# **ADVENTURE PATH PLUG-IN**

# ROAD TO DESTINY

BY JIM GROVES WITH THE LEGENDARY GAMES DESIGN TEAM

> DARY JAMES



# **ROAD TO DESTINY**

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### HEY, WHAT'S WITH THE ADVENTURE PATH PLUG-IN?

You will see us use phrases such as "Far East Campaign" instead of the title of the most recent Adventure Path. Or, you may see us use names such as the "Destined Empress," the "Elven Protector," the "Caravan Master," the "Mystic Seer," or even the "Eternal Rose" or "Goddess of Love" instead of the proper names of specific characters or places from those adventures or gods from the world setting. While we can create compatible products under the Open Game License, we still have to be respectful of certain content Paizo owns. Because we want to be very respectful of their content and work in partnership with them, we use these "replacement phrases." Plus, this helps the product have a more general appeal to those who may be running a home campaign that fits the same themes. In any event, we are 100% confident you know what we are talking about and will have no problem making the required connection. So, enjoy these pregenerated characters for use in your "Far East Adventure Path," helping the "Destined Empress" claim her birthright across the polar ice cap in the "dragon empire." See, that wasn't so hard, was it?

### SPECIAL ELECTRONIC FEATURES

Some of the content in the stat blocks of the pregens has been linked to the Pathfinder Reference Document, the official online compendium of game rules (when not present there, we also used the d20PFSRD). If it is in the core rulebook, we generally didn't link to it. The point is not to supercede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules. We did link some of the more unusual things, like feats or abilities. On occasion, we linked to content form the core rules if we thought a rule was obscure.

# INTRODUCTION

Road to Destiny is an adventure path plug-in designed to make your Far East Adventure Path experience more flavorful and robust. It is not a traditional adventure, rather it is a series of detailed encounters which integrate and round out an early portion of the PCs journey. In the first chapter of their Far East Adventure Path, the PCs travel approximately 540 miles between their home town and the next established adventure site with no encounters, beyond a random encounter chart. Road to Destiny provides a "story within a story" for those 540 miles and allows the GM to dispense with random encounter tables and creatures pulled directly from a bestiary. The adventure assumes the PCs goal is to travel north while they capitalize upon trade opportunities along the way, not the traditional exploration of ancient ruins and forgotten dungeons. With that goal in mind, the encounters provided are not only interesting but logical for the context of the journey. Road to Destiny provides a richer and more meaningful experience for the players as they cross the width and breadth of the nation of the Gypsies.

### Background

Far away in the Eastern Realms, a coalition of Dark Spirits engineered a plot to seize the Imperial Throne. The Dark Spirits eliminated or corrupted four of the five ruling families. The fifth family became aware of the threat against them. Before their destruction could be orchestrated, they arranged to flee over the roof of the world. Yet, a traitor had already been co-opted in

their midst. This adventure path plug-in concerns itself with the fallout of this treachery.

Shirota, a member of this fifth family, thought it prudent to submit and yield to the Dark Spirits rather than face certain destruction. His dark masters tasked him to spy on his own family and alert them of any sudden changes. When Shirota attempted to warn them of his family's flight-he was caught. Shamed before his kin, he was disowned and dishonored-no longer even recognized by his family's own mystic Seal. Shirota became enraged to the point of madness and attempted to murder his former family's patriarch. He was instead cut down by a trusted bodyguard as the clan fled in the night. With no time for a proper burial, Shirota was left to rot. When the Dark Spirits came upon the abandoned estate they found Shirota's unburied corpse. There they performed foul rituals and Shirota arose to serve them once more, now as a vampire, a jiang-shi, a stealer of breath and chi.

The Dark Spirits pursued the surviving family over the top of the world, and Shirota went with them. Whereas the Dark Spirits focused their divinations upon the location of the family Seal and the general trajectory of their flight, Shirota sought them throughout time itself. Symbols, signs, and portents "speak" to a jiang-shi in ways now other being can comprehend. The slightest patterns and coincidences, from tea leaves, the migration of birds, broken crockery, to morning dew on a spider web speaks the secret language of universe to a jiang-shi, and in this way the vampire communes with the cosmos. To the obsessive Shirota, creation is riddled with hidden messages in every day events that only he can decode and interpret.

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Once the surviving family changed their name and went

into hiding, the Dark Spirits lost their trail. Shirota harnessed his peculiar oracular gifts in order to see his way around the problem. The signs which he alone could fathom led him to an impossible conclusion—he could only cross paths with an Imperial Heir after his son. This represented a paradox because Shirota died childless. Unlike the vampires of the West, a jiangshi's internal organs rot away upon their fell rebirth and all their mortal lusts are replaced with an all-consuming obsession with the circumstances of their undeath. Yet a jiang-shi rarely questions the signs that haunt their daily existence. If the signs dictated a way, then Shirota would follow them—however impossible the way seemed. With foul sorcery, he possessed the body of a Viking reaver. With his cold intelligence and the reaver's warm living body, the vampire sired two fraternal twin sons. Neither boy shared his blood but both were tainted by his undead curse.

One boy was born with skin that is pale and gray. No amount of sunlight could tan his features or redden his complexion. His hair was shockingly white, and his eyes were a pale blue as to be almost almost milky. When he came of age and showed no signs of growing out his preternatural appearance, his birth father declared him accursed. The young man was driven from the frigid Viking Lands, to the Gypsy Lands to the south. There he named himself Ranulfr the White (the "white plundering wolf"). He became an infamous bandit, known up and down the coast. Not knowing the circumstances of his own conception, Ranulfr never realized he was a dhampir. As the years passed with no sign of age, Ranulfr has come to believe he is immortal.

The other son was born normal of appearance, free of unnatural gifts, and enjoyed their father's favor. He remained in the Viking Kingdoms and became a Viking raider. Over the years, he had periodic contact with his brother Ranulfr. The two maintain a tenuous relationship and meet at the Gypsy Lands. At a disreputable port of call, Ranulfr sells his brother the prisoners he has captured. These prisoners are taken to the Viking Lands to be resold as thralls. Despite this cooperation, Ranulfr's agelessness remains a bone of contention between them. Eventually his brother tore out his own eye and replaced it with a nacreous gray sphere ioun stone, which shields him from the effects of aging—henceforth earning him the name of Old One-Eye.

When the Seal was magically located 25 years ago, the Dark Spirits swiftly decimated an entire town to ensure the family's extinction. The Spirits were convinced there could be no survivors and returned Far East Realms to consolidate power and finalize their plans. Yet, Shirota refused to accept the signs were wrong—only that his estimated timetable was inaccurate. Overruled, Shirota was ordered to return to his homeland, but at his insistence the Dark Spirits left a contingent of spies and ninjas in the Viking metropolis of Skargard just to hedge their bets should the vampire prove to be right. Shirota keeps a silent and secret watch on his sons from afar through sorcery, while he waits for an Imperial Heir to appear and cross their path.

In recent years, Old One-Eye has become an old man and the leader of his own band of reavers. Ranulfr had lapsed into ennui, more a mystery and a legend to the people of the Gypsy Lands than the great terror he was 25 years ago. Yet when the Destined Empress and her companions start north on the Road to Destiny, everything begins to change. Shirota, far off in the Far East Realms sees omens manifest as he foretold so long ago. Ranulfr stirs to sudden ferocious activity, drawn instinctually by forces he does not understand. Finally One-Eye is struck at long last by his undead heritage, and becomes consumed by a wasting disease born of his true heritage. The Destined Empress is on the road north at last, and one of the sons of Shirota rises to meet her.

### Adventure Summary

The party departs their coastal home town and heads north and then east towards University Town, a significant point for them to trade and restock their supplies. They are accosted by thieving goblins who attempt to draw off their stoutest defenders to raid their caravan of its goods. Once at University Town, they hear rumors of a legendary bandit, the "White Wolf" who has returned to terrorize the coastline after decades of inactivity. A local rogue attempts to exploit them to smuggle a stolen treasure from the University out of town.

On the road again, their next stop is the town of Wolvington—a community once stricken by a dire plague. Decades ago, Wolvington's leaders invested in a magical jewel which can sense the presence of plague carriers. Only a few of Wolvington's oldest citizens know the device is actually a fake, designed to put minds at rest. The new town Sheriff, entrusted with the secret, is now using for extortion. A citizen who remembers the dark days of the plague asks the PCs to help put a stop to the crooked lawman's scheme.

With Wolvington behind them, the party braves a shortcut through Gnarlwood towards the port of Safe Haven. On the way they are beset by Ranulfr's raiders, who attempt to capture the Destined Empress. If the bandits are successful, the PCs have an opportunity to rescue her later at Safe Haven, before she is sold to Old One-Eye's band.

As the caravan continues north, the party comes across another caravan that has been attacked by ogres. The PCs can turn a blind eye, or help their fellow travelers by mounting an impromptu rescue before it's too late. Finally, in the last leg of their journey to the town where Destines Empress's family secret lies buried, Ranulfr the White confronts them at last-fulfilling the destiny his vampire sire envisioned just over a half a century ago.

### Not Plugging-In

While Road to Destiny is intended to augment an Asian-themed Adventure Path, there is no reason it can't be used as a standalone product. The overarching story is self-contained and comprised of small encounters, each of which can be used as stand-alone encounters to supplement any campaign where caravan travel takes place.

Road to Destiny assumes the party is traveling to another country, specifically to the north and to the Viking Lands. The GM need only supply an alternate motivation for making the journey. The party might be following up on a legendary treasure in the Viking Lands, and have joined a caravan as guards to earn additional income and travel in the safety and comfort of numbers. Alternately, perhaps they have hired to deliver important legal documents or a family heirloom, or return a fallen Viking hero (preserved by gentle repose) to his homeland to receive a proper funeral. The GM need only supply the

motivation for the caravan journey, and *Road to Destiny* supplies the story and the encounters.

The villain of the story, Ranulfr, responds to fate, instinct, and forces he does not comprehend. Yet, he's also a bandit. If the GM is looking for a simpler story independent of the Far East Adventure Path, he can be just an unusual outlaw to match wits with the PCs.

Finally, there is no reason a GM cannot incorporate both random encounters and the encounters described in *Road to Destiny.* The encounters contained within deal with humanoids and the trappings of civilization (or those creatures who prey upon it). When the goal is to get to Point A from Point B in a timely and efficient manner, one doesn't look trouble, rather it seeks you out. On this twenty day journey there is amble opportunity for GMs to add their own random encounters if they like.

### **These Encounters Are Hard!**

*Road to Destiny* plugs into a Far East Adventure Path when the party should be 2nd level. Most of the encounters are quite challenging in terms of CR, yet most are not designed to be utterly lethal. Often they have high CRs because they're addressing the economy of action which often renders some encounters too easy despite their CR. Also, the assumption is made that these encounters are the only one the PCs may experience on a given day; thus the PCs are at full hit points and have a full complement of spells and uses of their special abilities.

The GM should consider how to address the XP the PCs earn. One method is to simply waive the experience gained in favor of a more robust roleplaying experience; another is to enhance the difficulty of the rest of Far East Adventure Path.

### **Caravan** Combat

We at Legendary Games have studied the existing Far Eastern Caravan Rules and determined they work much better with certain assumptions. As written, the caravan encounters are (perhaps unintentionally) balanced as if the caravan was a fifth member of the party, instead of a single substitute for four PCs. By reducing the CR of a caravan encounter by 4, a balanced encounter can be generated using the streamlined caravan combat rules.

Road to Destiny assumes most groups will prefer to play out combat in the traditional manner, with the PCs acting as independent characters. Nevertheless, we don't neglect those groups who want to use the Far Eastern AP's caravan rules. We do recommend significant changes in the "caravan creature" ability scores to represent a fair fight between the Caravan and the forces attacking it. These values prevent the creatures described in the encounters from doing a disproportionate damage to the caravan, while still providing a challenge. Remember, these values are best utilized in a situation where the caravan is fighting as a single unit alone against the encounter. If the PCs act as distinct combatants alongside the caravan, the encounter will be far too easy—a traditional combat should be played out instead (which is what we actually recommend).

For caravan encounters published in your Far Eastern AP, use these values instead of the ones listed. You should also reduce the DCs to bypass encounters with a Security check by 2. Note—this adventure already takes these modifications into account.

Encounter				
CR	AC	hp	Atk	Damage
3	10	5	+0	1d4
4	11	10	+1	1d6+1
5	12	15	+2	2d6
6	14	20	+4	4d4
7	15	30	+6	3d8
8	17	40	+8	4d6+2
9	18	55	+10	8d4
10	19	70	+12	7d6
11	20	85	+13	6d8+3
12	22	100	+15	10d6

# PART ONE: GOBLINS ON THE ROAD

The Caravan Master's route takes the PCs caravan north along the coastal road, and then northeast towards the University Town. The entire journey to University Town spans 133 miles, and unless the caravan is particularly efficient requires 5 days. Goblins are an ever present threat in Gypsy Land. The savage creatures are too ravenous and vicious to properly farm, fish, or create proper long term structures, so their favorite means of survival is to prey upon more industrious creatures while they salvage their debris. The road between the PCs home town and the Monastery of the Wind is well traveled and goblins typically avoid it for fear of quick reprisals. Yet, the path northeast from the Monastery towards University Town is less patrolled and protected, as many caravans take the safer (but considerably longer) route along the southern Lantern River.

Between the Monastery of the Wind and University Town, a small tribe of goblins prepares to ambush the party's caravan. This encounter can be situated at any point between those two communities.

### A. Ambush! (CR 2 and CR 4)

Creatures: The Whistlewhip goblin tribe maintains a ragged existence near the Monastery of the Wind. The numerous existing goblin tribes near the party's home town to the south prevent their move into more populated territory. Yet, this relative scarcity only serves to make the Whistlewhips more devious and cunning. The occasional caravans who take a direct route to University Town are among their favorite targets.

The actual ambush is split into two waves (CR 2 and CR 4). Two groups of goblins are hiding off the side of the road in sparse forest terrain.

The first group is a decoy intended to draw the caravan's defenders away from the caravan itself. They present themselves as a small, easily intimidated group, in hopes of luring any caravan guards into a chase.

If the decoys are successful, the second group emerges to launch the real attack. If the distraction fails, both groups attack together—though the GM should consider mitigating such an event as the merger of the two encounters constitutes an encounter with a difficult between that of CR 4 and CR 5.

The PCs can spot the goblins prior to the start of the ambush >by making a Perception check opposed to the goblin's Stealth

roll. Alternately, since the goblins are not in danger till after they're spotted, the GM can expedite the dice rolling by assigning a flat DC 20 Perception check for the decoy group and a flat DC 25 for the main raid group (this is comparable to a Take 10 Stealth action on part of the goblins).

