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# SHATTERED SKIES

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## The Hunger from Below



RODNEY SLOAN  
ROBERT GRESHAM  
EWAN CUMMINS





# THE HUNGER FROM BELOW

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SHATTERED SKIES  
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# The Hunger from Below

**AUTHORS** Rodney Sloan, Robert Gresham, Michael Whitney, Jarrett Sigler, Ewan Cummins  
**COVER ARTIST** Dean Spencer  
**INTERIOR ARTIST** Eric Lofgren, Rick Hershey, Beatrice Pelagatti, 1Man Studio, Kaitlynn Peavler, Tamás Baranya, Gary Dupuis, Forrest Imel  
**CARTOGRAPHY BY** Robert Gresham, Rodney Sloan, Dyson Logos, Maciej Zagorski  
**CREATIVE DIRECTOR** Robert Gresham  
**EDITORS** Robert Gresham, Micheal Whitney  
**WAYWARD ROGUES PUBLISHING LOGO BY** Robert Gresham  
**PAGE BACKGROUNDS** Robert Gresham  
**LAYOUTS BY** Robert Gresham

**PUBLISHER** Robert Gresham

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## THE RAVENOUS RUIN HAS BEGUN!

*An ancient evil has arisen and put into motion a plan that could wipe out all life in the universe. Brave heroes must rise to thwart the Ravenous Ruin before all is lost!*

### FORWARD

The Ravenous Ruin's plot came to me when I thought about the following dilemma: "When Starfinder® comes out, will my players want to switch games? How can I provide a way for them to bridge the gap with characters they've been adventuring with for over a year?" Thus, the seed for the adventure path was planted. I would design a mini campaign centered around the concept of being a possible bridge from a Pathfinder® Compatible setting, to a Starfinder® Compatible one, should my players want to make the leap.

I initially contemplated writing the story beginning at 1st level, but then thought: this is a good opportunity to write a sequel to Whispers of the Dark Mother. So, the decision was made to start at 7th and feature the "sweet spot of gaming". I devised some simple hooks to bring heroes from that campaign to this one, as well as some new, starting off points for new characters.

Naturally I wanted to continue featuring my fantasy take on the mythic creations of H.P. Lovecraft, while telling a story unique to the Shattered Skies® Campaign Setting. And in that vein, I wanted to explore some entities that not much was written about. As Lin Carter surmised in his essay about the Mythos of Lovecraft: only additional lore, not recycled knowledge, classifies a story as belonging to the mythos. So, look forward to future parts to see where we expanded upon his horrifying mythology.

The central villain had to be Mortalbane- ghastruler of the haunted Endiel forest, and one of the main "big-bads" of the world. The character was based on a long-played character by my brother, who contributed several plot points and twists to the story. We are excited to unleash the Mortalbane upon adventuring parties across the world and hear of his terrifying exploits.

To bring the adventure path to life, we reached out to some very talented authors to craft an unforgettable experience. Rodney Sloan and Charlie Brooks first tackled the frightening world of Celmae in Whispers of the Dark Mother and bring their sinister talents back for the Ravenous Ruin. Exciting new authors Joe Peters and Jessica Redekop have crafted some very unusual, and uniquely scary entries with some iconic villains. Plus the pantheon and gazetteer of Celmae are further expanded upon, adding deeper layers of mystery and wonder to the world of Shattered Skies®!



Robert Gresham  
Publisher, Wayward Rogues Publishing







### WELCOME TO THE FREEDOM GAMES!

This year, the call to historical prominence stretches as far as it ever has. The city of OmniLibertas plan an array of physical and arcane contests, and the PC's are invited. The citizens are bracing themselves for the influx of travelers and adventurers, and businesses find themselves scrambling for food, drink, goods, and extra labor. Extra muscle is in high demand to keep the peace. With competitors coming from all corners of the continent, the events of this year's games promise to be particularly spectacular.

#### CAMPAIGN TRAITS

Several individuals have come to OmniLibertas from all over Celmae with the strict intent of attempting to win glory in the Freedom Games. These would be pursuers of glory have worked themselves into fine machines of competition. Allow PC's to add one of the following Campaign traits to their character for easier integration into the adventure path.

**Banner Runner** — Etiquette and displays of valor are very important to you. You have learned the proper way to display heraldry and motivate others through such displays. When you are wielding a Polearm decorated with a tabard of some sort, you gain a +2 trait bonus on charisma checks. You may charge with your Banner to inspire others, granting them a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls.

**Discus Thrower** — The preparation for the Freedom Games have lead you towards a singular talent. You throw heavy blunt objects incredibly well. Once per day, you can push your body to the absolute

limit and hurl something a great distance. When you throw a bludgeoning weapon or an improvised weapon you may increase its range increment by 5 feet.

**Greco-Wrestler** — You've trained yourself in various submission holds, trips, and grabs against all manner of beasts. While unarmored you gain a +1 trait bonus your checks to grapple a foe. Once per day, when attempting a grapple check, you may deal an additional 1d4 points of nonlethal damage if you succeed the check.

**Rhetorician** — Through years of intense debate, study, and rigorous mental exercise, you have become well versed in the art of arguing. You gain a +2 trait bonus on attempts to use diplomacy to argue why things should be done your way. You may spend one round of Rage, Bardic Performance, or a similar ability to increase this trait bonus to a +5 by giving an emotionally charged plea for your case.

**Transmutation Junkie** — You are particularly receptive to transmutation magics through years of self-manipulation and augmentation. Choose Strength, Dexterity or Constitution. While you are under the effects of a transmutation spell you gain a +1 trait bonus to that attribute. Once chosen you may not change this choice.





## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Ten years ago, the ghost lord Mortalbane (see *Cultures of Celmae: Elves*), attacked the underground gnomish city of Kushl searching for an ancient relic: The Radiant Shard. During the battle, many gnomes succumbed to ghoul fever and the vast caverns around the city were flooded, forcing Mortalbane to retreat. Over the following decade the ghouls departed the city and adapted to hunting in the flooded caverns on its outskirts, while Mortalbane continued his search for the artifact.

Through his agents, he recently discovered that the Radiant Shard is held at the temple of Hastroi in Omnilibertas. He has sent a squadron of elves to retrieve the relic, instructing them to travel underground to best avoid detection or capture.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The party is invited to attend the quadrennial Great Freedom Games in the city of Omnilibertas, sponsored by the temple of Hastroi. After participating in several sporting events, the celebrations are interrupted by a raiding party of undead elves—a cover for the theft of the Radiant Shard from the temple.

After dealing with the aftermath of the attack, the PCs track the invaders through the underground city of Kushl, after encountering hordes of gnome ghouls in the surrounding area. The haunted, deserted city bares signs of Mortalbane's attack, and has become home to a dangerous giant. Before the party can investigate matters further, a party of dwarves arrive, and detains them for interrogation.

## ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Characters begin this adventure at 7th level. They should reach 8th level by the end of the adventure. Feel free to add in fitting encounters to ensure that they gain the needed experience points to advance in level before beginning the next adventure in the Ravenous Ruin series.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

If the party has not played through the *Whispers of the Dark Mother Adventure Path*, there may be another reason they are invited to Omnilibertas to compete in the games. They may have allies within the city who've invited them, or may already be citizens of town.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE GAMES

The PCs are invited by an acquaintance, possibly someone they befriended during their previous adventures, to the neighboring country of Helot to attend their Freedom Games. Held in the city of Omnilibertas, it is a highly anticipated festival of sportsmanship. The PCs are invited to participate in the first day's events. If the players are playing heroes from the *Whispers of the Dark Mother Adventure Path*, then they may be guests of honor at the event.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PC's arrive at Heroes Field, where the games are being held.



“Approaching Heroes Field, you see colorful banners surrounding the grounds and temporary arena seating fashioned from cherry wood. Hundreds of spectators fill them, waving small colored flags and cheering. Teams of competitors stand near each banner wearing matching tunics, some stretching, some waving towards the crowd. A great race is occurring along the tracks at the far end of the grounds, and to your left you see archers firing at small targets.”

If the PC's have been invited by an ally from a previous adventure, insert that NPC now, otherwise Jarnos Bixby, their contact in Omnilibertas, welcomes them to the games.

Read or paraphrase the following:

“Welcome friends! I am so pleased you were able to accept my invitation to the Great Games. I have secured our team's entry; we are the Gold Lions, and we represent the neighboring kingdom of Brynndell and the heroes of Bright Mountain. I have rented several rooms at the Unfettered Ox for your convenience. The early competitions have already begun, and the afternoon events are being filled as we speak. Our team has positions at several posts, now we just need to find where best to enter you. There are contests of aim, barrel lugging, and the duels, physical, mental, and spiritual. Come friends, let's get you fed, refreshed, and ready for competition!”

Run events for your players, allowing them to from below or inventing your own challenges to suit the party.

## ARCHERY

Read or paraphrase the following

A half-elvish woman with dark purple eyes and flowing auburn hair, directs teams towards the archery field. Straw targets with dangling glass bulbs stand 100 feet from the firing line, the jars exploding in a flash of prismatic light when hit. A plump human woman late in her years, sits at a small table beneath a stretched leather shade, scribbling into a ledger with a peacock feather.

As you approach, the half-elf turns towards you, a hungry smile crossing her thin lips.

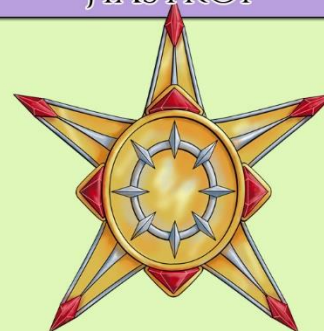
“Gold Lions! I see you have a few competitors left! Good thing too, as your team trails by 15 points. Have at it, and may Hastroi fairly guide your aim.”

Before they can shoot, the human woman under the shade casts *detect magic* upon the party and will frown if they are magically enhanced for the contest. She is only concerned with spells cast, not items obtained. She will require PC's to wait out the duration of any enhancement spells cast.

Contestants fire 3 arrows from their longbows at Small sized straw targets placed 100 feet away. The target's AC is 11. Contestants score 2 points for a hit. If the shot beats the target's AC by 5 or more, it's a bull's eye, and scores 5 points instead. If scores are tied for first place, then the targets are moved to 150 feet, and the tied contestants take 3 more shots each. Continue until there is a winner.

**Reward.** The contestant with the highest score wins a potion of *remove disease*, a potion of *water breathing*, and a potion of *cure moderate wounds*.

## HASTROI



### OMNILIBERTAS

The town of Omnilibertas has many interesting sites and fascinating people. More about the city can be found in ***Omnilibertas: City of Freedom***.

### THE TEMPLE OF HASTROI

The largest building in town, the PCs should pass the temple as they enter the city. Their guide should mention that it houses the protective Radiant Shard, a boon to healers within the city. Hastroi is the god of liberty, honor, and justice. He guides men towards good deeds that strengthen friendships, and compassion in battle if war must be waged. He is credited with helping the Faramaans escape slavery from the Udaai in Cythea.

### THE RADIANT SHARD

The Shard's powers are unknown, beyond its ability to increase the strength of *good* spells cast near it. It was discovered in old orcish ruins by the settling Faramaans, who placed it in the temple of Hastroi to honor the god. Made of an unknown metal, the Radiant Shard is a foot long, two inches in diameter, and weighs 5 lbs.

