*The shadow fey prince under the canopy wears a crown that glows with moonlight. As he steps out from under it, he becomes very difficult to see for a moment. He says, "I am Orik, the Prince of Moonlight and Lord of these scáthsidhe who have defended my interests here in the forest while I was a servant of Shadow. I renounce all my claims to the castle we call Rosehaven, and retain my claims to the Rosehill deep in the Margreve Forest. You have done well for all my people, though I must warn you that not all of them have accepted the lifting of the curse with good hearts." He draws a rapier from his scabbard and offers it hilt-first.*

If the party asks about the shadow fey that are not grateful, Orik explains that his younger brother, the Black Prince, remains in the service of the Goddess. His claims upon the castle are broken. Still, he may hold a grudge. The rapier that he hands over to the PCs is a +1 rapier of speed.

## THE CASTLE FALLS INTO SHADOW

If the party fails at two more flashbacks than it succeeds at, you have the option to call it over. The roses in the Winter Garden all turn black, and the castle permanently crosses the



planar boundary into the Shadow Realm. It cannot return to the Material Plane without the permission of the Black Prince of the scáthsidhe (which will obviously not be forthcoming). The Black Prince arrives the following day to stake his claim and take possession. The transition from the normal world into shadow is fairly obvious. Consult the Shadow Realm description on page 35 and read the following.

*Night falls, or a purplish-blue twilight at any rate. Harness bells ring in the distance, and distinct liquid voices speak a strange language, a bit like a warped Elven. Visible from the courtyard are 30 or 40 black dogs racing through the air, each wearing a tiny saddle and bridle and serving as the mount of a fey warrior. Banners of black and gray and silver float beside them, snapping from their rushing speed. Behind them, all the stars are falling from the sky, like a huge meteor shower. In a minute, the sky is entirely black.*

Give the party time to prepare weapons, heal, and so forth. Then read the following.

*A fey lord wearing black chain armor and an open-faced helm topped by a glowing white feather lands in the black oak courtyard, and speaks to the oak in that strange language. He turns and bows, and says in Common, "This castle is mine now and all its contents. Unless you wish to swear fealty to me, I suggest you cease trespassing." Fourteen warriors and two sorcerers gather around him, but the creak of bows being drawn back in the shadows suggest there may be many more soldiers nearby.*

This is Hander Svenk, the Black Prince, who remains loyal to Sarasta and is delighted to see the castle's curse completed. He is accompanied by 30 of his kin, sorcerers, and fighters, including any surviving members of the Four Deaths. For stats, use the Four Deaths from the Bridge at Oros flashback as Hander and his best fighters, then add 30 shadow mastiffs (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*), 12 greater shadows (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*), and 26 regular shadow fey (*Midgard Bestiary*). If the party attacks, Hander has readied an action to shadow jump away from the party, behind his soldiers. He calls out to his 12 archers to shoot, while the mastiffs, shadows, and 12 melee fighters all attack directly. His two sorcerers attempt to blind the party or strike with *starbolts* and *orbs of light*.

If the party tries bluffs or diplomacy, Hander has little sympathy and a hostile initial attitude. If they truly want to win him over, they should go kill his milksop older brother, Orik. Leaving the Shadow Realm requires the usual methods, such as *ethereal jaunt*, a planar gate or portal, a *gate* spell,

or similar. If the party doesn't have any such means at their disposal, they may need to serve the Black Prince or pay their way home at one of the shadow cities.

## CONCLUSION

If the party sorts out Evander's role, succeeds in the flashback encounters, clears out the monsters haunting the castle and dungeons, and lifts the shadowy curse on the family lineage, they'll have a good claim on the castle. The shadow powers of the castle, its magic, and the shadows themselves will obey the wielder of the *sword of bright shadows* or the slayer of the Black Oak if Evander is dead. The City-State of Zobeck grants the claim to the land and castle, if the Stross family gives up any claim to lordship over the city and its holdings. By renouncing that claim forever, the Strosses hang onto their ancestral castle and the silver mine: better than nothing, especially without the shadow curse.



## FURTHER ADVENTURES

The party may control a cleansed castle, with a good- or neutral-aligned Stross family's name restored. The remaining dangers might include the Grimbolt dwarves, Lóránt the werewolf lord, Vasilios, an escaped Argostad, or some unrepentant shadow fey. Evander, Moira, and Vasilios are grateful to the PCs if the shadow fey tell them what really happened; Zarek is an arrogant young nobleman and refuses to believe that he would have been a vampire if not for the PC's intervention. He calls the heroes a bunch of "Cheeky, conniving beggars out to steal the family treasures."

"Bandits" in the woods attack travelers for some time to come; these servants of the Black Prince can be chased into the woods (the fey are unlikely to stick around for fair fights). Ghosts and shadows do not haunt the castle, but it is still a valuable site near an active mine. A kobold sorcerer lich might claim the castle for the kobold king, or the city may send a garrison and a captain to lead it. Possession still counts heavily

in the PCs' favor, but they might need to spend time or money to retain their hold on the castle.