### The Decoys (CR 2)

The fight begins this way: one goblin from the decoy group is posted near a small tree at the side of the road. This goblin takes a standard action (on the surprise round, unless spotted) to manually knock over a small tree which has been sawed at the base in preparation. This tree requires at least one minute

of labor by 2-3 characters to remove it before the wagons can advance. This forces the caravan to stop and the party to get out of the wagons. If the decoy goblins have surprise, their leader throws a thunderstone at a predominant target from cover, while the other decoys fire at the front of the caravan, targeting drivers and horses. Once in initiative the decoy goblins make no great effort to hide as they seek to encourage pursuit. They fall back behind the fallen tree and continue to make ranged attacks upon any character. Once the PCs or NPCs from the caravan dismount to confront them they avoid positions where a charge is possible and ready actions fall back to just before the PCs can close with them in melee. Their overall goal is to lead the defenders to the north and then off the side of the road. Then Skeeter the druid may cast her entangle spell on the forest ground to keep the defenders stuck and busy while the primary group then launches their attack upon the caravan. If the PCs ignore the decoys, they maintain their ranged attacks as this only serves to weaken the party for when the raid group attacks.

Note, Road to Destiny does not typically note the specific locations of creatures on the maps, but an exception was made for this an encounter to add clarity to the written text. The decoy goblins are noted by the letter D, and Skeeter by the letters Sk. This is done to help GMs, but not hinder them. If the GM sees a better tactical arrangement, they're encouraged to make use of it!

CR 1

### GOBLIN DECOYS (3)

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary, "goblin")

Skeeter, Decoy Leader	CR 1/2
XP 200	X
Female goblin druid 1	
NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)	
Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6	
Defense	
AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +1	size)
<b>hp</b> 12 (1d8+4)	
Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> club +0 (1d4–1)	
Ranged shortbow +5 (1d4/x3)	
Special Attacks fire bolt (1d6+0 fire, 5/day)	
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +3)	A DE LA DE L
1st—burning hands (DC 13)(D), entangle (DC 13)	),
longstrider	
0 (at will)—flare (DC 12), resistance, spark (DC 12	2)

### TACTICS

- Before Combat Skeeter casts longstrider, and then hurls her thunderstone to signal the attack once the tree has been knocked down. This signals the start of the attack for the rest of the decoy group.
- During Combat Skeeter targets the most dangerous and aggressive looking defenders with her bolt of fire ability to draw them into a chase. If she can get a significant number of defenders away from the caravan she uses her entangle spell to try to keep them rooted in place.
- Morale If reduced to three hit points or less, she attempts to withdraw and heal herself with her potions.

ROAD TO DESTINY IM GROVES

Maph-Goblin Ambush

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### STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 11 Base Atk +0; CMB -2; CMD 12

### Feats Toughness

Skills Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +6, Ride +8, Spellcraft +3, Stealth +13, Survival +4; Racial Modifiers +4 Ride, +4 Stealth

### Languages Goblin

SQ nature bond (Fire domain), nature sense, wild empathy +1

Combat Gear potions of cure light wounds (2), thunderstone; Other Gear mwk studded leather, shortbow with 10 arrows, tindertwig (2), spell component pouch

### The Goblin Raiders (CR 4)

Creatures:. The raid leader, Sputterlick, makes the determination when to attack the caravan, based upon how successful Skeeter and the decoy group have diverted would-be guards. The GM should also consider how the pace of the overall encounter. If the players won't give pursuit and the decoy group succumbs too easily, the raiders launch their attack promptly.

The raid group doesn't fight 'fair' in any sense of the word. Whether the GM narrates the goblin's tactics as part of caravan combat, or plays out traditional combat, the goblin's don't hesitate to set the wagons on fire, attack the horses, cut the horse's harnesses, and in general mob any one on the ground.

The caravan's draft horses are assumed to be "heavy horses" as described in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary, and a full stat block has been provided for the GM's convenience. It is assumed the horses cannot use their hoof attacks unless cut free of the caravan hitching, however they can bite.

### CARAVAN DRAFT HORSE

### XP 600

Advanced heavy horse

N Large animal

Init +4; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

Defense

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, -1 size)

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, -1 size) hp 19 (2d8+10) Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3 OFFENSE Speed 50 ft. Melee bite +5 (1d4+5), 2 hooves +0 (1d6+2) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. TACTICS During Combat The draft horses have limited options except bite at adjacent goblins. They cannot make hoof attacks whil

- bite at adjacent goblins. They cannot make hoof attacks while hitched to the wagons.
- Morale If a draft horse is reduced to 9 hit points or less, they attempt to turn their wagon around in order to retreat in a panic. The wagon may be come stuck if there is insufficient room to do so. As a full round action, a character who successfully makes a DC 15 Handle Animal check or Profession (Driver) check can steady them to remain where they are.

### **STATISTICS**

Str 20, Dex 18, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 17, Cha 11 Base Atk +1; CMB +7; CMD 21 (25 vs. trip) Feats Endurance, Run<sup>B</sup>

### Skills Perception +8 SQ docile

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Docile (Ex) Unless specifically trained for combat (see the Handle Animal skill), a horse's hooves are treated as secondary attacks.

### Sputterlick

### XP 400

Male goblin alchemist 2

CE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

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

### Defense

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 18 (2d8++6)

Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; +2 vs. poison

### Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk morningstar +5 (1d6+2)

Ranged sling +4 (1d3+2) Special Attacks bomb 3/day (1d6+1 fire and catch fire, DC 12, 10 ft. radius)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 2nd)

1st-bomber's eye, enlarge person (DC 11), expeditious

### retreat TACTICS

**CR 2** 

Before Combat Sputterlick drinks his mutagen the round before he calls the raid group to attack. His stat block reflects this.

During Combat Sputterlick deploys his bombs first if possible, to create chaos and wear down any remaining defenders. Before he wades into combat, he ingests his enlarge person elixir. With enlarge person on top of his mutagen he has: AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15, mwk morningstar +5 (1d8+3), STR +2, DEX -2, CMB +4, CMD +15

Morale If brought down to four hit points and unless the goblins are doing very well, Sputterlick takes his expeditious retreat elixir and attempts to vacate the fight.

Base Statistics Without his mutagen or enlarge person Sputterlick has: AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13, mwk morningstar +5 (1d6), STR 10, INT 15, CMB +0, CMD 12, Craft (alchemy) +7, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Spellcraft +7, Swim +2

### **STATISTICS**

Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 6 Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 14

Feats Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Throw Anything

Skills Craft (alchemy) +6, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Perception +6, Ride +6, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +12, Swim +4; Racial

Modifiers +4 Ride, +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin, Gypsy

- SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +2, identify potions), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 20 minutes), discoveries (explosive bomb), poison use
- Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds; Other Gear mwk studded leather, mwk morningstar, sling with 10 bullets

### Whistlewhip Goblin Raiders (4) CR 3

XP 200 each Goblin warrior 2

### CR 1

### CE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

### Defense

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size) hp 13 each (2d10+2)

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

### Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +7 (1d4/19–20) Ranged shortbow +6 (1d4/x3)

### TACTICS

- **Before Combat** The Whistlewhip raiders wait for Sputterlick's command to attack, and require a full round action to come out of hiding.
- **During** Combat They focus on defenders on the ground, or barring such targets—the horses and their harnesses
- **Morale** The Whistlewhip raiders are more ferocious than their two leaders and fight to the death.

### **STATISTICS**

Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8

Base Atk +2; CMB +1; CMD 14

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Ride +11, Stealth +12; Racial Modifiers +4 Ride, +4 Stealth

Languages Goblin

Other Gear leather armor, mwk short sword, shortbow, with 10 arrows

**Caravan Rules**: If all of the PCs have left the caravan, the fight can be streamlined by pitting the caravan against a CR 4 caravan encounter (to represent the main raiding group) using the ability scores in the sidebar "Caravan Combat". The caravan can avoid this encounter by intimidating the goblins into looking for easier prey with a successful DC 17 Security check. Note, if both groups of goblins attack at once and you still want to use caravan combat rules, treat the goblins as a CR 5 caravan encounter instead of CR 3. Every character who successfully makes a DC 15 Intimidate check can add +1 to the Security check.

**Challenge Adjustment**: If the party's APL is raised because some of the significant NPCs are join the fight as additional combatants; the overall CR of the encounter can be raised or lowered by 1 by adding or subtracting one additional standard goblin to the decoy group, and one goblin raider to main raiding group.

**Treasure**: The Whistlewhip don't conveniently bring their tribal treasure with them to the raid. Even so, PCs who search for tracks with a successful DC 16 Survival check locate their modest make-shift 'fort' in the woods after an hour. Besides typical goblin refuse, a successful DC 15 Perception check locates a dilapidated strongbox Sputterlick withholds from the rest of the tribe. The strong box can be opened with a successful DC 15 Disable Device check or simply smashed open (5 hardness, 1 hit point, break DC 17). The box contains Sputterlick's formula book (which only contains the elixirs in his stat block but is an otherwise serviceable book with empty pages), alchemical materials and reagents which can be cobbled together to create or restock an alchemical lab, and 100 gp worth of various gold, silver, and copper coins.

### Traditional Combat versus Caravan Combat and "keeping it real"

The recommended method of combat resolution in *Road to Destiny* is traditional combat, where the caravan serves as part of the terrain or a nearby structure. Yet, we honor your Asian Themed Adventure Path by recalibrating the caravan encounters—just in case you want that option.

The problem starts when you become tempted to mix them. The two combat resolution mechanics are relatively incompatible in most cases. This is usually easy to avoid as the GM simply chooses the method they like the best. The PCs may struggle against a "main opponent" in a traditional combat, while the caravan fights that opponent's minions off to the side, in a separate but parallel fight.

Since this may be the party's first caravan encounter we wanted to provide a traditional combat which is also memorable and authentic—goblins fight dirty. The challenge is to simulate those dirty tactics without opening the door to unwanted encounter complexity. Here are a few techniques to liven up the battle without undue stress. As always, the GM should streamline the encounter however they see fit.

Damage to the Caravans and Goblin Fires: One method to avoid complex structural damage rules is to have individual goblins who are not engaged with the PCs attack the caravan directly. An individual goblin which goes uncontested does 1-2 points of damage per round to the caravan itself. Alternately an uncontested goblin can spend a full round action to light the caravan on fire, provided they have a source of flame. Caravan wagons burn in five foot sections which do 1d4 points of damage per round at the start of the turn of the creature who set it. The fire spreads to a random adjacent five foot section each round unless extinguished, and each burning five foot section deals 1d4 points of damage individually. Likewise, a significant NPC (like the Destined Empress, Caravan Master, or the Fortune Teller) can spend a full-round action to put out a five foot section of a fire, or automatically oppose a goblin vandal. This is allows the GM to reallocate some of the extra goblin attackers (especially if the PCs become overwhelmed), and keeps significant NPCs engaged in the story without the need for someone to run them in combat. If the fires or other structural attacks go unchallenged, the GM can require a loss travel time spent on repairs, and loss of trade goods needed for those repairs. Normally we don't advocate the mix of regular combat and caravan rules, but this technique is one method by which the GM could combine the two systems.

Horses and Caravan Movement: Although facing does not exist as a concept in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, the GM may optionally prohibit the horses from biting creatures that are not adjacent to the square their "front half" occupies. This is an added layer of complexity, but takes into account that the horses really cannot turn around without the entire wagon rotating with them. The horses do attempt to turn around and flee if injured enough. Rather than incorporate an entire vehicle combat system, the GM should bear in mind that the horses need to move one square forward before they turn and move one square in a forward diagonal direction. The chance of a wagon becoming stuck is high, as the goblins chose their ambush site well. If a horse dies, the wagon it pulled cannot move until the animal is replaced.

# PART TWO: UNIVERSITY TOWN

When the PC's caravan reaches University Town an area is set aside for caravans to the south of town. Here caravans can park, circle their wagons, and strike a campfire. A public well is available for groups to draw water in order to cook, clean, and water their animals. The town is not walled, but a guard post is established where the main road diverts into town. A wooden gate that blocks the road can be raised and lowered, which prevents a caravan from riding through town, but does not significantly deter foot traffic.

Common practice for the town guard is to permit each caravan to drive a single horse drawn wagon into town to sell, buy, and exchange cargo. This discourages congestion in the streets and keeps the town from being overrun. Conversely, it is not uncommon for townspeople to visit the campground fires. Some Gypsy caravans supplement their trade with music, dancing, gambling, and fortune-telling in the evening.

The road continues north, past University Town along Cinder Lake for 32 miles. Just past Cinder Lake, is the northern half of Lantern River—where a ferry crosses near the town of Wolvington.

University Town gets its name from the Gaimen College, which is attached to a private school of magic called the Dusk Institute. Gaimen College is an adjunct to the Institute and serves as a preparatory school for those with wealth who seek a higher education. The College and the Institute drive much of the town's economy and play a central role in the community. The community qualifies as a large town from an economic perspective, though its population is closer to that of a small town.

There is no caravan encounter set at University Town, however the PCs make repairs to the caravan, purchase upgrades, and buy and sell trade goods to further finance their journey. If the PCs mention that they are traveling north to merchants (or admit it when asked), they receive a +1 circumstance bonus on their special Resolve checks to trade. A number of caravans have become uneasy about traveling north due to bandits. Southern merchants seek to encourage brave traders to transport their goods the north before their revenue streams dry up. This can serve as a hint to the players to make skill checks to find out more about the bandit situation.

# Gather Information subset of Diplomacy or Knowledge (local)

PCs who wish to learn more about the bandits, or are just curious about local news as it pertains to their journey can make a DC 15 Gather Information subset of Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check. The levels of knowledge cascade, so a successful roll also reveals of the previous pieces of information.

- 15+ A band of bandits have become organized under some strong leader, and have conducted raids north of University Town. The worst activity has actually been reported north of Wolvington, so the trip is considered safe at least that far.
  - 20+ The bandits not only steal goods, but take prisoners—

who have not been seen since. Survivors tell stories of the bandit leader as being Viking, and called "the White Wolf".

• 25+ The bandit leader is said to get his name from his white hair man and pale skin

### B. Campground Confrontation

The PCs become embroiled in a robbery which took place in town just prior to their arrival. The thief is a gnome illusionist named Vaylenchek, and the item is a rare spell book—pilfered from the Dusk Institute. The book in question is entitled *Folio* of the Faebinder. It is a treatise on fey magic, with an emphasis illusion and charm magic. Although the Institute does not know the identity of the author, the book has an uncommon slant towards the use of illusion and enchantment on fey creatures, which are often resistant to such magic.