## BARREL LUGGING

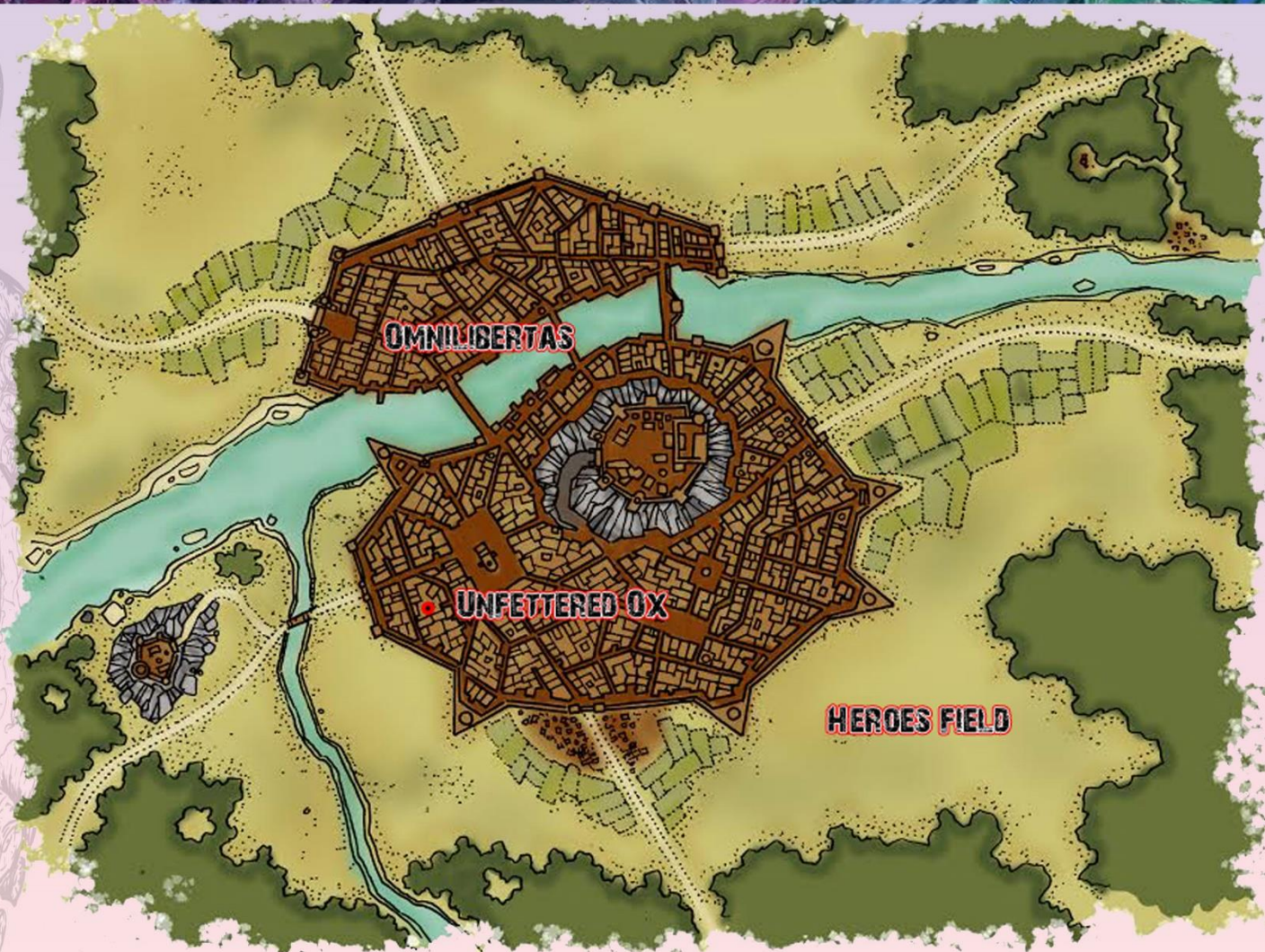
Read or paraphrase the following

Tall, muscular athletes stand in rows, ready for their turn at the course. The contestants lug heavy oak barrels passed obstacles in an exciting race. The event marshal, a tanned Brynnysh man with a droopy mustache claps enthusiastically between each round.

“Come sportsman,” he says as your group approaches. “It's about time the Gold Lions were represented. I'm Sven from Brighton and I've been waiting to see who would stand for the heroes of Bright Mountain.”

He uses a thunderstone to signal the start of the round.





Each contestant grabs a greased, weighted barrel, then races through a series of obstacles. The winner is the first to cross the finish line with their barrel.

There are 4 stages along the course, each 60-feet apart:

- **Start.** After the starter's whistle, each contestant must successfully grapple a barrel (see the Combat chapter in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*). There is a 90-pound barrel per contestant, kept at the start of the course, and the barrel's CMD is 12. Contestant move along the course using the move action described under the rules for grappling. If a contestant fails a grapple, they spend 1 round trying to heft the barrel again.
- **The Lake.** This obstacle is 60-feet long and 10-feet deep. The contestant must make a DC 12 Swim check for each round they are in the water. On a failure, the contestant makes no progress. On a failure by more than 5, they can decide to either let go of the weighted barrel and reattempt the Swim check (DC 10), or to go underwater.
- **The Wall.** This 15-foot high wall has random hand and foot holds,

and requires a successful DC 15 Climb check to scale it, with a –2 penalty for holding a barrel.

- **The Slide.** This slope has been turned into a muddy slide. Getting to the bottom is simple enough, doesn't require a check of any kind, and takes 1 round. At the bottom of the slide the contestant must make another grapple check to maintain a hold on the barrel, with a –2 penalty for the jarring ride.

**Reward.** The fastest contestant receives a ring of swimming.

## DUELING

Read or paraphrase the following:

The dueling fields are by the far the most popular and rowdy, and the cheers are more aggressive here. Three separate arenas cater to the different themes of the duels: physical, magical, and spiritual, surrounded by wooden bleachers crammed with spectators. Coaches and fellow teammates shout encouragement at the competitors



while servers from the city taverns sell bottled ale and ciders to the crowd. A Gold Lion banner flaps in the wind on the far side of the arena.

Contestants are paired up and duel in each specially prepared ring. The type of duel will depend largely on your players. Ideally, you could have different PCs participate in each type of duel listed below, against a team of appropriately chosen NPCs:

- **Spell duels** (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*). **Opponent:** Thazhol the Angry, a half orc with a chip on his shoulder and something to prove. He shouts insults in orcish during the duel. Once over, he becomes very friendly with his opponent. As bloodfire sorcerer; (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*) **hp** 60.

- **Physical duels** (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*).

**Opponent:** Titus Broop, a traveling monk from Helot, the aloof Titus entered the games as a challenge to his own skill. He compliments his foe throughout the battle whenever he is struck. As harrying brute (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*) **hp** 45.

- **Psychic duels** (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Occult Adventures*).

**Opponent:** Armitage Vex, a scoundrel and thief, Vex uses his occult powers to benefit himself only. He entered the games for the gold, and thinks nothing of cheating if he can get away with it. His stats are below.

## Armitage Vex

Male human occultist 7

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** *aura sight*, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *see invisibility*, **Perception** +14

## DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex)  
**hp** 53 (7d8+15)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8; +2 vs. emotions

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 *one-eyed sword* +11 (+10) (1d8+6/19–20)

**Ranged** masterwork composite longbow +7 (1d8+4/×3)

## Implement Schools

*Abjuration* (talisman clasp, 2 points)—Resonant warding talisman; Focus mind barrier (14 points)

*Divination* (headband, 9 points)—Resonant third eye; Focus mind eye (7 minutes), sudden insight (+3)

*Necromancy* (Mother Svetlania's skull, 1 point)—Resonant necromantic focus; Focus mind fear (DC 17), pain wave (DC 17), spirit shroud (7 minutes)

*Transmutation* (one-eyed sword, 3 points)—Resonant physical enhancement (+2 Str); Focus legacy weapon (+2), mind over gravity (7 minutes), philosopher's touch (2 weapons, 7 minutes), sudden speed

**Occultist Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +11 6th;

concentration +10)

**3rd** (2/day)—*dispel magic*, *haste*, *retroognition*OA, *riding possession*OA (DC 17)

**2nd** (4/day)—*false life*, *find traps*, *levitate*, *resist energy*

**1st** (6/day)—*inflict light wounds* (DC 15), *lead blades*

APG, *psychic reading*OA, *shield*

**0**—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 14)

## TACTICS

**Base Statistics** If Vex's mental focus points are unassigned, his statistics are **Senses** *aura sight*; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7; **Melee** +2 *one-eyed sword* +10 (1d8+5/19–20);

**Ranged** masterwork composite longbow +7 (1d8+3/×3); **Str** 16; **CMD** +8; **CMD** 20;

**Skills** *Perception* +10.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Extra Focus Power OA\*, Extra Mental FocusOA\* (2), Iron Will\*, Weapon Focus (longsword)\*

**Skills** Appraise +9, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +5, Fly +7, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (planes) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Linguistics +10, Perception +14, Spellcraft +11, Use Magic Device +13

**Armor Check Penalty** –0

**Traits** grief-filled, spirit sense

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Infernal

**SQ** implements 4, magic item skill\*, mental focus (15), object reading

**Combat Gear** oil of daylight, potions of cure serious wounds (2), scroll of align weapon, wand of cure moderate wounds (0 charges), acid (2); **Other Gear** +1 mithral breastplate, +2 one-eyed sword (longsword), masterwork composite longbow (+4), headband of vast intelligence +2, ring of protection +1, backpack, dagger, headband, hemp rope (50 ft.), grappling hook, talisman clasp, torches (5), trail rations (4), waterskin, 60 gp

\* This ability's effects have been calculated into Vex's statistics.

**Reward.** The winning contestant or team receives a ring of feather falling.

## CELEBRATIONS!

Following the days games, the teams celebrate at the Unfettered Ox where Jarnos Bixby has secured rooms for the PC's. Depending on the final scores from the games the party may even be celebrated as the victors. To set the scene, read or paraphrase the following.

Lute music and song fills the main room of the Unfettered Ox. The barkeep, an aged man with a long black beard, fills copper-coated tankards with potent blackberry cider, refilling empty cups with



JARNOS BIXBY



with manic glee. Competitors from the days games revel, singing along with the tavern's bard. The mood is light, and laughter flows.

Jarnos Bixby is especially drunk and joyful, boasting to many that it was his glorious idea to invite your group to Omnilibertas.

Feel free to create any additional NPC's for the PC's to interact with, such as bar patrons, fellow competitors, consorts, or spectators congratulating them on their performance in the games. Use the opportunity to give character and personality to townsfolk who may be slain or kidnapped later by the elves.

## BESIEGED!

As the celebrations of the day wrap up, an army of vampiric elves attack the city, hitting key location to cause as much chaos as possible. They kill many citizens and abscond with nearly a dozen captives—mostly women and children, and including Jarnos Bixby, the NPC contact who invited the PCs to the games. Feel free to include any NPC you think the PC's are fond of from their interactions earlier.

Their attack is a cover for the theft of the Radiant Shard from the Temple of Hastroi. That part of the mission is being done with stealth to ensure success.

Read or paraphrase the following.

As the night goes on and the celebrations grow more festive, Jarnos becomes sentimental, several times regaling patrons about your previous heroics and adventures, and how he worried about your group's safety during each.

Screams erupt from the streets outside the Unfettered Ox causing revelers to rush to the windows and silencing others within. Most immediately back away, terror stricken from what they see outside. Several remain watching, paralyzed with fear. More screams are followed by louder, inhuman growls.

The moment the PC's mention they go outside, read or paraphrase the following.

