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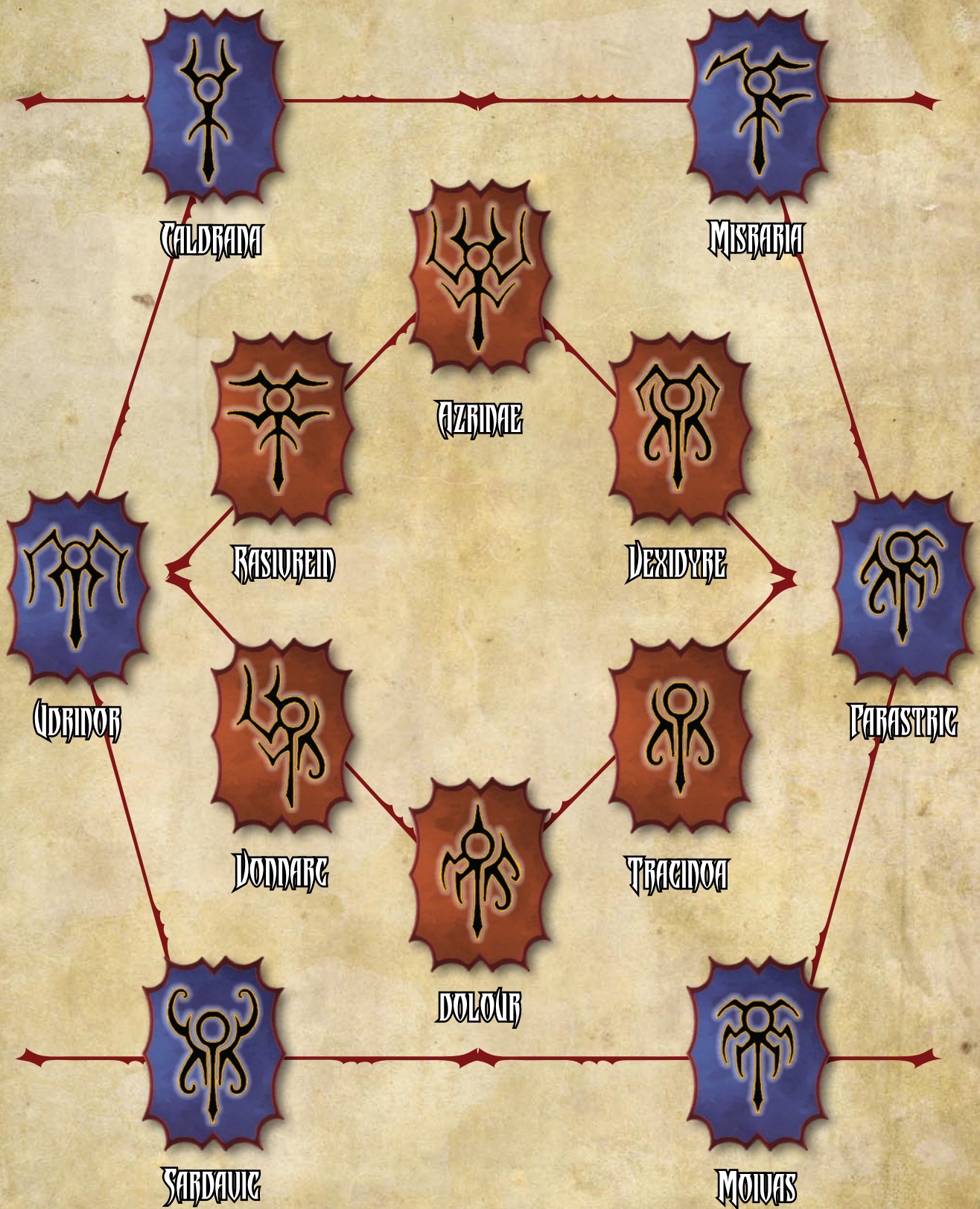


Second Darkness

A MEMORY OF DARKNESS

By J. D. Wiker

DROW RUNES



PATHFINDER™

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"A Memory of Darkness" is a Pathfinder Adventure Path scenario designed for four 12th-level characters. By the end of this adventure, characters should reach 14th level. This adventure is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the 3.5 edition of the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game. The OGL can be found on page 92 of this product.

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We try not to date *Pathfinder* too much, since reports from the trenches and whatnot prove pretty worthless when you look back at them a year later. So only a few words got said in these pages about Gen Con 2008. But let me say something about it now. Gen Con was freaking awesome.

Along with the start of the Second Darkness Adventure Path, August and Gen Con marked the first birthday of *Pathfinder*. We got probably the best birthday present we could with three ENnie awards, including a gold for Best Adventure for *Pathfinder* #1. The recognition was both a shock and beyond cool, so a big “thank you” to everyone who voted. We really appreciate it, and the knowledge that folks like what they’re seeing makes all this totally worthwhile!

But while awards are neat, they weren’t what made the convention so cool.

Day one of the convention saw the launch of our Pathfinder Society organized play program (paizo.com/pathfindersociety)—a huge room that swiftly became packed (and stayed packed) with *Pathfinder* fans throughout the whole weekend. Nick Logue, Lou Agresta, and a team of incredibly brave GMs wrangled

the Ascension of the Drow mega-event, which helped shape the design of last month’s adventure, *Endless Night*. We didn’t call out what came from where (largely due to a lack of space), but close readers might see their characters, nefarious deeds, and other contributions reflected in the dark elven homeland.

Going hand-in-hand with that—and this is going to sound schmaltzy—it was really you guys that made the trip to Indianapolis so fantastic. This year folks actually knew what *Pathfinder* was and sought us out to talk about it. Our seminars were packed, supposedly more due to folks’ interest in our world and adventures than for my, James’s, and Sutter’s ever-effervescent personalities (turns out we’re pretty hilarious though). We got wine-and-dined (well, beered-and-desserted) by the Werrecabbages, a group of some of our most dementedly enthusiastic contributors, whom we invited to participate in a semi-open call for Set Piece adventures. Expect an all-Werrecabbages series of Set Pieces debuting with *Pathfinder* #19 and running throughout the upcoming Legacy of Fire Adventure Path, with more news on writing for *Pathfinder* soon after. We also saw a ton of *Pathfinder* fan art, heard about several

dozen characters from Golarion, and likely traumatized the first *Pathfinder* cosplayer.

So to everyone at Gen Con who stopped by to chat or question, rant or gush, play or GM, another fond thank you! And for everyone we missed, I'm sure we'll catch you next year!

THE WAY OF THE SPIDER

Right below the title and the big scary spider-demon on the cover you'll see J. D. Wiker's name. Chances are you already know J. D.'s work—he's got a game design resume as long as my arm, after all. Recalling roleplaying products that I read and reread growing up and then tracking down their authors to harass them about writing for *Pathfinder* has always been one of the most enjoyable and humbling aspects of my job. Not trying to make J. D. feel old, but I was just starting college when his work on *Dark•Matter* and the *Star Wars* RPG were coming out. It must have hit at a formative time, though, because when James and I put our heads together on who should handle Second Darkness's big elven intrigue adventure, J. D.'s name came to the top of the list.

We knew "A Memory of Darkness" would prove tricky. One of this adventure's themes is the tangled web that is elven politics. The queen wants the PCs to infiltrate the Winter Council hideout of Thorn's End, disrupt the group they find there, and find proof of conspiracy and misdeed. But she can't directly order them to take action without risking her power and the respect of her people. As a result, she's forced to undertake a rather complex plan of manipulation and plausible deniability in the hopes that it looks like the PCs decided to oppose the Winter Council on their own. Maybe you're starting to see where the drow get their scheming nature.

While some groups might work well with this setup, you know your players better than I do. If you don't think they'll mix well with sneaky political subplots, consider bringing them in on the conspiracy. After the PCs suffer the attack at the hands of the Shin'Rakorath, have the queen take them aside and lay out the situation as detailed on page 15. In this version, she tells the PCs to use the deluded succubus she's got imprisoned as a guide. If the PCs don't let the succubus know that they know what's going on, they can trust the demon to act according to her nature and lead them directly to Thorn's End. The queen tells the PCs that she'll deny this conversation if they mention it after their meeting, of course, but this route does make the PCs feel more like they're allies with the elves rather than frustrated enemies.

At the end of "Endless Night" the PCs technically have all the information they need to seek out Allevrah in the Land of Black Blood. If they want, they can certainly act on their own and bypass this entire adventure, instead heading down deeper into the Darklands to seek out their enemy to confront her immediately—though that confrontation won't

be detailed until *Pathfinder* #18's adventure. PCs who bypass "A Memory of Darkness," however, might well be damning themselves to a grisly end. Not only will they likely be too low-level for "Descent into Midnight" (which is designed for 14th- to 15th-level characters), but this month's adventure is designed to fill the PCs in on how to defeat Allevrah's plan—simply killing her isn't enough, since the magic to bring down the sky is already in motion. Of course, there's nothing preventing PCs from coming back to play through this adventure when they realize that they need information hidden in Thorn's Hold or the support of the elven nation to finish things off in "Descent into Midnight." Just a heads-up for GMs with particularly enthusiastic parties.

RETURN TO DEATHSTALK TOWER

The illustration to the left is not the first appearance of Treerazer, the Lord of the Blasted Tarn. Actually, the demonic warlord first debuted on the cover of the classic adventure *JJ1: The Secret of Deathstalk Tower* by James Jacobs. Unfortunately, unless you were another student at Point Arena High School or U. C. Davis in the late 80's/early 90's, chances are that you never saw this 40-plus-page adventure or the elaborate charts, illustrations, or map book that go along with it. Right now, the only copy of this decades-old self-publishing effort sits on my desk, its cover illuminated in colored pencil (a far better effort than I could ever manage) and its typewriter-inked parchment held together by rusty staples and a meter of yellowed tape. Carefully flipping through the pages of three-column, first-edition adventure, a few familiar names attract the eye: Treerazer, Allevrah, urdefen, eidolons, a certain Demon Lord of Vermin—pretty influential stuff for a young writer's summer diversion. It's been almost 20 years now since *The Secret of Deathstalk Tower* didn't see publication, but it's cool to see its influence still creeping into print a decade or two later. I guess on some level the games we play today still satisfy the same parts of us that pretended to be heroes and monsters a few dozen years back, and in some cases the ideas that got us excited before we were teenagers still get us excited today. Fortunately, even if you never got to play *The Secret of Deathstalk Tower*, its spiritual successor, "A Memory of Darkness," stands alone pretty well. Just forewarning, though—when it comes to next month's final confrontation with Allevrah, you can bet she's going to be a good deal tougher than an 11th-level drow witch with 56 hit points.

Wes

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Second Darkness

CHAPTER FIVE

A Memory of Darkness

The truth is a powerful weapon—too powerful to be left in the hands of strangers. While the drow, led by their new military mastermind Allevrah, perfect their meteor magic, the question arises: How did they come by such devastating magic in the first place? The truth lies in the halls of elven power, guarded by the Winter Council, a secret society so ancient that they are considered all but a myth. And what the Winter Council is prepared to sacrifice in order to retain this secrecy is a scandal that the elven nation may not be prepared to accept.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

As with every society, there are those who favor standing by the old way of doing things, and those who espouse adapting to changing conditions: tradition versus progress. With the elves, the role of traditionalism is a time-honored value upheld by folk of all walks of life, yet none cleave more tenaciously to tradition than the Winter Council. Originally an advisory body to elven royalty, the Winter Council gained respect when their agents at the Mordant Spire learned of the inevitability of the coming Earthfall over 10,000 years ago. It was at the Winter Council's urgings that the elves of Golarion fled to Sovyrian—and in a way, it was due to the Winter Council's act that the drow race would ultimately be born. In the centuries to follow, the role of the Winter Council receded from the public eye, so that by the time the elves returned to Golarion, the Winter Council was little more than a dream in most elves' already long-lived memories.

Yet the Winter Council has maintained its basic principles for centuries, its members serving as secret advisors for the elven rulers through the ages, and placing their highly trained agents at their fingertips for secret operations and shadowy missions best left unmentioned to the general populace. Yet not all of Kyonin's rulers have meshed well with the Winter Council's values and goals. Invariably, these "upstart rulers" who espouse more liberal elven principles find reasons to step down from power, pressured secretly by the Winter Council, which is always ready to install a more compliant ruler on the throne. Yet sometimes, rulers arise who are too headstrong, too sure of their own vision for the future of the elven people to bow to intimidation and implied threat.

The current recognized ruler of the elves, Queen Telandia Edasseril, is "one of those progressive ones." She and the Winter Council have clashed on numerous occasions—and the Winter Council has always prevailed in the end. The queen has grown increasingly frustrated as what she hoped would be great strides in art, culture, magic, and particularly interracial relations were methodically undone by the Winter Council. Worse, she's seen innocent people—elves and other races alike—suffer in order to maintain the Winter Council's hoary status quo. And perhaps worst of all, due to the Winter Council's masterful manipulation of events—and the fact that most elves believe that the Winter Council is just a convenient scapegoat for conspiracy theorists—Queen Telandia has actually taken the blame for the worst of the Council's reprehensible acts in its pursuit of maintaining tradition.

The Winter Council has recently cut all contact with Queen Telandia, and she fears that its members have withdrawn to plot a coup or something worse. She finds herself in an impossible situation—unable to move against the Council without seeming to be a despot to her people, and unable to let the Council carry on in their destructive,

stagnant ways. She is sick of the Winter Council punishing her people for daring to share the queen's vision of a more enlightened future, and tired of being manipulated into taking the blame—if not actually enacting the punishments. She has seen elven communities abandoned to the tender mercies of rampaging monsters, progressive elven leaders crippled for life by mysterious illnesses, and countless generations of elven children taken from their families and forced into lives of "orthodox" education—all for the sake of ensuring that future generations of elves never rise above traditionalist rationale.

To put a stop to this, Queen Telandia needs to expose the Winter Council's true role in these shameful acts. But she has no one in Iadara she can trust; those who are not Winter Council dupes often still feel the pangs of conscience when they act counter to what centuries of traditionalist thinking has convinced them is "proper." What the queen needs is outsiders—either elves who grew up apart from Sovyrian-influenced society, or members of other races... few of whom ever come within her sphere of influence (or care about the political troubles of the elves).

The arrival of the PCs in Iadara brings Queen Telandia a ray of hope.

Adventure Summary

The adventure begins with the PCs having arrived in Kyonin after escaping the Darklands via an *aiudara* (a mystical gate that elves use to travel throughout Golarion). Ushered to the elf city of Iadara, the PCs reveal their findings in the drow city of Zirnakaynin to the queen, who asks for time to consider the news. Not long thereafter, the PCs are assaulted by elven mercenaries, and the Queen has the PCs relocated to a magical prison known as the paradise chamber for their own safety. In the prison, the PCs meet a strange half-elf bard who has some disturbing information for the PCs—a shadow government known as the Winter Council may be after them. This half-elf, a woman named Quilindra, asks the PCs to aid her in exposing the corruption in the Winter Council, and reveals that if they can escape the paradise chamber, she can escort the PCs through the *aiudara* network to Tanglebriar, where the Winter Council fortress is located. That Quilindra is in fact a succubus seeking to gain prestige in the demonic court for being the one to topple the Winter Council is a secret the PCs may or may not discover, yet her aid remains equally useful even if they do learn her secret.

After moving through several portals, the PCs arrive at Thorn's End, the stronghold of the Winter Council, only to find that it is besieged by demons. Exploring Thorn's End, the PCs learn that the Winter Council recently endured a schism of sorts—a betrayal of the society by one of its own, and now the surviving councilors are in desperate need to defeat the demons so that they can attempt to rebuild

THE DARK FATE

Only a few elves know the terrible secret—that any among their kind can transform into a drow. Over the course of many centuries, only a few handfuls of elves have undergone this transformation—almost all of Golarion's drow were born to drow parents and never knew life as an elf. Yet those who underwent the Dark Fate are among the most vile and reprehensible of the entire race.

Without proof of the Dark Fate, most of Golarion's people (elves included) would discount such stories as the stuff of legend and myth. But with the Winter Council gone, no society remains to ensure that the drow remain hidden, or that the Dark Fate remains obscured. The legacy of these secrets, at least for the near future, is now firmly in the PCs' hands. They can choose to continue the crusade of secrecy, or they can decide to let the world know. Further ramifications of this change in elven society are detailed in *Pathfinder* #18.

In any event, as tempting as it may be, you shouldn't inflict the Dark Fate on the PCs. Likewise, no specific game rules are given to determine when the Dark Fate should strike—this should always be an event to drive stories, and therefore, if the GM wants it to happen, it happens. Just don't let it happen too often—there are plenty of evil elves in the world already, and almost all of them aren't at risk of the Dark Fate—it takes something more than evil to trigger such a drastic change.

their nearly broken society. The PCs must encourage the councilors to set aside their personal demons to hear the warning about what the drow are planning for Kyonin, and at some point learn that their enemy Allevrah Azrinae was once a member of this same council, and that she was the one who put the society in the situation it finds itself in today. At the climax of this meeting, another of the councilors, driven mad by the revelations the PCs bring, goes mad and lets the demons in. In so doing, the PCs are witness to a rare event—the transformation of elf to drow. If they are to use the information they learn about Allevrah and her methods of drawing down stars from the sky against her, they must survive this sudden turn of events.

The PCs should be 12th level when they begin “A Memory of Darkness.” By the time they finish Thorn's End, they should have gained enough experience to reach 14th level.

PART ONE: CITY OF ILLUSION

The previous adventure ended with the assumption the PCs were escaping the Darklands via an elf gate deep underground. This adventure continues that assumption, with the PCs emerging from the gate into the midst of a group of quite surprised and suspicious elven guards. If the PCs escaped from Zirnakaynin via another method (such

as teleportation), where they begin this adventure can vary greatly. Yet what they've learned is of great import, and it is to the elves of Kyonin that they should bring the news that the matron of House Azrinae intends on destroying Kyonin with a falling star.

If the PCs returned to Crying Leaf after their escape, they are urged by their contacts there to bring their news to Queen Telandia Edasseril herself. If the PCs need transportation to Kyonin, they can hitch a ride with the next delivery of supplies from Kyonin, brought there via a teleporting wizard. In this case, the PCs' arrival in Kyonin is a bit less intense than if they'd simply stumbled into the elven nation unannounced through an elf gate, but their eventual reception and the reaction the elves have to their outlandish claims remain the same.

But if the PCs were forced to flee Zirnakaynin on foot and make use of the elf gate to escape, they step through the portal into a clearing in the middle of an ancient forest. The journey through the elf gate is not pleasant; the portal was dormant at the Kyonin end, and forcing it open from the far side makes for a rough journey. Each PC must make a DC 20 Fortitude save to avoid being nauseated for 1d4 rounds as a result. The clearing they find themselves in is about 50 feet across, with the delicate white marble arch of the elf gate located at its center.

The elves of Kyonin have long known that this particular elf gate linked to a location deep under Fangwood—after activating it briefly many centuries ago and determining that it led to a point too close to the city of Zirnakaynin, the king at the time ordered the gate deactivated but not destroyed (since he could not bear the thought of destroying it). Instead, he placed a small contingent of soldiers in the area to guard the elf gate should something manage some day to open it again. For centuries, the elf gate lay dormant and quiet, and the soldiers slowly became citizens of a cozy village that grew up around the clearing. This is the village of Siavenian, a small settlement a mere two hour's walk from the elven capital of Iadara.

The activation of the Siavenian elf gate is impossible to ignore—the device glows and hums for a minute before the PCs actually arrive. By the time the PCs emerge, dozens of elven soldiers have gathered at the arch, bows drawn and arrows aimed. Among them is a regal-looking elven wizard—this is **Villastir** (LN male elf aristocrat 5/diviner 9), noble lord of Siavenian, one of Queen Telandia's countless advisors... and one of the many secret pawns of the Winter Council. Once the PCs are through, he steps forward to greet them. Assuming they no longer have their drow disguises, his greeting is polite but his stance makes no mistake—he's ready to order the PCs shot dead if they try anything funny.

While Kyonin's leaders know that the drow exist, among the people of the nation the drow remain firmly in the

category of myth. The Shin'Rakorath, mercenaries in the indirect control of the Winter Council, do an excellent job suppressing the facts in this case, and if the PCs claim to have come from a drow city and bear news of a dark elf plot against Kyonin, snickers ripple through some of the elven soldiers surrounding them. Yet Villastir does not smile. He explains to the PCs that they have appeared deep in the sovereign nation of Kyonin via a route thought dormant, and that if they are friends, they should lower their weapons and accompany him to the city to sort things out. If the PCs grow argumentative and combative, things can quickly grow grim—they're surrounded by nearly two dozen elven archers and a powerful wizard, after all. If the PCs want a fight, they'll quite swiftly face the armies of Kyonin in swift course. This adventure assumes the PCs go quietly with Villastir.

The elven noble is quite concerned about the PCs' sudden appearance, and offers to teleport them directly to the queen's palace, telling them that if their claims of drow menace are truth, then Queen Telandia must hear swiftly. Of course, what he doesn't tell them is that by bringing them to the core of Iadara's government, he's basically placing the PCs in the perfect spot for the elven army to handle them

if they've got ulterior motives. In any event, their arrival through the dormant elf gate itself is reason enough to take their claims seriously for now. Villastir doesn't ask the PCs to relinquish their weapons, but does ask them to keep them sheathed and to remain patient while things are sorted out. The point here isn't to dwell on making the PCs feel unwanted in Kyonin; they've been through a harrowing time of things, all at the request of the elves of Crying Leaf, and it's best to get them into Iadara to begin the adventure itself rather than drag this section of things out for too long.

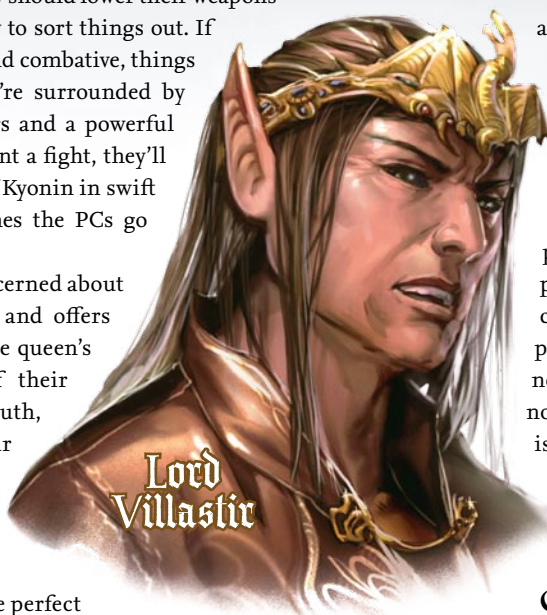
Welcome to Iadara

The first thing visitors to Iadara notice is the light—bright, glorious sunshine, streaming through the leaves of trees high above and washing over the ground in waves of sun and soft shade. Here and there it glances off the windows of graceful towers and austere buildings with exquisitely carved wooden eaves. The ground, too, is made up of thousands upon thousands of inlaid wooden tiles, polished and glowing the hue of a warm hearth, with designs as intricate as the most delicate gold jewelry. Elves move to and fro, or gather to talk in light, carefree tones, and all—from tradesmen to the elite of elven

society—are dressed in elegant but functional garb, and adorned with understated gold and silver trinkets of the highest quality. Colorful birds flit through the air, and you can just make out a recurring melody in their song that brings to mind lazy summer days and hours of indolent pleasure. The sound of countless burbling fountains fills the air, and the scents of pristine woodland and delicate wildflowers grace every intake of breath.

This is Iadara—a city built amid ancient trees and with elven ideals.

Most of the city's structures are built of finely carved and smoothly polished wood or delicately polished and shaped stone and crystal. Windows are large and bright, often decorated with pastoral scenes in stained glass. The people are peaceful and happy, even carefree—though they are merely polite and somewhat reserved toward non-elves, largely because they are not accustomed to other races; Iadara is an insular community after all, and many of its citizens have never met anyone who wasn't an elf.



An Audience with the Queen

When the PCs are granted an interview with Queen Telandia Edasseril and her advisors, Lord Villastir arrives at the party's doorstep with the verbal invitation and an offer to escort them. If necessary, he gives the PCs a chance to bathe and change into "more suitable" clothing (such as courtiers' outfits of elven design), and asks them to leave their weapons behind. If the PCs balk at this, he gives his personal word that they have nothing to fear here in the heart of the elven nation, and appears insulted if the PCs persist to believe that their gear could be stolen. If the PCs have Kyonin's trust, he relents and allows them to retain their weapons, but otherwise he refuses to let the PCs come before his queen. Draw this out as long as you can, then have Villastir pause, cock his head as if listening to something no one else can hear, and then blush. He announces that he has just received word from his queen that they can retain their weapons—that she trusts them to be on their best behavior.

Even if the PCs refuse Villastir's offer to teleport into the queen's hall, the journey into the palace is short—the Viridian Throne is on the palace's ground floor. A herald loudly announces the PCs by name as they approach the entrance, indicating that they should bow as they enter. Beyond the towering silver and crystal double doors from the palace entrance, a short, broad flight of marble stairs

IADARA RESIDENCE KEY

All internal doors in the villa are of thin wood (hardness 5; hp 20) and most have no locks. Windows have no glass within but can be secured from the inside with wooden shutters that can be opened from outside with a DC 12 Open Lock check. A map of the villa appears on page 12.

- A1. Entryway:** The front door is of stronger wood and includes a sturdy lock (Hardness 5; hp 40, Open Lock DC 35). The PCs are given a key to this door.
- A2. Sitting Room:** The sitting room is modestly appointed, though the owners provide a bottle of fine elven wine (worth 65 gp) and eight crystal wine goblets (worth 12 gp each) for guests. The room's other furnishings consist of a small table with several chairs.
- A3. Living Area:** The living area's furnishings include a settee, two rocking chairs, and a low table.
- A4. Small Bedroom:** Each of these small rooms includes a single bed, a freestanding wardrobe, and a chamber pot.
- A5. Large Bedroom:** Each of these two rooms includes a double bed, cleverly hidden closets in the walls (DC 20 Search to locate the doors), and a chamber pot.
- A6. Patio:** The patio is a raised platform about 12 feet off the ground outside. The 3-foot railing is just wide enough to sit on.
- A7. Washroom:** This room features a crystal washbasin and a cupboard of soap and towels.

leads into a vast hall. Light filters in from above through wide crystal windows to focus on a dais perhaps a hundred yards distant. Several richly garbed elves speaking quietly among themselves stand in a gathering near the dais, on which a single throne of living vines and delicate wooden branches sits. And seated upon that throne is a regal, beautiful elf woman with an intense gaze and an almost challenging expression. Upon her brow is a crown of delicate vines and violets. She nods at the PCs as they approach—this is Queen Telandia Edasseril.

Queen Telandia has heard of the PCs' adventures (particularly the role they played in helping to retake Celwynvian), and she believes them. Yet she suspects that in the PCs is her first real chance at exposing the activities of the Winter Council. But, while she is happy to see them and hear them speak, she knows that she cannot appear to take them too seriously, lest she tip her hand to the Winter Council. Instead, she chooses to simply invite the PCs to tell their stories, and allows her dozens of advisors to ask most of the questions while she pretends to be out of her depth.

Villastir himself quickly takes the lead in the questioning, assuming the role of spokesman for the assembled advisors, and he does his best to shoot holes

in the PCs' story. He asks for evidence of their so-called discoveries; calls for the PCs to allow themselves to be subjected to *zone of truth*, *detect evil*, *discern lies*, and other divinations, and even accuses them outright of self-aggrandizement. As they tell their tale, he quietly mocks them to the queen, with the occasional exaggerated "Oh, dear!" or "Surely not!" and similar sarcastic remarks. The queen seems to be barely hiding her amusement at Villastir's antics, though she does remind him at each outburst to let the PCs finish. However, at a moment when she is fairly certain Villastir is not looking—and at least one PC is—Telandia's expression briefly changes from "bored and befuddled" to "keenly interested" and back again, hopefully letting the PCs know that, despite her advisors' doubts, she at least knows that what they have to say is very important.

When the PCs have finished their story and the advisors are done with questions, Queen Telandia continues to watch them for a long moment, apparently lost in thought. Finally, Villastir taps her lightly on the hand and asks, "My queen?"

"Oh," says Telandia, coming alert. "Our apologies. We were leagues away. Well. Your tale is surely riveting, and certainly one worthy of the bards. Villastir, perhaps they can return to Kyonin to tell it again some time—perhaps next year at the midsummer feast. Please make the arrangements."

She turns back to the PCs after this subtle dismissal of the noble, who flushes with embarrassment before stiffly bowing and then briskly leaving the hall. Telandia watches his exit with a slight smile, waiting for him to be gone before she speaks again.

"Thank you so much for visiting us today. We cannot remember when we have been so entertained—though perhaps the next time you tell this tale you should add in some dragons, and perhaps a captive princess, with a handsome suitor who comes to her rescue. And perhaps leave out all that distasteful nonsense about falling stars; you must consider the sensibilities of your audience, after all. In any event, we shall take your tale under advisement. Kyonin's seers and diviners are second to none, and given time we trust that they shall secure the truth of these matters. The divinations may take some time, perhaps a week. Until such time as they are ready to advise us further, I invite you to remain in Iadara at the accommodations we have provided you. You may take these next days to rest and relax and recover from your ordeals—when we have our reports from our diviners, we wish to speak with you again on what might be done if, Calistria forbend, your tales are as true as you fear."

With a royal nod, the audience is over. Guards appear and offer to escort the PCs back to their quarters, after which they are free to do as they will. Iadara is a large city, and a perfect place to sell or purchase magic items, take time to learn spells, work on item crafting, or whatever else the



PCs might wish to take the time to do. Yet the invitation to return to the queen's side to hear what her diviners have discovered never occurs—once enough time has passed (as judged by the GM), proceed with “Arrows in the Night.”

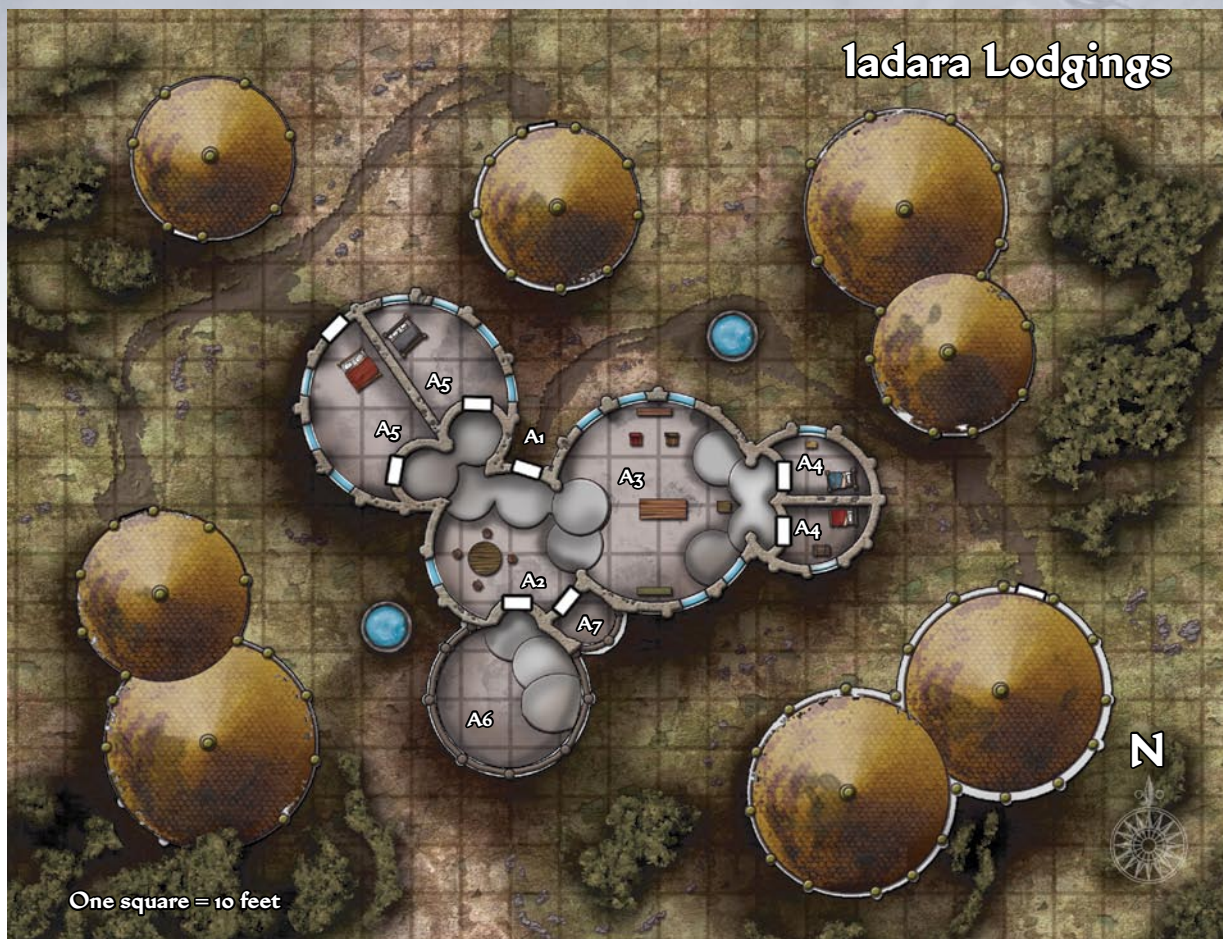
At one point during this period, perhaps even as soon as the PCs first return to their quarters after their meeting with the queen, something new waits for them in area A3. Sitting on a table, prominently displayed, is a large book, the lacquered wood cover embossed with silver and the pages edged in gold. The title of the book, in elven, reads *Emerald Dreams*. The book itself is a popular tome among the elves—a collection of stories and parables documenting the elves' return to Golarion that has become beloved among elven children throughout Kyonin. A bookmark consisting of a single green vine with a violet flower (of apparently the same type as the vines and flowers that comprised the queen's crown) marks one of the several parables inside, a short tale entitled “The Quasit's Promise.” In brief, this story recounts of an elven princess named Ilaraviana who is captured by a marilith and placed in a prison infested with quasits. The priestess escapes by forming an alliance with one of these quasits (a foul-mouthed demon named Ochurgund), and even though the

quasit breaks his promise to the priestess in the end and betrays her, her trust in the quasit to act according to its nature and betray her allowed her to engineer her escape nevertheless—she emerges from the prison wounded but alive. The obvious moral of the story is that sometimes one can trust one's enemies to act according to their natures and if the wise person accounts for that, an alliance with an enemy can still function.

Of course, Queen Telandia engineered the placement of this book where the PCs would find and read it as a way to prepare them to help her in Part Two (when the PCs are given the opportunity to ally with a succubus), but in a way that no elf would suspect the queen as having blatantly allied with them—the popularity of *Emerald Dreams* is strong enough that no citizen of Kyonin would think twice about its inclusion in a library of any size.

Arrows in the Night (EL 11+)

Throughout this part of the adventure, Lord Villastir keeps a watchful eye on the PCs. As one of the Winter Council's highest-placed contacts in Kyonin high society, he's quick to report to his masters once a group of “heroes” emerges from the Darklands with tales of drow plots. When the



Winter Council learns that Allevrah is involved, of course, its members realize they've got a much larger problem on their hands. They certainly want to stop her from realizing her own dire goal, but it's just as important to the Winter Council to cover up the fact that Allevrah became a drow and that the genesis of the entire plot to create a Second Darkness originated with the Council itself. To the elves of the Winter Council, protecting their society is more important than protecting Golarion, and so the silencing of the PCs before they learn too much is their first order of business. Once the PCs are dealt with (preferably via capture for later interrogation), they can turn their attention to acting on what the PCs have discovered about Allevrah's plans.

This encounter represents the PCs' first real contact with the Winter Council and its minions. Concerned with Villastir's reports, Hialin of the Winter Council decides to see that the PCs are captured—or if this proves impossible, slain. To achieve this end, he orders Villastir to use the Shin'Rakorath mercenary to take care of the situation. Villastir handpicks a group of soldiers from the Shin'Rakorath to handle the assault, ordering them to attack the PCs in the dead of night while they are at

rest. The brazen attack serves the Winter Council in another way as well—occurring as it does practically on the front porch of Queen Telandia's palace, it's their way of sending a message to the queen that she shouldn't be putting so much trust in outsiders' words. In fact, as the Shin'Rakorath soldiers attack, they take the time to yell out, "Death to all who would doubt the Winter Council!"

SHIN'RAKORATH SOLDIERS (9)

CR 6

Elf fighter 6

LN Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 19, flat-footed 17

(+4 armor, +3 deflection, +6 Dex)

hp 55 (6d10+18)

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee mwk rapier +13/+8 (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged +1 composite longbow +14/+9 (1d8+4/×3 nonlethal plus sleep) or

Multishot +10/+10 (1d8+4/×3 nonlethal plus sleep) or
Rapid Shot +12/+12/+7 (1d8+4/×3 nonlethal plus sleep)

TACTICS

Before Combat The elves drink all of their potions once they approach within 60 feet of the PCs' lodgings. Any characters on guard can attempt Spot checks against the anarchists' Hide checks to notice the elves drinking down potions. The effects of all these potions are included in the stats here.

During Combat The elves begin their assault by firing sleep arrows on any PC they can see from outside. Once there are no awake PCs apparent, or the alarm is raised, the elves rush inside the building through as many entrances as possible. They favor archery as attacks, with two or three switching to melee as necessary to keep the PCs from reaching the archers. Their goal is to capture as many PCs as possible alive, but they aren't squeamish about killing those who prove difficult to subdue.

Morale The anarchists flee if at least four of their number are defeated.

Base Statistics Init +4; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +6; **hp** 43; **Melee** mwk rapier +11/+6 (1d6+1/18–20); **Ranged** +1 composite longbow +12/+7 (1d8+4/×3 nonlethal plus sleep) or Multishot +8/+8 (1d8+4/×3 nonlethal plus sleep) or Rapid Shot +10/+10/+5 (1d8+4/×3 nonlethal plus sleep); **Str** 13, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12; **Skills** Jump +10, Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Ride +13

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 22, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **Gp** +9

Feats Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)

Skills Jump +12, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Ride +15

Languages Common, Elven

Combat Gear *potion of bear's endurance*, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of fly*, *potion of shield of faith* +3; **Other Gear** mithral shirt, rapier, +1 composite longbow (+1 Str) with 20 sleep arrows

PART TWO: PRISONERS OF PARADISE

Centuries ago, elven illusionists created an illusory playground in the heart of Iadara: a place where the wealthy could live out their wildest fantasies. Eventually, an elven noble hit upon the idea of using one of these “paradise chambers” to hold or even interrogate prisoners by tricking them into believing they were actually free from control, and the idea proved wildly successful among Kyonin's government—until Queen Telandia rose to power. She felt that using the paradise chambers as prisons was eminently worse than standard prisons, since the paradise chamber's quality of turning a prisoner's mind into the cell bars

HAVE YOU HEARD OF ALLEVRAH?

The name “Allevrah” is not unknown in Kyonin. As a DC 20 Gather Information check or a DC 30 Knowledge (local) or bardic knowledge check can reveal, the name is elven for “she whose words end wars.” Of course, those who speak Elven know that depending on where the inflections and accents fall, the name could also mean “she whose words begin wars.” In any event, it's not an unusual name among the elves. More to the point, the most famous “Allevrah” in Kyonin is a general of the elven army, a decorated commander whose mind for tactics has long served Kyonin in the constant battle against Razmiran in keeping the northern borders strong. Claims of an Allevrah Azrinae being the greatest threat to Kyonin are met with skepticism and shock—even moral outrage—that the drow should take a “perfectly good elven name” for one of their own, yet since the drow retain the elven language in their society (albeit one with a strange and sinister accent), the possibility that the drow and the surface elves share some names in common isn't all that unusual (although the concept still makes elves wince in distaste).

struck her as the worst sort of torture. “We are above such practices,” she preached, and many elves found themselves swayed by her words. Yet traditionalists argued that the practice should not be abandoned entirely, that at least one paradise chamber be kept as a prison for certain rare situations. Queen Telandia assented (mostly to appease the Winter Council and other traditionalists), a choice she has recently been forced to admit was fortuitous. For now that the PCs are here, the paradise chamber prison gives her the perfect place and method to engineer the end of the Winter Council itself—although her methods are incredibly complex and nested one within the other in layers of deception and plausible deniability so that if things backfire, she won't be forced from her position of power. The fact that her plan hinges on the PCs making what she hopes is the right choice is the shakiest part of her plan. Of course, the introduction of the succubus Quilindra creates another variable in her plan, but one that the queen feels she can trust as well. Just as Princess Ilaraviana trusted the quasit Ochurgund to act to his nature, she trusts Quilindra to try to deceive the PCs into helping her take down the Winter Council, and trusts the PCs to live up to the reliable need most adventurers have for revenge.

Quilindra's Story

Years ago, at about the point when Queen Telandia decided she needed to do something about the Winter Council, a beautiful agent of the enemy played unknowingly into her hands. A succubus named Quilindra infiltrated Iadara's political circles in an attempt to gain access to information

about the Winter Council—the Council's hidden fortress in Tanglebriar, Thorn's End, has long been a source of irritation to the demons of that region, and any demon who engineers a way to root out the unwelcome elven presence would certainly earn much favor with Lord Treerazer, master of that twisted woodland. Quilindra, as one of the few succubi in Treerazer's court, knew that her particular skill set gave her access to sources that the more crude and violent of the demon court couldn't reach. Hoping to find information on how to bring down Thorn's End, she succeeded in memorizing a map that revealed the locations of numerous elf gates, including one that led to a point very near the target fortress in Tanglebriar. For several months, she used this information to explore the network of portals, traveling to dozens of different elven holdings in her search for information about Thorn's End's defenses.

Quilindra learned much about Thorn's End, but unfortunately she also learned that she needed non-demonic proxies to infiltrate the fortress. For a succubus, gathering such minions is no great deal, but when she returned to Iadara to build a hand-picked army of charmed minions, she was finally captured.

Impressed that the succubus had eluded detection for so long, Telandia decided not to execute the creature immediately. Since demons are one of the few creatures the queen had little conscience about tormenting, she placed Quilindra into the paradise chamber and turned the tables on the experienced deceiver. She allowed the succubus to believe that her disguise was uncompromised, and that she'd been imprisoned at the Winter Council's command—that the Winter Council believed her to be an anarchist bent on bringing down the elven government from within by leading an army of dissidents recruited from beyond Kyonin's borders through the network of elf gates to strike at the nation's heart. The queen's interrogations were in fact a cover for the actual work—she employed *detect thoughts* and other methods to learn everything she needed to know about the succubus's actual plans without revealing to the demon how much she knew. The queen realized that here was a perfect pawn to lead a well-equipped strike force against Thorn's End. Yet the queen didn't want to use anyone that could be traced easily back to her trusted followers. She needed skilled, dependable, and potent heroes to take on this role—heroes with an axe to grind against the Winter Council, so that if they were caught, investigation would need look no further for motives. In the PCs, Queen Telandia has her heroes—that she's forced for political reasons to be so deceptive and underhanded with sending

them against her own government doesn't sit well with her, but she hopes that if the PCs are successful, she'll be able to come clean and reward them properly once the Winter Council is exposed for the corrupt society it has become.