What few know is the author learned these secrets while the lover of a powerful Fey Baroness from the Faerie Lands. After the author ferreted out many magical secrets, they slipped away from their faerie patron with nary a word—and returned to the Material Plane. While the author's final fate is unknown, the Baroness placed a bounty on the book over a century ago. Just this past year while on a visit to the Dusk Institute, Vaylenchek noticed the volume among the reserved collection. When he returned to his gnomish community within the Somnos Forest, he confirmed the reward is still posted and made his plans. Vaylenchek returned to University Town a few weeks ago and carefully infiltrated the Institute. Rather than thwart the Institute's magical wards and protections, Vaylenchek played a cautious gambit. By way of invisibility, cunning, and stealth he observed the instructors at the Institute for over a week until he knew the required passwords to bypass the library's defenses. He succeeded in the theft of the tome, but not before he triggered an unexpected mechanical trap which did him a mild injury. The gnome transferred the book to a satchel he specially prepared in advance. The satchel contains thin sheets of lead sewn into the sides to block divinations like locate object.

Unfortunately for the wizardly thief, the theft was noticed much sooner than he anticipated. A mere hour after his flight, the Institute hired Lexia Harken to recover the book. Lexia is an inquisitor whose faith concerns itself with Law, Trade, and Travel. The Inquisitor has acquired a blood sample of the thief (from the aforementioned trap), and tracked Vaylenchek throughout town with her *bloodhound* spell. The PCs become involved when the gnome selects their caravan to be the device by which he smuggles the tome out of town. His plan is to keep a safe distance and reclaim it later. This is an open-ended encounter which the GM can use as a mini-sandbox, and even play out over future encounters and character levels.

### The Thief (CR 3)

**Creature**: First, the GM should decide how Vaylenchek divests himself of the book and hides among the PCs caravan. If the GM doesn't want to leave PCs involvement to chance, Vaylenchek hides his satchel among their newly acquired trade goods in advance so the PCs carry it back to their wagons without their knowledge. In such a case he shadows the PCs so he can either steal it back or make contact with them later, once they've left town.

Alternately, the gnome could use Stealth, Sleight of Hand, or *invisibility* to stash it somewhere among their wagons—giving the PCs an opportunity to catch him.

Finally, Vaylenchek could approach and seek employment with the caravan, and stash the tome among his gear. In this final option he hopes to hide amidst the travelers and go unnoticed, and that the PCs resist being questioned or having their wagons searched.

The GM should also decide whether Vaylenchek is on the scene or not when Lexia arrives. He should be in most cases, except if the tome was smuggled inside the PC's trade goods earlier. If he is present, he should either be invisible, hiding, or be present as a new member of the PC's caravan crew.

### Vaylenchek

CR 3

XP 800 Male gnome rogue 1/illusionist 3 CN Small humanoid (gnome) Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +9

### Defense

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size) (+4 dodge vs. giants)

hp 28 (4 HD; 1d8+3d6+10)

Fort +4, Ref +7 (+1 vs. traps), Will +5; +2 vs. illusions

### OFFENSE Speed 20 ft.

Melee rapier +5 (1d4-1/18-20)

- **Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6, +1 on attack rolls against goblinoid and reptilian humanoids
- Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5) 5/day—blinding ray
- **Illusionist Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd; concentration +5) 2nd—<u>create pit</u> (DC 14), invisibility, misdirection 1st—color spray (DC 14), disguise self, expeditious retreat, mage armor

0 (at will)—*detect magic, mage hand, open/close, read magic* **Opposition Schools** necromancy, abjuration

### **STATISTICS**

Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 10

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** –1; **CMD** 13

Feats Dodge, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +10 (+6 when jumping), Bluff +6, Climb +5, Disable Device +9, Disguise +5, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +8, Spellcraft +8; Racial Modifiers –4 Acrobatics when jumping, +2 Perception

Languages Common, Gnome, Gypsy, Sylvan, Viking

- SQ trapfinding +1, arcane bond (*wand of grease*), extended illusions +1 rounds
- **Combat Gear** potions of cure light wounds (2), wand of grease (6 charges), wand of minor image (5 charges); **Other Gear** cloak of resistance +1, key of lock jamming, grappling hook, lead-lined satchel. silk rope, spell component pouch, mw thieves' tools, 19 pp, 4 gp

### The Detective (CR 4)

**Creatures:** Once the GM has determined if and how the PCs meet Vaylenchek, and the circumstances by which the *Folio* of the Faebinder is hidden on their wagons, Lexia arrives to

investigate. Based on how the GM sets the encounter up, she may or may not suspect the PCs involvement. She is a fair woman but this is a matter of personal conviction, a contract with the Institute, and a matter of reputation for her. She means to see the book recovered and the thief caught if possible. The Institute has also offered her 850 gp for the book's return.

Lexia arrives at the campground from the town to the north. She is accompanied by one of University Town's guard. This doesn't make Lexia an "official" representative of the University Town's law enforcement, but the guard does lend weight to her ability to investigate and ask questions. The guard is also a witness to everything which transpires, and if the PCs are completely uncooperative it reflects on them poorly. If the party is unwarrantedly hostile to Lexia, the GM may consider penalties to all social skill rolls and other penalties to their ability to trade and do business in town.

Lexia's tracking abilities have led her to campground but now the trail ends. Her recourse is to visit each campsite and ask questions. Most Gypsies are reluctant to answer any questions but don't want their ability to trade significantly impacted. Lexia's questions are in the vein of, "Has anyone suspicious come around lately? Has anyone tried to get you to buy or accept anything for them?" When she arrives at the PC's caravan, the scent of Vaylenchek is stronger than anywhere else. She may ask if she can search their wagons, though she has no legal authority to make such a demand. While Lexia has no legal authority she may try an opposed Bluff check to convince the party she does. Conversely, Lexia has an unfriendly starting attitude towards the PCs (based upon her suspicions than genuine dislike); a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check allays her suspicions and convinces her to search elsewhere. Lexia only fights if strongly provoked.

### Lexia Harken

XP 800

Female human <u>inquisitor</u> of Travel and Trade 4 LN Medium humanoid (human) **Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +9

### Defense

**AC** 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +1 shield) **hp** 29 (4d8+8)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +7

### Offense

### **Speed** 40 ft. **Melee** mwk morningstar +6 (1d8+2)

**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)

Inquisitor Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +7) At will—detect alignment

**Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 4th; concentration +5)

2nd (2/day)—<u>bloodhound</u>, detect thoughts (DC 15)

1st (4/day)—<u>interrogation</u> (DC 14), <u>litany of weakness</u>, shield of faith, <u>wrath</u>

0 (at will)—<u>brand</u> (DC 13), daze (DC 13), detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, <u>sift</u>

# Domain Travel

**During Combat** Lexia is quick to use her *<u>litany of weakness</u>* in conjunction with physical combat. *Shield of faith* is an option only if she has time to cast a standard action spell.

Morale If outnumbered (which is likely), Lexia flees early, well

CR 3

# Map B-Campground Confrontation

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### before she has lost half her hit points.

### **STATISTICS**

### Str 14, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 15

- Feats Judgment Surge, Lightning Reflexes, Paired Opportunists, Toughness
- Skills Bluff +5, Diplomacy +7, Heal +7, Intimidate +10,
- Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (local) +3, Perception +9, Ride +5 (+7 to remain in saddle), Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +5, Survival +10, Swim +6; **Modifiers** +2 Ride to remain in saddle

Languages Common, Gypsy

- **SQ** cunning initiative, judgment 2/day, monster lore +3, solo tactics, stern gaze, track +2, +10 base speed from Travel domain, agile feet (6/day)
- **Combat Gear** *wand of cure light wounds* (15 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, mwk buckler, mwk morningstar, mwk light crossbow, holy symbol, light horse, military saddle, 17 gp

### UNIVERSITY TOWN GUARD

CR 1

XP 400

Human warrior 3 LN Medium humanoid

Init +0; Senses Perception +3

### Defense

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor) hp 19 (3d10+3)

Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1

### Offense

Speed 20 ft.

**Melee** halberd +5 (1d10+3/×3) or heavy flail +5 (1d10+3/19–20) or sap +5 (1d6+2 nonlethal)

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

### TACTICS

**Morale** The Guard doesn't fight for long if outnumbered. He flees back to town for reinforcements.

### **STATISTICS**

Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +5 (+7 sunder); CMD 15 (17 vs. sunder) Feats Alertness, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +5, Perception +3, Ride –3, Sense Motive +2 Languages Common

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** halfplate, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, halberd, heavy flail, sap, 5 gp

Additional Challenge: Vaylenchek should remain a CR 3 challenge, however Lexia and the town guard together constitute a CR 4 challenge. Adding a second guard to assist Lexia makes it a CR 5 challenge. Alternately if Lexia conducts her investigation by herself, she is CR 3 all on her own.

**Development**: There is no absolute right or wrong in this situation. The Fey Baroness that placed a bounty on the book believed herself to be wronged—taken advantage of by the author for the knowledge contained within the book. Thus, Vaylenchek sees himself as the instrument of an ancient wrong put right. Yet, the Dusk Institute bought the book decades ago in good faith and with no prior knowledge of its history. They do not see it as fair that they should suffer the cost of the book through no misdeed on their part. Lexia Harken may be zealous but only seeks to recover actual stolen property. There are merits to either position and the PCs are free to choose either side. Finally, this is a roleplaying social encounter, but of course, combat is always an option.

If the PCs somehow discover the book and fully cooperate with Lexia, she offers them portion of her own reward money—200 gp, and with a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check can be persuaded to half it with them, for 425 gp. If she recovers the book without their help, the PCs are told they'll be lucky if she doesn't mobilize the town guard to run them out of the area. Finally, if her exchange with the party resulted in combat, she flees in the face of superior numbers. Yet the inquisitor swiftly returns with a number of University Town's guards to back her up. The PC is free to expand that situation by multiplying the number of guard's with her.

If Lexia's investigation comes up empty, Vaylenchek either shadows the caravan on its journey until he can steal his book back. Alternately, if he is part of the crew he stays with it until he's sure there is no pursuit, and then he joins another caravan heading back south. If the stolen spell book is discovered later, Vaylenchek does his best to maintain possession, but offers to let any PC copy spells out of it freely.

Also, if the theft goes undiscovered it is entirely possible the group has not seen the last of Lexia. If she gains a single level, she'll be able to cast <u>blood biography</u> and discover the identity of the thief. The faculty at the Dusk Institute may be able to scry Vaylenchek and set Lexia on the party's trail. Once the book is miles from town, Vaylenchek may cease to conceal it in his lead-lined satchel, and Lexia can cast *locate object* when she is close to their location (particularly if the GM elects she has seen the book before in her dealings with the Institute). Lexia's reaction to the PCs reflects how they've treated in the past, only now she'll have her <u>discern lies ability</u> to guide her.

**Story Awards**: If the PCs discover what Vaylenchek is up to and make a decision on what to do about it on own their terms (even if that means working with him), award them xp as if they had defeated him in combat. What signifies success is whether they're tricked into doing what he wants, or they decide what do on their own with full knowledge of the situation.

If the PCs thwart Lexia's investigation with minimal confrontation award them xp as if they had defeated her in combat. If they simply turn over the book and Vaylenchek to her, it counts as defeating him and not her.

**Treasure**: Besides the possessions of the NPCs, the book itself is a magical treasure.

### Folio of the Faebinder (Level 7 Illusionist)

The covers of medium sized book are of bright blue-dyed leather, but the spine is constructed of cold iron, as are the triangular metal pieces which protect the corners. The pages are of a fine crisp paper, often with ivy scrolled in green ink along the borders. The delicate handwriting is bright red in contrast.

Protection Average lock (DC 25), and the entire book is warded with *illusory script* (Will DC 16; on failure, the suggestion is for the reader to "Close the book and forget its existence").Opposition Schools divination, necromancy

Value 1,705 gp

4th—charm monster, hallucinatory terrain 3rd—fly, illusory script, invisibility sphere, major image 2nd—blur, hideous laughter, hypnotic pattern, mirror image 1st—charm person, color spray, dancing lantern, disguise self, hypnotism, magic aura, memory lapse, silent image, vanish

0—all but those in the opposition schools

### PREPARATION RITUAL

**Stolen Faerie Secrets (Su)** When you prepare three spells from this book, you can access to this boon until spent, or until you prepare spells again (whereupon it can be reapplied). You are considered trained in the Knowledge (nature) skill as long as the check pertains to identification of a creature of the fey type. If you are already trained in this skill, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus instead. This passive bonus remains until the boon is spent. You may spend this boon as a free action when you can a charm or illusion spell. If the spell allows a saving throw, the DC is increased by 4 if the target has the fey type.

# PART THREE: WOLVINGTON

The town of Wolvington is 32 miles due north of University Town, with an exception of a ferry trip across the Lantern River. Pcs who successfully make a DC 15 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check can recall that Wolvington had a reputation as a safe haven for people with maladies approximately 40 years ago. When the town was subsumed by the large city-state to the south there was an unfortunate purity and cleansing campaign waged against the town's citizenry, and the "problem" was declared resolved. Many still consider Wolvington to be an odd rural community, but both the regional and local governments are content to forget the past and discourage public talk of anything outside the ordinary about the town now.

### C. Roadside Conversation

A few miles south of the ferry, the PC's caravan overtakes the horse drawn wagon of an elderly farmer, Hortus Ulby (NG male human druid 1/expert 2). Hortus flags them down and introduces himself and makes them an offer. Hortus has 4 units of trade goods—particularly fresh and healthy produce from his farm. He offers to sell them to the PCs at cost (10 gp each) if they are interested in a resale opportunity at Wolvington. The exceptional quality and freshness of his goods grants a +2 circumstance bonus on any special Resolve check made to sell them.

If questioned why he doesn't want to take his goods to market himself and therefore obtain a better price for himself directly, Hortus grudgingly makes an admission. "I don't cotton to messing with that fool of a Sherriff they got up there now. Not today anyway. On the bright side, I don't think he'll pester you folks—not being local and all." Hortus is hesitant to elaborate on his comment, but if the PCs prompt him or appear friendly he elaborates.

"Wolvington does some odd things, but for good reasons. The town relies on trade, so merchants and caravans need to feel safe going through there. Conversely, folks who have lived there for generations need to feel safe that nobody is going to stir up trouble. Forty years ago there was a trouble with a plague and the matter was put to rest. At that time, it was the job of the Sheriff to make sure there were no further troubles. To protect itself, the town invested in a magical jewel which only glows when in the presence of the plague, or someone who might be a carrier. The plague is said to run in families, you see. If someone tries to enter town and the jewel glows, the town guard turns them back at the gate, and everybody feels safe.

Hortus lowers his voice carefully. "Now don't be tellin' anybody I told you this, but the whole thing is a sham. Forty years ago, folks were putting the torch to their neighbor's house for no cause but fear, and the whole community was tearing itself apart. The *plague stone* is a fake and it always has been. The Sheriff can turn it on and off whenever he wants, and all it does is glow. Furthermore, it ain't been seen to glow in a dog's age. The plague died out years ago, but the *plague stone* puts folk's minds at rest.