As you move to the door, a drunken half elf yanks it open, peering out. He shouts something in Elvish just as a thin curved blade stabs through his chest and out his back. Blood shoots onto the tavern floor and the half elf slumps in the open doorway. Holding the bloody sword is a tall thin figure clad in scale armor with an elaborately carved wooden helmet resembling a diseased stag. Intense, gold-flecked eyes stare at you in challenge. Outside, a pack of dire wolves smash through crowds of panicked citizens. Their riders spear helpless bystanders with their cruel lances.

This encounter is meant to distract the PCs from the main robbery, so that they only hear about it after the raid, along with discovering Bixby's kidnapping. This should motivate them to pursue the elves. Don't give away the fact that the elves are vampires unless the players actively try to figure out their true identities—it'll help establish their appearance of invincibility.



## Unfettered Ox

XP 1,600

Male elf vampire warrior 5

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +9, **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +14

## DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 14, flat-footed 23 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +2 shield)

**hp** 55 (5d10+25), **fast healing** 5

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1, +2 vs. enchantment spells and effects

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immunities** eleven immunities, undead traits; **Resistances** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., Spider Climb

**Melee** +1 darkwood lance +9 (1d8+5/x3) or masterwork scimitar +9 (1d6+4/18-20) or darkwood shield +8 (1d4+4)

**Ranged** alchemist's fire (flask) +10 (1d6-3)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 22), energy drain (2 levels, DC 22)

## TACTICS

The elves drink their potion of *mage armor* before entering combat, then make attacks using either their Ride-By Attack or Trample feats. If their mount is slain, they drop their lances in favor of their scimitars. They retreat if reduced past 20 hp or somehow denied their fast healing ability. If reduced to 0 hp, they use *gaseous form*, but are unable to return to their coffins, and are destroyed after 2 hours pass.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24



**Feats** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Toughness, Trample

**Skills** Climb +8, Intimidate +9, Perception +14, Ride +10

**Languages** Common, Elven, Sylvan

**SQ** change shape (dire bat or wolf, beast shape II), elven magic, gaseous form, keen senses, shadowless, spider climb, weapon familiarity

**Combat Gear** alchemist's fire (flask) (3), potion of *cure light wounds*, potion of *mage armor* **Other Gear** darkwood lance +1, masterwork scale mail, darkwood shield, masterwork scimitar, 103 gp

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

See the vampire in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* for a description of all vampire related special abilities.

See the elf racial description in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for a description of all elf related special abilities.

## Dire Wolf CR 3 (2)

AC 14, hp 37

See the dire wolf in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*.

## BLOODY AFTERMATH (CR 7)

After defeating the undead elves, the PCs most urgent problem is dealing with the wounded—many of whom will die without immediate attention. This encounter is meant to drive home the destructive waste of life perpetrated by the elves.

Read or paraphrase the following.

In the distance, the mounts of the retreating raiders howl victoriously into the night. In the streets, scores of dead citizens lie silent, while wounded others moan and writhe beside them.

Clerics from the temple of Hastroi approach to offer aid, one acolyte turning towards you.

“They stole the Radiant Shard! Without its power, our healing spells are weaker. Please help!”

There are 16 wounded citizens, and 4 dead bodies among them. The PCs must prioritize healing to save the most civilians.

A character that succeeds on a DC 8 Heal check or a DC 10 Perception check can determine if a citizen is alive. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Heal check or a DC 15 Perception check can determine if a citizen is stable, dying, or in a critical condition. Allow each PC to check the health of 3 citizens at most per round, as a full round action, unless they are using magic, such as the *deathwatch* spell. The wounded are relatively close together, requiring a move action to move between each.

### Stable Citizen CR 1/2 (3)

hp 0

### Dying Citizen CR 1/2 (6)

hp –2, Con 10 (Dies after 8 rounds)

### Critical Citizen CR 1/2 (7)

hp –6, Con 10 (Dies after 4 rounds)

### Dead Citizen (4)

hp –10

## UNFETTERED OX

The Unfettered Ox is one of Omnilibertas's oldest inns, converted to a working tavern from a manor home 100 years ago. The owner is Gustus Carvus, a Faramaaran with a love of hospitality. Gustus's brother Fenrik works in the kitchen, brewing the signature Ox-Blood Ale the inn is famous for.

A. Main Taproom.

B. Stairs to second floor guest rooms.

C. Kitchen.

D. Guest rooms.

E. Pantry. Stairs to basement larder.

More information can be found about the Unfettered Ox in *Omnilibertas, City of Freedom*, available at [waywardrogues.com](http://waywardrogues.com)

**Rewards.** If the PCs attempted to help the dying citizens, a surgeon—arriving late to offer aid—approaches them, and offers them some supplies to further aid those they might find in need. These supplies include a healer's kit, antitoxin (3 vials), potion of *lesser restoration* (2), and a potion of *cure serious wounds*.

If the PCs save at least one of the critical citizens, his child approaches the PCs with a wrapped gift, and insists that they take it as a token of thanks for saving their father's life. The package contains a potion of *water walk* and an oil of *magic weapon*.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE HUNGER BELOW

After dealing with the aftermath of the elves' attack, the PCs find themselves pursuing the elven rearguard which leads them on a perilous quest through ghoul infested warrens and the gnomish city of Kushl.

## PURSUED!

The PCs have just enough time to grab their gear, learn of the theft of the Radiant Shard and the kidnappings, before the next encounter. Read or paraphrase the following.

As the last of the wounded are tended to, you receive grateful thanks from the Hastroi clerics who begin preparing for the long-term care of the more critical survivors. Senator Druthval, a high-ranking member on the Leaders council of Omnilibertas approaches out of breath, flanked by two haggard and bruised guards. One of the clerics goes to him and reports the theft of the Radiant Shard and of the accompanying damage of the temple. He shakes his head and his expression grows darker.

“Friends,” he calls out to your group. “Those merciless fiends have



have done more than just rob us of our holy relic and kill our people, they have abducted over a dozen more, including my wife's nephew, Jarnos Bixby, who I am told is one of your friends. Please, I implore you, save our people from those inhuman beasts!"

If the PC's request supplies, Senator Druthval agrees and commands his guards to gather them for the group. If the PC's negotiate for payment, he reluctantly agrees, muttering about 'cold-blooded mercenaries'. He promises to gather 4000 gp of his own wealth and give it to the PC's once they return with the artifact and townfolk.

The city residents are reeling from the attack. Though they will have a considerable head start the elves are easy enough to pursue: they're a large force slowed by a train of prisoners, many of whom are wounded. Some captives will be left for dead as the army flees southwest into the hills. Jarnos will not be among them.

Any survivors discovered are in shock, muttering only, "they said they were taking us to *her* and our suffering would be far worse."

## THE HUNGRY BELOW

Eventually the trail leads underground. The wide tunnels go west for miles, and are too extensive to reproduce here. The following encounters can be played in order, or interspersed with random encounters.

### TUNNEL FEATURES:

The tunnels are stone, 10' wide, with ceilings reaching 15' to 40' in spots. The walls are moist and fluorescent lichens dot the floors allowing characters with low-light vision to navigate some passages. Not all passages contain these glowing fungi. The trail of the elves remains easy to follow (Survival DC 12).

### FUNGUS GROVE (CR 6)

The tunnels widen further, creating a small chamber littered with florescent fungi. They give the grove a prismatic glow, and cause the larger violet colored mushrooms to cast shadows onto the moist walls. Two small skeletons lie on the ground, their bones coated with lime-colored, hairy fungi.

Decaying corpses have attracted two violet fungi. They attack anything with flesh, including ghouls who pass near them. A pair of ghouls, reduced to skeletons, now coexist with them.

### Violet Fungus CR 3 (2)

AC 15, hp 30

See the violet fungus in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*. **Tactics:** The fungi lash out hungrily at anyone that comes near them.

### Gnome Skeleton CR 1 (2)

XP 400

gnome warrior 3  
NE Small undead

**Init** +6, **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

### DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2, +2 vs. illusion spells or effects  
**DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immunities** cold, undead traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +3 (1d3)

### TACTICS

The skeletons attack any living thing, excluding the fungus.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

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

**Feats** Improved Initiative

**Skills** Climb +4, Swim +5

**Languages** Common, Gnome, Sylvan

**Gear** crossbow bolts (20), jewelry worth 200 gp, and 50 gp

### RUSTING BRIDGE (CR 7)

A pair of rust monsters moved into the area after Mortalbane's attack. Without anyone to chase them off, Kushi's iron highways presented a literal banquet. The pair are consuming the decking of an iron bridge that spans a gap not far from the city, which has turned the old thoroughfare into a dangerous death trap.

### Rust Monster CR 3 (2)

AC 18, hp 27

See the rust monster in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*.

**Tactics:** The rust monsters attempt to force opponents onto the weaker sections of the bridge, hoping that they fall into the gorge below.

### Rusting Bridge Trap CR 5

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

### EFFECTS

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

**Effect** 50-ft.-deep pit (5d6 falling damage); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

**Rewards.** A corpse on the far side of the bridge wears a *stone ring of protection +1* and carries a scroll case containing a scroll of *summon monster II*, scroll of *gust of wind*, and scroll of *scorching ray*.

### PUPPET MASTER (CR 8)

A troupe of marionetteers occupy a network of tunnels not far from the city. Capable ambush hunters, they wait to seize the last person in a group, then use them to lure the rest of the party into their trap.

If they succeed in seizing a PC in stealth, read or paraphrase the following.

The tunnel walls here are covered in black soot, and parts of the tunnel have collapse into the inky water, making the already tight corridors a claustrophobic labyrinth. Slimy black fungus covers the fallen stone, giving them the appearance of silent, hunched monsters.

Taking a moment to look around, you realize (the party member) is gone.

If the marionetteer is unsuccessful, read or paraphrase the following.





Above you a bulbous cephalopod with six thick tentacles and a head studded with red eyes, flicks two long barbed tongues in and out of its fanged maw.

### Marionetteer CR 4 (4)

XP 1,200

CN Large aberration

**Init** +7; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 37 (5d8+15)

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

**Immune** poison; **Resist** cold 5

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

**Melee** bite +7 (1d8+4), tentacles +2 (1d6+2)

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

**Special Attacks** barbed tongues +7 (1d6+4 plus grab plus poison)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** each marionetteer uses Stealth, waiting for the PC's to pass them, and then they attempt to sieze them one-by-one in ambush attacks.

**During Combat** each marionetteer focuses on a single foe, attempting to paralyze their prey for an easier kill.

**Morale** the marionetteer's flee if reduced to 12 hp or lower.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +8 (+12 vs. grapple); **CMD** 21 (29 vs. trip)

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff)

**Skills** Bluff +9, Climb +19, Escape Artist +10, Perception +13, Stealth +6; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb, +4 Perception

**Languages** Aklo

**SQ** puppetry

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Barbed Tongues (Ex)** A marionetteer's barbed tongues must strike at a single target, but do so as a primary attack with a reach equal to three times the marionetteer's normal reach (30 feet for a Large marionetteer). A marionetteer does not gain the grappled condition while using its barbed tongues to grab a target it hits with this attack. A marionetteer cannot use its bite attack while it has a creature grappled.

**Poison (Ex)** Barbed tongues—*injury*; save Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* paralyzed for 1d4 rounds; *cure* 1 save.

**Puppetry (Ex)** A marionetteer can animate an unconscious or dead creature grappled with its barbed tongues, using it as a decoy to fool other creatures. The marionetteer gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Stealth checks when using this ability.