Now all that remains is to introduce Quilindra to the PCs.

The Paradise Chamber

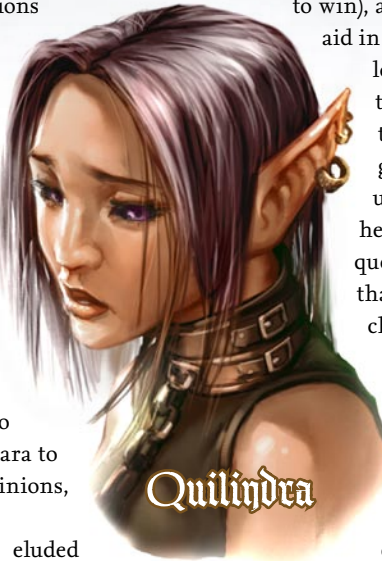
After the attack on the PCs by the anarchists, Queen Telandia's guards react swiftly. As the battle is winding down (or as soon as it appears that the anarchists are about to win), a dozen elven guards arrive on the scene to aid in defeating the anarchists. These guards are loyal to their queen and her displeasure at the PCs' treatment terrifies them—even if the PCs are largely hated by the elves, these guards are apologetic and quickly pass out up to 8 *potions of cure moderate wounds* to help heal the PCs. The guards refuse to answer questions about the Winter Council, claiming that such knowledge is best left to those in charge. The guards also inform the PCs that the queen has been made aware of this affront to her guests, and that she has ordered that the PCs be relocated into a more secure guest chamber in her own palace, for their own protection. Here, in the paradise chamber, the guards explain that the PCs will have all the comforts they need while the queen's diviners finish their research.

Once the PCs are ready, the guards lead them through a pair of double doors, through a large antechamber decorated to the left and right by statues of enormous wasps, and then through a shimmering golden curtain into a spacious chamber fit for royalty. They do not bother to take the PCs' gear or weapons, since the magic of this prison functions best when the prisoners aren't aware that they are prisoners. Such is the subversive nature of the paradise chamber.

Bi. The Paradise Chamber

Luxurious tapestries hang suspended from slim marble pillars, many of which are tied back to give the room an airy, open feeling. Light filters in from an opening in the ceiling, and softly glowing lanterns hang from several of the pillars. The center of the room is a wide common area, decorated with potted plants and a large pool and fountain burbling in the exact center of the room. Entrances to four smaller chambers mostly closed by thick green curtains surround the larger central area.

The guards themselves indicate that the PCs should step into the chamber through the golden curtain, but do not themselves follow. "We usually reserve these chambers



for visiting ambassadors and particularly influential merchants,” explains a guard, “but the queen is making an exception for you, by way of apology for recent events. You will be safe here. Please make yourselves at home, and we will speak again in the morning.”

Of course, the implication to most of elven society is that the queen has ordered the PCs into the paradise chamber in order to sequester, even imprison them. If the PCs still haven’t read between the lines, they may never realize that they are more prisoners than guests of Kyonin. The entire paradise chamber is a powerful magical device—a large hall that creates a false reality for those inside it. The queen can observe events in the chamber via a magical scrying pool dedicated to this purpose, and can manipulate the illusions within to generate any kind of false reality, triggering *screen* (DC 28), *mirage arcana* (DC 25), and *persistent image* (DC 25) to maintain the illusions for those within. The illusions created by the paradise chamber function at CL 20th.

Illusions are not the only effects that work to keep those imprisoned within—a *dimensional lock* and a *sympathy* effect (both at CL 20th) are at work here as well. Actually escaping a paradise chamber requires physically exiting the area of the chamber’s influence (the chamber itself and the corridor outside); a tricky proposition, given that the magic of the chamber bends reality so much that those inside can literally walk in circles while believing they are traveling in a straight line. Successfully penetrating the illusions to locate the exit requires a successful DC 25 Will save against the *mirage arcana* effect. Once the exit is located, the *sympathy* effect must be overcome before anyone can leave the room. This effect targets all creatures that enter the chamber—it doesn’t only target specific types of creatures or alignments. If a character successfully makes a DC 29 Will save, he can leave the chamber but 1d6×10 minutes later must save again or be compelled to return to the chamber. A new saving throw to escape the chamber may be attempted once per day.

The four side rooms (areas **B1A–B1D**) each contain beds, constantly replenishing supplies of food, and other comforts and supplies to keep guests of the chamber content. Books, musical instruments, and other forms of entertainment are present as well, but the majority of these are little more than complex illusions themselves. The food and drink itself is created via *create food and water*, with exquisite flavors added via illusion. If the illusions in this chamber are penetrated, the truth is revealed to be a barren chamber with simple wood furniture and bland food and water.

B2. Guard Post (EL 13)

A pair of domed chambers connect to form a single larger room here. A towering pair of double doors stands in one wall, opposite a shimmering golden curtain. The floor is of polished marble, matching the plain but spotless walls rising to the domed ceiling

RESISTING ARREST

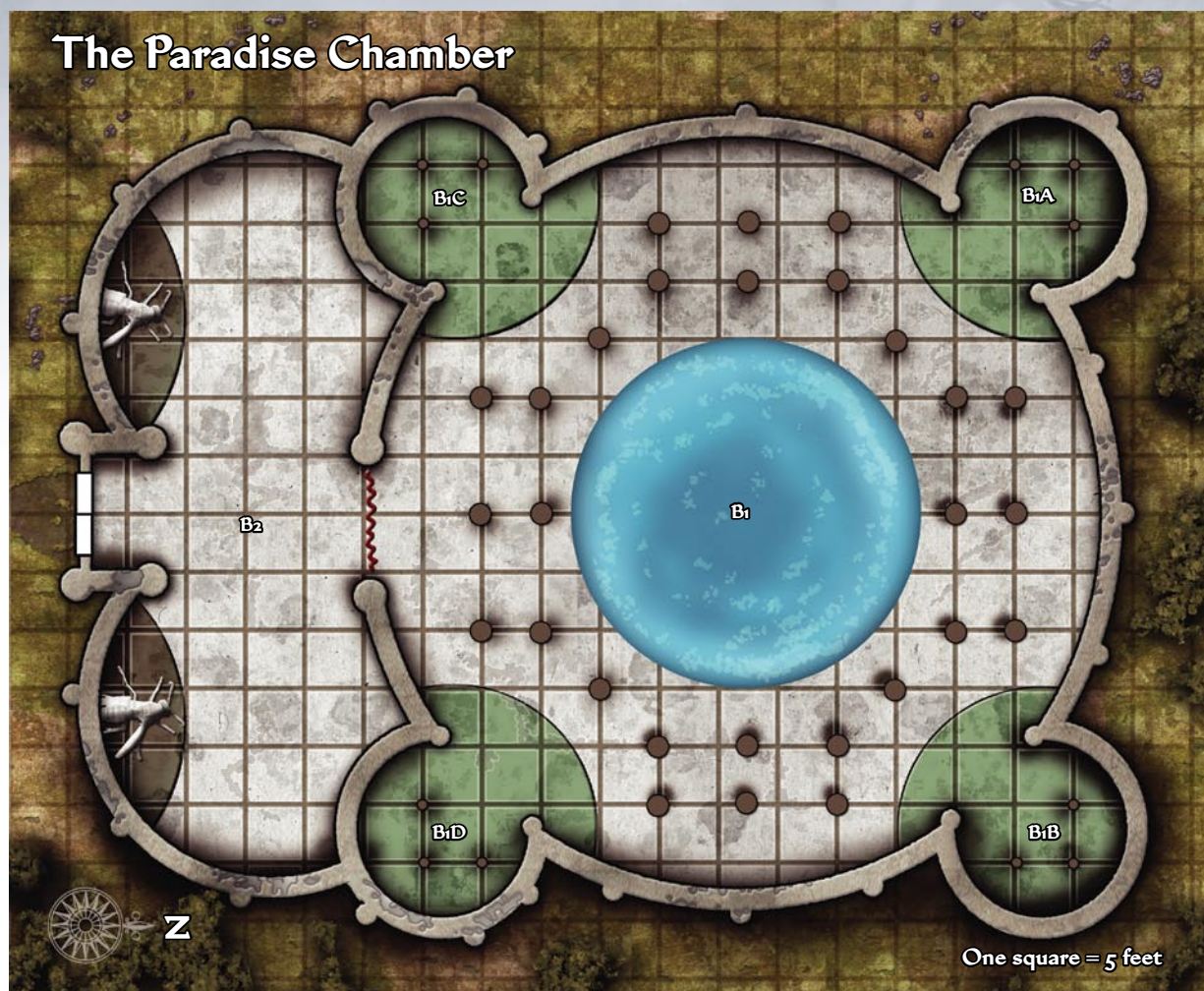
This part of the adventure requires that the PCs are, effectively, placed under house arrest. If the players realize what’s going on, they’re likely to become resistant to being so railroaded, and with good cause. Don’t force the PCs to accept being relocated into the paradise chambers, but do your best (acting as the elven guards) to convince them that the paradise chambers are much more secure and that they’ll be much safer there. If the PCs remain resistant to the idea, Queen Telandia (observing via scrying on the guards) teleports into the area to apologize to the PCs in person and to do her best to encourage the PCs to comply. She uses a *sending* spell to the PC that seems the friendliest toward her, delivering the following message: “Please comply; I am your ally, but our enemy is powerful. This secret society must be stopped! I’ll send you allies within the Paradise Chamber.”

If even this isn’t enough, it’s time for Queen Telandia to come clean. She’ll dismiss the guards and invite the PCs into a private meeting room. Such a move is highly irregular (as a DC 15 Knowledge [nobility and royalty] check can confirm), but Queen Telandia is out of options. Once she’s alone with the PCs, she explains to them about her worries of the Winter Council, and her suspicions that this “Allevrah Azrinae” could be the same as General Allevrah, one of the secret leaders of the Winter Council. She goes on to explain that she cannot take action herself, and that laying it out on the table like this to the PCs is her last, desperate attempt to take action before she’s forced to put her entire government at risk of collapse. She explains that there’s a succubus prisoner in the paradise chamber the PCs can use to get into Tanglebriar and perhaps even to aid in infiltrating Thorn’s End, and then begs them one last time to go along with her plan.

above. To either side, an equally well-polished stone statue of a crouching wasp with crystal wings stands sentinel.

While the paradise chamber’s *sympathy* effect and illusions don’t extend into this antechamber, the *dimensional lock* effect does, preventing the use of teleportation and similar powers from functioning here. The double doors to the south are kept locked with *arcane lock* at caster level 20th. They’re made of magically treated stone (hardness 16; hp 120; Break DC 58).

Creatures: Both of the stone wasps are in fact variant stone golems posted here to ensure that anyone who manages to escape the paradise chamber faces one final hurdle before escaping the prison. The stone wasps have the same stats as normal golems, save that they have a fly speed of 40 feet (poor). The golems do not pursue foes out of this room.



STONE WASPS

Variant stone golem (MM 136)

hp 107

Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor)

CR 13

The Voice of Experience

The PCs are not alone in the paradise chambers—currently relaxing in area B1C is the succubus Quilindra, still in her disguise as a half-elf bard. She's been a prisoner of the paradise chambers for months, and even though she suspects these chambers are powerful illusions, she hasn't quite figured out how the place works—while she's a gifted bard, she doesn't know much about the theory behind magic, only that it's useful in getting her way. With the introduction of new prisoners, she hopes to be able to befriend them and even recruit them in not only escaping the chamber but in destroying Thorn's End. Masterfully handled illusory interrogations at the queen's hand have tricked the succubus into thinking this was her own plan—furthermore, Quilindra believes that during these “interrogations” she picked up on a clue on how to escape from the chambers.

Although she notices the PCs arrival (unless they're taking pains to be stealthy), Quilindra ignores them at first as she believes they are mere illusions meant to distract her from finding her way out. However, if the PCs force her to interact (such as by standing in her way, or attacking her), she recognizes that they, too, are honest-to-goodness prisoners. At this point, her attitude softens and she breaks down in tears in an attempt to set the PCs off guard and to trust her. Once she's “recovered,” her despair quickly gives way to eager curiosity. She assaults the PCs with questions, asking them why they've been imprisoned, what the current year is (she's uncertain about the passage of time inside the paradise chamber), and if the PCs have any clues that she can use to escape. If the PCs are curious about her, she explains that she is a political prisoner, that a shadow government known as the Winter Council is using the elven people as pawns and puppets for their own hidden agenda, and that when she attempted to organize a rebellion, the Winter Council sent their thugs, a mercenary company known as the Shin'Rakorath, after her. They caught her and she's been languishing in this prison ever since.

This may be the first time anyone's mentioned the Winter Council in the PCs' presence, but if a character can make a DC 35 Knowledge (nobility and royalty) or bardic knowledge check, he can confirm the rumor that a secret society exists in Kyonin's government by this name—some rumors hold that the Winter Council advises the queen, while others hold that the Winter Council uses the queen as a puppet and that its members are the true rulers of Kyonin. Quilindra explains that she learned about the Winter Council after a former lover died under mysterious circumstances after voicing doubts about the appointment of Villastir to the post of Royal Chamberlain. (This is technically the truth; Quilindra simply leaves out the part about how she was using this "lover" to get access to the chamberlain, and how she killed him to prevent him from exposing her.) Quilindra used her skills as a bard to infiltrate the chamberlain's quarters, and found evidence revealing that Villastir took his orders from the Winter Council. She wasn't able to carry away any of the documents she found, but she did manage to memorize a map that indicated the Winter Council had a secret headquarters called Thorn's End in Tanglebriar, and that by using several elf gates one could navigate the route with speed. As she speaks, Quilindra grows more and more excited, pointing out that with the PCs' aid, she can certainly not only escape this prison but can make her way to Thorn's End to confront the Winter Council. If she learns that the PCs have been targeted by Winter Council agents, she proclaims that their enemies are the same, and that for the good of the elven nation, this corrupt society must be excised.

QUILINDRA

CR 14

Female succubus bard 10

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

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +17, **Spot** +17

DEFENSE

AC 36, touch 16, flat-footed 32

(+7 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +11 natural, +2 shield)

hp 126 (16 HD; 6d8+10d6+64)

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

DR 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee +2 *spell storing rapier* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+3/18–20) and claw +13 (1d6)

Special Attacks bardic music 10/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +2, inspire greatness, *suggestion*), change shape, energy drain (DC 26), *summon demons*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*charm monster* (DC 27), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 25), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 lb. of objects only), *suggestion* (DC 26), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lb. of

objects only)

Spells Known (CL 10th)

4th (3/day)—*freedom of movement*, *hold monster* (DC 27)

3rd (5/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *displacement*, *haste*, *tiny hut*

2nd (6/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 25), *cure moderate wounds*, *enthrall* (DC 25), *mirror image*

1st (7/day)—*cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 24), *undetectable alignment*, *unseen servant*

o (3/day)—*detect magic*, *know direction*, *light*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Quilindra casts *unseen servant* and *undetectable alignment* every morning.

Quilindra



UNMASKING QUILINDRA

Although Quilindra wants to help the PCs escape the prison they share, the PCs may find cause to mistrust her. If they penetrate her disguise with an effect like *true seeing*, or don't succumb to her healthy Bluff checks, Quilindra does her best to avoid combat. She points out that she means them no harm, and argues that they have a common enemy in the Winter Council. She suggests an alliance until such time as the Winter Council is defeated, after which, if the PCs still want to kill her on general principle, she's willing to give them a fair fight.

On the other hand, if the PCs aren't having anything to do with a demon, a fight against the succubus is certainly an acceptable end to this part of the adventure. When the PCs invariably loot her body, they should find a partial map of the *aiudara* network she redrew from memory that shows the route from Iadara to Tanglebriar and lists each portal's particular gemstone key.

During Combat While Quilindra is in disguise, she avoids using her spell-like abilities or *summon demons* ability, instead fighting defensively while using Spring Attack and using her bardic music and spells to support her allies. If forced to fight against those who know her for what she is, she teleports away to cast *displacement*, *mirror image*, and *haste* before she returns and uses *hold monster*, *blindness*, and *hideous laughter* to cripple her foes. She's fond of using her energy drain on creatures that are held in place or otherwise incapacitated by her magic.

Morale If Quilindra is reduced to 30 hp or less, she uses *greater teleport* to escape to a safe spot in Tanglebriar where she can heal her wounds. If she's still allied with the PCs, she returns to their side as soon as she's healthy, claiming she merely dimension doored away for a moment to "catch her breath." If she's not allied with the PCs, she teleports to Thorn's End to join the demon host there and waits for several days, hoping the PCs find their way there without her further aid.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 36

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +14

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Hover, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +32, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +25, Disguise +32 (+42 with change shape), Escape Artist +16, Gather Information +23, Hide +13, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (geography) +22, Knowledge (nature) +13, Listen +17, Move Silently +13, Perform (oratory) +32, Search +13, Spot +17, Tumble +23

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft., tongues
SQ bardic knowledge +14

Gear +4 studded leather armor, +2 spell storing rapier (contains blindness/deafness), sapphire amulet of natural armor +2, cloak of Charisma +4, gloves of Dexterity +2, ring of force

shield, ring of protection +2, *aiudara* map, silver anklet set with bloodstones (worth 300 gp), platinum ring set with a fire opal (worth 2,400 gp), silver and moonstone bracelet (worth 450 gp)

Escaping Paradise

Quilindra's tried many times to escape the paradise chamber, and mentions that she's even managed to throw off the compulsion to remain several times, but each time she's made it into area **B2**, she was stymied by the locked door and the golems and was forced to retreat back into area **B1**. Yet with the PCs' aid, she hopes to finally be able to escape for real. The trick is getting out of the paradise chamber, and that requires either *dispel magic* to remove the *dimensional lock* effect so the group can teleport out (Quilindra can only teleport herself, so to keep up her disguise she claims to be unable to teleport and would require aid from the PCs in this matter), or the door to the south of area **B2** must be opened (a tactic that requires either great stealth or the defeat of the two stone wasps). Quilindra does everything she can to aid and help the PCs, whatever their plan, all the while observing their skills and tactics. It doesn't take her long to decide that they'd be perfect agents to send into Thorn's End to disrupt the fortress's wards and allow the demonic host gathered outside to attack, and by the time the PCs do escape, she remains at their side until they reach Thorn's End—or until the PCs see through her ruse and try to kill her, of course.

Fortunately for the PCs, once they manage to escape the paradise chamber, they'll find that there aren't many guards posted elsewhere in the palace to avoid. Queen Telandia has been watching the PCs progress, and once it becomes obvious that they're about to escape, she calls an emergency meeting of her advisors and guards, claiming she has news about what the PCs have brought her. She stalls for hours on this meeting, effectively saying nothing but giving the PCs plenty of time to sneak out of the palace—as long as the PCs don't try something particularly foolish, like attempting to enter the queen's throne room or going shopping in Iadara, they should meet no resistance to their flight from the palace. If the PCs have no plan for what to do, Quilindra suggests that they make for the closest elf gate and begin their journey through the network of portals to Tanglebriar, so that they can confront the Winter Council as soon as possible. If the PCs prefer to teleport to some other point of safety to rest and recover, she agrees for now, but begins pressuring them to take up her plan to confront the Winter Council soon thereafter. If she's forced to use *charm monster* and other tactics to convince the PCs, she won't hesitate to use such methods (provided she can do so without arousing the suspicion of the other PCs).

PART THREE: THE GRAND TOUR OF GOLARION

Quilindra (and Queen Telandia, for that matter) both want the PCs to travel to Thorn's End and confront the Winter Council. Unknown to the PCs, secrets hidden in Thorn's End can also give them a wealth of information and aid when they finally move against the secret society. Although Queen Telandia's influence prevents the whole of her palace guard from chasing after the PCs after they escape from imprisonment (she quickly covers up the fact that the PCs were even in the paradise chambers at all, and her agents spread rumors that the PCs have been exiled from Kyonin), the Winter Council does not let them go quietly. Soon after the PCs' escape, agents of the Council command the leader of their pet mercenary company, the Shin'Rakorath, to track the PCs down and assassinate them.

Where the PCs go once they escape the paradise chamber is left to them, but Quilindra strongly pushes to have them follow her to somewhere safe where she can lay out her plans. She realizes that she can use their help to get inside Thorn's End, but she also knows that agents of the Winter Council will quickly learn that she and the PCs have escaped. As a result, she pushes for speed, pointing out that an overland journey from Iadara to Thorn's End would require navigating a distance of approximately 60 miles, most of its territory held by the elves or the demons of Tanglebriar. If the PCs prefer an overland journey, Quilindra begrudgingly accedes to them—consult the gazetteer on Kyonin that begins on page 48 for more details of what the PCs can expect to encounter if they opt for this route. Note that if the PCs don't maintain secrecy, word that they're still in Kyonin spreads quickly and they may face more encounters with Shin'Rakorath assassins.

Quilindra's favored approach is to use the elf gates to enter Tanglebriar, effectively bypassing the dozens of miles of enemy territory between Kyonin and their goal. If the PCs follow her advice, Quilindra quickly leads them through the streets of Iadara toward the closest elf gate. As she leads the PCs, she goes over her plan with them in a quiet but eager voice.

"We must move quickly now. Even if you feel that the elven nation as a whole can be trusted, the Winter Council cannot. They are not the nation. They are their own society, and as you've already experienced, they'll stop at nothing to maintain their status quo. We need to be out of Iadara quickly. If we can keep moving along the *aidara* paths, I think we can stay ahead of our pursuers and should be able to reach Thorn's End before the Winter Council realizes it.

"While there's not an *aidara* that leads directly to Thorn's End, several of them did lead into southern Kyonin at a time. Most of these have been deactivated or destroyed—we don't want Treerazer's demons using them to invade Golarion. But

THE AIUDARA NETWORK

Each elf gate is either a simple gate with only two linked locations, or a hub that connects several locations. Active elf gates need only be stepped through to transport a traveler; in the case of a hub, the traveler needs to be carrying a specific portal key to select his destination. All other travelers who follow go to the same location, so that in the case of a group, only the first to travel needs a key. Typically, these keys are gemstones. In a case where a traveler has multiple gemstones that suffice, the elf gate defaults to the most expensive gemstone—in the case of a tie, the destination is randomly determined between tied gemstone values. Travel through an elf gate is instantaneous, much like that of traveling through a portal created by a *gate* spell.

some of them still exist, and I know of one that's only a few hours away from our goal.

"There are two types of *aidara*. Some are simply two-way portals that link distant locations, but many are hubs that connect to two or more sites. For the simple portals, you just activate them and step through. The hubs are a bit more complex; you need a portal key to indicate which of the multiple destinations you wish to travel to. I've got all of the portal keys we'll need to navigate our route—from Iadara to a site in Galt, and thence to a site in northern Irrisen, and from there to an abandoned elven fortress in Ustalav. It is from this abandoned fortress, a place called Mirianath, that we make our final journey into Tanglebriar. But before we reach Mirianath, we should prepare. At Galt and Irrisen, we'll need only to keep level heads to talk our way by the guards, but in Ustalav we may have trouble. Rumor holds that the elves who once held Mirianath fell to temptation and became banshees. I can protect us somewhat with my singing, but more protection against their dirge would be wise."

The First *Aidara*: Lotusgate

Iadara is the heart of the *Aidara* Network—nowhere else on Golarion are there as many separate elf gates in such close proximity. There are certainly more than a dozen functioning elf gates in the city limits or within an hour of its border, and likely twice that number of non-functioning gates as well. The majority of these gates are not hubs—each has a single destination when leaving from Iadara. One such gate links to the Darklands (this is the one the PCs likely used to arrive in Kyonin at the start of the adventure); the one Quilindra leads the PCs to is another.

Known locally as Lotusgate, this delicate arch of stone sits at the center of a series of ring-shaped gardens filled with a riot of lotus flowers. As the PCs approach, Quilindra grows nervous—there's no sign of any guards in the area. She'd been prepared to have to fast talk or fight through to Lotusgate, and isn't prepared for the strange lack of

opposition. Of course, this is due to the fact that the queen has reassigned the guards here, giving the PCs a fortunate break and allowing them to move through Lotusgate with ease. If the PCs linger, perhaps beginning a paranoid search for hidden guards who aren't there, the sound of a group of guards returning to their post at Lotusgate should be enough to encourage them to leap through the aiudara and onto the first stage of their journey.

The Second Aiudara: Galtgate

Hidden in a cavern under several ancient fir trees in Boarwood, the elves have taken recently to calling this aiudara Galtgate. This region once held a small but majestic set of temples dedicated to the elven gods, but during the period of time when the elves were gone, Taldan soldiers razed the temples to the ground. Distraught at the loss of the temples, the elves chose not to rebuild here, and now use the surviving cathedral-like caverns that once served as the temple's storerooms as a staging ground for a long-term observation of the nation of Galt. Galtgate itself is located in the central cavern, a large, 200-foot diameter chamber filled with softly humming crystals, floating motes of multicolored light, and a dozen stone bunkers.

Galtgate is one of the network's busier elf gates, with connections to seven other locations in all, and as such the gate sees travelers passing through several times a day. Since many of these travelers are not elves, the guardians of Galtgate are relatively welcoming of travelers. New arrivals are greeted by several elven soldiers and offered drinks of wine and snacks of fruit if they wish. As long as the PCs don't act too crass or suspicious, these soldiers have little interest in delaying them. The elves of Galtgate sometimes trade goods with travelers—treat this small collection of soldiers as a community with a 500 gp limit for the purposes of buying items. One of Galtgate's greatest resources are its crystals and gems, many of which are sold as portal keys.

The portal key for Galtgate is a garnet. Travelers from Lotusgate need no portal key to travel here, of course, as Lotusgate is not a hub, but if the PCs wish to return to Galtgate from another aiudara hub, they'll need a garnet. Characters who wish to move on to Irrisen need a moonstone to serve as a portal key; if the PCs are still with Quilindra, her bracelet does the trick.

The Third Aiudara: Icegate (EL 12)

North of Irrisen, along the border between the continents of Avistan and the Crown of the World, lies a mysterious

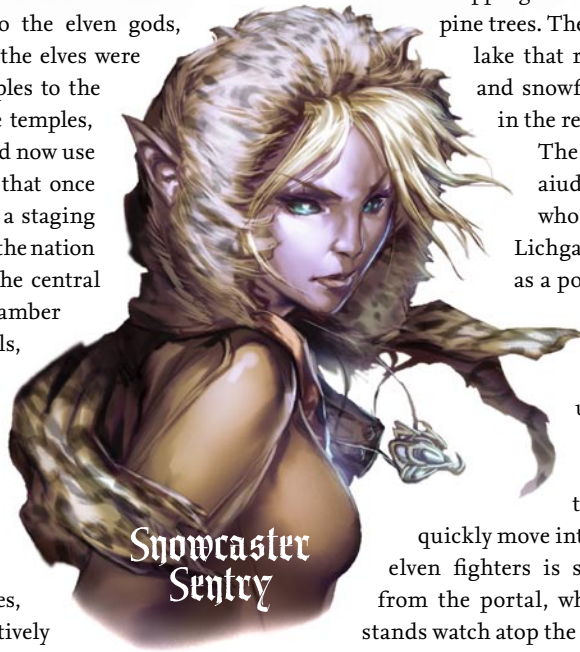
region ruled by one of Golarion's most reclusive elves. Known to many in the region only by rumors and myth, these elves are referred to as Snowcasters, and the stories of what they do to visitors are almost universally overexaggerated. Yet while tales of cannibalism, demonic sacrifice, and the ability to freeze a man solid at a glance are all blatant falsehoods, the Snowcasters' disdain of intruders is quite legitimate.

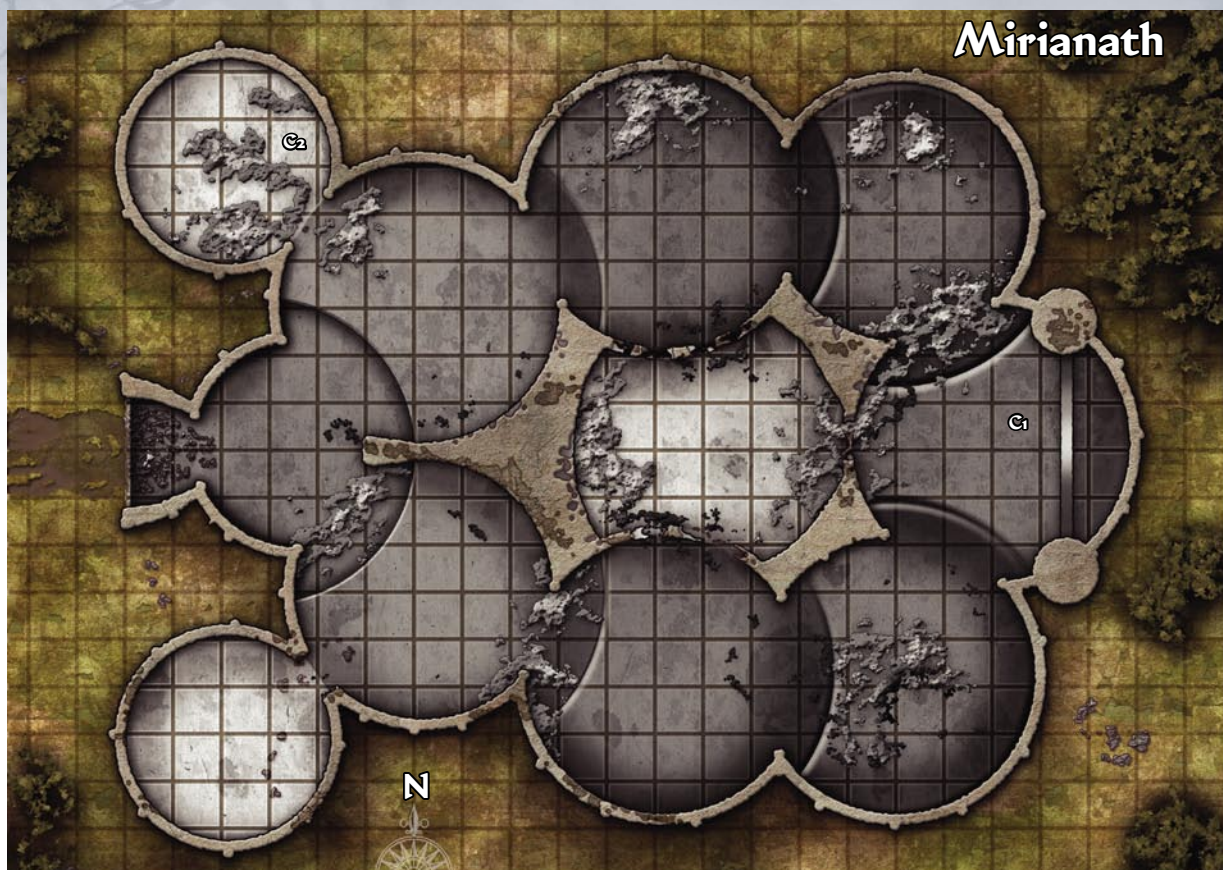
Icegate, as a result, is only rarely used—rather than deal with the Snowcasters, most travelers opt for alternate routes between these four regions. Icegate itself is a pale arch no more than 9 feet tall carved in the side of a stony outcropping at the edge of a small copse of pine trees. The arch looks out over a small lake that remains frozen year round, and snowfall is generally quite heavy in the region.

The portal key for the Icegate aiudara is a moonstone. Those who wish to move on to Ustalav's Lichgate need a fire opal to serve as a portal key; if the PCs are still with Quilindra, her ring suffices for this key.

Creatures: Icegate is under constant watch by a small band of Snowcaster sentries, and as soon as the aiudara activates, they quickly move into action. One group of four elven fighters is stationed 30 feet downhill from the portal, while another group of four stands watch atop the outcropping. It only takes a few seconds for the eight elves to move into position, after which one of them cries out to the PCs in strangely accented Common, "You there! Lower your weapons and cast no spells! Hands where we can see them! Give us no cause to attack, and you can go in peace."

Assuming the PCs cooperate, two of the sentries downhill from the aiudara stand up and approach within 10 feet, warning the PCs that they won't hesitate to open fire if they try anything rash, then demand an explanation for why the PCs have appeared. The elves remain suspicious of the PCs even if they tell the truth, but as long as the PCs aren't too aggressive they agree to let them use Icegate to continue on their way—but only if they pay a toll of 200 gp per person. The snow elves prefer this payment to be in gems, jewelry, or magic items, but will accept coins with a grumble. The snow elves respect shows of force (they find the calm ways of their southern kin to be "soft and childish") and an attempt to intimidate them gains a +4 bonus on the roll; if successful (or if the hostile elves are made friendly with a DC 35 Diplomacy check), the snow





elves agree to let the PCs continue without paying. Any other attempt to dodge payment, including an attempt to simply flee through the aiudara, causes the elves to immediately attack.

SNOWCASTER SENTRY (8)

CR 6

hp 55 each (see page 12—Shin'Rakorath soldier)

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs negotiate a peaceful accord with the elves, award them experience as if they had defeated them in combat.

The Fourth Aiudara: Lichgate (EL 13)

Centuries ago, the elves maintained a small stronghold called Mirianath in a remote woodland in northern Ustilav, a series of several stone domes used as a barracks by a small group of female elven scouts and rangers. Lichgate was unique among the aiudara of the network in that it led to the lost region of Kyonin under the influence of the demon Treerazer—no other aiudara remained active that led to this region. The elves of Lichgate were charged with the task of guarding this portal but were under strict orders not to venture through it into Tanglebriar beyond.

Yet Mirianath's commander Elledariah ignored these orders. Acting on the best of intentions but fueled by a

dangerous combination of pride and patriotism, Elledariah believed that if she could establish a safe harbor on the far side of the gate, she and her soldiers could wage a war against Treerazer's demons from within Tanglebriar's borders, and in so doing might be able to drive the abyssal taint of the region even farther back. Elledariah's initial efforts seemed to be working, but she was unfortunately confronted by a menace she wasn't prepared for—seduction. Armed to defend herself against physical threats, she was ill-prepared to resist the wiles of a particularly silver-tongued succubus who seduced her in the form of an elven scout who claimed to have escaped the Witchbole and had much to teach Elledariah. The eager elven ranger brought the scout back to Lichgate, tended to his apparent wounds, and accepted him into her people's ranks, but as the scout "recuperated," he began to lure the elves away from their mission with well-placed lies and the periodic charm. Over the course of several months, the elves of Mirianath became increasingly paranoid and introverted. They abandoned their worship of Calistria and started to suspect the rest of the elven army had been infiltrated by shapechanging demons from Tanglebriar, that someday in the near future, an assault of demons wearing elven skins would overwhelm them and that their allies in distant Kyonin would do nothing to help. So when a group of Kyonin's

soldiers arrived to investigate why Mirianath had cut off contact with the homeland, the defenders mistook their arrival for invasion and attacked. The succubus enjoyed the slaughter, but she enjoyed the results of that slaughter even more. The only survivor of the fight was Elledariah, and when the succubus revealed her true nature to her after the battle, Elledariah was overwhelmed with despair and took her own life. The succubus, none other than Quilindra herself, returned to Tanglebriar triumphant, while back at Mirianath, Elledariah's spirit rose the next twilight as a powerful banshee.

Since then, Elledariah's proximity has soured the elf gate here—it can still accept arrivals, but none may use it to leave the fortress as long as the banshee exists. Saddened and shamed by the failure here, the elves of Kyonin tried once (and failed) to exorcise the undead elf, and instead settled for quarantining the area. Long-term plans to cleanse the area and lay the spirits to rest remain on the schedule, but as with so many things in elven life, these plans seem eternally doomed to languish in the future.

Quilindra is eager to return to the scene of one of her most successful early triumphs, but a bit nervous as well. She knows the place is haunted by a banshee, and encourages the PCs to prepare accordingly with *death ward* spells and similar effects.

Lichgate itself is located in area **C1** of Mirianath. It can receive travelers from other elf gates, but as long as Elledariah exists, it cannot be activated from the Mirianath side to transport travelers to any other location. Once the banshee queen is defeated, the elf gate functions normally. The portal key for Lichgate is a fire opal. Those who wish to move on to Tanglegate need a sapphire to serve as a portal key. If Quilindra remains with the PCs, her *amulet of natural armor* +2 does the job as portal key.

Creatures: During the day, Elledariah is harmless and hides in the stone walls of the place, but at night she emerges to wander the ruins' halls, her deadly song echoing through the chambers. Her ability to sense heartbeats allows her to locate living intruders swiftly, and once night falls, she is terrifically fierce in defending her home. The banshee appears as she did in life (albeit in a smoky white, ghostly form), with long hair, form-fitting chainmail, and a gently curved sword in one hand. Her eyes glow with a cruel yellow flame, and her face is a constant grimace of hate and despair.

ELLEDARIAH

Banshee

hp 161 (see page 80)

CR 13

Treasure: Scattered among the dead bodies in area **C2** are many objects of value—10 minutes of searching gathers the following treasure: a +1 *large steel shield*, a *potion*

of eagle's splendor, a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, a suit of +2 *elven chainmail*, a +1 *improved silent moves mithral shirt*, a *wand of fireballs* (CL 8th, 21 charges), a +2 *cold iron evil outsider bane bastard sword*, and 1,203 gp in all.

Slumped against a wall in the southern guardtower is what remains of Elledariah's mortal form. Her withered skeleton still wears her +3 *moderate fortification elven chain*, the front lifted up and draped over her +2 *cold iron speed longsword*, which is still lodged between her exposed ribs. On one hand glints a *ring of protection* +3, while draped over her neck is an *amulet of health* +4.

The Fifth Aiudara: Tanglegate (EL 12)

The final stage in the race through the aiudara network is Tanglegate, a stone arch sitting on a small sliver of ground amid a stinking, seething bog of tainted water. Deep in the forest known now as Tanglebriar, this gate is covered with clinging moss and the ground around it is thick with diseased and foul-smelling mushrooms. The elf gate itself looks remarkably well-preserved for the surroundings, though—Treerazer has forbidden his minions from damaging the portal, since he hopes someday to use it against the elves, perhaps by redirecting it to connect directly to Iadara, giving him a direct line of invasion to the elven heartland.

Creature: To encourage his demonic minions to keep away from the elf gate, Treerazer posted two bebiliths in the region to serve as guardians. The immense spidery creatures' reputation for cruelty to other demons is well known, and no random encounters with other demons occur within a mile of Tanglegate. Unfortunately, the bebiliths themselves are dangerous guardians, and they move quickly to attack anything that steps out of Tanglegate, splashing through the shallow waters of the surrounding bog with terrific speed.

BEBELITHS (2)

hp 150 each (MM 42)

CR 10

Traversing Tanglebriar

Once the PCs defeat or escape the bebiliths, they're faced with the daunting prospect of a short but uncomfortable overland journey through Tanglebriar. According to Quilindra, it's only a 3-mile journey to the west to reach Thorn's End, but no trails exist in Tanglebriar, and the forest lives up to its name. Thick coils of stinging nettles, swaths of glistening mold and poisonous fungi, spiky vines and razor-sharp branches, and thick, sucking patches of soggy ground present a very real threat to any who would try to traverse the woodland. Overland travel through Tanglebriar is 1/4 normal, and for every hour spent traversing the tangle, a creature must make a DC 14 Fortitude save to resist taking 1d4 points of Strength

damage from the various poison thorns, spores, and nettles that grow thick in the area. Wandering monsters (see page 79) are another very real threat to those in Tanglebriar, although if the PCs know she's a succubus, Quilindra can use her influence to talk any demons the PCs encounter out of attacking if she makes a DC 35 Diplomacy check. PCs can attempt the same, but suffer a –10 penalty to their check if they're obviously not demons.

With Quilindra as a guide, the PCs can find their way through Tanglebriar to Thorn's End directly (at a speed of 30 feet, the 3 mile journey still takes 4 hours). If Quilindra is no longer with the party, a DC 30 Knowledge (geography) check is required to know the approximate location of Thorn's End if the PCs don't possess a map. To avoid becoming lost in Tanglebriar the PCs must make a DC 20 Survival check; if the PCs have a map, this drops to a DC 15 Survival check. With Quilindra, there's no chance of becoming lost at all.

PART FOUR: THORN'S END

After the elves returned to Golarion in 2632 AR, the Winter Council's role in elven society had changed. Whereas before they were a public group that served as ambassadors to Azlant, Earthfall and the resulting Age of Darkness changed the society's outlook. It was only through espionage and secrecy that their agents were able to so accurately predict Earthfall's advent, and so as the new age of elves dawned, they retreated from the public eye. Proxies like the Shin'Rakorath mercenary company and certain select nobles became their public faces, and in time, even these proxies began to have doubts about who they really worked for. The Winter Council's traditional stronghold, a fortress called Thorn's End, stood in a portion of Kyonin from which the elves were unable to reclaim from Treerazer, but the Winter Council saw this as a boon, not a liability. The wards in place at Thorn's End made it difficult for the demons to harm the building, and once Winter Council wizards perfected a magical item called the *Maleficus Spike* and drove it into the tower's foundation, Thorn's End became practically invulnerable to the demonic host that surrounded them. Nestled deeply in one of the few places on Golarion that the elven people had no real interest in exploring, it became the perfect place to base a secret society.

It was honestly only a matter of time until things backfired on the Winter Council, and when they did, it was spectacular. When their most decorated and powerful member, an elven priestess and general named Allevrah, approached the Winter Council with an audacious plan to destroy the drow, the council recoiled in horror. The argument that resulted intensified until Allevrah struck out against the then leader of the Winter Council, an elven wizard named Auramesties, murdering him before the rest of the council. It was the final act in Allevrah's



recent sacrifices to her morality, and before her associates' eyes, she transformed into a drow. Allevrah fled before the shocked Winter Council could react, and as she fled she damaged the *Maleficus Spike* enough that the demonic host of Tanglebriar could come closer than ever to the fortress. The act gained her enough time to flee to the Darklands, taking with her much of her research and several potent magical resources while the other Winter Council leaders mobilized to shore up the rent in their fortress's armor.

Several of the Winter Council's guards and even a few of their leaders perished in that initial surge of demonic fury, and some of Thorn's End's higher towers suffered partial collapse before the elves were able to right the damage. Yet the demons had tasted victory, and whereas before they were content to lurk in the shadows around Thorn's End, now they have settled into a perpetual host of monsters around the tower. Their minions haunt the damaged upper reaches and lay siege to the tower from below. Unwilling to cede their pride and fortress, the Winter Council dug in for a long siege and turned their attentions to how to track Allevrah down and stop her without allowing the world at large to learn that one of their own had become a drow.

It is this tenacious stalemate between demon and drow that the PCs come upon when they draw near to Thorn's End.