The old Sheriff used it only rarely, and as an excuse to keep undesirables out of town. Keeping the peace is the Sheriff's real job."

"Problem is, the old Sheriff passed away last year and we got ourselves a new one. This fellah, Burniss is his name—he was alright at first. He's knows the secret of course. Except lately, he's been asking for 'donations'. From farm folk coming into town, and from what I hear, those families that once had a history of the plague. He plays at it as being for his retirement fund, new equipment, and the like. Ha! More like to pad his purse and buy liquor! If folks don't pay, he suggests the *plague stone* might just light up someday. If it does, it means scandal, accusations, and being run out of town. That being said, Burniss doesn't fool with travelers from the south. That would lead to too many questions, and outside interest. That's why I wanted to sell my goods to you. Its better to sell at cost, than take the pinch from that thief."

The following are some logical questions the PCs might ask, as well as Hortus's in character responses.

How do you know all of this? "I know a little nature magic, and I'm old enough to remember the bad times. Some of us have been around long time, long enough to figure a few things out."

What was the plague? "I'd rather not get into it. Let's just say, it was a problem that could have been contained within

the community, except some religious folks from outside the community came and decided they knew what was best for everybody else. As a result a lot of people got hurt and killed on either side. Someone came up with the idea of the *plague stone* as a way for everybody to go forward with their lives. It was a means to show the matter was settled, so we could all just get along. Problem is, this new Sheriff—he's rockin' the boat with his greed."

Has the plague really died out? "Does it matter? Merchants and caravans ain't had no trouble with sickness in 40 years prior to this and there's no reason they're gonna start now. The folks of Wolvington got a handle on this, so long as a certain someone doesn't stir things up that are nobody's business."

How does the Sheriff make the stone glow when he wants? "He knows some command phrase or combination of words, probably passed on from his predecessor. He hasn't carried out his threat enough for anybody to figure them out yet. He keeps the *plague stone* under lock and key when it's not on display at the gate."

What can be done about the Sheriff? "Ah, now that's an interesting question!" (See Below)

Hortus "needs" to sell his produce, but what the old druidfarmer "wants" is to persuade some adventurers to help the Wolvington community. This entire conversation is a means to discover something about the party and to gauge their reaction to his story. It is indirect, but for what Hortus has in mind, it is safer than being forthright. If the PCs give the impression they are decent and trustworthy people, Hortus makes them an offer.

"Sheriff Burniss needs to go, but that's the town's concern, not yours. Myself and some other concerned folk would rather do it without an unpleasant confrontation. I think if the Sheriff's racket was exposed before the whole town, he'd have the good sense to pack up and leave. Our reliance on the plague stone also needs to come to an end. There's no need to rely on magic as a surrogate for common sense. We've taken up a collection to compensate any group that would do us a favor. Steal the stone out from beneath the Sheriff's nose. We'll gather folks up and show the whole town it ain't real, and we'll get his shake down racket out in the open. He won't be able to fight the whole community and we can see him on his way. The only thing which stops us now is that some folks still believe in the stone, so we need to pass it around and show them. Then there won't be any doubt about it."

If the PCs agree, Hortus and his fellow backers agree to pay the party 500 gp (total) if they steal the *plague stone* and deliver it to them. Hortus says his grandson will be posted a mile south of town, and once the party reports the stone's acquisition Hortus's group will assemble, tender the promised amount, and then proceed to town to confront the Sheriff. The party can persuade Hortus to increase the amount by 100 gp with a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check, but no more. As it stands, he represents a handful of local people who are tired of the new Sheriff. Each of them has contributed towards the bounty, but they have no further financial resources to offer. The farmer's story is accurate, and if the PCs make a DC 20 Sense Motive check they receive a hunch that Hortus has no ulterior motive other than to expose the Sheriff as a crook.

If the PCs decline, Hortus asks for their discretion about what they discussed and wishes them good luck on their travels. The old man would prefer they not tell the Sheriff, but he doesn't fret over the prospect of the PCs betraying his confidence—he believes the matter will be settled soon, one way or another.

If the PCs question "how" they're supposed to steal the plague stone, Hortus explains they need to devise a plan which works well for them, nevertheless he offers some suggestions. First, he suggests they finish their trip to town and assess the situation. He does describe the gate and how the *plague stone* is hung above it during the day (see section D., below), but there should be no harm in scouting the situation out. They could assault >the gate, but that surely leads to an attack from the guards, and Hortus doesn't want any townsfolk seriously hurt or killed-even Sheriff Burniss. The guards on the wall are often bored, lazy, and thirsty, and could be distracted while the plague stone is stolen out from beneath their noses. The plague stone is locked up at night and the Sheriff frequents the local tavern. A clever or attractive PC could pickpocket the keys while someone else keeps the Sheriff busy. Finally, they could burglarize into the town jail after nightfall and steal it that way. This is a problem with numerous solutions designed to allow the players to exercise their creativity.

### C1. The Wolvington Gate (CR 3 or CR 4)

The road forks to the east and leads towards a tall, wooden, stockade wall which encircles a settlement. The side road leads to a pair of large double doors which form a gate through which a caravan can enter. A large red crystalline stone is attached to a chain and hangs above the gate, while the chain disappears through a small hole set in the wall. Directly above the gate is a covered guard post set on the wall on the interior side. Additional guard posts are set on the wall on either side.

The walls that surround Wolvington are 15 feet high and require a successful DC 21 Climb check to scale without additional aides. Structurally each 10-ft.-by-10-ft. section has hardness 5; 60 hp; Break DC 25. The entire wall is not manned, just near the west and east gates. The east gate is typically only opened in emergencies, and all caravan traffic is rerouted to the other side.

The magic stone hangs 10 feet from the ground on a chain (hardness 5, 10 hp, Break DC 20), and is lowered in place from a small trapdoor on the walkway above.

Creatures: Sherriff Burniss typically mans the gate from the ground at the busiest times of day. This enables him to keep track of who is in town, and he can single out local farmers to extort. Burniss doesn't demand much from the farmers, usually only a few pieces of silver, but this accumulates quickly. He extorts much more from the families who have a history of the plague. Those who balk at paying are threatened with their history with the plague (real or fictitious) made public knowledge. While Hortus Ulby knows the truth, most of the town does not. Anyone thought to be a plague carrier faces being ostracized, their goods and custom refused, turned away at the town's gate, or run out of town. Burniss prefers to prey on locals who are dependent upon the town. He is not likely to trouble the PCs—provided they look and act as if they are just in town to do business. The men and women of the town guard are not part of his scheme, as Sheriff Burniss is loath to share the stone's secret. When the Sheriff is present at the gate, he and one of his guards above constitute a CR 4 encounter.

It is difficult to trick the Sheriff. He keeps the guards alert and disciplined. Attempts to Bluff or otherwise distract any of the guards should be treated an opposed Sense Motive check made against the Sheriff himself. Yet, the Sheriff takes a late afternoon lunch at the local tavern an hour to an hour and a half. This can be discovered with a successful DC 12 use the Gather Information subset of Diplomacy (or simply observing him discreetly for a day). While the Sheriff is gone, the guards become much more relaxed. They are unaccustomed to any true threat at the town's gate and take the community's safety and security for granted. Consequently the GM may allow the PCs to gain an advantage through roleplaying, and/or Bluff or Diplomacy checks to engage them in conversation and otherwise distract them. For example, they often man the walls in four shifts. With the Sheriff elsewhere, they could be persuaded to leave their posts for only a moment to flirt with admirers, respond to staged disturbances nearby, or accept a hot drink or cool ale, depending on the prevailing weather. This is a CR 3 encounter when only a normal guard mans the gate, with another in the guard post above.

### Wolvington Town Guard (1-2) CR 1

XP 400 each

Human warrior 3 LN Medium humanoid

Init +0; Senses Perception +3

### Defense

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor) hp 19 (3d10+3)

Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1

### Offense

### Speed 20 ft.

Melee spear  $+5(1d8+3/\times3)$  or heavy flail +5(1d10+3/19-20) or sap +5 (1d6+2 nonlethal)

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

### STATISTICS

### Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 15

Feats Alertness, Power Attack, Rapid Reload

Skills Intimidate +5, Perception +3, Ride -3, Sense Motive +2 Languages Common

**Combat Gear** potions of cure light wounds (2); **Other Gear** half-plate, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, heavy flail, key to common areas of the town jail, sap, spear, 5 gp

### Sheriff Burniss

### XP 800

Male human expert 3/fighter 3 LE Medium humanoid (human) Init +1; Senses Perception +0

### Defense

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge) hp 41 (6 HD; 3d10+3d8+7) Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +5 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +10 (1d8+3/19-20) Ranged mwk light crossbow +7 (1d8/19-20)

### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12 Base Atk +5; CMB +8; CMD 20

Feats Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Rapid Reload (light crossbow), Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Appraise +7, Bluff +9, Climb +7, Craft (traps) +10, Diplomacy +6, Disable Device +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +9, Ride +8, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +8, Survival +7

Languages Common, Gypsy, Viking

### SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of invisibility; Other Gear +1 chain shirt, mwk longsword, mwk light crossbow, with 10 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1, two keys to the town jail, masterwork manacles, masterwork thieves' tools

Additional Challenge: Along to the wall, to the north and south, are two additional guards. The encounter as it stands is CR 3 or CR 4, but adding additional guards can easily make it more challenging. Sheriff Burniss with two guards is a CR 5 encounter, while three guards without the Sherriff is a CR 4 encounter. The GM should not feel they must add these additional guards, as they can be ordered to maintain their positions to prevent a breach elsewhere along the wall.

Development: There is no small risk involved in the theft of the stone from the gate in broad daylight. If it goes poorly or is mishandled, the party runs the risk of being run out of town and isolated from their caravan (if parked inside). Worse, if the PCs are associated with the caravan, it could be impounded. If the caravan was left outside of town when these hijinks take place, it can still enter if the PCs are not seen as to be attached to it. The ramifications of these possibilities are beyond the scope of this product, but the GM is free to explore them. There is no specific advantage to the direct "in broad daylight" approach other than rapid escape out of town is much more feasible-and the approach requires less patience on the part of the PCs.

The PCs may decide after all this that Hortus is a troublemaker, despite his appeal and forthright explanation. The party can simply report the plot to Sheriff Burniss. In such a case, Burniss gives them a 50 gp reward, and grants them access to the town to buy and sell, and refurbish their caravan before they continue on their way (something he encourages them to do as soon as possible to avoid a confrontation). He asks them not to discuss the matter further, and in return treats this information as if it came from an "anonymous source".

### Wolvington Town Jail

CR 3

Wolvington locks its gates at night and Sheriff Burniss takes the plague stone to the town jail where it is secured until morning. The Sheriff is off-duty at night and resides in personal quarters inside the jail itself. This approach is certainly unexpected and significantly reduces the risk of casual observation by witnesses. The disadvantage is it is difficult to leave town until daybreak.

The jail is only intended to house town drunks, pick-pockets, and other minor criminals. Serious criminals are either sent to the major city-state to the south for trial, or dealt more immediate justice from the town council (only in the case of situations deemed too dangerous for delay). Consequently it is not unheard of for the jail to be unmanned during certain times of day time unless there are prisoners who merit close supervision. A few town guards are found here just prior to dawn, midday, and dusk as they prepare to change shifts. The Sheriff is out most of the day except for a check-in at midday, and nightfall when he secures the stone. He spends a few hours at the tavern and is then inside the jail till morning.

Physically the jail is a solid structure in good repair. The walls and floors are wood, but the doors are specifically strong wooden doors (see Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook). All of the rooms are kept locked for the sake of security. The Sheriff and the Wolvington Town guards all carry a key on a ring attached to their belts, which unlock every door and cell, except rooms C4 and C6, and the Sheriff's desk. Those two rooms and the desk have different locks, the key to which only Sheriff Burniss carries. Most areas have a hanging light oil lamp except where noted, which may or may not be lit, depending on whether

**ADVENTURE PATH PLUG-IN** 

# Map C-Wolvington

the guards or the Sheriff are in the building.

### C2. Jail Entrance

This L-shaped room appears to be an office, with wood plank floors and white-washed walls. A plain desk and chair sits in the west corner with nothing on the desktop itself. On the southern end of the room is a slightly larger desk and chair, upon which are a handful of papers, an inkpot, paperweight, and quill. Behind the southern desk is heavy-duty, standing, wooden locker with its doors closed. Sturdy wooden double doors exit to the north, while another set of double doors lead deeper in the building to the south. A single door is set in the wall to the west just behind the smaller desk.

All of the doors in and out of this area are routinely locked and require a successful DC 20 Disable Device check to unlock. The smaller desk to the west is for guards to use as necessary, and is more often than not just a spot to lounge behind during meetings, assignments, or slow periods.

The Sheriff's desk is locked and requires a successful DC 22 Disable Device check to unlock (it can be opened by the same key that opens area C4 and C6). The contents are mostly unremarkable. A successful DC 12 Linguistics (or a Profession skill that applies to administrative work) confirms that Burniss is actually qualified and competent in his job. His papers detail work assignments, a budget from the Town Council, payroll, and necessary repairs to the town's public facilities. A simple log book detail noteworthy events from recent months, yet the majority of the entries are still mundane by an adventurer's standards. Success by 15 or more does uncover a list of names entitled "Known carriers—approach with caution." The list suggests individuals who may have suffered the plague of 40 years ago, or was related to someone who did. A PC who does some follow-up detective work in the community can confirm the list has several older Wolvington families on it with a successful DC 15 Gather information use of Diplomacy.

1 square = 5 f

The locker against the south wall is closed and locked, but is far simpler to disable than most others, and requires only a successful DC 15 Disable Device to open. Inside are 3 spare light crossbows, 8 sets of 10 crossbow bolts, and a half-dozen pairs of manacles and leg-irons. One set of manacles are masterwork.

**Treasure**: The locked desk drawers also contain 10 crossbow bolts treated with alchemical silver worth 21 gp.

### C3. Hallway

This simple hallway runs east and west. The west end widens to accommodate a large table against the south wall and a single door that leads north. The east end is narrower, with two sets of double doors which lead north and south, and another door which goes east and outside.

This is a simple hallway with a couple special features. The large table on the west side is often covered with dishes from the local tavern. The jail has no means to prepare food, so simple meals (gruel and bread) are brought over from the tavern through the east door and placed here. All the doors are routinely kept locked, except when meals are served. A successful DC 20 Disable Device check opens them all except the door to C4, which requires a DC 22 Disable Device check.