## MAGIC POWERS OF THE CASTLE

The castle is so deeply infused with magic that it grants shadow abilities to its owner. As far as the castle is concerned, the owner is the wielder of the *sword of bright shadows* (or the slayer of the Black Oak). That PC gains the ability to command any and all shadows and greater shadows at the castle (and to summon a new one once per month). In addition, the PC can cast both *mirage arcana* and *shadow walk* three times per day while on the castle grounds (using her character level as the caster level). If the PC speaks with the greater shadows that live there, he gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (planes) checks he attempts while in the castle. Of course, the shadows also whisper promises of the power that awaits a hero in the Shadow Realm. Eventually, they even suggest swearing an oath to Sarasta.

### OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product Identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content You Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

### 15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v1.0, © 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document. Copyright 2000–2003, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, Andy Collins, David Noonan, Rich Redman, Bruce R. Cordell, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

**Deep Magic.** © 2014 Kobold Press. Authors: Wolfgang Baur, Tom Benton, Creighton Broadhurst, Jason Bulmahn, Ross Byers, Charles Lee Carrier, Tim Connors, Adam Daigle, Jonathan Drain, Mike Franke, Ed Greenwood, Frank Gori, Jim Groves, Amanda Hamon Kunz, Sam Harris, Brandon Hodge, Phillip Larwood, Jeff Lee, John Ling, Jr., Chris Lozada, Ben McFarland, Nicholas Milasich, Carlos Ovalle, Richard Pett, Marc Radle, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Wade Rockett, Stephen Rowe, Adam Roy, Amber E. Scott, Neil Spicer, Owen K.C. Stephens, Joshua Stevens, Christina Stiles, Matt Stinson, Stefan Styrsky, Dan Joyce, and Mike Welham.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide.** © 2010, Paizo Inc.; Author: Jason Bulmahn.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Race Guide.** © 2012, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, Jim Groves, Tim Hitchcock, Hal MacLean, Jason Nelson, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Owen K.C. Stephens, Todd Stewart, and Russ Taylor.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary.** © 2011, Paizo Inc.; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2.** © 2010, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Wolfgang Baur, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, Graeme Davis, Crystal Frasier, Joshua J. Frost, Tim Hitchcock, Brandon Hodge, James Jacobs, Steve Kenson, Hal MacLean, Martin Mason, Rob McCreary, Erik Mona, Jason Nelson, Patrick Renie, Sean K. Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Owen K.C. Stephens, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor, and Greg A. Vaughan, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3.** © 2011, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Jesse Benner, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, James Jacobs, Michael Kenway, Rob McCreary, Patrick Renie, Chris Sims, F. Wesley Schneider, James L. Sutter, and Russ Taylor, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4.** © 2013, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Savannah Broadway, Ross Byers, Adam Daigle, Tim Hitchcock, Tracy Hurley, James Jacobs, Matt James, Rob McCreary, Jason Nelson, Tom Phillips, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K. Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Tork Shaw, and Russ Taylor.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook.** © 2011, Paizo Inc.; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Monster Codex.** © 2014, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Logan Bonner, Jason Bulmahn, Ross Byers, John Compton, Robert N. Emerson, Jonathan H. Keith, Dale C. McCoy, Jr., Mark Moreland, Tom Phillips, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K. Reynolds, Thomas M. Reid, Patrick Renie, Mark Seifter, Tork Shaw, Neil Spicer, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Russ Taylor.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat.** © 2011, Paizo Inc.; Author: Jason Bulmahn.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Equipment.** © 2012, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Ross Byers, Brian J. Cortijo, Ryan Costello, Mike Ferguson, Matt Goetz, Jim Groves, Tracy Hurley, Matt James, Jonathan H. Keith, Michael Kenway, Hal MacLean, Jason Nelson, Tork Shaw, Owen K.C. Stephens, Russ Taylor, and numerous RPG Superstar contributors.

**Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic.** © 2011, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Jason Bulmahn, Tim Hitchcock, Colin McComb, Rob McCreary, Jason Nelson, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K. Reynolds, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Russ Taylor.

**Return to Castle Shadowcrag.** © 2018 Open Design LLC. Authors: Wolfgang Baur and Thomas Knauss.



# RETURN TO CASTLE SHADOWCRAG



The family Stross ruled Zobeck with ruthless cruelty and shadow fey magic for nearly 600 years—until those who suffered under them finally reached their boiling point. The ensuing revolt overthrew the hated Stross, and left their cursed castle a dark and shunned place.

*Return to Castle Shadowcrag* is an adventure where past and present mingle. As the players explore this legendary castle, a single step can send them back in time to participate in its most important events—and possibly change history. Can they lift Shadowcrag's curse, sever its connection to the Shadow Realm, and redeem its melancholy steward, Evander Stross?

The adventure is intended for four 11th-level characters or five 10th-level ones. The heroes are expected to gain 1 level before the adventure's climactic ending.

**PATHFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

**KOBOLD**  
Press

PO Box 2811  
Kirkland WA 98083  
[www.koboldpress.com](http://www.koboldpress.com)