**Tentacles (Ex)** A marionetteer's tentacles must all strike at a **single** target, and do so as a secondary attack.

The marionetteer is a deceptive hunter that stalks the deepest caverns of the world. A typical marionetteer weighs 2,000 pounds, with tentacles that measure 12 feet in length.



PUBLISHING



## FOLLOWED! (CR 8)

Unless they're particularly slow, the PCs should bump into the tail end of the retreating vampire elf army. Unbeknownst to both parties, a will-o'-wisp tails the army, drawn to the suffering of their prisoners.

Played cautiously, the will-o'-wisp should plague the party for some time.

### Will-o'-wisp CR 6

AC 26, hp 40

See the will-o'-wisp in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*.

**Tactics:** The will-o'-wisp stays invisible, appearing only briefly to unsettle the party and feed on their fear.

### Vampire Elf CR 5

AC 27, hp 55

See the vampire elf in chapter 1.

**Tactics:** The vampire elf fights a running battle with anyone pursuing him.

### Dire Wolf CR 3

See the dire wolf in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*.

**Rewards.** When the wisp is defeated, each party member gains a +2 luck bonus on Will saves against fear effects for 1d4+1 days.

## THE CAUSEWAY (CR 7)

The main thoroughfare into Kushl is an underground causeway. Mortalbane's attack severely damaged the causeway, and part of the cavern collapsed. As the elves and prisoners passed here, they caved-in the rest of the tunnel, leaving only a small exit (**Area B**).

The cavern is flooded in 4 feet of water, while fallen stone forms islands around the remains of the causeway and count as difficult terrain. The causeway rises 5 feet above the island. Drifts of light debris have collected on the water's surface, providing concealment to creatures below.

The Kushl ghouls have made their home in the dark, flooded warrens surrounding the city, and have adapted a lacedon-like ability to swim. A pack of ghouls lie in wait here, hidden under the debris near a pile of junk made to look like a treasure hoard. A DC 16 Perception check by anyone within 15 feet of the pile reveals that it's made up of shards of broken glass, bits of metal, and shiny trinkets.

Read or paraphrase the following.

The passage opens into a vast cavern with a 60' high ceiling. The smell of wet, rotting decay hangs heavily in the air, and the sounds of water lapping on rock echoes in the distance. In the light of your torch you can barely make out a crumbling pile of stones that runs northwards, into the distance—some ruined architecture that must once have been glorious to behold.

To the east, something sparkles richly in the play of your torchlight.

### Kushl Ghoul CR 1 (8)

XP 400

CE Small undead

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+4 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 19 (3d8+6)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +7 (1d4–1 plus disease and paralysis) and 2 claws +7 (1d4–1 plus paralysis)

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

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** the ghouls hide in the fetid waters using Stealth.

They attempt to ambush anyone searching the "treasure pile", paralyzing and dragging them underwater back to their lair.

**During Combat** the ghouls attempt to overwhelm weaker or lone victims, then drag their paralyzed prey under the water to their lair, a small cave.

**Morale** staved and insane, the ghouls here fight until destroyed.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 9, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 14

**Feats** Weapon Finesse

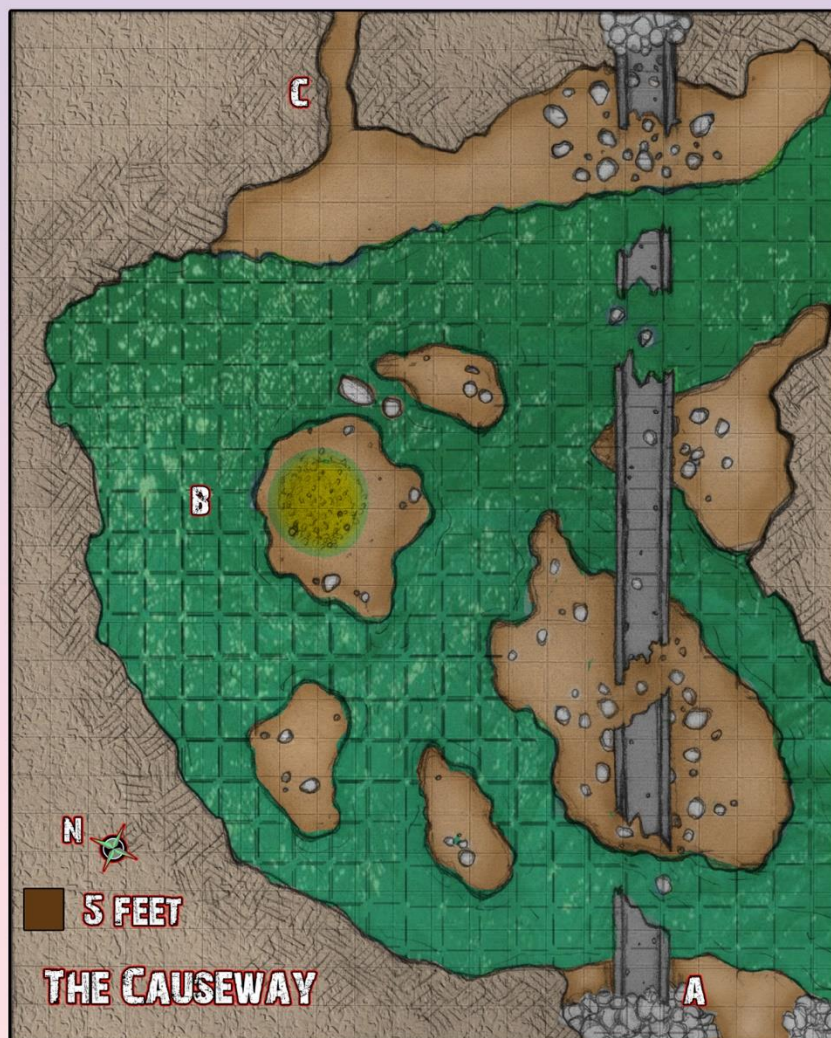
**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Climb +5, Perception +8, Stealth +14, Swim +10

**Racial Modifiers** +8 Swim

**Languages** Common







### CAUSEWAY MAP KEY

- A. PC's entrance to causeway cavern
- B. Ghoul hiding place.
- C. Exit to Ghoul warrens

### GHOULS WARRENS (CR 8)

Read or paraphrase the following:

Traveling deeper underground you perceive many small tunnels branching out from the wide passage you're following. Many of these tunnels are little over 3 feet high, and bare the marks of iron tools. The passage gradually descends deeper and deeper down, into the rock, growing narrower and narrower as it does so. You continue to pass more of the adjoining tunnels, each a pit of blackness in the dark rock. Strange sounds echo in their depths, and smell of decay and damp become inescapable. The dripping of water echoes in the unseen distance.

This encounter takes place in any network of tight tunnels, with very little space for the PCs to outmaneuver their ghoul assailants. The GM should be familiar with the squeezing rules from the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*.

The tunnels are completely dark and submerged in water—easy enough for the ghouls to swim through but difficult terrain for anyone that would rather walk. The surface of the water is coated with rancid gore and silt, making peering down into its depths difficult (treat as terrible conditions, giving a +5 bonus to Stealth for completely submerged characters). Characters with darkvision that duck beneath the surface can peer into the murky water at a distance of 1d8 x 10 feet.

Where ever the PC's do not have to squeeze, the ceilings of the tunnel is 5' high; still low enough that they may have to crouch as they walk, but at least they don't have to hold their breath. However, the stench of water home to ghouls is overpowering, giving characters who waded through it the Sickened condition unless they succeed at a DC 13 Fort save.

This encounter is intended as a slug-fest, with ghouls jumping out from around tight corners or bursting from the still waters, only to disappear again seconds later. Harry the party enough and their hatred for the ghouls will only increase, setting the stage for the later discovery that the ghouls are the same gnomes that suffered Mortalbane's attack.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

This encounter is not intended to drown the party, but to pick the party off one-by-one. Having the party wake up bound and gagged in a dark and gore splattered cavern should reinforce the dangers of the ghoul warrens they are now travelling through.

### Kushl ghoul CR 1 (12)

AC 15, hp 19

*See the kushl ghoul in the last encounter.*

**Tactics:** The ghouls surround weaker opponents and overpower them with their superior numbers.

### SACRED BURIAL

Somewhere in the warrens the PCs find a dead dwarf, lying on a slab of stone as if she was placed there. The area is under the effects of a *hallow* spell, and the ghouls won't approach it. It's a good place to rest, although surviving ghouls stalk its perimeter until dealt with.





- A ENTRANCE TO GHOUL WARRENS
- B DWARF CORPSE
- C EXIT TO LORD CARRION'S LAIR

The dwarf's gear is laid out with her and includes a masterwork dwarven urgrosh, a masterwork heavy crossbow, a suit of masterwork full plate, a masterwork dwarven boulder helmet (see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Race Guide*), and 730 gp worth of dwarven jewelry.

## LAIR OF CARRION

Once the PC's leave the ghoulish warrens, they travel down a passage for 200 feet before coming upon Lord Carrion's lair. Once they enter the ghastron's chamber, read or paraphrase the following.

After carefully picking your way through a series of dank caverns, you come out into a larger chamber. Like the others, this chamber is flooded, but its center is an island of stone and bone, teaming with ghouls. Sitting atop a pile of skulls overlooking the horde is a bloated, pale ghoulish with fangs filed into needle points. On its gaunt head it wears a crown of severed fingers.

Once the PC's are spotted read the following.

A cry goes up, as one of the ghoulish sentries spots you, followed by the guttural replies of the ghouls below.

Once the ghouls's initiative number occurs, read the following.

Several ghouls begin throwing something at the ceiling, each of which explodes into a cloud of violence. Thousands of bats fill the air, whipped up into a frenzy by the missiles. Through the cloud of flapping wings, the ghouls attack.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Turning a corner, you find a large chamber, with a slab of stone lying in the center. On top, as if laid out for burial, is a female dwarf in beautifully detailed plate armor. Her weaponry is respectfully laid out around her. The smell of incense still lingers on the air.

A sudden motion behind you alerts you to another one of the ghouls. Although it's close, it seems as if some unseen force is preventing it from coming any closer.

The ghouls are led by Lord Carrion, a cruel ghastron. He amassed a small fortune in dwarvish treasure by murdering a band of them several months ago, and now wears their former possessions.

Several long tunnels have been clawed out here, and the PCs can deduce that the ghouls are digging toward the surface, searching for food.





## Lord Carrion, Dread Ghast CR 4

Gnome Sorcerer 3

NE Small humanoid (gnome) undead

**Init** +, lowlight vision, darkvision 60ft

**Aura** Stench (20ft, DC 19, 1d6+4 minutes) Unnatural Aura (30ft)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 20 (+1 Armor, + 4 DEX, +4 Natural Armor, + 1 Size), touch 15, flatfooted 16

**hp** 40 (3d8+24)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9; +2 vs Illusion

**Defensive Abilities** Defensive training (+4 bodge bonus to AC vs giants), Undead Traits, Channel resistance +4

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20ft, Swim 20ft

**Melee** Bite + 5 (1d4+4 plus disease and paralysis), 2 claws +5

(1d4+4 plus disease and paralysis) or

*deep miners pick* +6 (1d6+4/x4, plus faerie fire)

**Special Attacks** Paralysis DC 17 (1d4+1 rounds), command ghouls and ghouls, create spawn,

Long Limbs (+5 ft to natural attacks and touch attacks),

+1 on attack rolls against goblinoid humanoids and reptile humanoids

**Bloodline spell like abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +10)

**10/day** – *acidic ray* (1d6+2 acid)

**Gnome spell like abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +10)

**1/day** – *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 18), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals*

**Sorcerer spells known** (CL 3rd; concentration +10)

**1st (7/day)** – *enlarge person* (DC 18), *reduce person* (DC 18), *shield*, *shocking grasp*

**0th (at will)** – *acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC17)

**Bloodline** aberrant

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Casts *shield* at beginning of combat, targets approaching enemies with *acid ray*, then uses his long arm ability to deliver touch spells and natural attacks. In melee casts *enlarge person* on self and attacks.