Between the sets of double door is a "trap" but not in the strictest sense of the word. Due to a flaw in the jail construction, the wooden floors are particularly creaky here. A creature that walks through this square creates a loud creak which is heard in areas **C2** and **C4** with a successful DC 15 Perception check, even with the doors closed (allowing that the listener is awake and alert). A character that actively checks the floor can notice the loose boards with a successful DC 20 Perception check, and a character with the trap spotter rogue talent can stop in a nick of time with a DC 12 Perception. Once a creature is aware of the loose boards they can move through the square at a normal speed without causing it to creak.

### C4. Sheriff's Quarters (CR 3)

This room is someone's personal quarters, as evidenced by a medium sized bed, chest of drawers, a small table and foot locker. A set of double doors exits to the north.

The footlocker is locked and requires a DC 22 Disable Device check to open, or the same key that opens the doors to C4 and C6.

**Creature**: Sheriff Burniss can be found in this room after nightfall. While he doesn't retire early, by 11 o'clock he beds down for the night. His armor, cloak, and other items can be found on top of the small table. His sword and crossbow are readily available at his bedside if there is a disturbance.

### Sheriff Burniss xp 800

CR 3

**hp** 41 (see page 17) **AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge)

### TACTICS

- **Before Combat** If Burniss hears a disturbance in the jail, he gets out of bed quietly and readies a weapon and cloak. He'll then assess the situation. He may try to ambush someone coming in the room, quietly investigate, or elect to hastily don his armor (which requires 5 rounds and imposes a –1 armor and armor check penalty).
- Morale If cornered, Burniss fights ferociously and to the death.However if granted any means to move towards a more open area, he takes it, while he yells for help as loud as he can.If reduced to half his hit points he aims to get outside and summon his town guard and townsfolk.

**Treasure**: The Sheriff's footlocker contains a sack with 400 gp and 2 vials of *silversheen*. This is a portion of the gold that Burniss has extorted from the families who still carry the plague. This portion he keeps on hand for personal spending money, and sometimes even to pay his guards, offer rewards, or pay for information from informants. He keeps the rest secured in the armory in area **C6**.

### C5. Jail (CR 2)

Three cells line the west wall, comprised of iron bars built into the walls and floors with single swinging cell door. Inside each cell, straw pallets serve as the only furniture. On the east wall are two doors, the northernmost is wood, but the southernmost one is constructed from iron. The words 'Sheriff Only' are painted on the metal door's surface. A final door is set on the southern end of the room.

As mentioned elsewhere, all of the doors and cells are kept routinely locked and all of them, except the iron door, have an identical lock whose key is carried by all of the town guards and the Sheriff. The doors can be opened by a DC 20 Disable Device check, except the iron door (hardness 10, 60 hp, break DC 28) whose lock is DC 22.

During the day this area is lit by a single *everburning torch* mounted on the east wall between the two doors. At night the torch is covered to make the area dark. This prevents the prisoners from trying to knock down an oil lamp to set the jail on fire, or otherwise distract the guards.

**Creatures**: The cells are occupied by three people (CN human commoner 1 / rogue 1), Oswin Grady, Mikel Greentoes, and Loupin Cartwright. Oswin (the only female) is in for pickpocketing, Mikel for public drunkenness, and Loupin for window peeping. The trio are mostly harmless (though Loupin less so), and because they have no weapons or armor they are not treated as a combat threat. The <u>beggar stat block</u> without weapons can be used as a stat block if necessary.

While they are not a threat, they can be an obstacle. If the PCs enter the area, they become curious and demand to know what the PCs are doing—especially if they start to open the iron door. To curry favor with Sheriff Burniss, and in hopes of an early release from jail, they may start yell for attention. There are ways to mollify them however, which include release by the PCs, a successful DC 13 Intimidate check against all three, or a spell or effect that renders them unconscious. Diplomacy is less effective than normal, as they have no real incentive to help the party if they receive nothing in exchange. A successful Bluff check could trick them into expecting a favor or release once the PCs are finished. They know little about what is behind the iron door except the *plague stone*, and some sets of armor and weapons. The trap inside C6 is not evident from across the room, and Burniss is secretive when he opens and enters that area. All three share the same opinion of the Sheriff—a competent lawman who has his own corrupt nature.

**Story Award**: There should be no need to fight the prisoners, but they can complicate matters. If the PCs keep them from interfering with their plans, grant the party a 1,200 xp story award. Note, the GM should not grant this award if the jail is unoccupied except for the prisoners!

### C6. Vault

This spacious room is bare accept for an armor rack, weapon rack, and a small chest. A single iron door on the west wall provides the only entrance and exit.

Within this room the Sheriff houses the *plague stone*, some of his ill-gotten gold, and spare sets or armor and weapons which he issues to the town guard. He does not permit any of townspeople in his employ access to this room, even though the armory is technically a "town resource." There is an unlocked wooden chest here with the rest of the Sheriff's personal hoard **ADVENTURE PATH PLUG-IN** 

of gold as well as the *plague stone*. The lock to this door requires a DC 22 Disable Device check, or the key that Sheriff Burniss carries on his person.

**Trap**: Concealed against the ceiling is a trapped rigged up by Burniss in the form of heavy half-moon bladed axe constructed from alchemical silver. When the door is opened, the axe is released to swing down in a 45 degree arc and bury itself in the gut of the unfortunate character in area C5 who opened the door. The trap is particularly difficult to detect from outside in area C5, as most of the mechanism is behind the door. Once inside C6, the device is obvious. A small button is concealed along the door's jamb which bypasses the trap, and allows the door to be opened without danger or the need to reset the trap.

### HALF-MOON BLADED AXE TRAP

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

CR 2

Trigger touch (door opening); Reset manual; Bypass (hidden switch) Perception DC 25

Effect Atk +10 melee (2d8+1/x3); single target

Treasure: On the armor racks are five sets of half-plate armor, with a weapons rack that holds 5 spears, 5 flails, and 5 heavy crossbows. The trap itself may be dismantled and a serviceable masterwork silver greataxe taken from its components. Inside the chest are 280 gp, 22 pp, and the plague stone.

### PLAGUE STONE

Aura moderate divination; CL 3rd Slot -; Price 2,700 gp; Weight 7 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

This dark, wine colored crystalline stone is approximately 6 inches in diameter and has a small metal loop mounted on the back, suitable for it to be hung by a rope or chain. With a command word, the plague stone can light up as per the continual flame with a bright ruby color which can be seen plainly even in daylight. It manifests a moderate divination aura, but has no divination properties.

### CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, continual flame, magic aura; Cost 1,350 gp

### Ramifications of the Theft

If the party successfully obtains the *plague stone* and arrives at the meeting point south of Wolvington, they are met by a young man named Trevis. Trevis is Hotus's grandson who instructs them to wait while he fetches his grandfather for the exchange. When Hortus returns it is with a company of 20 men and women from the surrounding farms and properties. Hortus asks for the *plague stone* and in return pays the party the agreed upon 500 gp. If the party insists the stone is more valuable than that, Hortus motions for them to hand over the stone as he explains, "After I'm finished with it, you can keep the damned thing." Hortus explains he and his group is going to confront the Sheriff in front of the whole town, and that he is responsible for what happens next. The party is welcome to come to help demonstrate a show of force, or they can watch from the side, or just depart on their way. In any case, their obligation is now over. Hortus intends to show the town the plague stone, and make it plain that

he personally had it stolen. He promises that any repercussions from the theft won't fall on them.

If the party confesses that they killed the Sheriff in the process of obtaining the stone, Hortus is grim and a hush falls upon the assembled group with him. Someone from the community asks Hortus, "I thought you said no one would get hurt?" Hortus hushes that individual, but is plainly downcast. "There was always a chance, because we all know Burniss wouldn't give up the power or the money without a struggle." He peers at the PCs, "I take responsibility for this, but it would be best you folks went about your way now."

Hortus is true to his word. He and his group march together to the gates of Wolvington, and brush past the startled guards who are too taken aback to turn away people they recognize as friends and neighbors. Unless Sheriff Burniss was inadvertently killed, he is alerted to the theft by now and emerges to confront Hortus and the mob directly. He demands to know what is going on.

What proceeds is a confrontation, during which Hortus tells the astonished townsfolk that the plague stone is a fake and always has been. Burniss tries to deny it, but Hortus knows a little magic and aptly demonstrates that anyone with the secret can turn make the stone glow whenever they want.

"Forty years ago, this town was tearing itself apart. We had zealots and inquisitors turning neighbor against neighbor. The people of Wolvington were always able to keep their secrets and sort their own problems out, but we just needed a reminder. Our old Sheriff gave us something we could believe in, a magical jewel that told us that everything was alright and that the plague was gone. With some help from some cooler minds down south, we restored order for generations. Yet, we have lived in fear of a problem we could always control ourselves and we put our faith in a lie." The old man hefts the glowing stone in one fist. "The time for lies is over. Sheriff Burniss here has turned our fear and our comfortable lies into a means to get rich off our hard work. It wasn't for this abuse of power we made him Sheriff. It's high time we went back to the old ways of looking after this community. By watching out for your neighbor when they need help, and minding our own business when they don't." The old man fixes Burniss with a steely glare. "Your services are no longer required here Burniss. Get your things and get gone! We want you out of this town by sundown."

What proceeds is up to the GM. A simple resolution is for Burniss to sulkily collect his belongings and leave town, followed by a watchful group of townsfolk. If the GM wants to get the PCs into the action as the final heroes of the day—it should be encouraged! Burniss may fly into a rage and make to attack Hortus, and the PCs can capture, arrest, and secure him in his own jail. In incarcerated, the town sends him south to the major city state for a quiet trial, after which he is never heard from again.

Much of the gold Burniss kept in the jail was extorted not only from locals wanting through the gate, but from long standing families who were once known to have a plague carrier in their family. While the gold technically belongs to them, no one steps forward to claim it. Hortus reckons they would rather have their privacy and security than actually come forward to make a

claim. If the PCs put themselves forward, no one objects if they take the money as an additional reward.

### **Other Business**

Aside from the *plague stone* and the Sheriff, Wolvington is an excellent place to resolve other business. The PCs can buy and sell trade goods, put in for repairs, and even purchase new wagons and items.

The party may even wish to follow-up on rumors about the mysterious bandit lord alluded to in University Town.

# Gather Information subset of Diplomacy or Knowledge (local)

PCs who wish to learn more about the bandits, or are just curious about local news as it pertains to their journey can make a DC 15 Gather Information subset of Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check. The levels of knowledge cascade, so a successful roll also reveals of the previous pieces of information.

- 10+ The White Wolf (the notorious bandit lord) is definitely abroad in this part of the Gypsy Lands. Travelers from the north report caravans have been attacked. He rarely comes this far south, but his reach has expanded and his bands sometimes attack travelers on both sides of the Lantern River.
- 15+ Some believe the White Wolf is a ghost or an evil spirit, because this is not the first bandit lord to stalk the Gnarlwood area to go by that name.
- 20+ The current White Wolf's behavior, strategy, and tactics bear a striking resemblance to the original, but that would make him at least twenty-five years older and yet virtually unchanged.
- 25+ The White Wolf's bandits always steal valuables and often take prisoners as thralls. They take the hardiest captives prisoner and let the rest go. Some report they study each captive's face carefully, as if looking for someone specific.

# PART FOUR: SHORTCUT THROUGH GNARLWOOD

The road out of Wolvington follows the east bank of the Lantern River towards the town of Raven's Eye for 75 miles before it diverts almost another 70 miles to get to the port town of Safe Harbor. The Caravan Master in the Far East Adventure Path proposes an alternate route; to go back across the Lantern River and follow the west bank and take a shortcut through Gnarlwood for a 110 mile trek. This shaves an entire day off the journey, and avoids the unpleasant swampy community of Raven's Eye. *Road to Destiny* assumes the party sticks to the Caravan Master's original plan. As it stands, on the third day after Wolvington the party takes a shortcut through the Gnarlwood Forest and ends that third day 14 miles outside of Safe Haven. The details of this encounter transpire while the caravan is traveling through the forest on a well-established trail.

### D. Gnarlwood Bandits (CR 5)

The path the Caravan Master takes is fairly broad and easy for the wagons. Terrain should not play a great impact, however if the fight goes off to the side of the path standard <u>forest terrain</u> rules apply.

**Creatures:** Ranulfr has more than one group of his bandits patrolling this portion of the Gypsy Lands. The White Wolf himself is currently patrolling elsewhere, but a small group of his raiders come across the party's caravan as it moves through the Gnarlwood.

The raiders have a strategy they've adopted since their master set them to search for the Destined Empress. When a caravan comes within sight, they avoid any obvious interest in what the caravan carries, and they keep their weapons sheathed. As a group they ride past the caravan and nod hello, and return waves and greetings if offered before they ride out of sight. They're actually checking faces for an attractive Asian-looking woman (the Destined Empress), count heads, and determine in which wagons the caravan's defenders are located. This is not obvious, but a PC who makes successful DC 20 Sense Motive check has a sense of unease and untrustworthiness about the group. The raiders do not appear as Vikings from a racial perspective, but a successful DC 10 Knowledge (local) check indicates they were trained by a Viking or heavily exposed to the culture, as evidence by their choice of melee weapon, dress, and overall style. Note, the caravan NPCs should make no particular effort to conceal themselves unless the PCs advise them first. This allows the raider's strategy to have a chance to work, while it grants the PCs all the credit if they're smart enough not to fall for it.

After sufficient time has passed for the party to lower their defenses, the raiders ride back towards the caravan prepared for a full attack. If they spotted the Destined Empress, she becomes their primary target and everything else is secondary. The raiders use *sleep arrows* to subdue or neutralize defenders.

The rope tie mentioned in the gear section of their stat block is a simple knotted loop of rope the raiders can slip over the wrists or ankles as a move action. The ties have 4 hp and a break DC 23, and are made from a short piece of spider silk rope.

At a CR 5 this can be considered an epic encounter; however

**ADVENTURE PATH PLUG-IN** 



the chance of loss of life is minimal. It is difficult for low level NPCs to actually capture and escape with an allied NPC, hence the higher challenge rating. The raiders should not take any opportunity to coup de grace PCs, or press an attack against characters that are helpless. The raider's horses have not been factored in the CR of the encounter as they are not combat trained and their primary function is a means for the raiders to attack the wagons in motion.

### **GNARLWOOD RAIDERS (4)**

### CR 1

GNARLWOOD R XP 400 each Human fighter 2 CE Medium humanoi Init +3; Senses Percej DEFENSE AC 15, touch 13, flat-hp 19 each (2d10+4) Fort +4, Ref +3, Will CE Medium humanoid (human) Init +3; Senses Perception -1

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

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will -1 (+1 vs. fear) Defensive Abilities bravery +1

### Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee battleaxe +4(1d8+2/x3)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +6 (1d6+2/x3)

### TACTICS

Before Combat The raiders ride by to assess the caravan as described in the text.