The Winter Council

The Winter Council originally consisted of a group of six elves, each with their own area of unique skill and specialty. Since Allevrah's defection and murder of the previous leader, this number has dropped to four. These surviving council members are growing increasingly isolated and distraught over what they feel to be a situation spiraling out of control, and if the PCs play their cards right, they can use this to their advantage in securing the Council's aid or ensuring its destruction.

Each of the surviving Winter Council members have their own issues and problems, and have reacted to Allevrah's betrayal and the growing concern of what to do to escape the siege without revealing the location of their hideout to the queen. If made friendly, any of the four councilors agrees to help the PCs secure an audience with the others, and they recommend holding an emergency council session with the PCs and all four councilors in attendance. A councilor made helpful might confide in the PCs that the situation here at Thorn's End is worse than it seems, and that one of their own, a woman named Allevrah, murdered another of their members years ago and fled, engineering the demon siege as she left to throw off pursuit. If the PCs mention that they've heard the Azrinae drow have a new matron named Allevrah, the councilor grows concerned but doesn't seem too

surprised, saying, "All will be made clear during the coming emergency session."

If the PCs befriend Armistril, the captain of the Thorn's End guard, he can give them the names of the following four, the locations where they've been spending much of their time, and the information listed here.

Arlindil (page 40) liaises between the Winter Council and Golarion's elven druids (particularly those operating in Kyonin). He is currently the council's oldest living member, and, perhaps not coincidentally, the most "hard-line" of an already traditionalist group. As a druid, he recognizes that there are natural cycles to all things, and most of his philosophy revolves around the elves not impeding Golarion's ability to carry out those cycles. He spends a great deal of time brooding in his new home (area **D30**).

Hialin (page 43) is the Winter Council's resident expert on arcane magic, and represents the interests of elven arcane spellcasters throughout Golarion. He also researches arcane knowledge, and is the keeper of Thorn's End's archives (areas **D39** and **D40**). A quiet and intense man, Hialin has become a bit of a recluse of late and spends his time in his laboratory (area **D36**) or his quarters (area **D37**).

Malindil (page 33) is the commander-in-chief of the Council's defenders and the main point of contact with the Shin'Rakorath and various other contacts scattered throughout Kyonin. Her primary concern is to maintain the integrity of Thorn's End, and it is primarily at her insistent arguments that the Winter Council has not yet given up on their traditional home. Malindil works closely with Arlindil to ensure the natural order of things, and spends some of her time visiting with him in his chambers (area **D30**), but mostly confers with Armistril (see area **D4**) about devising a plan to defeat the demons and their expectations that the wards will soon fail.

Perelir (page 39) is the council's advisor on divine affairs—a theologian who specializes in divinations, making her invaluable to the Winter Council. She also serves as the Council's armorer, providing for most of the council members' magical arms and armor. She's the most outspoken of the councilors; as a priestess of Calistria, she often differed on opinions with the rest of the Winter Council and most of the arguments that rocked the meeting room were started by her. She generally spends her days in her chamber (area **D28**) or tending to the chapel itself (area **D26**), and has grown uncharacteristically gloomy and morose.

D1. Collapsed Walls

The once-mighty gatehouse of this ancient elven fortress has collapsed, transforming into a jagged rent in the curtain

wall that opens onto a courtyard perhaps once used as a marshalling yard. Thick, dripping vines and soggy, drooping mushrooms grow thick on the walls and ground surrounding the castle, and the tangled woodland presses in against its outer walls like a malignant sea of verdant tumors.

After Allevrah damaged the *Maleficus Spike*, the demonic host that marched on Thorn's End tore apart the gatehouse that once stood here. When the Winter Council reactivated their defenses, the courtyard remained unprotected (along with a few of the upper towers that flying demons had managed to breach).

D2. Courtyard (EL 17)

The grace of elven architecture and design is still visible in the lines of the structure surrounding this large courtyard, but the yard itself has been polluted beyond redemption. A thick layer of mud, fungus, and refuse lies heaped on the ground, trampled flat in the middle of the yard but lying in mounds against the walls. To the south, a bloodstained and muddy set of stairs rises up to a set of filth-caked double doors of cold iron.

Creatures: The courtyard before the main doors of the castle swarms with demons. The exact mix of demons changes from day to day as some are slaughtered by their kin or grow bored with the siege, but at any one time the mix is about the same level of danger as the one presented here.

Overseeing the squabbling, howling mob is a single bloated nalfeshnee demon named Viggrizzur. Sent from Treerazer himself to handle the siege of Thorn's End, Viggrizzur has a quality lacking in many other demons—patience. He knows that Thorn's End is warded against teleportation (after many failed attempts to enter by that very method), and while he knows that the elves inside can likely last for years or decades on their magical supplies, demons are longer-lived even than elves. The elves themselves let down their guard once before, and precious time was lost in the initial assault—when the elves let down their guard again, Viggrizzur is ready to strike immediately.

Lurking in the yard with Viggrizzur are many lesser demons, all of whom fear the nalfeshnee enough to limit their squabbling and bickering and fighting to a dull roar. The nalfeshnee isn't above crushing minor demons for some real or imagined slight or error, and the demons gathered here have made a game of this, each trying his best to goad or trick his kin into angering the nalfeshnee enough to be crushed. It's a violent but entertaining enough pastime for the demons while they wait for their siege to have results. Over a dozen demons in all gathered here in the courtyard—eight babaus, three vrocks, two hezrous, and the nalfeshnee

MALEFICUS SPIKE

Aura strong abjuration; **CL** 20th

Slot —; **Price** — (minor artifact); **Weight** 16 lb.

DESCRIPTION

The *Maleficus Spike* is an ancient item forged of cold iron with an adamantine core designed to keep demons at bay. When driven into the wall of a building, the *Maleficus Spike* infuses the walls of the structure with a *dimensional lock* effect and a ward that repels demons. Any outsider with the evil subtype that tries to enter or damage the warded building must attempt a DC 30 Will save. If it fails, the outsider takes 12d6 damage each round and becomes nauseated for 1 hour. An outsider that manages to enter a building warded in this manner must make a new Will save each round to avoid damage and nausea. The effect is lessened against non-outsider evil creatures; such creatures gain a +4 bonus on their Will saves, take only 4d6 damage on a failed save, and are nauseated for only 1 minute.

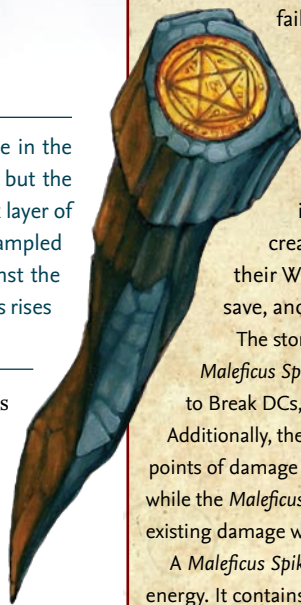
The stone and doors of a structure warded by a *Maleficus Spike* are considered magically treated (+20 to Break DCs, double hardness, and double hit points).

Additionally, the structure self-repairs damage at the rate of 5 points of damage per round, provided the damage was inflicted while the *Maleficus Spike* was functioning; the *Spike* can't repair existing damage when it is installed.

A *Maleficus Spike* consumes an enormous amount of magical energy. It contains enough energy to ward a structure for 24 hours, after which it becomes dormant until recharged. Recharging a *Maleficus Spike* requires a spellcaster to spend 10 minutes in contact with the *Spike*, after which the spellcaster selects a number of spell slots totaling no less than 24 spell levels to expend to infuse the minor artifact with enough energy to ward the structure for another 24 hours. Prepared spells in these slots are lost for a day, and for spontaneous spellcasters those slots are used for a day. Spell-like abilities cannot be used to fuel a *Maleficus Spike*.

DESTRUCTION

To destroy a *Maleficus Spike*, you must hammer it into a structure on the Abyss using a hammer bearing the unholy symbol of any demon lord.

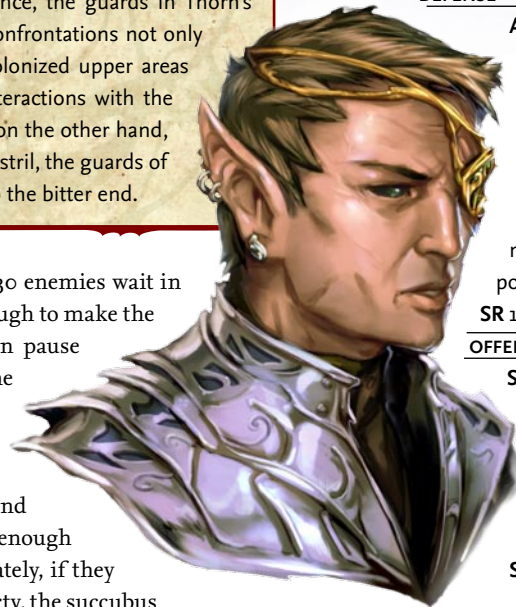


himself. In addition, a group of a dozen satyr barbarians (fey that have been corrupted and subsumed by the sickening miasma of Treerazer's presence in Tanglebriar and are equal parts satyr and demon now), bicker and squabble among their more powerful demonic cousins. It's among the ranks of these corrupted satyrs that most of the violence occurs, but the number of these creatures serving Treerazer is legion, and Viggrizzur isn't worried about running out

GUARDS OF THORN'S END

Today, the number of guards in Thorn's End is less than half of the original number—only 36 Shin'Rakorath guards remain stationed in the fortress, led by a single commander, Armistril. These elves have stoically upheld their charge of defending Thorn's End, but morale is nonetheless slowly eroding. Their loyalties today lie primarily with Armistril, and they see the retreat of the Winter Council commanders themselves into their own chambers on the floors above as damning evidence that the secret society is dying, if not already dead. Where Armistril goes, so do the guards, and so if the PCs earn his allegiance, the guards in Thorn's End become handy allies in confrontations not only with the demons that have colonized upper areas of the fortress, but also in interactions with the four remaining councilors. If, on the other hand, the PCs make enemies of Armistril, the guards of Thorn's End oppose the PCs to the bitter end.

of them any time soon. In all, 30 enemies wait in the courtyard, a force large enough to make the Winter Council trapped within pause even before one factors in the additional demonic creatures lurking in the midden (area D3) or the ruined heights of the tower above (areas D25 and D34). It certainly should be enough to give the PCs pause—fortunately, if they still have Quilindra in their party, the succubus gives them an easy way past the demons.



Thorn's End Guard

VIGGRIZZUR

CR 14

Nalfeshnee demon

hp 175 (MM 45)

TACTICS

During Combat Viggrizzur starts every fight with a smite, following up with *call lightning*. If he sees a PC casting spells, he targets that PC with *feeblemind*. He uses *slow* against physical combatants, and *greater dispel magic* to undo any detrimental spell effects on his demon host. He lets his demonic forces lead the attack, though, and only resorts to personal violence if a PC moves within his 15-foot reach.

Morale Viggrizzur is no fool, and if the PCs appear to be winning (or if he's reduced to less than 30 hit points), he uses *greater teleport* to retreat elsewhere in Tanglebriar to lie low until Treerazer's had time to learn about the failed siege and vent his rage on other demons. He does not return to Thorn's End during this adventure.

HEZROUS (2)

CR 11

hp 138 each (MM 44)

VROCKS (3)

CR 9

hp 115 each (MM 48)

BABAUS (8)

CR 6

hp 66 each (MM 40)

TANGLEBRIAR SATYRS (12)

CR 5

Male fiendish satyr barbarian 2 (MM 108, 219)

CE Medium fey

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Listen** +16, **Spot** +16

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 17
(+2 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural, -2 rage, +2 shield)

hp 65 each (7 HD; 5d6+2d12+35)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/cold iron and magic; **Immune** critical hits, mind-affecting effects, sleep, paralysis, poison, polymorph, stun; **Resist** cold 5, fire 5;

SR 12

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.

Melee mwk battleaxe +10 (1d8+6/×3) and

head butt +3 (1d6+2)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +7 (1d8+2/×3)

Special Attacks rage 1/day, smite good 1/day (+7 damage)

TACTICS

During Combat Tanglebriar satyrs rage at the start of battle and prefer to engage foes in melee; if they can't, they

save their rage and fire arrows at foes until they've closed to melee range.

Morale Tanglebriar satyrs fight to the death.

Base Stats **AC** 21, touch 11, flat-footed 19; **hp** 51; **Fort** +7, **Will** +6; **Melee** mwk battleaxe +8 (1d8+3/×3) and head butt +1 (1d6+1); **Str** 14, **Con** 17; **Skills** Jump +13

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 21, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6

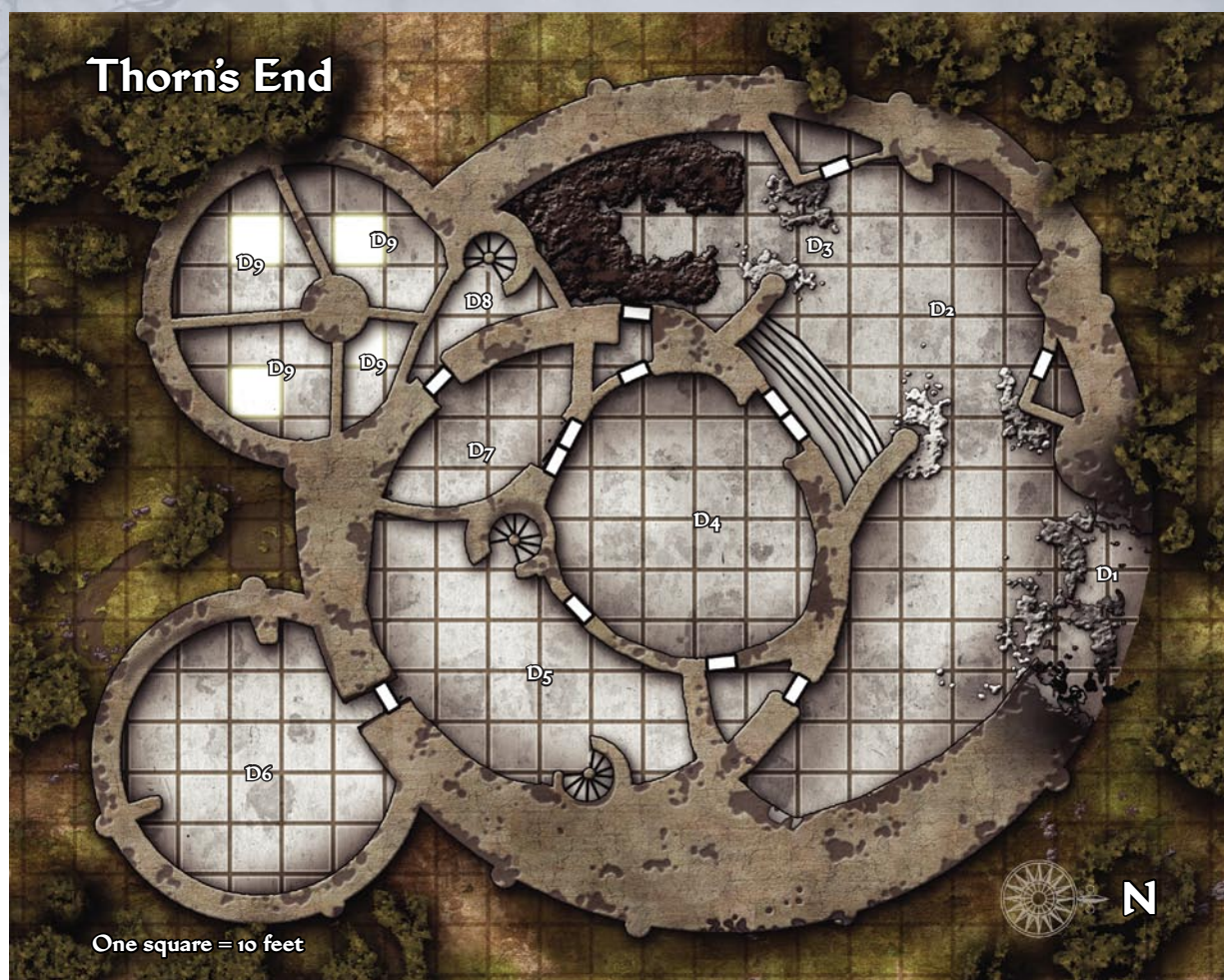
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)

Skills Bluff +9, Hide +13, Jump +15, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +16, Move Silently +13, Spot +16

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ fast movement

Gear masterwork leather armor, masterwork heavy wooden shield, masterwork battleaxe, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows



If Quilindra Isn't with the PCs: The demons' natural reaction to the arrival of humanoids is to attack, but Viggrizzur orders them to stand down long enough that he can greet the PCs in an unsettlingly civil manner. He asks if the PCs would be interested in doing him a favor—simply go into this tower and talk to the elves within and convince them to lower their defenses. In return, he promises the PCs they can have all of the treasure inside the tower. Of course, this is a lie; once the Thorn's End wards are down, Viggrizzur orders his demons to tear down the tower and kill everyone inside. Likewise, if the PCs attempt to exit the building after Viggrizzur lets them enter, he orders his demons to attack. The demons do not pursue PCs beyond the courtyard, though.

If Quilindra Is with the PCs: As the group approaches within 100 feet, Quilindra telepathically informs Viggrizzur that she and the PCs are approaching, and that she's convinced them to take down the Winter Council for them. From here, the interaction proceeds as above, with Viggrizzur allowing the PCs entry into the tower but demanding Quilindra remain behind as a hostage to ensure the PCs do their job; this is, of course,

because Quilindra herself can't enter Thorn's End, being a demon. She puts up a brave front in this case, telling the PCs not to worry about her and to be swift in their assault.

If the PCs know Quilindra's a succubus, she assumes her natural form as she arrives and is greeted with open arms and rounds of applause by the demonic host. At this point, she joins the besiegers, and if the PCs attempt anything other than entering Thorn's End to lower the wards, she joins the demons in an attack on the PCs.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to enter Thorn's End without resorting to combat, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 13 foe in combat.

D3. Midden (EL 10)

What once might have been a pleasant garden is now filled with all manner of filth and refuse. A great deal of it is heaped in front of a door leading into the central tower—and about forty feet below an upper-floor arrow slit; clearly, someone inside has been dumping the stronghold's refuse out the window, and the ambient spores heavy in the air have taken to the filth with speed.

Once a garden, this corner of the courtyard has become a midden. At one time, the demons and satyrs enjoyed frolicking in this filth and sifting through it for prizes cast off by the elves within Thorns' End, but they eventually grew bored with the diversion. Since then, several shambling mounds have settled in the area. The filth is piled up high enough along the wall to completely obscure the door leading inside.

SHAMBLING MOUNDS (4)
hp 60 (MM 222)

CR 6

D4. The Great Hall (EL 12)

All three doors leading into this chamber from the courtyard or the midden are locked via *arcane lock* (CL 15th), which in combination with the *Maleficus Spike*, make them very difficult to force open. Each of these doors is made of cold iron as well. If the characters pound on the

doors or call out to anyone within to be let in, Armistril replies soon enough—with the leaders of the Winter Council ensconced in their own particular distractions on the floors above, it's left to him to determine if the PCs are who they say they are, and if they should be allowed to enter. In the end, as long as the PCs don't threaten him and state their case with a DC 20 Diplomacy check (or a successful Bluff), he'll open the door for them, trusting the *Maleficus Spike* to keep the PCs out if they're really demons in disguise. As the door's opened, though, the demons in the courtyard might try to take a few shots at Armistril or any elves they can see through the open doorway with a few ranged attacks, so Armistril won't leave the door open for long, urging the PCs to enter as quickly as possible so he can slam the door shut again.

This huge, airy chamber was once decorated with finery fit for kings—but the faded tapestries on the walls are thick with dust, and the stonework is crumbling and coated with mold. High above, the vaulted ceiling is decorated with ancient frescoes depicting the sun, the moon, and various deities of the elven pantheon.

Viggrizzor



Creatures: Long ago, before Treerazer settled in, this area was where the Winter Council received guests or held public hearings. Today, the great hall is mostly empty and used as a marshalling yard for the guardians of Thorn's End. The commander of Thorn's End's guards, an honorable elven soldier named Armistril, spends the majority of his time here, retreating to his quarters at area D18 only for a few hours each night after midnight to rest. He even takes his meals here. Armistril wears gleaming armor and wields a cold iron longsword and a heavy shield bearing the image of a wolf's head. A group of four elven guards stands at attention in the room as well, although only Armistril speaks to the PCs if they enter without provoking a fight. Armistril has grown weary of the situation in Thorn's End; his only goal now is to prevent further death among his men, and he has all but given up on serving the Winter Council. Yet as long as the siege persists, he doesn't want to risk flight. He's been trapped here as a result for years, and the arrival of the PCs presents to him hope of an end to the situation. His initial attitude toward the PCs is thus friendly, unless he has cause to believe that they are allied with the demons (in which case it drops to unfriendly) or are here to destroy the Winter Council (in which case it drops only to indifferent).

Armistril's initial reaction to the PCs, whatever his attitude, is to address them in a calm, clear voice: "I do not know if you are friend or foe—liberators sent from Kyonin or scoundrels in league with the demons on our stoop. Speak now, and make plain your intentions here in Thorn's End!"



Armistril doesn't seek the PCs' surrender—only plain discourse. At one time he may have worried that the Winter Council elders might be observing events here, but he knows that they have all retreated into their own fugues upstairs, and has no qualms about speaking plainly with the visitors. Armistril knows that Allevrah left Thorn's End years ago in a rage, but isn't sure why. He's heard rumors that she proposed a hideous plan to use falling stars against the drow, and even that she's defected to work for the drow, but hasn't yet seen proof of these rumors. As long as the PCs aren't too aggressive or insulting, he sighs, then admits that he's worried as well that something has poisoned the minds of the Winter Council, but claims that it's not his place to intervene. He and his men are here only to guard Thorn's End. He encourages the PCs to seek out the four remaining Winter Council elders to speak to them—he cannot leave his post, but he does send two of the guards here with the PCs to act as guides and warn them of the places where dangerous traps or demons have infiltrated the structure. He also gives the PCs the information listed in the "Armistril's Plea" sidebar. He

can also tell the PCs where the four remaining councilors spend most of their time.

ARMISTRIL

CR 10

Male elf fighter 10

LG Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21

(+7 armor, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 79 (10d10+20)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2 (+2 against enchantment)

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee +1 cold iron longsword +16/+11 (1d8+6/19–20)

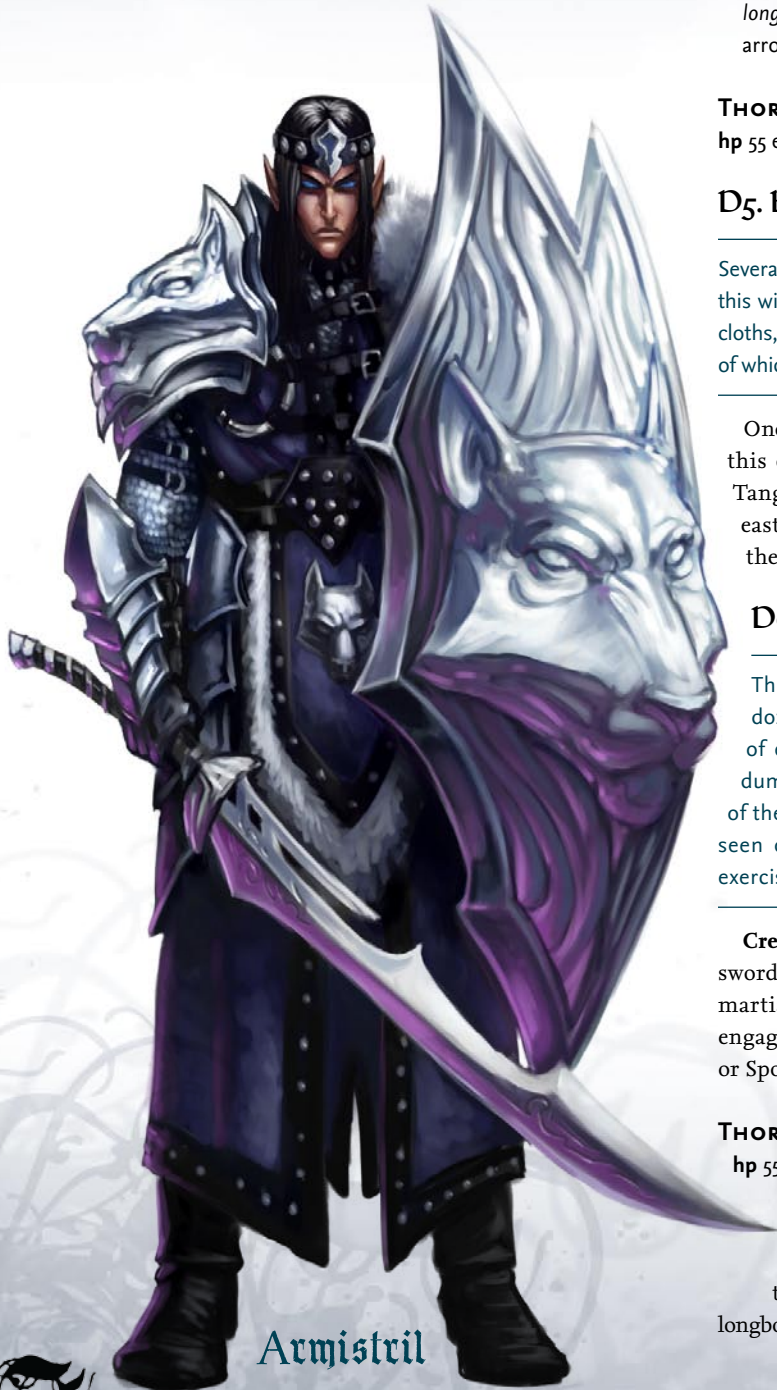
Ranged +1 composite longbow +13/+8 (1d8+4/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat Armistril's goal in a fight is to get his enemy to surrender. He uses Combat Expertise to gain a +5 dodge bonus to his AC (increasing his overall AC to 28) while making

Improved Disarm attempts. Once his opponent's weapon is out of the way, Armistril offers his foe a chance to surrender, and treats them fairly if they accept; if they refuse (or accept, but rejoin the fight later), he drops his Combat Expertise and makes full attacks.

Morale If overwhelmed by mortal foes, Armistril asks for quarter and vows not to attempt to harm or hinder the PCs (though he offers no aid, either). Otherwise, Armistril fights to the death, preferring not to be taken prisoner by those who would use him against his masters.



Armistril

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +13

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Disarm, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword), Whirlwind Attack

Skills Handle Animal +13, Intimidate +13, Sense Motive +5

Languages Common, Elven

Gear +2 breastplate, +2 heavy steel shield, +1 cold iron longsword, +1 composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 cold iron arrows, gauntlets of ogre power

THORN'S END GUARDS (4)

CR 6

hp 55 each (see page 12—Shin'Rakorath soldier)

D5. Banquet Hall

Several graceful yet sturdy mahogany tables cover the length of this wide room. The tables are covered with embroidered linen cloths, and one table is dominated by five magnificent chairs—all of which is finely coated in a layer of dust.

Once used to entertain guests and hold banquets, this chamber has gone mostly unused since the rise of Tanglebriar. The western stairs lead up to the stairs just east of area **D11** above, while the eastern stairs lead up to the northernmost guard post on the second floor.

D6. Drill Room (EL 10)

The walls of this vaulted chamber are lined with half a dozen weapon racks of longswords, bows, and spears, all of exquisite workmanship. Archery targets and practice dummies lean against the southern wall as well. The center of the room is clear. The polished stone floor has obviously seen decades, if not centuries, of sparring, drilling, and exercising.

Creatures: Two off-duty guards are fighting with wooden swords here while two others stand near the door, offering martial advice and comradely encouragement. They are engaged in their activities and suffer a –5 penalty on Listen or Spot checks.

THORN'S END GUARDS (4)

CR 6

hp 55 each (see page 12—Shin'Rakorath soldier)

Treasure: The weapons in here are all of masterwork quality, though not cold iron, like the guards' standard gear. There are 16 longswords, 8 longbows, and 12 spears in the racks.

D7. Kitchen

Although the tables and cupboards of this chamber are obviously those of a kitchen, very little in the way of food preparation utensils or other supplies are in evidence.

The elves have long since exhausted their normal supplies of food and water since the beginning of the siege, and have been subsisting on magically created food and water for some time.

Treasure: In a cupboard on the east wall lie two *wands of create food and water*—one fully charged, and the other down to only 11 charges.

D8. Pantry

A spiral staircase leads up to the north, while several water barrels stand in a nook to the stair's side.

These stairs lead up to area **D10**. Arlindil and Perelir keep the water in the barrels stocked with *create water* spells.

D9. Cells (EL 5)

Each of these cells has no exit onto this floor; they're all accessed via cold iron trap doors in the ceiling 12 feet above. The cells are lit by a single stationary permanent dancing light and from the tiny slots in the trap door that allow light and air in from area **D10** above. Each contains little more than a bed of straw, several low wooden pallets to sleep on, and three large buckets (one for food, one for water, and one for waste) that hang from chains leading up to the trap door.

Creature: Only one of these cells is currently occupied. The southeast chamber contains a despondent and depressed pixie named Estril that was captured by Hialin a few months ago when the pixie managed to sneak into Thorn's End. Estril had originally entered Tanglebriar to look for a lost pixie enclave rumored to be hidden in the corrupted forest, but instead discovered the conclave of elves hiding in the ruins. Intrigued, the curious pixie infiltrated the stronghold, but his curiosity would be his undoing. He followed Hialin into his laboratory to see what the elf was up to when he was spotted—assuming the pixie was here to cause trouble, Hialin swiftly overpowered the fey and had him thrown into this prison, intending to interrogate the pixie and figure out what was his "real" reason for entering Thorn's End. Unfortunately for Estril, Hialin soon forgot about the pixie, and since the other three councilors don't know he's being kept here, the pixie has languished in his cell for months.

Armistril and his men know about the prisoner, of course, and have taken care to feed him regularly, but as the

ARMISTRIL'S PLEA

"I'd been serving here at Thorn's End for years—barely long enough to start feeling that it was my home when it happened. There was an argument in the Council meeting room, and by the time I managed to get in there, the deed had been done. The eldest of the Council was slain in the fight, a brilliant wizard by the name of Auramesties. Another of the Council, General Allevrah, fled after the conflict, but neither I nor my men saw her flee—for all I know, she is now dead as well. The remaining four councilors have retreated into seclusion. Someone must convince the remaining four to convene a meeting—I suspect that only if one could get them all in the same room would there be any chance of learning more from them. I ask only that you moderate your blades and spells, for the concept of the Council is sound. If something of it can be salvaged and saved, it would do the elven nation good. Now go. Gather the Winter Council to the council chamber above and plead your case."

captain of the guard was ordered by Hialin to say nothing of the prisoner to the other councilors, he has remained quiet. If he befriends the PCs, though, he tells them of the prisoner—it takes very little urging on the PCs' behalf to convince him to let Estril out.

If released, Estril is ecstatic and showers the PCs with tiny hugs and kisses. He has nothing but insults for Hialin, and says that the pasty elf's lab up in the tower above was particularly creepy with all of its scary books and funny smells. Estril becomes particularly enamored of the PC with the highest Charisma, and begins following him or her around (invisibly, of course) and uses his magic as best he can to advise and protect that PC until the PC gets fed up with the pixie's nearly constant stream of chattery compliments. Estril lost his bow and arrows (they're in Hialin's laboratory at area **D36**), but the pixie does have the ability to use irresistible dance as a spell-like ability.

ESTRIL

Male Pixie

hp 3 (MM 236)

CR 5

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs free Estril, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 8 creature in combat.

D10. Interrogation Chamber (EL 8)

Iron doors stand on either side of this large, almost empty chamber, and a flight of spiral stairs leads both down and up to the north. Four iron trapdoors are set in the floor, their faces decorated with narrow slots and a tiny drawer-like latch. A single wooden chair sits against a large central pillar.



Estril

This room is used to interrogate prisoners. The four trapdoors in the floor lead down to the prison cells below (area D9); only the southeast door is locked (Open Lock DC 30). The key to the lock hangs on a hook by the stairs.

Creatures: Two guards stand duty in this room—more to watch for intrusions from outside via the two doors than to watch over the single prisoner in the room below.

THORN'S END GUARDS (2) CR 6
hp 55 each (see page 12—Shin'Rakorath soldier)

D11. Guards' Bath

This damp room contains several gleaming marble and polished wood tubs, shelves of towels and soap, and several partitioned alcoves containing chamber pots. A large number of barrels sit against the southern wall, and a large iron cauldron sits over a firepit to the north.

This is where the guards of Thorn's End bathe. The barrels contain water, which is heated in the large cauldron to the desired temperature for bathing.

D12. Guest Room

This well-appointed room appears comfortable, though clearly unoccupied. The air smells slightly musty, though the canopy bed appears comfortable.

The Winter Council has not had guests for quite a while, and so this room has been somewhat neglected.

Treasure: A DC 30 Search check of the bed turns up a long-lost gold ring set with a star sapphire, worth 2,150 gp.

D13. Upper Defense Post (EL 11)

Several curved stone walls provide ample places for cover in this room. Three metal gratings in the floor look out over the great hall over twenty feet below.

Creatures: A group of six guards are stationed here, charged with monitoring the activities of the demons in the courtyard. If the PCs aren't stealthy, the guards give constant reports through the grated murderholes in the floor to Armistril in area D4 below. They don't abandon their post unless ordered by a superior, but if combat breaks out in the room below, they'll provide ranged support via those same murderholes.

THORN'S END GUARDS (6) CR 6
hp 55 each (see page 12—Shin'Rakorath soldier)

D14. Mess Hall

Several wooden tables surrounded by chairs sit in this room, all covered with a thin layer of dust.

Since the siege began, the elves have grown less and less interested in camaraderie during meals and have taken to eating while on guard duty—this room hasn't seen use in years as a result.

D15. Southeast Tower Armory

The walls of this armory are hung with enough swords, spears, bows, and shields to equip a small company of soldiers.

Treasure: The Thorn's End garrison is divided between the two southern towers, each with separate armories. In this room, the armory includes two dozen masterwork cold iron longswords, 20 masterwork cold iron shortspears, 16 masterwork longbows, 1,200 cold iron arrows, 21 masterwork heavy steel shields, and 6 sets of elven chain. Additionally, a suit of +2 *elven chain* hangs on an armor rack on the south wall near the stairs, and a +2 *cold iron longsword* and a +2 *cold iron short sword* sit together on a small rack. There are also two separate quivers, each containing 50 +1 *cold iron arrows*.

D16. Malandil's Quarters (EL 13)

This room is decorated like a hunting lodge, with exotic animal skins in place of tapestries, simple but beautiful wooden

furniture, and a pile of luxuriant furs in place of a bed. Tucked into the southeast corner is a large, iron-bound chest, and on the southwestern wall is a pair of crossed shortspears. An armor rack and its accompanying weapon rack stand empty, while a warm brazier and general cleanliness mark this room as being in use, though there is no one about.

Creature: These are the personal chambers of Malindil, the commander-in-chief of Thorn's End defense and the main point of contact between the Winter Council and the Shin'Rakorath. Malindil was close friends with Allevarez, and feels particularly betrayed that her friend trapped her here when she left, and still can't bring herself to admit that Allevarez actually transformed into a drow, believing that she used an illusion to achieve the effect simply to throw the rest of the Council into chaos to aid her escape. Since the event, she's become lovers with another of the councilors, Arlindil, a move that normally wouldn't be approved by the Council but in these strange times is her only real source of comfort. Malindil can be found here 50% of the time, or in Arlindil's chambers in area D30 otherwise. If she's encountered here, there's a 50% chance that Arlindil is with her.

If the PCs are escorted by guards or Armistril when they arrive, Malindil is shocked by their presence but recovers quickly; her initial attitude in this case is indifferent. If the PCs arrive unescorted, she assumes they're demons in disguise and her initial attitude is hostile—the PCs have one opportunity to sway her before she attacks.

Malindil is a statuesque beauty whose mind teeters precariously on the edge. For hundreds of years she took pride in her rigorous, regimented lifestyle, and found relaxation in the solidity of her surroundings. When her close friend Allevarez betrayed the Winter Council, Malindil took the betrayal as a personal repudiation of their relationship. And when she found comfort in the arms of the druid Arlindil, she began to let her emotions guide her decisions more than ever. Perelir has seen these changes in Malindil's personality and has done everything she can to encourage them—it won't be much longer before Malindil completes her transition from lawful neutral to chaotic neutral and becomes, in Perelir's eyes, a "proper elf." Only the return of the Winter Council as a viable entity could halt her descent into chaos, and with each day that passes, Malindil grows more convinced that her old life as a councilor was a waste, a fear she has yet to voice to anyone else.

MALINDIL

CR 13

Female elf ranger 13

N Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +19, Spot +19

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 22

(+7 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +3 natural)

GUARDROOMS, BARRACKS, AND STORAGE

Three other categories of rooms exist in Thorn's End apart from the numbered encountered areas. These three rooms are indicated on the map of Thorn's End by a G, Q, or S.

G. Guard Post: Two elven guards stand sentinel at each of these guard posts.

Q. Guard Quarters: There's a 30% chance of encountering 1d4 guards at rest in any of these rooms.

S. Storage Room: These rooms are filled with dry goods, blankets, boxes of candles, cords of firewood, bolts of cloth, vials of ink, reams of paper, tools, lumber—anything that might come in useful during a long siege.

hp 114 (13d8+52)

Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7 (+2 against enchantment)

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee +1 *evil outsider bane bastard sword* +13/+8/+3 (1d10+3/17–20) and

+1 *returning short spear* +13/+8/+3 (1d6+2)

Ranged +1 *returning short spear* +17 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (plant +4, evil outsider +4, elf +2)

Spells Prepared (CL 6th)

3rd—*neutralize poison*

2nd—*barkskin*

1st—*longstrider*, *resist energy*

TACTICS

Before Combat As soon as she realizes danger is near, Malindil casts *longstrider* and *barkskin* on herself. She'll cast *resist energy* beforehand as well if she expects to face attacks from a particular type of energy.

During Combat Malindil fights with an almost hypnotic grace, a whirling vortex of blade and spear. She prefers to move in to make full attacks against any enemies when possible.

Morale Malindil has already died three times (and been resurrected three times) since Allevarez's betrayal, but even this hasn't blunted her devotion to Thorn's End. As long as the building still stands, she fights to the death (again) to defend it.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +15

Feats Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword) Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (bastard sword, short spear)

Skills Hide +16, Knowledge (geography) +16, Listen +19, Move Silently +16, Spot +19, Survival +18

Languages Common, Elven

SQ animal companion (hawk named laasos), camouflage, swift tracker, wild empathy +12, woodland stride

Gear +2 elven chain, +1 evil outsider bane bastard sword, +1 returning short spear, ring of protection +2, amulet of health +2

Treasure: Most of Malandil's belongings are of little value to anyone but her, but she keeps a few valuables in the iron chest, including a noble's outfit worth 125 gp,



Malindil

a spyglass, four amethysts worth 100 gp each, a silver drinking horn worth 300 gp, 150 gp in a sturdy leather sack, a set of *horseshoes of speed*, and a *stone of alarm*. The *stone of alarm* is set to sound if anyone opens the chest. The two spears on the wall are both masterwork cold iron short spears.

D17. Malindil's Trophy Room

The walls of this room are decorated with the stuffed and mounted heads of various creatures ranging from elk and bears to exotic creatures like demons and what must be an iron golem's head. One large plaque bears three heads—a lion, a dragon, and a fiendish-looking goat. The focal point of the collection, displayed in the center of the room, is an oversized greatsword driven through a scorched, bloodred, horned skull twice the size of a human head.

Malindil's trophy room contains her collection of mementos from past encounters, although these trophies now remind her of her previous life and fill her with bitterness and anger—she hasn't been in this chamber for years as a result. None of the trophies are particularly valuable, save for the greatsword.

Treasure: The Large +2 *axiomatic greatsword* was the pride and joy of a half-fiend hill giant who served as a commander for one of Treerazer's many armies. Malindil killed the giant over a hundred years ago and kept his sword and skull as a trophy after she disarmed it and used his own sword to strike the killing blow against him.

D18. Armistril's Quarters

This room is sparsely decorated, but obviously lived in. A canopy bed sits in the northeast corner, with a small writing desk wedged between it and the door, and a wooden chest at its foot. In the southwest corner is a small shrine. An armor rack and its accompanying weapon rack stand empty against the western wall; behind them is a rich tapestry depicting an elven knight suffering a variety of indignities while being menaced by a red dragon. The room is very clean and orderly.

This is Armistril's room, and, if he is with the PCs, he informs them so, asking them not to violate his privacy.

In a drawer in the writing desk is Armistril's personal journal, which mainly details (in Elven) his experiences since coming to Thorn's End. If the PCs haven't secured Armistril's cooperation, this journal can certainly suffice to fill them in on the information he would have told them had they made friends with the elf.

Treasure: The small idols on the shrine represent Nethys, Desna, and Calistria, as well as some ancestral spirits from Armistril's family. Each idol is made of gold and is worth 500 gp. In the chest are some personal belongings, including a courtier's outfit worth 30 gp, a silver ring worth 300 gp, and a velvet pouch containing 5 platinum pieces.

D19. Council Drawing Room

This comfortably appointed room holds several chairs and low tables, reading lamps, a wine rack full of bottles and elegant glasses, and a small cabinet for holding other alcoholic spirits. A fire burns merrily in a hearth against the southeast wall.

This room is designed with comfort in mind—a place for the Winter Council to rest while it waits for all of its members to gather before adjourning to the meeting room (area D20). The fire itself is a heat-radiating variant of *continual flame*.

Treasure: The wine rack holds six bottles of an exquisite elven brandy, each worth 750 gp. The four bottles of spirits in the cabinet are not particularly valuable, though they are quite flammable (treat each as a pint of oil).

D20. Council Meeting Room (EL 13)

This spacious chamber is the very picture of austerity. Candles burn throughout the room, illuminating tapestries depicting elven life in beautiful detail. A long, wide table stretches twenty feet through the center of the room, surrounded by exquisitely carved, high-backed chairs, and set with several silver ewers and silver-filigreed goblets. To the southeast, six tall paintings depicting full-size renditions of elves hang on the wall—a beautiful woman in a gown of stars with long red hair, a dark-haired man in a long fur cloak with green facial tattoos, a pale-skinned man with black hair wearing dark clothes and a spiked glove, a statuesque beauty in golden armor wielding a spear and a sword, a tall man with silver hair and long green robes holding a bejeweled staff, and a narrow-eyed woman dressed in gold and green armor missing the top half of her left ear. This last portrait has been slashed multiple times with a blade. To the northwest, the walls are bare save for what appears to be an iron spike with a pentagram carved into its head—the spike has been driven into the wall, and shimmers with a pale golden radiance.