**Morale** Lord Carrion believes himself impervious, fighting until destroyed.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** –, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 24



**Base Atk** +1 CMB +5 CMD 17

**Feats** Eschew Materials, Iron Will, Spell Focus (Transmutation)

**Skills** Bluff +11, Craft (Alchemy) +6, Disguise +8, Perception +6, Use Magic Device +11

**Languages** Common, Gnome, Sylvan

**SQ** bloodline arcana (+50% duration on polymorph spells), gnome magic

**Other Gear** *bracers of armor +1, deep miner's pick, stonemason's ring*

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Disease (Su)** *Ghoul Fever*: Bite – injury; save Fort DC 17; Onset 1 day; frequency 1day; effect 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. This DC is Charisma-based.

**Paralysis (Su)** – See *Kushul Ghoul*

**Stench (Ex)** Dread Ghosts exude an overwhelming stink of death and corruption in a 20-foot radius. Those within the stench must succeed a DC 17 Fort save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes.

**Create Spawn (Su)** Any creature killed by a dread ghast that lies undisturbed until the next midnight rises as a dread ghast at that time. The new dread ghast is not under the control of its creator. A *protection from evil* or *gentle repose* spell cast on the corpse prevents its conversion.

**Command Ghosts and Ghouls (Su)** As a free action, a dread ghast may command all normal ghosts and ghouls within 30 feet (as the *command undead* spell). Normal ghosts and ghouls never attack a dread ghast unless compelled.

## Kushl Ghoul CR 1 (8)

AC 15, hp 19

See the kushl ghoul in the *Causeway encounter* (page 13).

**Tactics:** In the first round of combat, 4 ghouls throw rocks at the cavern ceiling, causing the bat swarms to enter combat, and then move towards the closest enemy. During the rest of the combat, they swarm around enemies that threaten their king.

## Bat Swarm CR 2 (3)

AC 16, hp 13

See the bat swarm in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*.

**Tactics:** Agitated by the ghouls to screen their attack, the bats attack the closest PCs but flee if they take significant damage.

STONEMASON'S RING	PRICE
	1,600gp
SLOT ring CL 5th WEIGHT -	
AURA faint transmutation	

This stone ring was created by dwarven masons to aid them in their greatest works. It continually grants the wearer a +4 competence bonus on Craft (stonemasonry) checks.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 800 gp  
Forge Ring, 4 ranks in the Craft (stonemasonry) skill



DEEP MINER'S PICK	PRICE
	2,308 gp
SLOT none CL 1st WEIGHT 6 lbs.	
AURA faint evocation	

These practical weapons are valued by dwarven exploratory miners for their versatility and ability to reveal obscured creatures. A creature hit with a *deep miner's pick* is lined with light, as if under the effects of a *faerie fire* spell, for 1 minute.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** COST 1,154 gp  
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *faerie fire*



## WETWORK (CR 8)

Read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead, the tunnel walls are carved upon, depicting gnomes at work and at play. Long-dead lanterns hang from chains along the ceiling, creaking as they sway in the draft that comes down the tunnel. The water is knee deep here, yet cleaner, and seems to be flowing from up ahead.

The passageway ends at an archway, and through this you see a cylindrical shaft towering above you. Suspended in the center of the room from two pulleys is a large, upside down vase, its mouth just below the waterline flooding the chamber. A series of sturdy wooden rafts are tied together, forming a ring around the vase.

When Mortalbane attacked, he and his forces damaged many of the floodable elevator gates that once protected Kushl, causing vast sections of Kushl to flood. The PCs must pass through one of these gates to enter the city.

The elevator is a circular tower (10 feet in diameter and 65 feet high), filled with 10 feet of water. Suspended from the ceiling is a large pottery vase—a *decanter of endless water*. It constantly streams out 120 gallons of water (15 cubic feet) each round. While the vase is partly submerged this ability is temporarily suppressed. Ropes allow the vase to be raised to flood the chamber, or lowered to stop the chamber flooding. Wooden rafts act as the elevator's platform. The sealed doors that once enclosed the lower and upper levels to prevent flooding have been destroyed, but can be repaired with a reasonable plan, such as using a wall of ice spell to seal them.

The wheel that once opened the release hatch—to drain the tower and lower the elevator—has been disabled, but can be repaired by reconnecting the chain connecting the wheel to the hatch.

It takes 40 minutes to flood the lower chamber and surrounding halls (4 minutes if the doors are repaired), and another 4 minutes for the elevator to reach the second level.

If the vase is raised high enough, it will begin to flood the city. For each day the vase is active, the water level in Kushl rises by 1 foot. After 5 days the entire city is flooded.

**Rewards.** Valuable gnomish possessions have fallen to the bottom of the flooded elevator, including a potion of *comprehend languages*,



a potion of *cure moderate wounds*, a +1 *scimitar*, and 2 black pearls (worth 500 gp each). The command word to deactivate the *decanter of endless water* was lost with the gnomes but can be discovered with a DC 25 Use Magic Device check.

## PERIMETER TRAPS (CR 7)

The city proper is protected by a gauntlet of perimeter traps, many of which were disabled by the attackers. The PCs must deal with one trap set along a 10-foot wide corridor into the city.

### Water Jet Trap CR 7

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

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Duration** 3 rounds; **Reset** none

**Effect** high powered jets of water (3d6 bludgeoning damage, DC 20 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in the 10-ft.-wide and 60-ft.-long corridor)

## CHAPTER THREE: CITY OF WHISPERS

After the PC's have passed the water trap, they will come upon the abandoned gnome city of Kushl. Once they do, read or paraphrase the following.

Before you stretches a vast, silent underground city. Diffused light from magical lamps dimly illuminate buildings intricately cut from the very stone of the chamber. They now lie dark and empty, devoid of any signs of life. No one walks the crumbling, half-flooded streets, which are marred by the scars of a forgotten war and the passing of the lonely years.

The gnomes have long since abandoned the gnomish city to satisfy their hunger elsewhere, but it's still a somber place, scarred by signs of slaughter and ghoulish depravity. From the sights around Kushl it's clear that it only fell in the last decade.

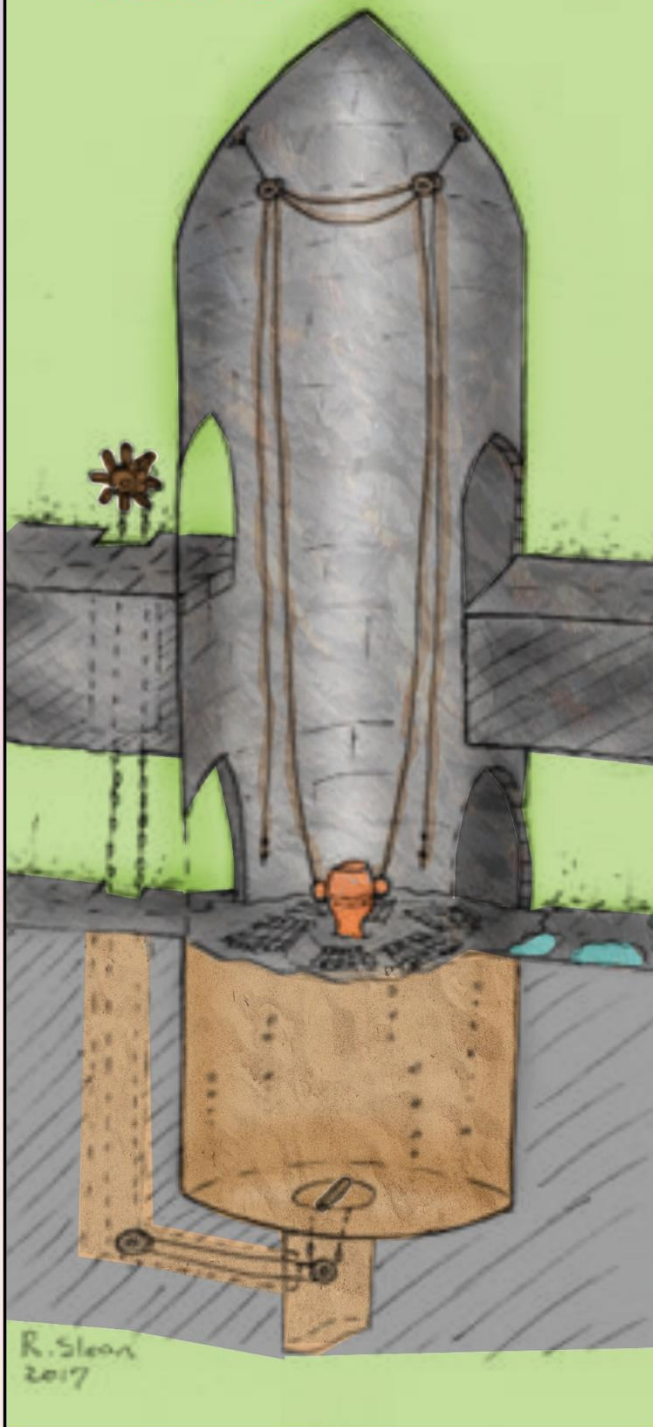
As they explore, the PCs encounter clues as to what happened in the city, including haunts that tell the story of Mortalbane eradicating the gnomes and spreading ghoulish fever, leading to the party learning that the ghouls they just slaughtered are the former innocent residents of the city.

Consult the following table to describe what the PC's discover. Use each result only once.

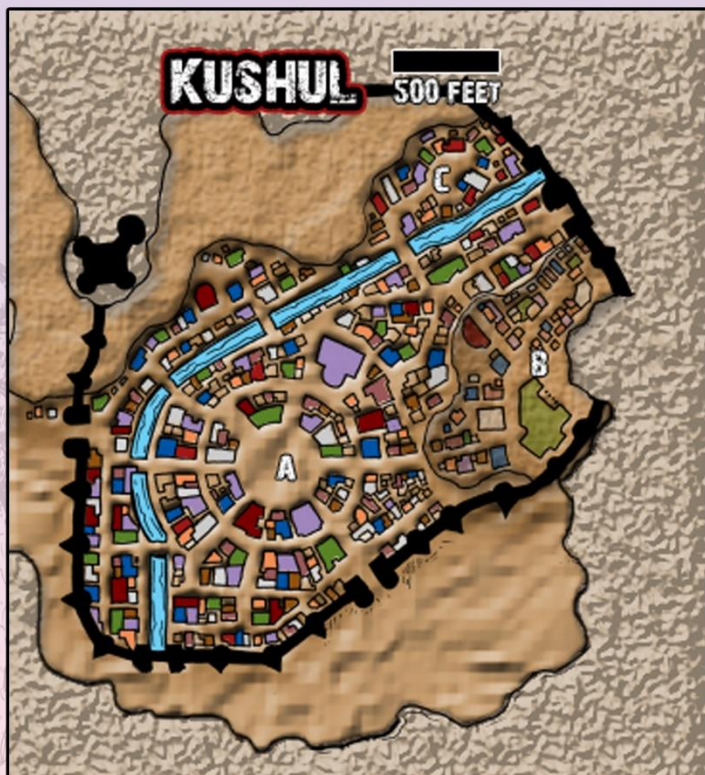
### Table: Abandoned Buildings 1d6

1. Rotting, mold shrouded furniture stands against the walls of this chamber. A heavy, formal chair is particularly far gone and one leg collapses if the chair is disturbed.
2. The shattered remains of several pewter mugs lie scattered across the floor. A dented and bent pewter plate lies against one wall. Dust covers everything.
3. A strange dark stain mars the floor of this chamber. Investigation reveals the stain is likely old, dried blood.
4. Someone has pried up the floorboards to reveal a small space below. Nothing but cobwebs fill the niche. A faint outline in the dust hints a small box or coffer was once stored here.
5. The hinges of this door have failed and only the door jamb holds it in place. If the door is opened, it collapses into the room with a loud thud.
6. Someone has covered one wall in graffiti daubed in charcoal. To the untrained eye, the graffiti looks like nothing but deranged scribbling. Scholars of the occult may realize; the scribbles look a little like the sigil of a certain elder, blasphemous power...