During Combat At least two to three raiders focus on the wagon with the destined heir, and the remainder focus on preventing interference. Sleep arrows are an opening gambit. A fast dismount (DC 20 Ride check) is used to leap aboard a moving

wagon combined with a DC 10 Acrobatics check. Battleaxes can slice open canvas wagon coverings. The bull rush maneuver can be used to throw rivals or the Destined Empress from a moving wagon. The raiders focus on the Destined Empress and do not waste time and energy on helpless targets.

Morale The raiders flee or surrender when reduced to 4 hp or less. If one raider can secure the destined heir and get her on their horse, the rest immediately break off the attack except to assist with the abduction.

### **STATISTICS**

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

Base Atk +2; CMB +4 (+6 bull rush); CMD 17 (19 vs. bull rush) Feats Improved Bull Rush, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Power Attack

- Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +6, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Ride +8, Swim +6
- Languages Common, Viking
- Combat Gear dust of tracelessness (1 raider only), rope tie, saddle (on horse), sleep arrows (2 raiders have 2 arrows each, the others have 3); Other Gear leather armor, battleaxe, mwk composite shortbow, with 10 arrows

### Light Riding Horses (4)

XP 400 each

hp 15 each (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "light horse")

CR 1

Challenge Adjustment: This is a challenging encounter as presented, so it is not recommended that the difficulty be increased any further. Yet, if the NPC allies are actively involved, their participation is offset by a single additional raider. Likewise, the challenge is reduced by subtracting one raider, though raiders chance of a successful abduction of the Destined Empress is greatly diminished.

**Caravan Combat**: While traditional combat is recommended, this fight is a CR 5 caravan combat encounter on the chart on page 5. Alternately the encounter is avoided by a special DC 18 Security check, with each additional PC who succeeds on a DC 15 Intimidate check adding a +1 circumstance bonus to the Security check.

**Developments:** If the raiders manage to escape with the Destined Empress, they're quick to use their *dust of tracelessness* to eliminate their tracks. If the PCs become stymied by this, the Caravan Master suggests since slavery is illegal in the Gypsy Lands, raiders will transport thralls to Pirate's Landing or Safe Haven. Since Safe Haven is the closer of the two ports and is on the way to Pirate's Landing, it is a logical first place to search.

If the PCs capture and interrogate one of the raiders, they are loath to betray Ranulfr. Yet a successful DC 12 Intimidate check loosens their tongues. They describe the "White Wolf" their leader, and report that little over a month ago he dreamt of an Asian woman. She has become an obsession of the White Wolf, who has vowed to stop at nothing to find her. If pressed on why, the raiders look extremely uncomfortable and feign, "You don't bring that subject up with him." If pressed harder, they blurt out, "He wants to know why he is immortal!" The raiders can offer that their leader has not aged a single day in the last 25 years, and no one knows why. Yet some madness has convinced him it has to do with a woman who looks exactly like the Destined Empress. If allowed, the raiders produce a folded charcoal sketch on heavy paper. The illustration is exact likeness of the Destined Empress, which they report the White Wolf drew from the memory. They can offer no further explanation other than their orders are to search for her with every raid they perform.

### Boxed Text-When and When Not To

Boxed text is an art form in of itself, and there is a time and place when to use it. It can be of great value to the GM in devising an apt description of a room or dialogue from an NPC. Yet but when it comes out of nowhere, like a wilderness encounter, it can be a dead giveaway something is about to happen. It is at these times it is best to keep it simple and not rouse the PCs suspicions any earlier than you have to after all, sometimes a path through the woods is just a path through the woods!

# PART FIVE: SAFE HAVEN

The journey from Wolvington to Safe Haven is been approximately 110 miles, with the party arriving early afternoon on the fourth day of this leg of the trip. Safe Haven is one of two ports with questionable reputations. Safe Haven earns its name from being the tamer of the two. Most sailing merchants can put into port without undue fear of piracy. This is does not necessarily make Safe Haven a "safe city". The authorities place a premium on peace and safe trade over actual justice. Ranulfr the White Wolf uses Safe Haven to meet his estranged brother One-Eye. As mentioned in the introduction, the brothers have always had an unusual relationship. Ranulfr always resented One-Eye's "normalcy" and acceptance in the Viking Lands, where One-Eye resented Ranulfr's immortality, so much so that he plucked out his own eye to gain some portion of it. Yet, they are the other's only living kinfolk and maintain a brotherly, if not strained, relationship. As a matter of business, Old One-Eye usually buys Ranulfr's captured thralls and transports them for resale back to the Viking Lands.

When the PCs arrive in Safe Haven, certain events are in motion. Old One-Eye has fallen sick from a wasting disease while at sea and now lies below deck slowly dying. The crew needs provisions and is forced to stop at Safe Haven, so the first mate has elected to confer with Ranulfr anyway.

This encounter serves as two purposes. If the raiders managed to capture and abduct the Destined Empress in Part Four, this is an opportunity to rescue her and put the main storyline back on track. Otherwise, this encounter introduces the PCs to Ranulfr before their final confrontation and permits them to get a look at the man whose personal legend has shadowed their journey thus far. Rumors and stories are a fine thing, but nothing heightens the drama than a shared glimpse between two adversaries.

If the party has searched for information about their friend, the Destined Empress, slavers, or human trafficking, it is suggested the docks are the best place to learn about such things. Safe Haven is not a perfectly idealistic seaside town, but the residents don't want it to become Pirate's Landing either, so unsavory business is largely confined to the harbor area. This fact can be learned automatically, so that the PCs have a definite opportunity rescue the Destined Empress if necessary. It is also possible to learn additional information.

# Map 1- Safe Haven

## 1 square = 5 ft.

### Gather Information subset of Diplomacy or Knowledge (local)

PCs who wish to learn more about the White Wolf and his presence in Safe Haven can make a DC 15 Gather Information subset of Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check. The levels of knowledge cascade, so a successful roll also reveals of the previous pieces of information.

10+ The White Wolf is not unknown in Safe Haven and Pirate's Landing. His real name is said to be Ranulfr, and he is a Viking with pale skin and pale blue eyes. He is not quite an albino but close to it. He is said to have been around forever but rarely seems to change.

15+ Ranulfr is circumspect while in Safe Haven. He is said to traffic in thralls but keeps his activities quiet, and prefers to avoid direct confrontation with city authorities whenever possible. He keeps primarily to the harbor district while in town. He often trades with an aged Viking named Old One-Eye. Ranulfr is said to be unwelcome or exiled from his homeland. While many would like to banish him from the Gypsy Lands, Ranulfr neither fears nor cares about any who would presume to try.

**20+** Old One-Eye is said to be Ranulfr's older brother, but both have come to Safe Haven and Pirate's Landing for decades. Old One-Eye is a minor lord or clan chief back in the Viking Lands, and is a ring-giver to many property owners. He is an infamous reaver and pirate. Ranulfr is said to be moodier than his brother, and was sedentary for the past several years but has abruptly become active again. **25+** Ranulfr is actually Old One-Eye's fraternal twin and was even born first. Old One-Eye actually ages whereas Ranulfr does not. One-Eye takes his name from when he tore out his own eye and replaced it with a magical one that keeps him as vital as a young man—except now some strange sickness has finally brought him low.

### E. Safe Haven

Down the length of a long, east and west running wooden pier is a large Viking longship with a single mast and benches for rowers man oars between rounded shields mounted on the sides. Across from the ship is a large wooden loading platform built right into the pier for the purposes of loading unloading cargo from merchant ships. A solitary rowboat is tied off next to the loading platform. The pier terminates on the east end where it joins to rest of the docks of Safe Haven.

If the Destined Empress was never successfully abducted, the PCs still have a reason to be down at the docks. The caravan needs to sell and buy trade goods. The best trade goods are those which are hard to find and shipped in from other areas far away—basic supply and demand. A port is the best place to buy and sell rare items and a perfect place for the caravan to conduct its trade. The GM can even grant a +1 or +2 circumstance bonus to on special Resolve checks when selling goods at the docks, or selling goods purchased from the docks in other towns. This makes spotting Ranulfr at the docks a perfectly reasonable coincidence.

The sea waters off the side of the pier are 15 feet deep and for

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the purposes of the Swim skill are considered calm.

### Ranulfr Revealed (CR 5)

**Creatures**: Ranulfr has just visited his sick twin inside the Viking longship, and is now on the pier as he confers with Old One-Eye's first mate. Ranulfr believes One-Eye has little time left before he dies, and he should be returned to the Viking Lands where those who owe fealty to One-Eye can conduct his funeral rites properly. The two also negotiate the usual sale of thralls, who stand with their hands bound nearby. If previously abducted, the Destined Empress is also present and bound, though Ranulfr has no intention of selling her to anyone. His obsession is so great he won't let her out of his sight.

Assuming the Destined Empress was abducted, Ranulfr has no reason to recognize the PCs but at least one of his men may spot the party. A raider can spot the PCs from the east end of pier with a successful DC 10 Perception check. If the PCs spend at least ten minutes as a group to Disguise themselves (or use magic to shorten that time) they can approach without anyone immediately expecting an attack. This does not mean that Ranulfr, his men, or the longship reavers are surprised by the PCs, only that they are not immediately aware of the party's relationship to the Destined Empress.

If the PCs are recognized, Ranulfr prepares to defend himself and quietly orders his men to get ready to shove the bound thralls off the side of the pier where they'll drown if no one helps them quickly. If the fight starts to go poorly, one of the raiders knocks the Destined Empress overboard as well. Ranulfr shouts "No! No! Not her!" in shock and fury. In principal Ranulfr wants to pull her from the water, but his own men beg him to retreat for the sake of his own life. The bandit allows himself to be hustled abroad the ship while his raiders cover his retreat. The longship casts off with none of the thralls and Ranulfr enraged at the loss of his prize.

Stat blocks for the four thralls are not provided, but if required use the stat block for a <u>townsperson</u> (N human commoner 2, 9 hp) with no weapons or gear. Their wrists are bound in rope (hp 2, break DC 20).

If the Destined Empress was never abducted, it is strongly suggested the GM does not run this as a fight scene at all, but treat it as a roleplaying encounter and a chance to employ foreshadowing. On a similar note, the GM should encourage the Destined Empress be present with the party while in Safe Haven, or just skip this encounter altogether. Situate the party some distance to the east side of the docks, while Ranulfr and his men congregate near the gangplank of the longship with no prisoners. Ranulfr senses the Destined Empress's presence from across the map with his entangled destinies ability. He stares boldly at her and the party and grows enraged. His allies notice this exchange, and physically restrain him from an ill-advised charge down the pier towards the party. They hustle their master abroad the longship, which immediately makes ready to sail. Ranulfr glares menacingly before he calls mockingly out across the pier in Common, "Another time and another place, woman! You will be mine!" The Destined Empress shivers despite herself, and reports the sensation that the White Wolf "just seemed to know I was here."

# Why Put The Villain At Risk Prematurely?

In this encounter the party meets Ranulfr before the final encounter. Too often in adventures there is significant foreshadowing of the adventure's main villain, but never a chance to see or encounter the villain until the final scene. That isn't always satisfying and it is a lost opportunity to build some real tension and personal investment. On the other hand, unless the Designer really clamps down on the PCs options, there is a chance the heroes might just kill the villain and torpedo the ending!

*Road to Destiny* puts the Destined Empress at genuine risk with a strong encounter that has a fair chance to abduct her. This makes the situation personal for the PCs, and it cements her relationship with them as well as Ranulfr. To make the rescue authentic, Ranulfr needs exposure to at least some of the same risk. In a perfect world, he escapes at the end of this encounter. If he doesn't—then so be it. Let the PCs celebrate and Part Seven talks about what to do if Ranulfr is dead.

### Ranulfr

XP 800

Male fighter 2/sorcerer 2

NE Medium humanoid (dhampir)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception –1 **DEFENSE** 

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex) hp 28 (4 HD; 2d10+2d6+6)

Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, negative energy affinity, resist

### level drain Offense

### Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +8 (1d8+3/19–20), or mwk longsword +6 (1d8+3/19–20), throwing axe +4 (1d6+1)

**Ranged** throwing axe +6 (1d6+3)

- **Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 2nd; concentration +8) 5/day—grave touch (1 rounds)
- Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +8) 1st (5/day)—cause fear (DC 13), chill touch (DC 13) 0 (at will)—bleed (DC 12), daze (DC 12), message, spark (DC 12), touch of fatigue (DC 12)

# Bloodline undead

**Before Combat** Given the opportunity, Ranulfr orders his raiders to knock thralls into the water to serve as a distraction (see Developments).

- **During Combat** Ranulfr typically fights with both weapons, but can hurl an axe to free up a hand to cast spells. He may use *cause fear* to reduce the number of enemies. His tactics here are more defensive in nature.
- **Morale** If reduced to half his hit points, or if the Destined Heir is removed to safety or knocked in the water, Ranulfr retreats. He boards the longship and orders them to cast off.

### **STATISTICS**

Str 16, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 15 Base Atk +3; CMB +6; CMD 19 26 Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Bluff +7, Climb +7, Intimidate +7, Ride +7, Spellcraft +4, Swim +7

Languages Common, Viking

- SQ dayborn, bloodline arcana (corporeal undead affected by humanoid-affecting spells)
- **Other Gear** mithral chain shirt, mwk longsword, throwing axe, *cloak of resistance* +1

### Special Abilities

- **Dayborn (Ex)** Ranulfr is unhindered by the light of the day. This ability replaces the dhampir spell-like ability.
- **Entangled Destinies (Su)** As a standard action, Ranulfr can sense the immediate presence of the Destined Heir as an at will ability, as per *locate person*.
- **Unstoppable Force (Ex)** Creatures who have a trait bonus which grants them a bonus to attack rolls against enemies that threaten the Destined Heir do not apply that bonus to Ranulfr.

CR 1

Gnarlwood Raiders (2) XP 400 each

hp 19 each (see page 22)

**Combat Gear** The raiders have no <u>sleep arrows</u> or dust of tracelessness.

### TACTICS

CR 3

**During Combat** The raiders may knock the Destined Heir off the side of the pier along with the thralls, despite Ranulfr's intent. With their Improved Bull Rush feat, PCs are also suitable to knock in the water.

**Morale** The raiders only retreat to the ship after Ranulfr does. If necessary they cover his retreat.

### The Longship (CR 3)

**Creatures**: Old One-Eye's reavers want no part of a fight at this time. They remain on the ship or protect it, repel boarders, and leave Ranulfr to fight his own battles. Should a battle break out, they prepare the longship to push off from the pier and sail off. They are listed as a separate encounter as they should really only defend the boat, and grant Ranulfr an escape in the end. The GM should actually make the ship's departure a priority over whether Ranulfr lives or dies. The reavers are listed as a separate encounter because it is impossible to predict what players may do, but the GM should do everything within their power to prevent the capture and overrun of the vessel.