This is where the Winter Council meets to discuss important matters—it is in here the councilors gather should the PCs convince them to meet. The portraits on the walls are of the most recent six Winter Councilors. Plaques on the portraits' bases read, from right to left, "Perelir," "Arindil," "Hialin," "Malindil," "Auramesties,"

and "Allevrah." The damage to Allevrah's painting was inflicted by Malindil, who stopped just short of burning the portrait.

Creatures: A ghaele, conjured via planar ally by Perelir, stands guard over this room. The ghaele does so in globe form, hovering invisibly near the ceiling above the *Maleficus Spike*. She does not move to attack unless attacked herself or unless anyone attempts to meddle with the *Maleficus Spike*, at which point she creates a wall of force to seal off the spike from as many foes as possible, then uses all of her powers to defend the spike from anyone still able to meddle with it. Perelir maintains a *status* spell on the ghaele at all times, so as soon as the outsider takes damage or otherwise suffers harm, the elven cleric knows and immediately comes to investigate, sending any guards she encounters along the way to gather the other councilors.

GHAELE

hp 65 (MM 94)

CR 13

Treasure: The five silver ewers are each worth 300 gp, while the 10 silver-filigreed goblets are each worth 75 gp. Seven of the eight tapestries are worth 750 gp—the eighth, depicting the return of the elves from Sovyrian, is worth 1,250 gp. The portraits themselves are 7 feet tall and 3 feet wide, weighing 100 pounds each. With the exception of Allevrah's, which is damaged beyond repair, the portraits are worth 1,500 gp apiece.

The spike on the wall is, of course, the *Maleficus Spike*. As long as it remains embedded in the wall, the Thorn's End wards persist and keep the demons at bay. The spike itself cannot be damaged, but if it is pulled out of the wall, the wards vanish. It's a DC 40 Strength check to yank the spike free. The wall surrounding the spike can be battered apart with 300 points of damage (hardness 16, repairs damage at 5 hp/round), after which the spike can be pulled free easily. Other spells, like *stone shape* or *stone to flesh*, weaken the wall enough that extracting the spike is a simple task as well. Once the spike is extracted, proceed with Concluding the Adventure.

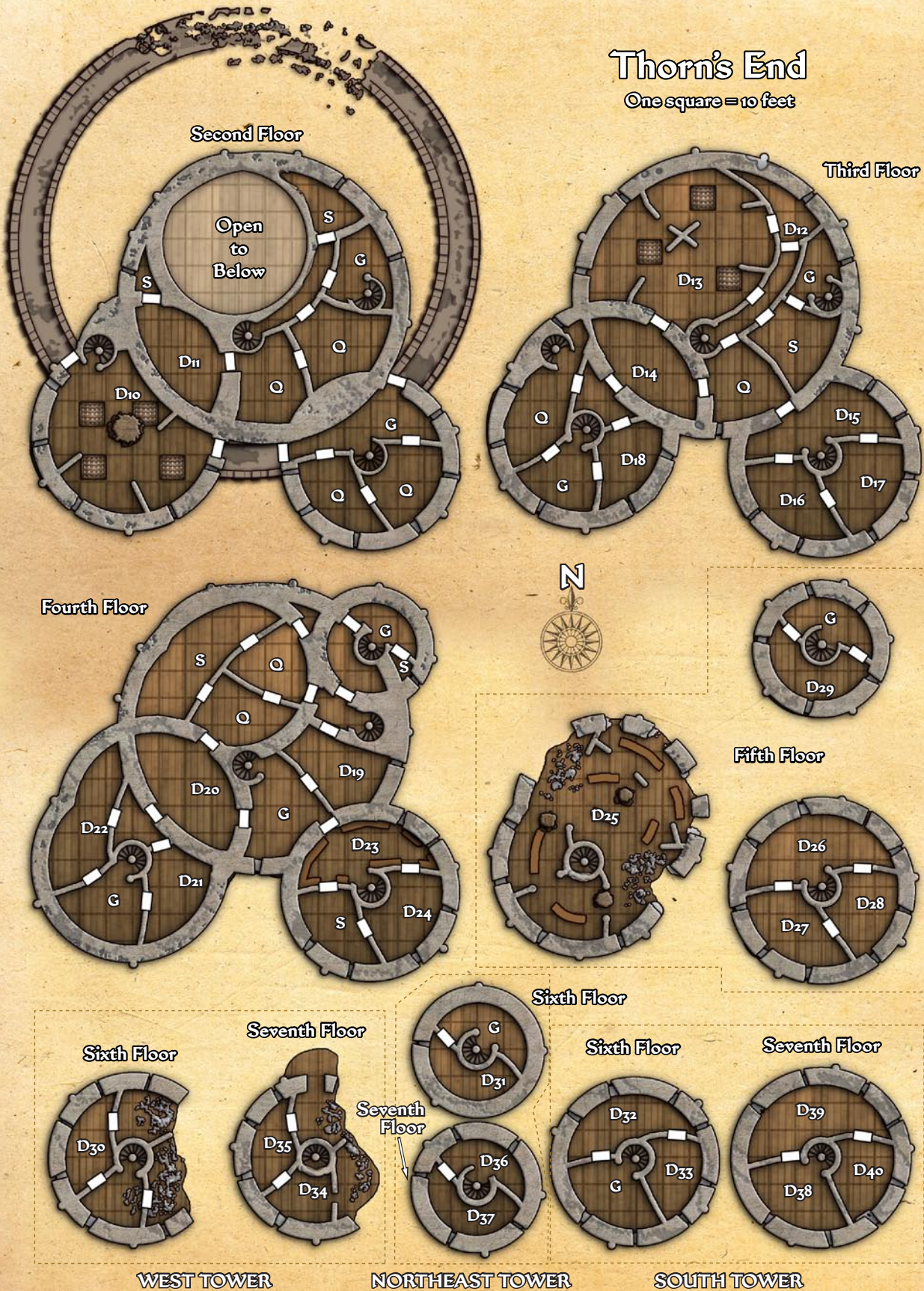
D21. Abandoned Quarters

Clearly a bedroom until relatively recently, this room has only a light coating of dust and a few spiderwebs in the corners. The furniture has all been covered, and there are no signs of personal belongings.

Before Allevrah betrayed the council and became a drow, this was her room. All of her personal items were placed in storage in the lesser archives (area D39) by Malindil, who at the time still harbored hope that

Thorn's End

One square = 10 feet



Allevrah would return for atonement. Nothing of interest remains in this room.

D22. West Tower Armory

The walls of this armory are hung with enough swords, spears, bows, and shields to equip a small company of soldiers. A gleaming breastplate hangs on an armor rack amid the various suits of chainmail.

Treasure: The west tower armory includes 17 masterwork cold iron longswords, 24 masterwork cold iron shortspears, 10 masterwork shortbows, 1,500 cold iron arrows, 16 masterwork heavy steel shields, and four sets of elven chainmail. Additionally, a +3 *mithral breastplate* rests on an armor rack, and a +2 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) hangs near the door.

D23. Council Map Room

The walls of this room are lined with high shelves, all of which are packed with what appear to be oversized scrolls. A large central table is inlaid with an elaborate cartographic woodcut of the Inner Sea region of the world.

The Winter Council has collected hundreds of maps over the years. In addition to being a comprehensive map of the depicted region, the central table is also magical: touching any given spot on the table map causes a map corresponding to that area to slide out of its spot in the shelves and to float over to the table for perusal. The maps themselves are of varying quality, and a few are woefully out of date (the maps of Cheliah, for example, still list Westcrown as the capital).

Treasure: While the table is magical (providing a number of *locate object* spells keyed to the maps on the shelves) it weighs almost 2,000 pounds, and is useless without the maps in the map room (or new maps, which can be keyed to the table by touching a point on the table and a map at the same time). However, the table and all of the keyed maps are worth 18,000 gp if the entire collection is sold as one.

D24. Council Baths

This bathing room is lavishly appointed with what appear to be two solid silver tubs, silver ewers and washbasins, and even a full-length mirror with a mahogany frame. Fresh towels sit on a small table in the corner.

The members of the Winter Council bathe separately from the guards, and in a great deal more luxury.

Treasure: The two tubs are worth 3,500 gp each, but weigh roughly 900 pounds apiece. The four silver ewers

and the two washbasins are worth 80 gp each, and the mirror is an antique worth 1,450 gp.

D25. Rookery (EL 13)

Although the stairwell has a landing here, the archway that once provided access to this area has been sealed with a *wall of stone*.

This room might originally have been some sort of library—judging from the numerous bookshelves—but now it is in ruins. Sections of the wall to the northwest and southeast have crumbled away, and a humid wind carries through the room with the stink of the surrounding tangles and the din of demons in the courtyard below.

Once the pride and joy of the druid Arlindil, this abandoned and destroyed rookery has been lost to Thorn's End. When Allevrah deactivated the *Maleficus Spike* to cover her escape, it was against this central tower that a large portion of the demon host attacked, focusing on the now-ruined balcony areas and battering down walls before the Winter Council managed to reactivate the wards once the ruined section here was quarantined with a *wall of stone* over the stairwell. Once the wards were reactivated, the demons quickly learned that even within this partially ruined area they were affected by the wards, and thus they retreated—but their agents lurk in this ruined area still.

The *Maleficus Spike* works well to ward off demons and other evil creatures, but only to portions of Thorn's End that remain enclosed by stone and structurally sound. This ruined rookery (and the ruined seventh floor above) fell out of the artifact's zone of control when the Winter Council reactivated it, and ever since the nalfeshnee Viggrizzur has kept a portion of his host positioned at these two locations.

Creatures: Here in the rookery, one of Viggrizzur's favorite minions lurks amid the ruins—a hulking glabrezu named Mokravud. Selected for his patience (a relatively rare trait among Treerazer's demonic host), Mokravud spends his time slowly dissecting and then tasting various animals the vlocks from the courtyard below catch and offer to him. The demon also periodically experiments with Thorn's End's ability to repair damage to itself, amused and intrigued by the fact that the tower can't repair damage done during the initial siege, but quickly fixes any new damage the demon inflicts to the remaining ruins.

Once Mokravud notices non-demons, he quickly rises and greets them in a disturbingly welcoming and pleasant voice. He holds forward a large bag in one of his pincers, shaking it to show that it is filled with what sounds like coins and then says, "These gold coins can be yours,

mortals, if only you'll let me into this tower. I can make this easy for you. Simply wish for the tower wards to be lifted, and this gold is yours." If the PCs comply, the glabrezu can use his *wish* granting power to disable the *Maleficus Spike*. He drops the coins, roars with triumph, and then both he and the other demons below begin to teleport into the tower to assault the elves within. See *Concluding the Adventure* for further details on the breaking of the siege. If the PCs refuse Mokravud's offer, he snarls in anger and attacks. If a battle here lasts for longer than 4 rounds, the fight attracts the attention of the demons in the courtyard below, and they begin teleporting up to this room in groups of 1d4 per round to join the mayhem.

MOKRAVUD

CR 13

Glabrezu demon

hp 174 (MM 43)

Treasure: Just in case the PCs demand to see the gold before they agree, the sack Mokravud carries is the real deal—inside are 5,000 gp.

D26. Chapel

This small but exquisitely furnished chapel contains several carved wooden benches lining the northern wall, facing a small altar of polished white wood in the center of the room. A glimmering gold and onyx statuette of a beautiful elven woman stands on the west side of the altar atop a short silver stand. To the east, an empty silver stand sits—the statue it may have once supported is nowhere to be seen.

This is a temple to Calistria tended by Perelir. She holds twice-daily services here—at sunrise and then again at sunset, but her sermons are only rarely attended. Even when the Winter Council was at its height, the other councilors found Perelir's sermons to be far too emotional, flighty, and petty for their sensibilities. The inclusion of a shrine to the elven goddess of trickery and lust had been a relatively contested choice from the beginning, since much of what the Winter Council espoused was moderation and restraint. Yet the Winter Council also knew that Calistria was a jealous deity, and its members didn't want to chance her wrath by turning their back on her completely. Perelir and the line of priests before her knew this, and despite their sermons have traditionally had very few to preach to here at Thorn's End.

Treasure: The statuette of Calistria is a fabulous work of art worth 4,500 gp.

D27. Acolytes' Chamber

Numerous throw-rugs and cushions and four canopied beds occupy this otherwise spacious room. Each is graced with

black and yellow sheets and swathed in gauzy curtains. A large freestanding cupboard stands against the western wall.

At one point, four acolytes shared religious duties with Perelir, but all four perished long ago during the initial assault on the tower by the demons.

Treasure: This room is also a storage area for religious supplies. Within the cupboard are 20 pounds of incense worth 40 gp per pound, along with two healing kits and six bottles of blessed wine worth 200 gp apiece. Also within is a beautiful statuette of Nethys made of ivory and onyx—yet it has been broken at the waist into two pieces. This statue broke and tumbled from the altar in area D26 when Allevrah, formerly a priestess of Nethys, betrayed the Winter Council and embraced the demon lord Abraxas as her new god. No amount of magic or repair work can fix the statue as long as Allevrah still lives and worships Abaraxas—if the PCs bring the broken statuette with them into the Land of Black Blood in the next adventure, though, it could give them a chance to distract Allevrah long enough to turn the tide of the final battle in their favor simply by causing her to hesitate before attacking (see *Pathfinder* #18 for more details).

D28. Perelir's Chamber (EL 13)

This bedroom is decorated with a black-and-yellow motif, and the repetition of wasp imagery in paintings on the wall, statuettes on desks and shelves, and even in the carvings along chair backs and headboards is impossible to ignore. Thick fur rugs line the floor along with numerous large cushions. A canopy bed sits in the middle of the southeast wall.

Creature: This is the bedchamber of Perelir, the only remaining priest at Thorn's End. One of the primary item crafters for the Winter Council, Perelir spent long hours trying to craft lasting relationships (both sexual and otherwise) with other members of the organization but as often as not found the elves of the Winter Council and their guards to be unusually stoic and, in Perelir's words, "Afraid to feel good about themselves." The only true friendship she managed to make with the other elves was with fellow priestess Allevrah, and even then their conversations inevitably spiraled into frustrating arguments over the nature of devotion, and whether one could truly serve the spiritual needs of faith and still serve the physical needs of one's self. Perelir's reaction to Allevrah's betrayal and transformation into a drow is much less self-delusional than Malindil's—she believes that Allevrah's denial of the elven need to experience pleasure and enjoy beauty created a sickness in her, one that caused her faith in Nethys to erode. Perelir is sorry that Allevrah's new faith seems to have taken her into the arms of the demonic, but takes some small consolation in

the knowledge that, as a drow, at least her friend is now free to allow herself pleasure now and then.

Perelir is a beauty, with flowing red hair, deep green eyes, and a preference to wear her glamered magic armor in a diaphanous robe that seems to be made partially of stars and shadows. Since Allevrah's betrayal and the demon siege, Perelir has kept herself busy crafting wands of *create food and water*, tending to disease and wounds among the elves of Thorn's End, and periodically sneaking out to do what she can to organize guerilla-style attacks on the demons from outside Thorn's End. These strikes are almost universally handled via planar allies, insect swarms, and summoned monsters—Perelir is careful not to risk her life in open combat, but she believes that these periodic attacks on the demons from outside, while not really useful at paring down their numbers or dedication to the siege, keep them from accumulating to numbers that would simply finally overwhelm the tower's defenses.

Of the four councilors, Perelir is the easiest to convince to aid the PCs; she already thinks that the Winter Council itself may have outlived its usefulness and would like to see the society disbanded, but as of yet hasn't had the courage to push these views to the others. With the PCs' presence and support, she just might. As long as the PCs don't insult or attack her, they need make no Diplomacy check to secure her aid.

PERELIR

CR 13

Female elf cleric 13 (Calistria)

CN Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Listen +8, Spot +8

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 24

(+8 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 88 (13d8+26)

Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +14 (+2 against enchantment)

Immune sleep; SR 25

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee +3 spell storing flail +13/+8 (1d8+4)

Special Attacks turn undead 5/day (+4, 2d6+15)

Spells Prepared (CL 13th; +11 ranged touch)

7th—*destruction* (DC 23), *insanity*^D (DC 24)

6th—*antilife shell*, *blade barrier* (DC 22), *heal*, *mislead*

5th—*charm monster*^D (DC 22), *dispel evil*, *flame strike* (DC 21), *greater command* (DC 22), *spell resistance*

4th—*air walk*, *confusion*^D (DC 21), *dismissal*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon*, *sending*

3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *magic vestment* (2), *searing light*, *suggestion*^D (DC 20)

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *hold person* (DC 19), *invisibility*^D, *spiritual weapon*, *status* (2)

1st—*command* (DC 18), *charm person*^D (DC 18), *magic*

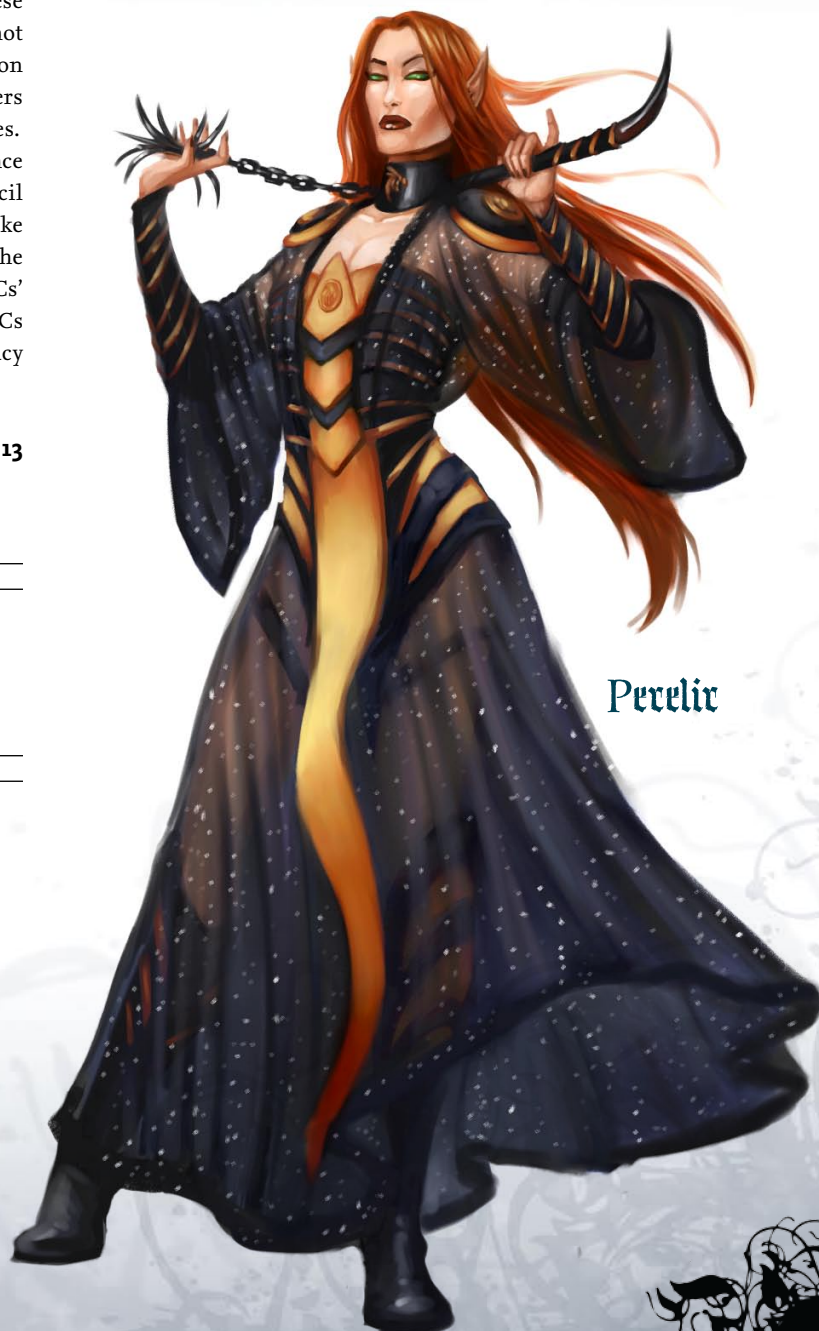
stone, obscuring mist, protection from evil, remove fear, sanctuary (DC 17)

o—*create water* (2), *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *purify food and drink*

D domain spell; Domains Charm, Trickery

TACTICS

Before Combat Perelir casts *magic vestment* on her armor and shield and *greater magic weapon* on her flail every morning. Before any major event, she also casts *air walk* and *freedom of movement*. She waits to cast *bull's strength*, *bear's endurance*, and *spell resistance* until she's relatively certain that combat will soon occur—she certainly casts these spells before she enters the council meeting room, since



Perelir

she suspects the meeting won't last long before things turn sour. She also casts *status* twice a day on the ghaele that stands guard over the *Maleficus Spike* in area **D20**.

During Combat Perelir never initiates an attack, preferring to give potential enemies the opportunity to reach a peaceful accord with her first. Once battle begins, though, she fights with a furious wrath, opening with her spells against ranged targets and forcing her enemy to come to her before she engages in melee.

Morale Perelir's primary devotion is to her faith, and as long as the shrine to Calistria still stands at Thorn's End, she'll fight to the death to protect it.

Base Stats hp 62; **Fort** +8; **Melee** +3 *spell storing flail* +11/+6 (1d8+2); **Str** 8, **Con** 10; **Skills** Concentration +16

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +9; **Gp** +8

Feats Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Martial Weapon Proficiency (flail), Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Concentration +18, Bluff +10, Knowledge (religion) +8

Languages Common, Elven

SQ spontaneous casting (cure spells)

Combat Gear *scroll of break enchantment, scroll of commune, scroll of restoration, scroll of remove curse, scroll of remove disease, scroll of remove paralysis, scroll of teleport, wand of cure serious wounds* (33 charges), *wand of lesser restoration* (17 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *glamered elven chain*, buckler, +1 *spell storing flail* (contains *hold person*), *periapt of Wisdom* +4, *ring of protection* +2, augury beads and gems worth 400 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Charm Domain Once per day, Perelir can boost her Charisma by 4 for 1 minute as a free action.

D29. Treasury

Both doors leading into this area are sealed with arcane locks (both at CL 15th).

This room is a riot of gold. Chests and coffers spill over with coins. Bejeweled platters, goblets, and bowls lie in untidy piles. A host of rings, combs, mirrors, and other baubles lie loosely wrapped in linen cloths. Small idols from long-forgotten religions prop up beautifully crafted, silver-bladed swords with golden hilts.

Although the arrow slits in this room seem open, they are in fact sealed with permanent *walls of force*, letting in sunlight during the day but nothing else.

Treasure: The contents of this room consists of 16,311 sp, 14,572 gp, and 932 pp. In addition, the treasury contains 62 gold platters worth 100 gp each, 112 gem-encrusted goblets worth 50 gp each, and 44 jade bowls worth 80 gp each. Each of the 106 baubles (rings, combs,

and other pieces of jewelry) are worth an average of 100 gp apiece, and the 12 silvered masterwork swords are each worth 390 gp.

D30. Arlindil's Retreat (EL 14)

This room seems to be someone's bedchamber, although the furniture has a somewhat haphazard feel to it. The "bed" is little more than a mound of furs, and there are no chairs or tables or other concessions toward civilization present—just a rickety stand for a suit of armor and a few flat rocks that might make impromptu seats.

Creature: The druid Arlindil dwells here now, after having lost his own quarters during the initial siege against Thorn's End. Of the four elves of the Winter Council, Arlindil has been the most affected emotionally—already a morose individual (as would be any druid who lived at the heart of a corrupted forest), Arlindil sees the recent siege as final proof that Tanglebriar is a lost cause, and so might be the Winter Council. His beloved animal companion, an enormous raven named Meraka, was slain in that initial attack, and he simply never bothered to bond with another. His faith in nature is teetering, and only the companionship of an almost equally distraught Malindil has kept his already dangerous thoughts from straying too far into a complete loss of faith or even suicide.

Arlindil rarely leaves this room anymore, and spends much of his time alone meditating. When the PCs arrive, there's a 50% chance Malindil is here trying to cheer the druid up (this chance increases to 100% if the PCs already visited area **D16** and Malindil wasn't there). Insults or aggression quickly rile Arlindil to the point where he attacks, but if the PCs simply speak to him, they find most of his responses to be monosyllabic grunts. Mentioning Allevrah, the demons outside, or the drow threat gets his attention, and a cold hatred fills his eyes. He isn't that resistant to the idea of an emergency meeting of the Council, but before he'll agree to one, he asks the PCs to prove to him that they're worth the trouble—he asks them to travel to the floor above this one and to kill the vrock that roost there, then bring him proof of the deed. Arlindil has killed more vrock above than he cares to count in numerous attempts to reclaim his old quarters, but has grown tired of the task—if the PCs can do this for him, he'll know that they're capable heroes worth listening to.

ARLINDIL

Male elf druid 14

LN Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +23, Spot +23

CR 14

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20
(+5 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 80 (14d8+14)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities resist nature's lure; **Immune** poison, sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee *staff of the woodlands* +12/+7 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks a thousand faces, wild shape 5/day (Large, Tiny, plant)

Spells Prepared (CL 14th; +12 ranged touch)

7th—*fire storm* (DC 21), *heal*

6th—*greater dispel magic*, *fire seeds* (DC 20), *wall of stone*

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 19), *cure critical wounds*, *stoneskin*

4th—*air walk*, *antiplant shell*, *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *freedom of movement*

3rd—*cure moderate wounds*, *neutralize poison* (DC 17), *quench* (DC 17), *sleet storm*, *spike growth* (DC 17)

2nd—*barkskin*, *flame blade*, *fog cloud*, *resist energy* (2), *lesser restoration*

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *entangle* (DC 15), *goodberry*, *longstrider*, *produce flame*

0—*create water* (2), *cure minor wounds*, *guidance*, *light*, *purify food and drink*

TACTICS

Before Combat Before a battle (or the council meeting), Arlindil casts *longstrider*, *barkskin*, *freedom of movement*, *resist energy* (fire), *air walk*, and *stoneskin* on himself.

During Combat Once his battle blood is up, Arlindil's depression and morose attitude vanish. He prefers to fight while wildshaped, opting for the form of a raven against mobile foes that are more susceptible to magic, or the form of a shambling mound against foes in melee.

Morale Arlindil fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +10

Feats Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Staff, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Natural Spell

Skills Concentration +18, Handle Animal +16, Knowledge (nature) +20, Listen +23, Spot +23

Languages Common, Druidic, Elven, Sylvan

SQ animal companion (none currently), nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy +15, woodland stride

Combat Gear *staff of the woodlands* (41 charges), *lesser extend metamagic rod*; **Other Gear** +3 leather armor, 500 gp in diamond dust

D31. Magic Vault

Like the room below, the door leading into this area is held fast via *arcane lock* (CL 15th).

This room is stacked with locked boxes of various sizes: about a dozen, at a rough count. Each of the boxes is chained to a separate iron ring set in the wall.

As in area D29, the arrow slits in the wall here are sealed by permanent *walls of force*.

Treasure: The majority of the contents of the boxes and containers here hold raw magical components used for crafting magic items—there's 22,000 gp of these various components in all. In addition, several items are stored here, including a +3 *light wooden improved electricity resistance shield*; a *rod of metal and mineral detection*; a *bottle of air*; a

Arlindil

pearl of power (2nd level); an *amulet of mighty fists* +1; a *dusty rose prism ioun stone*; a vial containing 6 doses of *dust of illusion*; a *wind fan*; and a partially complete set of *ivory goat figurines of wondrous power* (missing the *goat of terror*).

D32. Scrying Room

The walls of this room hang with dark tapestries that glitter as if tiny bits of gemstone were embedded in the fabric, creating an effect not unlike that of a field of stars. Against the northern wall stands a large mirror, nearly fifteen feet wide and about ten feet tall, its frame a delicate wooden affair carved to resemble twisting vines.

Treasure: The mirror on this wall is a highly polished silver mirror worth 4,000 gp, although transporting such a large and fragile treasure could be a problem. The Winter Council wizards use this mirror as a focus for *scrying* spells.

D33. Auramesties' Room

This bedchamber looks austere and well-organized, including a massive canopied bed with thick velvet curtains, a large writing desk and padded chair, and several partially finished crystal sculptures of trees, animals, and elven buildings. Everything in the room is covered with a layer of dust, and the air smells musty and stale.

This empty bedroom was once used by the wizard Auramesties, once the most powerful of the Winter Council, and now several years dead. He succumbed to a *destruction* spell cast by Allevrah, an act that sealed her fate and resulted in her transformation into a drow. All items of value once kept here have been relocated to the vaults and treasuries—the elves haven't entered this room in years.

D34. Demonic Roost (EL 13)

What once seems to have been several different rooms is now nothing but a single ruin, left exposed to the elements. A partially collapsed balcony hangs precariously to the north, and the entire place is spattered with blood and bits of rotting flesh and splintered bones. Two doors, their faces filthy but in remarkably good repair, stand in the still-intact western walls.

Creatures: As with area D25 below, this floor of the central tower bore the brunt of the initial demonic assault. Once the home of the druid Arlindil and his animal companion, most of this entire floor has fallen into ruin. The fragments of flesh and bone testify to the habits of the four vrock that have taken up residence here. These vrock are loathe to use their stunning screech or dance of ruin against foes, since

that means they'd have to share the fun of mutilating foes with other demons from below, but as soon as at least two of the vrock are defeated, the remaining two use their screech on their next action. One round later, additional demons from area D2 below begin appearing here to investigate, teleporting in at the rate of 1d4 per round.

VROCKS (4)

hp 115 each (MM 48)

CR 9

D35. Arlindil's Old Room

This room looks to have once been a bedroom, but it's been completely destroyed. A huge amount of bones lie heaped along the far walls of the room, and spatters of long dried gore and bits of leathery flesh cling to the walls.

Once Arlindil's room, the vrock nearby did their best to trash the room but could only stand a few precious moments within before the *Maleficus Spike* ward drove them out. They periodically entertain themselves by hurling bodies (particularly fiendish satyrs) into the room, trying to stun them long enough to watch the ward finish the job; the age of the bones and fragments in here testify to the fact that the vrock haven't played this game for a while.

D36. Hialin's Laboratory

Clearly an arcane workshop, this room is filled with materials used for testing the properties of magic items and potions, and the center of the room is dominated by a long table topped by a magnificent alchemist's laboratory.

Hialin uses this room as his laboratory and workshop for creating magic items—originally, he allowed the other councilors access to this room as well, but since the siege he's forbidden anyone else from entering this floor. There's a 20% chance he's here when the PCs arrive, in which case consult area D37 for his reaction and stats.

Treasure: There are a number of partially completed magic items and potions lying about this lab, including a pair of *gloves of Dexterity* +4 that only require another 2 days of work to be completed. Four recently finished *potions of haste* sit in a rack next to a bubbling cauldron of foul smelling, used-up reagents. Sitting almost forgotten on a shelf above the central workbench is a tiny bow and a quiver of arrows—these belong to the pixie Estril (and include a dozen cold iron arrows, 6 *memory loss* arrows, and 3 *sleep* arrows). The real treasure here is the alchemist lab itself—it provides a +8 circumstance bonus on Craft (alchemy) checks and is worth 6,400 gp (but weighs 500 pounds in all).

D37. Hialin's Quarters (EL 15)

This bedchamber is cluttered and disorganized, with piles of clothing lying on the floor and on the canopy bed, and books, scrolls, half-empty wine bottles, and half-eaten food covering every horizontal surface. The walls are covered with shelves of jars, vials, and bottles full of the kinds of macabre items arcane spellcasters tend to collect. Narrow paths in the debris lead from the door to the bed and to a chamberpot nearby.

Creature: Before the betrayal, Hialin was poised to inherit the mantle of high speaker for the Winter Council once the then-current high speaker, Auramesties, stepped down. Allevrah changed all that when she murdered him and betrayed Thorn's End to the demons. The Winter Council had spent too much energy on secrets and inward growth to survive such a catastrophic betrayal from within, and now Hialin feels helpless while he watches the society he's belonged to for hundreds of years—and hoped to one day use to lead the elven nations into a new time of prosperity—crumble around him. He has not taken the development well.

Hialin has not been resting well since Allevrah betrayed the Winter Council, and has grown increasingly careless, sloppy, and self-centered. He barely bothers to clean up after himself and has actively begun to hate the other Winter Council elves. If they had shared Hialin's sense of devotion to the Winter Council, after all, this tragedy would never have occurred. And with his hatred of the Winter Council, Hialin's inborn hatred of the elven nation, and particularly of Queen Telandia and her "flighty, childish ways," have grown as well. Worst of all, his once-indomitable faith in the order of things is eroding, and as he feels his mind slipping away from order and into chaos, his sanity is slipping as well. He has become obsessed with the nagging dread that Allevrah's transformation into a drow was, in fact, the ultimate evolution of all elves and the unstoppable fate for his people if they can't pull themselves out of their capricious and overly emotional ways. That he feels the same unbridled emotions growing so strong in his own soul is perhaps the most maddening part of it all.

Recently, Hialin's growing madness has taken a decidedly dangerous turn. He now believes that it's only a matter of time before the wards of Thorn's End fail and the demons get in. The prospect of others taking over the traditional fortress of the Winter Council sickens him, but not quite as much as the idea of the "betrayers," as he has come to think of the other councilors, who have done little in his mind to stem the erosion of their society. Best, Hialin has come to feel, if Thorn's End were allowed to crumble to the dust, an unavoidable eventuality that to Hialin not only symbolizes Treerazer's triumph over the elven people, but the loss of the final true link to the elves'

traditional past. With the loss of Thorn's End, the elves are lost as well—and in such a case, a catastrophic erasing of life is the only way Hialin can conceive of to preserve the possibility of a new society, one that can rise from the ashes of the old world and be shaped from the start by his wisdom and will.

In this way, Hialin has come to agree with Allevrah's plan to smite Golarion with a falling star, but his desire isn't to do so to wipe out a single race. He wants to wipe out all of them. Or at least, the majority. He's been building a short list of his contacts and allies among Kyonin's elite at the same time he's been studying the ancient texts Allevrah left behind, hoping to predict when and where the end will strike, and if there's a method by which he can engineer an increase to the devastation. Just before the end, he and his allies will retreat again to Sovyrian, build a new empire in that distant land, and then they shall return to rebuild. The eleven nation's error last time, Hialin believes, was waiting too long to return. The time to return is a few decades after the end, when there are no societies to fight against, when the world is wiped clean and in need of fresh hands to guide its new growth.

The other councilors have no idea that Hialin has slipped so far into madness—they know only that he has retreated to his quarters and cut ties with the rest of them, even more so than they have themselves. They assume his worries and guilt are the same as theirs, not that he's following much the same path that Allevrah did herself.

Hialin knows that his enemies are everywhere, and when he first meets the PCs he does his best to maintain his composure. A DC 20 Sense Motive check is enough to get a hint of a powerful rage hiding behind his flashing eyes and clipped voice. He acts impatient and insulted if the PCs confront him, claiming that he's working on a solution for the siege facing Thorn's End while the other councilors wile away their hours wallowing in self-doubt and maudlin sighs. No amount of threat or cajoling can convince him to speak further or to attend an emergency meeting of the Winter Council aside from the knowledge that the other three councilors are going to be meeting. Once he sees proof that Arlindil, Malindil, and Perelir are convening a council meeting, he'll have no choice but to attend as well. This proof can be presented to him with a DC 50 Diplomacy check (this is automatically successful if the PCs bring proof, such as the spoken testimony of any of the other elves in Thorn's End) or a successful Bluff check—but if he arrives in the council chamber and finds it deserted, he'll seek out and attack the PCs.

HIALIN

Male gray elf wizard 15

NE Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +3

CR 15

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 20

(+5 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 54 (15d4+15)

Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +13 (+2 against enchantment)

DR 10/adamantine; Immune mind-affecting effects, sleep; SR 27

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk cold iron spiked gauntlet +7/+2 (1d4–1)

Spells Prepared (CL 15th, +10 ranged touch)

8th—*mind blank*

7th—*quicken haste*, *prismatic spray*

6th—*disintegrate*, *greater dispel magic*, *quicken mirror image*
5th—*dismissal*, *feeblemind* (DC 21), *spell resistance*, *wall of force*

4th—*greater invisibility*, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*, *stone shape*

3rd—*fireball* (DC 19), *fly*, *stinking cloud* (DC 20)

2nd—*false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 19), *resist energy*, see *invisibility*, *web* (DC 19)

1st—*alarm*, *grease* (DC 18), *magic missile* (2), *protection from chaos*

0—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat Every morning, Hialin expends 24 levels of spell slots to fuel the *Maleficus Spike*; he has fewer spells prepared each day as a result. He also casts *false life* and *mind blank* on himself and a mental *alarm* on the western entrance to area D39. Before entering combat or the council meeting, he also casts *stoneskin* and *spell resistance* on himself.

During Combat Once the fighting starts, Hialin decides to activate his final solution. He quickly moves to the *Maleficus Spike* in area D20 and casts *stone shape* on the surrounding wall, allowing him to pull the spike out with ease. Once this occurs, the siege breaks (see Concluding the Adventure). In battle, Hialin takes pains to keep his distance from the enemy, casting *fly* and *quicken haste* on the first round and then using his offensive spells against foes at range.

Morale Hialin tries to reach the *Maleficus Spike* if he can as soon as combat begins; once he's triggered it and suffered his dark fate, his madness takes over completely and he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 22, Wis 13, Cha 8

Base Atk +7; Grp +6

Feats Alertness (as long as Eltiril is in arm's reach), Brew Potion, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Forge Ring, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (conjuration), Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration), Weapon Finesse

Skills Concentration +18, Craft (alchemy) +14, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +24, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +24, Spellcraft +26

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Undercommon

SQ summon familiar (rat named Eltiril)

Combat Gear *wand of displacement* (33 charges), *wand of fly* (19 charges), *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 10th, 45 charges); **Other Gear** *bracers of armor* +5, masterwork cold iron spiked gauntlet, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of intellect* +2, *ring of protection* +3, *ring of force*

shield, 750 gp of diamond dust, spellbooks (contains

all prepared spells, plus an additional 2d6 spells of each level [save 9th] of your choice)



Hialin

D38. Archive Guardian (EL 13)

Creature: This undecorated room looks similar to the numerous other guard rooms found in Thorn's End, yet elves do not man this post. Instead, a highly polished iron golem built to resemble a 13-foot-tall elf stands sentinel here. Built by a long-dead member of the Council, the creature recognizes only the four surviving members of the Winter Council as allies, and immediately assumes a defensive posture if anyone else enters the room. If the intruder fails to leave immediately (or attempts any other action other than leaving the room via the stairs), the golem immediately attacks.

IRON GOLEM

hp 129 (MM 136)

CR 13

D39. Lesser Archives

The doors leading into this area are held fast via *arcane lock* (CL 15th).

This wide chamber is packed with a variety of items, from tightly bound bundles of scrolls and moldy books to dusty bits of equipment and assorted statuary.

As in area **D29**, the arrow slits in the wall here are sealed by permanent *walls of force*.

The Winter Council stores all of their old records in these archives. Most of it is worthless to anyone but a historian—minutes of meetings, records of crop yields, tallies of merchandise that was bought and sold hundreds of years ago—but to a dedicated researcher, countless examples of minor ways in which the Winter Council has manipulated Kyonin's growth, with some documents dating back to well before Earthfall on magically preserved scrolls, can be found here—although nothing with direct relation to the current peril facing Kyonin can be found.

D40. Greater Archives

The doors leading into this area are held fast via *arcane lock* (CL 15th).

The walls of this archive bear dozens of shelves, each heavy with stacks of scrolls, books, and even stone tablets. Lower freestanding bookcases sit on the floor throughout the room, and at the room's center is a single huge desk, its surface heaped with what appear to be astrological charts, ancient books, and several stone tablets bearing eerie-looking glyphs.

As in area **D29**, the arrow slits in the wall here are sealed by permanent *walls of force*.

This chamber is where the Winter Council stored the greatest secrets and records of its most clandestine

achievements and plots. The sheer number of documents stored here is somewhat mind-numbing—you can certainly seed any number of adventure leads or hooks among these papers. To Queen Telandia, the information to be found here is priceless, but to the PCs, the most important documents sit on the central table.

These documents are all that remain of the large number of forbidden tomes, scrolls, and fragments of aboleth runes recovered from the ruined aboleth city of Voshgurvaghhol after Allevrah made her escape. She brought the majority of her research with her, but what she was forced to leave behind has been gathered here by Hialin. He's annotated the collection extensively, and anyone who studies the notes and makes a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check can tell that his annotations are attempts to fill in the gaps and determine how to duplicate the magic required to call down stars from the sky. In particular, his annotations seem to be focusing on how to expand the magic not merely to something that would devastate a city or nation—but an entire planet. That same DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check makes it relatively obvious that Hialin's notes are doomed to failure, fortunately, since key pieces of information are missing. What is here, though, is certainly enough to inform a person on how best to destroy or otherwise thwart the glyph-based magic that causes these devastating events. These notes will be invaluable to the PCs during the course of the next adventure—see *Pathfinder* #18's "Descent into Midnight" for more information.

The Council in Session

If the PCs follow Armistril's advice and manage to convince the four remaining councilors to convene a meeting, they gather in area **D20** for the first time since Allevrah's betrayal. The PCs are invited to attend, but all others are asked to stay outside—Perelir even goes so far as to dismiss the ghaele guardian from her post. The councilors take seats at the long table; enough chairs for all of the PCs have been brought in as well. At first, the four elves say nothing. They simply sit at the table, lost in their own thoughts or glowering at each other or the PCs. If the PCs don't take the initiative, Hialin clears his throat and demands to know why they've been gathered here when there's so much more important work to be done. This sets off a round of arguments; each elf's desires are summarized below, and without the PCs to direct the conversation, the argument lasts for several minutes until Hialin grows fed up enough to end it, as detailed in *Concluding the Adventure*.

- **Arindil:** The downcast druid is despondent, claiming that the Winter Council is dead and that they should admit it, abandon the building to Tanglebriar, and throw themselves before Queen Telandia for mercy.
- **Hialin:** Hialin sees the other elves (and the PCs) as symptoms of the Winter Council's failure, and takes

every opportunity to cast blame. He claims to be alone in researching a method to solve the current problem, and that he alone is honoring Auramesties's memory. He takes particular delight in mocking Malindil and Arlindil's relationship, saying that their antics do not belie a proper member of the council, who should be above the distractions of the heart and body.

- **Malindil:** Malindil wants to recruit the PCs and her fellow councilors in an assault on the demons. A solid, swift blow to them and their nalfeshnee leader will show them that the Winter Council remains strong, but she quickly gets distracted by any perceived slight against her lover Arlindil and swiftly and shrilly defends him with insults and accusations of her own.
- **Perelir:** Perelir believes that the only sane choice is to contact the queen, to ask for her help, and to engage the armies of Kyonin to begin a massive reclamation effort against Tanglebriar, starting here at Thorn's End. The concept of giving up the Winter Council's secrets to the rest of the elven government is the only thing that galvanizes the other three elves together in agreement, and Hialin is quick to use the shift to lobby to have Perelir exiled from the Council, a move that just as swiftly estranges the others from his side.