## WETWORK







## WHISPERINGS OF MORTALBANE

The PCs encounter this first haunt anywhere within a home in Kushul, after having had time to witness signs of the destruction that scars the city. When the haunt is activated, read or paraphrase the following.

A crumbling stone fountain stands in the center of this room, illuminated by a thin beam of light that filters down from a cleverly cut shaft in the rock above. In the center of the fountain, dirty water gurgles from the neck of a headless statue of an unidentifiable humanoid figure — the sound reminds you of someone drowning.

### Drowning Fountain CR 6

XP 2,400

CE haunt (10 ft. radius, centered on fountain)

Caster Level 6th

Notice Perception DC 22 (to hear someone drowning)

hp 12; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

**Effect** When triggered, the stone floor around the fountain in the center of this chamber loses its firmness, and characters begin to sink into it. A loud, wet, choking sound seems to emanate from the fountain. Characters can just make out the ghostly image of an armored figure drowning a helpless gnome. The floor of the 60-foot wide circular chamber is targeted by a *transmute rock to mud* spell.

**Destruction** The corpses of several gnomes lying at the bottom of the 5-foot deep fountain must be given a proper burial.

## KUSHUL KEY

A. The Quarry (See *The Beast in Shadow*, below.)

B. The Mayor's Mansion (If they haven't already, PC's automatically encounter the *Gnomish Defenders Haunt* here.)

C. Alchemy Quarter (If the PC's haven't already, they automatically encounter the *Ghoulish Cravings Haunt* here.)

## GNOMISH DEFENDERS

At any point in their investigation of the city, the PC's will encounter this haunt. When they do, read or paraphrase the following.

Ahead you hear battle. At the end of the road a tall figure in Ornate armor with long hair braids tied to his belt, swings an enchanted blade at a regiment of gnome guards, cutting them down as if they were blades of grass. More spectral gnomes appear and enter the fray, but some turn, spotting your group. Their rotted, horrific faces twist into scowls. They scream in silent rage, charging toward you.

### Gnomish Defenders CR 7

XP 2,400

CE haunt (30-ft. radius)

Caster Level 7th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to see spectral image of decayed gnomish regiment)

hp 14; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 minute

**Weaknesses** tricked by *hide from undead*

**Effect** Spirits consumed by hatred due to their souls' inability to find rest or solace following Mortalbane's attack, gnomish defenders lash out at the PC's in jealous outbursts of ethereal horror. Appearing as regiments of spectral gnomish warriors with decayed flesh, these haunts charge toward intruders bearing rusting arms and ancient armor. While the attacks are physically futile, the sight of these horrific, tortured souls strikes witnesses with the effects of *eyebite* (save DC 19).

**Destruction** Defeating *The Beast in Shadow* will allow these spirits to permanently to rest.

## QHOULISH CRAVINGS

Mortalbane didn't just slaughter the residents of Kushul, he infected the survivors with *ghoul fever*. As the PC's continue searching homes, they will eventually trigger this haunt. When they do, read or paraphrase the following.

The scent of decay hangs heavy in the air in this building. Scattered furniture suggests that the occupants attempted and failed to barricade the doors. Faint sobbing emanates from the far corner of the room as your stomachs churn suddenly with ravenous hunger.



## Ghoulish Cravings

XP 4,800

CE haunt (30 ft. radius)

Caster Level 8th

**Notice** Wisdom check DC 18 (to notice sobbing and sudden twinges of unnatural hunger)

**hp 16; Trigger** proximity; **Reset** automatic (24 hours)

**Effect** When the hunger pangs strike, all characters in the room must make DC 20 Fortitude saves to resist taking 10d6 points of nonlethal starvation damage from the sudden phantom hunger. Accompanying this ravenous sensation is the conviction that only the flesh of the other PCs can sate the hunger. Any character who took starvation damage must then make a DC 20 Will save to resist taking 2d6 points of Wisdom drain as the cannibal urgings overwhelm the PC and drive him to the brink of madness.

**Destruction** Defeating Lord Carrion and at least 20 Kushul gnomes allows this haunt to rest once it is destroyed.

## ADDITIONAL HAUNTS

The following haunts are provided in case the PC's have not gained enough XP to advance to 8th level. Choose one or both to include.

### ENTOMBED!

This haunt occurs within an abandoned gnome home. Once the haunt is activated, read or paraphrase the following.

This lonely dust covered home once housed a large family with several children, as evidenced from the many toys scattered among broken chairs and tables. The faint sounds of scratching come from the walls nearby, before rivulets of crimson begin bleeding through, coursing down its surface as a scream pierces the air.

## Bleeding Walls CR 5

XP 1,600

CE haunt (5 ft. by 20 ft. hallway)

Caster Level 5th

**Notice** Perception DC 20 (to hear the sound of scratching)

**hp 10; Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

**Effect** When this haunt is triggered, thick rivulets of blood course down the walls accompanied by the shrill shriek of a woman's scream. All creatures in the area are targeted by a *fear* spell (Will DC 16).

**Destruction** The body of a gnome who died hiding from her ghouled-turned family is entombed behind the walls. She must be extracted and given a proper burial.

### DESPERATE WHISPERS

As you search this abandoned chamber, the sounds of whispers, faint at first, grow into a crescendo of desperate pleading and insane babbling.

## Desperate Whispers

XP 4,800

CE haunt (up to 40-ft. radius)

Caster Level 8th

**Notice** Perception DC 20 (to hear crescendoing whispers)

**hp 16; Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

**Effect** When this haunt is triggered, all within the affected area discern a faint, feathery whispering. As the whispers crescendo, all intruders are subject to the maddening disorientation of an *insanity* spell (save DC 20). The condition is permanent, but can be cured normally.

**Destruction** *Holy smite* cast in the area permanently destroys this raving haunt.

### STRANGLED!

A spectral giant with four arms appears before you. It's mishappen face splits down the center, revealing circular row after row of curved fangs. He strides forward and with its massive clawed hands, reaches towards your throat.

## Choking Hands

XP 1,200

CE persistent haunt (15-ft.-by-30-ft. alleyway)

Caster Level 4th

**Notice** Perception DC 20 (to see coalescing vapor forming into a humanoid shape)

**hp 18; Weakness** tricked by *hide from undead*; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

**Effect** This haunt manifests as a pair of spectral skeletal hands that latches around the throats of its victims. This +4 touch attack duplicates a *vampiric touch* spell each round, and the temporary hit points gained feed the haunt's own hit points, making the entity harder to dismiss the longer it strangles.

**Destruction** Defeating the Beast in Shadow permanently destroys the haunt.

## THE BEAST IN SHADOW (CR 10)

Before their investigations are completed the PCs come across ghoulish corpses that have been mauled by something large. The Beast in Shadow is a gog that now lairs in the dark, cramped quarry in the center of Kushul, and is partly responsible for the ghouls leaving the city.

How the gog escaped the prison city of Ukosh below the gnome capitol of Carbas (See *Cultures of Celmae: Gnomes*) is a mystery, one which the PCs won't have time to solve during this adventure. The gog is magically unable to leave Kushul; a condition it's not even aware of.

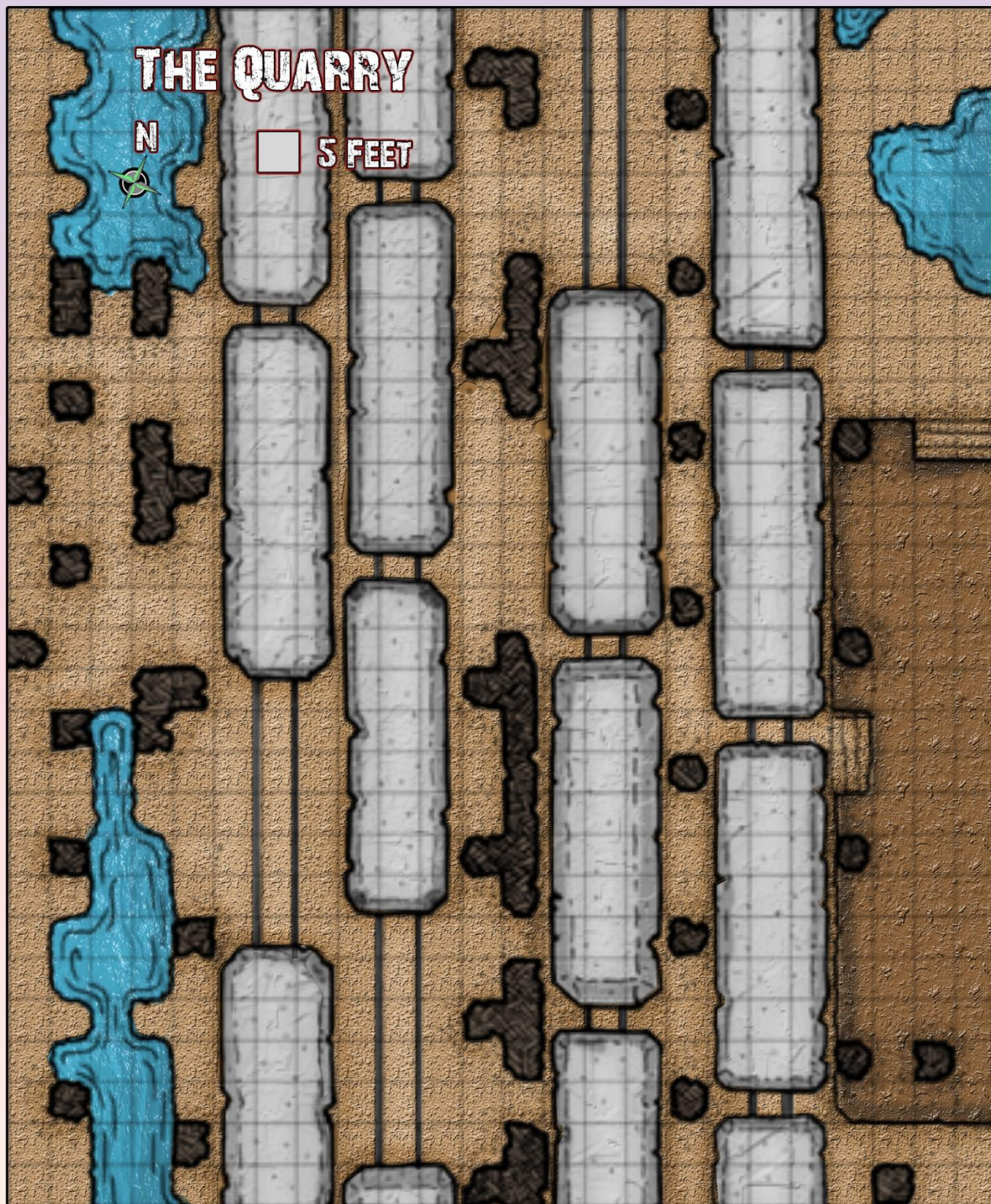
### Encounter Features

A flight of stairs leads into the quarry and to a 5-foot-high platform on the eastern side of quarry.