### Old One-Eye's Reavers (4) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Human barbarian 1 CN Medium humanoid (human) Init +1; Senses Perception +5

### Defense

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, -2 rage, +2 shield)

**hp** 17 (1d12+5)

Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +3 OFFENSE

### Speed 30 ft.

Melee battleaxe +6 (1d8+4/×3) Special Attacks rage (6 rounds/day)

### TACTICS

- **During Combat** The Viking reavers defend their ship from being boarded and prepare to set sail before the authorities arrive. They do not otherwise engage the PCs. They only rage if significantly injured or there is a risk of the longship being overrun.
- **Morale** The reavers wait just long enough to assess how Ranulfr's fight progresses. If he falls in battle, they depart immediately. Otherwise they permit him to board and then set sail.

### STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 14 Feats Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe) Skills Intimidate +3, Perception +5, Profession (sailor) +2, Survival +5, Swim +1 Languages Common, Viking SQ fast movement

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** battle axe, chainmail, heavy wooden shield

**Developments**: This encounter is not intended to be the final showdown between the PCs and Ranulfr. Yet, PCs are unpredictable. If they kill Ranulfr fair and square, the GM should allow that outcome to stand, perhaps with a depiction of the supernatural elements of Ranulfr's death described in Part 7.

If the Viking reavers provide him with an escape, they do not transport him to Viking Land, instead they put him ashore just north of Safe Haven. From there he resumes his search of the Destined Empress as described in Part 7. Next time it is of a time and place of his choosing.

The PCs should not capture the longship at this time. If absolutely necessary, the reavers should abandon Ranulfr as a priority over this possibility. The Far East Adventure Path is significantly derailed by a captured ship, or even the wealth acquired by its sale.

While bound, the Destined Empress and the thralls have the pinned condition and sink rapidly while they hold their breath. Another creature can drag them to the surface with a DC 12 Swim check, and anyone dragged to the surface adjacent to the pier or loading platform can be hauled out of the water as a standard action. This is a diversionary tactic and those knocked in the water are only at risk if ignored. The perception of potential drowning works quite well to keep the tension high.

Finally, the PCs may think to identify Ranulfr's creature type. This can be accomplished with a DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (religion) check, adjusted up due to Ranulfr's lack of discomfort in sunlight, a typical dhampir racial trait. The GM should note, Ranulfr does not know what he is! If confronted at any point with this information, it changes nothing. Ranulfr becomes confused and then angry by the revelation. He'll suspect it is untrue, and has difficulty reconciling it as he (to his understanding) had a normal biological father, and he has a "normal" twin. His biological father's was magical possession by a jiang-shi is beyond anyone's ability to guess. As a side note, the reason Old One-Eye fell so severely sick to a wasting disease is because the undead taint is latent, not dominant, within him.

# PART SIX: CARAVAN CRISIS

The road from Safe Haven heads north for approximately 60 miles to Pirate's Landing. The forests now left behind, the terrain becomes open with only small hills to the northwest on the second day of travel.

### Killers on the Road

The caravan spots a trail of smoke rising from the road ahead. Its source is undetermined, but if the party sends scouts ahead they report a burning wagon ahead and a caravan in chaos and disarray. There is no alternate route to take except to go offroad which costs the caravan a day's travel. Read the following description to the scouts or to the main caravan group. There is no map or combat associated with this scene, though several clues are available with some careful detective work.

A covered wagon almost burned to the ground, sits askew on the road ahead, it's wreckage still smouldering. One of its horses lies dead in front of it, while the other is missing. The scent of smoke and burning flesh hangs in the air. Nearby a smaller supply wagon sits on its side, its horse absent as well, and large hole has been crudely smashed through the floor boards. The tracks of a third wagon lead off the side of the road and out of sight. There is a conspicuous lack of bodies, except the armored blackened corpse of a man in the burning wagon. To the northeast, about a hundred yards away is a small copse of trees. The scene is quiet except for the crackling hiss and sputter of the fire.

The following clues can be ascertained just by asking good questions or careful observation. There are too many bodies missing, the attackers and most of the caravan defenders are unaccounted for. Many of the food stuffs and supplies are missing, except for a few crates and barrels that are broken and left behind with their contents spilled out on the ground. The second horse hitched to the burning wagon was cut loose. The horse hitched to the overturned wagon was likely able to wrench itself loose and is still dragging its reins if it was not captured.

PCs that make a successful DC 12 Heal check can surmise the burned victim died of blunt trauma and was already dead when the wagon caught fire. A successful DC 10 Craft (carpentry), Knowledge (engineering or wainwright) or Profession (engineer) check can ascertain the hole in the floorboard of the overturned wagon was either a battering ram, or a fist the size of a ham.

Survival is a very useful skill to perform a forensic analysis of this scene.

### Survival skill

PCs who wish to gather clues with the Survival skill can learn the following facts. The levels of information cascade, so a successful roll also reveals of the previous pieces of information as well as the rate of speed by which the party can follow any discovered tracks (barring special abilities).

• 10+ There is evidence of a pitched battle. A handful of arrows can be found. The wreckage suggests the attackers



used blunt weapons, whereas the defenders used blades and bows. The trail of a third wagon pulled by two horses is discovered, and leads off the road to the east. The horses appear panicked and had no driver.

- 13+ Several tracks lead to the northwest in the direction of some small hills. These tracks can be followed at half the PCs normal speed.
- 15+ The tracks which lead northwest were made by Large humanoid creatures. They must weigh in excess of 500 lbs. each from the depth of the tracks in firm ground. A second set of tracks, those of a normal Medium sized humanoid diverts from the scene in the direction of the copse of trees to the northeast (100 yards away).
  - 18+ The PCs can follow the tracks to the northwest attheir full speed.
  - 20+ There is evidence that some people were captured and forcibly dragged, or even carried northwest.

If the PCs follow the trail after the missing wagon, they can locate it after an hour, or 30 minutes while on horseback. The covered wagon is undamaged, but the horses are very skittish and tired. The wagon still contains supplies, bedding, and personal possessions one might expect to find on a Gypsy caravan. A successful DC 10 Handle Animal or Ride check allows a character to take immediate control of the wagon, otherwise the horses require an hour to calm down. At least one rank in Handle Animal or Ride is required to drive the wagon in any case.

**Creature**: PCs who follow the single Medium sized set of tracks to the northeast, towards the copse of trees, find the tracks end there. A 17 year old human woman, Aeysha Villani hides

up in one of the trees. Her family is the caravan owners. Earlier today the caravan was attacked by ogres, and in the ensuing chaos she fled. Now she feels quite guilty, but also still shaken by the violence she's witnessed. While the PCs are patently not ogres, she knows about bandits in the area and doesn't know who to trust. She's hiding for the time being, but a DC 18 Perception check notices her. If confronted she tries to flee, but a DC 17 Diplomacy check convinces her to stop and listen, otherwise enterprising PCs might catch her and demonstrate their good intentions. If the party convinces Aeysha they're not bandits, she describes the attack by "giants" and begs for the PCs to help her family who were taken as captives. PC who makes a successful DC 13 Knowledge (local) check can discern the "giants" must be ogres. They should also be aware there is limited time before the ogres either eat their captives, or do perverse and humiliating things to them (and then eat them). Aeysha's fate is discussed in the Developments section below. If she requires a stat block, the townsperson stat block.

### F. Ogre Cave (CR 5)

The degree of success the PCs obtain on their Survival check impacts the some of the conditions of this encounter. The tracks lead some distance off road where the caravan wagons cannot easily traverse. Most of the daylight passes before the PCs arrive. If the Survival check to follow the tracks succeeded by 18 or more, the PCs arrive at dusk. If so, all areas on the map have at least dim lighting. If it succeeded by less than 18, it is dark by the time the PCs arrive.

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# Map F- Ogre Cave

Nestled in the side of a hill, concealed by several clumps of trees is a large cave. Just outside of it is a large fire. Most of the wood on the fire has burned down to glowing bed of red-hot coals, and a low corona of flames which throw flickering shadows. The wood smoke fails to mask a sickly sweet smell of sweat and blood. Just inside cave is what appears to be a section of wooden enclosure.

The campfire sheds light like a torch. The low vegetation is undergrowth, while the trees provide partial cover (as described in the <u>Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook</u>). The wooden enclosure stands at least five feet high, and is more of a pen than an actual cage—suitable for livestock. The ogres often keep stolen cows, sheep, and pigs here. This same pen is where they also keep captive humans, with their wrists bound (and sometimes the ankles if the captives attempt escape). A simple bolt action keeps the swinging gate closed. The simple construction notwithstanding, the enclosure is sturdy (hardness 5, 10 hp, break DC 15 per five foot section).

Sitting along the southern wall of the cave are a number of crates and barrels stolen from the caravan. The ogres have only inventoried a few of them so far.

**Creatures**: Two ogres, Fraegrim and Hogrella dwell in this cave. These sibling spouses attacked the Villani family caravan this morning and now hold captive Estella and Davrioz Villani, as well as their hired caravan guard Garvantos. Use the <u>shopkeep</u> stat block for the Villani's if necessary, but bereft of any equipment. Use the <u>caravan guard</u> stat block for Gervantos, likewise stripped of any useful gear. All of the prisoners have their wrists bound together to prevent their escape, and dirty rags shoved in their mouths to keep them quiet.

The ogres are distracted, but their greatclubs and javelins remain within reach. The pair discovered a collection of cooking spices in their stolen loot, and now they argue which to use on Garvantos tonight.

FRAEGRIM AND HOGRELLA	CR g

XP 800 each

Ogres (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary, "Ogre") **hp** 30 each

### TACTICS

**During Combat** If it dark outside, one of the pair might scoop up a barrel of beer and hurl it on the campfire, which extinguishes the fire when it shatters and plunges the area into darkness.

Morale The ogres fight to the death.

**Challenge Adjustment**: As presented, the existing CR 5 encounter should be a great challenge for a party of four players with an average party level of 2. Reducing the encounter to one ogre should still be a challenge in theory, but economy of action favors the players in such a fight. A third ogre can be added, but that may well be too difficult, and should only be considered with parties of five or more characters, or slightly higher character levels. To really enhance the challenge, have the third ogre (Picklecheeks, Fraegrim and Hogrella's incestuous son) come from the woods behind the party after combat has already been started.

**Development**: If the Villani family is rescued they are incredibly grateful. Davrioz is ashamed he has no riches to

1 square = 5 ft.

bestow upon them, as much of his fortune was invested in the caravan. He is nevertheless grateful for his life. Estella hugs and kisses everyone present if they allow, her eyes wet with tears of relief. If the PCs are generous (and not claim it as salvage) they ask to take the surviving wagon and as much of their supplies that survived and head south. There they intend to find some community to settle down in permanently, and abandon the traditional nomadic Gypsy lifestyle.

Aeysha Villani wants none of this. The young woman understands her parents have grown old, but she dreads the idea of settling down and becoming a farm girl until some farmer sees fit to marry her. She would rather see the world and have adventures, as she becomes inspired by the courage and determination of the PCs. Her parents may resist initially, but do not stand in her way. The choice is entirely up to the PCs, but if they permit she joins their caravan. She can be rebuilt by the GM to fulfill a number of different roles (cook, entertainer, and driver). Alternately, Aeysha can become the apprentice of a PC or the basis of a replacement character that has died.

**Treasure**: Inside of a sturdy wooden keg (which has had its lid nailed back on) the ogre family has poured all the riches they've stolen from travelers over the years. It includes 1,422 gp, 12 pp, a *potion of remove curse*, and a plain scroll case which contains a *scroll of <u>spiked pit</u>*. If a third ogre was used in the encounter, add to that: 50 gp, 4 pp, a *potion of levitate*, and a *potion of reduce animal*.

# PART SEVEN: THE FATE OF THE WHITE WOLF

After the events of Safe Haven, the Caravan Master is able to direct the caravan to Pirate's Landing without incident. Unless the GM arranges otherwise, *Road to Destiny*, assumes the stop is uneventful. Ranulfr has regrouped with his band and has been in slow pursuit. The distance to their final destination is 200 miles, and requires at least 6 nights before they arrive at the adventure sight described in a Far East Adventure Path. It is on the sixth night that Ranulfr strikes, on the very eve of the next step in the party's grand quest.

### G. When Destinies Collide (CR 5)

The final encounter does not take place in a location the caravan chances upon, but at their own campsite. For the GM's convenience a battlemap is provided which depicts a typical caravan campsite just off the side of the road, with the wagons drawn in a protective circle. Before the map is revealed, the GM should solicit a watch schedule from the PCs, as their enemies attack at night under the cover of darkness. While the campsite is not literally in a forest, <u>terrain rules</u> for trees and undergrowth are as described in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*.

**Creatures**: Ranulfr returns in this final encounter, and this time he brings more magical assistance. Kenna White-eyes is Ranulfr's ally and sometimes lover. The Viking woman is a striking beauty with silver hair, perfect fair skin, and milky white eyes. She dresses in black leather armor and dark colors. An oracle of battle, Kenna is drawn to acts of passion and violence by forces beyond her comprehension. She is jealous of her bandit lord's unearthly fascination with the Destined Empress, and yet she also knows what it is to be the slave to obsession. She hates him every bit she is drawn inexplicably towards him, and would pull away from Ranulfr if she could. Like the Destined Empress, Kenna is entangled up in the strands of his story. If nothing else, the pair have an unspoken empathy for each other few others would understand.

The dhampir's goal is to capture the Destined Empress. Ironically, Ranulfr doesn't know exactly what he's going to do with her once he does, or why he is compelled to capture and possess her like an object.. He only knows she is somehow tied up to the mystery of his birth, and she is the object of an obsession he cannot explain. He intends to capture her and if necessary kill every single person who stands in his way.

Ranulfr stages his attack in the middle of the night. The exact time is left to the discretion of the GM, but it is to put the PCs at the greatest disadvantage. Ranulfr possesses darkvision, as does Kenna, and to expedite the assault he has arranged for his reavers to have one *potion of darkvision* each. Kenna casts *enlarge person* on him just prior to leading the assault. Not only does this provide him with combat benefit, but he enjoys towering over the PCs, and experiences a rush of exhilaration at the thought of dominating the object of his desire.

For the GM's convenience, Ranulfr's stat block is presented here again with the *enlarge person* effect already applied.