As the PCs interject and speak with the elves, keep in mind that the Winter Council believes that they have always acted in the best interests of their people. The council feels that it is the responsibility of those with the most experience to shepherd their respective cultures through difficult times by making the decisions others are not prepared to make—even when it means a few innocents might suffer. By way of argument, they ask if the PCs have ever had to make tough decisions with very short deadlines—to decide between attacking an enemy or healing an injured comrade, for example, or between executing an enemy prisoner or deciding whether or take him prisoner. “At those times, you had to make a choice between a moral or ethical solution and a practical one. Rulers—like Queen Telandia—must always appear both moral and ethical, or risk being overthrown by their subjects. We have foregone that luxury, and so can make the choices that any elf would agree are right, if not necessarily just.”

Accusations that the Winter Council sent Shin'Rakorath agents against them do little to mollify the elves—Hialin even admits that he personally ordered the strike through his agents, and that had the PCs left things well enough alone, none of this would have been a problem. If the PCs bring up Allevrah or the plot to call down devastation from the sky, though, a strange silence settles over the elves. Malindil says “She must have been ensorcelled or deceived,” which quickly arouses the anger of both Perelir and Hialin. Perelir

accuses Malindil of being naive, while Hialin hisses to her to not speak of such matters before the “guests.”

Eventually (likely because the PCs push him too hard to account for what happened to Allevrah, or confront him with the documents in his handwriting from area **D40**), Hialin snaps. He stands abruptly and shrieks, “You are all nothing but fools! I alone see what Allevrah was trying to do, and she had the right of it! Earthfall didn't finish the job, and that may be the greatest failing of history—but it is a failing that can still be corrected!” At this bold proclamation, he casts *stone to flesh* on the wall holding the *Maleficus Spike*—continue with Concluding the Adventure below.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to get all four elves in the same room and convene the Council, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 14 creature in combat, regardless of how the council session turns out.

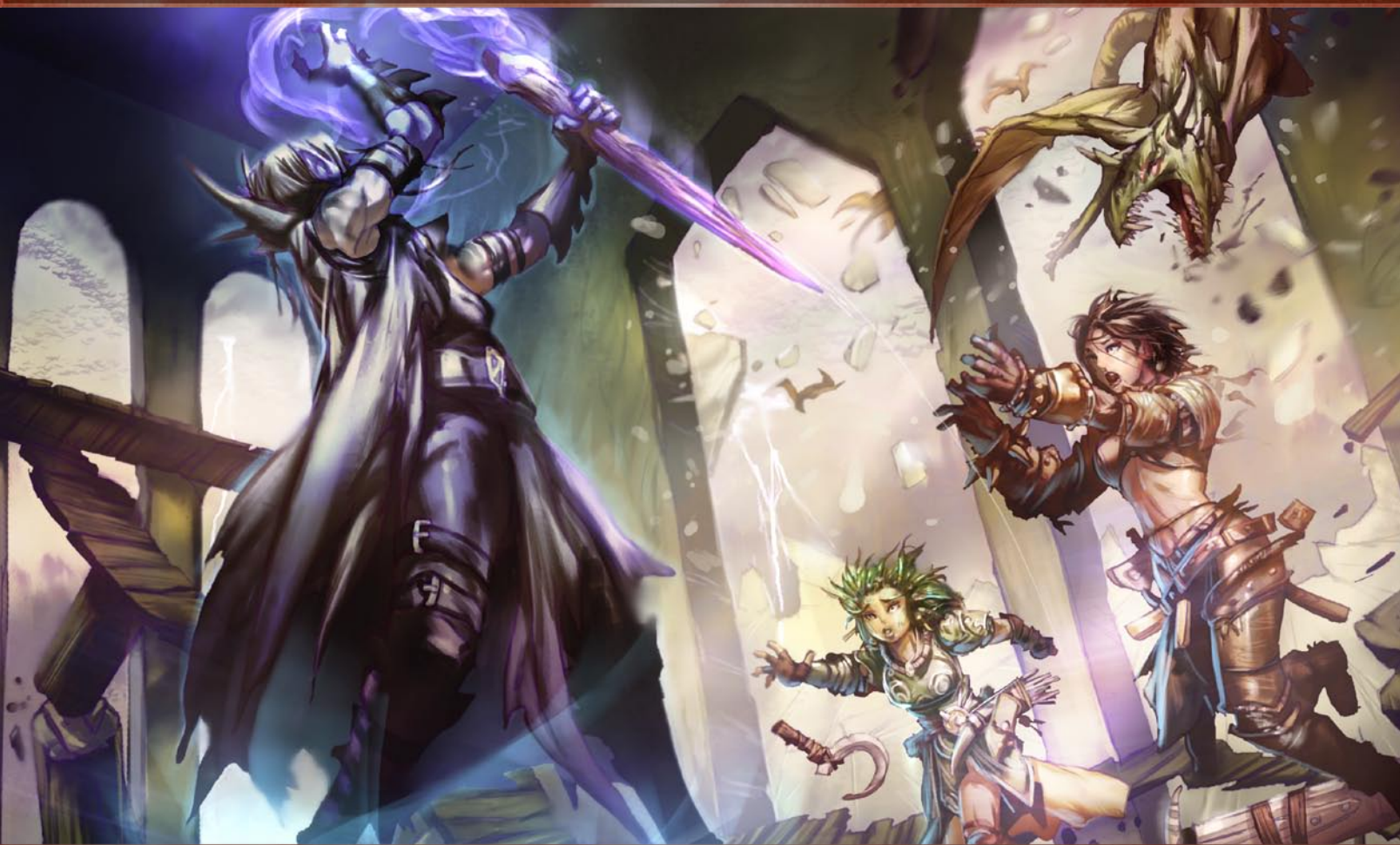
CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The culmination of the PC's presence in Thorn's End is an event no less momentous than the transformation of an elf into a drow.

This adventure assumes that the PCs are successful in gathering the Winter Council and that they confront its members with what they've learned about Allevrah. At some point soon thereafter, Hialin casts *stone to flesh* on the wall around the *Maleficus Spike* and then races over to it to pull it free. As he does so, the last remaining part of him that is good dies, and the fury and wrath inside him, fueled by having spent the last several years poring over forbidden texts and plotting the end of the world, cause him to undergo a shocking transformation—his skin darkens to black and his hair bleaches silver. His eyes film over to cold white orbs. The entire change takes only seconds—where once stood an elf now stands a drow.

If the other Winter Council elves are present, each of them reacts differently. Malindil collapses in a fit of terror and tears, convinced that she will be the next to change. Arlindil roars in fury and attacks Hialin, realizing that he has revealed the greatest secret of the elves to outsiders. Only Perelir retains rationality; she comes to stand at the PCs side and begs them to aid her in subduing Hialin and restoring the *Maleficus Spike*.

Of course, things might play out differently in your game. The PCs might goad Hialin into attacking them when they first encounter him, in which case he should try to make his way to area **D20** to release the spike on his own; if the PCs prevent him, his anger at being stymied does the trick and triggers his transformation into a drow there and then. The PCs themselves might even trigger the end by pulling out the *Maleficus Spike*, in which case the Winter Council swiftly comes to area **D20** to try to set things right. Hialin arrives and does his



best to prevent that, and his act of defiance here triggers his transformation. In the end, the important thing is to have Hialin's transformation occur when the PCs are present, thereby giving them the final piece of the puzzle they need to figure out what must have happened here at Thorn's End with Allevrah so many years ago.

Once the *Maleficus Spike* is out, of course, the PCs have another problem. All of the demons gathered in areas **D2**, **D25**, and **D34** seize the opportunity and teleport into the tower. They can appear in any room with arrowslits, and swiftly make their way through the ruins. At best, the PCs have only 1d4 rounds before the first wave of demons reaches their location; it's best to have both Viggrizzur and Quilindra in this initial wave, to give those two demons a chance to clash with the PCs. Even with the aid of Arlindil, Malindil, and Perelir, a fight against the demons and Hialin is an EL 19 encounter, and one the PCs would have little chance of surviving. If they don't think of it, one of the elves tells them that the *Maleficus Spike* must be driven back into the stone of Thorn's End. Doing so is a standard action that requires a bludgeoning weapon and that provokes attacks of opportunity; if the PCs have no appropriate weapons, even an improvised weapon like a club made from a chair leg will do. The *Maleficus Spike* is

an artifact, and it needs only a solid blow to sink deep into the stone—of course, if Hialin still possesses the spike, the PCs must first retrieve it from him before they can act. Once the spike is driven into place, all of the demons in the building are trapped—they'll be prevented from fleeing via teleportation, and must make Will saves every round to avoid taking damage. Even Viggrizzur and Quilindra won't last long in this situation, and the surviving demons lose all interest in the fight and devote every action to escaping from the deathtrap.

In any event, this adventure comes to an end as soon as the PCs defeat Hialin and perhaps save the rest of Thorn's End from the demon host. Even if they're forced to flee the tower, as long as they do so with the notes from **D40** intact, they'll be well-armed for the next adventure. If they're forced to leave those notes behind, they may be able to get hold of them anyway if they report their findings to Queen Telandia at the start of the next adventure—she'll certainly be interested to know the exact location of Thorn's End and that there may be the answers to countless government cover-ups and scandals hidden within. Exactly how the queen welcomes the PCs back, and what lies in store for them, continues in the final Second Darkness adventure: "Descent into Midnight."



Kyonin

On the eve of Starfall, faced with planetary catastrophe and panicked hordes of shorter-lived races, the elves left Golarion to travel magically to the mysterious realm known as Sovyrian. For thousands of years, only a few scattered remnants held their ground and went into hiding or walked among the other societies. It wasn't until 2632 AR, when the exiled demon Treerazer attempted to corrupt the power of a potent elven artifact, the *Sovyrian Stone*, that the elves came flooding through their magical gateway to wage war, forcing the demon back to the southern edge of the Fierani Forest. When the war had been fought to a standstill, the elves paused to look around them, and in doing so discovered that humanity had advanced significantly during their long absence, and could now be treated as semi-civilized beings. In a vast homecoming that was by turns joyous and violent, the elves began retaking their ancestral

lands, resuming their rightful place among the oldest and wisest of Golarion's races.

At the heart of the Inner Sea region, Kyonin stands as the largest and most renowned of the elves' holdings, home of the *Sovyrian Stone* and bastion of elven culture. Within its borders, elves work to repopulate cities evacuated millennia ago and cleanse the land of Treerazer's taint. Ruled from illusion-shrouded Iadara by Queen Telandia Edasseril and her councils of advisers, the elves of Kyonin maintain a respectful distance from the outside world, mingling with humans and other races only on their own terms and in established locations like Greengold. For most, it is enough to simply learn and play in their ancient and half-remembered home, hunting the giant insects of the Fierani Forest or studying Golarion from the golden fields and pastoral mountain glades. Still, Queen Telandia knows that if the elves hope to retain their power in the

Elves? Aye, I've trucked with elves—can't sail this side of the lake without it. They're a decent enough sort, so long as you follow their rules to the letter. Still, I say you can't trust 'em, not really. Any one of 'em's got a memory stretching back farther than your family tree, and you can bet they've picked up some tricks along the way. No matter how good a deal you think you've made, be sure you're on the losing end. You'll live and die in the time it takes one of their ladies to buy a new dress, and ain't a one of them going to give you a second look, so when we get to Greengold, you keep your head clear and your pants up. Whatever you do, don't leave the town, or they'll send you back fuller of arrows than a straw man at festival time.

—Captain Aphis Treagal, of the Encarthan free vessel *Summation*

current age, they must emerge from their shells and engage the younger races, and every year more ambassadors are allowed to pass through the elves' deadly borders and witness the wonders of Kyonin firsthand. Presented herein are several of the most famed and mysterious locations within the elven nation.

Arabrecht: This was once the site of a stately manor house known as Arabrecht, home of Archmage Aelthian, one of the greatest elven wizards Kyonin had ever seen. When the rest of the elves fled Golarion 10,000 years ago, Aelthian couldn't be bothered to interrupt his studies and elected to stay behind, confident in his home's magical wards. For thousands of years he did just that, mastering the secrets of eternal life and occasionally surveying the few acres of forest around his home but otherwise allowing the world to go its own way. When the elves returned from Sovyrian to wage war on Treerazer, they pleaded with Aelthian to help. Already deep inside the demon's territory and enraged at the fiend's audacity, the wizard attempted to single-handedly banish the demon and his minions with one spell of incredible power. Yet something went awry. Though many demons died in the subsequent release of energy, the elves of Kyonin found themselves unable to contact Aelthian. To this day, scouts who brave the Tanglebriar find a grassy, bowl-shaped clearing carved out of the ground where Arabrecht once stood, and floating above it a strange sphere of utter darkness. Trees and plants on all sides of the clearing bend to point toward the sphere, and a steady whistling wind blows inward toward it from all sides, as if the sphere were slowly sucking it in. Beyond this, little is known about the site, as no scout who's attempted to study the sphere up close has ever returned.

The Berm: Just across the Endowhar River to the north, Razmiran's acolytes of the Living God watch Kyonin's fertile land and lush forests with hungry eyes. Far more difficult to intimidate than other neighboring nations, Razmiran's citizens pose a constant threat to Kyonin's borders, sending raiders deep into the Fierani and fighting tooth and nail to annex more of the valuable southern riverbanks. To this end, in 4683 AR numerous

elven druids banded together with the Fierani treants to create the Berm, or the Dancing Forest. This rustling, miles-long grove of semi-sentient trees stands guard along the river's bank, and is capable of shifting its position with astonishing speed, though no one in Razmiran has ever recorded exactly how this occurs. Similarly, those who enter the grove without Kyonin's blessing are rarely seen again, though the occasional blood-soaked piece of clothing might be found downriver. More than fear of elven warriors, the sudden appearance of the Berm, emerging from the morning fog where only plains lay the night before, keeps greedy soldiers from Razmiran from crossing the border lightly.

Caruskei: Here seven narrow, treeless avenues spiral out from a central clearing, in the middle of which stand the half-crumbled remains of a columned, crystalline temple. Although the structure seems to have at one time stretched twice its height in an imposing spire of blue gemstone, the tower has long since been shattered, scattering shards across the clearing as if blown out by an explosion. At the far end of each arm of the clearing stand 10-foot-tall obelisks of amber that each encase a single bone. Normally dormant, on stormy nights the obelisks seem to draw lighting from the sky, sending it crackling horizontally in great bolts to converge on the fallen temple, making shards dance and producing great balls of blue flame that roll across its damaged facade before dissipating. Yet if the vast amounts of energy ever served a productive purpose, it seems to have disappeared with the temple's destruction. The few identifying markings remaining on the temple's worn columns do little to suggest which god it might have been devoted to, showing instead only the faint outlines of men with great bird wings.

The Century Root: The elves of Kyonin might be the nation's most visible residents, but they're not its oldest. Long before the first elves set foot within its borders, the treants of the Fierani Forest moved slowly and purposefully among their trees, tending the leagues of wild growth as shepherds to their flock. For the last several years, however, the treants have been gathered at the Century Root, the half-mile-wide stump of what must



once have been the greatest tree Golarion has ever seen. This spot, sacred to the tree people, is the site of the great meetings called “moots,” in which treants from all across the forest gather and slowly converse in times of joy or strife. While many elves are curious, as such a meeting hasn’t occurred since Treerazer’s arrival 2,000 years ago, the solemn treants have so far remained polite but silent as to what is being discussed.

The Cicatrix: This wasteland, on the border between the Five Kings Mountains and the southern end of the Fierani Forest, was once part of the Tanglebriar. It was here that the returning elves, finding their magic and strength of arms insufficient to rout Treerazer from his entrenched position in the swamps, sought to burn out the demon’s infection with cleansing flame. Although they succeeded in forcing the demon out, their victory brought them little joy. Centuries later, shattered trunks and stumps charred black are all that stand on the dead, open ground. Oozes, camouflaged to resemble the barren earth, creep along its dusty borders, consuming elves and Treerazer’s demonic minions with equal indifference. Though the scar, beyond even the elves’ power to heal, is universally avoided by Kyonin’s residents, rumors whisper of noble Galtan treasure hidden here for safekeeping during that country’s political upheaval, and of cultists and smugglers sneaking into the elven nation by traversing the treacherous badlands.

Coralesian: The natural beauty that draws elves to settle in a given location is not exclusive to forests, and the town of Coralesian is a perfect example. Here, on windswept peaks at the edge of the Five Kings Mountains, many elves have chosen to build their homes among the austere grandeur of snowcapped stone and solitary evergreen trees. Some of these elves live in small cabins in the area’s few mountain glens and alpine meadows, while others band together to create cliff dwellings of ladders, bridges, and tunnels in the mountains’ faces. Although spread thin and made up primarily of elves who seek a simple existence, the community of Coralesian still works together to ensure that all of its residents have enough supplies and protection to weather the dark, hard winters and the hungry mountain cats and worse beasts that stalk the nights.

The Endless Cairn: While many elves prefer to be laid to rest through more natural means, such as mummification in a bog or a quiet forest grave beneath a sapling, for some the rarity of death raises its significance, leading them to choose interment in tombs or mausoleums so that they might be better remembered. Of these tombs, the most famous is the Endless Cairn. A vast island of stone in the middle of a swamp, this squat circular tower holds numerous noteworthy elves lost to war, disease, and other unfortunate ends. What makes this mausoleum

DEMONS OF KYONIN

Although centuries have passed since the elves returned to Golarion, the reclamation of their homeland remains incomplete. The Abyssal encroachment upon their ancient forests lingers still, though now largely driven back to the region known as Tanglebriar. Yet a potent demonic taint still lurks within the woodlands and even the best trained elven hunters don’t dare the wilds alone.

Demons: The denizens of the Abyss, in all their horrifying forms, stalk the wildernesses in and near Tanglebriar. Although most of these fiends serve the demon Treerazer, many have mad ambitions and cruel objectives of their own.

Fiendish Satyrs: Many of Kyonin’s resident fey have fallen into corruption with the desecration of their homes. The satyrs of the nation’s southern forests have suffered most, with whole groups having succumbed to the demons’ depredations. What once were roving bacchanals of rowdy and lusty fey have become dangerous gangs indulging in wanton violence and the desecration of the lands they once held dear.

Treerazer: The Lord of the Blasted Tarn rules Tanglebriar from his fortress of Witchbole, where he endlessly schemes to bring about the annihilation of Iadara and the defiant elven nation. Treerazer is fully detailed on page 88.

unique, however, is the fact that it remains unfinished, its layers constantly sinking and being subsumed by the bog’s muck. Over the course of decades or centuries, the base sinks below the surface, at which point the elves continue the construction of a new level, connected to the one beneath by shafts and passages. No one alive today knows how many levels lie perfectly sealed and preserved beneath the bog’s rich soil, but records from before the elves’ exodus from Golarion indicate that the tradition is already millennia old.

Erages: Tolerated but hardly accepted, half-elves native to Kyonin are a social quandary. Small wonder, then, that many would seek the company of their own kind. Thus Erages was formed. Here, on the shores of Lake Encarthan, the almost entirely half-elven village lives in peace, drawing its living from fishing and occasional smuggling for merchants unwilling or unable to go through Greengold (something Kyonin’s government suspects, but allows). The village itself is constructed among the ruins of several great stone towers of ancient elven origin, most of which have crumbled to just a few stories above the ground, their blocks scavenged for use as building material. Entrances beneath the rubble suggest that the towers may be connected to each other via subterranean passages, but after a few curious explorers went missing, most townsfolk saw fit to let any secrets stay buried. Of late, rumors speak of a group of radical

FOREIGN RELATIONS

In spite of Queen Telandia's recent efforts to reach out to the younger races via the establishment of Greengold and the acceptance of more ambassadors inside her borders, Kyonin retains an overwhelmingly isolationist attitude. The elves hold that good fences do indeed make good neighbors, and Kyonin's fences are backed up by the finest archers the Inner Sea has ever seen. That said, not all outsiders are equally shunned, and residents of different bordering nations prompt widely varying reactions.

Andoran: With their staunch belief in both order and democratic equality, Andorens are the most respected of Kyonin's neighboring nationalities, and more of its diplomats make their way into Iadara than any other border nation, and vice versa. As a result, most of the half-elves born in Kyonin are of Andoren heritage.

Druma: While hardly poor themselves, the elves have never understood the Kalistocracy of Druma's obsession with amassing great stores of personal wealth. During the elves' long absence, the merchants to the south enjoyed reaping the Fierani Forest's valuable resources, and though a few decisive border disputes taught the Drumish not to push the elves, many of those close to Kyonin's border watch the land with hungry eyes, eager for the elves to grow careless or leave once more.

Galt: Although the elves have a certain amount of pity for the harried refugee camps just across the river in Galt, that nation's constant upheaval is a perfect illustration of the chaos the short-lived races call civilization. Its example only strengthens the elves' resolve to keep outsiders from entering Kyonin unbidden, and the necessity of lethal force in stemming the human tide before it can roll over their homeland.

Iomedaeen Crusaders: The Sellen River along Kyonin's eastern border is a primary route for crusaders and pilgrims on their way north to the Worldwound to help combat the region's demonic hosts. Embroiled in their own war against Treerazer, the elves fully support the crusaders, and are happy to trade with them and help respectful passersby so long as the pilgrims don't attempt to land on their shores.

Razmiran: The farce that is the Living God is a constant thorn in Kyonin's side. Left to themselves, the elves would be content to wait out the strange pageant taking place to the north—a relatively brief interlude, to elven thinking—but Razmiran's constant attempts to "punish elven heresy" by launching raids into Kyonin has forced the elves to divert significant forces from the fight against Treerazer in order to defend the border.

River Kingdoms: The speed with which regimes turn over in the River Kingdoms makes it impossible for elves to take them seriously. Thanks to the quick and effective manner in which the elves have put down bandits and invaders from the tiny nations in the past, most residents of the kingdoms view the elves as little better than demons themselves.

half-elves using the tunnels to plan rebellion against Kyonin's rigid, traditionalist nobility.

Erithiel's Hall: Winding for several miles through the western edge of the Fierani Forest, the serpentine mound known as Erithiel's Hall has been the subject of folklore for ages. Ancient even before the elves' initial arrival, the long, grassy hill ranges from 20 feet across to near 100 at its widest point, and its rounded crest rises several stories above the forest floor. The most popular legends hold that the prehistoric earthworks stem from a fey hero of the First World named Erithiel, who fought the great primordial earth-serpent Garukresh in a battle which left deserts and seas in its wake, finally slaying him here and digging a long barrow-palace inside his corpse. Although the story seems quaint to some modern ears, to date no one has stepped forward with a better explanation. Those elves who have attempted to excavate portions of the serpent mound find themselves plagued with bad luck and earning the enmity of the local fey, and if there are indeed subterranean chambers somewhere along the mound's vast length, they remain undisturbed.

Greengold: Few nations can survive with completely closed borders. To this end, Queen Telandia has implemented a number of progressive policies designed to keep her otherwise isolationist nation from being completely cut off and left behind by younger, more frenetic races. The most ambitious of these policies was the establishment of Greengold. The only port in Kyonin where merchants of other races and nationalities are invited to trade freely, Greengold is a constant bustle of activity, its mostly human visitors watched over by a cadre of trusted half-elven and elven overseers. In its tree-lined streets, those non-elven ambassadors seeking audiences or permission to travel within the country may plead their cases, and adventurous elves may mingle with the short-lived outsiders to their hearts' content. While many traditionalists in Kyonin are uncomfortable with allowing other races a foothold within their haven, none can deny the vast influx of wealth the trading community brings in.

The House of Sky: From their original arrival in Kyonin millennia ago, the elves have maintained a firm alliance with the giant owls that hunt the Fierani Forest. Although naturally suspicious of humanoids, the owls quickly realized the benefits of such an arrangement, and the rise of Treerazer and other dark creatures has only strengthened their bond. Ruled by Winglord Kreiagh, the Breath of the Mountain, most of the owls make their roosts in a stone aerie high atop imposing cliffs in the Five Kings Mountains. Both this citadel and its residents are known collectively as the House of Sky, and within vast chambers burrowed into the forbidding stone the owls hoot and scream in vast counsels, with every word taken to

heart by their leader. Although the royal house of Kyonin and several other select individuals who have personally won the owls' respect may summon representatives by means of enchanted whistles, all others who seek audience must either possess the ability to fly or brave the long, dangerous mountain ascent, climbing sheer cliffs and narrow chimneys of rock while the owls look on and judge the petitioners' resolve.

Iadara: The capital of Kyonin is a place of breathtaking beauty, a shimmering array of silvered crystal spires and strange, arcing avenues that manage to somehow remain in harmony with the twining trees and grassy hills that make up its foundations. Even more expressive than its architecture, however, are the layers upon layers of artistically wrought illusion which shroud every wall and tower, changing hourly to reflect the whims of the city's illusionists and making it all but impossible for enemies to locate the city during times of strife. It was here that the elves used the power of the *Sovyrian Stone*, hidden somewhere far beneath the city, to flee to their mysterious homeland on the eve of Starfall, and it is from here that Queen Telandia and her coterie of advisors meet with elven representatives from all walks of life to plan their race's movements, from the aquatic elves in their Endowhar-flooded district to the half-elves and Forlorn in the ghettoized Lesser Quarter. Yet even those elves who visit the famed City of Silver Spires would do well to remember that, just as its architecture blurs the line between fantasy and reality, few things in Iadara are exactly as they seem.

The Moonpool Causeways: The passage of time is something elves understand well, making the strange properties of the Moonpool Causeways that much more intriguing to the Fair Ones. Here the forest thins out to accommodate dozens of glistening silver pools, ranging in size from a few feet to half a mile. Bridging these spring-fed ponds and their connecting streams are an equal number of ornate footbridges, no two wrought from the same material. Stories have long told that, on tranquil nights and by the glow of unnaturally bright moonlight, time flows at different rates among the pools and islands. During such rare occasions those who dare cross a bridge risk reappearing hours or centuries later. While most avoid the area for this reason, there are always elves who seek to investigate or explain the pool's storied effects, with enough such investigators having vanished in the region to keep tales of the magical waters alive.

Yet elves are not the only creatures that find the Moonpool Causeways fascinating. In addition to an assortment of naiads and other fey who flit between the islands, the bronze dragon Ekhezarean long ago claimed the tranquil waterways as his lair. Polite but standoffish,

the dragon tolerates intrusions into his domain so long as the visitors do not interrupt his studies, and Kyonin's rulers have been known to occasionally call upon his wisdom in times of great need.

Omesta: During the elves' long absence from Golarion, many races moved in to claim the abandoned elven settlements, yet none quite so creatively as the gnomes of Omesta. Instead of inhabiting the existing structures of this forest village, the gnomes instead opted to create a second town of tree houses and zip-lines, winches and baskets, in the canopy above. When the elves returned,



OTHER RESIDENTS

Along with elves, gnomes, and the smattering of other civilized humanoid allowed inside Kyonin's borders, the Fierani Forest plays home to several other intelligent races who have dwelt there just as long, and with whom the elves have generally positive relations.

Fey: Creatures of the First World abound in Kyonin, both benign fey, such as the dryads and nymphs which cavort with the forest's resident satyrs, and malicious sprites such as redcaps or normally neutral fey twisted by the magic of the Tanglebriar. Due to all fey creatures' slightly alien natures, the elves treat most such beings with respect and caution, generally electing to live and let live.

Giant Owls: The owls of the House of Sky are mighty hunters, slipping through the midnight trees on wings silent as clouds. Though not as interested in playing custodians of the forest as unicorns or treants, the owls loathe demons and other unnatural creatures, and are as likely to feast on their flesh as the deer and giant insects which make up their normal prey.

Treants: Although they interact too seldom to actually be called friends, the treants appreciate the elves' long-term perspectives and concern for the natural environment. They particularly respect the elves' efforts to reclaim the Tanglebriar from Treerazer's taint.

Unicorns: Several of these magical creatures gallop through the forest, slaying demons and often appearing just in time to aid good-aligned creatures in trouble. Although they occasionally deign to ally with elves who take the time to court them, even going so far as to carry warriors into battle, the unicorns are mysterious and mercurial creatures, and tend to pursue their own unknown designs.

they found a full-fledged gnome community cheerfully oblivious to any question of trespassing—after all, they hadn't technically set foot in the elves' settlement. The elves, amused by the gnomes' audacity and already struggling to populate many of their existing holdings, allowed the tree-village of Omesta to continue unmolested as a smaller, less formal version of Greengold's experiment into interracial communities, and a few elves now live in the buildings on the forest floor. The experiment is not without occasional strain.

Riverspire: Even with a slow birth rate, creatures with life spans as long as the elves can eventually spawn great clans, living to see half a dozen generations residing in the same ancestral home. Such was the case of Riverspire, among the largest of several interrelated communities. Originally a single stone tower housing a family of elves known as the Morgethais, a blessing of unusual fertility saw the family quickly needing to expand their structures, and children worked alongside

great-grandparents to expand the tower and its outbuildings until the simple ivy-coated spire came to resemble a proper town. Elves marrying into the family frequently moved to the compound, bringing members of their own clans with them, and today the town is host to a bustling community of which roughly two-thirds are related somehow to the original Morgethai family. Many of the residents still live inside the original tower, which stands astride a picturesque waterfall at the edge of the Fierani. Far-spread rumors claim that several of the family's ancient founding members yet survive at the heart of the community's central tower, but the Morgethais dismiss such gossip as nonsense.

Shevaroth: In the days before Starfall, Shevaroth was one of the most populous cities in Kyonin, and housed the largest temple to Calistria the Inner Sea region had ever seen. With Treerazer's arrival, however, the depopulated city was caught completely defenseless, and despite several attempts on the part of Kyonin's government to liberate the city, Shevaroth continues to remain staunchly within the Tanglebriar's borders. Demons and vengeful, corrupted ghosts whisper and wander the empty streets as the unmaintained buildings around them slowly wear down to nothing. Only the temple itself is inhabited—here, a group of Rovagug cultists have repurposed the temple for their own ends, making use of Treerazer's taint to work their own dark magics in a foul mockery of Calistria's sacred rites. While information is sparse, as new cultists attempting to reach Shevaroth are generally slain on sight by elves and demons alike, rumors speak of the once-grand cathedral now filled with countless cocoons and chrysalises resulting from the cultists' unholy embraces, each larger than a man, waiting for some unspecified time to crack open and disgorge their profane contents.

Tanglebriar: Although the returning elves fought hard against Treerazer's corruption, in the end, not even the combined might of their nation could roust the demon completely from his entrenched position in the stagnant swamps that make up the southern reaches of the Fierani Forest. Over the centuries, this area grew darker and more twisted, and today the Tanglebriar, as it is known, is a sinister and brooding place, where looming trees block out all but the faintest sunlight. In this gloom, evil fey consort with Treerazer's demons, and the beasts of the forest themselves are twisted and tainted beyond recognition. Many elven rangers make it their lives' work to stalk the cordon and keep the Tanglebriar from expanding, but even so, Treerazer's minions still regularly sally forth into the surrounding areas, with horrific results.

The Walking Man: Not even the most scholarly residents of Kyonin can say for sure where the Walking Man came



from, though its composition suggests elven origin. Thirty feet high, this roughly man-shaped topiary structure is a singular mass of woven vines and tree trunks, evergreen throughout the winter and flowering magnificently in the summer. What makes the Walking Man truly special, however, is his movement. Every year, on the summer solstice, the giant takes a single step to the west. How long he's been traveling or what his course portends remains a mystery, though the oldest elven records state that he was once on the eastern edge of the Fierani Forest, and many are curious what will happen when he eventually reaches the shores of Lake Encarthan, noting as well that his course seems to be leading him straight to the broken towers of Erages.

The Wandering Spheres: Once upon a time, this enormous orrery must have been a magnificent sight. Taking up a glen hundreds of feet across, several of the man-sized spheres representing planets would have risen above the treetops, perhaps orbiting slowly in time with the motions of the heavens. Now, however, the mechanism lies shattered, the great metal beams and rings which supported the planets bent and twisted,

with some of the hollow spheres staved in or wrenched free to roll across the meadow. Overgrown with moss in several places, the mystery of the spheres' destruction is matched only by the fact that, while the device was obviously designed to model the orbit of planets around a central star, none of the carefully embossed and detailed spheres appear to match Golarion's own sister planets in number or appearance.

The Witchbole: This gigantic twisted thorn tree serves Treerazer as a palace. Enormous and bloated, the Witchbole squats on raised roots like a mangrove, its oily black bole gouged and blistered with the many rooms of the demon's citadel. On its great writhing roots, this living fortress lurches ponderously through the woods, its shattered crest sometimes twisted into the vague outline of a face and its branches lined with the impaled corpses of brave elves who sought to confront the demon directly. While the exact nature of the Witchbole is the subject of much debate, the shamed silence of the Fierani treants on this matter has led some to believe that it may have once been a member of their order, since demonically perverted beyond all recognition.





Calistria

Calistria (ca-LIS-tree-ah) is an old deity and the most widely worshiped elven goddess in Golarion—mysterious, alluring, temperamental, passionate, and with a long memory for old slights. Although most of her worshipers are elves, she is popular with other races as well, for at some point almost everyone has an interest in lust, trickery, or revenge. She is not so much a spiritual guide for the elven people as a cornerstone for their culture, never pushing them to act but always ready to assist when the time comes for action.

Calistria is sultry, attracting men and women with raw sexual magnetism, manifesting everything in elves that attracts other races to them. Although she is beautiful, beauty is never the first word that comes to mind when describing her, being typically characterized as sensual, desirable, arousing, and countless more vulgar words. Seeing her clothed makes viewers wonder what she looks like naked, and seeing her naked makes them wonder more

explicit things. Although she considers herself female, she has been known to take the shape of a male from time to time, and in this guise she is every bit as attractive as her female form, enough to make any mortal weak in the knees and flushed all over.

She is mischievous, perplexing, devious, and silver-tongued, able to complement her most powerful rivals with pretty words that only after careful reflection reveal themselves as base and humiliating insults. She “surrenders” to enemies by convincing them to hand over their weapons, leads suitors on for decades with hinted promises of outrageous rewards, and outwits the most brilliant mortals as an afterthought. She is not a goddess of silly jokes or crude pranks, as she considers them beneath her station. She can convey an hour’s speech in one small gesture and a lifetime of emotion with a careful look. Lies are her meat and drink, half-truths are her favorite wine, and double entendres are a luscious dessert.

"Savor the three stings of passion, guile, and vengeance. No food you ever taste, no thing you ever build, will satisfy you as much as my gifts."

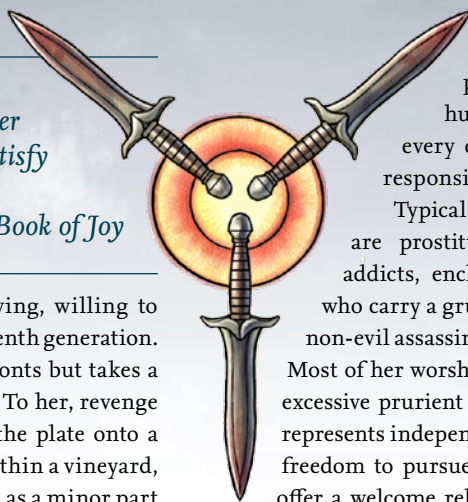
—The Book of Joy

She is merciless, patient, and unforgiving, willing to punish someone who offends her to the seventh generation. She enjoys a quick resolution to petty affronts but takes a longer approach to more serious offenses. To her, revenge is a dish best served cold, scraped from the plate onto a midden, rained on for a decade, planted within a vineyard, made into wine, aged a century, and served as a minor part of an elaborate steaming feast of vengeance for your foe and his friends, loved ones, and offspring. Calistria does not forgive, she does not forget, and any evidence otherwise is part of her plan to sting you in the most painful way possible when you least expect it.

Calistria is welcoming and personable to those who wish her no ill will and haven't made the mistake of drawing her ire. That said, she is fickle, changing loyalties as her needs and whims suit her. She doesn't do this to be hurtful, she just never lets her interest become too strong or too emotional, as she believes anyone who does otherwise is a fool. Those who paired with her in the past are usually smart enough to accept this and move on, but the duller ones sometimes persist in the chase after she has tired of being the prey, and then the claws come out. She feels no guilt for taking an eye for an eye, or even more; she is a goddess of vengeance, not justice, and if vengeance pushes beyond an appropriate response, that should be a lesson to those who get in her way. She has no interest in love and sees it only as a weakness and a needless byproduct of physical pleasures.

Calistria welcomes the worship of any mortal who lusts, relies on trickery, or seeks revenge on another. She doesn't care if the person is good, evil, unjustly accused, selfish, moral, criminal, or love-struck. She may not agree with an individual's methods or motivation, but if it has to do with her demesne she is interested in the outcome and willing to help achieve it. This means at any one time her worshipers are a very diverse lot, though most of them are transitional, only seeking her aid when they need her. This satisfies her and she asks for no more.

Because of this attitude, many accuse her of being evil, but in truth she is just amoral—she eschews right and wrong and fairness because she knows the world is not a fair place. Is it right that the whole world suffered the Age of Darkness because of the Azlanti? Is it right that Shelyn's brother became the plaything of unknowable horrors? Is it right that a leader-by-birth can tax his peasants-by-birth into starvation? Calistria is beyond these questions, and uses her abilities to survive. If others choose to follow her



path, so be it. And if others get hurt as a consequence, so be it, as every creature has the right—and the responsibility—to avenge their injuries.

Typical long-term worshipers of Calistria are prostitutes, spies, gossips, hedonists, addicts, enchanters, and illusionists. Those who carry a grudge pray for her favor, as do rare non-evil assassins pursuing a justified blood debt. Most of her worshipers are elves, not because of an excessive prurient interest in flesh but because she represents independence from commitment and the freedom to pursue what you desire. These tenants offer a welcome relief to a race that lives hundreds of years and might consider remaining with the same partner for life worse than a prison sentence. Some crusaders, particularly elven ones, pray to Calistria to help achieve holy vengeance on their targets. Very few dwarves worship her, even those avenging a slight against clan or kin, for Calistria's habit of disproportionate responses is generally too excessive for the lawful-minded dwarves. A fair number of halflings (especially those associated with shady merchant guilds) venerate her trickery aspect, and former slaves sometimes pray to her for vengeance against their cruel masters. Calistria is not a popular deity among the gnomes, largely because their trickery proves more whimsical and most prefer to live their lives rather than dwell on old slights and vengeance.

Calistria shows her favor among the faithful with sudden runs of luck in attempts to find companionship, heightening of physical pleasures, and finding easy marks for schemes or acts of vengeance. Those who displease her often find themselves plagued by impotence, failure to achieve sexual satisfaction, schemes failing disastrously, or angry wasps with an unerring ability to sting in sensitive places. Sometimes her ire is evidenced by several positive events culminating in a horrible failure, such as having the first outing with a long-pursued paramour go terribly wrong.

Calistria's avatar is a beautiful elven woman wearing a slinky black dress or gown accented with gold, often with a black or golden silk drape falling from her arms or drawn seductively across her face. Her eyes are dark and mysterious, sometimes flashing gold with passion or anger. She is commonly shown with giant wasps, her favorite creature—unlike bees, wasps can sting again and again without dying. In male form she looks like a slightly masculine version of her normal shape, wearing black leggings and a loose golden jerkin and cape, eyes smoldering with barely contained passion.

Formal clothing for her clergy is very scant, typically dark leather or yellow silk that covers little and conceals even less, often augmented with henna dyes on the palms of

A HAVEN FOR HALFBREEDS

Children of mixed races rarely have an easy life. Constantly reminded of their differences, they often end up on the fringe of their society, living on their wits and exotic looks, and frequently with a deep hatred for those who mistreated them. These factors make Calistria's faith very appealing to mixed-raced folk.

This is not to say that all halfbreeds are miserable or vengeful. In more tolerant societies they may be welcomed, but even these folk are drawn to the Savored Sting. Some of them owe their very existence to her, whether from the lustful acts that created them or their mothers leaving them on the doorsteps of Calistria's temples. The church usually accepts these unwanted infants and raises them in the faith, but they have also been known to let them die of exposure. Although a church's attitude reflects its community, in general they are much more tolerant of mixed-race people, which unfortunately tends to reinforce the stereotype that halfbreeds are whores and liars.

Given the goddess's promiscuity, gender-mutability, and variable tastes (and her divine servants' desire to follow her lead), it is entirely possible that a significant number of "halfbreeds" are actually descended from her in some way, whether first-generation or something more distant. Certainly it is not unheard of for an entirely human couple to have a part-human child, though fairies or evil spirits are usually blamed. Calistria shows these offspring no special favor, and rarely do they ever find out their divine ancestry, though the dream of being the goddess's "secret favorite grandchild" is shared by many foundlings of the church.

the hands and in narrow bands on the arms. Some priests like to add other accent clothing like a wasp's colors but eventually grow out of this habit, as the insect represents the goddess but is not inherently divine or worthy of emulation. Adventurer-priests favor gold jewelry, gold decorations on their armor, or (in the case of metal armor) gold plating or magically-hardened gold throughout. Church paraphernalia is usually slender wood or fine gold, often including erotic carvings or sculpture.

Calistria is chaotic neutral and her portfolio is trickery, lust, and revenge. Her favored weapon is the whip. Her holy symbol is three daggers pointing outward from a circle (representing her three aspects), and because of this many of her priests carry a dagger. Her domains are Chaos, Charm, Knowledge, Luck, and Trickery. Most of her priests are clerics or bards, though in some places more exotic spellcasters are the norm for her clergy, and there are a few non-spellcasters who have reached moderate status in the priesthood. Her titles include the Savored Sting, the Lady in the Room, and the Unquenchable Fire, as well as many vulgar epithets bestowed by disparagers outside the faith.

As a group the clergy is a reactive force more than a proactive one, content to let the world progress at its own

pace until something provokes them. Most people see the priests of Calistria as providers of comfort to those in need of solace, whether physical or emotional. They open their doors to those brimming over with lust, needing advice on embarrassing a rival, or seeking aid in striking back at those who have hurt them. Some dabble in divine magic but focus on other talents that express the illegal or semi-legal aspects of Calistria's interests, whether burglary, spying, extortion, or even murder.

Ceremonies honoring Calistria may involve ritual sex but not always the orgiastic excess described in salacious stories by those outside the church. A typical ritual might consist of quiet chanting, blessed wine, and perhaps a few passionate kisses among interested parties. In others, priests tell how they deceived others or enacted elaborate revenge plots. There are no formalities regarding where ceremonies should take place, and most elven rituals occur outdoors in the natural settings that elves prefer, though meetings involving the telling of secrets or plans might be held behind securely closed doors. The ritual of a new priest to the faith usually involves sex with another member of the church, performed in a private antechamber unless the initiate wishes otherwise; priests often court an intriguing new initiate for this privilege, with the expectation that the priest will look after the initiate in the early part of his or her career.