Large chunks of stone levitate above magical iron rails here, which transported them through a network of tunnels to building sites around the city. Without wizards to empower the rails, these chunks float immovably in the air, 2 feet up. The chunks of stone are 45 feet long, 11 feet high, and 11 feet wide. The ceiling of the quarry is 15 feet high.

Underground lakes here are 20 feet deep and filled with the detritus of the gog's past meals. Creatures who become submerged in a lake have a 50% chance of contracting filth fever (see appendix 1 in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*).







### The Beast in Shadow

XP 9,600

CE Large aberration (gug)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +27

### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (+1 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 127 (15d8+60)

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

**Immune** disease, poison

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +17 (1d8+7), 4 claws +17 (1d6+7)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** rend (2 claws, 1d6+10)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** the Beast in Shadow is very perceptive and may be alerted by the approaching PC's. If it is aware of them prior to combat, it uses its compression ability to hide in within the quarry, attacking the PC's by surprise.

**During Combat** The gug uses its ring of *lesser etherealness* and compression ability to evade groups of attackers, then skirts around to pick off lone individuals. Its goal is to subdue the PC's for a long, drawn out death by torture later.

**Morale** The Beast in Shadow desires its freedom more than the demise of the characters and attempts to flee if dropped below 30 hp. It is unaware that it is magically bound to the city, a fact that once discovered, will cause it to seek out the PC's for a second battle to the death should they remain, or return to Kushul.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 30

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Lunge, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception)

**Skills** Climb +15, Escape Artist +13, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10\*, Perception +27, Stealth +15, Survival +21; Racial Modifiers +8 Climb, +4 Escape Artist

**Languages** Undercommon

**SQ** compression

**Other Gear** ring of *lesser etherealness*

**Rewards.** The gugs lair contains a +1 *gnome hooked hammer of throwing*, *dust of dryness*, 6 amethyst stones (worth 100 gp each), and a large bloodstone (worth 80 gp).

RING OF LESSER ETHEREALNESS	PRICE 7,200 gp
SLOT ring CL 3rd WEIGHT —	
AURA faint transmutation	

This ring consists of intertwined bands of iron and an ethereal substance. Twice per day, the wearer can speak a command word to activate the ring's magic. For 3 rounds, the wearer is under the effects of a *blink* spell. The wearer can end this effect as a swift action.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 3,600 gp
Forge Ring, <i>blink</i>	



### CONCLUSION: ARRESTED!

After the battle, the PC's are almost immediately beset upon by a squadron of dwarves who've been alerted to the sounds of fighting. They are investigating the abandoned city and in search of a missing dwarven party (a member of which the PC's may have found within the ghoulish warren). They initially suspect the PC's may be involved with the present troubles, especially if any are equipped with gear taken from their fallen comrade. They arrest the PC's, demanding they return with them to the dwarven city of Orvast for questioning.

This final encounter can be tricky—most PCs will object to incarceration of any kind. They should now be a little above 8th level and may have powers to circumvent capture. The best advice for Game Masters is to end the adventure here on a cliff hanger, allowing the PC's to handle the actual circumstances of their imprisonment in part two of *The Ravenous Ruin: A Feast of Ashes*



THE BEAST IN SHADOW

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PUBLISHING





**Population:** 77% Human (Farmaaran, Brynnish and Cythean), 8% Half-orc, 5%, Orc, 3% Dwarf, 3% elf, 4% other.

**At a Glance:** Massive stone walls encircle the riverport city. Within the walls, multistory, barracks-like apartment buildings crowd along narrow lanes with belts of newer, lower construction in timber and recycled masonry filling many of the lots between the bigger and older structures. Centuries of weather and the busy chisels of men have effaced most of the bloodcurdling, crude carvings of the city's orc founders, and the citizens decorate their homes and shops with murals, sculptures, rooftop and window gardens. Toiling builders erect new structures on the ruins of older buildings, reusing beams and blocks.

A colossal step pyramid dominates the central city. Once a stronghold of the ancient city's orc overlords, the pyramid houses the principal shrine of the god Hastroi and the offices of his local clerics.

Omnilibertas enjoys a civic reputation for artistic talent, wit, and charm—but the hard-working countryfolk of Helot also see the citizens of the capital as irresponsible hedonists.

Fleeting passions rule daily life. Lovers' quarrels bloom into crimes of passion with alarming regularity.

Businesses suffer and construction projects falter as workers become bore or dissatisfied and quit their jobs without notice.

The hairdresser's shops serve as salons where bejeweled and brightly clad citizens sit sipping spiced wine as girls braid their long locks, and discuss not only art and fashion but also religion and politics with an openness that shocks many visitors from more conservative and stratified societies like the Kingdom of Bryndell

**Government:** The citizens elect a governing Council of Thirty and the councilors choose one among their number to serve as the gonfalonier, a presiding officer and the holder of a tie-breaking vote. Gonfaloniers must submit to the judgement of the Council of Thirty every two years, a measure designed to prevent corruption and tyranny. Altair Fieldhand (*LN human male, rogue 7, expert 3, bard 2*) has kept the office of gonfalonier for the last ten years. All his enemies and even some of his own faction members have expressed concern that Altair has been too long in power, but his backing from the merchants who like his low tariff, laissez-faire policies, has remained strong. The Cult of Hastroi also supports the gonfalonier, seeing him as a force for order in a chaotic city.



The gonfalonier's chief rival, Councilor Agata Tanner (*CG human female sorcerer 5, rogue 4*) of the impoverished Second Ward, promises the citizens free bread and games, and argues for the abolishment of the annual poll tax. The merchants oppose Agata, fearing her talk of higher tariffs and controls on grain speculation.

Slavers and other heinous criminals face execution by drowning, while lesser offenders may expect fines, community service, or banishment.

The legal codes of the city appear almost anarchic to visitors used to the manorial and guild systems of realms such as the Kingdom of Bryndell. Citizens come and go as they please, espouse whatever views they like short of open sedition, labor and trade with hardly any restrictions. Such a chaotic system offers few protections for common men, and a villain in Bryndell holds a stronger claim to aid and support from his lord than the day laborers of Omnilibertas have from anyone. Free to prosper, free to starve, as the local saying has it.

**Economy:** The River Thadmuss bends in its southerly course, flowing northeast to southwest past the antique masonry docks of Omnilibertas, bringing daily barges from the countryside laden with grain and vegetables from the outlying farmlands to feed the burgeoning city. Rafts deliver migrant laborers to work in the many building sites. Well-guarded galleys deliver precious metals and stones for the city's jewelers and iron weapons for the growing numbers of private guards. A fleet of small fishing boats supplies the fishmongers with netfuls of trout and salmon.

Low tariffs levied on imports provide a steady trickle of revenue for the civic coffers. No excise falls on the city's chief exports of fine clothing and jewelry.

Moneychangers—always well-guarded—convert foreign currency to the local standard:

- **Copper** *iura*
- **Silver** *liber*, or 'snap', so called for the broken chain on the obverse
- **Gold**-tin alloy *clavis*
- **Platinum** *num*, or 'laurel', so called for the laurel-wreathed image of the rebel leader Darrock Stockman

**Military:** The civic army of Omnilibertas wraps itself with the historic glamour of the Great Rising against the Udaei slave-masters.

Captains are called "Stockmen" in honor of the nation of Helot's liberator-general.

The city's famous companies of scale-armored heavy infantry, composed of wealthy citizens who purchase their own equipment, drill with warhammers and rhomphaias

in the parks of the Bulwark District. Poorer volunteers fight as spearmen and archers and practice wall defense and assault in Bulwark's ruins. The country gentry provides horsemen and many officers.

Daughter of an old family of gentleman farmers, Stockman Serinna Abberdorn (*CG half-orc female, fighter 3, cavalier 4*) enjoys a reputation as the city's foremost commander and a superlative fighter with sword, hammer, and lance.

Serinna's rival, Stockman Herra Valiant (*N human female, ranger 7*), leads a unit of sappers, archers, and scouts. Herra favors unconventional tactics and has no time for "chivalric nonsense."

**Temples:** Shrines to various deities line the four sides of the breezy, open Pyramid Plaza.

The principal temple of Hastroi occupies the upper levels of the step pyramid, having supplanted a shrine to Rullux that fell into decay after the downfall of the orcs. Eagles nest on the wooden rookery atop the pyramid; the sacred birds sometimes fly out bearing messages. Scholars often petition for permission to enter the old orc dungeons of the lower pyramid levels, where the evil humanoids left occult inscriptions.

High-Shield Orrella (*NG human female, cleric 9*) leads a hierarchy of Shields (clerics), Swords (inquisitors), and acolytes. Shrewd and resolute in pursuing her goals, she takes an active role in recruiting adventurers to deal with threats to the city. Orrella believes without her cult the city would fall into anarchy.

**Mages & Sages:** West beyond the walls stands the Arcanists Tower, a tall structure of clean, new masonry. Blocks of floating stone orbit the huge emerald that hangs in midair above the uppermost turrets of the tower, and lightning arcs between satellites and centerpiece.

Most mages of Omnilibertas reside at least part-time in the Tower or the laboratory and housing complex, called the Labyrinth, dug beneath it. Citizens come here to do magical business.

Grand Mage Barden Walcott (*NG human male, wizard 9*) governs the Tower and Labyrinth, resolving disputes among the mages and overseeing purchase of materials for experiments.

A menagerie on the Tower grounds holds numerous exotic--and mostly harmless--beasts. Many of these animals and monsters were brought hither by the Transmuter Laxita Bronsor (*N dwarf female, transmuter 9*), who has run out of space for living specimens in her section of the Labyrinth.



**Underworld:** The city watch doesn't patrol outside the walls, leaving justice in the farming villages to vigilante committees.

A sprawling shanty town north of the city walls houses an army of migrant workers employed in the city's ongoing renovation, as well as a large number of beggars, cutpurses, and harlots. The markets of this squalid suburb openly display stolen goods and contraband—everything but slaves.

The notorious assassin Shalla "Grim" Hazel (*LE human female, rogue 6, assassin 6*) no longer takes contracts, she will train promising students if offered enough money.

For those in need of an 'adjustment' to a rival in love or business, the apothecary Maxil Darlene (*CN male half-elf, alchemist 7*) offers a range of toxins from sickening to lethal.

**Interesting Sites:** The quadrennial Freedom Games competition takes place on Heroes Field, the fairgrounds south of the city beyond the walls. Locked storehouses contain decorations for the games—and caches of weapons.

A pair of arched, carved bridges span the river, joining the two halves of the city. The wide pavements allow for passage of wagons as well as foot traffic, leaving room for the vendors who hawk goods from lightweight stalls set hard against the outer rails. A visitor might pass a day without leaving one of the two bridges, as he watches the boats on the river, samples fermented pickles and other street foods, and shops in the stalls.

Between the bridges on the southern bank, the small district of Easel Haven combines the bustle of a working waterfront with the air of an artist' colony. Painters set up the canvases in the open air on sunny days. Visitors to the city and young lovers hire street limners for simple likenesses done on the spot, in chalk and ink. In the early morning, boys fish off the piers.