### Ranulfr, *Enlarged*

CR 3

XP 800 Male fighter 2/sorcerer 2 NE Large humanoid (<u>dhampir</u>) Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception –1

### Defense

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, -1 size)

hp 28 (4 HD; 2d10+2d6+6)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3 (+1 vs. fear)

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, negative energy affinity, resist level drain

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft. **Melee** mwk longsword +8 (2d6+4/19–20), or mwk longsword +6 (2d6+4/19–20), throwing axe +4

(1d8+2)

**Ranged** throwing axe +4 (1d6+4)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

5/day-grave touch (1 rounds)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +4) 1st (5/day)—cause fear (DC 13), obscuring mist 0 (at will)—bleed (DC 12), daze (DC 12), message, <u>spark</u> (DC 12), touch of fatigue (DC 12) Bloodline undead

### TACTICS

- **Before Combat** Ranulfr studies the campsite from the furthest extent of his darkvision. He is not especially stealthy but uses cover from the trees and the darkness. His entangled destines ability helps him focus on where the Destined Empress is located. He waits for Kenna to use *enlarge person* on him before he charges to attack.
- **During Combat** Ranulfr focuses on the Destined Heir, but does not do so to the exclusion of greater threats or protectors. If he has difficulty with a particular foe, he uses the reach advantage of *enlarge person* to stay out of range of enemies to cast *chill touch* and then make a touch attack at range. *Cause fear* can be utilized to provide crowd control.

Morale Ranulfr fights to the death.

**Base Statistics Init** +3; **AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; **Ref** +3; **Melee** mwk longsword +8 (1d8+3/19–20), or mwk longsword +6 (1d8+3/19–20), throwing axe +4 (1d6+1); **Ranged** throwing axe +6 (1d6+3); **Str** 16, **Dex** 16; Climb +8, Ride +7, Swim +7

### STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 15

Base Atk +3; CMB +8; CMD 20

- Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)
- Skills Bluff +7, Climb +8, Intimidate +7, Ride +6, Spellcraft +4, Swim +8

Languages Common, Viking

- SQ bloodline arcana (corporeal undead affected by humanoidaffecting spells), dayborn
- **Other Gear** mithral chain shirt, mwk longsword, throwing axe, *cloak of resistance* +1

### Special Abilities

**Dayborn (Ex)** Ranulfr is unhindered by the light of the day. This ability replaces the dhampir spell-like ability.

- **Entangled Destinies (Su)** As a standard action, Ranulfr can sense the immediate presence of the Destined Empress as an at will ability, as per *locate person*.
- **Unstoppable Force (Ex)** Creatures who have a trait bonus which grants them a bonus to attack rolls against enemies that threaten the Destined Empress do not apply that bonus to Ranulfr.

### Viking Reavers (2)

XP 200 each

**hp** 17 (see page 22) **Combat Gear** *potion of darkvision* (1 each)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The reavers drink their *potions of darkvision*. They wait for Ranulfr to launch the attack, and activate their rage ability.

**During Combat** The reavers primary role is to ensure that Ranulfr is not brought down by sheer numbers.

Morale The reavers fight to the death.

ADVENTURE PATH PLUG-IN

CR 1/2

# Map 6-When Destinies Collide

### Kenna White-Eyes

### XP 400

Female human oracle 2

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

### **Defense**

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield) hp 16 (2d8+4)

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

### Offense

### Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk morningstar +4 (1d8+2)

- Oracle Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +5)
- 1st (5/day)—bane (DC 15), cure light wounds, enlarge person (DC 14), murderous command (DC 15)
- 0 (at will)—bleed (DC 13), create water, detect magic, spark (DC 13), virtue

### Mystery battle

### **TACTICS**

- **Before Combat** Kenna has no advance plan, but she remains close to Ranulfr so as to apply *enlarge person* when it is time. She may use *create water* to extinguish the campfire early and put the PCs who rely on a light source disadvantage.
- **During Combat** Kenna can see without a light source, but is limited to 30 feet. She stays behind Ranulfr and the reavers and takes a support role as long as her magic holds out. Her battlecry ability is a good "no-fail" move. <u>Murderous command</u> weakens their enemies if successful, even if only through the

loss of a turn. Once her magic is exhausted, she wades into battle herself.

**Morale** As an oracle of battle, Kenna cannot pull herself out of her divine reverie to actually retreat. If rendered unconscious but not killed, she considers surrender.

### **STATISTICS**

CR 1

- Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 17
- Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD 14
- Feats Iron Will, Spell Focus (enchantment)
- Skills Intimidate +8, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perception +4, Ride +3, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +5
- Languages Common, Viking
- SQ oracle's curse (clouded vision), revelations (battlecry [+1, 1/ day])
- Other Gear studded leather, light wooden shield, spell component pouch, silver wolf's head armband, 7 gp

**Developments**: After all of the bandits are defeated, a special and unique magical event takes place. Far across the world, Shirota, Ranulfr's "true father" senses the death of his oldest son. Ranulfr's eyes shine with an eerie light and his lifeless lips part to permit a sepulchral voice to be heard. "So it was foretold," the voice intones in the Far Eastern tongue, "so it has come to pass!" Ranulfr's corpse moves slightly, his head lolling on his neck unnaturally so the corpse can regard the PCs. The voice then speaks in perfect Common. "My first son is dead. If she hasn't already, the Kinslayer's Heir shall soon discover the past. On that day my second son's heart shall beat its last, but still you must defeat him battle! Only then shall I be unbound by the chains of fate. You have my gratitude, both now and for the day when you

ROAD TO DESTINY

bring the Heir to me at long last." With that, Ranulfr's corpse shudders with an unwholesome laugh before it becomes still.

As implied on her stat block, Kenna does not surrender—as an oracle of battle, she cannot bring herself to stop. If brought to a helpless state and then healed after Ranulfr's death, she holds no acrimony towards the party. She explains that it is a facet of her nature, and her relationship with Ranulfr was "complex". If it suits the needs of the story, Kenna can become a new ally or replacement character. She can sense the road the PCs travel is fraught with conflict and is drawn like a moth to a flame.

Treasure: Kenna's silver armband is worth 150 gp.

# CONCLUSION

The story of Ranulfr the White Wolf is at an end. Although the PCs may have learned who Ranulfr was, his obsession with the Destined Empress remains an unresolved mystery. Unanswered questions notwithstanding, the White Wolf pitted his destiny against theirs and was found wanting. The PCs final destination, the town of Saltcrest lies only 8 miles ahead.

Shirota, the jiang-shi sorcerer now knows that the Destined Empress is on her way to claim her throne. The vampire does not share this information with the Dark Spirits however, as his desire for revenge against his former family is too personal, and too long has his oracular insights been dismissed and mocked. Shirota keeps his counsel, and waits for the scion of his former family to draw closer so it is he who is the instrument of her destruction. In this way he means to prove himself at last to the Dark Spirits, and bring meaning and purpose to his undeath.

If Ranulfr proves triumphant, then the GM should consider that he takes the Destined Empress prisoner while he tries to unravel the mystery of their connection. This may allow a new group of heroes to arise to rescue her and see her on the road to destiny.

# APPENDIX ONE: DAYS TRAVELED AND STORY EVENTS

What follows is an approximate chronology of events and miles traveled each day. It assumes the default caravan travel rate of 32 miles per day, but also notes locations where the caravan might come to a halt because of proximity to a town or event. This is to assist GM's who maintain a calendar or log for their campaign. It can also be useful to show days where no events take place, where the GM may wish to roll for a truly random encounter on the chart included in the Far East Adventure Path. The length of the entire journey is 541 miles.

- 1. Home Town to Monastery of the Wind–58 miles; the PCs must camp one day, and arrive late on the second day.
- 2. Monastery of the Wind to Goblin Ambush–10 miles, late morning of the third day.
- 3. Goblin Ambush to University Town–65 miles; the PCs must camp twice before they arrive at University Town early on 5th day, and presumably stay the night.
- 4. University Town to Wolvington–32 miles; the PCs arrive late afternoon on the 6th day and presumably stay the

### What If Ranulfr Is Dead And Other Plot Points

It shouldn't be easy to kill Ranulfr prematurely in Part Five, but it could happen, and should be allowed to happen—if the PCs are exceptional. This does leave the final encounter without a primary "boss" however. One simple solution is to have a "lieutenant" of Ranulfr's seek out the party for revenge. This is just a matter of "reskinning" Ranulfr's himself. Take his stat block, drop the darkvision and unusual appearance, and add an extra *potion of darkvision*. When you roleplay the lieutenant be sure to differentiate him as much as possible from Ranulfr. Alternately, the GM can use the battle map provided and stage an entirely different encounter.

An added twist to the story is for the Destined Empress to fall into a swoon when Ranulfr storms the camp and locks eyes with her. The psychic malevolence of Shirota pours through him and causes her to lapse into a coma just as the party is almost to their final destination. A Far East Adventure Path may provide its own rationale for this, but the mystic tension between these characters can serve as an alternate explanation—or both causes could work in conjunction!

### night.

- 5. Wolvington to Gnarlwood Ambush–70 miles; the PCs must camp twice and are attacked early on the 9th day.
- 6. Gnarlwood Ambush to Safe Haven-40 miles; the PCs must camp once and arrive in Safe Haven late morning on the 10th day and presumably stay the night.
- 7. Safe Haven to the Ruined Caravan–17 miles; if the PCs stop to help and fight the ogres that is the only progress they make on the 11th day. Alternately they arrive at Pirate's Landing in the evening of the 12th day (subtract one day from future estimates).
- 8. Ruined Caravan to Pirate's Landing-45 miles; the PC must camp once and arrive in Pirate Landing just before midday on the 13th day and presumably spend the night.
- 9. Pirate's Landing to Confrontation with Ranulfr–192 miles; the PCs must camp six times and are attacked after they make camp the final night. The next morning is the 19th day
- 10. Confrontation with Ranulfr to Saltcrest–8miles; the PCs arrive at SaltCrest late morning on the 20th day.

# LEGENDARY GAMES ADVENTURE PATH PLUG-IN

# **Appendix Two: Shirota**

The main story of Road to Destiny concerns itself with Ranulfr while it foreshadows Old One-Eye. That said, any story of a dhampir is incomplete without some thought as to their vampire sire. As a bonus feature, Shirota's stat block has been included. Shirota makes an excellent future villain for the GM to incorporate in the Far East Adventure Path.

Ranulfr's obsession is inherited from Shirota, and is a facet of what it is to become a jiang-shi. The vampire's motivation is revenge for his murder at the hands of his family (after he sought to betrayed them), but this goes deeper than surface thoughts and feelings. Shirota's very undead existence bound up in this obsession. Were he to be free of it his soul might move on, or he might be finally liberated to a contemplative existence unfettered by the past.

Shirota situates himself in a locale where he can anticipate the PCs pass through on the way to the Empire. His desire to prove his superiority over those who have questioned him, including some of the Dark Spirits, provides motivation for his acting alone or with minions loyal only to himself. There is no special game mechanic for the jiang-shi's unique form of divination, but the GM should feel comfortable granting him some measure of "meta-game" information in regards to the party's location—strictly for the purpose of creating future adventures and encounters (and not to acquire specific insights used to defeat the party).

Shirota appears to be a Medium sized human with pale skin bordering on cyanosis. His physical form remains unchanged over the centuries since the day he was raised from a corpse four days dead. His hair and mustache are jet black, pulled into a ponytail and waxed. A small prayer scroll is nailed to his forehead and dangles between his eyes. He dresses in an exquisite robe which buttons down the front and wears a black velvet cap with a round knob at the top. Like all jiang-shi he moves by means of swift but short hops.

### Shirota

XP 19,200 Male human jiang-shi sorcerer 11

LE Medium undead (augmented human)

Init +4; Senses blindsight 60 ft. (breathing creatures only); Perception +12

### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 118 (11d6+77); fast healing 5

Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +11

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, prayer scroll; DR 10/ magic and slashing; Immune disease, spell completion and spell trigger effects, undead traits; Resist cold 20 Weaknesses jiang-shi weaknesses

### Offense

Speed 25 ft.

Melee bite +9 (1d6+1), 2 claws +9 (1d8+1/19-20 plus grab) Special Attacks brutal claws, drain chi (DC 20) Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +16) 8/day—touch of destiny (+5 bonus, 8/day)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 11th; concentration +16) 5th (5/day)—*break enchantment, magic jar* (DC 20), *suffocation* (DC 20)

4th (7/day)—bestow curse (DC 19), <u>dragon's breath</u> (DC 19), freedom of movement, scrying (DC 19)

3rd (7/day)—blink, fly, gaseous form, lightning bolt (DC 18) 2nd (7/day)—blur, darkness, fog cloud, frigid touch, ghoul touch (DC 17), spider climb

1st (8/day)—alarm, chill touch (DC 16), mage armor, magic missile, true strike, <u>vanish</u>

0 (at will)—arcane mark, bleed (DC 15), detect magic, haunted fey aspect, mage hand, message, open/close, ray of frost, touch of fatigue (DC 15)

### Bloodline destined STATISTICS

- Str 12, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 20
- Base Atk +5; CMB +9 (+13 grapple); CMD 23 (can't be tripped)
  Feats Agile Maneuvers, Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Combat Casting, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Eschew Materials, Fleet, Maximize Spell, Mobility<sup>B</sup>, Quicken Spell, Skill Focus (Acrobatics)<sup>B</sup>, Spring Attack<sup>B</sup>, Toughness, Weapon Finesse
- Skills Acrobatics +16, Appraise +8, Bluff +13, Fly +12, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +6, Perception +16, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +12, Use Magic Device +19; Racial Modifiers +8 Acrobatics, +8 Perception, +8 Stealth
- Languages Common, Far Eastern, Viking
- **SQ** jiang-shi traits, bloodline arcana (gain luck bonus on saves when casting personal-range spells), fated (+3)
- **Other Gear** cloak of resistance +2, ring of protection +2, brooch of shielding, lesser metamagic rod of silence

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR 12

- **Brutal Claws (Ex)**: A jiang-shi's nails are brutally sharp and can extend and retract at will. They threaten a critical hit on a roll of 19–20, are magical weapons for the purposes of overcoming DR, and grant the grab ability.
- Drain Chi (Su): Instead of draining blood, a jiang-shi vampire drains "chi," or life energy, from a victim's breath. When a jiang-shi makes a successful grapple check (in addition to any other effects caused by a successful check, including additional damage), the jiang-shi can attempt to drain chi by drinking the victim's breath. The victim can resist this attack by making a successful Fortitude save. On a failed save, the victim gains 1 negative level and is staggered for 1d4 rounds.
- **Prayer Scroll (Su)**: The scroll attached to the brow of a jiangshi grants immunity to any effects generated from spellcompletion or spell-trigger magic items, such as scrolls and wands. Such magical effects treat the jiang-shi as if it had unbeatable spell resistance. A jiang-shi's prayer scroll can be removed with a successful <u>steal combat maneuver</u>, which immediately ends the jiang-shi's immunity to these effects. If a jiang-shi's prayer scroll is destroyed (a standard action), the vampire also loses its fast healing ability. A jiang-shi may create a replacement prayer scroll by using any strip of parchment and a writing instrument, but doing so requires 10 minutes of uninterrupted work.