The church puts little stock in the formalities of marriage. While it serves a valuable function in society, most of the worshipers don't have a strong urge to settle down with one person (especially given elven longevity) and they usually don't confuse physical attraction with emotional affection (which is seen as a weakness by members of most non-good churches). The faithful consider any relationship that lasts more than a few months to be a "marriage," though this confers no legal rights. Ending a relationship has no stigma, though these ends are often the start of long feuds if one person feels slighted. Some do see the appeal of long, committed relationships, though even these tend to be tolerant of other partners or even polyandrous or polygynous. Lacking the weight of law in their relationships, most expect inheritance and similar matters to go to blood relatives rather than the mutable, tenuous passionate relationships.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

A typical temple has many rooms with lockable doors for privacy, and many are converted mansions or large homes. Because of their association with sex, temple priests are known for assisting with births, giving advice on contraceptive herbs, and taking in unwanted infants. Each temple tends toward good, evil, or neutrality, and this influences the activities that take place there. These philosophical differences are the source of many inter-

temple feuds, some going back hundreds of years with bloodshed on both sides.

Good temples try to serve the community and usually function as a brothel with sacred prostitutes, as they believe that the relief of sexual needs eases other tensions that might lead to violence. Regular visits by customers usually mean the temple is a hotbed of gossip and clandestine talks about double-dealing and revenge. Evil temples are much like thieves' guilds, a place to hear news, seek evidence of unfaithful lovers, and make shady plans, only sometimes while enjoying a lover. Neutral temples (and elven temples in particular) try to mix both, casually entertaining the lonely and lusty while avoiding the more violent plans for vengeance.

Many temples encourage wasps to nest on the exterior of the building. Guided by magic, the insects leave the residents alone but react angrily to trespassers. Wealthier temples may employ giant wasps as guardian creatures and spider eaters as flying steeds (evil ones may bind abyssal wasp swarms to guard the temple as well). Some use a church-created method of harvesting venom from the wasps, which is typically used by the temple guards or sold.

The church has few shrines, as Calistria's interest is in the nature and actions of people rather than places. Ancient standing stones at the site of old temples might bear phallic or yonic carvings, or a flat stone might be carved with the name of some great vengeance that took place at the site, but beyond these the church prefers to remember things in stories and warnings.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

Many priests work as or with prostitutes, always in a manner that assures the safety of those in that profession; the church does not make its priests into victims, as they are people with power who greatly enjoy what they do for a living. All clergy undergo extensive training in the arts of conversation, body language, and seduction. Even the most ugly or disagreeable priest knows how to turn on the charm at the right time, surprising those who witness the change. Others may work—alone or in groups—as spies, investigators (for individuals or the government), or smugglers of exotic materials suitable for strange interests. Because of their varied concerns and areas of expertise, there is no “typical day” for priests of Calistria unless they work for a temple, their faith being a driving force but not a defining force in their daily activities.

If a temple has guardian wasps, the priests might be responsible for caring for or magically influencing them, or this duty might fall to a layperson (similar to a beekeeper). This frequent association with wasps means many become used to stings and resistant to venom (either through Great Fortitude or a similar feat-enhancing



HOLY TEXT

Although Calistria's followers recommend several works of theater and literature as shining examples of the perfect seduction or revenge, they only hold one text as sacred.

The Book of Joy: This tome is a guide to many passions; some include illustrations of sexual positions, guides on reading and manipulating others' emotions, or collected anecdotes on satisfying revenge schemes for various offenses. Some conservative cities actually make it illegal to possess or display a copy, fearing that the information within will corrupt the morals of its citizens. Mischievous members of the church like to print portions of the book as one-page "penny bibles" showing the most erotic portions of the manuscript, hoping to elicit curiosity in the reader.

ALLIES OF CALISTRIA

Calistria's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

Summon Monster I

Giant bee (N)

Summon Monster II

Tiefling rogue 1 (CN)

Summon Monster V

Spider eater (N)

Summon Monster VIII

Hellwasp swarm (CE)

poison resistance). Some keep unusually large common specimens (up to 4 inches long) as pets for good luck, and a few are known within the church for their cat-sized pet wasps with abilities similar to a mage's familiar.

The church hierarchy is very casual, with priests valued more for their ability to persuade others (or feared for their history of revenge) rather than their magical power. Of course, a powerful priest might be able to persuade or frighten more than a weak one, but an inexperienced priest who pulls off an elaborate revenge plan, creates a new profitable financial scheme, or develops a new seductive technique receives much respect from her peers despite her other shortcomings. There are few titles in the church used by all temples. A priest who is known for calmness despite all circumstances might be given the title "the Serene." The high priestess of a temple is *cheyim* or *cheyos*, feminine and masculine forms of an Elven word meaning "revered one" respectively. Individuals might earn various honorifics based on deeds, assigned by the head of the

temple and customized for the recipient, such as "of the Gentle Hands," "the Heartless Avenger," "of the Hundred Faces," or "the Shameless."

Because of the different areas of interest of her good, neutral, and evil factions, most temples focus on local issues and ignore what their counterparts are working on (barring old vendettas). The church is organized democratically, with every full priest having a vote in her temple's affairs. For rare decisions requiring input from several temples, each sends a priest to represent that temple's opinions and interests.

Priests of good temples may work as sacred prostitutes or look after the health of these workers. Others priests in good temples work as confessors and gossip-brokers, buying and selling information that might be useful. They address the goddess's vengeance aspect by listening to complaints and assisting them in finding legal compensation for their issues, though the priests have been known to resort to public shaming of guilty parties when the offense is inconsiderate rather than illegal, such as broken engagements, shoddy business practices, adultery, or slander. To a small extent they work as matchmakers, though usually for sexual interest rather than marriage.

Priests in evil temples engage in seedier work. They may seduce someone in order to blackmail them later as compensation for some wrongdoing (against them or a client), exchange valuable secrets as if they were exotic spices, and make plots to unseat an influential leader or leverage a reluctant merchant. A few work as thieves or assassins for the church or even the highest bidder, acting anonymously or under a pseudonym. They walk in the path of shadow, using their seductive talents to get what they want and destroy those who stand in their way. The most alluring members make the best sacred prostitutes, though they usually demand payment in secrets, and it is these who often lead double or triple lives as spies in extensive secret plots. Evil priests tend to be very competitive with each other, trying to outdo their rivals in feats of intimacy, trickery, and vengeance, and as a result many are forced to wander for their own safety.

Priests of neutral temples might perform the same duties as a counterpart in a good temple or an evil one, or mix aspects of both as is their preference. In most cases, when asked for help with revenge, they push the person to first find non-injurious recompense for the petitioner, though if the offense is great enough they are not adverse to giving advice or explicit aid in fulfilling a debt of blood. In some communities there might only be one priest greatly respected and feared for what he knows and the careful web of peace he brokers with flesh and promises.

Alchemy, herbalism, and potion-making are common pastimes among priests, and some make a living selling

poisons, aphrodisiacs, love potions, contraceptives, abortifacients, and their counteragents. Even good priests are known to sell poisons, though usually nonlethal kinds designed to embarrass or humiliate the target (such as laxatives, those that simulate drunkenness, and so on). Some become so skilled at their duties that just by looking at a target they can tell how much of a drug is required to affect them for a certain period of time and the best way to administer it in food or drink. Of course, the followers of Norgorber carefully watch Calistria's priesthood to make sure they aren't overstepping their bounds or undercutting prices.

Calistria's church is not known for its altruistic healing, though its priests have been known to sell cures for money or favors. Sometimes they heal without demanding payment, saying only that they will collect a service at some point in the future.

Priests concerned with the goddess's lustful side are usually skilled at Balance, Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Escape Artist, Intimidate, Sense Motive, or Tumble. Priests more attracted to her vengeful aspect study methods that make them more effective in finding their targets, such as Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge, and Sense Motive. Priests attracted to her role as a trickster usually focus on skills appropriate to thieves, deceivers, or diplomats, depending on the type of deception they enjoy.

A typical day for a temple-based priest involves waking, having sex or shooing out last night's partner, ritual washing, breakfast, and prayer. They spend most of the day doing the work of the church. Evenings are a time to eat with friends, share stories, and enact plans that are best hidden from the light of day. Those who prefer to be up at night (or work at night, such as sacred prostitutes) have a shifted schedule, waking in the evening for a meal and socializing, then working, secret activities in the early hours before dawn, prayer in the morning, then sleep.

TWO MYTHS

Passed in whispers, the holy tales of Calistria often straddle the border between dire warnings and subtle encouragement.

The Blooded: The inspiration for a series of myths—mostly pertaining to the inspirational facets of lust, performance seduction, and grandiose revenges—the likely mythic civilization known as the Blooded supposedly rose after Azlant and lived and breathed the ideas of lust, trickery, and vengeance. Several great passion plays are attributed to this people. The noble houses of the Blooded supposedly fought each other with petty intrigues and used their influence for various gains and losses. After Starfall they allegedly perished, but plays attributed to them are popular among priests of all ages, and several

famed pieces of Taldan opera are said to draw influence from this storied people.

The Coldest Dish: Calistria is an old goddess and was dealing with opponents in the days before the first mortal civilization. In the unfathomable past, three of her enemy deities died before she could gain satisfaction from them. Even now, once a year, these three dead gods claw themselves out of whatever oblivion holds them and travel to her realm. These three shades of fallen, forgotten powers kneel before her and beg her forgiveness and ask that she abandon her yet-unfulfilled vengeance planned for them. Every year she just smiles and waits.

APHORISMS

To punctuate their vengeful desires, Calistria's worshipers circulate several bitter sayings and deadly sentiments.

I Stab Thee With My Heart: When a careful plan of vengeance comes to fruition, the satisfaction of it is as exhilarating as any intimate act. Whether whispered during an actual stabbing, or left as a note explaining the target's downfall, the faithful use this saying when they succeed at a particularly juicy vengeful act. Oddly, in the rare cases where members of the church pursue a genuine love, couples often use this as a form of vow between them to indicate the strength and sincerity of their feeling.

Love the Food, Not the Chef: This is used as an admonition against falling in love with the target of your lust. It is also a reminder to not become consumed by vengeance to the exclusion of all other things. There is more to life than just revenge, and there are many joys one can experience even while seeking retribution.

HOLIDAYS

Each temple has its own set of holidays based on avenging old slights, great conquests, and so on. The entire church has only one common holiday.

The Ritual of the Whip Sting: The church recognizes that sometimes a long-standing feud can be harmful to a community, and while the goddess doesn't believe in forgiveness, she does believe in adequate satisfaction for an offense. When priests intervene in a dispute to protect the community, they negotiate with both sides until they reach an agreement on an appropriate act of vengeance, usually performed publicly. Once this vengeance is carried out, the matter is considered settled by both parties and any further retaliation is forbidden. Normally this vengeance is humiliating (such as revealing an embarrassing truth, tarring and feathering, and so on) and may even be painful (such as a whipping or being locked naked in a pillory for a day) but rarely deadly, as anything serious enough that a reasonable person calls for murder is usually best handled with a trial. The name

of the ritual originates from when it was always a public whipping, but now the whip is mostly symbolic and both parties swear their oath on it.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Calistria's interactions with other gods are complex and strewn with contradictions and fabrications. Some paint her as a good god's lover, others as an enemy. One tale has her figuratively and literally in bed with an archdevil, while others describe her taking centuries to enact vengeance for a minor slight by such a being. Some stories suggest the creation or destruction of certain deities. Each temple has its own idea about which stories are true and which are false, and these differences only escalate the conflicts between factions. What is known is the other gods treat her very carefully and respectfully, as they fear her reprisal for an unintended slight.

In general, she and Shelyn get along tolerably well, as erotic love leads to sex and common lust can turn into love, though Calistria believes Shelyn's insistence on love is a weakness and Shelyn hates how people pretend to be in love so they can get sex. Calistria covets her romantic counterpart, but Shelyn refuses these advances as she knows the Savored Sting's affections are purely carnal. Calistria doesn't like Urgathoa much but respects her lust for life, and as long as they respect the border between their interests there is no trouble between them. Norgorber intrigues her with his mystery and they have worked together for a common interest, though he is never quite sure if he is somehow being manipulated. She respects Desna but thinks she's a little too hung up on her failures and setbacks. She and Cayden Cailean are on very friendly terms.

NEW DIVINE SPELLS

Clerics of Calistria may prepare *rage* as a 3rd-level spell and *suggestion* as a 4th-level spell (though those with the Charm domain have access to it earlier). Her followers have two additional spells only available to those of the faith.

LOVER'S VENGEANCE

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 3, cleric 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

CASTING

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V

EFFECT

Range touch

Target 1 living creature

Duration up to 1 day/level (D) or until discharged

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

DESCRIPTION

You inspire yourself or another to enter a vengeful rage upon entering combat with an enemy chosen at the time of the spell's casting. Upon entering battle with the intended foe, the target automatically gains the benefits of a *rage* spell. If the target is a creature other than you, the spell does not inform the target of who will provoke the *rage* effect. Once triggered, the *rage* effect lasts for 1 round per level. This spell counts as a *contingency* spell on the target for the purpose of multiple contingency effects.

SECRET SPEECH

School divination; **Level** bard 1, cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** no

DESCRIPTION

This spell grants the creature touched the ability to send secret messages within normal speech. This is similar to the ability of the Bluff skill, but no check is needed; the speaker's intended target (or targets) always perfectly understands the message, and other listeners cannot perceive the message at all. The subject can only send one message at a time, though it can be to multiple listeners. The secret message is considered to be in the same language the speaker is speaking, and intended targets hear and understand the actual speech and the secret message. The subject can make itself understood as far as its voice carries.

For example, at a fancy noble's wedding, a jealous former suitor casts this spell on himself before making a speech. Everyone hears his glowing words of praise, but he includes a secret message for his allies to attack the groom.

PRIESTS OF CALISTRIA

Whether embraced for their comforting company or shunned as vengeful villains, the clergy of Calistria receive mixed receptions in their travels—rightly so considering their goddess's tempestuous nature. The following are but two adherents of Calistria who PCs might encounter in their adventures.

Avoros Grimblade (CE male elf fighter 5/bard 7) is a handsome elf with cruel eyes and a tendency to laugh mockingly at those he considers beneath him. Only 2 centuries old, he has traveled much of Avistan on foot (he dislikes horses) and learned about many different races and cultures, though he found something to dislike about almost all of them. Now he travels for the opportunity to stir up trouble in foreign lands. Sometimes he sings offensive songs about neighboring

lands, hoping to arouse diplomatic tension. Other times he makes a point of seducing or dueling the adult children of people who annoyed him 20 years ago, usually setting up everyone for public humiliation. Avoros is amoral, and might quest with a group of PCs on a lark if one of his old enemies is in the direction they're traveling, or if one of them is the son or daughter of someone he wants to punish.

Longfingers (CN doppelganger cleric 6) has a network of friends and allies in the church, all of whom it knows well enough to impersonate flawlessly. It keeps a neutral role in inter-temple rivalries and prefers to spend its time spying on enemies of itself, its friends, and its associated churches. Its only known identity that isn't a duplicate of another person is a male tiefling-looking rogue named Longfingers; in this shape it bears a familial resemblance to Lavender Lil of Riddleport (who is also one of its friends). When introducing itself to potential allies, it usually claims to be a close friend or relative of one of its networked friends, especially if the people it's talking to know of that person (or have met it in that guise). Longfingers is an information broker and likes to help interesting people with their problems, especially if this help advances its or the church's agenda.

Neirein Vodintheil (CG female half-elf cleric 2/rogue 1) lives in Kyonin's human-maintained city of Greengold where she and her sisters Faisine and Tayce serve as the community's unofficial welcoming committee. Having lived in the city most of their lives, the sisters maintain far-reaching connections through the social strata. They eagerly approach newcomers, offering tours of the city, lessons in elven custom, and perhaps even introductions to prominent local figures—for the right prices. The slyest of the three sisters, platinum-haired Neirein knows several noteworthy figures among the city's smuggling and political community, using her training as an adherent of Calistria to cultivate a variety of crushes and useful would-be suitors. While she garners invitations to nearly every social event that takes place

in town she secretly longs for a more adventuresome life far from the eyes of leering diplomats and possessive criminals. Only her devotion to her sisters ties her to Greengold, as her "extra-legal" connections have helped the trio out of all manner of dangerous situations.

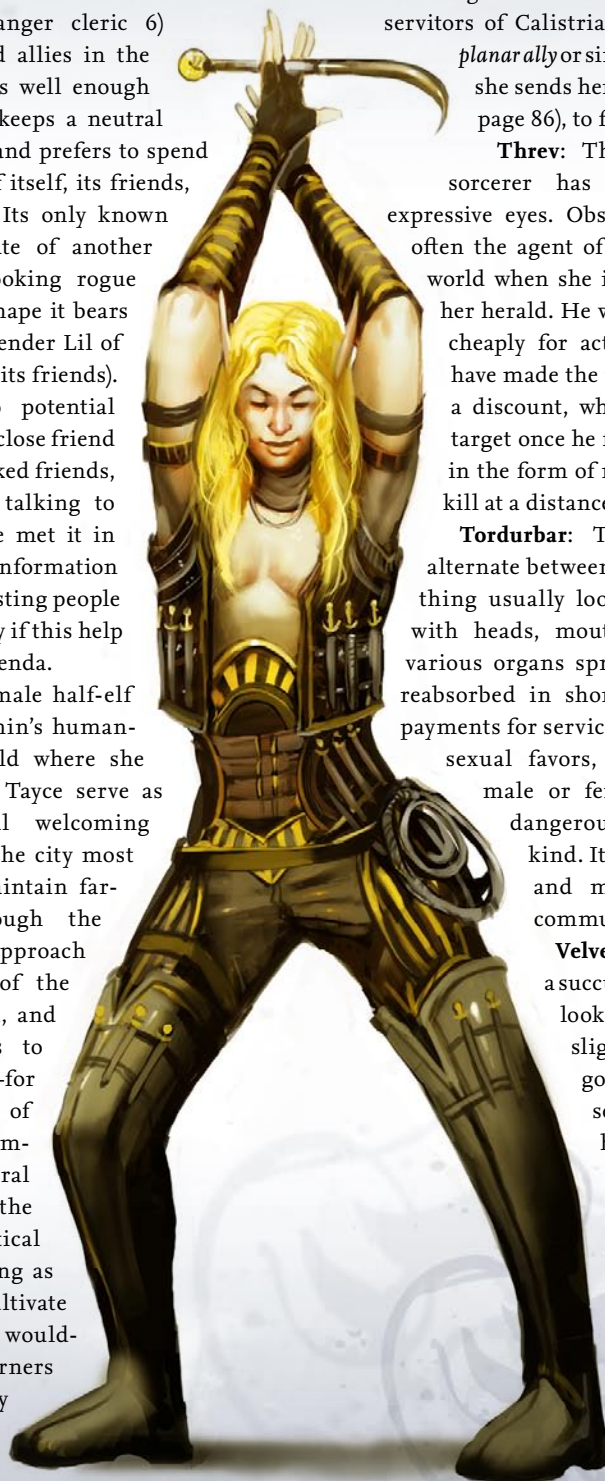
PLANAR ALLIES

The following creatures are well-known supernatural servitors of Calistria, suitable for conjuring with *planar ally* or similar spells. On rare occasions she sends her herald, the Menotherian (see page 86), to further her causes.

Threv: This frog-like shapechanging sorcerer has gray skin and strangely expressive eyes. Obsessed with vengeance, he is often the agent of Calistria's ire in the mortal world when she isn't angered enough to send her herald. He works for mortals as well, and cheaply for acts of revenge; some mortals have made the mistake of lying to him to get a discount, which usually makes them his target once he finds out. He prefers payment in the form of magic or poisons that let him kill at a distance. He is chaotic neutral.

Tordurbar: Though most chaos beasts alternate between horrible forms, this strange thing usually looks like a large fleshy mass, with heads, mouths, eyes, hands, hair, and various organs sprouting randomly and being reabsorbed in short order. Though it accepts payments for services in coin or magic, it prefers sexual favors, whether the summoner is male or female. In battle it takes on dangerous shapes like others of its kind. It does not speak (except to coo and moan), preferring telepathic communication.

Velvet Wing: Easily confused with a succubus, this beautiful seductress looks like a tan elven woman with slightly ragged insect wings (the goddess has many such creatures serving her, whom she calls her "vengeance demons"). Her kisses and other intimate acts drain Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (her choice). She can change her appearance to any humanoid creature and is adept at mimicking a specific person's voice and mannerisms. She is chaotic neutral.





Sun Dagger's Crown

Deep inside the Fierani Forest lies the ruin of a solar observatory, a center of ancient elven astronomy on Golarion. Before Earthfall, this was a popular retreat for elven astronomers and stargazing artists alike. Yet despite its popularity, the observatory known as Sun Dagger's Crown was forgotten when the elves abandoned the world.

Recently, life stirred again in the halls of Sun Dagger. A hezrou called Vodzur, on orders from Treerazer, the Lord of Blasted Tarn, claimed the shattered halls for his dark master, establishing it as a redoubt to subtly corrupt the elves of Greengold and Iadara. In the past weeks, through nefarious promises and outright lies, Vodzur gathered a cult of revenge-driven elves and outcasts. Now the demon and his cultists gather their resources to spread Treerazer's corruption to the four corners of Kyonin, ushering in a new era of darkness and pushing their brethren once again from this world.

"Sun Dagger's Crown" is a dungeon-based adventure for four 11th-level characters. In addition to working as a stand-alone adventure, this Set Piece can be used to supplement this month's Adventure Path installment, "A Memory of Darkness," or any other campaign.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

GMs who choose to send their PCs into Sun Dagger might use any of the following plot hooks. Adventure possibilities marked with an asterisk might be especially useful to GMs running "A Memory of Darkness."

Gathering of Cultists: Nisirvis Baradna, a leading constable of Greengold, is unsettled by rumors of recent attacks on caravans traveling the Queen's Road and of a growing demonic influence in the northern Fierani Forest. She's been warranted to offer 2,000 gp to any adventurers who would travel the Queen's Road and put an end to any demonic influences that have taken root along its length.

While our peers concern themselves with the shudders of celestial dust, the rotation of unreachable debris, and the ephemera of light, my investigation looks past the charts and figures traced and retraced since the days our fathers were young. Rather, I look to the unmarked places of the heavenly bower and hope to glimpse what wonders lie beyond. We do not look upon the great paeliel tree and assume merely because we see only the lowest branches that higher, more magnificent boughs don't exist—branches that possibly hold aloft wonders and terrors beyond our earthbound minds' prowess to imagine.

—Jointiel Airenidor, *Seeing Between the Stars*

***Path of the Stars:** In their travels from Iadara to Tanglebriar the PCs' path leads them to the supposedly abandoned ruins of an ancient elven observatory. When they arrive, however, they find the ruins are far less lifeless than they expected.

A Scholar's Search: Setherell, a stargazing elven scholar, has uncovered scraps of research collected from Sun Dagger in centuries past. The notes reveals the location of Sun Dagger, leading Setherell to finance an expedition to the site located in central Kyonin. He offers 8,000 gp worth of rare elven lore, histories, and artistic artifacts to any group able to guide and guard him as he investigates the ruin.

***Travails in Tanglebriar:** Upon arriving in Tanglebriar the PCs' seductive companion suggests they meet with her allies. Upon reaching her former redoubt of Sun Dagger, it becomes obvious that their ally's former minions have changed their allegiance, taking up the worship of Treerazer's minion Vodzur, who proves none too interested in competing for his follower's obedience.

SUN DAGGER OBSERVATORY

Once a center of celestial study and astrology, Sun Dagger rose above the tree line to offer the scholars and seers within an unimpeded view of the heavens. In the millennia since the Age of Darkness, though, the observatory has fallen into ruin, the grand magical orrery that once adorned its heights having toppled into the forest below and its irreplaceable libraries having rotted long ago. Today little more than the ruins of an open bunker and halls carved with esoteric runes remain, an eerie crown for a severe tor jutting from the depths of the Fierani Forest. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs near Sun Dagger.

Atop a tree-shrouded tor of exposed rock perches a squat, cylindrical structure carved of polished granite. Although obviously ancient, much of the weathered building remains, its facade covered over in vines and creeping vegetation. Although no entrance to the structure presents itself from a distance, a narrow path coils around the severe hill, leading to a gaping hole puncturing the rocky wall, a mound of finely crafted rubble evident below.

MODULAR CULTS

This adventure was designed so GMs should have no problem replacing the cult currently rooted in Sun Dagger with any other nefarious zealots of their choosing. Even the location could easily be revised and transplanted, perhaps making it a sinister circle of standing stones, the keep of a ruined fortress, or a wholly underground hideout. Here are a few alternative possibilities for those who want to tinker with the specifics of this Set Piece. Check out the Pathfinder Chronicles accessory *Gods and Magic* and *Pathfinder* #18's "Demon Lords of Golarion" for more details on unholy enemies and their fiendish followers.

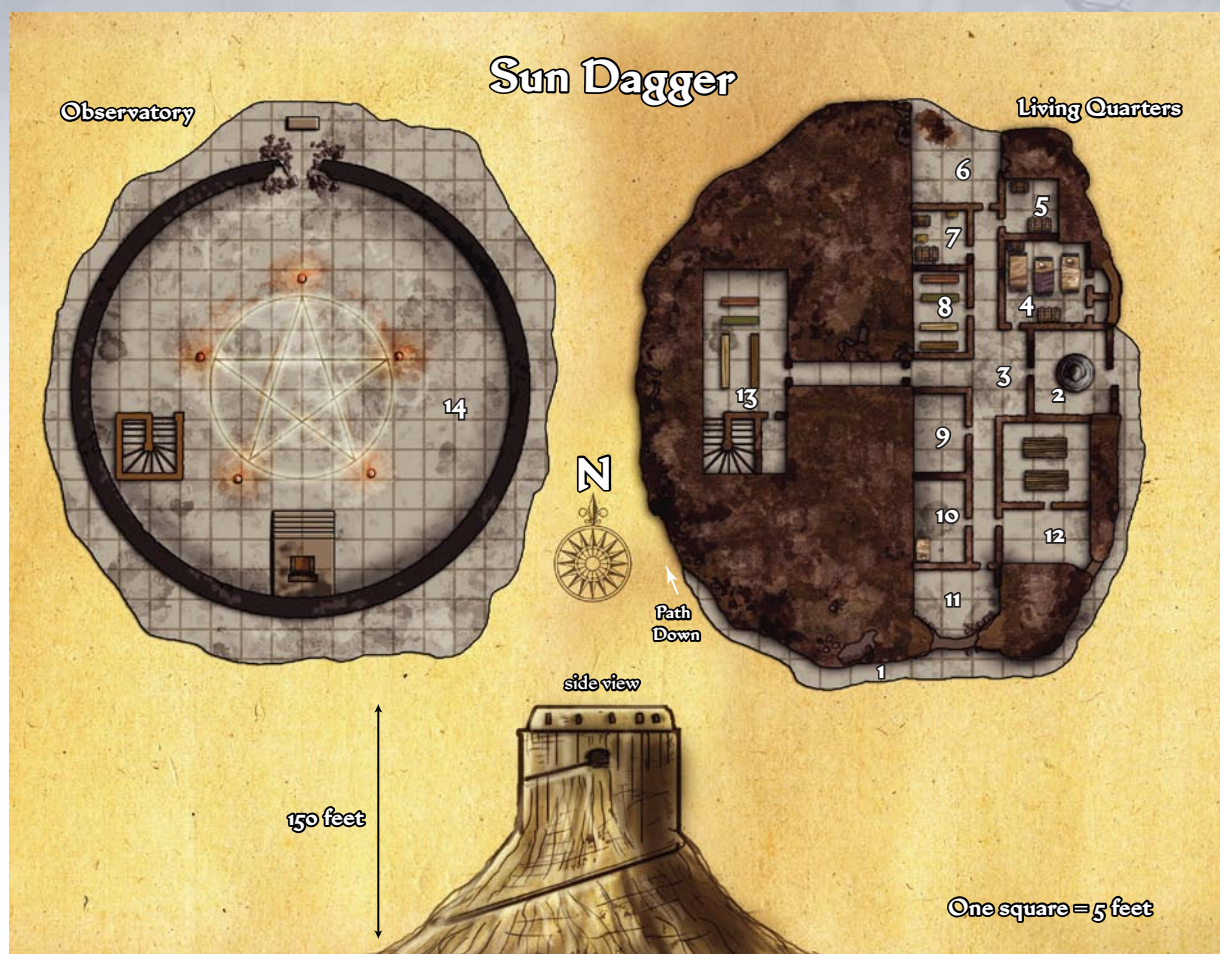
The End March: High atop Mount Cray in the Aspodell Mountains lurks a cult of Groetus worshipers devoted to bringing about the end of everything. Monthly, on the night of the full moon, they raise faces painted as skulls to the heavens and beseech their apocalyptic lord to make them the instruments of his grand destruction. Thus far they've received no sign from their dark god, but this never prevents their dwarven leader, Vaun-Thal, from claiming to receive a vision of what nearby village or community they'll next attempt to raze in their lord's name.

The Mysteries of Orreia: Gathering amid the burnt-out floors of Oppara's Veirnorine Tower, the adherents of Orreia's mysteries gather to participate in the bloody, orgiastic ceremonies of their demigoddess of the deserving. Unfortunately for the cultists, Orreia does not exist, merely being a persona of their shrewd erinyes high mistress, Aierro.

The Pale Kiss: Within a nameless outcropping of Thassilonian ruins outside Veldraine gather cultists of the vermin lord Ghlaunder, demigod of parasites and infection. Within the bowels of the ancient ruins they cultivate a nest of sizable, poisonous stirges, readying to release the vermin upon those who don't rightly fear their disgusting god.

Within, the structure remains in good condition, with every doorway being an intricately carved arch, open and clear since the wooden doors long ago rotted away. Unless otherwise noted, the ceilings within the living quarters are 12 feet high.

During the day, cracks and fissures throughout the structure light the living quarters with shadowy



illumination, while the roofless observatory is lit by the sun alone. At night, lanterns light any rooms with residents and ceremonial braziers illuminate the upper level.

1. Rising Path

A narrow path winds up the side of the rocky tor. Although scrub-covered and crumbling in places, there are relatively few places where the steep trail has slid away to any significant or dangerous extent.

This is the main path leading to the ruins of Sun Dagger. From this trail there are three entrances into the ancient observatory, the main entryway at area 2 and a pair of deeply shadowed fissures in the walls high above the main trail—one 20 feet above that leads into area 11 and requires a DC 22 Spot check to notice, and another 15 feet above that opens into area 12 and takes a DC 24 Spot check to notice. While the entrance into area 11 can admit any Medium or smaller climber, the gap leading to area 12 is barely a window, requiring even Small creatures to squeeze to gain admittance. Although obscured from the trail below, a large opening in the

wall of area 6 might admit any character with the power to fly or the tenacity to explore the hillock by climbing, requiring DC 20 Climb checks to traverse.

Creatures: The path is rarely guarded, but there is still 20% chance of encountering the cultists from area 2.

2. Entryway (EL 8)

Twin stone archways face each other across this dilapidated entrance hall, their surfaces etched with moons traveling through the sky. Dominating the chamber's center is a fifteen-foot-tall statue of a grandiose elven scholar in flowing robes adorned with celestial designs. In his left arm he holds a thick tome, while his right is raised to point eastward, as if in anticipation of the rising sun. The sculpture's head has been defaced and where might have once hung a nameplate is now just a scored depression in the stone.

This hall once served as a greeting place for visitors to the observatory, though the sturdy doors that once barred entrance have long since rotted away. Those who examine the statue find that weather and vandalism have made it unrecognizable as anything besides an elven scholar.

Creatures: Two cultists guard this room, though they aren't particularly mindful of their duties. At any given time they are gossiping or wandering down the pathway for a brief walk (potentially leading to encounters with them in area 1). Due to their constant distractions, they take a –2 penalty on all Spot and Listen checks.

CULT WARRIORS (2)

CR 6

Elf warrior 7

CE Medium humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 16, flat-footed 22

(+6 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 31 (7d8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3 (+5 against enchantment)

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +11 (1d6+2/18–20)

TACTICS

Before Combat If aware of the PCs, the cultists drink their potions of shield of faith +3.

During Combat The cultists attempt to flank one PC at a time and beat them down, all the while shouting for aid.

Morale The cultists are fanatics and fight to the death.

Base Statistics AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 9, **Wis** 0, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Intimidate +3, Jump +1, Listen +2, Search +1, Spot +2

Languages Common, Elven

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of shield of faith* +3; **Other Gear** +1 breastplate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 rapier, cloak of resistance +1, 10 gp

3. Hallway

Arms of a dusty, rubble-strewn hallway stretch to the north, south, and west. The floor looks as though it was once paved with colorful tile, but such decoration has mostly been broken or swept away. Every several steps, slender iron hooks are mounted on the walls for lanterns, though none currently hang here. Missing too are doors, nearly a dozen empty frames yawning along the hall's length, though a shimmering velvet curtain obscures much of the westernmost hall.

The main artery through Sun Dagger's living quarters, these stony halls barely divide the ruin's various open rooms. A DC 12 Spot check is enough for a character to notice large clawed footprints in the dust amid numerous other soft booted tracks.

If combat occurs in the hall, the commotion immediately puts all of the nearby rooms on alert. Only the cultists in area 4 respond immediately, while the others prepare for combat. Two heavy curtains cover the arches that lead to area 13.

4. Barracks (EL 10)

This cramped, smelly room lies in complete chaos. Several dirty bunks stand against one wall, while piles of dirty laundry, discarded food, and filthy dishes circle the chamber. Along the eastern wall are two foul-smelling privies, flies spreading from them into the larger room.

Although cramped and dirty, this chamber serves as the resting place for the cult's more martially trained members. Several sizable crates bearing the marks of elven merchants from Greengold—Erinwai Trades and Elnwood Merchants—serve as furniture, though the clutter of past meals covers them and spills across the floor.

Creatures: Four cult warriors rest here at all times. As the door opens out into area 3, these warriors serve as a second line of guards and can hear most of what goes on in area 2 and have a chance to see strangers entering the hallway.

CULT WARRIORS (4)

CR 6

Elf warrior 7

hp 38 each (see area 2)

5. Storeroom

This storeroom is filled to the ceiling with crates, barrels, sacks, and piles of miscellaneous supplies. The overpowering scent of brine and salted meat pervades the room, having drawn a haze of buzzing insects.

This room contains many items stolen recently from various merchant caravans traveling between Iadara and Greengold. Most of the supplies are of the military variety: cases filled with a total of 20 elven-made longswords, 10 green-tinged chain shirts, a dozen barrels filled with dried and pickled meat, 15 casks of wine, 7 sealed crates of salt, and a stack of winter blankets and bed rolls. Most of the fabrics stored here reek of brine, the troll cultist One-Claw having overturned a barrel of poorly pickled pork several days ago.

6. Observation Room (EL 10)

A massive, circular hole dominates this room's northern wall, offering a breathtaking view of the surrounding forest. Opposite the opening, hundreds of lines are drawn on the wall in perfect

arcs, most of which are faded or barely discernible. A large stain of dried blood mars the northwest corner of the room near two pallets of straw and heavy blankets.

This room once served as a secondary observation point, a place from which elven astronomers could focus their lenses upon the star-strewn heavens. Although the walls once bore elaborate depictions of the heavens visible from this vantage, time and weathering have worn this knowledge into a few meaningless scratches. The ledge rises 50 feet above the trail, a slight lip hiding the large opening from the path.

Creatures: This is the lair of Jinglefingers, Vodzur's first servant. Jinglefingers was once merely the stage name of Jardim Wyvel, an actor on retainer to an Iadaran noble family, serving in payment for a massive debt accrued decades ago. While traveling from Iadara to Greengold with his master, Vloat Ridiermai, Wyvel's caravan came under attack from the fiend Vodzur, who massacred the noble's guards. Wyvel, long embittered by his demanding masters and demeaning service, dropped to his knees before the demon, pledging his loyalty in exchange for mercy and one other thing: ownership over his lord, Vloat Ridiermai. Amused by the slight elf's request, the demon granted his wishes and brought him to Sun Crown.

In the months since meeting Vodzur, the elf has become increasingly corrupted by the hezrou's presence and abandoned his life as Jardim Wyvel, recreating himself as the manic, would-be Lord Jinglefingers. He regularly casts *charm monster* upon Lord Ridiermai, turning the tables by keeping him as a servant and personal entertainer.

JARDIM "JINGLEFINGERS" WYVEL

CR 10

Male elf bard 10

CE Medium humanoid

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +6, Spot +4

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12

(+2 Dex, +3 armor)

hp 37 (10d6)

Fort +3, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7 (+9 against enchantment)

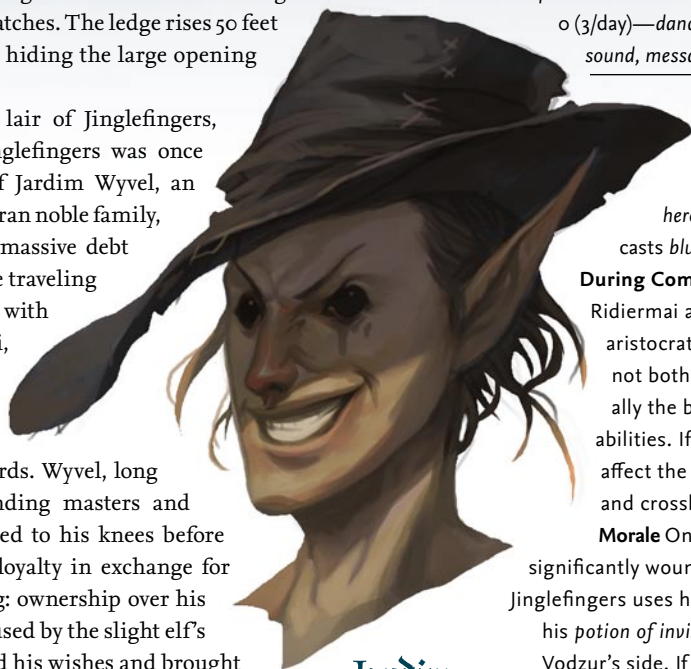
Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee kukri +6 (1d4–1/18–20)

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



Jardim
"Jinglefingers"
Wyvel

Special Attacks bardic music 10/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +2, inspire greatness, *suggestion*)

Spells Known (CL 10th)

3rd (3/day)—*charm monster* (DC 16), *confusion* (DC 16), *crushing despair* (DC 16), *gaseous form*

2nd (4/day)—*blur*, *cure moderate wounds*, *glitterdust* (DC 15), *silence* (DC 15)

1st (4/day)—*disguise self*, *grease*, *hideous laughter* (DC 14), *ventriloquism*

0 (3/day)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 12), *ghost sound*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat If

Jinglefingers is aware the

PCs are coming, he casts

heroism on Lord Ridiermai, then

casts *blur* on himself.

During Combat

Jinglefingers uses

Ridiermai as a shield, ordering his pet

aristocrat to attack the nearest PC—

not bothering to give his charmed

ally the benefit of his bardic music

abilities. If his spells don't regularly

affect the PCs, he changes to his wand

and crossbow.

Morale

Once Ridiermai starts looking

significantly wounded or he runs low on spells,

Jinglefingers uses his *elemental gem* and drinks

his *potion of invisibility*, attempting to flee to

Vodzur's side. If dropped below 10 hit points

Jinglefingers casts *gaseous form* and flees out the

opening in the wall and up to area 14.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +6

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Mobility, Improved Initiative

Skills Balance +16, Bluff +16, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +5,

Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Gather Information +5, Intimidate +5,

Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (local) +14, Listen +6,

Perform (comedy) +16, Search +3, Spot +4, Use Magic Device +16

Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

SQ bardic knowledge +11

Combat Gear *elemental gem* (air elemental), *potion of cure serious*

wounds, *potion of invisibility*, *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th);

Other Gear +2 studded leather armor, +1 light crossbow with 30

bolts and one *screaming bolt*, kukri

VLOAT RIDIERMAI

CR 6

Same stats as cult warrior (see page 67)

hp 38

Treasure: A DC 16 Search check reveals a pack amid Jinglefinger's sheets containing his personal effects. This

includes an entertainer's outfit, 3 days' worth of rations, a signet ring of the Ridiermai family (worth 15 gp), a bent bronze flute, a pouch containing 260 gp, two scratched pieces of amber worth 80 gp each, and a *deck of illusions*.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs don't kill Lord Ridiermai and free him from Jinglefinger's *charm monster* spell, grant them experience for a CR 8 encounter.

7. Treasure Room

Carefully stacked crates fill this cramped supply chamber. The numerous cases and chests here run the gamut of sizes, though most appear sturdy. Several bear simple decorations ranging from stylized names and elegant runes to graceful trees and shimmering towers.

This room contains many items stolen recently from various merchant caravans traveling between Iadara and Greengold. Much of the finery here was stolen from Ridiermai's caravan weeks ago.

Treasure: Supplies include 2,700 gp worth of fine clothes, tapestries, and simple men's jewelry.

8. Library

Tall, stone shelves dominate the middle of what might have once been a library. While the shelves are barren and relatively clean, in the rear of the room lie the piled remains of moldering leather book spines, rotted pulp, and birds' nests.

Although this room was once a library, no knowledge from Sun Dagger's ancient past has survived. The remains of the library's collection lie in a pile of rot at the back of the room, all symbols of meaning having long since faded from the once ornate bindings and gold-inlaid spines. Now the room waits to be used as further storage space, with only a small percentage of its shelves used to bear only 5 flasks of alchemist's fire and 4 sizable jugs of lantern oil.

9. Star Chamber (EL 10)

The walls of this hall merge overhead to create a dome of dark stone. Elaborate depictions of stars, constellations, and other planetary bodies cover the walls from approximately waist-level up, etched to portray the heavens in starkly contrasting details.

Having weathered the centuries quite well, this sculpted star map depicts the heavens of centuries past and remains largely accurate to modern times. Anyone who attempts to make a Knowledge (nature) check regarding the heavens in this room and spends 10 minutes referencing the sculpted celestial bodies gains a +2 circumstance bonus on their check.

Creatures: Two cult sorcerers spend their time here studying the map and hoping to glean some insight into the mystical secrets of the heavens.

CULT SORCERERS (2)

CR 8

Elven sorcerer 8

CE Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Listen** +3, **Spot** +3

DEFENSE

AC 23, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 21

(+4 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 19 (8d4)

Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5 (+7 against enchantment)

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +1 (1d4—1/19–20)

Spells Known (CL 8th, ranged attack +6)

4th (3/day)—*ice storm* (DC 17)

3rd (5/day)—*lightning bolt* (DC 16), *slow* (DC 15)

2nd (6/day)—*darkness*, *glitterdust* (DC 14), *scorching ray* (DC 15)

1st (6/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *magic missile*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 13), *shield*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 12)

TACTICS

Before Combat If they hear combat, both sorcerers cast *mage armor* and *shield* on themselves and then join in.

During Combat The sorcerers stay in the background, using *scorching ray* and then *magic missile* to good effect.