**Special Notes:** Orcs built the old city, and every new construction project digs up orcish artifacts—mostly worthless junk, but every once in a while, workmen uncover treasures. Because the early human settlers made no effort to preserve the orcish inscriptions and skin-scrolls they found in the ruins, much of the ancient city's past has been lost. Only in recent generations have scholars begun serious study of Omnilibertas' orcish past. Some of the oldest families in the countryside carry orcish blood, a legacy of the early days after the rebellion against the Udaei, when wild orcs and freed slaves mixed in uneasy alliance. Reports of increasing numbers of orcs in the wilderness and of nocturnal visits to the Pyramid by hooded orcs have stirred up alarm among the citizens.

Scuttlebutt in the city guard tells of strange occurrences near the city walls: odd scratches found on the masonry, missing equipment that later turns up polished and repaired, and parcels of food left out near weary sentries.

Recent disappearances of children have spurred rumors of slavers and monsters. The latest party of adventurers that went looking for a missing child also vanished...

#### Omnilibertas

NG Small City

**Corruption** +1; **Crime** +1; **Economy** +1; **Law** -1; **Lore** +0; **Society** +4

**Qualities** government capitol, magically attuned, notorious, prosperous, strategic location

**Danger** +5

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** Council of Thirty & the Gonfalonier

**Population** 77% human (Farmaaran, Brynnys, Cythean), 8% half-orc, 5% orc, 3% half-elf, 3% dwarf, 4% other

#### Notable NPC's

**Gonfalonier Altair Fieldhand** (LN male human rogue 7, expert 3, bard 2),

**Councilor Agata Tanner Representative of District 2** (human female sorcerer 5, rogue 4)

#### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 12,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 25,000gp;

**Spellcasting** 6th

**Minor Items** 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major items** 1d6





## HASTROI

*God of Freedom, Justice, and Valor*

**Alignment:** Lawful Good

**Domains:** Good, Glory, Law, Liberation, War

**Sub Domains:** Friendship, Honor, Legislation, Revolution, Tactics

**Symbol:** A 5 pointed, crimson-tipped gold star, with a crown of thorns at its center.

**Favored Weapon:** warhammer

**Worship and Holidays:** Priests of Hastroi hold special ceremonies at the beginning of the new year and feasts on the last day of autumn, when Hastroi is said to have ascended to divinity.

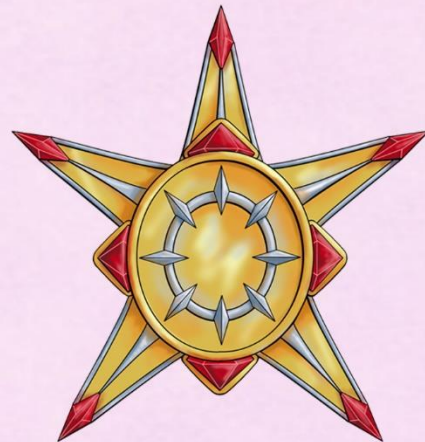
**Typical Worshipers:** Soldiers, duelists, freedom fighters, Rogaarvan rebels

**Center of Worship:** Helot, Rogaard

**Description** Once a mortal loyal to Rael, the god of noble battle, Hastroi inherited his portfolio after Rael's death at the treacherous hands of Rullux. Rullux believed that the death of Rael would leave him as the sole god of war in Celmae. However, Rael had long suspected that Rullux would try to usurp his power. To that end, he prepared for the possibility of his death by passing on his divine power, bit by bit, to his mortal champion Hastroi. This power transfer happened subtly, and at first Hastroi merely believed he was receiving visions from his god. Only upon Rael's death did the truth become known. Hastroi immediately ascended to godhood but was enslaved by Rullux. He eventually free himself and other heavenly entities, most notably the Leonal Agathions, and has actively fought to prove Rael's philosophy of honor in battle can prevail even when situations seem hopeless.

Hastroi usually appears as he did in life – a tall, dark-skinned man with braided hair and immaculate armor, though regionally he is often depicted in art as a Warrior in full plate and help, smashing chains with is great hammer. His worshipers hold honor in battle as the primary virtue that warriors must always strive for. As a lesson imparted from the dead Rullux, however, Hastroi emphasizes that honor does not have to mean a lack of preparation. A knight entering a duel could drink a vial of antitoxin if she suspects her opponent might cheat by using poison but should not sink to the level of her treacherous foe and use poison herself.

Hastroi is primarily worshiped in Rogaard, where his followers stand in opposition to the state religion of Rullux. Despite the lawful nature of the church, most followers of Hastroi in this area are considered criminals for opposing the strife and brutal warfare that many feels are necessary to bring the empire back to its old glory. These faithful focus on providing shelter and succor to those displaced by the followers of Rullux and openly



oppose the reign of Olaf Rogaarson.

His faith is very popular among the Faramaaran people of Helot, who praise him as the Chainbreaker, who helped them escape slavery from the Udao in Cythea.

**The Church:** The Church of Hastroi is well-organized but marginalized in its native land of Rogaard, thanks to the dominance of Rullux. As such, the church seeks small victories which it hopes can turn the tide. Convincing others than victory without honor is meaningless and winning fights with words are just as important as gaining victory on the field of battle.

Clergy often train in martial weapons and heavy armor. While the warhammer is Hastroi's favored weapon, it is not uncommon to see followers wielding battleaxes, flails, and swords. Weapons and armor are to be kept well-maintained but sheathed at all times unless battle demands it. Priests of Hastroi must always be ready to battle evil, but never eager to draw their weapons.

Duels and ceremonial battles are frequent in the church, and most temples have blunted or padded weapons that deal nonlethal damage for these events. The church looks poorly upon those cultures that utilize trial by combat to resolve criminal cases, as it unfairly harms those who cannot properly defend themselves. At the same time, priests of Hastroi consider it their holy duty to stand in as a proxy in such trials if they are convinced of a person's innocence.

**Temples and Shrines:** Churches of Hastroi resemble training barracks in many ways, with well-polished weapons lining the walls and tapestries depicting warfare. Religious and historical texts often describe great battles, but also touch upon matters of law, emphasizing the importance of benevolence in rulership.

Paladins, knights, and honorable soldiers keep small



shrines to Hastroi in their homes, allowing them to pay worship and receive blessings even when they are unable to make it to church.

When traveling or abroad on a mission, priests of Hastroi often bring a simple holy text, prayer beads, and a small silver replica of holy objects, such as a warhammer and shield, which they use as aids in prayer and meditation.

The Grand Temple of Hastroi in Omnibertas, Helot is the center of worship for the god on the continent of Brynnfell. Erected in the ruins of an orcish pyramid, the founding priests found the location symbolic to Hastroi, mirroring his rebuke of Rullex from Rael's realm.

**A Priest's Role:** Priests of Hastroi prepare spells at dawn. Following that, they engage in combat practice prior to breakfast unless prevented by exigent circumstances. They do not make living sacrifices but do begin each new year by cutting their hands and shedding blood upon an altar to their god.

Other duties of priests include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting military actions by righteous rulers,
- Teaching others about the tenets of justice,
- Defending those who cannot protect themselves in battle,
- Serving as representatives for others in trials by combat.

Priests of Hastroi must oppose Rullux whenever possible.

**Adventurers:** Adventuring worshipers of Hastroi include clerics, fighters, and paladins. Such adventurers often carry a variety of different weaponry, including at least one bludgeoning weapon and, if they can afford it, an item crafted of alchemical silver, mithral, or cold iron.

Rangers sometimes serve the god of valor, although their worship tends to be more individualistic and less tied to the church. Worshipers of Hastroi respect barbarians for their combat prowess but also look down upon them due to their recklessness. For their part, barbarians appreciate Hastroi's focus on battle but believe that the church ruins a good thing with all its rules.

**Clothing:** Hastroi's followers wear practical clothing that fits comfortably under armor. They have little need for ostentatious robes and gowns. Those who display their devotion to the god openly wear white, yellow, and blue tabards with Hastroi's holy symbol emblazoned on the front.

**Holy Texts:** Hastroi's primary holy text is *The Epic of Valor*. This poem spans several hundred pages, detailing the end of Hastroi's mortal life and his ascension to

godhood. Holy texts of Rael are often utilized as an alternate testament.

Many individual churches hold texts that are said to be part of Hastroi's adventuring journals or correspondences to those he held dear in his mortal life. The authenticity of these aged parchments varies widely, as even priests of the god of valor are sometimes prone to using fake relics to further an agenda.

**Holidays:** The church holds a special ceremony at the beginning of the new year. During this time, followers meditate, list their personal and religious goals, and make plans on how to overcome the obstacles in their way.

Hastroi is said to have ascended to divinity on the field of battle during the last day of autumn. On this day, the church holds *Riseday*. The holiday begins with followers spending the dawn hour in isolation and then fasting for the majority of the day. They break that fast at sunset and hold the *Feast of Ascension*, which carries on throughout the night.





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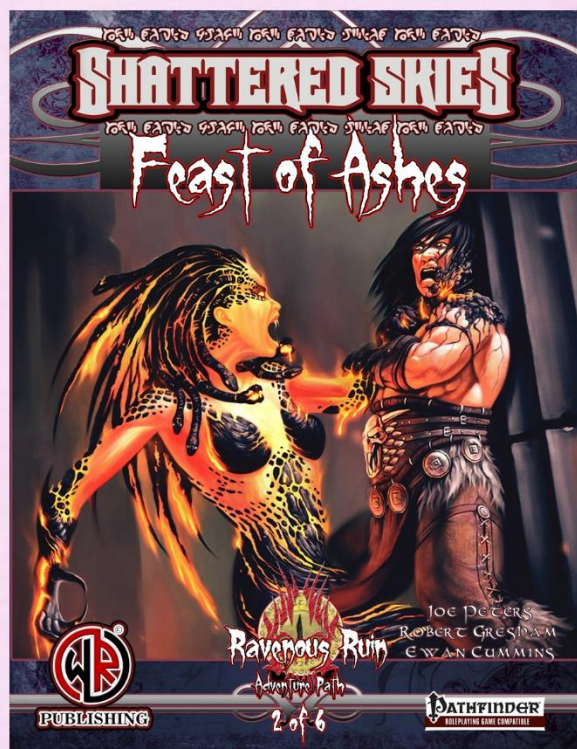
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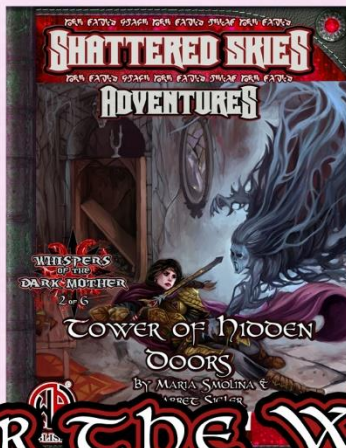
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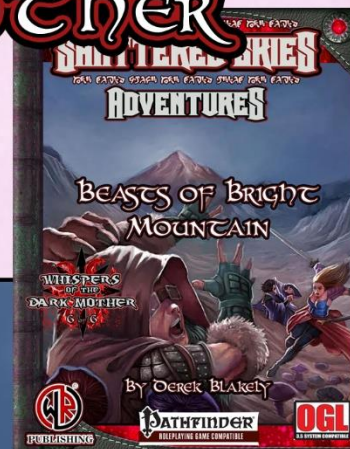
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