Morale These cultists flee to warn Vodzur of invaders if reduced to fewer than 5 hit points or as soon as they run out of useful spells to cast.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcana) +4, **Listen** +3, **Search** +2, **Spellcraft** +8, **Spot** +3

Languages Common, Elven

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (3), *scroll of wall of fire*; **Other Gear** *ring of protection* +2, 100 gp

10. One-Claw's Room (EL 10)

This stuffy room stinks of decay. To the south rests a large straw pallet covered in shredded blankets, while opposite that lies a pile of trash that, along with its mundane contents, includes dozens of gnarled, green, severed right arms.

Once a classroom, now this chamber belongs to a troll named Kekkanark, whom the other cultists call One-Claw. Anyone who examines the arms and makes a DC

14 Knowledge (nature) check can discern that the limbs come from a troll and have all been hacked off by a bladed weapon. Investigating also reveals that the arms at the bottom of the pile are obviously more decayed than those on top. A DC 20 Search check reveals a few elven remains amid the gruesome pile, including one still bearing a bit of treasure.

Creatures: The troll Kekkanark was a solitary hunter before he encountered Vodzur. Seeing the potential usefulness of a creature well-trained in ambush and knowledgeable of the area, the fiend convinced Kekkanark that he had cursed the troll's arm with a demonic taint that would spread unless the hunter served him. Kekkanark attacked the demon and was soundly defeated, surviving only by acquiescing to Vodzur's demands. Now the troll grudgingly serves the hezrou to stave off the demon's fictional curse. Every morning Kekkanark chops off his right arm in hopes of preventing the fiend's corruption from spreading to the rest of his body, even though the arm regenerates daily. Called One-Claw by Vodzur and Sun Dagger's other residents, the troll guides the demon's minions on raids and ambushes, though he has little care for his supposed allies. Currently One-Claw and four cultist warriors plan their next caravan ambush here.

KEKKANARK, "ONE-CLAW"

CR 4

Troll (MM 247 with the following changes)

hp 63

OFFENSE

Melee claw +9 (1d6+6) or

claw +9 (1d6+6) and bite +4 (1d6+3)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Modified Rend (Ex) If One-Claw hits with both his claw and bite attack, he latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 1d6+6 points of damage.

CULT WARRIORS (4)

CR 6

Elf warrior 7

hp 38 each (see page 67)

Treasure: Amid the pile of severed limbs lies a *ring of counterspells* One-Claw unknowingly left on the finger of an elven wizard he ate a few weeks back. The ring currently stores a *hold person* spell.

11. Collapsed Chamber

This chamber has partially collapsed, spilling loose rock and debris across the flagstone floor. Rising in two piles against the west and east walls, a gap amid the earth has been cleared, revealing a striking view of the forest below. A more architecturally sound hall leads to the north.

Once the office of Sun Dagger's eldest scholar, no evidence currently remains to suggest the chamber's former use. The rubble-strewn gap to the south opens into a gap high on the cliff outside, dropping 20 feet to the trail (area 1) below.

12. Kitchen

The stench of past meals and unwashed dishes pervades these connected stone chambers. Evidence of crumbling stonework suggests several more walls once divided this space, but now the hall stands split into a simple kitchen and larger dining area. While stained tables, low benches, and scattered clay dishware fill much of the northern dining place, the kitchen consists merely of a small cooking brazier set upon a wooden crate, an open barrel of water, a collection of knives, and a food-stained hole in the wall.

Here the cult prepares and takes simple meals. The southeastern wall partially crumbled away long ago and a 5-foot-wide hole now looks outside—the cult members largely use this opening to toss food scraps through. The hole is 10 feet above the path (area 1).

Treasure: An investigation of the cutlery here reveals that several of the knives are actually well-used bladed weapons, one of which is a fat-smeared +2 *dagger*.

13. Torture Chamber (EL 11)

The stench of stinging chemicals fills this wide chamber, an overwhelming reek like a sewer-soaked mire. Four large, bloodstained stone slabs fill the center of the hall, while dangling manacles hang from the western wall. A stone staircase winding upward lies to the room's south.

To keep the cult occupied while he awaits Treerazer's orders, Vodzur has convinced his followers to offer him bloody sacrifices amid elaborate rituals. Such living offerings are kept and tortured here while they are made fit for the demon's consumption in the observatory above. Currently the cult has no prisoners, having dispatched their last sacrifice two evenings ago.

Creatures: Five bored cult warriors sit here and wait for Vodzur's orders, sharpening their blades and fantasizing over what they'll do after Vodzur rules the realm.

CULT WARRIORS (5)

CR 6

Elf warrior 7

hp 38 each (see page 67)

14. Vodzur's Throne Room (EL 13)

A powerful wind swirls through this sizable, roofless chamber. Weathered and partially crumbled stone walls form a cracked,

circular ruin. To the south of the ancient structure stands an ornate stone dais, upon which rises an intimidating, wet-looking throne of dark rubble, twisted metal, and humanoid bones. Opposite the throne, far across the hall through a crumbling hole in the wall, a plain stone altar stained in blood and red wax squats at the edge of the tor's steep cliffs.

Once a great observatory where the scholars of Sun Dagger studied the heavens, this wide open chamber now serves as the lair and throne room of Vodzur, arrogant servant of the demon Treerazer. At his direction, the entire observatory was turned into a place where his deluded followers would pay him nightly worship. The altar bears evidence of past sacrifices and is scrawled over and over with the demon's name in Elven.

If the PCs are here looking for an *elfgate*, it stands behind Vodzur's throne.

Creatures: Vodzur lounges here upon his throne while four of his cultists wait soundlessly, terrified of attracting the demon's attention but ready to fulfill his slightest whim. As several dozen feet of stone separate the observatory from the living quarters below, only significant noises alert the demon and his servants to the PCs' invasion.

VODZUR

Hezrou (MM 44)

hp 138

TACTICS

During Combat Upon noticing intruders, Vodzur orders his minions into battle while he attempts to summon dretches to aid them. He also uses *chaos hammer* early in the battle to test its effectiveness against invaders, using it frequently if it obviously causes his enemys significant pain. Should the battle go poorly for his cultists, the hezrou wades into battle, careless of his stench's effect on his underlings.

Morale Vodzur fights until reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, after which he uses *greater teleport* to escape back to his master's realm.

CULT WARRIORS (2)

Elf warrior 7 (see page 67)

hp 38 each

CULT SORCERERS (2)

Cult sorcerer (see page 69)

hp 19 each

Treasure: Those who investigate the altar at the north end of the chamber discover two magical candles—a chaotic evil *candle of invocation* crafted to look like a demonic skull and a *candle of truth* carved to look like a stack of eyeballs—and a curved, black-bladed *assassin's dagger*.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

"Sun Dagger's Crown" concludes when Vodzur and all of his cult followers are either destroyed or routed. Should the demon survive, he vows that the PCs' disruption of his plot won't go unpunished. Unfortunately, the hezrou likely has to suffer his own punishment for failure first. Even if the Lord of the Blasted Tarn decides to destroy Vodzur for failing, the demon lord won't let the PCs' insult against him go unanswered for long.

Regardless of why the PCs headed to Sun Dagger, rooting out the demon worshipers completes the most dangerous portion of their quest—though they might still have some research to conduct in the area. Defeating the cultists and rediscovering a significant elven holding likely puts the party in the good graces of several local elven groups and might lead to further adventures in defense of the elven homeland or in service to its people.

Vodzur





A THOUSAND MILES TO ABSALOM

01 Kuthona, 4707 AR

The rain pounded like the throb of my heartbeat in my ears. Lightning seared across the sky, and thunder echoed my relentless, silent vow.

I will catch him.

I'd already been chasing Belzig for a week, ever since I clawed my way out of the Darklands just northeast of Gallowspire. His trail hadn't been easy to find, and it took me two precious hours to make certain I was following his true tracks and not a false trail. For days I tracked him south and east, around the edge of the Hungry Mountains, sleeping as little as I dared and pressing myself as hard as I could without risking exhaustion. The last thing I needed was to cripple myself just as I came within striking distance.

Now this blasted thunderstorm threatened to hamper my progress further. Up ahead, on the side of the road, sat a lonely hostel. Stone walls to blot out the thunder, heavy shutters to mask the lightning, and a stout wooden door

to close out the rain. A sign rattling in the gusting wind proclaimed it the Sturdy Bedpost. It was as much as I could hope for in this dismal stretch of Razmiran.

Away from home, anything that looks too good to be true probably is—and even at home, such things are likely to cut your throat and steal your purse. But I digress.

I pounded on the door between rolls of thunder. It opened suddenly, and despite myself I took a step backward. The man in front of me was tall and well built, with white hair spilling over the contoured iron mask which covered his face with that of his god, the holy Razmir. Through holes in the metal visage, bright eyes peered out at me. Throwing the door wide, he ushered me inside.

"A terrible night to be out."

"I thank you for your hospitality."

The priest's hair spoke of his age, but he moved with easy grace. A second priest, similarly masked, stepped forward and took my cloak. Together they escorted me into the dining room.

"We will prepare a meal for you and provide you with a bed for the night. Any donation you can make in return is humbly appreciated."

"Again, I thank you," I said. "Your hostel is a godsend for those out in such weather."

The priest's blank metallic expression was impossible to read, and despite his hospitality I understood immediately why so many avoid Razmir's chosen.

"A godsend indeed," he said. "We will speak more of that at dinner, when our other guest can join us."

"Other?" I echoed. The word slipped out as I stepped through an archway into a gloomy dining hall. A table, bowed with the weight of past feasts, held a few small platters. A fire glowed dully in the hearth. Silhouetted against the flames, a figure turned to face me.

"Indeed, it is a night for travelers," the priest said. Of course.

Belzig.

I saw my first instinct reflected in Belzig's stare. The desire to fly across the room and slam my dagger, fists, anything into his soft flesh again and again. A third priest, smaller and apparently younger than the other two, set wine out on the table.

Too many witnesses. Too many innocents. My blade stayed where it was, and I affected a smile. "A warm greeting on this cold night."

"To you as well," Belzig replied.

"You know each other?" the priest who had admitted me asked.

"But a little," Belzig said. "You came through Ustalav, did you not?"

"I did," I said. "That is a perilous land. Fortunately, I possess friends in the area. As I traveled through Varno, one ally approached me and told me the town ahead was poised to ambush me, having heard that I brought ill fortune in my shadow."

I took a seat at the table. Belzig sat opposite me, his dark gaze never leaving my face. The priests sat as well and dished out the cold slices of meat and slabs of bread.

"The superstitions of Ustalav are well known in these parts," Belzig said mildly. "Frustrating and pitiful. Were you forced to detour very far?"

"Oh no," I said. "I know the superstitiousness of Ustalav as well. With a borrowed dress and shawl and a change of tone, I entered town as a crone, a Varisian fortuneteller. I 'foretold' that the people there had been misled, and that I saw a cursed future for all children in the village unless the one who set the town against me was repaid in kind."

The first priest, who I now took to be in charge, gave a chuckle that echoed through his mask. "Astounding. Such guile is admirable."

Belzig's smile wavered, and he rubbed his shoulder. I had hoped the people of Ustalav would turn on him and slow his progress enough for me to catch up. Apparently they did.

Belzig and I ate in silence for a time while the priests talked. The white-haired one droned on in praise of Razmir, who had obviously guided us here, and about what a great blessing it was that we found this place. Through the haze of hatred surrounding me, his words began to penetrate. I don't trust a lot of gods, but from everything I'd heard Razmir was crazier than most. The only thing more fickle than a god or a king is the two of them combined.

It suddenly occurred to me that I might be in great danger. Fortunately, that meant that Belzig was in danger, too.

"Indeed," I said, breaking in on the priest's diatribe, "tales of Razmir's greatness have drifted along the river currents all the way to Absalom, where I first heard them. My friend here"—I tilted my knife toward Belzig—"has often listened to my tales of Razmir's glory. Though he follows a different path, he was forced to admit that they were interesting stories."

"Stories!" The priest turned his fixed expression on Belzig.

The Pathfinder all but gnashed his teeth. "My respect for the tales was great."

"They are not mere tales." The priest turned to me once more. "Do you follow the word of Razmir, then?"

My ability to spin a good story almost always serves me well. I launched into a rousing description of how Razmir's deeds have long inspired me. Belzig stammered and stuttered, allowing me to talk smoothly overtop of him. I looked great.

The fire was almost out and the food was stone cold. The old priest stood and said, "Truly you display uncommon knowledge and reverence for Razmir. And your stories mark you as a man of skill and poise."

"Thank you," I replied.

"Tonight you sleep in our finest suite. Tomorrow you must accompany us to the Exalted Wood, where we shall teach you more about the glory of Razmir. Your friend, unfortunately, has neither the instinct nor drive for such training."

Behind him, Belzig smirked at me.

"Still," the priest continued, "he may find his calling in time, and the priests that instruct there are always in need of additional servants. He will come as well."

We both protested, all enmity momentarily set aside in the face of greater peril, but the priests insisted, in the process introducing us to several of their hulking brethren who helped tend the inn. In the Exalted Wood, I'd learn so much. I'd find my place in Razmir's plan. On the morrow, I'd understand everything.

I've heard plenty of tales of the Exalted Wood. No one who goes there comes back the same.

I did say my ability to spin a good story *almost* always serves me well.

I stayed awake until the moon had crossed the peak of the sky and the storm had begun to lessen. The priests were so committed to my training they'd stationed a guard outside my room, to ensure my rest was undisturbed. A few arcane syllables sent him tumbling to the ground in a deep sleep. I picked the lock, dragged his body inside my room, and began my painstakingly slow creep through the hallways to the stairs.

At the top of the stairs, I sensed movement down a corridor and whirled, drawing my sword. Frozen mid-creep, Belzig stared back at me.

I took a step forward, but Belzig stopped me with a raised hand. "Start something now, Kline, and you'll bring every zealot in this place down on our heads."

"Maybe it's worth it."

"Really? Well then—be my guest." He spread his arms wide and waited.

He was right, of course. I put my weapon away. Belzig's death would be satisfying, but it wasn't worth my own. Still, the look of satisfaction on his face almost made me change my mind. Shoulder-to-shoulder, we skulked down the stairs and into the shadowed dining hall.

Another guard waited there, ready to raise an alarm. As he drew breath, Belzig leaped forward and grabbed for his throat. The guard flinched back, and I spun around behind him, pinning him between me and Belzig. I brought my fist down on his head, and he went down with a squeaking sigh.

We were halfway through the foyer when Belzig dropped a pellet I didn't even know he had hidden in his hand. It exploded with a flash and a bang, accompanied by a cloud of smoke that choked and burned. A door banged open, and shouts went up throughout the building. Tears poured from my eyes as I staggered forward, sword drawn. Two shapes rushed at me through the smoke, and I fought them just long enough to wedge myself out the front door. Shutters opened on the upper level and I heard chanting through the hiss of rain. With Belzig nowhere to be seen, and no time to look for him, I put my head down and pumped hard for the relative safety of the forest. So much for a warm bed.

13 Kuthona, 4707 AR

I've found beauty in the murderous peaks of Belzen, the fire-baked Storval Plateau, and even in the chill depths of the Darklands. But Galt is never-ending gray to me.

The dank, warm rain pounds the colorless ground into sticky mud. Leafless trees hang their gray branches before

me, as if set to bar my passage. The rain-swollen clouds hang so thick and heavy they blot out the sun.

I struck out southeast from the hostile hostel in Razmir, hoping to come across Belzig's tracks on my journey. I lost him several times in the River Kingdoms, but fortunately I appeared to have as many friends in this area as he did. I dropped in on a companion from years ago, now a bandit queen, who ferried me speedily across her small realm and relayed rumors of a traveler fitting Belzig's description. Within a day I'd picked up his trail, curving south into the near reaches of Galt. By noon the next day I was slogging through the steaming rain and boot-sucking mud.

I was hours into my journey when I saw my first splash of color, a puddle of blood in the road ahead turning the mud a sickening, clotted pink. As I drew closer I could make out the body from which it stemmed, its face turned away. His build was a shade too small but I convinced myself it could be Belzig. The cloak was the same, the boots mud-stained enough. I told myself that he met an untimely and grisly end on this gray path, and thus saved me the trouble of tripping on his footsteps all the way to Absalom. The words had the force of a prayer.

I approached the corpse slowly, not knowing what surprises it might hide. I knelt next to the form, one hand on my blade, and turned the body over.

It wasn't Belzig. And, as it turned out, it wasn't dangerous.

That quality belonged solely to the armed men who suddenly rose up from the muck all around me.

I attempted to backpedal and make a run for it, but the nearest one knocked me sprawling over the corpse. I tried to roll with it, but the slick gray mud thwarted me and I skidded over to another assailant, who kicked me in the head.

There were six of them, all shouting, their voices muddled and foreign. I caught the occasional word: "sympathizer," "traitor," "crimes." I dragged my sword out of its sheath and lashed at the nearest attacker. He fell back, crying out and clutching his stomach. I forced myself up on my knees and flailed to keep the mob back, but the mud sabotaged me again. As a group of three pressed forward, one beat my blade hard with his staff, and the slick hilt flew from my hand.

I tried to use the distraction to get to my feet and run—find higher ground, find a weapon, find out what the hell was going on.

Only one attacker directly blocked my path, but he had a cudgel and knew how to use it. I had barely started toward him when he brought the beam crashing down on my sore head.

I fell. Eyes open, I stared at the expanse of mud pressed against my cheek until black stole in to replace the gray and take away the pain.

I didn't really expect to wake up, and when I did it seemed that I might have slipped into another dream. How else to explain the coarse rope binding my hands behind my back, the howls of a crowd hammering in my ears, the warped boards mottled with old bloodstains bumping beneath my feet?

I blinked several times and my eyes watered freely, washing away the crust of mud on my eyelashes. Strong hands held my arm and half-carried, half-dragged me up the flight of steps. The ropes cut into my wrists and forearms so tightly I couldn't even bend my arms. A cold drizzle misted my face. I raised my head a little and saw the platform to which I was headed.

Two men stood upon it. One shouted at the crowd, a litany of my crimes. Apparently I was an enemy sympathizer, sent to infiltrate and betray their town.

The other man wore simple robes and a hood of gray silk for a mask. He stood next to the guillotine.

I'd heard of the "final blades" of Galt before, tools of execution that drained and imprisoned their victims' souls, but like all the other stories of paranoia, violence, and pogroms to come out of Galt, I'd assumed a certain degree of exaggeration. I was wrong.

The stock was made of solid oak, heavy and impassive. The track ran eight feet straight up, held steady by an oaken crossbar. The blade sat at the top of the track, its edge glinting in the gray light.

It hung there, waiting.

"What's going on?" I asked, my voice thick. My captor stood me upright on the platform while the speaker whipped the crowd into a frenzy. Heavysset and ugly, he carried my rucksack over one meaty shoulder.

"You've a date with Razor Mary." The grip on my arm tightened. "You stopped to help a wounded Chelaxian, 'stead of passing by or running him through for good measure. Maybe he was even a friend of yours, yeah?"

"That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard. I didn't even know he was Chelish."

"Yeah, well, we heard about your plans here. You won't be seeing 'em through."

He shifted his grip on my elbow and I glanced down. A jeweled ring, strangely ostentatious in this drab land, sat sparkling on his fat, heavy finger.

Belzig.

All hope of talking my way out of the situation evaporated. Given the state of the crowd, it's possible Belzig's word alone would have turned the town against me. But if he'd cemented the deal with gold...

The speaker appeared to be building to a climax. Razor Mary drew my gaze—she seemed to strain against the slim bit of wood that held her blade aloft. My mind spun.

Purchased allies often remain stubbornly loyal—it's better for business—so I knew I only had seconds. I whispered quickly.

"Look here—I know Belzig gave you a token of good faith to show you his word was true." I felt my captor stiffen. "The truth is, I have just as much wealth as he does. And I can be even more generous if you listen to what I have to say."

The crowd wasn't going to wait much longer for my justice. My head throbbed, my arms ached, and sweat collected around my neck where Razor Mary longed to strike. My captor whispered back, his voice harsh and suspicious. "I ain't setting you free, no matter how much you pay me."

"I wouldn't expect you to. I just want you to loosen these ropes." I heard him start to protest and I talked over him. "Just a bit, you don't have to let me free. I only want to go to my death with honor, not bound and bent like a dog. And in return, I'll tell you where my share of the treasure lies."

The crowd screamed a final demand for my blood. The speaker gestured, and my captor shoved me ahead. I could all but feel his resolve struggling with his greed.

*No monster is as dangerous
as a righteous man.*



I affected a limp, making myself seem as weak and helpless as I could.

"Don't let me die with such dishonor," I urged. I stumbled over a warped board and the crowd strained against the platform.

My captor pushed against my back. I felt my bonds loosen a little, just enough for me to flex my wrists and straighten my arms. "There. Die as you like. Now tell me where my reward lies."

He didn't have time to act before I splayed my fingers in relief and whispered an incantation. The crowd howled something unintelligible and my captor jerked on my arm, sensing a trick, but it was too late. Flicking my hand as much as the bonds allowed, I cast a blob of dark liquid across the platform and directly into the silk mask of the executioner. Screaming, he clawed at the sizzling, popping ooze burning through the cloth, staggering backward and catching himself on Razor Mary's sturdy frame.

My captor cuffed me on the side of the head, managing to find the exact center of my existing bruise, but I gritted my teeth and remained conscious. The speaker screamed for help, the executioner struggled to get his footing, and I concentrated just hard enough to trigger the tiniest and simplest of my tricks—the same spell I'd used to thread a rope through the counterweight-trap weeks ago. The conjured force tapped aside the block that held Razor Mary's thirsty blade aloft.

The executioner had time for a single scream before the blade cut him in half. The crowd surged back from the spray of blood, panicked, and the shouting began as those in the back fell under the crush of bodies from the front. My captor cuffed me again and I heaved with all my might, swinging him around just enough to hit the puddle of greasy viscera. I tore free as he fell in the mix of blood and offal, stripping my pack from him in the process.

The speaker charged, and I kicked him square in the chest, knocking him back off the gallows and into the crowd. Then I turned, leaped from the back of the platform, and ran full-speed into the drizzling mist beyond, my gear flopping awkwardly behind me. The panicked shrieks of the crowd followed me for some time. Even when I had put the town long behind me and stopped to wriggle fully from my bonds, I couldn't stop shivering. In my hasty flight, I'd brushed right up against Razor Mary. She was warm.

Purring.

16 Kuthona, 4707 AR

Once again Belzig sought to lead me into a trap, and once again I'd barely escaped with my life, fleeing into the wilderness.

Once again, it'd done me not a bit of good.

I tracked Belzig west, back toward the net of rivers that would take us straight down to the Inner Sea and Absalom. At a fishing village I traded a gem from the serpent city for a new sword and a brace of daggers. When I reached the slippery, twisting stream of the Sellen River, though, I found Belzig's tracks continued on the other side, traveling up the banks of Kyonin.

I spent precious time ensuring that the tracks were genuine. Once again, Belzig passed up the direct route in order to—what? Leading me into a trap seemed the most likely action. But on the chance that he knew some shortcut, I followed the trail across the water and into the green glades of the elves.

Everyone in Avistan has heard stories of how keenly they elves of Kyonin guard their secrets, and the penalties they exact from trespassers. Perhaps this was his plan—to risk capture outright in the hopes that I'd be less fortunate. Yet by this point I had practically forgotten our mutual goal in my desire to come to grips with him, to repay him blow for blow for Galt and Razmiran. I followed the trail on into the cool trees, misted with glimmering dew.

Peace radiated from those trees. Forest creatures rustled in the undergrowth; once or twice a sleek, fat rabbit hopped across my trail. They looked at me with round, fearless eyes, perhaps never having seen a human before. Birds whispered and sang overhead. It would have been a lovely place to lie down and dream away my worries. Instead I forged ahead as quickly as I dared while maintaining caution. I knew Belzig was leading me this way for a reason, and I wasn't going to be caught off-guard again.

I found the trap not far into the forest. "Getting close, aren't I?" I muttered as I bent to inspect the snare. "Could you be getting nervous, Belzig?"

It was a simple net trap, but masterfully made and concealed. Had I not been quite so alert I would have blundered straight into it. The tiny string of bells caught my attention most of all. If the trap was alarmed, that meant Belzig was waiting for the signal.

Somewhere close.

I set up a blind of my own, working quickly to shade my chosen location with branches and undergrowth. Then I had only to wait until the next calm, trusting rabbit hopped by. I grabbed it around its middle and directed it into the net.

Kicking and whimpering, the rabbit shot up in the air. The string of bells jingled in the quiet forest. I ducked behind my blind, dagger out, waiting.

Belzig crashed through the undergrowth and fired at the net, the bolt flying past the rabbit and burying itself in a tree trunk. He cursed as he saw what struggled in the net. Then he yelled in pain and surprise as I rose up and loosed my dagger.

His reflexes were good. He turned at the last second, and the knife scored his shoulder, not his heart. I drew my sword as he charged. The world slowed, his thudding boots muffled by the mossy forest floor, and I brought my blade into line. My blood was on fire. Neither of us spoke—that time was behind us.

Suddenly a flight of arrows soared out of the trees and thudded into the ground before Belzig. He halted awkwardly, spinning around and scanning the trees for this new foe. I did the same, boiling with frustrated rage.

“That was a warning, poachers,” a sibilant voice whispered from the trees. “There will not be another. Kill each other elsewhere, or we’ll save you the trouble.”

Belzig swore, turned on his heel, and ran. A thousand thoughts raced through my mind: explaining my side of the story, protesting my innocence, soliciting aid in my quest.

From the brush came the tiny, rasping slither of an arrow being nocked.

I ran. Stumbling, crashing through the trees, hearing the soft whiff of arrows behind me to spur me on my way. When I broke from the trees and stumbled into the river, I scanned the bank desperately up and down.

There was no sign of Belzig.

Cursing roundly, I floundered through the waters and struck out to the southeast. Belzig had played me well—I could have been miles ahead by now, had I not let my emotions get the better of me. From here on out, I would play it smart, rather than trying to finish Belzig personally. No more detours. No more traps. Nothing but this final race to the Inner Sea, and from there, to Absalom.

I prayed I would make it in time.

For all our sakes.

22 Kuthona, 4707 AR

The trip down the Sellen was anticlimactic after my desperate race across Avistan. Save for the trouble I had securing transportation—most of the traffic on the river was headed the other direction, sailors ferrying generous soldiers north to the Worldwound—my journey was swift and uneventful. I finally hit upon a small sailing ship traveling back down to the Inner Sea for another load of crusaders and paid for passage. Properly paranoid, I worried that Belzig might have hired assassins among the few passengers, wild-eyed and broken warriors fresh from the fray, but their personal demons consumed them. I don’t think gold would have roused them from whatever dark memories cycled round in their minds.

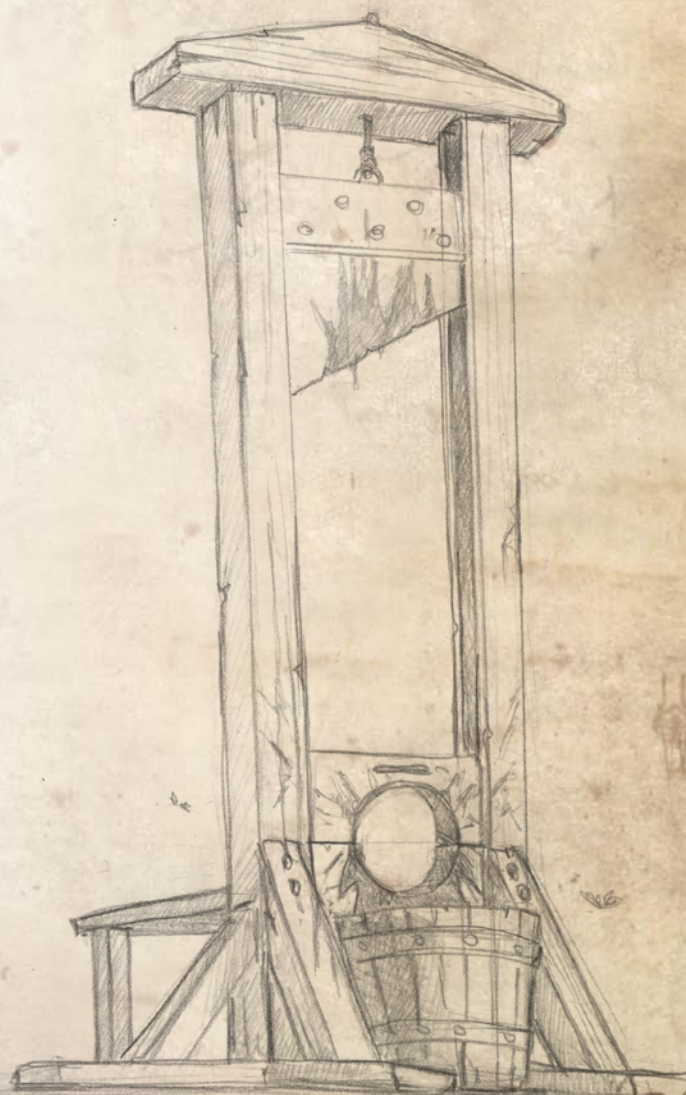
Finally, this morning, the Sellen spilled into the Inner Sea. The dark blue waters surged and frothed around our ship. My heart leaped as I saw once again the port settlement of Cassomir, its cosmopolitan cityscape just a sliver of what waits for me on the Isle of Kortos. Within this

city, I’ll be able to board a ship bound for Absalom, the City at the Center of the World. I’ll walk through the markets, the beggars, the hawkers and aristocrats, and come at last to the Grand Lodge. The end of my journey. And there I’ll do everything in my power to hide my discovery.

Outside the windows of my inn, the gulls are calling, the salt spume frosting the air. I am suddenly very weary. It seems like decades since I stepped onto these docks, so much younger, so inexperienced and trusting. I came here as a boy, eager for knowledge. And again as a man, a Pathfinder, fresh from Absalom and ready to ply my craft. And now, at last, I am here again... but as what?

I’m not sure I know anymore.

*Galt's justice is as swift
as it is questionable.*





Bestiary

The monsters presented in this month's bestiary are inspired primarily by the elven nation of Kyonin, a place of great beauty with a grisly secret buried in its southern expanse, the swampy reaches of Tanglebriar. Here, the minions of the exiled demon Treerazer hold sway, with corrupted plants and beasts replacing saner life. Yet peril can hide even in gentler elven lands, particularly in the form of the banshee, a cursed elf who succumbed to a death terrible enough to transform her soul into an enemy of all things living. Of course, this month's article about Calistria wouldn't be complete without her herald, the wasp-like seductress known as the Menotherian, and finally we round things out with *Pathfinder's* third epic-level threat—the Lord of the Blasted Tarn: Treerazer himself!

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The denizens of Tanglebriar are both powerful and deadly. Wandering monsters encountered therein can be fiendish vermin, creatures like man-eating plants, or

slavering demonic beasts. Some encounters are more complex, and these are summarized below.

Demonic Host: Many of Treerazer's demonic commanders lead patrols through Tanglebriar. These encounters should include a single demon of CR 13 or higher with a group of smaller demons that brings the total EL of the encounter up to 15. Typical encounters are with a glabrezu and a dozen babaus or a nalfeshnee with three vrocks. If you have *Pathfinder* #5, consider replacing the nalfeshnee with a shemhazian.

Fiendish Vermin: Fiendish vermin are the primary scavengers and low-end predators of Tanglebriar. This encounter is with one of the following: 1d6 fiendish giant stag beetles, 2d4 fiendish Huge monstrous centipedes, or 1d4 fiendish Huge monstrous spiders.

Green Hag Covey: This encounter is with a covey of 3 green hags accompanied by 1d6 troll minions. If you have access to *Pathfinder* #5, they could instead be accompanied by a single marsh giant. The trolls or giant are not magically controlled, but are nonetheless docile and

I had initially thought the corruption of Kyonin to be vile enough, yet as we made our way deeper into Iadara I learned just how limited my imagination could be in such venues as depravity and cruelty. What had been wrought upon our city was beyond the sane mind's comprehension, and I shall not repeat what we found there. Yet of the beast we encountered at the city's heart, the titanic blasphemy responsible for the slaughter of the Seventh Sovyrian Legion, I have learned all too much. He is known as Treerazer, the Lord of the Blasted Tarn, and it is he who has brought this terrible doom to us.

—From the report of Verinias Soseshtian, sole survivor of the Iadara Massacre of 2511 AR

somewhat afraid of their greenhag mistresses, and obey their commands without question.

Hungry Fungus: Numerous types of deadly fungus inhabit Tanglebriar. If you roll this encounter, the PCs are attacked by 2d4 violet fungi. If you have access to the *Tome of Horrors*, this encounter could instead be with 1d4 ascomoids (ToH 21), 1d4 basidironds (ToH 29), or 1d6 phycomids (ToH 293).

Shin'Rakorath Scouts: While the elves as a whole have left Tanglebriar to its own devices, patrols of Shin'Rakorath elves sometimes steal into the sinister woodland to scout it out and keep abreast of developments within. A group of Shin'Rakorath encountered in Tanglebriar consists of six 6th-level fighters (see page 12); they assume that any others they encounter are disguised demons, and unless the PCs try to be friendly and make a DC 25 Diplomacy check or can otherwise prove they're not demons, the scouts attack, retreating back to Kyonin as soon as one of them is slain.

Treerazer: Although the Lord of the Blasted Tarn spends the majority of his time in his palace of Witchbole, he periodically wanders the wild of Tanglebriar. Treerazer is a deadly opponent, so you should give the PCs ample warning of his coming; the sound of immense footsteps approaching, a sudden writhing and decay of plant life as his aura draws near, or even the sound of his roars as he punishes an errant victim. An encounter with Treerazer should be handled more as a visual threat than anything else. If he does confront the PCs, he may only send his demonic minions after them while he hangs back to watch the battle. If the PCs flee, Treerazer does not pursue. If the PCs insist on attacking him, though, the demon won't hesitate to ruin them.

Tanglebriar Hazards

An additional danger hides in the filthy undergrowth of Tanglebriar—hazards. Dangerous mold like brown mold and yellow mold, and hideous other growths like green and olive slime are quite common in the darker parts of the corrupted woodland, growing in places where the tangled canopy is dense enough to block all sunlight. Unlike monsters, these hazards are not mobile—they

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN TANGLEBRIAR

d%	Encounter	Avg. EL	Source
01–04	1 shambling mound	6	MM 222
05–07	1 tendriculos	6	MM 241
08–14	Hungry Fungus	7	Variable
15–17	1 black pudding	7	MM 201
18–20	1 yellow musk creeper and 2d4 zombies	7	<i>Tome of Horrors</i> Rev. 374 & 414
21–26	Fiendish Vermin	8	MM 108 & 284–289
27–31	1d6+6 dretches	8	MM 42
32–35	2d4 ettercaps	8	MM 106
36–40	2d6 boggards	8	<i>Pathfinder</i> #2
41–42	1 witchfire	9	<i>Pathfinder</i> #5
43–47	1d6 babaus	9	MM 40
48–50	1d6 will-o'-wisps	9	MM 255
51–52	1 bebilith	10	MM 42
53–55	1d12 leucrottas	10	<i>Pathfinder</i> #17
56–59	2d4 trolls	10	MM 247
60–62	2d6 mandragoras	10	<i>Pathfinder</i> #17
63–64	Green hag Covey	10	MM 143
65–71	2d6 Tanglebriar satyrs	11	Page 26
72–73	Shin'Rakorath Soldiers	11	Page 12
74–75	1d4 mobogos	12	<i>Pathfinder</i> #12
76–80	1d6 vrocks	12	MM 48
81–82	1 banshee	13	<i>Pathfinder</i> #17
83–84	1 froghemoth	13	<i>Tome of Horrors</i> Rev. 208
85–86	1 glabrezu	13	MM 43
87–90	1d4 hezrous	13	MM 44
91–95	2d4 marsh giants	13	<i>Pathfinder</i> #5
96–97	1 adult green dragon	13	MM 68–88
98–99	Demonic host	15+	Variable
100	Treerazer	25	<i>Pathfinder</i> #17

work best not as random encounters but perils to throw the player characters' way in between fights as needed to spice up the journey.

Brown mold, yellow mold, and green slime are detailed on page 76 of the DMG. Olive slime is detailed on page 419 of the *Tome of Horrors Revised*.



BANSHEE

A spiteful twist to the face mars the extraordinary beauty of this translucent elven woman. The phantom floats scant inches above the ground, and is clad in an elegant dress of glimmering silver cloth. A veil of pale hair drifts through the space behind her like a wave of stardust, but then her face churns into a knot of hideous rage and an unearthly wail issues from the yawning gape of her mouth.

BANSHEE

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +15; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., hear heartbeat; Listen +24, Spot +7

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 26, flat-footed 21

(+5 deflection, +11 Dex)

hp 161 (14d12+70)

Fort +4, **Ref** +17 **Will** +14

CR 13

Defensive Abilities incorporeal traits, undead traits;

Immune ability drain, critical hits, death effects, disease, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting effects, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, sonic, stunning

Weakness sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Spd fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee touch +18 (3d6 negative energy plus fear)

Special Attacks wail

TACTICS

During Combat A banshee generally attempts to swoop in to afflict a target with her fear touch, then on her next action wails in an attempt to strike the essence of death into her frightened victim's soul.

Morale A banshee retreats only in the face of natural sunlight—otherwise, she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 32, **Con** —, **Int** 5, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +7; **Grp** —

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility

Skills Listen +24, Spot +7

Languages Elven

SQ unholy fortitude

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 15–30 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear (Su) The touch of a banshee infuses the living with overwhelming waves of fear. Any living creature that is damaged by the banshee's touch attack must make a DC 22 Will save or become paralyzed with fear for 1d3 rounds. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. Creatures that are naturally immune to fear are immune to this attack, but if the banshee strikes a target that is protected from fear effects by a spell (such as *heroes' feast* or *mind blank*), the banshee's touch targets that spell effect with a *greater dispel magic* (CL 14th). If the protective spell is dispelled, the victim must then make his saving throw to resist the fear effect as normal. If multiple spells are in effect that grant immunity to fear, the banshee's touch only attempts to dispel the highest-level effect. It must touch the target again to attempt to dispel other effects in place. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Hear Heartbeat (Ex) A banshee can sense the beating hearts of living creatures with horrific ease. Treat the banshee as having tremorsense to a range of 60 feet against creatures with heartbeats; this sense can detect creatures not in contact with the ground, unlike the limitations on standard tremorsense.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex) A banshee is powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flees from it, typically

by hiding within a solid object. A banshee caught in sunlight cannot attack or use its wail and can take only a single standard or move action in a round.

Unholy Fortitude (Ex) A banshee gains bonus hit points equal to its Charisma modifier times its Hit Dice, and a bonus on Fortitude saves equal to its Charisma modifier.

Wail (Su) A banshee's wail is its most notorious and devastating attack. Once a minute a banshee may wail as a full-round action. This wail lasts until the beginning of her next turn. All creatures within 40 feet of the banshee when she begins her wail, and all creatures that end their movement for their turn within this radius, must make a DC 22 Fortitude save (this save is only required once per wail, so a creature in the area of effect who then moves on his turn but is unable to escape the area does not have to save a second time). Those who succeed on this saving throw become sickened for 1d6 rounds. Those who fail the save are immediately reduced to –1 hit points and are dying. Creatures in the area of effect of a banshee's wail who are already dying and who fail this save are immediately slain. Although a banshee's wail is not a fear effect, creatures that are under the effects of any type of fear effect suffer a –4 penalty on their saving throw to resist a banshee's wail. If a wailing banshee is damaged during the round in which she's wailing, she must make a Concentration check (DC = 10 + the damage dealt) to maintain the wail, otherwise it is disrupted for the remainder of the round. Banshee wails are supernaturally powerful, and penetrate the effect of any 3rd- or lower-level spell that creates magical silence. A banshee's wail is a sonic death effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Skills A banshee has a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

A banshee appears as a translucent elven woman made of pale vapor or mist. Her clothing and hair are generally long and flowing, billowing as if in a strong wind.

Ecology

A banshee is the undead spirit of an elven woman who, in her last moments of life, either committed some sort of heinous betrayal of her friends and family or was herself dealt a soul-shattering, torturous death at the hands of those she thought were her allies and loved ones. In either event, the spirit of the slain elf rises with the next sunset as a creature of indiscriminate vengeance whose hatred of the living targets both innocent and guilty with equal ferocity. Only the cleansing rays of true sunlight, a symbol of healing, renewal, and forgiveness, evokes anything resembling fear in these nearly mindless harbingers of death.

Habitat & Society

As undead elves, banshees are generally found in regions where elves are prominent, yet elves find banshees to be shameful and hideous curses, and swiftly mobilize

to destroy those that appear within elven society. As a result, most banshees dwell in regions where elves once dwelt but, for whatever reason, were forced to abandon. These are invariably remote locations with ill reputations, such as ruined buildings deep in Tanglebriar, forgotten graveyards and ghost towns in Ustalav, or the trackless northern moors and tundras of Irrisen. Curiously enough, banshees rarely if ever rise from the drow—the right mix of catalysts in a dying drow's soul simply aren't tragic enough when compared to an uncorrupted elf who falls to betrayal or mortal sin.

Greater Banshee

When a female elven bard of at least 10th level perishes under conditions that would normally transform her spirit into a standard banshee, she instead becomes a much rarer and more dangerous variant of the banshee. Known variously as dread banshees, white women, caoineags, or simply as greater banshees, these spirits have the abilities of standard banshees, but with the following three additional abilities.

- **Improved Wail:** Those who fail to save against a greater banshee's wail are slain immediately rather than being reduced to –1 hit points. Any female elf slain by a greater banshee's wail rises in 1d4 rounds as a banshee under the control of the greater banshee who slew her. These newly created banshees are always standard banshees—a greater banshee cannot spawn another greater banshee.
- **Intelligent:** Greater banshees retain their minds and are capable of executing long and complex plots to spread death and dismay. A greater banshee has an Intelligence score of 16 rather than 5, and gains additional skill points as appropriate for her intelligence score. She gains Bluff, Intimidate, Knowledge (any), and Perform as class skills.
- **Bardic Magic:** A greater banshee casts spells as a 10th-level bard. A typical greater banshee knows the following spells.
 - 4th (1/day)—*dimension door*, *hallucinatory terrain* (DC 19)
 - 3rd (3/day)—*crushing despair* (DC 18), *dispel magic*, *fear* (DC 18), *slow* (DC 18)
 - 2nd (4/day)—*darkness*, *minor image* (DC 17), *shatter* (DC 17), *whispering wind*
 - 1st (5/day)—*animate rope*, *lesser confusion* (DC 16), *silent image* (DC 16), *unseen servant*
 - 0 (3/day)—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*

A greater banshee is a CR 15 monster, although many of them are advanced in Hit Dice beyond the standard banshee, increasing their CR by 1 for each additional 4 Hit Dice gained. The most powerful greater banshees also have additional bard levels—these bard levels stack for the purposes of determining what caster level and additional spells the greater banshee has access to.



LEUCROTTA

This ferocious monstrosity is a cloven-hooved beast the size of a horse. Its mouth opens back almost as far as its ears to reveal jaws lined not with teeth but razor-sharp ridges of bone. With the haunches and hooves of a stag, the tail and body of a lion, and a head resembling that of a badger, this patchwork horror is as gruesome as the shrill laughing bark that issues from its maw.

LEUCROTTA

Usually CE Large magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +10, Spot +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17
(+1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 57 (6d10+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

CR 5

Immune disease, poison

OFFENSE

Spd 80 ft., climb 50 ft.

Melee bite +10 (2d6+7/19–20) and
2 kicks +5 (1d6+2)

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

Special Attacks lure, powerful bite, voice mimicry

TACTICS

Before Combat A leucrotta prefers to scout and observe its victims before attacking, listening to the names and the voices of its prey for up to several days before it strikes so it knows which of its victims to take in order to maximize the distress and sorrow in not only its chosen victim, but among the victim's friends and family. If it can, it waits until an opportune moment to lure an enemy away from its allies, repeating this tactic as often as it can before the remaining enemies catch on.

During Combat Once engaged in combat, a leucrotta charges its closest opponent with a bite attack. It continues to bite, using its kick attacks against other foes if anyone attempts to get in the way.

Morale A leucrotta is a cruel, hate-filled creature, but it's also highly intelligent. If faced with a foe that it has difficulty hitting or who reduces it to less than 25 hit points, a leucrotta flees and hides, hoping to track the foe and then lure him to his doom at a later time.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 12, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +15

Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff), Stealthy

Skills Bluff +15, Hide +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +11, Spot +10

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate or tropical forests and hills

Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–12)

Treasure standard

Advancement 7–14 HD (Large), 15–18 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment +3 (cohort)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Lure (Su) A leucrotta can use its voice to create a powerful compulsion to approach it if the listener isn't aware of the danger. At any point that the target is unaware of the leucrotta (such as if the leucrotta is hiding or concealed in darkness), the leucrotta can call out to the target using its voice mimicry. The target must be in line of sight and within 60 feet. When the leucrotta calls out, the target must make a DC 16 Will save or fall under the effects of a *suggestion* to approach the leucrotta. This effect functions identically to a *suggestion* spell with a caster level equal to the leucrotta's Hit Dice. A creature that saves cannot be affected again by the same leucrotta's lure for 24 hours. Lure is a language-dependant effect, and if the leucrotta uses the victim's name during the lure, the victim suffers a -4 penalty on his saving throw. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Powerful Bite (Ex) A leucrotta's bite is powerful indeed, capable of slicing through metal and cutting through bone with terrifying ease. It gains 1.5 times its Strength modifier to all damage rolls made with its bite attack, and threatens a critical hit with its bite on a roll of 19–20. Against objects, a leucrotta's bite treats the object as having a hardness of 5 less than the object's actual hardness rating.

Voice Mimicry (Ex) A leucrotta can perfectly imitate the voice of any creature it has heard talking. It makes a Bluff check when using voice mimicry—listeners may oppose this Bluff with Listen checks to see through the mimicry, although if the listener isn't familiar with the voice of the person being mimicked, he suffers a –8 penalty on his Listen check to oppose the leucrotta's Bluff. Leucrotta find it difficult to mimic the voices of creatures more than one size category smaller or larger than themselves, and take a –8 penalty on their Bluff checks to mimic the voices of such smaller or larger creatures.

Skills A leucrotta has a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

The leucrotta is a vile, untrustworthy creature that roams in packs through desolate forests and plains. Though the leucrotta has a fondness for blood and violence, it is not a mindless savage, but rather a a shockingly intelligent beast capable of speech and complex plans.

A typical leucrotta stands just over 5 feet tall at the shoulder and weighs 800 pounds. Its body appears to be an odd combination of lion, stag, and badger. Its light fur is usually covered with dried, foul-smelling muck.

Ecology

It is said that the first leucrotta were born from Lamashtu after she took a particularly virile hyena as a mate long ago. Certainly, most leucrottas venerate the Demon Queen as their mother and maintain small skull mounds in their lairs as personal shrines. A leucrotta is highly intelligent, yet many of its behavior patterns mimic those of a cruel-minded predator—as if the leucrotta uses its intelligence only as a tool to trap foes and to enjoy the pain and torment it inflicts. The creature certainly shows a boundless enthusiasm and creativity in the methods of securing its meals and entertainments.

The leucrotta's jaws are fantastically powerful, capable of shearing through bone and the hardest of scaly hides with ease. A leucrotta's metabolism is equally powerful, and the creature's digestive process is so swift that it is in a constant state of hunger. The leucrotta creates no waste as a by-product of feeding—its stomach and intestines process every ounce of consumed matter. A leucrotta can't digest metals, stone, or other hard, inorganic substances, forcing it to periodically disgorge such materials in foul-smelling masses it often picks through to find objects of value to aid in luring foes into its clutches.

Habitat & Society

The leucrotta is a social creature and generally travels in packs that consist of an elder male, a younger male, and several females and pups. The two males often spar in combat, though not to the death. As long as the elder male remains dominant in these battles, it remains the pack leader. Once the younger male starts to win the majority of these fights, it assumes the mantle of pack leader, and the elder male leaves to travel on its own. This almost bestial pack-mentality doesn't seem to mesh with the creature's considerable intellect, but the leucrotta appears not to mind, saving its intelligence for setting ambushes, spying on villages for new victims, coming up with new methods to torment victims, or enjoying the desperate pleading and begging of their food before eating it alive.

A leucrotta pack stays close to rivers and to lakes when possible, since such regions are far more likely to attract prey. A favorite leucrotta ploy is to wait near an abandoned boat or shack along the water and then lure good-natured and foolish souls into their trap. "Having a leucrotta's tongue" is a well-known phrase throughout the realms of Golarion, referring to those rogues who would double-cross an unsuspecting victim.

Leucrottas have been known on occasion to ally themselves with tribes of gnolls. They refuse to be used willingly as beasts of burden, but sometimes allow favored gnoll companions to ride them as steeds into battle. The leucrotta in a gnoll pack often thinks of itself as a leader, and treats the established gnoll leader poorly in an attempt to goad the gnoll into attacking it. Those leucrottas who manage to slay the gnoll leader usually seize control of the tribe. A tribe of gnolls led by a leucrotta is generally much more aggressive than one that is not, since the leucrotta often demands its gnolls spread out and raid for more and more victims as it grows content in its position of power.

Crocotta

Not all leucrottas are intelligent, magical beasts. Some, known as crocotas, are much more feral than their intelligent kin. A crocotta has the same statistics as a Large 5 HD hyena and gains the Improved Natural Attack (bite) feat as a bonus feat. A crocotta looks similar to a leucrotta but with shorter back legs, giving it a hunched, more hyena-like appearance. Its badger head, wide jaws, and strangely human-sounding yips and cackles belie its more sinister nature. Leucrottas tend to view crocotas with disdain and even shame, but it's not unusual to find these large hyena-like beasts in close proximity to a leucrotta pack. Crocotas are popular attractions in traveling carnivals and other roadside attractions in rural areas, where unscrupulous con artists bill them as cursed unfortunates who have been magically transformed into beasts, leaving them only with a crude echo of what was once a voice.





MANDRAGORA

Clumps of damp earth drop away from this small humanoid figure as it wrenches itself free from the loam. The creature resembles a small fat child made from leaves, coiled vines, tree bark, and pallid tubers. Its limbs are short and end in writhing tendrils and twitching roots, while its vestigial head sports little more than a pair of beady yellow eyes and a thorn-filled mouth.

MANDRAGORA

CE Small plant

Init +6; Senses low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 11

(+6 Dex, +1 size)

hp 37 (5d8+15); fast healing 3

CR 4

Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +2

Immune critical hits, mind-affecting effects, sleep, stunning, paralysis, poison, polymorph; Resist acid 5, cold 5, electricity 10

Weakness vulnerable to darkness

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee 2 vine whips +10 (1d4+3 plus poison) and bite +5 (1d4+1 plus blood drain)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with vine whips)

Special Attacks shriek

TACTICS

During Combat A mandragora attacks unarmored opponents first, biting them with its thorny maw. While it continues to bite its primary victim, it lashes out at any other potential attackers with its long vines, attempting to poison them so it can settle in on its chosen foe to drink its blood

Morale Mandragora are tenacious combatants that do not understand the concept of fear and thus fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10

Base Atk +3; Grp +2

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

Skills Hide +14 (+22 in verdant areas), Move Silently +10 (+18 in verdant areas)

Languages Abyssal, Common

ECOLOGY

Environment cold or temperate forest

Organization solitary, pair, or grove (3–12)

Treasure standard

Advancement 6–9 HD (Small), 10–15 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Drain (Ex) A mandragora drains blood, dealing 1 point of Strength damage, whenever it successfully bites a victim. A mandragora that drains blood from a target with 0 Strength instead inflicts 1d4 points of Constitution damage as its blood drain draws upon the target's final reserves and life blood.

Poison (Ex) The mandragora's vines are covered with tiny, razor-sharp thorns that carry an unusual poison. Anyone hit by a mandragora's vine whips must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become confused for 1 minute. If, at any time during that minute, the confused creature receives a confusion result of "act normally," the confusion effect ends. As soon as the confusion effect ends (either after a minute or as a result of the confused creature acting normally), the creature must make a second DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid becoming fatigued.

Shriek (Su) Once per day as a standard action, a mandragora can give voice to an unsettling shriek that sounds not unlike the cry of a frightened baby. All creatures within 30 feet of a shrieking mandragora must make a DC 15 Will save or become nauseated for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-

affecting effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Vulnerable to Darkness (Ex) In areas of utter darkness (including those created by *deeper darkness* but not by *darkness*), a mandragora loses its fast healing and becomes slowed, as per the spell.

Skills A mandragora gains a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move. Silently checks made in areas of heavy plant growth.

An odd and mercifully reclusive dweller of the woods, the mandragora is a small, plant-like creature known for its viciousness and toxic properties. This horrid creature wanders through wild forests, keeping itself hidden until it encounters an unsuspecting victim that it can attack and feed upon. Fortunately for most civilized creatures, the mandragora tends to shun open areas of land and the congested sprawl of villages and cities, preferring to keep to itself among its plant brethren in the woodlands.

When a mandragora attacks, its “fingers” take on a hideous life, growing into whipping, thorny vines nearly 10 feet long and extending the plant’s reach significantly. An advanced Medium mandragora’s vines grant it a reach of 15 feet. The typical mandragora stands at just over 3 feet tall and only weighs 30 pounds. However, its size hides the creature’s fantastic strength and brutality.

Ecology

The mandragora is not a creature of nature. Spawned in woodland regions that have been infused with demonic essence, such as Kyonin’s Tanglebair, a mandragora rises spontaneously from a mandrake root that has drawn nutrition from soil fertilized by the corpse or ichor of a demon. It is possible to artificially induce the transformation from mandrake root into mandragora via alchemical means (a process that requires a day of work, a single root, several pints of ichor or the body of a demon of no less than CR 6, and a successful DC 25 Craft [alchemy] check), although a freshly created mandragora feels little compassion toward its creator. In the wild, a mandrake root exposed to demonic nutrients has only a 2% chance of spontaneously awakening as a mandragora within a day of first supping upon the tainted fertilization.

A mandragora is a cruel, brutal creature who typically assaults its opponents with reckless abandon, giving little thought to the potential success or failure of its attack. However, a mandragora can recognize druids and the authority that they can wield over the wild, and though it has no qualms about attacking or killing a druid’s allies, a mandragora won’t initiate an attack on a druid or her animal companion. Against druids that deign to attack it, on the other hand, a mandragora spares no mercy.

Although it is a plant and is capable of subsisting entirely on photosynthesis, the hunger for blood often drives a

mandragora out of its lair in search of prey. A mandragora denied blood for several weeks doesn’t die, but does grow listless and functions as if under the effects of a *slow* spell until it manages to feed on fresh blood.

Habitat & Society

Most mandragoras wander through the forests alone, but they have also been known to form small tribes upon rare occasions. A typical mandragora tribe consists of no more than a dozen creatures. Should the tribe grow larger, mandragoras turn on one another, attacking the weaker members of the tribe in order to cull their numbers.

A mandragora makes its lair amid large tangles of roots or low-growing brambles and vines. It rarely strays far from its lair, roaming no more than a mile or so when the urge to feed on blood grows too strong to resist. However, mandragoras may spend several weeks wandering around the outskirts of their lairs in search of prey or small shiny baubles to claim as their own. A mandragora tends to remain in a single forest throughout its entire lifetime and rarely travels beyond the trees of its homeland. Though they show no mercy in attacking the other denizens of their forests, mandragoras are oddly protective of their homes, and may even ally themselves with other forest creatures if they feel their woodland territories are threatened. Should a forest burn or fall prey to the advances of man, the mandragoras of that forest are sometimes forced to adapt to dwelling in slums or in and around farmlands, but these creatures seldom live long.

Mandragora Blood

When the poison dripping from a mandragora’s thorny vines is mixed with the thick, gooey sap that serves as their blood, a curious alchemical event occurs. The mixed ichors and fluids from the mandragora’s body coalesce into a small, clear pool, allowing one skilled in the magical arts to briefly glimpse events occurring elsewhere. Preparing a bowl of this fluid requires 1,000 gp in additional alchemical reagents, an hour’s work, and a DC 30 Craft (alchemy) check. The fluid, once created, persists for only 5 minutes, but for the duration of that time the user can use the fluid to scry on any target. The fluid itself works as the focus component for the *scrying* spell as well, and if used as such the target being scryed takes a –4 penalty on his Will save to resist being scryed.

Mandragora Familiars

A mandragora can function as a familiar, although the size and relative strength of a mandragora as compared to other improved familiars like quasits or pseudodragons means that a spellcaster must be even higher level. To gain a mandragora as a familiar, the spellcaster must take the Improved Familiar feat and be at least caster level 9th.



MENOTHERIAN

This bear-sized creature looks like a gangly black wasp. Its wings are large and delicate, and fine hairs cover its joints and feet. Its front-most legs end in graceful articulate hands, and its jagged abdomen terminates in a wicked pair of stingers as long as a man's arm. Though its alien face has no human-like expression, intelligence gleams in its eyes.

MENOTHERIAN

CR 15

Always CN Large outsider (chaotic, elf, extraplanar, shapechanger)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +23, **Spot** +23

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 14, flat-footed 28
(+5 Dex, +19 natural, -1 size)

hp 189 (14d8+126)

DR 15/lawful; **Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 30

Fort +17, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.; climb 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (poor)

Melee sting +22 (2d10+9 plus poison) and
2 claws +20 (1d4+4) and
bite +20 (1d8+4)

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

Special Attacks alluring scent, mind control

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)

At will—*dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *lover's vengeance* (DC 18, see page 62), *message*, *neutralize poison*, *rage*, *secret speech* (DC 17, see page 62)

5/day—*crushing despair* (DC 19), *cat's grace*, *cure moderate wounds* (DC 17), *remove disease*, *suggestion* (DC 18), *summon swarm*, *telekinesis*, *teleport*, *wall of thorns*

1/day—*heal* (DC 21), *insect plague*, *scrying* (DC 19)

TACTICS

Before Combat The Menotherian prefers to let her alluring scent seduce her opponents. If she anticipates a battle she uses *cat's grace* on herself.

During Combat If facing weaker opponents that aren't a threat to her, the Menotherian likes to use *rage* to end the battle quickly. Against more dangerous opponents, she uses *suggestion* to send enemy spellcasters away from the battle, *crushing despair* to weaken melee fighters, *summoned swarm* or *insect plague* to harass ranged attackers, and *dimension door* to avoid being flanked or captured.

Morale The Menotherian is willing to surrender or flee if necessary, as she knows that sometimes vengeance must wait for the right opportunity.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 20, **Con** 28, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +27

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Balance +15, Bluff +22, Climb +14, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +26, Gather Information +10, Heal +14, Intimidate +24, Jump +26, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (nature) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +21, Move Silently +15, Perform (dance) +10, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +14, Spot +21

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven

SQ telepathy 100 ft.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 15–20 HD (Large), 21–42 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alluring Scent (Ex) The Menotherian constantly exudes intoxicating pheromones that cause creatures in her vicinity to grow relaxed and react favorably toward her. Any creature within 30 feet of her must make a DC 26 Fortitude save or adjust its attitude one step closer to friendly; the creature makes a save on the first round of exposure and every minute thereafter. Creatures with the scent ability take a -4 penalty on their saving throws. The Menotherian prefers to let this ability take effect before trying to negotiate with others, though it works even in combat (in long-term battles, opponents have been known to ask to parlay with her

after sufficient exposure). A creature ceases to attack her once its attitude shifts away from hostile (but if she attacks it again, its attitude resets to hostile). This is a mind-affecting poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Alternate Form (Su) The Menotherian can change into her elf-like form or back again at will as a move-equivalent action. In her elf form she cannot use her natural attacks, implant swarms, or mind control, but can still use her spell-like abilities and alluring scent. She can also take the form of a giant wasp or a normal wasp, though she normally only uses these shapes as disguises rather than for battle.

Implant Swarm (Ex) Once per day as a standard action, the Menotherian can use her stinger to implant a cluster of eggs in a target. The affected creature must make a DC 26 Fort save to avoid implantation; this DC is Constitution-based. The eggs gestate in 2d4 rounds, during which the target is nauseated. When the gestation period ends, the eggs hatch into a chaotic neutral hellwasp swarm with a hive mind. The swarm swiftly consumes the victim's innards, killing the host immediately, then inhabits and animates the body as a zombie-like creature. A *remove disease* spell rids a victim of the eggs during the gestation period, as does a DC 30 Heal check made as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Mind Control (Su) The Menotherian can inject a concentrated form of its alluring scent directly into the brain of a helpless or willing humanoid creature. If the creature fails a DC 26 Fortitude save, the herald can control the target for the next 24 hours as if using *dominate person*, though the Menotherian must verbally give the target instructions.

Poison (Su) Injury, Fortitude DC 26, initial damage 2d6 Dex, secondary damage 1d6 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The Menotherian is a personification of lust, vengeance, and trickery. She is the chief immortal agent of Calistria in the mortal world—bereft of morals, she seduces, tricks, or murders any creature necessary to complete her mission. In her true form she is a great wasp-like creature weighing just over 1,400 pounds. Though she can fly, her wings create a loud buzzing noise audible from over 500 feet away, so when she must be stealthy she walks or climbs. The Menotherian needs no armor, for her exoskeleton is as hard as adamantine. She observes her environment with an alien detachment, missing no detail but only acting when she feels the time is right.

When subtlety is necessary, she can take the shape of an exotic elf of either gender, a giant wasp, or a normal wasp. Her humanoid form is almost a caricature of elven beauty, with long ears, narrow cheekbones, and long graceful limbs—if elves look more elven than half-elves, the Menotherian looks even more elven than true elves, as if elves are near-perfect mortal copies of the “true” elven ideal. In this form she lacks most of her combat ability, but can still seduce with her wits and good looks, or even use

her pheromones on reluctant targets. *The Book of Joy* refers to hundreds of transparent, sealed chambers in Calistria's palace, each containing a sleeping creature resembling the Menotherian's elven form; the goddess awakens one of these any time she needs a new herald or wants to create another one of her succubus-like avengers.

Ecology

A supernatural spirit clad in immortal ageless flesh, the Menotherian does not need to eat, drink, or rest, though she enjoys these activities as much as any elf. Her interests are elven interests—pleasant company, fine wine, savory food, and intricate music. She can conceive and give birth, though it is rare for her to do this as she must remain in elven form for the duration of her pregnancy and Calistria dislikes having her herald unavailable for extended periods. Her offspring are usually mortal elves resembling feytouched, aasimar, or tieflings, though some have enough magic in them to be born as young vengeance demons (Velvet Wing is one of the Menotherian's direct offspring, see page 63). Church heretics and mad elven wizards suggest the Menotherian could breed with insect-like outsiders, but she has shown no interest in such things, particularly as most of them have sub-human intelligence or contrary agendas.

Habitat & Society

The Menotherian is a singular creature; Calistria is only known to have one in existence at any time, so the herald usually socializes with the goddess's succubus-like “vengeance demons” and other servitor entities. The Menotherian is very curious about mortal elven society, regardless of the elf's social status, homeland, or relationship with other elves or even other races. Her interest in non-elves is similar but less ardent; she has been known to watch a particular elf (usually disguised as a common wasp) off and on for years, while non-elves rarely keep her attention for more than a few days. The Menotherian is a creature of spirit but has a physical body, and sometimes seeks attractive elves (using her elven form) to satisfy her carnal desires; this is a sign of great favor among the devout, though the experience is usually so overwhelming that the lucky partner cannot articulate its full extent. The Menotherian has a long memory and has been known to bear a grudge to the second or third generation against an elf that offended her or one of her predecessors (it is unknown whether the Menotherian receives the memories of the heralds that came before her, but her behavior indicates this is likely). She sometimes attends the goddess as a handmaiden (in elven form) or silent observer (in insectoid form). Calistria has been known to send the Menotherian to meetings disguised as the goddess herself, especially when she is unsure of the other party's motivations.



TREERAZER, LORD OF THE BLASTED TARN

The demon's bulk shoulders aside the trees as he lumbers into view, a twenty-foot-tall saurian demon, mouth agape to reveal rows of sharp teeth, eyes ablaze with fury. Draconic wings stretch from bony shoulders, fearsome talons tear at the earth, and diseased mushrooms grow and melt into corruption with horrific speed in his wake. Clutched in his hands is an axe that seems to have been hewn from obsidian, and from its chiseled edge drips thick, steaming acid.

TREERAZER

CR 25

CE Huge outsider (demon, native)

Init +14; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; **Listen** +41, **Spot** +41

Aura corruption (120 feet), **unholy aura** (DC 25)

DEFENSE

AC 46, **touch** 22, **flat-footed** 36

(+4 deflection, +10 Dex, +24 natural, -2 size)

hp 573 (31d8+434); **regeneration** 15 (fire or holy damage)

Fort +31, **Ref** +27, **Will** +24

Defensive Ability freedom of movement; **DR** 15/cold iron and good; **Immune** disease, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 38

OFFENSE

Spd 60 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee *Blackaxe* +42/+37/+32/+27 (3d6+23/19-20/x3 plus 1d6 acid) and claw +35 (1d8+11) and

bite +35 (2d6+11) and
2 wings +35 (1d8+11)

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

Special Attacks defoliation, *summon demons*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)

At will—*antiplant shell*, *contagion* (DC 21), *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (within Tanglebriar only), *telekinesis* (DC 22), *unholy aura*, *unholy blight*, *water breathing*

3/day—*wall of thorns*, *control plants* (DC 25), *quicken greater dispel magic*

1/day—*horrid wilting* (DC 25), *symbol of death* (DC 25), *time stop*

TACTICS

Before Combat Treerazer maintains *detect good*, *detect law*, *unholy aura*, and *water breathing* at all times

During Combat Treerazer begins most combats by casting *time stop* and raising an *antiplant shell* to prevent plant creatures and any other creatures under the effect of his aura of corruption from approaching. If he has time during the *time stop*, he also creates walls of thorns and summons demons. If engaged in melee, he gleefully takes up *Blackaxe* and makes full attacks against the closest foe. The first 3 rounds of combat, he targets obvious spell effects with *quicken greater dispel magic* as well.

Morale If Treerazer is reduced to less than 150 hit points, he teleports back to his fortress of Witchbole to recover and plan his revenge.

STATISTICS

Str 36, **Dex** 30, **Con** 38, **Int** 21, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +31; **Grp** +52

Feats *Awesome Blow*, *Blind-Fight*, *Combat Reflexes*, *Improved Bull Rush*, *Improved Critical* (battleaxe), *Improved Initiative*, *Multiattack*, *Power Attack*, *Quickened Spell-Like Ability* (*greater dispel magic*), *Spell Stowaway* (*time stop*), *Track*

Skills *Concentration* +48, *Hide* +36, *Intimidate* +41, *Knowledge* (arcana) +39, *Knowledge* (nature) +43, *Knowledge* (the planes) +39, *Listen* +41, *Move Silently* +44, *Sense Motive* +41, *Spellcraft* +43, *Spot* +41, *Survival* +41, *Swim* +47

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Sylvan; *telepathy* 300 ft.

Gear *Blackaxe*

ECOLOGY

Environment Tanglebriar**Organization** solitary or group (Treerazer plus 1d4 shemhazians or nalfeshnees and 2d4 hezrous)**Treasure** triple standard**Advancement** —**Level Adjustment** —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Corruption (Su) Treerazer exudes an aura of corruption to a radius of 120 feet. This aura causes plants to twist and grow hideous, sprouting thorns and twisting branches. Creatures with woodland stride or *freedom of movement* can move through this fungal bloom with ease. Living creatures within reach of Treerazer's aura of corruption must make a DC 39 Fortitude save each round or their flesh grows pasty and clammy as tendrils of diseased plant matter and fungal growth sprout from it. This condition persists as long as the creature remains within Treerazer's aura of corruption and for 1 minute thereafter. While suffering the effects of this aura, a living creature is treated as a plant for the purposes of spells and effects that harm or otherwise inconvenience plant creatures more than other creatures. A living creature would thus be subject to *antiplant shell*, *blight*, additional damage from *horrid wilting* or a *plant bane* weapon, and could be affected by *control plants*. The corruption does not otherwise impart creatures with plant traits. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Defoliation (Su) As a standard action once every 1d4 rounds, Treerazer can exude a pulse of defoliating energy in a 30-foot-radius spread. This appears as a wave of sickly green energy, and causes all plants and plant creatures in the area to blacken and wither. Such creatures take 20d6 points of damage, or half with a successful DC 39 Fortitude save. A plant that isn't a creature (such as a tree or a shrub) doesn't receive a save and immediately withers and dies. Treerazer can choose to exclude any number of plants in the area from this effect, and generally does so to save twisted and corrupted plants and fungus. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Freedom of Movement (Su) Treerazer constantly uses this ability, as the spell (CL 20th).

Spell Stowaway This epic feat attunes Treerazer to the spell *time stop*. If another spellcaster within 300 feet of him uses this spell, Treerazer immediately gains the spell's effect as if it had been used on him by the same caster. Treerazer must have direct line of effect to the spellcaster in order to gain the benefit of the attuned magic (though he does not have to know the spellcaster is present, and he can be flat-footed). The magic's duration, effect, and other specifics are determined by its original caster's level.

Summon Demons (Sp) Once per day, Treerazer can automatically summon 1 shemhazian (see *Pathfinder* #5) or 1d6 hezrous. This ability functions as a 9th-level spell.

True Seeing (Su) Treerazer constantly uses this ability, as the spell of the same name (CL 20th).

BLACKAXE

Treerazer's favored weapon is *Blackaxe*, a Huge +5 *plant bane greataxe* carved from obsidian but as strong as adamantine (the weapon is treated as an adamantine weapon for the purposes of overcoming hardness and damage reduction). *Blackaxe* constantly weeps acid, and inflicts +1d6 acid damage on a hit. On a successful critical hit, it inflicts +2d10 acid damage. Once per day, the wielder can *heal* himself by striking a tree with *Blackaxe*—this act causes the tree struck to wither to ash in a heartbeat. Treerazer can call *Blackaxe* to his hand as a free action, despite any intervening distance, as long as *Blackaxe* is not kept in an area that prevents teleportation effects from occurring.

Treerazer, the self-styled Lord of the Blasted Tarn, was once the favored minion and lieutenant (some even say child) of Cyth-V'sug, Demon Lord of Fungus and Parasites. After a failed attempt to wrest that crown away from Cyth-V'sug, Treerazer fled to the Material Plane. Cyth-V'sug was unable (or perhaps only unwilling) to pursue, but took steps to ensure that Treerazer would remain by exiling him, transforming him into a native outsider and severing Treerazer's bond to the Abyss—if the Lord of the Blasted Tarn is slain, his animus will not return to the Abyss and reform. Death to Treerazer is a permanent thing.

Treerazer arrived on Golarion near the end of the Age of Darkness, and found the savaged planet much to his liking—so much so that the sting of exile was somewhat ameliorated. He spent many centuries wandering the remote corners of Golarion before finally coming upon the abandoned elven nation of Kyonin in 2497. In the *Sovryrian Stone*, he found an artifact that he believed he could use to reinstate his Abyssal link and, perhaps, even uproot the entire nation and refocus the portal from Sovryrian to the Abyss, thereby reclaiming his position there and taking one more step toward revenge against Cyth-V'sug. Yet the elves sensed his tamperings and returned to confront the demon. A terrific battle resulted, and while the elves were able to drive Treerazer out of Iadara and into southern Kyonin, they were unable to slay him or force him out completely—they merely concentrated his power in a smaller region. Instead, the elves “walled off” this region, a perverted realm known today as Tanglebriar. Treerazer lurks at Tanglebriar's heart to this day, the greatest boogeyman in elven mythology and a very real and constant threat to the nation's security.

Treerazer's Cult

Cults of Treerazer are quite rare beyond Kyonin, where secret cabals of cultists venerate him. Treerazer's symbol is a bleeding dead tree that's been split in half. His clerics have access to the Domains of Chaos, Destruction, Evil, and Plant. His favored weapon is the battleaxe.

SAJAN



MALE HUMAN MONK 12

ALIGN LN INIT +4 SPEED 70 ft.

DEITY: Irori

HOMELAND: Vudra

ABILITIES

14	STR
19	DEX
16	CON
10	INT
14	WIS
8	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 93

AC 29

touch 23, flat-footed 25

Fort +11, Ref +12,

Will +10 (+2 against enchantment)

Special Defenses

improved evasion, slow fall 60 ft., still mind; **Immune** nonmagical disease, poison

OFFENSE

Melee unarmed strike +14/+9

(2d8+3/19–20) or

greater flurry of blows

+14/+14/+14/+9 (2d8+3/19–20) or

+1 temple sword +12 (1d8+3/19–20)

Base Atk +9; Grp +11

Special Attacks abundant step 1/

day, *ki* strike (lawful and magic),

stunning fist 13/day (DC 16),

wholeness of body (20 hp/day)

SKILLS

Climb	+17
Escape Artist	+19
Jump	+35
Sense Motive	+17
Tumble	+21

FEATS

Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (temple sword), Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Trip, Mobility, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse



Combat Gear *potion of fly*; **Other Gear** +1 temple sword, amulet of mighty fists +1, bracers of armor +4, dusty rose ioun stone (+1 insight bonus to AC), incandescent blue ioun stone (+2 Wisdom), pink rhomboid ioun stone (+2 Constitution), gloves of Dexterity +2, ring of protection +3, ring of force shield, monk's belt, wooden holy symbol, belt pouch

Sajan Gadadvara and his twin sister Sajni were separated when the lord they served was shamed and forced to cede half his army to the victor—among them Sajan's sister. Sajni was taken away from Vudra by her new master, and Sajan abandoned his own responsibilities to follow. He spent years trying in vain to find her, but has not yet given up. Sajan knows he cannot return to Vudra, for the padapranja there would execute him as a deserter. He cares not for his home country, however, and continues to seek out any clue that might point him toward his sister.

LINI



FEMALE GNOME DRUID 12

ALIGN N INIT +1 SPEED 20 ft.

DEITY: Green Faith

HOMELAND: Land of the Linnorm Kings

ABILITIES

6	STR
12	DEX
16	CON
10	INT
20	WIS
13	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 93

AC 18

touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+4 bonus against giants)

Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +15 (+2 against illusions)

Special Qualities immune to poison, low-light vision, nature sense, woodland stride

OFFENSE

Melee mwk sickle +9/+2 (1d4–2)

Ranged +1 sling +12/+7 (1d3–2)

Base Atk +9; Grp +3

Special Attacks gnome spell-like

abilities, wild shape (Tiny to

Large, plant) 4/day

Spells Prepared (CL 7th; +9 ranged)

6th—*fire seeds* (DC 21), *wall of stone*

5th—*animal growth*, *death ward*,

trans. rock to mud, *wall of thorns*

4th—*air walk*, *dispel magic*, *flame*

strike (DC 19), *freedom of mvmt.*

3rd—*call lightning* (DC 18), *neutralize*

poison (DC 18), *remove disease*,

quench (DC 18)

2nd—*barkskin* (2), *cat's grace*, *lesser*

restoration, *resist energy*

1st—*cure light wnds.* (2), *entangle* (DC

16), *longstrider*, *produce flame* (3)

0—*cure minor wnds.* (4), *light*, *mending*

SKILLS

Concentration	+18
Craft (alchemy)	+2
Handle Animal	+16
Knowledge (nature)	+17
Listen	+7
Ride	+16
Survival	+7
Wild Empathy	+13

FEATS

Augment Summoning, Mounted Combat, Natural Spell, Ride-By Attack, Spell Focus (conjuration)

ANIMAL COMPANION

Droogami (snow leopard; MM 274)



Combat Gear *rod of lesser quicken metamagic*, *wand of flame blade* (50 charges), *wand of cure moderate wounds* (50 charges); **Other Gear** +2 wild leather armor, masterwork sickle, +1 sling with 10 bullets, cloak of resistance +2, ring of protection +2, periapt of Wisdom +2, belt pouch, mistletoe, spell component pouch, rations (2 days), collection of special de-barked sticks, 5 gp

Lini always seemed to possess a certain affinity with various creatures of the woodlands near where she grew up—particularly with larger predators like bears and snow leopards. In the years since her departure from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Lini has collected more than a dozen sticks—one from each forest or wood she visits.

SELTYIEL

MALE HALF-ELF
FIGHTER 1/EVOKER 5/ELDRITCH KNIGHT 6

ALIGN LE INIT +5 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Asmodeus
HOMELAND: Cheliox

ABILITIES

12	STR
20	DEX
16	CON
15	INT
8	WIS
10	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 79
AC 23
touch 17, flat-footed 18
Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +4;
+2 against enchantment;
immune to sleep effectsSpecial Qualities low-
light vision

OFFENSE

Melee +2 flaming b. spell st. longsword
+13/+8 (1d8+3/19–20 plus 1d6 fire)
Ranged +1 flaming comp. longbow
+15/+10 (1d8+2/×3 plus 1d6 fire)
Base Atk +9; Grp +10
Spells Prepared (CL 10th, +14
ranged touch, 10% spell failure)
5th—teleport, wall of force (2)
4th—dimension door, fire shield, still
lightning bolt (DC 17), stonemin
3rd—dispel magic, fireball (DC 17),
fly, still scorching ray
2nd—bull's strength, glitterdust (DC
14), still magic missile (3), mirror image
1st—enlarge person, burning hands
(DC 15), magic missile (3), shield
0—flare (DC 14), light, mage hand,
ray of frost, prestidigitation
Prohibited Schools enchant., necro.

SKILLS

Concentration	+15
Craft (alchemy)	+15
Diplomacy	+2
Gather Information	+2
Intimidate	+4
Knowledge (arcana)	+15
Listen	+0
Search	+3
Spellcraft	+15
Spot	+0

FEATS

Combat Expertise, Craft Magic
Arms and Armor, Dodge,
Greater Spell Focus (evocation),
Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Spell
Focus (evocation), Still Spell,
Weapon Focus (longsword)

FAMILIAR

Dargenti (bat)

Combat Gear potion of barkskin +4 (2); Other Gear +4 leather armor, +2 flaming burst spell storing
longsword (contains vampiric touch), dagger, +1 flaming composite longbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows
and 3 human slaying arrows, amulet of health +2, gloves of Dexterity +4, ring of protection +2, flask of
fine absinthe worth 50 gp, gold holy symbol worth 75 gp, diamond dust (500 gp), spellbook, 8 gpBorn from a dead mother amid screams and disgrace, Seltiel grew up surrounded by shame and abuse.
Before he came of age, his stepfather attempted to murder him, but after Seltiel turned the tables, he fled
into the wild. Since then, his life has been a cruel series of betrayals and pain. His brief reunion with his
true father (a notorious bandit) ended with the half-elf being betrayed and imprisoned.

AMIRI

FEMALE HUMAN BARBARIAN 12

ALIGN CN INIT +2 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Gorum
HOMELAND: Realm of the Mammoth Lords

ABILITIES

24	STR
15	DEX
18	CON
10	INT
12	WIS
8	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 131
AC 19
touch 13, flat-footed 17
Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +7
Special Defenses trap
sense +4, improved
uncanny dodge; DR 2/—

OFFENSE

Melee Large +2 frost bastard sword
+20/+15/+10 (2d8+12/17–20 plus
1d6 cold)
Ranged +1 comp. longbow
+15/+10/+5 (1d8+8/×3)
Base Atk +12; Grp +19
Special Attacks greater rage 4/day
Special Qualities fast movement,
illiteracy
BARBARIAN RAGE
HP 167; AC 17, touch 11, flat f. 15
Fort +15, Ref +6, Will +10
Melee Large +2 frost bastard
sword +23/+18/+13 (2d8+17/17–20
plus 1d6 cold)
Str 30, Con 24
RAGING POWER ATTACK
Melee Large +2 frost bastard sword
+11/+6/+1 (2d8+41/17–20 +1d6 cold)

SKILLS

Climb	+20
Intimidate	+14
Jump	+20
Listen	+16
Spot	+3
Survival	+16

FEATS

Exotic Weapon Proficiency
(bastard sword), Improved
Bull Rush, Improved Critical
(bastard sword), Iron Will,
Power Attack, Weapon Focus
(bastard sword)Combat Gear potion of barkskin +3 (2), potion of fly; Gear +3 hide armor, Large +2 frost bastard
sword, +1 composite longbow (+7 Str), javelins (2), throwing axe, amulet of health +4, belt of giant
strength +6, gloves of Dexterity +2, ring of protection +1, 20 gpAmiri never quite fit in with the expected gender roles of her tribe, and when the tribe attempted to send
her on a suicide mission, she returned with an enormous trophy—a frost giant's sword. She has since
abandoned her people, and has come to value her oversized sword (even though she can only truly wield
it properly when her blood rage takes her). She never speaks of the circumstances that forced her to flee
her homeland. Some things are better left unsaid.

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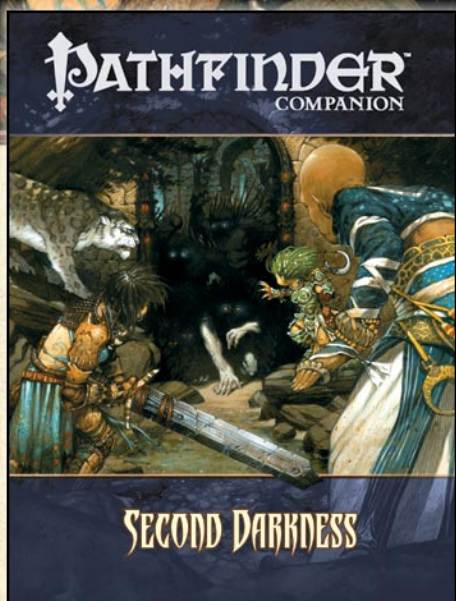
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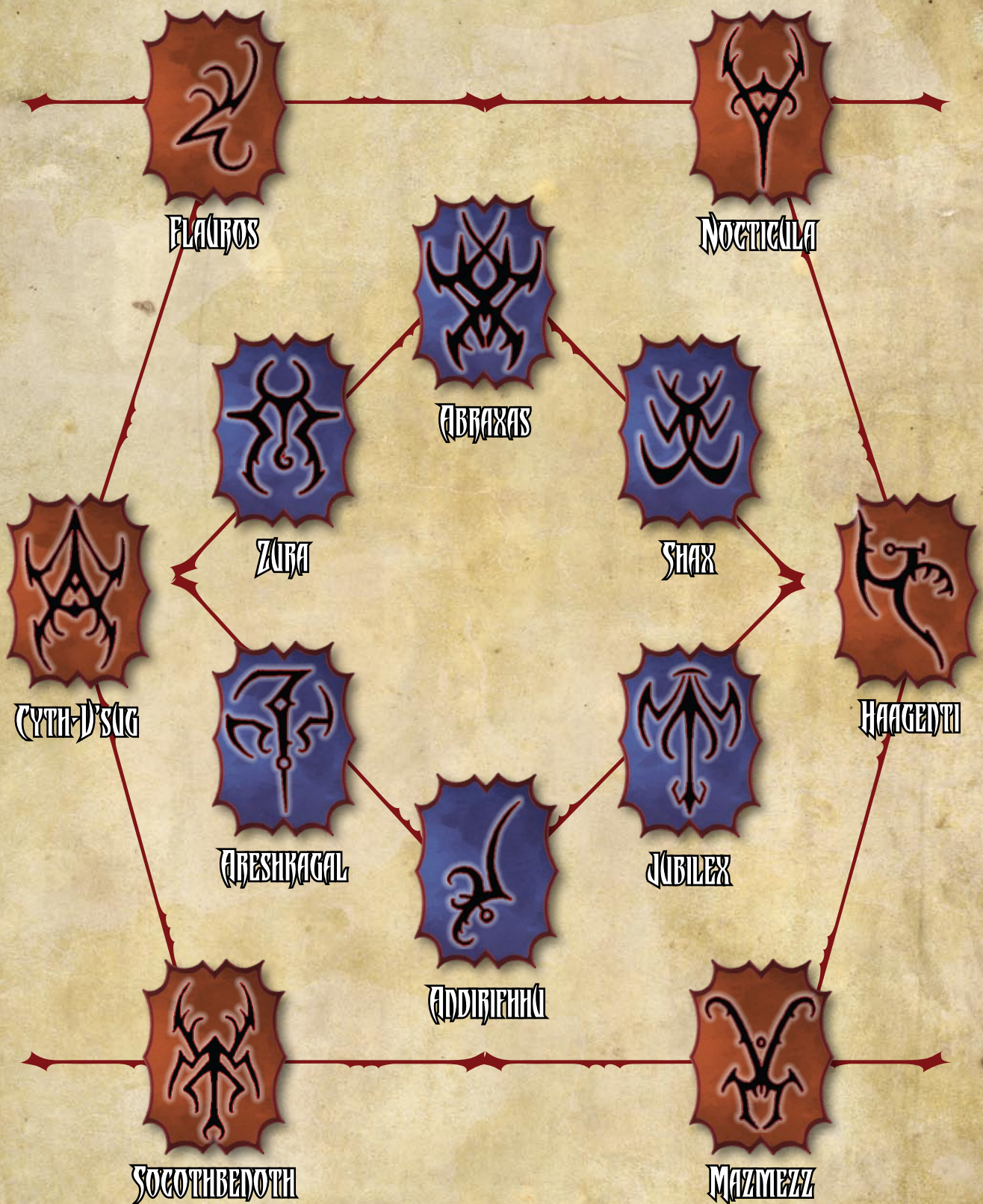
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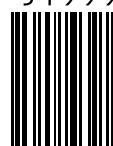
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